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CONTENTS

MEDITATION	There is One Universal Creator God	S. Bhupinder Singh	5
EDITORIAL	Raj Karega Khalsa: Restoring the Spirit of a Timeless Vision	S. Partap Singh (DIG Retd)	6
MORAL TRADITION	Sikh Sewa: A Global Commitment To Selfless Service	Prof. Dr. Lakhinder Singh	8
HISTORIOGRAPHY	Foundation Day Of Amritsar	Dr. Bhai Harbans Lal	10
	The Eternal Light Of Harmony	Dr. Jogishwar Singh	15
	The Multifaceted Legacy Of Harmandar Sahib	Dr. Devinder Pal Singh	19
PHILOSOPHY	Dead while Alive	S. Bhupinder Singh	27
NAAMOLOGY	Five Khands In Gurbani	Dr. S. Sodhi	35
LITERATURE	Contribution Of Muslim Writers To Punjabi Literature In Jammu And Kashmir	Dr. Jasbir Singh Sarna	39
MARTYRDOM	Qurbani And Victory	S. Satpal Singh Johar	47
HERITAGE	The Kohinoor : From Mahabharata To British Crown Jewels	Dr. KBS Sidhu	52
VIEW POINT	Tirath Yatra Da Ki Labh Heh?	Dr. Kulbir Singh Gupta	57
SOCIOLOGY	Leadership In The Sikh Context For The Future World	Dr. Dalvinder Singh Grewal	61
PERSONALITY	The First Birth Centenary Of Dr. Jaswant Singh Neki	Dr. Mohinder Singh	69
SIKH ABROAD	J.J. Singh Campaigning For Indians To Obtain Citizenship Of America	S. Tarlochan Singh	74
TRIBUTE	Dr. Surinder Bir Singh	Dr. Kanwarpreet Singh	76
READERS FORUM	Letter to the editor		79
BOOK SECTION	My spiritual voyage through word divine (SGGS) : Surinder Jit Singh Pall	Reviewd by : S. Santokh Singh Bains	80
	Exploring the sikh roots in Eastern India: S. Jagmohan Singh Gill	Reviewd by: Dr. Bhai Harbans Lal	82

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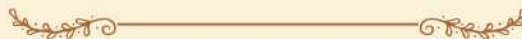
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[SGGS: 718]



Translation*

Some people claim that (God is) near us, (while) some (others) declare (that God is somewhere) far away from us. (But it is impossible to come to an agreement on this issue by mere arguments, just as for) a fish living in water (it is impossible to) try to climb a palm tree (same way coming to a consensus impossible). ||1|| O brother! Why do you get into (these useless) arguments in vain? Then to exhibit your (superior) knowledge (of whether God is near or far) you argue in vain? The person who has found God becomes humble (himself, and he does not flaunt his knowledge by getting into such futile arguments). ||1|| Pause || Pandits, who have acquired this knowledge (from reading), goes around discussing the Vedas (the ancient religious books) in depth. But the foolish Namdev gets to know God (experientially only through His meditation, and not from reading of scriptures). (Namdev is implying that it is his own personal experience and not an acquired bookish information, which needs to be substantiated.) ||2||1||

*Translation by : S. Bhupinder Singh



Raj Karega Khalsa: Restoring the Spirit of a Timeless Vision

In the Sikh tradition, the word “Khalsa” (Word origins as Khalis in Arabic, stands for Purity, moral courage, and selfless service) is not merely a label for the baptized Sikh community but a profound spiritual ideal — an embodiment of purity, moral courage, and selfless service. When Guru Gobind Singh Ji bestowed the title “Khalsa,” it signified the community of those who lived in complete alignment with divine will, free from fear and malice, committed to upholding truth and justice.

The phrase “Raj Karega Khalsa” first emerged in the context of Guru Gobind Singh Ji’s vision for a spiritually sovereign community—one that would exercise moral authority, not territorial domination. The “Raj” here is the reign of righteousness, where justice, compassion, and equality guide governance, whether personal or collective.

Unfortunately, over time, the phrase has often been misconstrued. For some, it has been politicized or interpreted in narrow nationalist terms, while for others it has been relegated to ritual recitation without deeper reflection. Both extremes risk diminishing its universal relevance.

Historical Evolution of the Khalsa Ideal

Guru Nanak Dev Ji laid the foundation by rejecting caste, ritualism, and tyranny, affirming instead the oneness of humanity and the sovereignty of divine truth. This seed was nurtured through the successive Gurus, culminating in Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji’s Miri-Piri doctrine—a balanced integration of temporal responsibility and spiritual wisdom.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji gave this vision concrete form in 1699 with the creation of the Khalsa. The Panj Pyare represented diversity transcending caste and social divisions. The Khalsa’s purpose was not conquest for power’s sake, but the protection of righteousness, the defence of the oppressed, and the service of all humanity.

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Challenges in Modern Times

In today's world, the Khalsa vision faces dual pressures—internal and external. Internally, complacency, factionalism, and the dilution of discipline have weakened collective identity. Externally, misrepresentation in media, political exploitation, and the conflation of spiritual sovereignty with territorial ambitions have blurred the message.

This has led to confusion both among Sikhs and non-Sikhs, where “Raj Karega Khalsa” is sometimes perceived as a separatist slogan rather than the universal call for justice and virtue that it truly is.

Restoring the Authentic Meaning

To reclaim the essence of “Raj Karega Khalsa” in the 21st century, several steps are crucial:

1. **Education** – Strengthening community understanding of Sikh history, Gurmat principles, and the Khalsa's role through gurdwaras, schools, and digital platforms.
2. **Living the Rehat Maryada** – Encouraging adherence to Sikh discipline not as ritual but as a pathway to spiritual and moral integrity.
3. **Global Service** – Expanding the Khalsa's mission of seva beyond community lines, engaging in humanitarian work that reflects the ideal of Sarbat da Bhalla.
4. **Interfaith Dialogue** – Demonstrating through action that the Khalsa vision is inclusive, fostering partnerships for justice and equality worldwide.

Conclusion

“Raj Karega Khalsa” is not a relic of the past but a timeless declaration of moral responsibility. Its true reign is the reign of compassion over cruelty, truth over falsehood, and humility over ego. In reclaiming its meaning, the Khalsa can shine as the Gurus intended—a light for all humanity, guiding the world toward a just and harmonious future.



Editor, The Sikh Review
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Sikh Sewa: A Global Commitment to Selfless Service

PROF. DR. LAKHINDER SINGH*

The Sikh faith is fundamentally rooted in the principle of "Sewa" – selfless service to humanity. This core value translates into a profound and active commitment to helping others, often extending far beyond their own community, and is particularly evident in times of crisis.

A Pillar of Disaster Relief Worldwide

In the face of natural disasters and humanitarian crises across the globe, the Sikh community consistently stands out as a rapid and unwavering first responder. Alongside Christian aid organizations, Sikhs are recognized for their active and immediate mobilization, providing essential food, water, and medicine to those in dire need. A recent testament to this dedication was seen during the Texas flood relief efforts, where UNITED SIKHS, operating from the San Antonio Gurdwara, launched a critical mission. The appreciation was palpable, with the Chief of Police of Kerr County stating, "We have seen the Sikh community at the forefront and consistently present as first responders in times of need. Your commitment to supporting victims is praiseworthy." Similarly, Mrs. Teresa of the Salvation Army expressed, "We are overjoyed with the Sikh community's outreach in providing hot meals for those in need."

Gurdwaras : Open Sanctuaries for All

Central to the Sikh ethos is the concept of "Langar" – the community kitchen. Sikh Gurdwaras (places of worship) worldwide embody this spirit by being open 24/7 to absolutely anyone, regardless of their religion, background, or social status. Here, visitors can find not only shelter but also hot, nutritious meals, offered freely and without judgment. This unwavering hospitality ensures that no one in their vicinity ever goes hungry or without a shelter.

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A touching example of this hospitality recently occurred in Mumbai, India: A French family with their three daughters got stranded during their visit due to heavy rains and desperately searched for hotel rooms. They eventually found shelter and food in a Sikh Gurdwara. The next day, the family departed for Paris, leaving a donation and a note that read: "One of the worst experiences in India turned out to be one of our best."

A Legacy of Courage and Trust

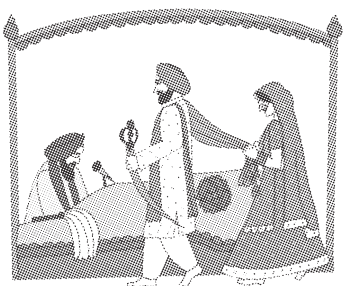
Beyond humanitarian aid, Sikh history is replete with examples of immense bravery and sacrifice. The gallantry of Sikh soldiers during both World Wars is well-documented, showcasing their unwavering courage and commitment to justice and duty on the global stage.

This deep-seated trust in the Sikh character extends into everyday life. The renowned naturalist Sir David Attenborough once famously remarked during his travels in India that he always sought out a Sikh taxi driver because he felt inherently safe. This sentiment resonates with personal experiences, such as that of a German friend traveling in the USA who, facing car trouble, was advised to "look for a Mr. Singh in the telephone book" for guaranteed shelter and help. These anecdotes, though seemingly small, underscore the profound reputation for reliability, honesty, and helpfulness that the Sikh community has cultivated globally.

The unwavering commitment to Sewa, the open embrace of Gurdwaras, and a history rich with valor and trustworthiness collectively paint a vivid picture of a community dedicated to serving humanity in its purest form.



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– *Publisher*

Foundation Day of Amritsar

DR. BHAI HARBANS LAL*

The Foundation Day of Amritsar : Cradle of Sikh Practices, Culture and Civilization.

Amritsar, a name that resonates with spiritual depth and historical grandeur, stands not merely as a city but as a symbol of resilience, devotion, and the Sikh ethos. The Foundation Day of Amritsar marks the birth of a place synonymous with the Sikh faith and its core values. Established in 1577 CE by the fourth Sikh Guru, Guru Ram Das Ji, Amritsar was conceived as a center of spiritual and communal life. Over the centuries, it has become the most sacred city for Sikhs and a prominent site of Indian heritage. This essay delves into Amritsar's genesis, evolution, and enduring relevance, exploring its foundation not just as a historical event but as a transformative moment in the Sikh narrative.

The Historical Context of Amritsar's Foundation

The establishment of Amritsar in the late 16th century occurred during a time of spiritual ferment and socio-political change in the Indian subcontinent. Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, and Guru Amar Das laid the groundwork for a new faith rooted in universal living, based on Guru Nanak's teaching of naam, daan, and ishnaan.

Guru Ram Das Ji, the fourth Guru (1534–1581), carried forward this mission by recognizing the need for a permanent center where the Sikh community could congregate, learn, and grow. In 1573, he began developing a spiritual site known as Guru Da Chakk. With the acquisition of land granted by Emperor Akbar to Guru Amar Das Ji's daughter (Bibi Bhani, wife of Guru Ram Das Ji), the project was formalized. By 1577, excavation began for a sarovar (holy tank), which would form the nucleus of the new township. This date is widely recognized as the Foundation Day of Amritsar.

Guru Ram Das Ji envisioned this town not as a place of mere residence, but as a pilgrimage of the soul, free from caste, class, or creed divisions. The centrality of the Sarovar—later called Amrit Sarovar (pool of nectar)—gave the city its name: Amritsar.

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II. The Role of the Gurus in Amritsar's Early Development

After Guru Ram Das Ji laid its foundation, Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the fifth Guru, played a pivotal role in expanding the town's physical and spiritual significance. He completed the excavation of the Amrit Sarovar and initiated the construction of the Harmandir Sahib, or the Golden Temple, which was completed in 1601. Distinctively, the temple was built at a level lower than the surrounding land, with doors in all four directions—symbolizing humility and universal access.

Amritsar thus became the seat of the Sikh spiritual authority, attracting devotees from all corners. Guru Arjan Dev Ji also compiled the Adi Granth, the first scripture of Sikhism, and installed it in the Golden Temple in 1604, establishing the practice of kirtan and scripture recitation that continues today.

Later Gurus further developed the city. Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, the sixth Guru, built the Akal Takht, a throne of temporal authority opposite the Harmandir Sahib. This conferred on Amritsar the twin roles of spiritual (Piri) and temporal (Miri) guidance, creating a unique spiritual polity that would later define Sikh sovereignty.

III. Amritsar as a Cultural and Political Hub

By the 18th century, Amritsar had become more than a sacred city—it was the nerve center of Sikh cultural and military resistance. During the turbulent Mughal and Afghan invasions, the city and its people endured destruction but never lost their resolve. The massacre by Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1762, known as the Wadda Ghallughara, devastated the Sikh community. Yet, within a decade, the misls (confederacies) of the Sikh warriors reclaimed and rebuilt the city.

The golden era of Amritsar was under the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780–1839), the founder of the Sikh Empire. He restored and embellished the Golden Temple with marble and gold plating, giving it the appearance we recognize today. He treated Amritsar as the spiritual capital while Lahore served as the political one. His secular approach—where Muslims, Hindus, and Christians also found protection—reflected the inclusive foundation laid by Guru Ram Das Ji.

IV. Foundation Day Celebrations: Spiritual and Communal Importance

Although the exact Gregorian date varies due to the lunar calendar, the Foundation Day of Amritsar is celebrated in the month of Katak (October-November) in the Sikh Nanakshahi calendar. It is a day of spiritual reflection and community service.

The day is marked with:

- **Akhand Path** (continuous reading of Guru Granth Sahib)
- **Kirtan Darbars** (musical recitations of Sikh hymns)
- **Nagar Kirtans** (spiritual processions through city streets)
- **Langar Seva** (community kitchens serving free meals)
- **Lectures and seminars** on Sikh history and philosophy

The celebrations not only recall the foundation of a city but rekindle the founding principles of seva (service), Simran (remembrance of God), and sangat (holy congregation).

V. The Significance of Amritsar in Sikh Psyche

Amritsar is more than a location; it is the spiritual heart of the Sikh world. Every Sikh, irrespective of birthplace, harbors a deep emotional connection to this city. Visiting the Darbar Sahib is often described as a transformative pilgrimage. The serenity of the Amrit Sarovar, the sacred vibrations of Gurbani, and the egalitarian atmosphere of the langar all represent the Sikh ideals in physical form.

