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GURDWARA SRI KATALGARH SAHEB, SRI CHAMKAUR SAHEB (RUPNAGAR)

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GURDWARA SRI FATEHGARH SAHIB JI



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MEDITATION

ਸਲੋਕ ਸੇਖ ਫਰੀਦ ਜੀ

ਮਤਿ ਹੋਦੀ ਹੋਇ ਦਿਆਣਾ ॥ ਤਾਣ ਹੋਦੇ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਤਾਣਾ ॥
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ਇਕੁ ਫਿਕਾ ਨ ਗਾਲਾਇ ਸਭਨਾ ਮੈ ਸਚਾ ਧਣੀ ॥
ਹਿਆਉ ਨ ਕੈਹੀ ਠਾਹਿ ਮਾਣਕ ਸਭ ਅਮੋਲਵੇ ॥੧੨੯॥
ਸਭਨਾ ਮਨ ਮਾਣਿਕ ਠਾਹਣੁ ਮੂਲਿ ਮਚਾਂਗਵਾ ॥
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[SGGS: 1384]

Translation*

These three Saloks are the concluding Saloks of Sheikh Farid Ji's bani, where he advises against the usage of harsh words to criticize others. He preached that humility and kindness were the essence of all human virtues. Being humble even if you own wisdom; function as if powerless even if you are powerful; and even when you are needy, still share with others. Such are the characteristics of a devotee. 128. He advises us (seekers of divine, so as) not to utter even a single harsh/vain word (against anyone, as) God abides in all. Do not break anyone's heart (because) all (living beings) are priceless jewels (like pearl beads). 129. (As) The hearts of all are like precious (fragile) jewels; to harm (or cause emotional pain to anyone) is not good at all. If you are desirous of meeting your Beloved (God within), then do not break the heart of anyone of His Creation. 130. Farid Ji has shared characteristics of a seeker as – Humility, Compassionate, Philanthropic, Caring, Helpful, Non-Judgmental, Accepting of all.

*Translation by : S. Bhupinder Singh



Redefining Sikh Identity: The Crisis Among Sikh Youth in the Digital Age

*DR GURNAM SINGH AND DR JOGISHWAR SINGH**

Sikhs are witnessing a silent yet pervasive identity crisis confronting Sikh youth in the modern world, particularly within the global Sikh diaspora. This crisis can be defined as a sustained condition of uncertainty and internal conflict regarding how Sikh faith, cultural heritage, and personal aspirations are integrated within contemporary social landscapes. It manifests in distancing from religious practice, confusion over cultural norms, ambivalence toward visible Sikh identity, and a search for belonging within non-Sikh value spaces.

It can be understood only as the outcome of multifaceted social, economic, cultural, and institutional transformations. Key drivers include diasporic pressures and intergenerational gaps arising from ongoing migration, the homogenising influence of globalisation and consumer culture (including Bollywood's long-standing stereotyping of Sikhs), experiences of discrimination, processes of secularisation, and widespread language loss. At a deeper historical level, we witness the dislocation of the agrarian ethic and a vacuum of inspiring leadership within Sikh institutions. The consequences are profound, resulting in psychological distress, social withdrawal, weakened cultural transmission, and community fragmentation.

In terms of a way forward, a radical reimagination of Sikhi that balances the preservation of core ethics with the freedom for critical engagement. Alongside this, practical measures such as creating safe exploratory spaces for intergenerational dialogue and radically reimaging parchaar to align with Guru Nanak's revolutionary, universalist vision, including confronting issues such as gender inequality, casteism, and the inclusion of minorities within the wider Sikh family. The challenge for Sikh leadership is straightforward: unless there is a genuine willingness to awaken from a long-standing state of denial and to recognise the profound sociological shifts caused by globalisation and digital culture, which will only intensify, there is little hope of arresting what is, for Sikhs, nothing short of an existential crisis.

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The Nature of the Identity Crisis

Identity formation involves synthesising personal values, social expectations, and individual aspirations into a coherent self-concept. When this synthesis is disrupted, feelings of uncertainty, conflict, and disconnection emerge. Among diasporic Sikh youth, this crisis is compounded by the need to navigate hybrid identities—managing the tensions between the cultural norms of the “home” environment and those of the host society. An identity crisis, thus, denotes a persistent sense of disorientation about what it means to be Sikh—how faith, culture, family expectations, physical appearance, and career ambitions cohere in a rapidly changing world. Among Sikh youth globally, the crisis manifests as:

- Distancing from religious practices
- Confusion regarding cultural norms (language, marriage, dress, food)
- Ambivalence about visible Sikh identity
- Conflict between familial expectations and personal choices
- Seeking belonging in peer groups or digital spaces detached from Sikh values

Traditionally, such crises were moderated through family, sangat, and local peer networks. However, contemporary transformations—especially digitalisation—have disrupted these structures.

Consequences

The consequences of this identity crisis manifest themselves across multiple levels of Sikh life. At a personal level, individuals may experience heightened psychological distress as they struggle to reconcile inherited traditions with contemporary pressures. This often leads to patterns of social withdrawal or, conversely, into forms of high-risk assimilation in which young people distance themselves from visible markers of Sikh identity in pursuit of acceptance. As these individual trajectories accumulate, they contribute to broader communal effects: the erosion of intergenerational transmission of language, cultural knowledge, and religious practice, the fragmentation of community structures that once provided stability and coherence, leading to a gradual decline in the public visibility of Sikhs within pluralistic societies. Ultimately, these shifts weaken the collective political voice of Sikh communities, whose ability to organize, advocate, and assert their rights depends on both cohesion and public presence. Such patterns are becoming increasingly evident across Sikh populations worldwide.

Remedies: Towards a Reimagination of Sikhi

Addressing the crisis, therefore, requires reclaiming Sikhi's radical, universal, and egalitarian foundations. Guru Nanak's teachings were revolutionary precisely because they rejected ritualism, caste hierarchy, and religious exclusivism. Contrary to myths portraying Guru Nanak as a pacifist and Guru Gobind Singh as being responsible for the militarisation of Sikhi, Nanak directly confronted political tyranny, including admonishing Babur, and articulated a fearless ethical vision. The following factors need to be considered.

Ethical participation.

Spiritual creativity.

Safe spaces for identity exploration.

Balanced religious literacy.

Normalisation of multi-layered identities.

Culturally competent mental health care.

Family-Level Remedies

Balancing Preservation and Freedom

The Sikh identity crisis is, at its core, a crisis of imagination. It arises not from a loss of faith but from a failure to reinterpret Sikh teachings for the modern world. Sikh leaders have failed to offer a compelling institutional vision, whereas Sikh youth, especially in the diaspora, show signs of leading a renaissance grounded in intellectual honesty, ethical engagement, and global confidence. Perhaps the term 'identity crisis' is not that helpful. A more positive way to look at this issue is in terms of 'identity opportunity'. In truth, young Sikhs are understandable products of social change, discrimination, and normal developmental exploration. Solutions, therefore, are not about pressing youth to conform, nor simply accepting disengagement; they are about building bridges, educational, emotional, and institutional, so young people can make free, informed choices from a palette of belonging and resilience. Communities that succeed will be those that listen to youth, modernize their modes of transmission, protect rights and visibility in public life, and create enough cultural flexibility that being Sikh remains a living, meaningful option rather than a source of shame or conflict.

Existing Sikh leaders have failed to inspire Sikh youth to stay loyal to their identity and have generally served as bad role models. Nonetheless, they must find ways to let go and to yield leadership roles to Sikh youth. This process will not be easy, but its early

signs can already be discerned in forums where Sikh youth are boldly questioning rituals and practices which they feel are antithetical to the values of Sikhi. Mentors need to encourage Sikh youth to question established dogmas. Successful Sikh professionals, Sikh entrepreneurs need to be held up as role models for educated Sikh youth instead of Dera chiefs, Babas, or preachers mouthing rituals as salvation. An observant Sikh as President of the World Bank is a better role model for an educated young Sikh than a semi-literate preacher talking in an idiom incomprehensible to educated young Sikhs who refuse to be spoon-fed rituals. Examples exist of clean-shaven Sikh adults whose young children have readopted Sikh visual identity in the US, Canada, UK, Malaysia, Australia, Singapore, and other places. The disastrous lack of leadership in Punjab cannot be allowed to overshadow these green shoots. Salvation will come from Sikh youth outside India. The more Sikh youngsters succeed professionally in their adopted countries, the more the myth will be negated that a visible Sikh identity is a burden for such advancement.

Sikh leadership in Punjab, as well as its acolytes overseas, has badly let down the community. They have become synonymous with unbridled corruption, both moral and financial. Contrary to the Gurus' teachings, women have not been treated as equals in Sikh society. Sikh youth can be the drivers of rapid change to include Sikh women as transmitters of Sikhi. An empowered and educated Sikh woman will help her children reconnect with the true values of Sikhi in terms of gender and social equality. It is extremely regrettable that Sikh women are still not allowed to recite Gurbani or do kirtan in the sanctum sanctorum of the Darbar Sahib in Amritsar. They are not allowed to carry the Palki in the morning. This gender inequality needs to change fast. It could then also help in reducing the practice of female infanticide, still prevalent in Punjab, where female children are aborted before birth.

There is a crying need for Sikhs to provide academically excellent educational institutions that inculcate the true values of Sikhi in youngsters. There are several existing educational establishments run by Sikhs, but hardly any of them are considered as markers of academic excellence. This is why Sikh families send their children to institutions run by other faiths, which have scant motivation to inculcate values of Sikhi in Sikh students. In fact, their agenda is exactly the opposite. They preach their own faiths as better alternatives. Serving and retired renowned Sikh academics should be mobilised along with financial support from numerous Sikh high-net-worth individuals to

provide such a level of education inspiring intellectual curiosity, the ability to question existing ritualistic beliefs, and use modern technologies like AI to free minds from falling prey to dogmas and prejudices.

Our Gurus did not offer a set of dogmas to be cherished. They offered a new way of seeing our existence as human beings. This truly revolutionary consciousness remains as vital today as it was five centuries ago. If Sikh institutions discover the humility to listen and Sikh youth the courage to lead, Sikhi may yet rediscover its purpose, not as a relic of the past but as a beacon for the future. For Sikhi to flourish, Sikh youth must be empowered to question, innovate, and lead. Chardi Kala, the spirit of ever-ascending optimism, remains the key to this transformation. Sikh youth must be trusted to build the Sikhi of the future: not nostalgic, not ritualistic, but universal, ethical, and fearlessly compassionate. □

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The Intersection of Divine Wisdom and Indian Knowledge in Salok Mahla 9 (ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੯)

PROF HARPREET KAUR & DR. INDERPREET KAUR*

Abstract

The timeless cadence of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib's philosophy, as presented in Salok Mahla 9, mirrors the spiritual synthesis intertwined with the framework of the Indian Knowledge System. Guru Sahib is an epitome of spiritual enlightenment; He upheld Dharma and self-liberation as the fundamental values necessary, not only for Sikhism, but for Indian civilization tradition. His martyrdom is far more than a chronicle of the past, but a manifestation of sacrifice and devotion shining through his unwavering resistance to Mughal despotism. The paper has used the comparative methodology in investigating how the sacred hymns of the Salok Mahla 9 interact and redefine the intellectual traditions of India through the intersection of divine wisdom and Indian knowledge. Through the historical analysis it demonstrates how Salok Mahal 9 complements and enriches Indian spiritual discourse.

Keywords: Dharma, Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, Indian Knowledge Systems, Salok Mahla 9, Self-liberation.

Introduction

Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib (1621-1675), the Ninth Guru of the Sikhs, created a spiritual awakening in the Indian national discourse with his supreme martyrdom. His Salok Mahla 9 is considered a depository of truth owing to its sublime ethical vision and contemplative nature. There are 57 Saloks in the Salok Mahal 9, which are recorded in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred scripture of Sikhs. During the medieval times, India was undergoing a social and political upheaval because of the cunning statecraft of Aurangzeb, an orthodox Mughal Emperor. The Mughal authorities were demolishing temples and other places of worship under the emperor's exploitative mandates. Kashmiri

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Pandits, who were regarded as the custodians of ancient knowledge and tradition, found themselves trapped in this harrowing plight. The heart-wrenching tales of Kashmiri Pandits deeply moved Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib never advocated for idol worship or ritual practices of Hinduism but nurtured the grace of compassion and considered it his sacred duty to be the guardian of human identity and dignity. For him, martyrdom is the purest form of moral resistance.

His Salok Mahla 9 is a prelude to his martyrdom in which he confronts the inferno of religious bigotry through his deeds and words. Rather than paying attention to the external contradictory situation, his verses in Salok Mahla 9 explore the constant battle of human beings, say, illusion versus reality, the pull of worldly ties against the spiritual detachment, and the clash of ego against the gentle tide of compassion. These Saloks are layered with symbols and rich imagery, which expound upon the casting off of the cloak of arrogance and echo the truth of union with God. It is not limited to the Sikh worldview but resonates with the plurality of the Indian Intellectual tradition of Schools of thought, including Upanishads, Buddhism, Jainism, and the like. These schools of thought investigate life rooted in truth and equity, the nature of existence, the cause of anguish, the question of selfhood, and the ways to bring it to fruition. It corresponds with the central tenets of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS).

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Sikh Wisdom and Indian Thought

Indian Knowledge Systems refer to the vast repository of theological, cultural, spiritual, and intellectual heritage that has been expanded in India over millennia. It includes Upanishads, classical philosophies like Vedanta, and extends to art, literature, linguistics, astronomy, and spirituality. The Bhakti Movement is one of the major schools of thought that drew its notions from the IKS, namely sacrifice, devotion, and social justice. The Bhakti movement gave rise to Sikhism, which is a call for equality and aims to become a beacon of social reform. Sikhism transformed the elements of IKS through its philosophical resonance with the Gurbani of Sikh Gurus, which is a living stream of divine wisdom and courage. Guru Tegh Bahadur's Bani enriches the ethical model of IKS with its 'Knowledge of Oneness of all' and its emphasis on sewa, naam-simran, and truthful living. 'Guru Sahib traversed from 'Tegh' to 'Tayag' (Kaur, Palvinder, 2020), which was immortalized by his unparalleled martyrdom.

Prof. Kapil Kapoor (2005) asserts:

In the Indian thought system, the function/goal of knowledge is not the exercise of power over others but power over oneself, moksha, liberation of the self from its own limitations/constraints. The direction of governing thought is the exact opposite of what pertains in the Western framework. The movement is from the individual to the social/collective — a continuum; not from the social to individual in a relationship of rupture or tension (Pg. 28).

These ideas reflect Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib's philosophy. IKS also discusses the role of the Guru as both a teacher and an authority in the oral transmission of knowledge. In Salok Mahla 9, Guru Sahib preaches about the practicality of life, guiding his disciples towards self-liberation.

ਹਰਖੁ ਸੋਗੁ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਨਹੀ ਬੈਰੀ ਮੀਤ ਸਮਾਨਿ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਤਾਹਿ ਤੈ ਜਾਨਿ ॥੧੫॥

(SGGS: Pg. 1427)

Harakh sog jaa kae nahee baeree meet samaan.

Kaho Naanak sun ré manaa mukat taahi tae jaan. ||15||

In the aforementioned hymns, Guru Sahib explains that a person who is unshaken by the jubilant joy or aching sorrow enters the realm of liberation (mukti). Guru Sahib's teachings are not based on rigid norms, but they are an invitation to mindfulness. His teachings are didactic and transformative in nature.

ਰਾਮੁ ਗਇਓ ਰਾਵਨੁ ਗਇਓ ਜਾ ਕਉ ਬਹੁ ਪਰਵਾਰੁ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਥਿਰੁ ਕਛੁ ਨਹੀ ਸੁਪਨੇ ਜਿਉ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥੫੦॥

(SGGS: Pg.1429)

Raam gaio raavan gaio jaa kao baho parvaar.

Kaho Naanak thir kachh nahee supné jio sansaar. ||50||

Neither Ram nor Ravan stayed for long. Life is like a dream. Everything is swept away by the tide of time.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib and IKS consider fearlessness as a practical and spiritual requirement, especially in the face of the fangs of oppression.

ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਤਾਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਿ ॥੧੬॥

(SGGS: Pg.1427)

Bhae kaahoo kao déh neh neh bhae maanat aan.

Kaho Nanak sun ré manaa giaanee taahi bakhaan. ||16||

During the times of Aurangzeb's cunning regime, fearlessness emerged as a social necessity rather than a human trait. Prof Surjit Singh Gandhi (1978) says:

During all his travels, Guru Ji identified himself with the people and their sorrows and sufferings, and he did whatever he could do to provide relief to them. He felt that only those minds which are strong in moral fervour and spirit were capable of struggling against tyranny and injustice. (Pg. 364)

Question of Selfhood: Indian Thought versus Western Thought

In the Western tradition, 'knowledge' has been held as opposed to innocence, and associated with 'power' that leads to the Fall of man...Western history of ideas is the man-centered worldview. (Kapoor, Pg. 26)

Western philosophers have navigated the realm of the question of selfhood with scholarly rigor. Rene Descartes (1596-1650) pondered on his philosophical statement Cogito, ergo sum, meaning, "I think, therefore I am". In his book titled Discourse on the Method (1641), he affirms:

What about thinking? Here I make my discovery: thought exists; it alone cannot be separated from me. I am; I exist—this is certain. But for how long? For as long as I am thinking... I am therefore precisely nothing but a thinking thing; that is, a mind, or intellect, or understanding, or reason—words of whose meanings I was previously ignorant. (Pg. 65)

René Descartes based his theory of the "self" solely on the principle of "an act of thinking".