Moreover, the Akal Takht, where decisions regarding the Sikh Panth are made, reaffirms Amritsar's role as the seat of Sikh sovereignty and moral authority.

VI. Amritsar and the Colonial Encounter

The British colonial period brought further trials. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919, in which British troops under General Dyer killed hundreds of unarmed civilians, took place in Amritsar and left an indelible scar on the city's conscience. This horrific event catalyzed the Indian freedom struggle and exposed the brutality of colonialism.

Sikhs continued to play a leading role in resistance, including the Gurdwara Reform Movement of the 1920s, which reclaimed Sikh shrines from corrupt custodians (mahants) under British patronage. This struggle was deeply rooted in the city of Amritsar and culminated in the formation of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) and the Shiromani Akali Dal, institutions that still operate from the city.

VII. Contemporary Amritsar: Challenges and Continuities

Today, Amritsar stands as a modern city while retaining its traditional roots. With a population exceeding 1.1 million, it is a bustling urban center known for tourism, trade, and culture. The Golden Temple Complex receives more visitors annually than the Taj Mahal, attracting pilgrims, historians, and travelers alike.

Amritsar is also a site of interfaith dialogue and peace. The Partition Museum, Durgiana Mandir, and Jallianwala Bagh make it a space for remembrance and reconciliation.

However, the city is not without its challenges:

- Urban congestion and pollution affect the environment around the Sarovar.
- Political tensions, such as those witnessed during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and Operation Blue Star, continue to cast a shadow.
- Commercialization and unchecked tourism threaten to dilute its spiritual atmosphere.

Nevertheless, the spirit of the city—embodied in the selfless sevadars of the langar halls and the tireless kirtanias (musicians)—remains strong.

VIII. Amritsar as a Global Symbol

With the spread of the Sikh diaspora across the world, Amritsar has become a transnational sacred center. Sikhs in Canada, the UK, the US, and elsewhere remain connected to Amritsar emotionally and organizationally. Satellite broadcasts of the Golden Temple's kirtan, live streams of Akhand Paths, and frequent international pilgrimages keep Amritsar at the forefront of Sikh consciousness.

Diaspora contributions have funded hospitals, educational institutions, and preservation projects in the city, reflecting the global Sikh commitment to their foundational city.

IX. Reflections on the Legacy of Guru Ram Das Ji

To understand Amritsar's Foundation Day is to appreciate the vision of Guru Ram Das Ji, whose humility, spiritual wisdom, and community-building spirit laid the groundwork for a city that belongs not just to Sikhs, but to all humanity.

Guru Ram Das Ji composed many of the hymns sung in the Golden Temple today. His verses emphasize self-effacement, divine love, and service to others—values that

the city of Amritsar continues to exemplify. His founding act was not a feat of conquest or commerce but of compassion, equality, and devotion.

Conclusion: The Living City of the Guru

As the Sikh world commemorates the Foundation Day of Amritsar, it is a time to honor the vision of the Gurus, the sacrifices of countless generations, and the promise of the future. In a world fragmented by identity politics and spiritual voids, Amritsar stands as a reminder of what a sacred city can be: a place where the divine is made accessible, the hungry are fed without question, and every visitor—regardless of caste, creed, or nationality—is welcomed as family.

The Foundation Day of Amritsar is not merely a date in history—it is a call to live the principles on which the city was built: humility, devotion, service, and unity. As long as the waters of the Amrit Sarovar ripple with prayers and the Guru Granth Sahib is sung within its golden sanctum, Amritsar will continue to shine as the jewel of Sikh heritage and humanity’s shared spiritual inheritance.



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The Eternal Light of Harmony

The Historical and Spiritual Legacy of Sri Darbar Sahib

DR JOGISHWAR SINGH*

Introduction

In the sacred city of Amritsar in India, stands Sri Darbar Sahib—reverently known as the Golden Temple—a luminous embodiment of Sikhism’s spiritual ideals and a universal beacon of peace, humility, and inclusion. Founded by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the fifth Sikh Guru, in 1581 and completed in 1604, the temple’s foundation was not merely a construction milestone but a spiritual declaration of openness and divine equality. It provided the fledgling Sikh faith with a central focal point, constituting an important step in the development of Sikhi as a distinct religion. It became, over time, as the main decision making centre for the community after the establishment of the Akal Takht (Timeless throne) by the sixth Guru, Hargobind Sahib, opposite the sanctum sanctorum located in the middle of the sarovar. The Darbar Sahib has become as important in the lives of Sikhs as the Vatican for the Christians or Mecca for the Muslims. It has been desecrated several times, first by Muslim rulers and finally by the Indian government in 1984 but has been rebuilt each time to defy those who desecrate it.

A Foundation Rooted in Unity

Guru Arjan Dev Ji envisioned a Place of worship that welcomed all—a revolutionary idea in an era of rigid caste hierarchies and religious exclusivity. In a profound act of interfaith respect, the Guru invited Hazrat Mian Mir, a revered Muslim saint from Lahore, to lay the temple’s foundation stone. This singular gesture symbolized the Guru’s message that truth transcends religion and that divinity dwells in unity, not division.

The temple was deliberately constructed lower than the surrounding city, signifying humility—a central Sikh virtue. Furthermore, it features four entrances, symbolizing openness to people from all directions and walks of life. Many religious

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shrines are on elevated situations, requiring devotees to climb stairs or hills to reach them. Darbar Sahib is situated below ground level so that devotees have to descend down some stairs to reach it. A visible lesson in humility as a cardinal virtue of Sikhi and a contrast to other elevated religious shrines.

There are no restrictions other than removal of shoes and washing the feet, covering of the head and non-admittance of toxic substances like tobacco or alcohol for ingress to the Darbar Sahib. All religions, castes, creeds are allowed to visit it. All visitors are allowed to partake of the Langar, the community kitchen. It is a visible and practical example of the rejection of the divisive caste system, the bane of Indian society. It is also a shining example of welcoming human unity.

Spiritual Significance

At the heart of the Darbar Sahib is the Guru Granth Sahib, the eternal Guru of the Sikhs, revered as the living embodiment of divine wisdom. The sacred scripture is continuously recited in uninterrupted prayer, creating an atmosphere charged with Naam Simran (meditative remembrance of God).

Surrounding the sanctum is the Amrit Sarovar (Pool of Nectar), whose waters are believed to have healing properties. Pilgrims immerse themselves in its purity, symbolically shedding ego and worldly attachments.

The Darbar Sahib exemplifies Sikhism's core spiritual tenets:

- Naam Japna (meditating on God's name)
- Kirat Karni (honest living)
- Vand Chhakna (sharing with others)

The Guru ka Langar is run on a 100% voluntary basis. Devotees, many times from even other faiths, come and serve there, contribute finances or rations, clean the premises in a shining example of communal harmony and selfless service.

A Pillar of Sikh Identity and Resilience

Sri Darbar Sahib is not just a religious monument—it is a living chronicle of Sikh perseverance. Over centuries, it has faced invasions and desecrations but has always been rebuilt with unwavering devotion.

The most poignant reminder of this resilience is Operation Blue Star in June 1984, when the temple complex was stormed by the Indian Army. Despite the tragedy and

the pain endured by the global Sikh community, the sanctity and centrality of the Darbar Sahib remain undiminished, serving as a focal point of identity, remembrance, and healing.

After the Akal Takht was badly damaged in 1984 as a part of the Darbar Sahib complex, Sikhs not only reconstructed it but did it after rejecting the hasty reconstruction undertaken under the auspices of the Indian government which had inflicted this destruction. The community decided to demolish the structure rebuilt by the Indian government under the supervision of a Sikh minister. After this demolition, the Akal Takht was reconstructed through Kaar Sewa (voluntary community service) to restore the glory of the Darbar Sahib complex. Sikhs, including the present author, came from all over the world to participate in this Kaar Sewa. It was another example of how the Darbar Sahib complex always arises from its ashes like the legendary Phoenix, each time, invaders or governments seek to desecrate it.

During the period of Sikh Genocide from 1715 till 1765 when local rulers had set a price on Sikh heads, Sikhs used to congregate twice a year at Vaisakhi in April and Diwali in autumn to take decisions affecting the community. Such a gathering was known as the Sarbat Khalsa. It also showed their resilience to their persecutors by manifesting their presence in spite of the price put on their heads. After the formation of the Misals, such biannual meetings in the Darbar Sahib complex became the main decision making forum where social and military decisions were reached in a democratic fashion, enshrined in the term Gurmatta (Guru's decision). The Misals used to combine after such meetings as the Dal Khalsa to fight against foreign invaders and local oppressors. This system strongly resembles the system of the Landsgemeinde, practised in various Cantons (provinces) in Switzerland where, even today, decisions affecting the local community are reached through a show of hands of those present.

Global Relevance and Inspiration

In today's fractured world, the Darbar Sahib offers a universal message of compassion and service. The temple's Langar (community kitchen), established by Sikh Gurus and expanded through history—serves over 100,000 meals daily, free of charge, to all, irrespective of religion, caste, gender, or nationality.

This practice is a living example of:

- Equality
- Seva (selfless service)
- Shared humanity

Visitors from across the globe—pilgrims, scholars, tourists, and peace advocates—flock to experience its calm, sacred energy. For many, it is not merely a place of worship but a sanctuary for the soul.

Darbar Sahib offers a place for spiritual solace and visual exhibition of human harmony in a world riven more and more by conflicts between nations, religions, governments. The rise of religions fundamentalism and political expediency in recent years is adding fuel to the fire of wars in the world. The message represented by the Darbar Sahib offers a solution to such problems which are damaging world order in an accelerating fashion where numerous countries are now ruled by populist governments making a mockery of democratic decision making, an essential pillar of Sikh ethos, so clearly represented by the Darbar Sahib complex. Its message of hope needs to be spread far and wide as a shining example of human harmony, tolerance, ability to rise from the ashes like a Phoenix and social service.

Conclusion

The foundation of Sri Darbar Sahib is more than a moment in Sikh history—it is a living, breathing testament to divine unity, compassion, and inclusion. It continues to shine as a spiritual lighthouse, guiding humanity toward humility, service, and collective upliftment.

To Sikhs, it is their holiest shrine. To the world, it is a symbol of peace, reminding us that even in the darkest times, the divine light still shines through the golden walls of hope, courage, and love.



ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਬਣੀਐ ॥

The Word of the True Guru's Bani is the embodiment of Truth;
through Gurbani, one becomes perfect.

[SGGS : 304]

The Multifaceted Legacy of Harmandar Sahib

DR. DEVINDER PAL SINGH*

Abstract

Harmandar Sahib, also known as the Golden Temple, in Amritsar, India, is a cornerstone of Sikhism and a global symbol of spirituality, equality, and resilience. This essay explores its multifaceted legacy across spiritual, historical, architectural, cultural, and social dimensions. As the holiest Sikh shrine, it welcomes all, embodying inclusivity through its open entrances and sacred Sarovar. Historically, it has endured destruction and reconstruction, reflecting the Sikh people's perseverance, notably under the patronage of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Architecturally, its golden facade and humble design blend Mughal and Rajput styles, symbolizing Sikh values. The Langar, serving thousands daily, revolutionizes social equality by uniting diverse communities through shared meals. Culturally, it shapes Sikh identity and inspires global interfaith dialogue and humanitarian efforts. Despite challenges like environmental concerns and political complexities, its universal message endures, amplified by digital outreach. Harmandar Sahib's legacy transcends religion, offering a timeless model of compassion and unity that reinforces its role as a spiritual and cultural beacon for humanity in an increasingly divided world.

Introduction

Harmandar Sahib, also known as the Golden Temple, stands as one of the most revered spiritual and cultural landmarks in the world. Located in Amritsar, Punjab, India, this sacred Sikh shrine is not only a place of worship but also a symbol of equality, compassion, and resilience. Its shimmering golden architecture, serene Sarovar (holy pool), and the daily practice of Langar (community kitchen) draw millions of devotees and visitors annually. The legacy of Harmandar Sahib is multifaceted,

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encompassing spiritual, historical, cultural, architectural, and social dimensions [1-2]. This essay explores the rich tapestry of its legacy, delving into its origins, its role in Sikhism, its architectural grandeur, its historical significance, and its enduring influence on society and global culture.

Spiritual Significance

At the heart of Harmandir Sahib's legacy is its spiritual importance as the holiest site in Sikhism. Founded by Guru Ram Das, the fourth Sikh Guru, in the 16th century, and completed under the guidance of Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru, the temple was envisioned as a place where people from all walks of life could come to worship and seek divine connection. The name "Harmandir Sahib" translates to "the abode of God," reflecting its role as a spiritual haven.

The temple houses the Guru Granth Sahib, the eternal Sikh scripture, which is treated with utmost reverence. The continuous recitation of hymns (Kirtan) from the Guru Granth Sahib fills the sanctum with a sense of peace and devotion. Unlike many religious sites that restrict access based on caste, creed, or gender, Harmandir Sahib welcomes everyone, embodying the Sikh principle of equality. Its four entrances, facing all cardinal directions, symbolize openness and inclusivity, inviting people from every corner of the world to experience its spiritual aura.

The Sarovar, a sacred pool surrounding the temple, is another integral element of its spiritual legacy. Pilgrims believe that bathing in the Sarovar cleanses the soul and brings spiritual purification. The act of seva (selfless service), such as cleaning the temple premises or serving in the Langar, is a cornerstone of Sikh practice at Harmandir Sahib, fostering humility and devotion among devotees.

Historical Context and Resilience

The history of Harmandir Sahib is a testament to the resilience of the Sikh community. Constructed by Guru Arjan Dev, the temple was designed as a central place of worship for the Sikh community. However, its history is marked by periods of destruction and reconstruction, reflecting the turbulent times the Sikh community faced. In the 18th century, the temple was repeatedly attacked by Mughal and Afghan forces, who sought to suppress Sikh influence. Despite these challenges, the Sikh community rebuilt the temple each time, demonstrating unwavering faith and determination.

One of the most significant historical events associated with Harmandar Sahib is the establishment of the Sikh Empire under Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the early 19th century. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, a devout Sikh, significantly contributed to the temple's legacy by overseeing its reconstruction and embellishing it with gold foil, earning it the name "Golden Temple." His patronage elevated the temple's status as a symbol of Sikh sovereignty and cultural pride.

In the 20th century, Harmandar Sahib was at the center of significant political and social upheavals. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919, which occurred in Amritsar, underscored the city's role in India's struggle for independence. Later, in 1984, the temple complex was the site of Operation Blue Star, a military operation that left deep scars on the Sikh community. Despite these challenges, Harmandar Sahib has remained a beacon of hope and resilience, symbolizing the Sikh spirit of "Chardi Kala" (eternal optimism).

Architectural Grandeur

The architectural brilliance of Harmandar Sahib is a key aspect of its legacy. Designed by Guru Arjan Dev, the temple blends elements of Mughal and Rajput architectural styles, creating a unique aesthetic that is both majestic and serene [3]. Unlike traditional temples that are elevated on platforms, Harmandar Sahib is built at a lower level, symbolizing humility. Devotees must descend steps to reach the sanctum, reinforcing the Sikh value of humility in the presence of God.

The temple's golden exterior, added during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign, is a striking feature that has made it one of the most recognizable religious sites in the world. The intricate marble inlays, frescoes, and gold-plated domes create a visually stunning effect, especially when reflected in the Sarovar at sunrise or sunset. The Darshani Deori (main entrance) and the causeway leading to the sanctum are adorned with detailed carvings, showcasing the craftsmanship of the era.

The Akal Takht, located within the Harmandar Sahib complex, is another architectural and spiritual marvel. Established by Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru, it represents the temporal authority of the Sikhs and serves as a seat of justice and governance. The juxtaposition of the spiritual (Harmandar Sahib) and temporal (Akal Takht) within the same complex reflects the Sikh philosophy of Miri-Piri, which emphasizes the balance between spiritual and worldly responsibilities [4].

The Langar: A Social Revolution

One of the most remarkable aspects of Harmandar Sahib's legacy is the institution of Langar, the community kitchen that serves free meals to all visitors, regardless of their background. Initiated by Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru, and institutionalized at Harmandar Sahib by Guru Arjan Dev, the Langar is a powerful symbol of equality, compassion, and community service. Every day, thousands of people from different religions, castes, and economic backgrounds sit together on the floor to share a simple vegetarian meal, breaking down social barriers.

The Langar at Harmandar Sahib operates on an unprecedented scale, serving meals to over 100,000 people daily. Volunteers, or sevadars, work tirelessly to prepare, cook, and serve the food, embodying the Sikh principle of seva. The Langar is entirely funded by donations from the community, reflecting the collective spirit of giving. This practice has inspired similar initiatives worldwide, making Harmandar Sahib a global model for communal harmony and social welfare.

Beyond its immediate impact, the Langar has had a lasting influence on modern humanitarian efforts. It serves as a reminder that food, a basic human need, can be a powerful tool for fostering unity and equality. The Langar's legacy extends beyond the temple, inspiring organizations and individuals to address hunger and inequality in their communities.

Some Outstanding Features of the Harmandar Sahib Complex

The Akal Takhat

The Akal Takhat, historically known as Akal Bunga [5], is situated directly opposite the sanctum of the Harmandar Sahib (Golden Temple) in Amritsar. It is the highest temporal seat of Sikh authority. Established in 1606 by Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, the sixth Sikh Guru, it symbolizes the unity of spiritual and temporal power in Sikhism, known as Miri-Piri. The Akal Takhat serves as the supreme decision-making center where matters concerning the Sikh community, including doctrine, discipline, and political advocacy, are deliberated.

Unlike the Harmandar Sahib, which represents spiritual guidance and inner peace, the Akal Takhat asserts the Sikh community's commitment to justice, dignity, and active engagement in worldly affairs. It has historically issued edicts or hukamnamas to guide the global Sikh diaspora on matters of faith and collective

action. Architecturally austere yet majestic, the Akal Takhat has withstood historical upheavals, including assaults during the Mughal and British eras, as well as the traumatic events of 1984.

It stands as a resilient symbol of sovereignty, martyrdom, and moral leadership. The dual presence of Harmandir Sahib and Akal Takhat within the same complex reflects the holistic Sikh worldview, which holds that true spirituality must be accompanied by righteous action and fearless responsibility in society.

Central Sikh Museum

The museum in Harmandir Sahib, also known as the Central Sikh Museum, is located within the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar, Punjab. It plays a significant role in preserving and showcasing Sikh history, heritage, and sacrifice. Established in 1958, the museum is situated in the main clock tower building at the entrance of the holy shrine.

The museum houses a rich collection of paintings, manuscripts, old coins, weapons, and historical documents that chronicle the lives of Sikh Gurus, saints, warriors, and martyrs. Portraits of Sikh martyrs and heroes from various eras, particularly those who opposed Mughal oppression or colonial rule, adorn the museum's walls, providing visitors with a profound insight into the community's struggles and resilience.

One of the museum's key objectives is to inspire devotion and educate devotees and visitors about the rich legacy of Sikhism. It highlights the importance of faith, valour, and service, central tenets of the Sikh religion. The museum also features rare photographs and depictions of significant events in Sikh history.

The museum at Harmandir Sahib is not just a historical archive, but a spiritual and educational experience that complements the sanctity of the Golden Temple, deepening the visitor's understanding of Sikh identity and heritage.

Toshakhana

The Toshakhana of Harmandir Sahib, located within the sanctified premises of the Golden Temple in Amritsar, serves as the official treasury where precious offerings made by devotees from around the world are preserved. The term "Toshakhana" translates to "treasure house," and in the context of Sikhism, it holds deep spiritual and

historical significance. From ancient times to the modern era, offerings such as gold, silver, precious stones, ornaments, and antique artifacts have been donated as acts of reverence and devotion.

Situated near the Darshani Deorhi, the Toshakhana is not open to the general public but is managed by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) under strict supervision. Among its priceless possessions are gold-plated swords, jewelled kirpans, royal robes, intricately adorned palkis (palanquins), and rare manuscripts of Sikh scriptures. These offerings are not viewed merely as material wealth but as sacred tokens symbolizing the devotion of the sangat (congregation) towards the Guru and the Panth.

The Toshakhana also serves a custodial function—preserving heritage and reminding future generations of the collective spiritual and cultural wealth of the Sikh community. It embodies the Sikh principles of sewa (selfless service), shardha (faith), and communal unity in devotion.

Sikh Reference Library

The Sikh Reference Library, located within the precincts of the Harmandir Sahib complex in Amritsar, was one of the most significant repositories of Sikh heritage and scholarship. Established by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) in 1946, the library housed an extensive and invaluable collection of rare manuscripts, Hukamnamas (edicts) from the Sikh Gurus, historical documents, ancient copies of Guru Granth Sahib, and literature on Sikh theology, history, and philosophy. It was not merely a physical archive, but a spiritual and intellectual beacon for Sikh researchers and scholars worldwide.

Tragically, during Operation Blue Star in June 1984, the library was looted, desecrated, and burned. Despite official claims of relocation for “safe keeping,” many manuscripts and books were never returned, resulting in an irreparable loss to Sikh history and cultural memory. For the Sikh community, this destruction was not just physical, it was a symbolic wound, representing an assault on their identity and knowledge traditions.

Efforts to reconstruct and revive the Sikh Reference Library continue today, including digitization projects and appeals for the return of stolen documents. It remains a powerful reminder of the need to protect religious and cultural heritage, especially in times of conflict.

Cultural and Global Influence of Harmandar Sahib

Harmandar Sahib’s legacy transcends religious boundaries, making it a cultural and global phenomenon. The temple attracts millions of visitors annually, including tourists, scholars, and spiritual seekers from around the world. Its universal message of equality and compassion resonates with people of all faiths, making it a symbol of interfaith harmony.

The temple has also played a significant role in shaping Sikh identity and culture. The daily rituals, such as the early morning Prakash (installation of the Guru Granth Sahib) and Sukhasan (closing ceremony), are steeped in tradition and reinforce the Sikh way of life. The vibrant festivals celebrated at Harmandar Sahib, such as Vaisakhi and Guru Nanak Jayanti, attract global attention and strengthen the Sikh diaspora’s connection to their roots.

In the global context, Harmandar Sahib has become a symbol of Sikhism’s contributions to humanity. The Sikh diaspora, spread across countries like Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States, often looks to the Golden Temple as a source of inspiration and pride. Its image is frequently used in art, literature, and media to represent Sikh values and heritage.

The temple’s influence extends to interfaith dialogue and global humanitarian efforts. The principles of equality and service embodied by Harmandar Sahib have inspired initiatives in education, healthcare, and disaster relief. For example, Sikh organizations like Khalsa Aid draw on the temple’s legacy to provide aid in crisis zones worldwide, reflecting the global reach of its values.

Challenges and Contemporary Relevance

Despite its enduring legacy, Harmandar Sahib faces contemporary challenges that test its resilience. Environmental concerns, such as the pollution of the Sarovar due to urban development, pose a threat to the temple’s sanctity. Efforts are underway to preserve the ecological balance of the complex, including water purification projects and the implementation of sustainable practices.

The temple also navigates the complexities of modern politics and globalization. As a prominent religious and cultural site, it often finds itself at the

intersection of religious sentiment and political discourse. Ensuring that its message of universal brotherhood remains untainted by external influences is a constant challenge.

In the digital age, Harmandar Sahib's legacy is being shared with a global audience through technology. Live broadcasts of Kirtan, virtual tours, and social media platforms have made the temple accessible to those who cannot visit in person. This digital outreach has expanded its influence, allowing people worldwide to connect with its spiritual and cultural heritage.

Conclusion

The legacy of Harmandar Sahib is a multifaceted tapestry woven from threads of spirituality, history, architecture, social reform, and global influence. As the spiritual heart of Sikhism, it embodies the principles of equality, compassion, and service that are at the core of the faith. Its historical resilience reflects the strength of the Sikh community in the face of adversity. Architecturally, it stands as a masterpiece that blends humility with grandeur. The Langar represents a revolutionary approach to social equality, while its cultural and global impact continues to inspire millions.

Harmandar Sahib is more than a physical structure; it is a living testament to the enduring values of Sikhism and a beacon of hope for humanity. Its legacy reminds us that faith, when combined with action, can transform societies and transcend borders. As the world continues to grapple with division and inequality, the Golden Temple stands as a timeless symbol of unity, compassion, and the shared human spirit. □

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Dead while Alive

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Abstract

The concept of Dead while Alive appears as an unbelievable contradiction, because both terms are mutually incompatible. It makes us ponder how one can be alive when one is dead. In this essay, we will explore what Guru Ji means by being dead while alive. We will also explore what is achieved when we can be alive while.

Introduction

Let us explore this reality of being “Dead While Alive” in light of Gurbani. Gurbani gives us an inkling that there is no life without dying in these words:

ਸਦ ਜੀਵਨੁ ਭਲੇ ਕਹਾਂਹੀ ॥ ਮੂਏ ਬਿਨੁ ਜੀਵਨੁ ਨਾਹੀ ॥

Sad Jeevan Bhalo kahaa(n)hee

“Mooae bin jeevan naahee ||1||”

(SGGS. Pg. No. 655)

Translation: People say it is good to live forever, || But without dying (to self-will), there is no life. ||1||

However, the reality is that the very mention of the word ‘death’ sends chills of fear down the spine. It becomes a taboo subject instantly in any conversation; immediately the efforts are made to change the topic of conversation to a more enjoyable topic. Even people will implore you to talk about something nice. But death is an inevitable part of life, it being ephemeral. Whosoever is born in this world comes with an expiry date, called death. It is certain, but still humans have a fear of death, as nobody knows what happens afterwards, because nobody has come back to share that experience. Additionally, all humans have this innate desire to live forever. In the hospitals, we can keep terminal patients alive, as death is considered a defeat medically and by the family of the patients. Gurbani shares this aspect in these words:

ਜਗਿ ਮਰਣੁ ਨ ਭਾਇਆ ਨਿਤ ਆਪੁ ਲੁਕਾਇਆ ਮਤ ਜਮੁ ਪਕਰੈ ਲੈ ਜਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥

“Jag maran na bhaiaa nit aap lukaiaa mat jam pakarai lai jai jeeau ||”

(SGGS, Pg. No. 447)

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Translation: In this world no one likes death; they try to hide from it. Because they are afraid that the Messenger of Death may catch and take it away.

What is Death?

Death is the cessation of vital functions of the human body. But that is the death of the physical body alone. Besides, there is another type of death when the person forgets the Creator. This death can happen many times while being bodily alive. Guru Nanak Ji has put that idea as:

ਆਖਾ ਜੀਵਾ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਉ ॥

“Aakhaan jeevaa visarai mur jaa-o||”

(SGGS, Pg. No. 9)

Translation: When I (remember and) utter then I live (spiritually), forgetting I die.

So far we have seen death as related to the body as physical death then the spiritual death in forgetting the Creator. But human creation has another dimension besides the body and mind to it, which is the soul, which Gurbani calls Jeeau or Jot. Gurbani clarifies it as:

ਜੀਉ ਪਾਇ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਜਿਨਿ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਦਿਤਾ ਪੈਨਣੁ ਖਾਣੁ ॥

“Jeeau pai pi(n)dd jin saajiaa dhitaai painan khaan ||”

(SGGS, Pg. No. 619)

Translation: The One who fashioned the body and placed the soul within, who gives you clothing and nourishment (as well).

That is the soul, when it leaves the body, the body dies. It has emanated from Infinite, who is deathless, so it possesses the same characteristic of its Creator, of being deathless.

Physical death is not a betrayal of life, but it is part of it. The date, time, situation, or location may be unknown, yet physical death is certain for all. Every living being born, with certainty, he/she will die one day.

ਅਨਿਕ ਜਤਨ ਕਰਿ ਕਾਲੁ ਸੰਤਾਏ ॥ ਮਰਣੁ ਲਿਖਾਇ ਮੰਡਲ ਮਹਿ ਆਏ ॥

“Aanik jattan kar kaal santaae || Maran likhai mandal meh aae ||”

(SGGS, Pg. No. 685)

Translation: Despite innumerable efforts, death's torments persist. Destined only to die, one comes into the world.