For example, I now see a light, I hear a noise, I feel heat. These things are false, since I am asleep. Yet I certainly do seem to see, hear, and feel warmth. This cannot be false. Properly speaking, this is what in me is called "sensing." (Pg. 66)

Comparatively, Guru Sahib acknowledges life's uncertainty:

ਪਾਚ ਤਤ ਕੇ ਤਨੁ ਰਚਿਓ ਜਾਨਹੁ ਚਤੁਰ ਸੁਜਾਨ ॥

ਜਿਹ ਤੇ ਉਪਜਿਓ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਲੀਨ ਤਾਹਿ ਮੈ ਮਾਨੁ ॥੧੧॥

(SGGS: Pg. 1427)

Paanch tat ko tan rachio jaanhu chatur sujaan.

Jih té upjio naankaa leen taahi mae maan. ||11||

Here, Guru Sahib explains that the human body is a vessel of five elements: water, air, earth, fire, and space, and at last, it will mingle into the dust.

ਜੇ ਉਪਜਿਓ ਸੋ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਹੈ ਪਰੇ ਆਜੁ ਕੈ ਕਾਲਿ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਇ ਲੇ ਛਾਡਿ ਸਗਲ ਜੰਜਾਲ ॥੫੨॥

(SGGS: Pg. 1429)

Guru Sahib repeatedly looks at the nature of life as ever-changing and impermanent. Does it mean that life is meaningless since everything is perishable here?

The twentieth-century French existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre (1943) sheds light on the meaninglessness of life:

Nothingness lies coiled in the heart of being-like a worm. (Pg. 21)

Sartre says that nothingness is an inseparable part of life. But does it strip the soul of its virtues? This could be misunderstood as a world-denying, but Guru Sahib clarifies that nothingness does not empty one's soul if it is filled with inner devotion and love for the divine. Rather, it cultivates fearlessness, the brave rhythm of conscience, and the silent roar of integrity.

ਜਨਮ ਜਨਮ ਭਰਮਤ ਫਿਰਿਓ ਮਿਟਿਓ ਨ ਜਮ ਕੋ ਤ੍ਰਾਸੁ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਭਜੁ ਮਨਾ ਨਿਰਭੈ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਬਾਸੁ ॥੩੩॥

(SGGS: Pg. 1428)

Janam janam bharmat firio mitio na jam ko traas.

Kaho Naanak har bhaj manaa nirbhæ paavahi baas. ||33||

It becomes evident from these verses that the human soul is trapped in the cycle of birth and death and is haunted by the shadow of pride, anger, and greed, which makes him restless. According to Guru Sahib, an individual must engage himself in the nam-simran and sewa to set his soul free from human shortcomings and let go of their ego.

The Indian mind believes in the knowledge of the oneness of all. It “operates not with pre-X-post apparatus but with the configurational model” (Kapoor, Pg. 31). It “rests on cyclicity as against the Western linearity” (Pg. 31).

The concept of “pagan pluralism” as identified in IKS is deeply embedded in the inclusive teachings of Salok Mahla 9. The holistic framework of Salok Mahla 9 and IKS,

ignited by Dharma and liberation, unlocks the chains of doubt and offers solutions for the human predicament. Firstly, the eternal light of this integrated model enables individuals to embrace the unity and diversity of the country. Secondly, they would be able to handle the pressure of life and retreat from the distractions since ego and fear would not torment their peace of mind. Thirdly, they would not let their souls be corrupted by the forces of global integration, and they would emerge as resilient and corruption-free. In this way, citizens would be able to contribute to the spiritual and intellectual traditions of India. □

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The People's Prophet: Guru Nanak and His Universal Message

*DR GURMEET SINGH SIDHU***

In the Fifteenth century, India witnessed a spiritual upsurge with the advent of Guru Nanak (1469-1539), who testified that God is one, eternal, creator and sustainer of all, without fear and enmity, beyond time and death, self-manifested and known by the grace of a sacred preceptor. He explains the qualities of God and the path of union with Him. Moreover, he has presented the unity of faiths with the idea of one and universal God. However, this unity does not mean a junction or conversion in singleness. Secondly, the teachings of Guru Nanak contained in Gurbani are not merely theoretical but also practical. To have a better understanding of Guru Nanak's thought, there is a need to understand his life experiences first because he has practiced his teachings and shown the common path of spiritual life to the people of different faiths. He lived among the people and taught them a lesson in honest life. Although Guru Nanak was the founder of Sikhism, people of different faiths were similar to him. Guru Nanak teaches humanity that we are in cordial accord with everyone.

The Janam Sakhi literature describes the location, time, and situation when Guru Nanak announced the first spiritual word after the experience of God. As per Puratan Janam Sakhi, Guru Nanak used to go to a rivulet (ਬੇਈ ਨਦੀ) Bein river in Punjab at Sultanpur for daily bathing. One day, he went to have a bath, but he did not return. The departure of Nanak had raised many questions in the minds of people. But Janam Sakhi tells that Nanak was called by God, and God himself served him nectar of His Own Name or Naam, and God sanctioned His divine power to him. Puratan Janam Sakhi narrates this episode, "As the Lord willed, Nanak the devotee was escorted to His Presence. Then a cup filled with nectar (Amrit) was given to him with the command, 'Nanak, this is the cup of Name love. Drink it. I am with thee, and I do bless and exalt thee. Whoever remembers thee will have My grace. Go, cheer in My Name and teach others to do so. I have granted upon thee the gift of My Name. Let this be thy calling, Nanak made the salutation stood up.

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Guru Nanak gives details of this experience in Var Majh as, “I, the lower Bard by Thee a Task Assigned: In primal time was I commanded night and day to laud Thee. The bard by the Master to the Eternal Mansion was summoned. And with the robe of holy Divine laudation and praise honoured. On the Holy Name (Naam) ambrosial was he feasted. As by the Master’s guidance on this, he has feasted. Has felt blessed. The bard, Divine laudation by the holy word. Has spread and proclaimed. Nanak says; By laudation of the Holy Eternal, Is the Supreme Being, all-perfection, attained” (SGGS; 150). After pleasing the God and taking spiritual enlightenment from Him, Nanak came out of the water of Bein and announced the first hymn to the people, that was, there is no Hindu and there is no Muslim (Na koi Hindu, na koi Mussalman).

The next day, Guru Nanak spoke the same words, ‘There is no Hindu and there is no Muslim’, meaning, do not define people by their religion. Then the Qazi went to Nawab Daulat Khan to complain against Nanak. But he dismissed all and remarked that Guru Nanak was a faqir whose mystic words they did not easily understand. Even the Qazi urged the Nawab to summon Guru Nanak. Qazi said if there is no Hindu and there is no Muslim, if both are equal, then Nanak too should join Namaz (Muslim Prayer) with us. And, they called Nanak for Namaz. Qazi was reciting the Namaz; the Guru remained standing and did not bow down. After the Namaz, Qazi got another chance to complain against Nanak, and he spoke to the Nawab. He did not join the Namaz. “What Namaz was I expected to join?” asked the Guru. “The Qazi’s own heart was not in the words he was repeating. His mind constantly wandered to his newborn foal that he had left in his yard before coming to the mosque. He remembered that there was a well in the enclosure and feared lest the foal should fall into it.” The Qazi confessed that the Guru had spoken truly.

VISIONARY:

The correct vision of Guru Nanak is noble, sensible, and shared by all. He pronounced his first spiritual word to the people that all are equal in His vision and can attain His grace directly. Furthermore, the Guru tells the Muslim to be a good Muslim and to the Hindu to be a good Hindu.

Guru Nanak has presented the religion in its real sense. Through his true insight, he has known the practices of various faiths. In the beginning, he declared that pure practice is a must for religion because the Guru himself had discovered God by his true spirit and commitment. He strongly recommended pure religious conduct, especially kindness to

fellow human beings. He rejected all arrogance of faith and all differences created by society.

The Guru had declared that if someone performs the religious practices without a true spirit, such activities are of no use. He suggests that truthfulness is the primary requirement of religion, and every person should be honest to their faith through his/her good deeds. If he says, there is no Hindu, and there is no Muslim, then he also tells who is a good Muslim and who is a real Hindu.

Guru Nanak said that truthfulness, honesty, charity, purity of mind, and praise of God are the five main qualities of a good Muslim or a religious person. Thus, he upholds high-quality religious life; there is no place for corrupt practices in such life. He further says that true religious conduct is not so simple or easy. The real religious life deserves complete dedication and attachment to God.

Guru Nanak asked the same conduct from Hindus as well as from every denomination of the world. Because all faiths were equal in his vision. As per Hindu family tradition, a Brahmin had come to put the sacred thread (janeu) on Nanak's body, but Nanak refused to do so. He asked the Hindu priest to give him a thread or janeu, which would not be worn on the body only as a ritual; such a thread must have qualities of kindness, bliss, celibacy, and truth. Guru Nanak has given a new meaning to this ritual, and he writes a sloka in Var Asa.

ਦਿਆ ਕਪਾਹ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਸੂਤੁ ਜਤੁ ਗੰਢੀ ਸਤੁ ਵਟੁ ॥

ਏਹੁ ਜਨੇਊ ਜੀਅ ਕਾ ਹਈ ਤ ਪਾਛੇ ਘਤੁ ॥

ਨਾ ਏਹੁ ਤੁਟੈ ਨਾ ਮਲੁ ਲਗੈ ਨਾ ਏਹੁ ਜਲੈ ਨਾ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਧਨੁ ਸੁ ਮਾਣਸ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜੋ ਗਲਿ ਚਲੇ ਪਾਇ ॥

"Make compassion the cotton, contentment the yarn;

Continence the knot and purity the twist;

Such is the truly sacred thread of the self.

Thou Brahmin-priest! Put this on me

Shouldst thou have it?

This thread neither snaps nor is soiled.

Neither burnt nor lost.

Saith Nanak; blessed are the beings that around their neck put this" (SGGS; 471)

Guru Nanak gives advice that every religious person should be honest about his/her faith. Therefore, for him, between a good Muslim and a good non-Muslim, there could be no antipathy. He also observed that both Muslims and Hindus had lost the genuine courage to pursue their faiths. After attaining the true knowledge, Guru Nanak has declared that without the true spirit of religion, all practices are vain. At that time, people were fighting in the name of religion, and the essence of religion had escaped from their lives. Thus, the main contribution of Guru Nanak to religion is that he teaches a lesson of mutual love and service.

The Guru says that all human beings are born from the same spirit. So, empty or false religious boundaries are meaningless to Him. The Guru enlightens that God does not divide people. However, people create walls against others. He says that there are no divisions between Hindus and Muslims if both live a truthful life. Last and important, Guru Nanak has a mission to establish a new religious identity, which distinguishes his faith from existing faith traditions.

Guru Nanak's personality has a unique feature in that he visited many holy places. Through his dramatic style, he always created a situation for dialogue, and his divine personality attracted the people. He talked in such a manner that people liked to discuss the spiritual issues. In addition to this, he gave a new vision to understand Reality and always advised leading an honest life. Moreover, he was a man of God, and wherever he went, he delivered the message of God and talked about his new faith.

One most interesting episodes is Guru Nanak's visit to Multan. This town was very famous for religious personalities. As per Janam Sakhis, Nanak went to Multan, and his fame had already reached there. The Muslim saints heard about his arrival. At a short distance from the town, a representative of the local Sufis had received Nanak, who offered Guru a milk bowl full to the brim. The Guru had understood its mystery. With the cup of milk, Sufi saints had sent a message to Guru that the world is already full of various traditions, and there is no space for the new formation. The Guru plucked a jasmine flower, placed it on the milk bowl, and respectfully returned it. He had sent a message to the Sufi saints that the holy spirit creates space without hurting the sentiments of others, and the true spirit exists in all places, and no faith can survive without it. Truth prevails everywhere, and all religions have it. This episode also describes the new mission of Guru Nanak, that Sikhism does not need a space for its survival and adjustment. As per their faith, the

entire world is for them. During his short visit, Nanak impressed everybody with his Divine message and spiritual appearance.

The faith of Guru Nanak is beyond all boundaries that have been created by humankind. It also signifies that Sikhs live delightfully like the essence of the flower. In addition to this, Guru inserts a bouquet of love among the various faith traditions. His experiences teach a lesson of love, modesty, and harmony. In his new formation, there is no difference between self and others because all are the creation of One Creator. His thought makes the human being responsible to others. Guru says that all are equal to Him because the Creator loves each and He is common to everybody.

Guru Nanak, during his tours, went to Jagannath Puri. There was a famous Hindu temple. Guru Nanak and Mardana (a companion of Guru) were sitting outside the temple, and they were singing Sabads in praise of God. Many people gathered there, and after some time, they asked the Guru to visit the temple. When Guru reached near the temple, it was the time of Arti (a Performance in which Hindu priests stand before the idol with lights in their hands). Professor Puran Singh describes that the priests of the temple began their hymn to their god. In a large tray, they put many little lamps of ghee, the pearls of the temple, and the offering and incense, and stood to offer it to God. Some priests held each one a feathery chowrie (a ceremonial fan used for sacred rites, etc.) in their hand and stood at the back of the enshrined god to fan it. The priests began the ceremony, but the Guru paid no heed. After the ceremony, the priests were infuriated with him. They asked him why he did not join the arti. The Guru said, 'This is not genuine arti of the true God, your goods and temporary lights cannot please Him.' They asked again for genuine arti. Then Guru Nanak's voice came like the voice of God, and all stood listening dumb as cattle. Here, Guru Nanak Ji had sung his famous hymn that is included in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, and Sikhs recite this every evening. Guru Nanak Ji recited the following hymn:

ਗਗਨ ਮੈ ਥਾਲੁ ਰਵਿ ਚੰਦੁ ਦੀਪਕ ਬਨੇ ਤਾਰਿਕਾ ਮੰਡਲ ਜਨਕ ਮੋਤੀ ॥
ਧੂਪੁ ਮਲਆਨਲੋ ਪਵਣੁ ਚਵਰੋ ਕਰੇ ਸਗਲ ਬਨਰਾਇ ਫੁਲਤ ਜੋਤੀ ॥੧॥
ਕੈਸੀ ਆਰਤੀ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਭਵ ਖੰਡਨਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਆਰਤੀ ॥
ਅਨਹਤਾ ਸਬਦ ਵਾਜੈਤ ਭੇਰੀ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਸਹਸ ਤਵ ਨੈਨ ਨਨ ਨੈਨ ਹਰਿ ਤੋਹਿ ਕਉ ਸਹਸ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਨਨਾ ਏਕ ਤੋਹੀ ॥
ਸਹਸ ਪਦ ਬਿਮਲ ਨਨ ਏਕ ਪਦ ਗੰਧ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਹਸ ਤਵ ਗੰਧ ਇਵ ਚਲਤ ਮੋਹੀ॥੨॥

ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ ॥ ਤਿਸ ਦੈ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਗੁਰ ਸਾਖੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਪਰਗਟੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਜੋ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੁ ਆਰਤੀ ਹੋਇ ॥੩॥
ਹਰਿ ਚਰਣ ਕਵਲ ਮਕਰੰਦ ਲੋਭਿਤ ਮਨੋ ਅਨਦਿਨੋ ਮੋਹਿ ਆਹੀ ਪਿਆਸਾ ॥
ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਜਲੁ ਦੇਹਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਰਿਗ ਕਉ ਹੋਇ ਜਾ ਤੇ ਤੇਰੈ ਨਾਇ ਵਾਸਾ ॥੪॥੩॥

*"The whole Heaven with its myriad lights goes round and round my Beloved!
The little stars are as pearls! The winds fan him,
And there rises in His temple the incense from the hearts of a million flowers,
The endless music of creation resounds!
A million eyes hath my Beloved!
And yet no mortal eyes!
A million Lotus-feet are His, And yet no mortal feet!
I die with the joy of the perfume of His presence!
His Flesh emits a million perfumes!
And yet He hath no scent!
He is the Light of Life.
By the beams of His face, the stars burn bright,
And He is the soul of everything,
My Arti is waiting for things to be as He willeth.
When the master comes and stands by, the Divine Light is revealed!
The Moon of His lotus-feet draws me like a thirsty
Sarang, whose thirst daily increases.
O God! Come and bend on me Thy saving glance,
And let me repose forever in The Holy,
Holy Naming Thee"* (SGGS; 13)

The Guru elucidates that God is not limited to any deity. He is endless. He lives everywhere, and His light illuminates everything. Thus, a rainbow of different faiths has elements of the same spirit. The entirety of his creation is performing art for Him, and such art is everlasting. Now, in the age of globalization, people of different faiths are searching for a common prayer for all faiths. The prayer, which had been performed by Guru Nanak,

is not creed or space-specific. Guru presents a universal message through the real arti that is beyond all types of divisions. Such prayer should be acceptable to all the faiths. The Guru gives a cosmic perspective towards Reality that is not exclusive to any faith. It has futuristic possibilities and liberates human souls from boundaries.

After taking the tour of different parts of the world in all four directions, Guru Nanak concludes that one God pleases all and different people of different cultures identify Him in various names and forms. He writes his own experiences that he could not find any other God.

ਚਾਰੇ ਕੁੰਡਾ ਵੁਢੀਆ ਕੋ ਨੀਮੀ ਮੈਡਾ ॥
ਜੇ ਤੁਧੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸਾਹਿਬਾ ਤੂ ਮੈ ਹਉ ਤੈਡਾ ॥੧॥
ਦਰੁ ਬੀਡਾ ਮੈ ਨੀਮਿ ਕੋ ਕੈ ਕਰੀ ਸਲਾਮੁ ॥
ਹਿਕੋ ਮੈਡਾ ਤੂ ਧਣੀ ਸਾਚਾ ਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮੁ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

"In all four directions have I searched, none have I found to be mine.

Lord, should it please Thee,

Thou alone art mine, I Thine.