But how will death come? When and Where? Under what circumstances will it be? It is unknown. So, human nature is to worry about those circumstances. Guru Ji has noticed it and put the observations as:

ਕਿਆ ਜਾਣਾ ਕਿਵ ਮਰਗਏ ਕੈਸਾ ਮਰਣਾ ਹੋਇ ॥

“Kiya Jaana Kiv marrangae, kaisa marna hai. ||” (SGGS. Pg. No. 555)

Translation: What do I know, how I will die, under what circumstances will it be?

Gurbani tells us that there can be uncertainties of circumstances, but it is inevitable, and even with our best efforts it reality cannot be averted. The actual time may be unknown, which could be as close as the next breath or it could be far enough. Gurbani further says that all human beings – the poor and the wealthy, the ruled and rulers, the ordinary folk and the religious – are merely awaiting their turn. None can step out of the queue. Gurbani says that there is no need to fear something certain and unavoidable. We must accept physical death as the natural end of the life cycle.

But the spiritual death happens to us every day, numerous times when we forget our Creator, make compromises in life on principles, acquiesce to weird requests, or exercise our lust, greed, anger, attachment, or pride only to fulfill our wishes and desires. That reality is experienced because we were under the allure of a future reward, such as a prestigious position, honor, and recognition with accolades, financial gains, or when we fail to live in the present moment – NOW.

Dead being Alive

We have seen that Guru Ji says that without being dead while alive, there is no life. As the body is alive, so what died?

ਹਉ ਨ ਮੂਆ ਮੇਰੀ ਮੁਈ ਬਲਾਇ ॥ ਓਹੁ ਨ ਮੂਆ ਜੋ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਇ॥

“Hau na mooaa meree muiee balai || Oh na mooaa jo rahiaa samai ||”

(SGGS. Pg. No. 152)

Translation: I have not died - that evil nature within me has died. The One who is pervading everywhere does not die.

Guru Ji is talking about the death of ego, which dies at physical death as well as when a person is dead, being alive. Guru Ji wants us to remember death plus become dead to desires, wants, worldly possessions, achievements, status in society, etc.

When we start living not as a body but as a spiritual being, an inner transformation takes place. When that takes place, we become spiritually strong not just to face the undaunted challenges of life but toughened enough not to let the circumstances impair our faith, commitment, or mental calmness. That inner connection initiates spiritual awakening within.

Spiritual Awakening

Guru Ji provided the answer in the next line by saying what can be done to overcome those anxieties associated with uncertainties surrounding the circumstances of death. The answer is spiritual awakening through remembrance of the Creator, which will efface those concerns:

ਜੇ ਕਰਿ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਮਨਹੁ ਨ ਵੀਸਰੈ ਤਾ ਸਹਿਲਾ ਮਰਣਾ ਹੋਇ ॥

“Jae kar sahib munaho naa veesarai thaa sahilaa maranaa hoae.||”

(SGGS. Pg. No. 555)

Translation: If I do not forget the Master (God) from my mind, then my death will be easy.

When God is in awareness, then the obsession with the body or the self is removed, and we start living as spiritual beings. Spiritual awakening is an intensely painful process as it involves the ego-death or experiencing a “dying-while-alive”. It is a process of ego-dissolution or dis-identification from the body while alive that takes place. Gurbani shares the potential growth that can take place when we get rid of our self-will or ego.

ਹਉਮੈ ਜਾਈ ਤਾ ਕੰਤ ਸਮਾਈ ॥

“Haumai jaiee taa ka(n)t samaiee ||”

(SGGS. Pg. No. 750)

Translation: But if she gets rid of her ego, then she (all humans are brides) merges with her Husband Lord.

What happens when ego is rid, Guru Ji answers in next line as:

ਤਉ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਨਵ ਨਿਧਿ ਪਾਈ ॥੬॥

“Tau kaaman piaare nav nidh paiee ||6||”

(SGGS. Pg. No. 750)

Translation: Only then can the soul-bride merge with her Beloved – God, the source of nine treasures. ||6||

When ego is not rid while alive then what happens to soul after death is depicted as:

ਜੇਮਣੁ ਮਰਣੁ ਨ ਚੁਕਈ ਫਿਰਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇ ॥੫॥

“Ja(n)man maran na chookiee fir fir aavai jai ||5||” (SGGS. Pg. No. 68)

Translation: Their births and deaths do not cease; over and over again, they come and go in reincarnation. ||5||

In SGGS, the soul (atma) has been compared to a bride, and God (Parmatma) is considered as the Groom. The atma in its pristine form is as pure as the Parmatma, but being in the company of the sensory organs of the body, it is affected by the experiences of the body organs. The purpose of human birth is to reunite the atma with Parmatma, which happens only at the soul level. However, because of a characteristic affliction of the ego, humans have been experiencing separation. This gulf has been called the Bvsagr (Bhavsaagar) or Bxujl (Bhaujal) in Gurbani; both terms mean the worldly ocean. It has also been compared to a wall/curtain, again indicating the separation. If that separation is bridged, reunion is possible. Once the merger takes place, while alive, the separation is no more; thus, the purpose of life has been achieved. Separation is bridged by giving up the ego, which caused the separation.

ਆਤਮਾ ਪਰਾਤਮਾ ਏਕੋ ਕਰੈ ॥ ਅੰਤਰ ਕੀ ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਮਰੈ ॥੧॥

“Atma partama eko karai || Antar kee dhubidhaa a(n)tar marai ||1||”

(SGGS, Pg. No. 661)

Translation: His soul and the Supreme Soul become one. His duality within his mind is dead (and gone).

When the atma (soul) merges with the Pramatra (Supreme Soul/God) then the soul sees the entire creation made of one substance, God's light. When that is experienced, the life's journey is completed. The journey starts with the quest to find out who I am. The soul eventually disidentified itself from the body to soul and then connected with the Cosmic consciousness and finally merged with it. Now it just sees the entire creation made of one substance only – His Light. The declaration of successful completion of this journey has been painted in these words.

ਸਫਲ ਸਫਲ ਭਈ ਸਫਲ ਜਾਤ੍ਰਾ ॥ ਆਵਣ ਜਾਣ ਰਹੇ ਮਿਲੇ ਸਾਧਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ਦੂਜਾ ॥੧॥੩॥

“Safal safal bhiee safal jaatraa || aavan jaan rahe mile saadhaa ||1|| rahaau dhoojaa ||1||3||” (SGGS, Pg. No. 686)

Translation: My journey (Yatra), my life pilgrimage, has become fruitful, fruitful, fruitful. My comings and goings have ended, since I met the Holy Saint (Guru). ||1||Second Pause||1||3||

Through the Guru’s blessings, the soul’s journey was undertaken and completed. Kabir Ji, who completed his journey in life while alive, has shared his experience in these words:

ਸਦ ਜੀਵਨੁ ਭਲੇ ਕਹਾਂਗੀ ॥ ਮੂਏ ਬਿਨੁ ਜੀਵਨੁ ਨਾਹੀ ॥

“Sadh jeevan bhala kahaa(n)hee. Mooe bin jeevan naahee ||1||”

(SGGS, Pg. No. 655)

Translation: People talk about the desire to live forever as a nice life, but without dying (to the mind), there is no life (forever). ||1||

In the concluding lines, he shares that only those exceptional ones are those who transform themselves successfully while alive, enjoy eternal bliss in these words:

ਜੋ ਜੀਵਨ ਮਰਨਾ ਜਾਨੈ ॥ ਸੋ ਪੰਚ ਸੈਲ ਸੁਖ ਮਾਨੈ ॥

“Joe jeevan maranaa jaanai || So panch sail sukh maanai ||”

(SGGS, Pg. No. 655)

Translation: Those selected few, who know how to die while yet alive, enjoy great peace.

Here, the prerequisite of spiritual life has been shared, which is called dying to the mind, to live for eternity. One who successfully learns the art of eliminating egoism starts leading a spiritual life, enjoys the undiminishable spiritual happiness of the saints.

The Other Side of the Coin

When one becomes dead to material desires while alive, it has been defined by

another special term called Jeevan Mukat (), which is defined as:

ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਸੋ ਆਖੀਐ ਮਰਿ ਜੀਵੈ ਮਰੀਆ ॥

“Jeevan mukat so aakheeaai mar jeevai mareeaa ||” (SGGS, Pg. No. 448)

Translation: Those who die, and remain dead while yet alive, are said to be Jeevan Mukat, liberated while yet alive.

When the person is still bodily alive, then what death has been clarified as:

ਮਾਨ ਮੋਹ ਦੋਨੋ ਕਉ ਪਰਹਰਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਕੇ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਵੈ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਇਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਕੋ ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕਹਾਵੈ ॥੨॥੨॥

“Maan moh dhono kau parahar gobi(n)dh ke gun gaavai || kahu naanak ieh bidh ko praanee jeevan mukat kahaavai ||2||2||” (SGGS, Pg. No. 831)

Translation: One who has abandoned ego and attachment, sings praises of the Lord of the Universe. Says Nanak, the mortal who does this is said to be 'jeevan mukat' - liberated while still alive. ||2||2||

Basically, “I” has gone out of his/her inner self, and only “You” remains. The duality between me and the other is also gone, along with it. When You alone remains, then whatever is done while bodily alive is to serve One (You) alone. When you are admired and remembered, its imprints get imbued within. It is like facing the Sun; we will be drenched in Sun rays. So, what resides within ‘jeevan mukat’ is:

ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਜਿਸੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਭਗਵੰਤੁ ॥

“Jeevan mukat jis ridhai bhagava(n)t ||” (SGGS, Pg. No. 294)

Translation: He (alone) is Jeevan Mukat - liberated while yet alive; the Creator God abides in his heart.

And:

ਜਿਨੀ ਆਤਮੁ ਚੀਨਿਆ ਪਰਮਾਤਮੁ ਸੋਈ ॥

“Jinee aatam cheeniaa paramaatam soiee ||” (SGGS, Pg. No. 421)

Translation: Those people who have tasted their spiritual life, only those people know God.

Human life is a journey, and its success lies in arriving back to the original abode (Nij Ghar) while alive, that is, back in Pramatma, the source from where it

started. Thus, it ends the cycle of further births. In this way when the soul experiences the Supreme Soul within, then love for Parmatma (God) arises in the heart (and there is no need to wander around).

ਆਤਮੇ ਨੋ ਆਤਮੇ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤਿ ਹੋਇ ਤਾ ਘਰ ਹੀ ਪਰਚਾ ਪਾਇ ॥

“Aatame no aatame dhee prateet hoi taa ghar hee parachaa pai ||”

(SGGS, Pg. No. 87)

Translation: When the individual soul experiences the Supreme Soul within, then it shall obtain realization within (and not look outside).

Failure of the soul to merge with the Creator results in further reincarnations, and the atma has to try and get a human birth to be able to enter the Nij Ghar. That is because it is only in human birth that one can understand God's virtues, try to emulate them, and thus be entitled to the reunion. Gurbani questions the life devoid of devotional love:

ਜਨਮੈ ਕਾ ਫਲੁ ਕਿਆ ਗਣੀ ਜਾਂ ਹਰਿ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਭਾਉ ॥

“Janmae kaa fal kya ga ee jaa har bhagat na bhaao||” (SGGS, Pg. No. 1411)

Translation: What is the rewards of this human life, if one does not feel love and devotion to God?

Gurbani has shared the unique human opportunity in these words:

ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਜੋਨਿ ਸਬਾਈ ॥ ਮਾਣਸ ਕਉ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਦੀਈ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥ ਇਸੁ ਪਉੜੀ ਤੇ ਜੋ ਨਰੁ ਚੂਕੈ ਸੋ ਆਇ ਜਾਇ
ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਦਾ ॥੨॥

“Lakh chauraaseeh jon sabaiee || Maanas kau prabh dheeeiee vaddiaaiee || Eis pauRee te jo nar chookai so aai jai dhukh paidhaa ||2||” (SGGS, Pg. No. 1075)

Translation: There are 8.4 million life forms, but the Creator has granted glory to human birth. If the soul loses this opportunity it suffers many more births and deaths.

Conclusion

The thought of being dead while alive is scary, but Guru Ji is not talking about physical death. Guru Ji talks about being dead to material desires and aspirations, thus living a spiritual life while alive. Life is a (spiritual) journey, and when we understand this, then we shift our focus from worldly wealth and possessions and yearn for real wealth that we can take with us even after physical death. Guru Ji is telling us that we are spiritual beings having human life journeys. When we make that



Five Khands In Gurbani

DR. S. SODHI*

FIVE KHANDS or Panj Khands literally mean as follows: Panj is five and khands are regions or realms. They signify the five stages in Sikh traditions of spiritual progress that lead man to the ultimate truth. The supporting text is a fragment from Guru Nanak's Japji Sahib, Pauris (Stanzas) 35 to 37.

The Panj Khands in Japji Sahib delineates the different stages of spiritual ascent, tracing the evolution of human consciousness on different planets that involve man's thoughts, emotions, and actions. At each stage, the status or position of the individual is set forth in a social setting. The seeker is not conceived as a recluse or ascetic: social obligations and moral qualities for man essential core of the spiritual path. The empirical mind is first emancipated from the grip of desire and purified by a rigorous moral discipline. When it learns to stand still, it is taken to the divine portal which it can enter only with divine grace. There it finds itself face to face with the eternal truth, that is God.

The delineation of the Panj Khands is preceded by two introductory remarks in the two preceding stanzas. First, there is the term pavarian (ਪਉੜੀਆ), which means rungs of a ladder, denoting the stages of the mystical ascent. Guru Nanak relates this ascent to the constant remembrance of God's name.

The first stage is the Dharma Khand (ਧਰਮ ਖੰਡ). The earth exists for dharma to be practiced. The word dharam has been employed in the sense of duty. Duty is usually performed either out of a sense of social responsibility or through moral awareness. Guru Nanak links this sense of duty to man's consciousness of divine justice as follows:

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ਧਰਮ ਖੰਡ ਕਾ ਏਹੋ ਧਰਮੁ ॥

This is righteous living in the realm of Dharma.

SGGS Pg. 7

Next is Gian khand (ਗਿਆਨ ਖੰਡ). In the realm of knowledge, it is ignited, that is illumination dawns. The seeker becomes aware of the universe and the mystery of existence. Through the creation, he gains knowledge of the Creator from whom it emanates. Knowledge is not merely intellectual or sensual, it is intuitive awareness, a spiritual consciousness which expands the vision of the seeker.