No other portal is for me, where I may offer obeisance.

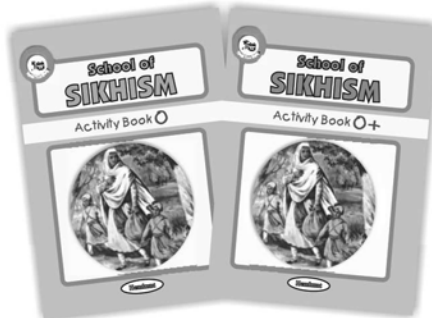
Thou alone my Master; on my tongue is Thy eternal Name" (SGGS; 418)

Guru Nanak visited many places and created a dialogue with different faith traditions, but he never asked anybody to change his/her religion or beliefs. Wherever he went, he gave the message to all that "we must be true to the faith." Everyone loved Guru Nanak because of his holy persona, and he was common to all faiths. A very famous verse depicts the reality as;

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹ ਫਕੀਰ
ਹਿੰਦੂਆ ਦਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾ ਦਾ ਪੀਰ
Baba Nanak Shah Faqir
Hinduan da Guru Mussalmana da pir

[Baba Guru Nanak is the acme of spirituality. He is the Guru of the Hindus and Pir (guide) of the Muslims.] Guru Nanak lived a holy life. His life experiences are directed towards the interfaith understanding, and he has made a new endeavor in interreligious dialogue. □

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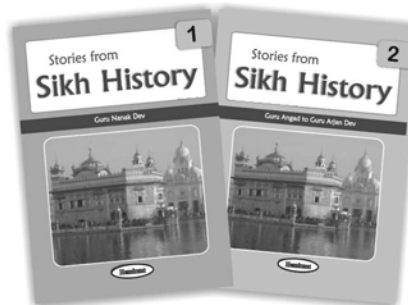
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From the Vadda Ghalughara (ਵੱਡਾ ਘਲੂਘਾਰਾ) (Great Massacre of 1762) to the Expulsion of Ahmad Shah Abdali from Punjab: The Military Triumph of the Sikh

S. HARKRISH SINGH *

Abstract

This article focuses on how the Sikhs regained their power after being nearly destroyed by Ahmad Shah Abdali (1722–1773) on 5th February 1762, a day now remembered as the Vadda Ghallughara (ਵੱਡਾ ਘਲੂਘਾਰਾ), and how they became the driving force behind the downfall of the Durrani Empire and its complete expulsion from Punjab by the end of the 1770s. This paper focuses on the last five invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali, which were primarily aimed at the destruction of the Sikhs and the plunder of Punjab. However, Abdali failed miserably in his attempts to crush them. This article also highlights the valour and brilliance of the 18th century Sikhs, who, despite being outnumbered on most occasions, continued to challenge and ultimately defeat the Durrani Empire.

INTRODUCTION

After defeating the Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat on 14 January 1761 and plundering Delhi and its surrounding areas, Ahmed Shah Abdali and his Durrani forces began their return to Afghanistan on 22nd March 1761. When the Durrani troops crossed Sutlej and entered Punjab, they were attacked by the Sikh forces led by Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Sardar Charat Singh Sukerchakia (Grandfather of Maharaja Ranjit Singh) and the other Sikh forces as well. The Sikh forces followed Abdali till Attock and plundered him again and again and released all the women who were Abducted by the Durrani forces. By May 1761 Ahmed Shah Abdali returned to Afghanistan leaving behind Khwajah Mirza Khan in charge of Chahar Mahal, Khwajah Abed Khan in Lahore, Saadat Khan and

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Sadiq Khan Afridi in the Jalandhar Doab and Zain Khan in Sirhind. The Sikh forces attacked Khawajah Mirza Khan of Chahar Mahal and killed him. After this, the Sikhs attacked the Jalandhar Doab region, where Sadat Khan and Sadiq Khan Afridi were unable to offer any resistance. The Sikhs dominated and captured the Jalandhar Doab. After this, they attacked Sirhind, where they defeated Zain Khan, and later they defeated Bhikhan Khan to capture Malerkotla as well. Meanwhile, Ahmad Shah Abdali sent his trusted general, Nur-ud-Din Khan, in August 1761. However, Nur-ud-Din was defeated on the banks of the Chenab by Charat Singh Sukerchakia. Sikhs captured Lahore by November 1761.

VADDA GHALLUGHARA (THE GREAT HOLOCAUST OF 1762)

A Gurmatta was passed by the Sikhs on Diwali in 1761 in which the sikhs decided to eliminate the supporters of the Durrani in Punjab. Their first target was Guru Aqil Das, also known as Harbhagat Niranjaniya, who had provided information to the Mughals about Bhai Taru Singh, Bhai Mehtab Singh, and others. In January 1762, the Sikh forces under Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia attacked Jandiala. Aqil Das, on the other hand, had already sought help from Ahmad Shah Abdali, who crossed the Indus and invaded India for the sixth time and his sole aim was to destroy the Sikhs.

Abdali hurried to Lahore and reached Jandiala the next day, but the Sikhs had already left and were moving towards Sirhind. Within 36 hours, Abdali covered nearly 200 kilometres and launched a sudden attack on the Sikhs on the morning of 5th February 1762. Along with his generals Shah Wali Khan, Jahan Khan, and Zain Khan (the Governor of Sirhind), Abdali surrounded the Sikhs from all sides near the village of Kup, about six kilometres from Malerkotla.

The Sikhs had not expected Abdali to arrive this early, and they had women, children, and non-combatants in their vahir (caravan). The Sikh warriors formed a protective circle around them and attempted to move towards Barnala, which was considered a safer zone at the time. Abdali's forces attacked from all four sides, and nearly 20,000–25,000 Sikhs were massacred in a single day. After massacring a large number of Sikhs, Abdali attacked Amritsar and he desecrated the Darbar Sahib in Amritsar. He placed boxes filled with ammunition beneath the foundation of the Harmandir Sahib, and it was blown up brick by brick. The remaining materials were set on fire, and the surrounding houses were demolished. The Amrit Sarovar was first defaced and then filled with the debris of the

destroyed buildings and refuse. It was further desecrated by the slaughter of cows, whose blood and entrails were scattered all around. Sources confirm that during the desecration of the Darbar Sahib, a brick struck Abdali on his nose, which later became one of the reasons for his death in 1773.

Ahmad Shah reached Lahore on 3rd March, where he erected huge towers made of Sikh heads at the city gates and along the city walls.

Sikh retaliation

The Afghans were unable to cope with the scorching summer of Punjab, and taking advantage of this situation, the Sikh forces attacked Zain Khan of Sirhind in May 1762. The Sikhs defeated Zain Khan in the Battle of Harnulgarh. This victory was remarkable for the Sikhs because just ten weeks earlier, they had suffered a major loss in the battle near Kup. By August 1762, the Sikhs, under the leadership of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, began moving towards the Jalandhar Doab. They attacked those who had remained loyal to the Afghans during earlier invasions, they gained substantial wealth, and then advanced towards the Malwa region. On 17th October 1762, the Sikhs confronted Abdali in the Battle of Pipli Sahib, where the Afghans, under Abdali's own leadership, were defeated once again. The following day, the Sikhs discovered that Abdali had fled to Lahore, marking another major success for them. Sikhs also returned to Lakhi jungle by November 1762 and there a small fight took place between Sikhs and Afghans in which Sikhs again emerged victorious. Finally, on 12th December 1762, Ahmad Shah Abdali began his return journey to Afghanistan, during which the Sikh forces repeatedly attacked him along his route. After Abdali's departure, the Sikhs, seizing the opportunity, attacked the Afghans and compelled them to excavate the Amrit Sarovar, which had been desecrated by them in 1762. It seemed that the Afghan massacre of the Sikhs had no lasting effect on their spirit. By May 1763, the Sikhs had captured Kasur, and by June 1763, they had taken control of the Jalandhar Doab. An important battle then took place at Sialkot between the Sikhs and the Afghans, where the latter were led by Jahan Khan and the Sikhs by Charat Singh Sukerchakia. The Sikhs emerged victorious in the Battle of Sialkot as well. The Sikhs then advanced once again towards Sirhind, and by January 1764, they defeated Zain Khan under the leadership of several prominent chiefs, including Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Hari Singh Bhangi, and Baghel Singh. As a result, Sirhind was captured and Zain Khan was killed in battle. Subsequently, the Sikhs broke into Lahore through the

Delhi Gate and killed Khawaja Ubaid Khan. Kabuli Mal, the governor of Lahore, paid a large sum of money to the Sikhs to save his capital and appointed Tek Chand, a Sikh nominee, in his court. Meanwhile, Charat Singh and Gujjar Singh attacked and captured Rohtas Fort after defeating Sarfaraz Khan. Sarbuland Khan, the governor of Kashmir, attempted to recapture Rohtas to restore Durrani control over the fort but was also defeated by the Sikh forces. The Sikhs then captured Lamma and Nakka, after which Hari Singh Bhangi marched towards and captured Multan. The Sikh capture of Multan is mentioned in the writings of Nur Muhammad, a courtier of Ahmad Shah Abdali, who referred to the Sikhs in derogatory terms due to the deep hatred he harboured for them. By this time, the Sikhs had captured Sirhind, Lahore, Multan, Jhang, Khushab, and Chenab, and divided these territories among the twelve misls. Sikhs again started the reconstruction of Darbar Sahib Amritsar in the Baisakhi of 1764 after they plundered and captured Sirhind.

Ahmad Shah Abdali's seventh invasion to India

After seeing Punjab falling out of his hands, Abdali again crossed Indus and invaded India for the seventh time with 18,000 soldiers. Abdali reached Eminabad by November 1764, where he was joined by 12,000 men under Nasir Khan Baluch, the Chief of Kalat. Upon hearing of Abdali's advance, all the Sikh forces and misls gathered near the Lakhi Jungle and launched an attack on Abdali near Lahore. Abdali sent his general, Nasir Khan, to confront them, while the Sikh forces were led by Charat Singh Sukerchakia. After a prolonged battle, the Sikhs began to withdraw towards Amritsar. Upon learning this, Abdali prepared to invade Amritsar, and on 1st December 1764, he attacked the city. Only thirty Sikhs were present inside the Darbar Sahib at that time, and they fought with extraordinary valour under the leadership of Baba Gurbaksh Singh. All thirty attained martyrdom while defending the shrine, and Abdali once again desecrated the Darbar Sahib at Amritsar. After this act, Abdali returned to Lahore. When the Sikhs learned of the desecration of the Darbar Sahib, they launched a counter attack on Abdali's forces near Jandiala and defeated them. The Sikhs then attacked the Durrani forces again in Batala, where they secured another victory. Within a short span of time, Abdali was defeated twice by the Sikhs. However, when the Sikh forces clashed with Abdali's army again near the Jalandhar Doab region, the Durrani forces — under the command of Jahan Khan — were fully prepared and managed to defeat the Sikhs. Abdali then marched towards Kunjpura, but on his way, his army was once again plundered by the

Sikh forces. By this point, Abdali sought to avoid further encounters with the Sikhs, as his forces had grown terrified after facing their repeated attacks. The Durrani army began retreating to Afghanistan in late February 1765 but was engaged in a seven-day running battle with the Sikhs during their withdrawal. These clashes took place at various locations: on the first day near the Sutlej, on the third and fourth days near Nurmahal and Kapurthala respectively, and on the final day near the Beas River. Both the Durrani and Sikh forces suffered heavy casualties, and by the end of March 1765, Abdali finally withdrew from Punjab.

Capture of Lahore and The Eighth Invasion of Abdali

A Gurmata was passed on Baisakhi in 1765 to take possession of Lahore. Consequently, Sardar Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh Bhangi, along with two thousand soldiers and assistance from the residents of Baghbanpura employed in the fort, launched an attack. On 16 April 1765, the Sikh forces successfully captured Lahore once again. This time, the Sikh leaders divided Lahore among themselves where Bhai Sobha Singh received the southern part, Gujjar Singh the eastern part, and Lehna Singh the remaining areas. Charat Singh Sukerchakia, with his two thousand men, rushed towards Lahore and captured the Zamzama, a highly useful war cannon. Following their victory, the Sikh forces issued their own coin, symbolizing their sovereignty. The coin bore the same inscription that Baba Banda Singh Bahadur had previously used.

“ਦੇਗ ਓ ਤੇਗ ਓ ਫਤਿਹ ਨੁਸਰਤ ਬੇਦੀਰੰਗ ਯਫਤਾਜ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ॥”

"Deg o tegh o fatah o nusrat bedirang Yaftaz Nanak Guru Gobind Singh"

After August 1765, the Sikhs also entered the Ganga–Jamuna Doab and seized some territories from Najib-ud-Daula. Ahmad Shah Abdali, determined to restore his authority in Punjab, crossed the Indus again at the end of November 1766 and advanced towards Rohtas. He defeated the Sikh forces that had attacked him near Rohtas, largely due to the lack of unified Sikh leadership. In response to Abdali's return, Lehna Singh withdrew, while Sobha Singh moved towards Pakpattan. Abdali recaptured Lahore on 2 December 1766. However, by this time, he had realized that he could not permanently subdue the Sikhs. He attempted to negotiate by sending a letter to Lehna Singh, offering him the governorship of Lahore along with a gift of dry fruits. Lehna Singh rejected the offer and sent back an inferior kind of grain, remarking that fruits were food for kings, whereas he lived on grains. Abdali then appointed

Dadan Khan as the governor of Lahore and marched towards Sirhind. Ahmad Shah next advanced towards Jandiala but returned to Lahore after hearing of attacks led by Charat Singh, Hira Singh, and Lehna Singh. Once again, Abdali tried to negotiate with Sikh leaders Jhanda Singh and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, sending the Raja of Chamba and Saadat Yar Beg as his envoys. The Sikhs rejected Abdali's proposal, knowing well that they would recapture Lahore once the Durrani forces retreated to Afghanistan. On 17th January 1767, Sikh forces under the leadership of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Gujjar Singh, and Hira Singh attacked Abdali's general Jahan Khan near Amritsar. They forced Jahan Khan to retreat, killing six thousand Durrani soldiers. Ahmad Shah himself came to assist Jahan Khan, but the Sikh forces had already begun moving toward Lahore. Ahmad Shah intended to march towards Delhi but was prevented by the unstable political situation and the continuous Sikh attacks. Consequently, he began his return journey to Afghanistan in March 1767. On his way back, after reaching Machhiwara, Abdali moved towards Lahore, where he received news of Sikh attacks on Najib-ud-Daula. Abdali dispatched Jahan Khan to assist Najib, and though they managed to succeed, both forces suffered heavy casualties. Ahmad Shah once again appointed Dadan Khan as governor of Lahore and returned to Afghanistan. Soon after Abdali's departure, the Sikhs recaptured Lahore, and Dadan Khan surrendered. Thus, the Sikhs emerged as a powerful force in Punjab. Ahmad Shah Abdali attempted to invade India again in 1768 and 1769, but by then, the political conditions in both India and Afghanistan had changed, and his troops were no longer willing to fight the Sikhs. After consolidating their power in Punjab, the Sikh forces grew stronger and eventually captured Delhi on 11th March 1783 under the leadership of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Sardar Baghel Singh.

CONCLUSION

The spirit of the Sikhs played a key role in driving Ahmad Shah Abdali out of Punjab. The Sikhs fought with immense bravery to protect their motherland from invaders such as Ahmad Shah Abdali and Nadir Shah. After the massacre of 1762, Abdali had not expected the Sikh forces to rise again so soon. He was unable to counter the guerrilla warfare tactics employed by the Sikhs. The Sikhs made full use of the geography of Punjab, whereas Abdali was unfamiliar with the region. Qazi Nur Muhammad, whom I have mentioned earlier, devoted a separate paragraph at the end of his writings to praise the courage and valour of the Sikh forces.

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The Significance of Guru Tegh Bahadur

*PROF. NIRVIKAR SINGH**

Introduction

For Sikhs, Guru Tegh Bahadur occupies an important place in their tradition, with his public execution marking the beginning of intensified conflict with imperial Mughal authorities and being a clear step toward creating a community that sees itself as willing to make deep sacrifices for the greater good. For others, the death of Guru Tegh Bahadur is part of a modern ideological project of “Sikhizing the Sikhs” (Fenech 1995, 1997), Or a minor footnote in Mughal imperial history, part of the emperor’s concerns to maintain law and order in a geographically extensive and culturally heterogeneous realm (Truschke, 2017).

Much of the debate between contending interpretations of the events surrounding Guru Tegh Bahadur’s execution has focused on the sources used, their dating, and the identities of their authors. Recently, Rajbir Judge has summarized this kind of process, which is merely one example of a broader methodological approach:

There was a broader shift in Europe during the eighteenth century in how history was understood, specifically in relation to experiences of time. As Reinhardt Koselleck writes, “One of the conceptual achievements of the philosophy of the Enlightenment was enhancing history into a general concept which became the condition of possible experience and possible expectation” (Koselleck 2004, 194). ... A further change in the nineteenth century was a shift away from the universal history of humanity to particular histories of “men” marked by difference. ... This change in the nineteenth century indicated the emergence of a new “science” of history that sought to properly map time, articulated by a diverse tradition that we know today as historicism. (Judge, 2024, 259)

In this article, I briefly review this process of applying historicism in the case of Guru Tegh Bahadur’s execution, focusing on a recent analysis by Pashaura Singh (2021). Then I draw on aspects of the discussion of Judge (2024), who uses Kapur Singh’s (1976)

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frustration with what Singh calls “extremely stupid guidelines” for history writing to explore the limits of historicism. The article closes with brief concluding remarks.

“All We Want are the Facts”

In his discussions of martyrdom in the Sikh tradition, Fenech cites numerous diverse sources. Some sources are more reliable than others, in this writing of history, with the scholar making those judgments. For example (Fenech, 1997, 632), “Of course, the actual details of Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution are as shrouded in mystery as are those of Guru Arjan's death, hagiographic accounts filling in the few portions of the narrative we find in available contemporary and near-contemporary literature.” Similarly, Truschke (2017), in a new history of Mughal emperor Alamgir (better known as Aurangzeb), uses a Persian source to describe Tegh Bahadur as an individual who happened to be fomenting rebellion and had to be permanently stopped.

These particular historicist exercises are challenged, for example, in P. Singh (2021), which returns to various sources to construct a different narrative. Singh is more attentive in his use of contemporaneous Sikh sources than Fenech, and follows others in pointing out that Truschke's historiography is based on an account written a century later. He also provides a close reading of a couple of key verses by Guru Tegh Bahadur, argues that they are by him and not, as some have argued, by his son Guru Gobind Singh, and uses these verses to argue that they are consistent with Sikh accounts from that time. These accounts all suggest a deliberate decision by Guru Tegh Bahadur to stand up for human rights, in the form of freedom of religious practice.

P. Singh also places the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur in the context of earlier Sikh history, including the transmission of authority from each Guru to his successor, as well as some of the Guru's own activities in rallying and providing Sikh congregations throughout northern India with spiritual solace. There is a separate strand of relevant history, that of imperial interference, particularly by Aurangzeb, in the succession of Sikh Gurus, which is mostly absent from these competing histories, but has been well summarized in Grewal (1994).

What is interesting is that this debate is still going on. As Rajbir Judge documents, these issues concerning the circumstances of Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution were being examined and weighed by writers of history in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They surfaced again in an article by Fauja Singh (1976), based on the same source used by

Truschke (2017). In that case, the controversial interpretation of the Guru as leading an armed rebellion, given an Indian nationalist twist, became part of the Indian school history curriculum. It was this controversy that elicited extreme frustration from Kapur Singh (1976).

If historicism is about the facts, or as close as we can get to the facts, why has the debate about the circumstances of Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution continued? I turn to this issue in the next section.

Knowledge and Power

Judge (2024, 363), based on Chakrabarty (2015), summarizes the process of writing history, "inquiry into the past is not free-floating, tied to a general production of knowledge, but occurred within specific social relations and disciplinary protocols, especially in the cloistered life of the increasingly professionalized discipline of history." Judge traces the workings of this process in the writings of Jadunath Sarkar (1928), who provided some of the historical interpretations that have become part of the project of Hindu nationalism, but also of secular Indian nationalism. As Judge illustrates, Kapur Singh employed the same historicist approach as other writers, from the late 19th century onward, to challenge what was becoming conventional wisdom with respect to the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur, a conventional wisdom that devalued or excluded Sikh collective memory or Sikh sources.

This same contestation continues in the examples given in the previous section: Fenech, Truschke, and P. Singh. While Singh goes to great lengths to marshal evidence from a range of Sikh sources, it is not clear if the conditions of validating knowledge will allow the debate to be tilted in favor of what contemporary Sikhs and historical Sikh sources see as a struggle for a broader idea of human freedom than any tied to any narrow political goals. Singh's article appeared in a specialized journal, *Sikh Formations*, and has three citations. Fenech's 1997 article appeared in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, the very name of which signals its antecedents and precedents. Fenech's and Truschke's books were published by prominent university presses with extensive marketing departments and have been widely reviewed and cited.

The judge himself does not focus on issues of power in how academia produces or reproduces what we take to be knowledge. Note that we are focusing here on the writing of history, and there will be differences in how these issues arise in other disciplines. In

the case of histories of communities of people, the stakes are particular, and they can raise passions, such as the frustration, bordering on disgust, that Kapur Singh felt in having to respond to some accounts of Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution. As Judge (2024, 372) describes his aims, "My goal in thinking about passions is not to uphold 'feeling' or 'affect' as somehow more analytically clarifying than historical arguments. Rather, a focus on affect helps to understand how the stakes of a particular historiographical question—in this case, who killed Guru Tegh Bahadur?—became so critical."

While Kapur Singh's affective responses to Fauja Singh's controversial interpretation are front and center in his writings, as highlighted by Judge, such concerns can be present in other cases, even when expressed in a different register. At the end of his own exercise in historicism, Pashaura Singh (2021, 432) offers his own stirring interpretation of this aspect of Sikh tradition, "Guru Nanak's fundamental message of cultivating in life the values of human equality, self-respect, justice for all, human dignity and fearlessness found its practical expression in the lived experience of the Khalsa. Thus, Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom laid the foundation of modern ideas of defending the universal values of freedom of conscience and human rights, much before the dawn of the European Enlightenment."

Conclusion

Different interpretations of a particular historical event, the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur, raise important questions about the use of sources in writing history, the conditions of power in the production and dissemination of knowledge, and, ultimately, the broader processes and purposes of history writing. P. Singh illustrates, although only implicitly, this last issue in his own historicist exercise.

Judge (2024, 373) provides his own reflections on these deeper issues at stake, "Rather than locating the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur in time to produce a historical truth to answer historical problems, Kapur Singh's attempt to engage historiographical questions alongside the resulting affect forces us to contend with different questions, including: What is an ethical relation to the past in the thinking about texts? . Perhaps, in the face of Kapur Singh's frustration, we must grapple with how texts ... are not [only] sources of information but require us to sit urgently with much more nettlesome questions: What is a virtuous life? What is justice? What is politics?" □

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**FOR BASIC KNOWLEDGE,
BOLD COMMENT READ**

The Sikh Review

The Wandering Mind

S. BHUPINDER SINGH*

ABSTRACT

The wandering nature of the mind has been a proven reality. In this article, we will explore its fickle nature how the mind goes on a thought trajectory. Then we will look at some of the remedies for this wandering nature of the mind.

Introduction

The famous saying of philosopher René Descartes, “I think, therefore I am,” proves that the very act of thinking makes us human. But Gurbani has penned another aspect of this stark reality of the human thinking processes in these words:

ਮਾਈ ਮਨੁ ਮੇਰੋ ਬਸਿ ਨਾਹਿ ॥

ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸੁਰ ਬਿਖਿਅਨ ਕਉ ਧਾਵਤ ਕਿਹਿ ਬਿਧਿ ਰੋਕਉ ਤਾਹਿ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

*Maiee mun mero bas naeh. Nis baasur bikhian kau dhaavat keh bidh rokau taeh ||1||
Rahaau ||* (SGGS, Pg. No. 632)

Translation: O mother, my mind is out of control. Night and day, it runs after the material world. How can I restrain it? ||1||Pause||

The characteristics of the material world are that they are attractive, yet fleeting, fickle, constantly changing, and never satisfying. So, what are the qualities of the material world that are enticing to the mind?

Qualities of the Material World

Gurbani has characterized three operating characteristics of the material world as:

ਤ੍ਰਿਹੁ ਗੁਣ ਬੰਧੀ ਦੇਹੁਰੀ ਜੋ ਆਇਆ ਜਗਿ ਸੋ ਖੇਲੁ ॥

Trihau gun bandhee dehuree jo aaiaa jug so khel. (SGGS, Pg. No. 21)

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Translation: The three qualities of Maya hold the body in bondage; whoever comes into the world is subject to their play.

The three qualities have been defined as:

| Gurbani Name (Alternate Name) | Transliteration | Translation | Qualities (examples/not a complete list) |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|---|
| (ਰਜ ਗੁਣ) | Raj gun/Rajjo | Passion | Hopes, desires, wishes, doubts, stress, anxiety |
| (ਅਗਨਿ ਸਾਗਰ) | (Agan Sagar) | | |
| (ਤਮ ਗੁਣ) | Tam gun/Tammo | Ignorance | Lust, greed, anger, pride, attachment, slandering |
| (ਬਿਖੁ ਸਾਗਰ) | (Bikh Sagar) | | |
| (ਸਤ ਗੁਣ) | Sat gun/Satto | Goodness | Compassion, principled, service, philanthropy, humility |
| ਸੁਖ ਸਾਗਰ | (Sukh Sagar) | | |

Gurbani has many quotes where these three qualities have been further elaborated and their influence explored. One example where the three characteristics of Maya have been defined is:

ਰਜ ਗੁਣ ਤਮ ਗੁਣ ਸਤ ਗੁਣ ਕਹੀਐ ਇਹੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਸਭ ਮਾਇਆ ॥

Raj gun tam gun sat gun kaheeai ih teri sabh maya. (SGGS, Pg. No. 1123)

Translation: (O God) Raajas, Taamas, and Saatav modes are the creations of Your Maya (illusion).

Mind's Fickle Nature

According to science, the human mind has about 60,000 to 70,000 thoughts in a day, making it very fickle in nature. Out of this range, 70 percent are negative, and 90 percent are the same as the day before. Thus, the very nature of the mind is not being present in the now, but to dwell in the past or worry about the future. The scientific world has coined a name for it as “exquisite time-traveling masters.” No wonder Gurbani has put this fickle aspect of mind in these words:

ਮਨੁ ਚੰਚਲੁ ਧਾਵਤੁ ਫੁਨਿ ਧਾਵੈ ॥

Mun chanchal dhaavat phun dhaavai //

(SGGS, Pg. No. 222)

Translation: My fickle mind is continuously running after fleeting things.

The nature of the fickle mind is to wander around with thoughts that are negative, repetitive, and ruinous as well, putting us in a loop of paralysis of endless options. There is a beautiful story from Guru Nanak Dev Ji's life, which elaborates on what the problem of the mind is. This event took place in 1497, during Guru Ji's period of employment with Nawab Daulat Khan Lodhi, in Sultanpur. One day, Guru Ji went to the River Bein for his early morning bath, but did not return. Bhai Mardana waited for a long time and finally returned home alone. He duly informed Guru Ji's employer, Nawab Daulat Khan, as well as the parents, about Guru Ji's disappearance. Guru Ji had spent three days in a secluded place contemplating how to spread the message of living with Divine Virtues to the people. On the third day, someone saw Guru Ji sitting at the graveyard. Guru Ji was heard saying, "There is no Hindu or Muslim." Guru Ji's message was about the Oneness of humankind. Soon, the news reached the nawab, and messengers were sent to bring Guru Ji to the palace. Nawab asked Guru Ji if there are no faith differences, and everyone is God's creation, that he should be OK to perform Namaz (Muslim prayer) in the mosque with him. Guru Ji accepted the invitation, and all proceeded to the mosque.

At the mosque, Qazi led the prayers and Nawab joined in. After the prayers, Nawab asked Guru Nanak why he did not join in the prayers. Guru Ji replied, "Dear Nawab, who would have joined in the prayer? Your mind was in Kandahar (Afghanistan) purchasing horses, while your body was here." The Nawab said, "Nanak, if my mind was not present in the prayer, you should have joined the Qazi." Guru Ji said, "The Qazi's mind was looking after the newly born colt at home." Qazi admitted that his mind was with the colt, as pointed out by Guru Ji. Guru Ji, in his first sermon, thus demonstrated the wandering nature of the mind and the significance of being present in the moment. Even the scientific world has realized the potential of practicing mindfulness, which helps to calm the wandering nature of the mind.

It is for this reason that the mind in Gurbani has been compared to a monkey, always jumping from one limb of the tree to another. It has also been compared to a bird hopping and perching from one tree branch to another tree branch, and even to an elephant wreaking havoc in the forest. So, Gurbani wants us to change this thinking process by listening to

the Guru's teachings. Guru Ji's advice is to stop following your own mind and follow Guru's teachings:

ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਮਤਿ ਤੂੰ ਲੇਹਿ ਇਆਨੇ ॥

ਭਗਤਿ ਬਿਨਾ ਬਹੁ ਡੂਬੇ ਸਿਆਨੇ ॥

Gur kee mut too(n) leh iaane // Bhagat binaa bahu ddoobe siaane //

(SGGS, Pg. No. 288)

Translation: Take the Guru's wisdom, you ignorant fool; without devotion, even the (so-called) clever have drowned.

Guru Ji calls us ignorant fools, as we become victims by drowning in the three worldly oceans.

Remedies for a Wandering Mind.

ਮਨ ਕੀ ਮਤਿ ਤਿਆਗੀਐ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Mun kee mat tiaageeai suneeai upadhes //1// Rahaau // (SGGS, Pg. No. 814)

Translation: So, renounce the intellectual cleverness of your mind, and listen to the (Guru's) Teachings. ||1||Pause||

Guru Ji says, by listening to Guru Ji's wisdom, implement it in life:

ਤਿਆਗੋ ਮਨ ਕੀ ਮਤੜੀ ਵਿਸਾਰੋ ਦੂਜਾ ਭਾਉ ਜੀਉ ॥

"Tiaage(n) mun kee mataRee visaare(n) dhoojaa bhaau jeeau //

(SGGS, Pg. No. 763)

Translation: Abandon the evil pursuits of your mind and forget the love of duality (which is Maya/what will remain is One God alone).

What duality does is it gives birth to the fickle nature of the mind. One minute it makes one decision and the next minute cancels it and opts for another approach. When the unnecessary and negative thoughts are absent, the mind is stilled, calmed, and it becomes purer:

ਚੋਚਲ ਮਨੁ ਦਹ ਦਿਸਿ ਕਉ ਧਾਵਤ ਅਚਲ ਜਾਹਿ ਠਹਰਾਨੇ ॥

Chanchal mun dheh dhis kau dhaavat achal jaeh Thaharaano // (SGGS, Pg. No. 685)

Translation: The restless mind wanders in ten directions - it needs to be calmed down.

Guru Ji provides guidance as well as benefits in these words:

ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਬਨਾਵਹੁ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ॥

Gur kai shabad banaavahu ihu mun //

ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਿ ਅਘਾਵਨੁ ਸਾਚੈ ਨਾਇ ॥

Tirapat aghaavan saachai nai //

(SGGS, Pg. No. 377)

Translation: O brother! Remold this mind after the Guru's wisdom. My mind becomes satisfied and satiated by the True Name (Sat Naam).

When the anger, jealousy, wishes, and desires, including others, are gone, the fires burning within cool, and the mind becomes calm. So, how can this trait of mind chasing after desires and wants be calmed down? Gurbani tells us to start by observing the mind:

ਅਪਨੈ ਬੀਚਾਰਿ ਅਸਵਾਰੀ ਕੀਜੈ ॥

ਸਹਜ ਕੈ ਪਾਵੜੈ ਪਗੁ ਧਰਿ ਲੀਜੈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Apanai beechaar asavaaree keejai //Sahaj kai paavarai pag dhar leejai //1//

Rahaau //

(SGGS, Pg. No. 329)

Translation: I made self-reflection my mount, and in the stirrups of intuitive poise, I placed my feet. ||1||Pause||

Here, Kabir Ji has shared an example of a rider and his relationship to his mount (horse) as a metaphor. Before going further, a word of caution. In today's digital lexicon, the word mount connotes altogether a new definition, but in those days it was exclusively used for horses. He says just as the rider has to be aware of his horse, only then can he steer the mount. The rider is constantly aware of the body and mind of the horse he is riding. The rider's approach is that he is trying to help the horse understand what is required of him and then steer it to do its job better and more efficiently. So, when the horse makes a wrong turn, the alert rider quickly takes corrective action. Same way, by constantly monitoring the flights of the mind, the negative thoughts that are harmful are corrected at the earliest, before they get executed by the fickle mind. As this practice of watching the mind advances, coupled with the growing experience of watching it, many of these choices will come intuitively, reflexively, without effort or thought. Earlier, we were unconscious of this tendency of the mind to wander, but under observation, its mysterious aspect seeps into our conscious awareness, making us aware as soon as it takes flight. Next, try to stop the trajectory of its flight by nudging it back home within, with a gentle reminder:

ਕਹਾ ਚਲਹੁ ਮਨ ਰਹਹੁ ਘਰੇ ॥

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮਿ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਾਸੇ ਖੋਜਤ ਪਾਵਹੁ ਸਹਜਿ ਹਰੇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Kahaa chalahu mun rahahu ghare // Gurmukh raam naam tirapataase khojat paavahu sahaj hare ||1|| Rahaau // (SGGS, Pg. No. 414)

Translation: Where are you going, O mind? Come back, remain in your own home. The Gurmukhs remain calm with the remembrance of God's Name (Sat Naam); searching, they find God (within). ||1||Pause||

This observation makes the mind detached from the thoughts by becoming a witness instead. Next steer it to remain within, not wandering around by these words:

ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਪਰਦੇਸੀ ਵੇ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਆਉ ਘਰੇ ॥

Mere mun paradhesees ve piaare aaui ghare // (SGGS, Pg. No. 451)

Translation: O my dear beloved foreigner mind, please come (back) home!

Gurbani wants us to pay attention to our attention, chasing after the material wealth (Maya) of the three qualities. Whenever we observe it, chase, catch it, and refocus our attention. However, if the random thought was something important and worth while, even if it is not related to the subject of attention, make a quick note of that thought so as not to lose that information, and later bring the attention back. Thus, in the process, the multiple thoughts in mind become replaced by a single thought of the Darshan of God.

Gurbani stresses the significance and benefits of meditation while extolling us to incorporate it in our daily lives. Guru Arjan Dev Ji has said that:

ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੈ ਸਿਮਰਨਿ ਮਨ ਕੀ ਮਲੁ ਜਾਇ ॥

Parabh kaie simran mun kee mull jaa-ae // (SGGS, Pg. No. 263)

Translation: In the meditation/remembrance of God, the filth of the mind is removed.