ਗਿਆਨ ਖੰਡ ਮਹਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਪਰਚੈਤੁ ॥

In the realm of wisdom, spiritual wisdom reigns supreme.

SGGS Pg. 7

Saram Khand (ਸਰਮ ਖੰਡ) is the sphere of spiritual endeavour. Here man strives against the last remnants of his ego, which still afflict him despite his experiencing strong emotions of humility in Gian khand. If the sense of awe and wonder are not accompanied or followed by discipline, the experience might become a mere motion, something remembered with nostalgia but having no permanent worth.

To become worthy of receiving the divine grace, one must chisel one's surati (consciousness which is a unifying thread for all human faculties).

ਸਰਮ ਖੰਡ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਰੂਪੁ ॥

ਤਿਥੈ ਘਾੜਤਿ ਘੜੀਐ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਅਨੂਪੁ ॥

In the realm of humility, the word is beauty. Forms of incomparable beauty are fashioned there.

SGGS Pg. 8

Karam Khand (ਕਰਮ ਖੰਡ) is the realm of grace in the sphere where the Divine grace reigns. The process of initiated liberation with grace is now brought to completion. All sense of dualism ends. The devotee is one with the Lord and with those who have attained this state of bliss. One reaches here only after achieving a heroic victory over the evils.

ਕਰਮ ਖੰਡ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਜੋਰੁ ॥

ਤਿਥੈ ਹੋਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰੁ ॥

In the realm of karma, the word is power. No one else dwells there. SGGGS Pg. 9

The final stage of spiritual ascent. Sach khand (ਸਚ ਖੰਡ) is the realm of the truth. It defies description. Hard as steel is (to narrate) the story of this state. Described as the abode of the Nirankar, the Formless One, sach khand is not a geographical spot, but the final state of the evolution of human consciousness. One can only experience it, but not describe it, for here words cease to have any meaning and no analogies can help to describe the uniqueness. Here, in the Divine Court, the perfect ones rejoice in His presence. It is from here that His will (hukam) goes out to the universe, and the liberated, grace-filled souls perform it joyously and effortlessly. The devotee becomes one with Him and realizes Him as a unifying force working through all objects of His creation. In this way, he attains the non-spatial Sach khand to be the dweller therein, the Nirankar, who is nowhere outside his own heart.

ਸਚ ਖੰਡਿ ਵਸੈ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ॥

In the realm of Truth, the Formless Lord abides.

SGGS Pg. 8



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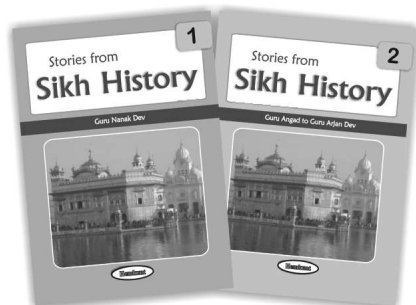
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Contribution of Muslim Writers to Punjabi Literature in Jammu and Kashmir

DR JASBIR SINGH SARNA*

Jammu and Kashmir is the epitome of Punjabi civilization and not the name of a mountainous region surrounded by fixed boundaries. It has been the misfortune of the Punjabis that this Jammu Kashmir UT has been geographically isolated for political reasons. Jhelum, Chenab and Ravi rivers, one of the five chief symbols of Punjabi civilization, kiss the fixed boundaries and sing the Punjabi tune in the wall-mounted region. The Punjabi language is one of the vital languages of the state and is well recognised in the legislation of the J & K. There are several dialects spoken around these rivers like Dogri, Pahari, Gojari, Poonchi, Chubali, Pothwari etc but the truth is that these spoken dialects have grown up drinking the milk of Punjabi mother. It is a clear fact that it is a collection of various manifestations of Punjabi culture. The Punjabi is the common heritage of Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, and Buddhists etc. Among the thousands of languages, Punjabi stands at number five after English, Chinese, Urdu and Dutch. According to Mohan Singh Deewana from the 14th to the 15th century, we have old Punjabi in which Lehndi predominates. Punjabi language and literature is vital and stronger, in terms of thoughts. Language, in individualization, is a matter of phonetics, and phonetics, of race, climate and dietary. In Jammu Kashmir UT, Punjabi dialects spoken are intermingling with each other with close affinity. These dynamic waves are full of essence in different sub dialects of Punjabi language. With the passage of time, conscious and subconscious ideas flourished among the tribes and races of the world. Drew Fredrick Simplified this correlation with a suitable model.

The Punjabi language and literature enhanced the historic cultural aspects of our state and in this way, invaluable assets of our rich glory and heritage are conceived in our soil. It is a true fact that Jammu and Kashmir has linguistic, Social, Cultural, Literary, Political, Historic, Economic, and Religious relations with Punjab State and Communication links only through this language. The uniqueness of Punjabi literature lies in the fact that this belongs to every citizen irrespective of caste, creed, and

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religion. There is no script rigidity, it is easily written in Gurmukhi, Persian, or Devnagri as per one needs, knowledge, or suitability.

I feel pleasure to introduce some Muslim Punjabi writers of our Jammu and Kashmir UT, who enriched Punjabi literature to its core.

Aziz Khan Karnahi: This Punjabi poet was born in Karnah (Thithwal, Kashmir) in 1896 AD. Due to economic strains, he could not publish his works. He was one of the pioneers of Punjabi literary society. Among his works, the poem 'Wisdom of God' became very popular. This poet died in Karnah in 1981 AD.

Abdullah Larvi: Abdullah Larvi was born in Sanjora Balakot (Hazara) in 1863 in the house of Mian Fullful. It is mentioned in Tawarikh that he had four marriages. He stayed in Wangat (Kashmir) and preached Islam and continued to write Siharfis under the guise of a fakir. Published Majmu'a Siharfi in Punjabi. Some of these books were also written in Urdu. He died in 1926 AD in Wangat, which is popularly known as 'Wangat Nagri'.

Iqbal Azeem Chowdhary : Mian Mohammad Iqbal Pen name Iqbal Azeem Chowdhary educationist, writer, poet, author, and critic, born at Pahalnar Wangath Kangan Kashmir in April 1940. Mian Mohammad Akbar Bajran belongs to the Bakarwal tribe of Gujjar community. Resides at Udder (Baba Nagri) Tehsil Kangan Ganderbal. Iqbal Azeem Chowdhary is a noted writer, poet, and author of Gojri, Punjabi, and Urdu languages. He has authored a number of books in Urdu Punjabi and Gojri and edited a number of titles and periodicals in different languages, published by the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages. Received earlier education from Government mobile school Lamberi Nowshera and then joined high school Kangan and later joined oriental college Srinagar for higher education and passed honors in Urdu and Persian with distinction from the University of Kashmir. Started working as the first broadcaster of Gojri in Radio Kashmir Srinagar during 1969. He has worked as an editor and cultural officer of the Gojri section in Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages and retired from this service in 2000. His published works are "REEJH KAWALLIEN" , "DHARTI KA ZAKHM", "PAYAAB" and Punjabi Publications: "KULLI NI FAQEER DI WICHOON".He passed away on 15th December 2021.

Syed Husian Shah Bukhari: Bukhari was born approximately between 1906-1911 AD. This Sufi poet was born in Poonch. His remarkable poems were accompanied by his nature and used a common colloquial language.

Sarfraz Hussain Khan Tasin: This Punjabi poet was born on January 2, 1908 in Manganad, Poonch. His nickname was TasinZafri. He got an education up to matric and Adib Fazal. He was a teacher in Poonch till 1947, and later went to Pakistan. Later joined Rawalpindi Radio Station and he continued to publish the weekly newspaper 'Kashmir' from Rawalpindi. He used to write in Urdu and Punjabi, but he composed poems in Punjabi. He died on 26 June 1955 in Lahore.

Sarwar Husan: Sarwar Hasan was born in the Rajouri (Kashmir) village Dhankot in the house of Maulana Mehridin Qamar Awanan in 1942 AD. After completing basic education, he became a teacher in the education department. In 1965, Sarwar went into exile in Abbottabad (Pakistan). In 1980 he came back to his native Rajouri. Wrote a lot of poetry in Punjabi, which could not be published in book form. Newspapers and magazines continued to be adorned. This poet passed away on 25 August 2000 in Rajouri.

Salim Kasher: Salim Kasher was born to Muhdeen and Mehtab Begum on 8 October 1932 in Anantnag (Kashmir). He was a head cashier in Pakistan National Bank for many years. Retired from National Bank of Pakistan, Lahore. His published Punjabi books are: Tattian Chhawan (1963), Surghi Da Tara (1978), and Hawa Di Suli (1982). These books have also received awards from various organizations.

Dr Sabar Afaqi: Dr. Saber Afaqi was born in the house of Maulana Ali Muhammad Fakhra in 1933 in the village of Gohari, Muzaffarabad (Kashmir). His real name is Chaudhry Ahmed Din Famra. After taking primary education in Persian and Arabic, he became a teacher of Arabic in the Department of Education in 1952. Completed FA (1952), BA (1960), and MA (Urdu, Persian) by 1965 while in service. He became a college lecturer in Muzaffarabad in 1967. He went to Iran to do his PhD in Persian, where he obtained his PhD in Persian translation of Rajatarangani in 1972. He continued to serve as an Associate Professor at Muzaffarabad College. He also wrote Athru (1966), Hara (1967), and Phulkheli (1976) and published three volumes in the Punjabi language.

Hazur Shah, Pir: PirHazur Shah was born in 1833 AD in the village of Gulpur (Poonch). They were the recognized elders of the area. Much of his poetry was destroyed in the 1947 holocaust. This poet died in Chhatra (Poonch) in 1980.

Habibullah Shah Bukhari, Syed: Habibullah Shah was born in the Pakhli (Kashmir) area of Kaghan. He was a good poet of Punjabi and a scholar of Arabic and

Persian. Spiritual color and Sufi ideology are evident in the poems. His handwritten book 'Miraj Alxas' is present in Pamrot village. Arabic-Persian words have also appeared in the poems. He died in 1923 AD.

Khalid Hussain: Khalid Hussain was born to their mother Batul Begum on 1 April 1945 in Udhampur (Jammu). He has retired from the post of Deputy Commissioner after holding various posts. He is basically a good short story writer and is associated with many literary societies. He was several times president of Jammu Kashmir Punjabi Sahit Sabha, Srinagar, and organized the All India Punjabi Conference. Being a journalist, he remained editor for Sandesh, Amarad, Waqt, Zimmidaar, Hamdard, Political Times, Kanwash, etc. His published books include The Jhelum Vagada Raha (1976), Gauri Fasal De Saudagar (1980), Deep Paniyan Da Suhar (1988), Noori Rishma etc. Apart from these, he got many awards. Recently, he got the Sahitya Academy Award for his Punjabi book Sullian da Sallan.

Khuda Bakhsh: Khuda Bakhsh was born in the village Mahut (Poonch) in 1888 to Halim Dahar. Having lived through hardships in his childhood, he acquired a modest education and started doing domestic work. The poem begins with Ishq's stumbling. It was natural for him to mature in poetry by enjoying the company of Baba Saheb's court and getting the guidance of Kader Bakhsh. Much of their speech is present through Punjabi 'Shi-harfi' and 'baramanh'. The entire Kalam of Punjabi is still unprinted. Some Shi-herfies have been included by Mian Bashir Ahmad Larvi in his book Nir-Samundar. Khuda Bakhsh died in the village of Mahut in 1982.

Ghulam Hyder Gulzar: This Punjabi poet was born in C 1904 AD in Mandi Poonch. He continued to serve as Maulvi after acquiring the training of Muktab. He has written many poems in Punjabi. He died at the age of 49 years.

Ghulam Nabi Rasleen: This poet is believed to have been born in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. This poet was a resident of Bilgram, Srinagar (Kashmir). He Wrote a poetic treatise which has 1154 couplets and completed this treatise in 1154 Hijri. The language of this poetic text revolves around simple language. The name of this poetic treatise is 'Rasa Pravandha'.

Ghulam Mohammad Khadim: Khwaja Ghulam Muhammad was born in Jammu in the house of Munshi Abdul Khaliq in 1882 AD. His paternal grandfather was a Munshi in Maharaja Ranbir Singh's artillery but his profession was pashmina dyeing. Three poetry collections of this poet were published in Sialkot in Punjabi Shahmukhi:

'Kashmir Di Sarr', 'Subah Da Nazara', and 'Subah Kashmir'. He was a satirical folk poet. He passed away on 4 January 1957.

Bashir Ahmed Bashir: Bashir Ahmed Bashir was also a Punjabi stage poet who was born in Jammu in 1915. He used to broadcast poems from the radio stations of Srinagar and Jammu but could not become Sahibe-Kitab. He passed away on 28 September 1990.

Mahmood Ahmed: Khadim's younger son Mahmood Ahmed was born in 1930. He was famous for his comedy and Akash Vani used to present programs from Jammu. He used to write a lot of songs and ghazals in Punjabi, but could not become a Sahib-Kitab. This poet passed away on 4 June 1998.

Pir Dara Badshah: This Punjabi poet was born in village Jhalas, Haveli (Poonch) in 1776 AD. He used to write poetry of spiritual color. It was the throne of some Piri Muridi. Its poetry is simple and understandable to common people.

Mirza Muhammad Yasin Beg: Mirza Muhammad Yasin Baig was born on 22 January 1943 in Jammu and Kashmir. B.A. (Hons.) Diploma in Library Science from Aligarh in 1966. He used to write poetry in Punjabi and Urdu. His mother Ghulam Fatma Koshari and elder sister Safira Nahid also wrote poetry in Punjabi. The only Punjabi book "Shabad Amart" printed in Faryad Koshari (Sialkot) has been published. This melodious Punjabi poet passed away on 5th November 2008.

Mian Nizamuddin Larvi: Mian Larvi was born on 25 March 1896 AD. Baba Ji Sahib took place at Larvi's house in Wangat (Kashmir). He was a member of the State Legislative Assembly for ten years after 1947. Most of his words are in 'Punjabi Shi Harfiyan' which is published under the title 'Ashar Nazami'. A little of his poetry is also in Gojri. The literary community used to join his court, among whom the names of Sain Kader Bakhsh, Khuda Bakhsh Zar, Mulana Asmail Zubi, Mulana Mihar Din Ghamar, Asrine Asher, and Iqbal Azim are worth mentioning. He died in Baba Nagar Wangat in 1972 AD. His son Mian Bashir Ahmed Larvi deserves his literary, scientific, and political legacy. The love for Punjabi is infused in them.