What is filth of mind? It is nothing but non-stop rambling of the mind in pursuit of material possessions. Besides the removal of the filth of unnecessary thoughts, Gurbani has shared many other benefits of meditation in this shabad as well (not covered here). Even the scientific world has now embraced the concept that meditation can calm the mind. Finally, with the Grace of God, no thoughts are left, then the mind becomes free from thoughts:

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਅਖਰੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਧਾਵਤੁ ਰਹਤਾ ॥

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਸੁਖੁ ਸਮ ਸਹਤਾ ॥

Gurmukh akhar jit dhaavat rahataa ||Gurmukh upadhes dhukh sukh sam sahataa ||
(SGGS, Pg. No. 131)

Translation: The Guru's Instruction is the Word (about Remembrance of God), by which the wandering mind is restrained. Through the Guru's Teachings, we can endure pain and pleasure alike.

Grace is only given as a blessing alone. So, we can only pray to the Almighty for the grace of meditation and His Darshan. The seeker becomes completely calm like the water in a deep aquifer in the bosom of earth -still, pure, pristine, and calm. The status of such a mind has been described in these words:

ਦਹ ਦਿਸ ਧਾਵਤ ਮਿਟਿ ਗਏ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਥਾਨਿ ਬਸਨਾ ॥੩॥

Dahh dis dhaavat mitt gaae nirmal thaani basnaa. ||3|| (SGGS, Pg. No. 811)

Translation: The mind's wandering in the ten (different) directions has stopped, and one dwells in the immaculate place (in peace). ||3||

And:

ਮਨੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਧਾਵਨ ਤੇ ਛੂਟਿਓ ਕਰਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਬਿਸਰਾਮੁ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Mun mero dhaavan te chhootio kar bai Tho bisaraam ||1|| Rahaau ||
(SGGS, Pg. No. 1186)

Translation: My mind has stopped wandering, and now, it has come to complete rest, becoming calm. ||1||Pause||

Conclusion

What will be the outcome of this initiative?

ਇਉ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਦਰਸਾਵੜਾ ਨਹ ਲਗੈ ਤਤੀ ਵਾਉ ਜੀਉ ॥

Eiau paaveh har dharasaavaraa naeh lagai tatee vaau jeeau ||
(SGGS, Pg. No. 763)

Translation: In this way, you shall obtain the Blessed Vision of God's Darshan; you will not be afflicted by any hot winds of sorrow or trouble.

When the mind is cleaned up of this negative trait of always wanting something, it becomes calm and focused as well. When it becomes completely calm, everything becomes easy and stress-free in life. There is a special term for it, which is Sahaj (ਸਹਜ). But its English translation of peace and poise does not do complete justice to it, as it cannot capture its essence. It is a feeling that has to be experienced. Let us all try not just to stop the wandering of the mind, but experience Sahaj as well. Guru Ji has expressed that thought in these words:

ਜਾ ਕੈ ਸਹਜੁ ਭਇਆ ਸੋ ਜਾਣੈ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਦਾਸ ਤਾ ਕੈ ਕੁਰਬਾਣੈ ॥੮॥੩॥

Jaa kai sahaj bhiaa so jaanai || Nanak daas taa kai kurabaanai ||8||3||

(SGGS, Pg. No. 237)

Translation: (But this natural state of Sahaj cannot be described). Only the person within whom this spiritual poise arises can understand it. Disciple Nanak is a sacrifice to such a person. ||8||3||

Guru Ji has also shared that when Sahaj comes within, then skepticism departs as the mind has climbed to the fourth quality above the three.

ਚਉਥੇ ਪਦ ਕਉ ਜੋ ਨਰੁ ਚੀਨੈ ਤਿਨੁ ਹੀ ਪਰਮ ਪਦੁ ਪਾਇਆ ॥੨॥

Chautha pad kau jo nar cheenai tin hee param pad paaiaa ||2||

(SGGS, Pg. No. 1123)

Translation: The man who realizes the Fourth Quality; he alone obtains the Supreme Status ||2||

Let's try to taste it by working on the wandering nature of the mind and asking for Guru Ji's grace to free us from it. □

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The Battle of Saragarhi: A Saga of Unyielding Bravery

*S. KBS SIDHU**

A shining moment in Indian military history, the Battle of Saragarhi, which took place on September 12, 1897, stands as a crown jewel in the legacy of India's most decorated unit, the Sikh Regiment.

The Battle of Saragarhi: A Saga of Unyielding Bravery

The Battle of Saragarhi, fought on September 12, 1897, stands as a defining moment in Indian military history. It epitomises the valour, sacrifice, and unwavering loyalty of 21 Sikh soldiers who chose death over surrender while defending a small outpost in the rugged North-West Frontier Province. Often compared to legendary last stands like the Battle of Thermopylae, it continues to inspire generations and is commemorated as a symbol of courage and sacrifice.

Background and Context

Saragarhi was a modest communication post situated between Fort Lockhart and Fort Gulistan in the North-West Frontier Province, now in Pakistan. During the late 19th century, the region was fraught with unrest due to frequent incursions by Pashtun tribesmen.

Manned by 21 soldiers from the 36th Sikhs regiment, now known as the 4th Battalion of the Sikh Regiment, Saragarhi played a crucial role in maintaining communication between the two forts. Under the command of Havildar Ishar Singh, the soldiers were entrusted with defending the post in an area that frequently witnessed violent skirmishes between British colonial forces and Afghan tribesmen.

The Battle: September 12, 1897

On that fateful day, between 10,000 and 15,000 Afghan tribesmen laid siege to the post at Saragarhi. The small contingent of 21 Sikh soldiers, faced with overwhelming odds, made the resolute decision to stand and fight rather than surrender.

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Under Havildar Ishar Singh's leadership, the soldiers mounted a fierce defence, holding off the attackers for over six hours. Despite being vastly outnumbered, they inflicted significant casualties on the enemy forces, with estimates suggesting as many as 600 Afghan tribesmen were killed. However, the odds proved insurmountable, and all 21 Sikh soldiers were ultimately martyred.

Aftermath and Recognition

Though outnumbered and martyred, the heroism displayed at Saragarhi played a crucial role in delaying the Afghan advance. This allowed British reinforcements to secure Fort Gulistan, achieving the larger strategic objective.

In recognition of their unparalleled bravery, all 21 soldiers were posthumously awarded the Indian Order of Merit, the highest gallantry award available to Indian soldiers at that time. The British government also rewarded the families of the martyrs with 50 acres of land and a monetary grant of 500 rupees each — a significant sum in that era.

Commemoration of the Battle

The Battle of Saragarhi has since been immortalised as an example of exceptional courage and sacrifice. The Sikh Regiment of the Indian Army observes September 12 as "Saragarhi Day", commemorating the soldiers' bravery and service.

In 2017, the Punjab government declared September 12 as a state holiday to honour the martyrs, further cementing the legacy of the battle in the cultural and historical fabric of the region.

The Strategic Importance of Saragarhi

Saragarhi's location made it a critical link in the British Army's communication chain between Fort Lockhart and Fort Gulistan, two key military outposts in the volatile North-West Frontier Province. The British relied heavily on such outposts to relay signals and intelligence. Despite being a small post, Saragarhi's strategic importance was immense. The post became a focal point of resistance, where a small band of soldiers could delay enemy advances and alert larger garrisons to threats.

The Bravery of the 21 Sikh Soldiers

The heroism displayed by the 21 Sikh soldiers under Havildar Ishar Singh has become legendary. Aware they were vastly outnumbered, the soldiers chose to defend their post to the last man. Their disciplined and determined defence significantly delayed the Afghan advance, giving nearby British troops time to prepare. Despite limited resources and facing overwhelming odds, the soldiers fought with remarkable courage and skill. As their numbers dwindled, they continued to resist, knowing their sacrifice would secure a tactical advantage for the British forces. Their unwavering resolve transformed Saragarhi from a simple communication post into a symbol of extraordinary bravery.

Gurdwara Saragarhi Memorial, Ferozepur district.

Gurdwaras and Memorials: Honouring the Fallen

To honour the Saragarhi martyrs, the British constructed two gurdwaras (Sikh temples). One was built near the Golden Temple in Amritsar, and the other in Ferozepur Cantonment. The Saragarhi Memorial Gurudwara in Ferozepur, built in 1904, holds a special place in history, as it was constructed using stones from the original Saragarhi post.

The memorial, surrounded by cannons, bears the names of the 21 fallen soldiers on its walls. Every year on September 12, a religious congregation takes place at the gurdwara, followed by a reunion of ex-servicemen, paying tribute to the soldiers and the spirit of selfless service that continues to define the Sikh Regiment.

The Battle of Saragarhi in Indian Cinema

The Battle of Saragarhi has inspired Indian cinema, becoming a source of pride and inspiration. One of the most notable films is *Kesari* (2019), starring Akshay Kumar. The film vividly portrays the courage and sacrifice of the 21 Sikh soldiers, resonating with a new generation of viewers. Similarly, the television series *21 Sarfarosh: Saragarhi 1897* aired on Discovery Jeet in 2018, providing a detailed, dramatized account of the battle and the socio-political climate surrounding it.

International and Upcoming Productions

The story of Saragarhi has also crossed borders, inspiring international productions. The UK-produced documentary *Saragarhi: The True Story* (2017) delved into the battle's historical significance, offering a global perspective. A year later, *The Saragarhi Dispatch*

focused on the final communications from the soldiers, capturing the harrowing last moments of the battle. Indian film projects like *Sons of Sardaar: The Battle of Saragarhi* and a potential project with Randeep Hooda are also in development, ensuring Saragarhi's legacy continues to inspire cinematic explorations.

A Symbol of Bravery and Sacrifice

The Battle of Saragarhi occupies a special place in Sikh history and in British military tradition. It symbolises the ideals of duty, bravery, and the resolve to fight for one's honour and nation, no matter the odds. Often compared to famous last stands like Thermopylae, the battle serves as a timeless reminder of the Sikh soldiers' immense contributions to both British India and independent India.

In remembering Saragarhi, we honour the extraordinary spirit of soldiers who displayed unmatched sacrifice, defending their post against overwhelming odds. Their legacy reminds us that heroism transcends numbers, and it is the spirit of the fight that defines true bravery.



ਸਲੋਕ ਕਬੀਰ ॥ ਗਗਨ ਦਮਾਮਾ ਬਾਜਿਓ ਪਰਿਓ ਨੀਸਾਨੈ ਘਾਉ ॥

ਖੇਤੁ ਜੁ ਮਾਝਿਓ ਸੂਰਮਾ ਅਬ ਜੂਝਨ ਕੇ ਦਾਉ ॥੧॥

ਸੂਰਾ ਸੋ ਪਹਿਚਾਨੀਐ ਜੁ ਲਰੈ ਦੀਨ ਕੇ ਹੇਤ ॥

ਪੁਰਜਾ ਪੁਰਜਾ ਕਟਿ ਮਰੈ ਕਬਹੂ ਨ ਛਾਡੈ ਖੇਤੁ ॥੨॥੨॥

*SHALOK, KABEER: The battle-drum beats in the sky of the mind;
aim is taken, and the wound is inflicted.*

*The spiritual warriors enter the field of battle;
now is the time to fight! || 1 || He alone is known as a spiritual hero,
who fights in defense of religion.*

*He may be cut apart, piece by piece, but he never leaves the field of
battle. || 2 || 2 ||*

[SGGS: 1105]

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Introduction

Food is one of the most essential gifts bestowed upon humanity by the Divine. It sustains the body, nurtures the mind, and uplifts the soul. In Gurbani, food is not merely seen as nourishment for physical survival but as a sacred blessing granted by the grace of God. The hymn on page 269 of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji reminds us that every comfort in life—be it food, fragrance, family, peace, or luxury—comes only through His kindness. Hence, it is our spiritual duty to remain ever grateful and remember the Giver in every morsel we eat. Just as a lamp cannot shine without oil, our life cannot thrive without the Divine grace that sustains it. Through food, we are taught humility, gratitude, and remembrance of the Creator, recognizing that all joy, health, and vitality flow from His mercy.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਛਤੀਹ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਖਾਹਿ ॥

By His Grace, you partake of the thirty-six delicacies;

ਤਿਸੁ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਕਉ ਰਖੁ ਮਨ ਮਾਹਿ ॥

enshrine that Lord and Master within your mind.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁਗੰਧਤ ਤਨਿ ਲਾਵਹਿ ॥

By His Grace, you apply scented oils to your body;

ਤਿਸ ਕਉ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਪਰਮ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਵਹਿ ॥

remembering Him, the supreme-status is obtained.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਬਸਹਿ ਸੁਖ ਮੰਦਰਿ ॥

By His Grace, you dwell in the palace of peace;

*E-mail : komalin73@gmail.com & jagjitahuja@gmail.com

ਤਿਸਹਿ ਧਿਆਇ ਸਦਾ ਮਨ ਅੰਦਰਿ ॥

meditate forever on Him within your mind.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਸੰਗਿ ਸੁਖ ਬਸਨਾ ॥

By His Grace, you abide with your family in peace;

ਆਠ ਪਹਰ ਸਿਮਰਹੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਰਸਨਾ ॥

keep His remembrance upon your tongue, twenty-four hours a day.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਰੰਗ ਰਸ ਭੋਗ ॥

By His Grace, you enjoy tastes and pleasures;

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਦਾ ਧਿਆਈਐ ਧਿਆਵਨ ਜੋਗ ॥੧॥

O Nanak ! Meditate forever on the One, who is worthy of meditation. ||1||

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਪਾਟ ਪਟੇਬਰ ਹਵਾਵਹਿ ॥

By His Grace, you wear silks and satins;

ਤਿਸਹਿ ਤਿਆਗਿ ਕਤ ਅਵਰ ਲੁਭਾਵਹਿ ॥

Why abandon Him, to attach yourself to another?

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁਖਿ ਸੇਜ ਸੋਈਜੈ ॥

By His Grace, you sleep in a cozy bed;

ਮਨ ਆਠ ਪਹਰ ਤਾ ਕਾ ਜਸੁ ਗਾਵੀਜੈ ॥

O my mind! Sing His Praises, twenty-four hours a day.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਤੁਝੁ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਊ ਮਾਨੈ ॥

By His Grace, you are honored by everyone; (SGGS PG. 269)

In this hymn, Guru Nanak Dev Ji teaches us that we must remain ever grateful and remember the Divine in all circumstances, for He is the true source of all blessings. For example, when we enjoy delicious meals or live peacefully with our families, we should recognize it as the Lord's kindness, not our own doing. Just as a tree cannot bear fruit without sunlight, we too cannot enjoy life's blessings without divine grace. Hence, instead of being attached to worldly pleasures, one should constantly meditate on God, keeping Him enshrined in the heart and on the tongue, as true happiness and peace lie only in His remembrance.

IMPORTANCE OF FOOD

We humans need a variety of food to nurture our bodies physically to stay fit and fine, to do various jobs. Food acts like fuel to sustain various distinct functions of our body -

- Physically
- Emotionally
- Intellectually
- Spiritually

There should be no denying that the food we eat has a tremendous effect on our overall well-being, including the mind. A balanced diet keeps the physical and emotional forces in performing various functions, especially meditation, in a proper way without disturbing our mind. In fact, in the olden days, there was wisdom in cooking food freshly.

Traditionally, it all started to have a simple and reasonably balanced diet to get the needed nutrients to maintain a healthy body and mind. However, due to the fast-changing lifestyle, most households do not seem to have time or energy to prepare a fresh, full-course meal anymore. As a result, fast-food joints and frozen dinners have become more popular, being considered handy.

So long as we keep on remembering these four distinct functions of our body, especially spiritually, various problems cropping up with our body will get minimized. If we just live to eat, this suggests that our consciousness is limited to our body only to gratifying our senses, particularly the tongue, ignoring the divine, God.

Above all, food products that are tasty to the tongue because of their sweet taste should be avoided or consumed minimally because they ultimately prove to be harmful to our body. Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) on page 50 warns us.

ਮਿਠਾ ਕਰਿ ਕੈ ਖਾਇਆ ਕਉੜਾ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਸਾਦੁ ॥ (SGGS PG.50)

People eat what they believe to be sweet, but it turns out to be bitter in taste.

Further on Page 16 SGGS highlights

ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਧੈ ਤਨੁ ਪੀੜੀਐ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (SGGS PG.16)

Eating them, the body is ruined, and wickedness and corruption enter into the mind.

Gurbani, in various pages of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, promotes a simple, virtuous diet focused on honest living and devotion to the Divine, the Almighty, the God, our creator. They, our Guru Sahib, put emphasis on avoiding food that becomes impure by being associated with sinful or egotistical behavior, rather than food being intrinsically bad.

Once, even though the same kinds of "thirty-six" foods may not be available everywhere in the world. Therefore, variation is bound to occur from place to place, region to region, country to country, and so on. Even within a country — for example, between north and south India — a vast difference in foods can be observed. In another Shabad, Bhagat Kabir ji has mentioned five tasty foods most commonly in use - milk, curd, clarified butter (Ghee), sugar, and honey, giving them the status of Amrit.

ਜਿਹ ਮੁਖਿ ਪਾਚਉ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਖਾਏ ॥

ਤਿਹ ਮੁਖ ਦੇਖਤ ਲੂਕਟ ਲਾਏ ॥੧॥

(SGGS PG. 329)

That mouth, which used to eat the five delicacies — I have seen the flames being applied to that mouth.

The word "Amrit" has been used in the context of food, which essentially means tasty, delicious, or flavorsome.

Traditionally, the idea was to have a simple and reasonably balanced diet so that one gets all the needed nutrients to maintain a healthy body and mind. However, due to the fast lifestyle of these days, most people do not seem to have time or energy to prepare a fresh, full-course meal anymore. As a result, fast-food joints and frozen dinners are becoming more popular and considered handy.

No denying that the food one eats has a tremendous effect on one's overall well-being, including the mind. A balanced diet keeps the physical and emotional forces subtle and refined, which, in turn, makes the meditation (Naam- Simran) subtle and refined.

While consuming food, the Gurbani would like us to pause and think about the following:

First, we are asked to recognize that everything, including the food we eat, is a Gift from God. That is, it's with His Grace (Nadar or Kirpaa) we receive this Gift and enjoy it.

ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਲੈਣਾ ॥

ਛਤੀਹ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਭੋਜਨੁ ਖਾਣਾ ॥

(SGGSPG. 100)

Everything we receive is a gift from God.

Thirty-six delicious foods to eat.

Generally, our elders have been teaching us to recite the above shabad before consuming food.

Gurbani has further elucidated in detail, reminding us about the giver, the God of food, who gave you the earth, and things to use.

ਤਿਸੁ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਕੇ ਚਿਤਿ ਰਖੁ ਚਰਨਾ ॥੪॥ (SGGS PG. 913)
enshrine in your consciousness the feet of that God

Gurbani has further clarified to the extent that if we do not thank the giver, then all the delicacies are just like eating poison. By using the word poison, Gurbani would simply like us to think and ask ourselves.

Do I eat to live or do I live to eat?

The following shabads further clarify strongly the word poison used therein -

ਗ੍ਰਿਹਿ ਸਾਕਤ ਛਤੀਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਤੇ ਬਿਖੁ ਸਮਾਨ ॥੨॥ (SGGS PG. 811)
The thirty-six tasty dishes of the faithless cynic, are just like poison

ਛਤੀਹ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਪਰਕਾਰ ਕਰਹਿ ਬਹੁ ਮੈਲੁ ਵਧਾਈ ॥ (SGGS PG. 1246)

Eating the thirty-six delicacies, they (who call themselves emperors and rulers) become bloated with inner filth or pollution

ਜਿਹਵਾ ਇਵੀ ਸਾਦਿ ਲੋਭਾਨਾ ॥ ਪਸੂ ਭਏ ਨਹੀ ਮਿਟੈ ਨੀਸਾਨਾ ॥੬॥ (SGGS PG. 903)

That person who is lured by the tastes of the sense organs - the tongue, etc. - is an animal; this sign (of his animal-consciousness) cannot be erased

ਖਾਤ ਪੀਤ ਅਨੇਕ ਬਿਜਨ ਜੈਸੇ ਭਾਰ ਬਾਹਕ ਖੋਤ ॥ (SGGS PG. 1121)

By forgetting the Lord's Name One who eats and drinks countless delicacies is like a donkey, a beast of burden

ਅਵਰਿ ਸਾਦ ਚਖਿ ਸਗਲੇ ਦੇਖੇ ਮਨ ਹਰਿ ਰਸੁ ਸਭ ਤੇ ਮੀਠਾ ਜੀਉ ॥੧॥ (SGGS PG. 100)

I have seen and tasted all other flavors, but to my mind, the Subtle Essence of the Lord is the sweetest of all.

The Gurbani, therefore, tells us that all the tastes or "thirty-six Amrits" are in the Name of the One Lord. In other words, all the tastes or "thirty-six Amrits" are in the Love of the One Lord. How can one love God who is said to be formless in the Gurbani? Following is Word, Simran (meditation, Jap, etc.), practising selfless love and compassion towards all in the world, and so on. Conclusion Gurbani teaches that food should not only satisfy hunger but also cultivate consciousness and devotion.

When consumed with gratitude and moderation, it becomes Amrit—a source of divine bliss and purity. But when eaten with greed or ego, it turns into poison that pollutes both body and mind. Thus, the true essence of food lies not in its flavour but in the remembrance of the One who provides it. A balanced and simple diet, prepared with love and eaten in thankfulness, keeps us physically strong, emotionally calm, and spiritually connected. As Guru Nanak Dev Ji reminds us, real sweetness lies not in the thirty-six delicacies of the world but in the remembrance of the Lord's Name. In essence, food becomes sacred when we see it as Prasad—a medium through which the soul connects with the Divine. □

ਸਰਾਗੁ ਸੋਰਠਿ ॥ ਭੂਖੇ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ॥
ਯਹ ਮਾਲਾ ਅਪਨੀ ਲੀਜੈ ॥ ਹਉ ਮਾਗਉ ਸੰਤਨ ਰੇਨਾ ॥
ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਿਸੀ ਕਾ ਦੇਨਾ ॥੧॥ ਮਾਧੋ ਕੈਸੀ ਬਨੈ ਤੁਮ ਸੰਗੇ ॥
ਆਪਿ ਨ ਦੇਹੁ ਤ ਲੇਵਉ ਮੰਗੇ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ

*AAG SORATH: I am so hungry, I cannot perform devotional
worship service. Here, Lord, take back Your mala.
I beg for the dust of the feet of the Saints.
I do not owe anyone anything. || 1 ||
O Lord, how can I be with You? If You do not give me Yourself, then
I shall beg until I get You. || Pause*

[SGGS: 656]

Chardi Kala: The Optimism that Transcends Sorrow

DR STUTI MALHOTRA*

In the wake of the devastating floods in Punjab—where countless families struggle with irreparable loss, uncertainty, and the painful task of rebuilding lives—the Sikh spirit instinctively turns to its timeless fountainhead of resilience. Even when waters of despair threaten to drown hope, the principle of “Chardi Kala”—the ever-rising spirit—reminds us that faith, courage, and optimism cannot be submerged.

Chardi Kala is not a shallow exhortation to “stay positive.” Rather, it embodies a profound spiritual resilience, rooted in the Sikh worldview of divine trust, inner contentment, and selfless service. It is optimism anchored in the Infinite, not merely in fleeting circumstances.

The secret to enduring happiness lies in *santokh* (ਸੰਤੋਖੁ) — contentment. Desire, by its very nature, multiplies endlessly; contentment, on the other hand, draws a firm full stop after necessity. A small anecdote illustrates this well: a man once grumbled about the meagreness of his salary raise. His friend gently reminded him, “Back in college, did you ever imagine you would be earning this much?” The man admitted he had not. The friend concluded, “Then your dissatisfaction has little to do with your earnings—it stems from comparing yourself with someone else.”

This simple reflection underlines a profound truth: comparison, not reality, is the thief of joy. Contentment releases us from this trap, allowing gratitude to take root. True joy, or *anand*, is not born of material excess but from an inner harmony with the Divine will—*Hukam*. This joy is cultivated through humility, remembrance of God (*Naam Simran*), and gratitude (ਸੰਤੋਖੁ).

Human history offers ample testimony that wealth, fame, and worldly success alone cannot guarantee happiness. Billionaires wrestle with insomnia, celebrities crumble in loneliness, and those who “have it all” often confess to feeling an inexplicable emptiness. The Sikh Gurus caution us repeatedly that fleeting pleasures cannot offer lasting fulfillment.

Bhagat Namdev employs a beautiful metaphor: just as a boy flying a kite can laugh and chatter with friends yet remain fully attentive to the string, a spiritually awakened

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person participates in worldly life while remaining inwardly tethered to the Divine. This balance—to be in the world yet not of the world—is the very essence of Chardi Kala.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji captures this vision succinctly in Japji Sahib:

ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ ॥੧॥

“Hukam rajaaee chalnaa Naanak likhiala naal.” (SGGS, p.1)

O Nanak! It is inscribed that one must walk in accordance with His Will.

The human quest for truth culminates here: to become truthful, one must walk in Hukam. To live in Hukam is to recognize that while not everything unfolds according to our personal desires, everything flows according to a higher, divine order. Yet accepting Hukam is not effortless. The ego (ਹਉਮੈ) rebels, demanding control, asking perpetually: “Why me?” The root of human suffering often lies in this dissonance between expectation and reality. The path of Chardi Kala does not erase pain but transforms our relationship with it. By submitting to Hukam, suffering is reframed—not as a punishment but as a passage through which the soul deepens its trust in the Divine.

Bhai Vir Singh Ji offers a compelling metaphor: Naam Simran is like polishing a mirror. A dusty mirror cannot reflect light; similarly, a distracted, ego-ridden mind cannot reflect peace. Through the steady discipline of remembrance, the grime of ego and desire is gradually wiped away, allowing the radiant self to emerge. This cleansing is complemented by Seva—selfless service. In serving others, one transcends the prison of self-centeredness and partakes in universal joy. The Sikh path teaches that to forget the self in service is to remember the Divine most fully.

To dwell in Chardi Kala is not to deny grief or suppress sorrow—it is to transcend them with spiritual strength. It is the spiritual optimism that sings even through tears, that clings to faith even when the world betrays it. It is the undaunted resilience that ensures the Sikh Ardaas always concludes with the words:

“ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਤੇਰੇ ਭਾਣੇ ਸਰਬਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ”

“Nanak Naam Chardi Kala, Tere Bhane Sarbat da Bhala.”

Through Nanak, may the spirit of ever-rising resilience prevail, and in Your Will, may all humanity prosper.

Thus, Chardi Kala is more than an idea—it is a lived reality, a way of being. It calls us, especially in moments of collective suffering such as the floods of Punjab, to rise above despair, to anchor ourselves in gratitude, and to translate faith into compassionate action for the welfare of all. □

The Floods in Punjab: Pain, Resilience, and the Spirit of Chardi Kala

*DR JASBIR SINGH SARNA**

Punjab, the land named after its five rivers, is today reeling under the devastation caused by those very waters. For more than two weeks, the state has remained in the grip of floods of an intensity unseen in recent years. The Ravi river has overflowed in the border districts, while the Beas and Sutlej river, swollen with monsoon rains and water released from dams, have submerged vast tracts of Majha and Doaba. Malwa too has come under severe threat, with smaller rivers and canals breaking their banks and causing immense destruction. Homes, crops, livestock, and entire means of livelihood have been swept away, leaving thousands homeless and destitute.

Although floods are natural disasters, the full weight of this calamity cannot be attributed solely to the nature. Human errors and administrative negligence have compounded the destruction. Floodgates left unrepaired, delayed releases of excess dam water, and the lack of adequate preventive measures have aggravated the crisis. Technical shortcomings, if rectified in time, could have minimized the scale of loss. The Indian Army has on countless occasions demonstrated its efficiency in disaster management—building bridges within hours and providing rescue operations during floods in Himachal, Uttarakhand, and Jammu. Yet in Punjab, questions arise as to why such swift measures were not mobilized with equal urgency. Amidst this devastation, one truth stands tall: the indomitable spirit of the Punjabi people. History bears witness that whenever Punjab has been scarred by foreign invasions, political upheavals, or natural calamities, its people have turned to one another for strength and stood upright in resilience. This strength is not accidental; it is deeply rooted in the Sikh spiritual tradition of Chardi Kala—ever-rising optimism, fearlessness in adversity, and an unwavering commitment to humanity.

From the days of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, who proclaimed the essential unity of humankind, to Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, whose supreme sacrifice epitomized courage in

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the face of tyranny, the Sikh tradition has nurtured resilience as a moral and spiritual discipline. In the midst of floods today, this tradition is visible once again. Gurdwaras have opened their doors for shelter, the langar continues to ensure that no one sleeps hungry, and countless Sikh organizations and volunteers are wading through floodwaters to deliver food, fodder, clothing, and medicines. This is seva, selfless service, carried out not as charity but as a duty—an expression of the Sikh principle “sarbat da bhala” (the welfare of all). Equally moving is the sight of ordinary villagers, who, despite losing their own homes and fields, are reaching out to save their neighbours, feed stranded cattle, and carry survivors to safety. Such acts recall Punjab’s age-old collective consciousness that has seen the people through Partition, wars, and earlier natural calamities. Even in personal loss, Punjabis find the courage to uphold others—a living testimony to the doctrine of Chardi Kala.

The present calamity also raises troubling questions about governance. Successive state and central governments have often treated Punjab as a frontier to be defended or a granary to be harvested, but rarely as a society to be nurtured with sympathy. Even today, many Punjabis feel alienated, as if “Delhi is far” despite physical proximity. Relief measures remain slow and inadequate, and the silence of many national institutions has been painful. Yet, in the absence of external support, Punjab once again proves to itself and to the world that it does not wait passively for rescue. The Sikh ethos has always taught that dignity lies not in lamenting fate but in actively shaping one’s destiny. The floods are devastating—fields are ruined, homes collapsed, diseases spread by stagnant waters loom large, and rebuilding will take many years. Yet, in the Sikh worldview, adversity is never final defeat. Guru Gobind Singh Ji, when faced with immense personal tragedy, gave to the Khalsa the mantra of Chardi Kala, urging his Sikhs to rise even higher in spirit during their darkest hour. That very legacy is visible in today’s Punjab, where instead of surrendering to despair, communities are rediscovering bonds of brotherhood, standing shoulder to shoulder, and transforming suffering into solidarity.

It is equally important to recognize the broader national responsibility. Punjab, which has for decades been the breadbasket of India, deserves not to neglect but solidarity from every quarter. The floods are not Punjab’s private tragedy but a national calamity. The open-heartedness of Punjabis has always been well known; a small gesture of compassion is remembered and cherished by them for generations. This is the moment for

governments, institutions, and fellow citizens to show Punjab that its pain is the nation's pain.

Three and a half centuries after Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's martyrdom, his message rings with renewed relevance. Sacrifice, courage, and the defense of human dignity define the Sikh spirit. The people of Punjab will rebuild their lives, as they always have, but the measure of our humanity as a nation will be judged by whether we stand with them or not now. Punjab today is wounded, yet unbroken. Its fields may lie under water, its homes in ruin, but its people continue to embody Chardi Kala—undaunted, compassionate, and ever-rising. The floods may test the endurance of Punjab, but they will never wash away the resilience, generosity, and spiritual strength that have always defined this land of the Gurus.



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Amritsar: Remarkable Tourist Attractions

S. TARLOCHAN SINGH*

For centuries, Amritsar has been the spiritual capital of the Sikhs and has been thronged by pilgrims and tourists alike. At the heart of the city stands the Golden Temple (Sri Harmandir Sahib), a shimmering edifice of faith, devotion, and architectural splendor. Its sanctum, surrounded by the sacred Amrit Sarovar, continues to inspire seekers of peace and spirituality from across the world.

In recent years, Amritsar has undergone a remarkable transformation, blending its rich spiritual heritage with new cultural and historical attractions. These developments have further popularized this historic city, making it a vibrant destination that appeals to devotees, history enthusiasts, and cultural travelers alike.

One of the prominent landmarks is the Summer Palace of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, situated in the beautifully landscaped Ram Bagh Garden. This palace is an exquisite example of Indo-Sikh architecture, blending Mughal and Sikh styles with intricate frescoes, floral motifs, and graceful arches. Converted into a Museum in 1980, it now showcases valuable artifacts, paintings, coins, and arms from the glorious Sikh era, offering visitors a glimpse into Punjab's regal past and the visionary leadership of the Maharaja. There is a special section to highlight diplomatic relations between France and Punjab, and also the role of French Army officers serving in the Sikh Army.

The Ram Bagh is also housing a Panorama on the famous battles during the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, especially the conquest of Multan, Kashmir, and the Afghan campaign. Multimedia sound and light effects enhance immersive storytelling. This attractive place for historical learning has been gifted by Sh. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Former Prime Minister of India.

A short distance away lies the Jallianwala Bagh, the poignant memorial of India's freedom struggle. The preserved bullet marks and the eternal flame stands as silent witnesses to the tragic massacre of 1919, reminding visitors of the resilience and courage of the Indian people. As part of the centenary commemoration of the event, renovation was executed, improving visitors' amenities and showcasing history through modern means. A sound & light show with narration by the film star Amitabh Bachchan has been added.

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Another major attraction is the Partition Museum, located near the Town Hall, which narrates the human stories of displacement, hope, and rebuilding following the 1947 Partition. Through oral histories, photographs, and documents, it pays homage to millions who journeyed across borders during that defining chapter of the subcontinent's history. Oral history archives have more than 100 survivor interviews.

No visit to Amritsar is complete without experiencing the Wagah-Attari Border Ceremony, located 30 km away from Amritsar. It is a daily ritual symbolizing both the rivalry and camaraderie of India and Pakistan. The spirited parade and the enthusiastic cheers from both sides evoke deep patriotic sentiments and a sense of unity. People enjoy a parade by soldiers from both sides, the closing of gates, and the simultaneous lowering of the National Flag.

Gobindgarh Fort, which was the treasury of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, has been transformed into a living Museum and cultural heritage complex. It now showcases rare coins and a replica of the Koh-i-Noor under its original domed roof. A laser-projected light and sound experience narrates the fort's centuries-old story in Punjabi and English. It functions like a heritage theme park, combining history, arts, music, and cuisine within the historic walls. The museum displays swords, war attire, and cannons, including the famous Zamzama. The multimedia show, a 7D production on Maharaja Ranjit Singh's vivid life, is a big attraction.

The War Museum on Amritsar Attari road has a striking 45-meter-high stainless steel Sword and 8 different themed galleries depicting the ancient and modern battles are showing the valour of Punjab soldiers. Short films are screened in a state-of-the-art 7D theatre.

The Golden Gate at the entry of Amritsar is a grand welcome to the holy city. It is designed in a traditional Sikh architectural style.

Heritage Street is a Heritage Walk between the Town Hall and the Golden Temple. Around 170 shops with pink Kota-style stone, decorated with Mughal/ Rajput Jharokhas, are thronged by visitors.

Ram Tirath is a revered pilgrimage site associated with Mata Sita. It is believed that Sita, with her sons Luv and Kush, stayed here in the Ashram of Rishi Valmiki. An ancient pond known as Sita Kund and grand statues are a great attraction.