Mian Muhammad Bakhsh: Mian was born in 1829 AD. He was born in village Kheri (Mirpur) at the house of his father Mian Shamshd in Qadri. He wrote many books in Punjabi, including Tuhfa Rasuliyani, Tafa Mian, Gulzare Fakir, Sohni Mahinwal, Sheikh Sanan, Shiri-Farhad, Shah Mansoor, Saifal Maluk, Sakhi Khawas Jaan, Qisa

Mirza Sahiban, Al-Muslimeen, Karamat, Mausul. Azam, Badih Muljaman, Sirafians, etc. He died in 1904.

Muhammad Ismail Isa, Nizami: This Punjabi poet was probably born in 1888 AD. But he died on 17 August 1947 at Amritsar. He used to work as a pashmina dyer and worked as a droga in Amritsar municipality. He said goodbye to Kashmir in his childhood and settled in Amritsar with his parents. He used to write Sufi poetry and was a great stage poet.

Muhammad Asrail Ashar: Muhammad Asrail Ashar was born in the village of Lambadi (Rajouri) in 1916 AD. He served in the education department. Punjabi poetry writing started in the court of 'Baba Sahib', where famous poets like Kader Bakhsh and Khuda Bakhsh Zar were present. His Kalam is also found in Urdu and Gojri apart from Punjabi.

Muhammad Ali, Hakim: Hakeem was born in 1864 AD. He was a good Punjabi poet and worked as a sage. His Punjabi book "Khawan Lei Maa" is said to have been published. Poetry and preaching of Islam and wisdom are dominant. This poet died in 1924 AD. There have been other good Punjabi poets like Maulvi Mughal Khatana, Haji Mullan Habib, Fateh Muhammad Darhal Mulkaan, Mian Syed Muhammad Bijran, Mian Mahmud Ahmed Mahmud etc. about whom not much information is available.

Mulana Mihardin Qamar: Qamar was born in 1901 in the house of Chaudhry Zafar Ali Awana, in village Margah, Dandkoot (Rajouri). He did his primary education in the schools of Punjab. He was proficient in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Punjabi, and Gojri languages. He published 27 small pamphlets (32 according to other sources), which included articles in Punjabi, Urdu, and Gojri languages. In 1947, he migrated to Abbottabad (Hazara) and started living there. There he met Mehjur, Dr. Sabir Afaqi, Ghulam Ahmed Raza, Jabeez, etc. poets/writers. In 1965, he formed an Adabi-Sangat and in 1967 continued to recite Kalam from Radio. He wrote many poems and articles in Punjabi. Among the published books of Punjabi, Hobe-Alwatani, Shi- Harfian are particularly notable. He died in 1976 in Abbottabad.

Dr Rafique Anjum: Dr Rafique was born in January 1962 in the village Kalai Hawali (Poonch) in the house of Dr. Mian Abdul Akram. A pediatrician by profession, Dr. Rafique Anjum is an Urdu, Punjabi, and Gojri poet, Islamic scholar, and researcher of Jammu and Kashmir. He received a state-level award for Excellence in Literature in 2007. He has served as Registrar and Consultant Pediatrician in GMC Srinagar and

Consultant Paediatrician in JK Health Services. Presently he is working as Coordinator Centre for Research in Gojri, Pahari & Kashmiri Languages and Asst. Professor in the School of Islamic Studies and Languages at BGSBU. Anjum is a poet and scholar of both Urdu and Gojri languages besides being a writer of English language. A number of his poetic collections both in Urdu and Gojri languages have earned him accolades across the sub-continent. He represents the higher echelon of the modern Gojri scholarship. A number of Publications in Gojri, Urdu, English, and Punjabi are to his credit. Khwab Jazeeray, Dil Darya, Kora Kagaz, Soghaat, Kaash! Banjara, Zanbeel, Chitti Mitti, Sadharian Salonis, Golden History Of Gojri Language And Literature. (Ten volumes), Ghazal Silony, Gojri English Dictionary, Gojri Urdu English Dictionary, Gojri Kashmiri English Dictionary, Gojri Hindi English Dictionary. He got many awards and honours.

Shamsdin Mehjoor Poonchi: Shamsdin was born in the house of Umar Daraz Gursi in 1892 AD in the village of Sialan, Swarankot. Garsi was a very learned man who studied Arabic and Persian at home. He initially wrote poetry in Punjabi and published a book under the name 'Guljar Medina'. After 1947, he started writing in Gojri as well. This poet died at the age of 92 on 21 November 1904 at his village Sialan.

Sain Faqardin: Sain Mian Faqardin's name recorded in his books is written as 'Alhaj Mian Faqrudin or Mian, Faqrudin Tarabi Chishti Gujjar Badhana'. He was born in Digwar, Haveli (Poonch) in 1903 AD. Many incidents related to his life are famous. He was a famous poet of Punjabi. Wrote many books and booklets. There are details of the publication of three books by Saiji: Mandah Ramuz un Ganj, Nama Faqardin, and Zia u IQamar (1981). The first two books were published in Pakistan. He passed away on 24 March 1987.

Fakir Mohammad Fakir, Dr: Muhammad Fakir was born in 1900 in Kashmir. His father's name was Mian Lal Din. Fakir Ji took up the profession of contractor. He continued to appear in the movements that spoke for Punjabi. Worked as a journalist for many years and edited a Punjabi magazine from Lahore.

Fazal Kashmiri: His real name was Ghulam Muhammad. He was born on 3 August 1916 in Dabkal, Maharaj (Srinagar). He was well-versed in Persian, Arabic, Urdu, and Kashmiri languages. He had published three dozen books, the most famous of which was the book Natsh-Anwar-e-Muhammad. He was the first Muslim writer of Kashmir, who translated Guru Nanak Sahib's hymn Japuji Sahib, Guru Arjan Sahib's Sukhmani-Sahib, and Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib's Slok Mahala 9 Ward-e-Nizat' into

Kashmiri and Urdu and made the Sikhs and Muslims proud. Many Sikh organizations presented him with prizes and Sirpaos. This spiritual poet passed away on 11 July 2004 at the age of 88 years.

Dr. Snobar: Dr. Snobar was born on 5th August 1980 in the house of a renowned Punjabi poet Late Kanwar Imtiaz in Malerkotla, Punjab. She did her M.A. (Punjabi) with a gold medal. She did her PhD (Punjabi) and B. Ed. She is serving as Assistant Professor in Punjabi, GCW Parade Ground Jammu. Her husband's name is Ajaz Haider. God bestowed them with two Children. She has published several books in Punjabi namely Nari Chetna di Kavita -2008, Farishta Poetry Book -2021, Nari Chetna Di Kavita (Alochna) -2021 second edition, Punjabi Sufi Kaav Atay Adhunik Punjabi Kavita-2021.

There are many Punjabi poets who need to be researched. These poets are Muhammad Ashraf Ustad (1880-1966 AD), Sain Muhammad Din (1927- ?), Fakir Muhammad (1881- ?), Syed Barkat Shah Bukhari, Hakeem Muhammad Ali (1864-1924 AD), Muhammad Hussain Khushnood (1895–1934 AD), Maulana Mihuiddin Qamar Rajourvi, AbdulAziz, Haji Baz Muhammad Bijran, Khuda Bakhsh Zar etc.

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Qurbani and Victory: A Call for a New Narrative

SATPAL SINGH JOHAR*

Abstract

This article reclaims the Sikh narrative of qurbani (sacrifice) by restoring its rightful link to victory. While shaheedi is sacred and rightly honoured, the deeper purpose behind each Sikh sacrifice was not martyrdom—it was triumph over injustice. Drawing from Sikh scripture and history, the article highlights how the sacrifices of Guru Arjan Dev Ji, Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, and the Khalsa were not final acts of submission, but catalysts for transformation and sovereignty. From spiritual resistance to battlefield victories—from Saragarhi to the world wars—Sikhs have never laid down their lives in vain. The call is clear: Sikh sacrifices must be remembered not just for their nobility, but for the justice, freedom, and victories they achieved. To honour sacrifice fully, we must teach our future generations that Sikhs are not born to suffer—they are born to win.

Introduction: Rebalancing the Narrative

We, as Sikhs, are immensely proud of our tradition of shaheedi—a history rich with courage, conviction, and sacrifice. Yet it is time to rebalance the narrative. Sacrifice is sacred—but it is not the destination. Victory is the fulfillment of sacrifice.¹

If we teach only qurbani, our future generations may come to believe they were born only to suffer, rather than to transform suffering into triumph. Sikhs are not meant only to accept martyrdom—we are meant to resist injustice and prevail. Let us tell the full story of the warriors who gave their lives and won their cause. Otherwise, our legacy risks being reduced to noble suffering rather than enduring sovereignty.

We do not fear death for a just cause, but death is not our mission. Justice is. Truth is. Standing with the oppressed is. And these missions demand not just dying, but winning.²

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The Strength Behind Sacrifice

In Sikh history, qurbani is not passive surrender—it is conscious defiance, infused with spiritual clarity.³ Our forebears did not give their lives in vain; they refused to let tyrants silence their principles. From the Mughals to the British, Sikhs endured systematic cruelty—yet our faith, identity, and dignity remained unbroken.⁴

Guru Amar Das Ji abolished caste distinctions in langar.⁵ Guru Nanak Dev Ji challenged kings and false dogmas alike. These were not acts of appeasement but of resistance through humility. To walk the path of truth in the face of oppression is itself a revolution.

Sacrifice, in our tradition, is the soul of transformation. It is through shaheedi that Guru Arjan Dev Ji birthed the spirit of the Saint-Soldier.⁶ Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji redefined freedom of conscience for all humanity.⁷ and countless unnamed Sikhs carried this legacy forward—praying through torture, standing when bending would have spared them.

Their stories live in kirtan, in Ardaas, and in every gurudwara's prayerful echo. But let us go further. Let us not only remember their death but also teach what their deaths accomplished. For only then do we honour the full truth of sacrifice.

Wars Are Fought to Win—Not Just to Sacrifice

Sikh history is filled with sacrifices, but also with resounding victories. Every battle we fought had a purpose: freedom, dignity, and justice. And more often than not, those battles were won.⁸ So why, then, do we hesitate to celebrate them?

Guru Arjan Dev Ji's shaheedi was not the end of a story—it was the turning point. His quiet strength gave birth to the Saint-Soldier spirit. From his sacrifice emerged Guru Hargobind Ji's call for Miri and Piri—the inseparable unity of spiritual wisdom and sovereign strength.⁹ Yet rarely do we tell this as a story of transformation and resistance fulfilled.

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji did not die merely to protect faith—he ignited a flame of freedom that exposed Mughal tyranny and galvanized an entire nation.¹⁰

Guru Gobind Singh Ji fought not to impose Sikhism, but to uphold human dignity.¹¹ His battles were strategic, righteous, and victorious. Still, we speak mostly of his sacrifice, not the fearless, organized resistance that reshaped India.

After his passing, the Khalsa rose. Sikh flags flew from Delhi's Red Fort.¹² Maharaja Ranjit Singh ruled a just and expansive empire—from Kashmir to Kabul and its then undivided India.¹³ These were not symbols—they were sovereignty earned.

Why are these stories missing from kirtans and sermons? To speak only of pain is to speak halfway.

Sikh Sacrifices in World Wars and Global Battles

Sikhs have never fought only for land—they have fought for justice. During both World Wars, Sikh soldiers stood at the frontlines, upholding their dharma with valour.

Over 83,000 Sikh soldiers laid down their lives, and more than 109,000 were wounded while serving in the British Indian Army.¹⁴ From the trenches of France and Belgium to the jungles of Burma and the deserts of North Africa, they fought far from home, yet never far from duty.

They repelled the Japanese in Malaya. They turned the tide against the Axis powers in Italy. Sikh soldiers died—but more importantly, they won.¹⁵

The Battle of Saragarhi remains a global emblem of resistance: 21 Sikh soldiers held their post against 10,000 Afghan attackers, choosing death over surrender.¹⁶ They gave their lives, but they left behind honour that no army could erase.

Why do we overlook these victories? Are they less sacred because they were successful?

Future Generations Need to Know the Full Truth

If we teach our children that Sikhs are born to sacrifice but say nothing of what they've won, we distort our legacy. Shaheedi was never meant to be the whole story—it was the fire that lit the path to transformation.

Sikhs did not only fall—they rose. They built empires, protected faiths, liberated the oppressed, and held ground across continents. That is the full truth.

To speak only of sacrifice is to speak of the means. Let us teach our youth to celebrate the ends: the victories those sacrifices achieved.

Challenge the Narrative Directly

Let us say it clearly: Sikhs are not born to die for a cause—they are born to win it.¹⁷ Without victory, sacrifice is incomplete.

We must reframe how we speak.

1. Not "*Guru Arjan Dev Ji attained Shaheedi*," but "*His sacrifice birthed resistance that changed India*."
2. Not "*The Chaar Sahibzaade were martyred*," but "*They stood unbroken against tyranny*."

And we must ask: who benefits when Sikh history is told as a series of noble losses rather than victorious campaigns?

Reform Sikh Discourse and Education

Most Gurudwara discourses emphasize martyrdom. But where are the stories of Ranjit Singh's diplomacy? Of Sikh battalions storming Italian hillsides? Of women in the freedom movement, who stood shoulder-to-shoulder with brothers of the Khalsa?

We need:

1. New curricula, anchored in both sacrifice and success.
2. More research and literature focused on Sikh-led triumphs.
3. Public language that names not only those who died but also what they won.

Language shapes memory. Memory shapes identity.

Sikhs Must Take Control of Their Own Narrative

For too long, others have written Sikh history, emphasizing wounds over victories. It is time to reclaim that story.

Shaheedi is not the mission. Victory is. And every drop of blood spilled was given for something greater: the triumph of truth over tyranny.

Let future generations remember: Sikhs not only die bravely. They lived with purpose, fought with dignity, and won with grace.