Together, these landmarks—spiritual, historical, and cultural—embody the soul of Amritsar, a city where devotion, sacrifice, and celebration coexist in harmony. Whether one comes to bow at the Golden Temple, to reflect at Jallianwala Bagh, or to witness the grandeur of heritage sites, Amritsar remains an enduring symbol of Punjab's faith and fortitude. □



Sahaj (Sikhism) and Mindfulness (Buddhism) Compared

*DR. S. S.SODHI**

According to Dr. J. S.Neki, a famous Sikh Scholar, the word SAHAJ is derived from the Sanskrit SAHA (Together) and JA (Born) - ie, liberation of the soul. Historically, SAHAJ behaviour is a protest against the formation of the orthodox religions or “SAHAJAYANA” of Buddhists. Guru Nanak, while rubbing his shoulders with Buddhist philosophy, understood its strength and introduced it to Sikhism. In Sikhism, SAHAJ signifies

- a. Rejection of external formalities.
- b. Recognition of a Guru for spiritual growth.
- c. Rejection of priestly authority.
- d. Recognition of the ultimate reality for achieving ineffable spiritual bliss.
- e. Discovering and retaining the natural self.
- f. Sahaj is conquered by reducing “Haumai”.
- g. Sahaj is basic spontaneity, love, goodness, and unconditional compassion.
- h. Sahaj is a transcendent state beyond duality (Maya).
- i. It is a state of illumination, mystic awareness, where everything happens with natural ease (SAHAJ-SUBHAJ) as (Mindfulness).
- j. SAHAJ opens the INNER DOOR (DASAM DVAR), where one can hear the unstruck melody of ANHAT NAD producing unconditional bliss (SAHAJ-ANAND) and Vismad.
- k. In SAHAJ, human emotional turbulence ceases. A wise person, while awake, sleeps in “SAHAJ’S freedom”.
- l. SAHAJ liberates a person from social consumption (O-C-D) or DSM IV.

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- m. SAHAJ makes a person attuned to the inner rhythm of Being, in touch with Mighty Cosmos (SATNAM) (Cosmocentric).
- n. Illumination of soul, spontaneity, freedom, equipoise, and harmony are the chief characteristics of SAHAJ (GG236).
- o. By renouncing MAYA and replacing it with Gyan with Guru's help and Nadar-
The person can hear SAHAJ DHUNI (GG970) and reach a SAHAJ state of evolution.

Mindfulness, in the Buddhist concept, in simple terms, means “just be” (SAHAJ), no matter the situation. By using meditation (kirtan kriya), deep breathing, we focus on living in the present, with gratitude and positivity. Mindfulness is a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings and thoughts.

It is a practice of maintaining a non-judgmental state of heightened awareness on a moment-to-moment basis. Practicing mindfulness involves breathing exercises and guided imagery, meditation, and Naam simran:

1. Paying attention by using all your senses: touch, sound, sight, smell, and taste.
2. Living in the moment and paying attention to what you do.
3. Self-acceptance with gratitude to “SATGURU”.
4. Focusing on your breathing.
5. Body scan meditation. Focusing slowly on each part of your body.
6. Sitting — Breathing meditation.
7. Walking and focusing on the experience of walking.
8. When we practice mindfulness, we are practicing the art of creating space for ourselves (space to think and space to breathe).
9. Mindfulness produces “thoughtless awareness.”

Physiologically speaking, the word mindful brings a balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems of the participants. The sympathetic nervous system is activated under the conditions of stress and helps the individual produce a “fight or flight response.” It is made possible because the adrenal glands releases a large

quantity of EPINEPHRINE, which increases the heart rate and blood flow, hence preparing the individual for imminent danger. Along with EPINEPHRINE, cortisol secretion, high blood glucose levels also takeplace.

The parasympathetic nervous system mainly controls the VAGUS NERVE and spinal nerves, and secretory glands. The vagus nerve is a very important nerve in the body system and controls involuntary muscles of the esophagus, stomach, gallbladder, pancreas, and gastrointestinal secretion. It also controls the digestion, heart rate, breathing, heart activity, and reflex actions such as coughing, sneezing, and swallowing. It is claimed by many researchers that diaphragmatic breathing techniques of mindfulness and SAHAJ helps to restore stability in the vagus nerve, producing a merger-like feeling with SATGURU. □

ਸਿਰੀਰਾਗੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੩ ॥ ਸਹਜੈ ਨੋ ਸਭ ਲੋਚਦੀ ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਪਾਇਆ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਪੜਿ ਪੜਿ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਜੋਤਕੀ ਥਕੇ ਭੇਖੀ ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲਾਏ ॥
ਗੁਰ ਭੇਟੇ ਸਹਜੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਆਪਣੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰੇ ਰਜਾਇ ॥੧॥
ਭਾਈ ਰੇ ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਹਜੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਸਬਦੈ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਸਹਜੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਸਚੁ ਸੋਇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

SIREE RAAG, THIRD MEHL: Everyone longs to be centered and balanced, but without the Guru, no one can. The Pandits and the astrologers read and read until they grow weary, while the fanatics are deluded by doubt. Meeting with the Guru, intuitive balance is obtained, when God, in His Will, grants His Grace. || 1 || O Siblings of Destiny, without the Guru, intuitive balance is not obtained. Through the Word of the Shabad, intuitive peace and poise wells up, and that True Lord is obtained. || 1 || Pause ||

[SGGS: 68]

Why Contemplate Death?

S. SOHAN SINGH, MA, U CQSW (ENGLAND)*

Abstract

This Essay aims to inspire us all to strive for a purpose-driven and well-lived life when we look back at the end of our lives. What decisions can we make in the near future and present time that will maximize purpose and infuse our lives with meaning

Introduction

There is hardly any person in the world who does not fear death. It could be fear of personal death or the demise of a loved one.

We like to discuss and ponder over other trivial topics, but rarely discuss our departure from this earth.

We spend a lot of time ensuring that our houses look attractive and discussing other people's properties, but rarely acknowledge that they are all impermanent.

Teaching by Guru Arjan Sahib directs us to ponder over our real dwelling:

ਜੇ ਘਰੁ ਛਡਿ ਗਵਾਵਣਾ ਸੋ ਲਗਾ ਮਨ ਮਾਹਿ॥

ਜਿਥੈ ਜਾਇ ਤੁਧੁ ਵਰਤਣਾ ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਨਾਹਿ ॥

Jo ghar chhad gavaavnaa so lagaa mann maah-ei.

Jithæ jaa-éi tudh vartanaa tis kee chintaa naah-ei. (SGGS: pg. 43)

That dwelling which you will have to abandon and vacate-you are attached to it in your mind.

And that place where you must go to dwell-you have no regard for it at all.

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Development /Expansion

Gurbani prepares us for our inevitable end; it tells us that the Grim Reaper can give us a call anytime. Verses about 'our existence on this planet being impermanent' need to be noted; they incorporate very specific advice- to be remembered and reflected upon all the time. If we internalise the Teachings in Gurbani, death will not have a traumatic effect on us.

So let us look closely at the following verses and understand the Message that they are imparting to us:

ਜੇਤੇ ਜੀਅ ਤੇਤੇ ਵਾਟਾਊ ॥

ਚੀਰੀ ਆਈ ਢਿਲ ਨ ਕਾਊ ॥

Jaetae jeea taetae vaattaaoo

cheeree aaee dhil na kaaoo

(SGGS PG.952)

There are as many travellers as there are beings: all the creatures are travellers- our stay in this world is temporary.

When one's death warrant is issued, there is no delay –when the call comes, one departs from this planet immediately.

ਜੋ ਦੀਸੈ ਸੋ ਚਾਲਨਹਾਰੁ ॥

ਲਪਟਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਤਹ ਅੰਧ ਅੰਧਾਰੁ ॥

Jo deesai so chaalanahaar.

Lapt rahio tah andh andhaar.

(SGGS PG. 268)

Whatever we see in this world will go away-i.e., it is perishable, transitory.

But he the blindest of the blind cling to them, and yet, the blindest of the blind cling to it.

The first verse makes it explicit that we are like travellers. Travellers move on after a day or two. Our stay is also impermanent like that of travellers.

The second couplet makes it crystal clear that we should not cling to this life, as it is perishable.

So why not reflect on what is inevitable?

ਗੁਰ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਅਪਾਰਾ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰਾ ਜਿਨਿ ਸਿਰਜੀ ਤਿਨਿ ਗੋਈ ॥

ਪਰਵਾਣਾ ਆਇਆ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਪਠਾਇਆ ਫੇਰਿ ਨ ਸਕੈ ਕੋਈ ॥

Gur giaaan aparaa sirjanharaa jin sirjee tin go-ee.

Parvaanaa aaiaa hukam pathaaiaa phaer na sakai koe. (SGGS PG: 688)

Wisdom given by the guru states that the Creator is infinite, who made the creation, and that He also directs it.

The call of death is sent by the Creator, and when the call to return is received, no one can countermand it. Births and deaths are divinely ordained.

Message: Death is not within our control. It is controlled by the Creator.

ਇਕਿ ਮੂੜ ਮੁਗਧ ਨ ਚੇਤਹਿ ਮੂਲੇ ਜੋ ਆਇਆ ਤਿਸੁ ਜਾਣਾ ॥

ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਸਦਾ ਸਾਚਾ ਸੋਇ ਮੈ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਣਾ ॥੨॥

Ik moorr mugadh na chaeteh mooalé jo aa-i-aa tis jaanaa.

Naam taéraa sadaa saachaa sooei mai mann bhaanaa. (SGGS PG:566)

Some fools and idiots never remember at all that whoever has come and born, shall have to go and die.

Your Naam-Your virtues- is True /Eternal and ever pleasing to my mind- like to remember You and cultivate Your virtues.

The reality is that even when we are very sick and frail, we do not want to die. We ask our doctor, and when not satisfied, the surgeons and specialists to do their best to save us. Suddenly, money is of no importance to us; we just want to carry on living. It is very difficult to accept death; we are all young and old and fear it.

Instead of fearing death, why not reflect on our departure and make our life as spiritual and virtuous as possible by remembering Naam-conscious awareness of the Divine and cultivating His virtues? It will be easier then, to accept death when it knocks at our door, and knock it will. Guidance by Bhagat Kabir Sahib:

ਰੈਨਿ ਗਈ ਮਤ ਦਿਨੁ ਭੀ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਭਵਰ ਗਏ ਬਗ ਬੈਠੇ ਆਇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Raaen gae mat din bhee jaa-ei.

Bhavar ga-ae bag baithae aa-ei. (SGGS: Kabir -792)

I need to be careful: the night has passed sleeping in indifference- lest the day should also pass, i.e., I have been engrossed in the pleasures of the youth and should not let old age also pass in indifference.

The black bees have gone, and the white cranes have come to take their place, i.e., youth has gone, old age has arrived with black hair turning grey – the end of life is near.

The message of the above couplet is that since our presence on this earth is transient, we need to earn merit through good actions.

ਕਾਚੈ ਕਰਵੈ ਰਹੈ ਨ ਪਾਨੀ ॥

ਹੰਸੁ ਚਲਿਆ ਕਾਇਆ ਕੁਮਲਾਨੀ ॥੨॥

Kachai karvai rahai na panee.

Hans chaliaa kaaiaa kumlaanee. //2// (SGGS PG:792)

Life is not everlasting- like water cannot remain in an unbaked clay pot.

When the swan /soul departs, the body withers.

ਦੇਖੁ ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜੁ ਥੀਆ ਦਾੜੀ ਹੋਈ ਭੂਰ ॥

Daékh Fareedaa juu theeaa daaree hoee bhoor.

See, Farid, what has happened: your beard has become grey.

ਅਗਹੁ ਨੇੜਾ ਆਇਆ ਪਿਛਾ ਰਹਿਆ ਦੂਰ ॥੯॥

Agahu naéraa aaiaa pichhaa rahiaa duur. //9// (SGGS PG:1378)

That which is coming is near, and the past is left far behind-the death is near.

Message: Remember and meditate on the Divine, do good. or it will be too late.

Conclusion

First, let us be clear in our minds that birth and death are not in our control. Guidance by Guru Nanak Sahib:

ਜੰਮਣੁ ਮਰਣਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੈ ਭਾਣੈ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇ ॥

jaman maranaa hukam hai bhaanei aavai jaae | (SGGS PG: 472)

Birth and death are subject to the Command of the Creator; through His Will we come and go.

Second, life should have a meaning to it and be purpose-driven.

Guru Arjan Sahib illumines this aspect when he says:

ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਤੂੰ ਆਇਆ ਲਾਹਾ ਲੈਣਿ ॥

ਲਗਾ ਕਿਤੁ ਕੁਫਕੜੇ ਸਭ ਮੁਕਦੀ ਚਲੀ ਰੈਣਿ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Praanee toon aaeiaa laahaa lain.

Lagaa kit kufakarrae sabh mukadee chalee rain. (SGGS PG:-43)

O human, you came here to earn a profit. (To get near the Divine)

What fruitless pursuits are you engaged in? Your entire life (night) is coming to its end.

Third, contemplation on death should compel us to take stock of our good deeds and bad deeds, and how many Divine virtues we have cultivated and lived in our lives. In other words, contemplation should lead us to re-evaluate our lives.

The question we should be asking ourselves to re-appraise our life is:

ਏ ਸਰੀਰਾ ਮੇਰਿਆ ਇਸੁ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਆਇ ਕੈ ਕਿਆ ਤੁਧੁ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇਆ ॥

ਕਿ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇਆ ਤੁਧੁ ਸਰੀਰਾ ਜਾ ਤੂ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਆਇਆ ॥

Ae sareeraa maeriaa eis jag meh-ei aa-ei kaae kiaa tudh karam kamaaei-aa.

Kei karam kamaaei-aa tudh sareeraa jaa too jag meh-ei aaeiaa. (SGGS PG: 922)

O my body, why have you come into this world?

And what actions/deeds have you done since you came into this world?



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Visit of five Kaurs to Dr Brijpal Singh Ji

*SDN PARWINDER KAUR**

Sometimes in life, we walk into a room expecting a routine meeting and instead, we walk out with a moment that shapes us forever. That's exactly what happened when a group of five young Kaurs from Ludhiana visited Dr. Brijpal Singh ji at his residence in Ludhiana. The depth of wisdom shared, the love expressed, and the profound realizations it brought made an unforgettable experience, one worth reflecting on and sharing.

For many of us, it was our first time interacting so closely with Dr Brijpal Singh ji, and honestly, we didn't know what to expect. Some of us assumed that the meeting would be highly formal. But the moment we walked in, he greeted us with genuine love and every ounce of fear or formality dissolved. We were drawn into a space of authenticity, humility, and heartfelt conversation. He made us feel seen, heard, and valued, not as learners, but as equals.

One of the most beautiful things he said was about imperfection. Dr Brijpal Singh ji said, "We are all imperfect - incomplete. But that is why we are born: this life is a journey from imperfection to perfection." This wasn't just a reflective statement, it was an invitation to stop seeing flaws as faults, and instead, to start seeing them as the areas of growth.

And then, with deep honesty, he shared how grateful he is for his wife, how she cares for him, his health, and his well-being, even through illnesses, his imperfections. But then he also gently pointed out that:

"We often become attached to the gifts in our lives. We love the blessings, but forget the One who gives them. We must fall in love with the Giver. That love is infinite." This reorientation from daat (gift) to daatar (the Giver) is a profound spiritual realignment that can reshape how we view relationships, gratitude, and even pain.

Despite the depth of his wisdom, Dr. Brijpal Singh ji carried such lightness and humour in his words. At one point, while speaking about marriage, he laughed and said, "When a

**A former Professor of Economics at LBS National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie is a legendary Gursikh of our times. Most decorated and humble, he is the personification of an ideal Gursikh. Author of a reputed write-up A Sikh in Greece, Dr Brijpal Singh ji is actively involved in providing financial assistance to Gursikh students through Gursikh Scholarship Fund at Patiala in Punjab.*

couple fights, one of them should go out for a walk. It's been 40 years, and I'm still on that walk!" We laughed with him - not just at the joke, but because of how naturally he mixed real wisdom with everyday life. He reminded us that spirituality doesn't have to be heavy - it can smile, it can laugh, it can be human.

The interaction was full of learning experiences. He also emphasized how we waste our time obsessing over small details - what's missing, what went wrong, who said what - instead of first identifying what's good.

"Why not acknowledge the goodness first?" he asked. This mindset shift can transform how we approach people, work, and even ourselves.

Dr Brijpal Singh ji spoke of the need for a 'quest for learning' in life. Regardless of age, role, or status, we must stay curious. And what humbled us most was when he said, "Today, I'm learning from all of you. I want to learn how you listen so intently, how you are so sincere. That's what I want to take with me and stand before God." We didn't know what to say. To be seen like that by someone so respected... it didn't just make us feel valued. It made us want to become even better learners, even more sincere seekers.

He beautifully articulated that everything - what we see, say, or feel is happening by Divine will. "Even if I see something beautiful, it's not me seeing it — it's God allowing me to see it."

The whole family was so welcoming that everyone talked to us as if we knew each other from years. His wife shared, "If someone comes to your house by invitation, they are a guest. But if someone comes uninvited, simply to learn or connect - they are sent by the Guru." She reminded us that every connection is divinely orchestrated.

We often get emotionally entangled in worldly blessings - jobs, people, comfort - and that attachment becomes a distraction. Dr Brijpal Singh ji said, "When we see only the daat, it becomes a vikaar (vice). But when we see the Daatar in the daat, it becomes a path to truth." He also gave a powerful example from his own Sewa at Joda Ghar in a Gurdwara. Two or three girls who would meet him everyday often complained to his wife that Dr Brijpal Singh ji didn't even remember their names even though they met him everyday. However, Brijpal ji said, "My focus was on shoes in Joda Ghar - whether I had cleaned them properly, if anything was left dirty and was not on who I met or talked to in Gurudwara. Our attention and focus must stay on what we are doing, the true purpose."