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The Sikh Review

Kohinoor Diamond: A Brief Tale

DR. KBS SIDHU*

Abstract

The Kohinoor: From Mahabharata to British Crown Jewels - A Journey through Mughals, Persian Invaders, Afghan Kings, and Sikh Sovereigns, Sikh Rulers, and the Conquest of Kabul, and Retaining Peshawar as a part of the Khalsa Darbar.

The Kohinoor, meaning "Mountain of Light" in Persian, is one of the largest cut diamonds in the world. Weighing 105.6 carats after being cut from the original 186 carats by the British, this legendary diamond has a storied and bloody history. It has passed through the hands of Mughal emperors, Persian invaders, Afghan kings, and Sikh rulers, involving the conquest of Kabul in the early 19th century, before becoming a part of the British Crown Jewels.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the Kohinoor

A significant chapter in the Kohinoor's history is marked by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the powerful and respected Sikh ruler. In 1813, the deposed Afghan King Shah Shuja sought refuge in Punjab and offered the Kohinoor to Maharaja Ranjit Singh in exchange for his help in reclaiming the throne of Kabul. Despite the tension and the immense value of the diamond, Maharaja Ranjit Singh honoured his word. He accepted the Kohinoor but also stood true to his promise, through the decades, to assist Shah Shuja. Through a combination of diplomacy and military support, Ranjit Singh played a crucial role in Shah Shuja's eventual, though brief, restoration to power.

Early History of the Kohinoor

The Kohinoor diamond, possibly originating from the Kolar mine in the Deccan, India, is steeped in ancient mythology. Referred to as Syamantaka Mani in Hindu texts,

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it was believed to be a jewel gifted to Satrajit by the sun god Surya, dating back to the Mahabharata era. However, after centuries of obscurity, the diamond reappeared in 1306 with the Rajas of Malwa.

Over time, the Kohinoor passed through various hands, including the Delhi Sultanate, the Mughal Empire, the Durrani Afghan Empire, and the Sikh Empire. The first verifiable mention comes from Mughal ruler Babur's memoirs in 1526. In 1628, it adorned Shah Jahan's Peacock Throne. The diamond remained with the Mughals until 1739, when Persian invader Nadir Shah took it during his conquest of Delhi.

Shah Shuja and the Kohinoor

At the time of his deposition in 1809, the Kohinoor was in the possession of Shah Shuja Durrani, the ruler of Afghanistan, who was forced to live in exile in the Punjab and Sind. In 1809, Shah Shuja attempted to obtain the assistance of Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh to regain his throne by offering him the Kohinoor diamond. After a tense meeting, Shah Shuja reluctantly surrendered the diamond to Ranjit Singh in exchange for his help, as narrated by us before.

The Tripartite Treaty and the Conquest of Kabul

Decades later, in 1838, Shah Shuja gained the support of both the British and Ranjit Singh to reclaim the Afghan throne from the usurper Dost Mohammad Khan. This alliance was formalised through the Tripartite Treaty, signed by Lord Auckland on behalf of the British, who viewed Dost Mohammad as increasingly susceptible to Russian influence. As part of the treaty, Shah Shuja agreed to recognise Ranjit Singh's claim over Peshawar, which was already under the control of the Khalsa Darbar.

In 1839, the British launched an invasion of Afghanistan to reinstate Shah Shuja. Sikh forces assisted the British by attacking Kabul from the north, while the British led the main expedition from the south. The joint British-Sikh forces successfully captured Kabul and placed Shah Shuja back on the throne. The Sikhs held a victory march in Kabul alongside the British, a moment celebrated in Punjabi folklore as the time when the Sikhs hoisted the "Nishan Sahib" over Kabul during the reign of Sher-e-Punjab, Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Shah Shuja's Tyrannical Rule and Assassination

However, Shah Shuja proved to be a cruel and tyrannical ruler upon regaining power. He engaged in barbaric atrocities against those Afghans he felt had betrayed him, making him extremely unpopular. When the British withdrew from Kabul in 1842, Shah Shuja was assassinated, ironically by his own godson.

Aftermath: Sikhs Retain Peshawar

Although they retreated after the conquest of Kabul, the Sikhs retained control over Peshawar, which they had captured earlier from the Afghans under the leadership of General Hari Singh Nalwa. This followed the fierce Battle of Jamrud, fought in April 1837, in which the veteran Sikh general was mortally wounded, but not before securing control of the strategically located citadel. Peshawar remained in Sikh hands until the end of the Sikh Empire in 1849.

Beginning of the End

The Legacy of Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the illustrious and powerful Sikh ruler who secured the Kohinoor from Shah Shuja, passed away in 1839, just before the conquest of Kabul. His death marked the end of an era for the Sikh Empire, a time when the empire's strength and unity were personified by the Maharaja's leadership and vision.

The Fall of the Sikh Empire

In the years that followed, the once-mighty empire faced numerous challenges, culminating in the British annexation of Punjab. In 1849, as part of the Treaty of Lahore, the British East India Company seized the Kohinoor, a symbol of Sikh pride and sovereignty. This loss was deeply felt by the Sikh community, as the diamond represented not just immense wealth but also the legacy of their great Maharaja.

The Kohinoor and British Imperialism

The Kohinoor's journey did not end there. It was later incorporated into the British Crown Jewels, a stark reminder of the colonial subjugation that had befallen India. In 1877, Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India, and the Kohinoor— cut to the present-day size of 105.6 carats from the original 186 carats— became a dazzling but painful emblem of British imperial power.

Contested Ownership and Emotional Legacy

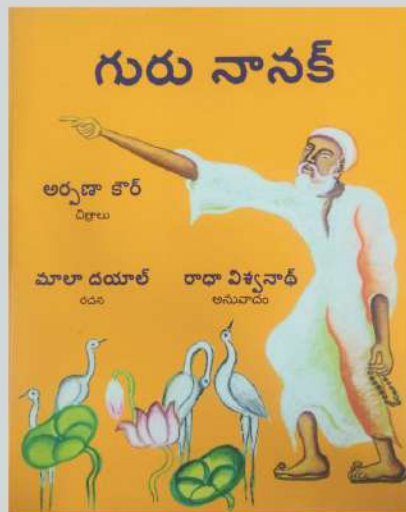
Today, the diamond remains a subject of contention and longing, with countries including India, Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan all claiming rightful ownership. For the Sikh community, the Kohinoor is more than a gem; it is a symbol of their rich heritage and the golden era of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign. The diamond's tumultuous history evokes a sense of loss and the enduring hope for justice and recognition of its past glories.



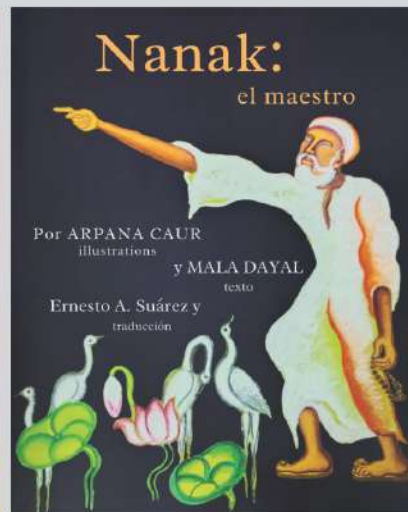
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Guru Nanak Dev Ji's ideology centered on the oneness of God, equality of all humans regardless of caste, creed, or gender, and the importance of earning an honest living, sharing with others, and meditating on the divine name to achieve spiritual liberation.

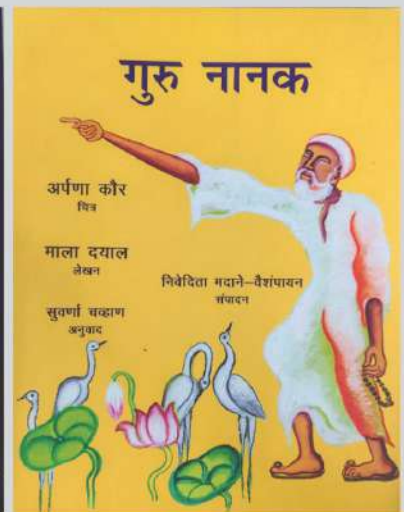
Earlier to mark the 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak special initiative was taken to educate children about the teachings of Guru Nanak through a beautiful and informative pictorial publication title: **Nanak - The Guru**. The book was published in Punjabi, Hindi, English, Telugu, Tamil, Marathi, Oriya, Spanish and German languages, under sponsorship from philanthropists, and distributed among children free of cost. The book is available on the TSR website for worldwide readership.



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‘Tirath yatra da ki labh heh’? (what is the benefit accrued out of a pilgrimage?)

DR. KULBIR SINGH GUPTA*

The Hindu ‘parampara’ (tradition) lays emphasis upon the significance of ‘Tirath-Yatra’ (Pilgrimage) as the instrument for one’s spiritual growth and advancement. The Sikh Way Of Life does not recognize pilgrimage as a tool for cultivating a spiritual temperament or disposition. Satguru Nanak Ji visited the holy places of pilgrimage of both Hindus and Muslims mainly to promote a rational discourse within the laity which was ridden with rituals and superstitions. He, through reason and gentle persuasion as well as his own piety and devoutness, had countless ‘wayward and adrift’ pilgrims emancipated from ‘Karam kand’ ਕਰਮ ਕਾਂਡ (rites and rituals performed mechanically and in a mundane manner with no acquisition of spiritual values). Those who were lured to pomp and pageantry associated with the practices of charms, chants, spells, incantations, and trivialized magic, were saved from the ‘morass of moral decay’ and instructed to live a life that was in step with one’s ‘True Dharna’.

Satguru Nanak conveyed to the congregated masses that an individual’s body was a ‘vessel or Temple of God’. One could, through spiritual discipline, evolve one’s Inner Self and even seek the ‘Darshan’ (Vision) of God. Satguru Nanak conveyed the import of the dynamic of combating the ‘Panj vikkar’ (five vices) and instructed the seekers that those who overcame ਪੰਜ ਵਿਕਾਰ ਕਾਮ, ਕ੍ਰੋਧ, ਲੋਭ, ਮੋਹ, ਅੰਹਕਾਰ kam (lust), krodh (anger), lobh (avarice), moh (attachment), and ahankar (ego) deserved to be called True Pilgrims. Satguru Nanak says ਵਿਦਿਆ ਵਿਚਾਰੀ ਤਾਂ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ॥ਜਾਂ ਪੰਚ ਰਾਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਤੀਰਥ ਵਾਸੀ ॥੧॥ (SGGS : 356) Vidya viicharri taah parupkarree II Jaa panch raasee tah tiirath vassi (Contemplate upon the Divinity of GOD to reflect upon your knowledge and you shall become a benefactor to others. When you ultimately conquer the five vices you shall be dubbed as the resident of the sacred shrine of your pilgrimage).

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People frequent the places of Yatra because of numerous reasons. Those who consider the act as customary familial practice, do so rigidly. Others do so for ostentation while many undertake a pilgrimage for the sheer pleasure of sightseeing. There is a category of people who, in order to escape from the mundane or the nitty-gritty of life, choose to carry out their pilgrimage. Many of the pilgrims tenaciously hold on to the notion their sins are rendered null and void once they visit the holy spot or take a dip in the Ganga. Sikhi does not consider the act of immersion in the water with long-winded rituals as a means of salvation. Guru Arjan Sahib Ji says (SGGS : 1348) :

ਪਾਪ ਕਰਹਿ ਪੰਚਾ ਕੇ ਬਸਿ ਰੇ ॥ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਇ ਕਹਹਿ ਸਭਿ ਉਤਰੇ ॥

ਬਹੁਰਿ ਕਮਾਵਹਿ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਸੇਕ ॥ ਜਮ ਪੁਰਿ ਬਾਧਿ ਖਰੇ ਕਾਲੇਕ ॥੨॥

Paap kerre pancha ke bass reh || Tiirath nayye kahhe sabh uttrai || Bahuur kamaaveh hoyye nissank || Jamm puur baandh kharre kalaank (They commit sins and perfidy under the influence of the five vices. They bathe at the sacred shrines and believe that they have been exonerated for their sins, They then continue to commit their malefactions against God, without any dread. The blasphemous are bound and gagged and hauled away to the City of Death).

The filth of sin is in a man whose mind is sullied and tainted. The sensuous pleasures and the craving for materialistic gains cannot be brought to a cessation by mere dips in the Ganga. A person, through linkage and association with the truly holy and saintly men of God, while visiting the sanctified shrines, could to a certain extent derive some semblance of a benefit. These places of pilgrimage remind the visitors of the goodness, moral standing, and spiritual greatness of Saints of yester year whose religious legacy lives on. For those on a pilgrimage there is a likelihood of a chance meeting or contact with the True Devotees of God who could impact upon their minds and influence them to take to a way of life that is in tune with Dharma. If one studies the life history of Guru Amardas Sahib Ji, the third Guru of Sikhs, his earlier pursuit of seeking 'God's Kirpa' through a fixated and exacting customs and practices of the time by visiting the Hindu shrines and taking a dip in the waters of the Ganga on twenty or so occasions, is well recorded. Despite having practiced a regimen of rigorous asceticism and constant bathing in the Ganga, it had not created a spiritual awakening. It was in Basarake, District Amritsar, that he heard Bibi Amro, the daughter of Guru Angad Sahib Ji, reciting the Gurbani in the ambrosial hours of the morning. The resonance of the Gurbani sung with devotion by Amro ji had a profound impact on

Amardas Ji. He, upon inquiring of the source of the Gurbani, was told by Amro ji that what she was reciting was the Japji Saheb, the composition of Satguru Nanak ji. Amro ji accompanied Amardas ji to Khadoor Saheb, 'Sikhi Da Ghar', where Guru Angad Saheb Ji, the second Guru of Sikhs, was in communion with the Sangat. It was at Khadoor Saheb that Amardas Ji met Guru Angad Ji for the first time and ultimately discovered his TRUE SELF.

Amardas Ji served Guru Angad ji with unstinting loyalty and selflessness for 11 years (1541-1552) at Khadoor Saheb. In the holy communion with Guru Angad Ji, Amardas Ji's notions and thinking about pilgrimage underwent a radical change. A remarkable transformation of the mindset of Amardas ji, through a filial association with the 'REHNNI, BEHNNI, and KERNNI' {TRUTHFUL LIVING WITH ALTRUISTIC INTERACTION) of Guru Angad Ji, thus shaped up his aura and persona. Guru Angad Saheb ji at the time of his 'Joti Jot' (passing away from his earthly abode to merge with the Divine Supreme Reality) chose Amardas ji as the succeeding third Guru of Sikhs for his service-mindedness, absolute humility and total obedience to the Guru, over his two sons, Dasu ji and Dattu ji.