One of the lessons which I'll cherish forever was when he emphasized developing the "skill of sifting" - distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant. We must learn where to place our energy. Even in casual conversation, he never made us feel small or inexperienced. In fact, he reminded us that learning is a two-way street- that he was learning from us.

In a conversation about aspirations, I expressed to him my uncertainty about my admission abroad. I shared my fears, expectations, and self-doubt, and he simply said, "Pray. Whether God keeps you here or sends you there - let Him decide." He then shared a story from his youth, about not being selected for a prestigious foreign program despite being a top student. He was heartbroken. But now he says,

"If I had gone then, I wouldn't be who I am today. Everything happens for a reason. We must trust His plan."

In a discussion on mental health with the daughter of Dr. Brijpal Singh Ji, Dr. Harpreet Kaur Ji, former Head, Department of Psychology, Punjabi University, Patiala, shared how many young people struggle to accept failure. A case was mentioned where a talented man lost his job during COVID, couldn't accept the setback, and took his own life. A psychologist later studied his case and said, "He never learned how to accept failure."

Dr Brijpal Singh ji added to this and said, "A small failure is never the ultimate failure.' And most importantly: In every dire situation, the "God Factor" is the final factor.

Dr. Singh reminded us that Success in life isn't about one moment or one exam. Guru Sahib doesn't measure your life by one event - He sees your entire journey.

We came looking for answers.

We left carrying reflections.

We came thinking we would speak.

But what truly happened... was that we listened.

And in listening, we were changed.

For us, it wasn't just a meeting. It was a divine encounter. We didn't just hear wisdom, we felt it. We didn't just learn, we transformed.

We entered expecting answers.

We left carrying reflections, realignment, and a renewed hunger to live with presence, purpose, and faith. □



Walking Past Strife

*DR. DALVINDER SINGH GREWAL **

While passing through unbearable strife,
I tried to catch on to dear life.
The dreams of greener pastures,
The thought of an unassumed laughter.
All flew past my broadened eyes,
But there were numerous questions and whys.
Will I gather my spirit to pass through glut
All hurdles I wished past, all failures shut.
To come clean in these dirty surroundings
Where, to countless nays I was bound.
I dared myself and got out of myself,
Something different I wanted to be.
To succeed through all hurdles and odds
I planned to trudge through roughshod
I got a clear call from inside me.
Advance relentlessly when you want to be.
Throw off all shackles that force you around
Cultures and traditions that kept us so bound.
Walk through free from all nasty nets
I advanced into a world of my own, duly set.
Ensured that all restrictions are blown
From being someone else, I turned into my own.
Soon, some invisible hand had come in aid
That helped me all through the difficulties.
The energy from nowhere entered me,
I had to go, and go I could see.
Throwing off all shackles, I waded free,
Keeping in mind that someone I would be.
I finally succeeded in creating a new world,
Flying gleefully like a free bird
I remembered Him then who held my hand,
Who made me advance into this new land
I bowed my head and thanked him indeed
Whose words now I always heed.

*E-mail: dalvinder45@yahoo.co.in



Partap Singh Ji,

Sikh review has published three articles on Amritsar in the September issue, a good start. I am working on a article to provide information about important Tourist attractions aided in Amritsar city so that the readers should visit when they are on the pilgrimage.

Tarlochan Singh, Ex-M.P
Former Chairman
National Commission Minorities.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

S. Tarlochan Singh,

Response From The Editor-

We welcome your initiative to pin down places of tourist attraction in Amritsar to enable a large number of Indian/ Overseas devotees visiting Amritsar to mark such locations in their itinerary.

We will certainly publish such write-up/s on receipt by us.

Editor
Partap Singh (DIG retd)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Pratap Singh Ji,

I admire your way of approach to reach readers to educate them on crucial issues. You have very well wrote about the Sikh Parade and this time about 'Raj Karega Khalsa'. Please keep it up.

Tarlochan Singh, Ex-M.P
Former Chairman
National Commission Minorities.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Response from the Editor-

Thanks S. Tarlochan Singh ji for your kind words which shall inspire our team to undertake such a forward looking subject for the benefit of our younger/ all other readers.

Editor
Partap Singh (DIG retd)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Harmanpreet Kaur: The girl who bowled medium pace with a dupatta tied around her waist, conquers the world

Many years ago, a young girl wearing her school uniform with a dupatta tied around her waist was troubling senior boys with her pace at the Guru Nanak College ground in Moga, Punjab. This is how Harmanpreet Kaur's coach Kamaldeep Singh Sodhi remembers the first time he saw the future Indian batting superstar. On Sunday in Navi Mumbai, that young girl from Moga, who has redefined women's cricket in India, created history, becoming the country's first-ever ICC Women's World Cup-winning captain. Kamaldeep Singh convinced her father to let Harmanpreet Kaur train in private academy, where he was the coach, 30 kilometers away from Moga, coach Kamaldeep Singh took her under his wings.

Harmandar Singh established an early cricket connection with his daughter. On the day she was born, Harmandar Singh bought a t-shirt with 'good batsman' printed on it. A prophetic decision. "I bought that t-shirt out of joy for becoming a father to a girl. But I knew that she would become a sportsperson in future. She played hockey and was into athletics, too. When she started playing cricket, she developed a passion for the game," Harmandar Singh had told this paper earlier.

Adelaide-based Yadwinder Singh Sodhi, who is Kamaldeep Singh's son, also coached Harmanpreet Kaur before he shifted to Australia. He watched on television as Harmanpreet Kaur made 89 and added 167 runs with Jemimah Rodrigues in the record chase in the semifinal against Australia. "She was ready to play second fiddle and knew that her stability could help Jemimah play with freedom at the other end. And then she would show her experience by the way she tackled Australian spinners Alana King and Ashleigh Gardner. Earlier, she played square of the wicket, but then in the semi-finals, she used her footwork and understood that she cannot play on the rise on the slow wickets. The six above the cover off Tahlia McGrath and then hitting Ashleigh Gardner by stepping out are shots which only Harmanpreet Kaur can play with such dominance and force," Yadwinder Singh said.

Since she captained Moga to the Punjab Inter-District title in 2006, the district was champions for nine straight years before Harmanpreet Kaur got busy with national duty. Kamaldeep Singh saw a bright spark during an Inter-District Tournament in Patiala. "We were playing a match against Patiala for the Punjab Inter-District Trophy, and during her knock of 75 runs, one of Harmanpreet

Kaur's sixes broke the window pane of a neighbouring house. The house owners were very angry, but when they got to know that a girl had broken the windows with a six,

they applauded Harmanpreet Kaur. When she played that knock of 171 runs against Australia in 2017, as well as the knock in the semi-finals of this World Cup, she would have inspired many more girls to take up cricket,” Kamaldeep Singh said.

The Indian captain is one of the top six hitters in the world. Yadwinder Singh says it came naturally to her. “Perhaps it was in her genes that she could hit the ball at her will. When my father built the girls’ team, she was a medium pacer, but then she spent time also on her batting. And as coaches, we could sense that she has what we call the cricketing IQ to strike the ball at the right spot. And then we would work on getting the art of getting runs in the cow corner and mid-wicket area by stepping out and slog sweeping too. It took some time, but perhaps it was her early days of playing against much heavier-built boys that she became fearless. In 2009, months after her debut for India, she hit a 91meter long six against Ellyse Perry, and she recalled how her bat was also checked. Apni will te six mardai hai shuru toh (She hits sixes on her own right from start),” Yadwinder Singh said.

Harmanpreet Kaur also had a two-year stint with Harshal Pathak in Pune, leading up to the 2017 World Cup, which refined her bat-swing to be more efficient. Over the course of her career, Harmanpreet Kaur has always shone on the biggest stages. The 171* belongs in cricket’s hall of fame, but she now also holds the record for scoring the most runs in the history of Women’s ODI World Cup knockout matches (331 in 4 innings). At the 2018 T20 World Cup, she became the first Indian woman to score a century in the shortest format. And in this edition, she saved her best for the mighty Aussies.

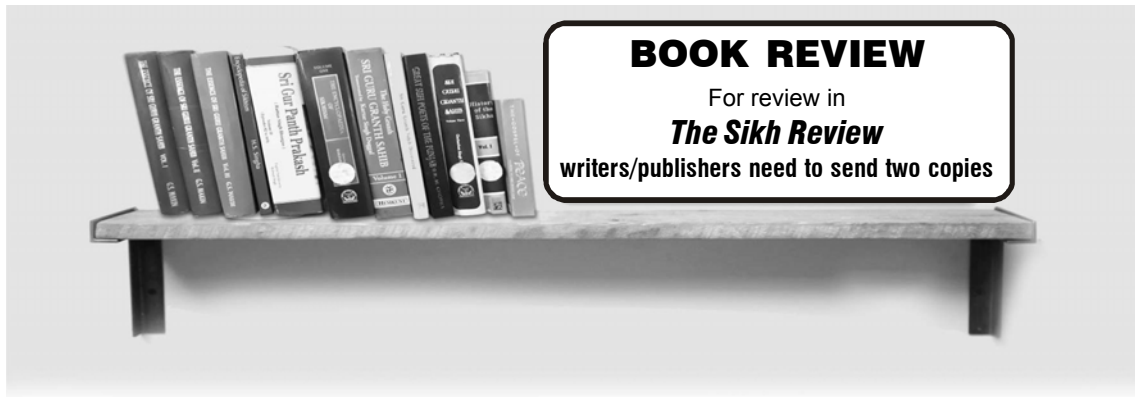
During the course of this campaign, Harmanpreet Kaur faced many challenges as captain, but she kept the squad together through a rocky league phase where the team lost three matches. Apart from being her intense self on the field, the world also saw her emotional side as she broke down in tears after the semifinal win. In the finals, though she scored just 20, her decision to bring Shafali Verma to bowl proved to be a masterstroke.

Coach Kamaldeep Singh is overjoyed with the World Cup win, but what also gives him immense satisfaction is how Harmanpreet Kaur has inspired other girls to take up cricket. “I am sure more parents will let their daughters play cricket, like the Harmans, Smritis, Jemimahs, and others.”

For Harmanpreet Kaur, it will undoubtedly go down as the greatest night of her career. She had told the ICC: “Itna haar liya hai, aur haar haar ke itna seekh liya hai...” In the final, she learned what it feels like to be the leader of World Champions

Courtesy : Nitin Sharma





BookTitle : EXPLORING SIKHISM: Faith, Values, and Heritage
Authors : Dr. Bhai Harbans Lal and Dr. Devinder Pal Singh
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A Review by Prof. Devinder Singh Chahal*

It is my pleasure to write a review of "Exploring Sikhism: Faith, Values, and Heritage," authored by the esteemed scientists and theologians Dr. Bhai Harbans Lal and Dr. Devinder Pal Singh. It is a profound and timely contribution to Sikh scholarship, offering a comprehensive exploration of Sikhism's spiritual, philosophical, and cultural dimensions. This hardcover volume comprises 18 chapters, organized into four thematic arcs. It is enriched by a foreword from S. Tarlochan Singh, a former Indian parliamentarian, which serves as a detailed introduction to the book. The book is a scholarly yet accessible resource for both Sikhs and non-Sikhs, addressing the faith's timeless wisdom and its relevance in a rapidly evolving, technology-driven world.

The book is structured as a collection of various essential and innovative articles published by the authors in different journals and newspapers, bridging Sikhism's

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eternal teachings with contemporary challenges, making it both a theological treatise and a practical guide. Its four parts—Foundations of Faith, Spiritual Praxis and Historical Legacy, Sikhism in the Age of Innovation, and Global Challenges and Sikh Identity- offer a logical progression from core principles to their modern applications.

Part I: Foundations of Faith (Chapters 1–5) establishes the philosophical underpinnings of Sikhism. Dr. Lal's opening chapter, *The Whole Earth is Exalted When Drenched in the Guru's Wisdom*, uses Guru Nanak's metaphor of the ocean and rivers to illustrate Sikhism's universal appeal, emphasizing its inclusivity and adaptability across cultures. The co-authored book *Sikhism - A Universal Religion* further dismantles misconceptions, highlighting Sikhism's emphasis on equality, tolerance, and ethical values through scriptural references, such as Guru Arjun's "No one is my enemy, and no one is a stranger" (SGGS, p. 1299). Dr. Singh's *The Spiritual Path in Sikhism* maps the soul's journey from love to eternal bliss. At the same time, Dr. Lal's *Three Pillars for a Fulfilled Life* revisits the ethical triad of Naam, Daan, and Isnaan, presenting them as dynamic principles for balanced living.

Part II: Spiritual Praxis and Historical Legacy (Chapters 6–11) delves into lived Sikh spirituality. Dr. Singh's *Compassion in Sikh Dharmic Tradition* portrays compassion as a way of life, embodied in practices like seva and langar. The chapter on Khimaa (forbearance), co-authored with Ek Ongkaar Khalsa Michaud, draws on the lives of the Gurus to illustrate how resilience fosters liberation. Dr. Singh's *Relevance of Guru Granth in the Present Era* highlights the scripture's guidance on contemporary issues, such as environmental stewardship, while Dr. Lal's *When the Light is Dimmed* cautions against moral decline, advocating for community-driven renewal.

Part III: Sikhism in the Age of Innovation (Chapters 12–15) is particularly innovative, exploring the intersection of Sikhism and artificial intelligence (AI). The co-authored book, *At the Intersection of AI, Spirituality, and Sikhism*, proposes ethical AI frameworks rooted in Sikh values, such as humility and justice. Dr. Singh's *Khalsa Synergy* envisions AI amplifying Sikh education and activism. At the same time, *AI and Sikh Heritage* explores digitization efforts to preserve manuscripts and oral histories, cautioning against reducing heritage to mere data. Dr Singh has written

many papers on the role of AI in Sikhism. He cautioned the Sikhs to be careful while using AI information about Sikhism because some of such information may not truly represent Sikhism.

Part IV: Global Challenges and Sikh Identity (Chapters 16–18) addresses existential threats. Dr. Singh's *Sikhism's Perspective on Environment and Sustainable Development* draws on the Guru Granth Sahib's reverence for nature, citing initiatives like Eco-Sikh's Guru Nanak Forest project. *Empowering a Global Movement for Sikh Renaissance* calls for an intellectual and creative revival, while *Braving the Challenges to Sikh Identity* addresses issues such as discrimination, assimilation, and misrepresentation, advocating for education and interfaith dialogue.

The book's greatest strength lies in its interdisciplinary approach, seamlessly blending theology, science, and technology. Both authors, distinguished scholars with backgrounds in neuroscience (Lal) and physics (Singh), bring rigour and clarity to their analyses. Their complementary perspectives — Lal's focus on theological nuance and Singh's emphasis on practical applications- create a balanced narrative that appeals to diverse audiences, from scholars to practitioners.

The exploration of AI's role in Sikhism is a standout feature, addressing a gap in religious studies. By proposing ethical AI frameworks and practical applications, such as digitizing scriptures and virtual reality tours of historical sites, the authors position Sikhism as a forward-thinking faith that can engage with modernity without compromising its core values. The book's global outlook, reflected in its discussion of the Sikh diaspora and initiatives like Khalsa Aid, underscores Sikhism's universal relevance, aligning with Guru Nanak's vision of a faith without borders.

The use of primary sources, particularly the Guru Granth Sahib, grounds the arguments in authentic Sikh thought. Quotes like "The One God is our father; we are the children of the One God" (SGGS, M. 5, p. 611) reinforce the faith's inclusivity. The inclusion of historical anecdotes, such as Guru Nanak's rejection of Sanskrit elitism, adds narrative depth, making complex ideas accessible.

While the book is comprehensive, its ambitious scope occasionally leads to uneven depth. For instance, the chapter on AI and Sikh heritage could benefit from more detailed case studies of existing digitization projects to strengthen its

practical recommendations. Additionally, the book's focus on North American and Indian contexts somewhat limits its engagement with Sikh communities in other regions, such as Southeast Asia or Africa, which could enrich its global perspective.

Writing, while clear, occasionally veers into academic density, which may be challenging for casual readers. Simplifying certain sections or including more visual aids, such as timelines or infographics, could enhance accessibility. Lastly, the book's discussion of internal community challenges, like fragmentation among Sikh institutions, is insightful but could be expanded to offer more concrete solutions.

"Exploring Sikhism" is a vital resource in an era of rapid technological and environmental change. Its emphasis on Sikhism's ecological ethics, exemplified by principles like "Pavan Guru, Pani Pita" (SGGS, Jap Sloka 2, p. 8), aligns with global sustainability goals, making it relevant to policymakers and activists. The book's call for a Sikh renaissance, driven by youth empowerment and interfaith dialogue, resonates with diaspora communities navigating identity in multicultural societies.

For Sikh youth, the book serves as both an inspiration and a roadmap, encouraging them to leverage technology and education to preserve their heritage. For non-Sikhs, it offers an inviting entry point into a faith often misunderstood, countering stereotypes through its emphasis on universal values like compassion and justice. The foreword by Tarlochan Singh and endorsements from figures like Arnold Toynbee and Pearl S. Buck enhance its credibility, affirming Sikhism's place in humanity's spiritual treasury.

"Exploring Sikhism: Faith, Values, and Heritage" is a masterful work that celebrates Sikhism's rich legacy while boldly charting its future. Dr. Lal and Dr. Singh have crafted a book that is both a scholarly milestone and a heartfelt invitation to engage with Sikh wisdom. Its interdisciplinary lens, particularly its pioneering exploration of AI, positions it as a must-read for anyone interested in religion, technology, or global ethics. As the authors conclude, Sikhism is not a relic but a "compass for the future," guiding humanity toward justice, equality, and truth. This book is a beacon for that journey, deserving a place on the shelves of scholars, practitioners, and seekers worldwide. □

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