Satguru Nanak Ji says (SGGS : 2) : ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਵਾ ਜੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵਾ ਵਿਣੁ ਭਾਣੇ ਕਿ ਨਾਇ ਕਰੀ Tiirath naavah jeh Tiis bhaava viin bhaanei ke naaye kari II (If the Lord considers me worthy of being graced, then and then only shall my act of taking a dip would be construed as a true pilgrimage. Otherwise, what good does the ritual of a dip do if my act does not please the Lord ?). Satguru Nanak again expounds (SGGS:687)

ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਵਣ ਜਾਉ ਤੀਰਥੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੈ ॥ ਤੀਰਥੁ ਸਬਦ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਹੈ ॥ in the same vein : Tiirath navaan jaaoo tiirath Naam heh II Tiirath Shabad biichaar antaar gyan hai II (The Naam or the Name of the Lord is the actual Tiirath when one undertakes a pilgrimage. The contemplation or the meditation of the Sacred Word of the Lord becomes the shrine of my pilgrimage). Guru Gobind Singh ji, the tenth Guru of Sikhs, had issued an injunction against the practice of pilgrimages. According to Kalghidhar Padshah - Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the contemplation of the Naam transcends over and above the esteem in which a place of pilgrimage is held. The Guru did not consider a pilgrimage worthy of momentousness. ਤੀਰਥ ਕੋਟ ਕੀਏ ਇਸ਼ਨਾਨ ਦੀਏ ਬਹੁ ਦਾਨ ਮਹਾ ਬੁਤ ਧਾਰੇ॥ ਦੀਨ ਦਇਆਲ ਅਕਾਲ ਭਜੇ ਬਿਨੁ ਅੰਤ ਕੇ ਅੰਤ ਕੇ ਧਾਮ ਸਿਧਾਰੇ॥ Tiirath kot kiyye ishnaan diiye bahuu daan mahaa barraat

dharre II Diin Dayaal Akal bhajje biin aant koh Aant keh dham sidharre II – Twaprasad Sawaiye. (By taking several dips in the waters of the pilgrimage sites and making large donations in cash and kind, carrying out fasts, one meets his death in the end, without having meditated upon the Lord of the Universe),

Bhagat Kabir Ji discovered God through his Inner Self. That is why he moved out of Benaras, a famous site of pilgrimage of Hindus according to the convention, and went over to reside in Maghar. He chose Maghar over Kashi. As a spiritually enlightened soul, he wanted the myth that anyone breathing his last in Maghar would be born as a donkey in his next life, to be dispelled. Kabir ji was demonstrating that the act of taking a dip in Benaras was a ritual that was totally superstitious and had no merit. Bhagat Kabir (SGGS : 326) says : ਬਹੁਤੁ ਬਰਸ ਤਪੁ ਕੀਆ ਕਾਸੀ ॥ ਮਰਨੁ ਭਇਆ ਮਗਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਸੀ ॥੩॥ ਕਾਸੀ ਮਗਰ ਸਮ ਬੀਚਾਰੀ ॥ ਓਛੀ ਭਗਤਿ ਕੈਸੇ ਉਤਰਿਸਿ ਪਾਰੀ ॥੪॥ ਕਹੁ ਗੁਰ ਗਜ ਸਿਵ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਜਾਨੈ ॥

ਮੁਆ ਕਬੀਰੁ ਰਮਤ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਰਾਮੈ ॥੫॥੧੫॥ Bahott barras taap kiiaa Kashi II Marran bhaiia Maghar ki bassi II Kashi Magghar saam biicharri II Auchii bhagatkesse uttaras parri II Kahho Gur gaj shiv sabh koh janne II Muua Kabir rammatt Sri Ramme II (For many years I performed austerities in Kashi but close to death have I taken abode in. I consider Kashi and Maghar to be the same. No one can merge with Universal Self without piety and sincere devotion. Everyone, including my Guru, Ganesh and Shiva knows that Kabir died uttering the Lord's Name, therefore he cannot escape heaven even if he died in Maghar).

A pilgrimage in reality is the Union of the seekers or Devotees with their Guru, who with his touch and discourse of the sacred Word of God, instils Light of Knowledge and Wisdom in their minds and hearts. Satguru Nanak Saheb ji (SGGS : 1329) renders his composition in Raag Prabhati to let us know :

ਗੁਰੁ ਦਰੀਆਉ ਸਦਾ ਜਲੁ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਮੈਲੁ ਹਰੈ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਪਾਇਐ ਪੂਰਾ ਨਾਵਣੁ ਪਸੂ ਪਰੇਤਹੁ ਦੇਵ ਕਰੈ ॥੨॥ Gur darriao sadaa jaal nirmaal millia duurmatt mel harre II Satgur paeai poora navaan passu parretoh Dev kerre II (The Guru is the river from which pure and clean water is obtained perennially. The transparent water washes away the filth and evil-mindedness of the Devotee. In discovering the True Guru a perfect dip or bath is that which transforms beasts and spirits into Gods. FAITH IS NOT THE CLINGING TO A SHRINE BUT AN ENDLESS PILGRIMAGE OF THE HEART.

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Leadership in the Sikh Context For the Future World

DR DALVINDER SINGH GREWAL*

Leadership Defined

Leadership is the “process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task”. Alan Keith states: "Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen." Ken Ogbonnia states: "Effective leadership is the ability to successfully integrate and maximize available resources within the internal and external environment for the attainment of organizational or societal goals."

Common Leadership Traits

- Sincerity of purpose
- Common cause with the people
- Truthfulness
- Dedication
- Commitment
- Communicative competence
- Firmness to resolve
- Knowledge and experience
- Capability to lead
- Setting examples & not merely talking

Sikhism

Sikhism advocates the pursuit of salvation through disciplined, personal meditation on the name and message of God. The followers of Sikhism are ordained to follow the teachings of the ten Sikh Gurus, as well as the holy scripture Sri Gurū Granth Sāhib Ji, which, along with the writings of six of the ten Sikh Gurus, including selected

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works of many saints and devotees from diverse socio-economic and religious backgrounds provide the spiritual guidance.

Fundamentals of Sikhism

- Follow the teachings of the Ten Gurus and of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.
- Meditate on God's Name (Naam Japna), Live and earn honestly through labor (Kirat Karni), and share the earnings with the needy (Wand Chhakna), keeping the principles of Simran and Sewa in mind.
- Keep off five evils i.e., Lust (Kaam), Rage (Krodh), Greed (Lobh), Attachment to worldly creation (Maya Moh), and Ego (Aham).
- Develop Truth (sach), Compassion (Daya), Contentment (Santokh), Humility (Nimrata) and Love (Pyar)
- Baptise with five k's Hair (Kesh), wooden Comb for hair (Kangha), Undergarment (Kuchha), Iron Bangle (Kada), and Sword (Kirpan)

Points of Belief

- Mool mantra; **ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥**
- One Universal Creator God. Whose Name Is Truth. He is a Personified Creative Being Without Fear; Without Hatred; Beyond Death & Birth since He is Self-Existent. He can be obtained by the Guru's Grace.
- Equality: All human beings are equal: no caste, creed, or status barriers. Men & women are equal.
- Value Human life: Human life is given by God and is the best for meditation and reaching God. Should not be wasted away. No harm to any human body. Don't hurt any heart.
- Defend against injustice: It stands for truth & Justice: and protects the oppressed. Allows the right to use force as a last resort.
- Consider Sri Guru Granth Sahib as supreme, read it, discuss it in sangat, and follow its teachings.

Some Great Sikh Leaders of the Past

1. Ten Gurus
2. Baba Banda Singh Bahadar

3. Nawab Kapur Singh
4. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia
5. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia
6. Baghel Singh
7. Bhai Maha Singh
8. Mai Bhago
9. Bhai Mani Singh
10. Bhai Taru Singh
11. Baba Deep Singh
12. Maharaja Ranjit Singh
13. General Hari Singh Nalwa
14. Akali Phoola Singh
15. Sham Singh Attariwala
16. Kharak Singh
17. Master Tara Singh
18. Manmohan Singh

Sikhism at Present

Followers of Sikhism are known as Sikhs. Sikhs number over 26 million across the world according to Census records. However, they are claimed to be 160 million (16 Crore) by various researchers. These include Sikligar, Vanjara, Johari, Lama, Agarhari, Bihari, Assamese, and other tribal Sikhs. Most Sikhs live in Punjab, India although there is a significant Sikh diaspora spread globally in the Indian states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra, MP, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, UP, J & K, Rajasthan, Himachal, Uttra Khand, Delhi, Haryana, etc. and outside India in USA, UK, Canada, Australia, Arab Countries, Singapore, Thailand, Malaya, Cambodia, Pakistan etc. The Sikhs are identified from their turban, hair, and Kada in general and Kangha, Kuchha, and Kirpan in specific as per Guru Gobind Singh's directions. Their central pilgrimage center is Harmandar Sahib in Amritsar; though they worship other Sikh historical religious places (gurdwaras) where Sri Guru Granth Sahib is centrally placed.

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat) Analysis of Present Sikhs-

Good Points

- Attached to Sri Guru Granth Sahib internally and follow teachings of ten gurus and consider Gurdwara as a meeting point and decision-making place for Sikh Society.
- Stand out in society due to their turban, defending the weak, feeding the poor, and pleasant manners.
- Very hardworking, go-getters, dedicated, committed to human service, and volunteer everywhere in times of need without caring for caste, creed, and religion. For them, everyone belongs to God and God's creation must be helped.
- Physically well-built with a towering personality.
- Believe in naam japna, kirat karna and vand chakna, welfare of all (sarbat da bhala) free service to the society (sewa), meditation as a way of life, ritual-free worship and living, They do not believe in revenge; easily forgive and forget; provide care and medicines even to enemies at war. Believe strongly in fair play.
- Famous for langar, selfless service, hard work, security and assistance to the helpless, openness, and bravery.

Weak points

- Not particular about baptism; many in Punjab have even shorn hair after the 1984 debacle.
- An increasing number of deras way lay simple village folk in the name of spreading Sikhism; and start their own practices.
- Not united: Divided into an increasing number of sects like Namdharis, Radhaswamis, Udasis, Sikligars, Vanjaras, or Joharis. Various party affiliations like Akali Dal Badal, Akali Dal Mann, Akali Dal Akal takhat, PPP, and RSS.
- Caste distinctions still continue like Jats, Bhapas, Ramdasia, or Ramgarhia leading to Gurdwara classification like Ramgarhia Gurdwara, Ramdasia Gurdwara etc.

- Brahminical rituals like Aarti, lamp lighting, pitcher with coconut, placing money in the hands of granthi during prayers, ritualism in reciting bani (Ladivaar Akhand Path without anyone in attendance), taking langar to homes, separate dining for VIPs are increasing in gurdwaras. Kirtnias becoming elite; charging high but never visiting the rural remote and the poor, high-rise gurdwaras with poor congregations (negligible sadh sangat), generally sangat reaching gurdwara on key functions just at the time of the start of the langar.
- Weak and selfish leadership

Existing leadership of Sikhs

- Self-centered leaders; Use Sikhism for material benefits.
- The central religious organization SGPC is controlled by self-seeking politicians. Losing democratic values, and organization control in the hands of the weak. SGPC losing importance as a central Sikh agency.
- The politics of Punjab dominates in SGPC. Diaspora is not given due roles to play.
- Different bodies are being formed in different states; e.g., DSGMC, PSGMC, RSGMC, etc. Everybody using their own clout.
- Funds collected for Sikhism are not being used on Sikh development and spreading Sikhism in the true spirit.
- Sikh masses do not have faith in Sikh leadership and thus losing faith in Sikhism. Apostasy increasing in Punjab.
- Gurdwaras became centers of power and not of religious preaching.
- Poor Sikh tribes Sikligars, Vanjaras, Johris, etc., were neglected regularly.

Characteristics of Future World

- Highly connected: Distances reduced in terms of time.
- Highly communicative and interactive: idea exchange going to be the fastest. The effect of one corner of the globe will impact the other corner as well.
- Internet takes over books.
- East will dominate West economically and politically.
- The migration pattern will reverse; jobs in India & China will attract all outsiders.

- Religion will lose out to spirituality. Faith in God will increase with increasing helplessness, widening differences between rich & poor, results not as desired. Reason will enter religion; religions close to reason will have more acceptance.

Sikhism in Future

- Sikhism is spreading fast globally; though it is losing its sheen in Punjab since a number of youth have become apostate by cutting their hair.
- This is not the case for Sikhs in other states in India and in the US, Europe, and Australia, where they have religiously maintained the tradition of keeping hair.
- Sikh saints did yeoman's service in spreading Sikhism in the USA. Similarly, many saints are also putting up their efforts to spread Sikhism, but the success has been limited so far.
- Sikhism is being understood globally faster now because of the need for distinction between Muslims and Sikhs.

Prospectus of Development of Sikhism in the Future

- Sikhism is based on reason, easily understandable and acceptable by all. It requires no rituals to become a Sikh
- The teachings of Sri Guru Granth Sahib have universal applicability and acceptability.
- Sikhism does not teach difficult practices; it explains meditation as a way of life: meditating while living and serving society.
- It advocates equality fraternity and service to humanity: it is a humane face.
- It is thus being accepted and spreading gradually all over the globe and has the potential of becoming the future key religion of the world.

Requirements for a Future Leader in Sikhism

- The future leader should be of global stature, able to have a global vision, and set mission, aim, and objectives.
- He should be true Gurmukh; following the Sikh way and values of life.
- He should be able to lead by example and not by talk.

- He should have no narrow or personal interest. He should believe in universal brotherhood and human development as a common cause.
- He should be dedicated, committed, service-oriented, practically free from material bondage, and above all truthful to the socio-religious needs of the world.
- He should be able to express, communicate, make judgments judiciously, and convince others about his aims and objectives.
- He should be politically, economically, and technically aware and sensitive to developments in the world.

Recommendations for Future Leadership

- Sikhs must search themselves within and be away from all evils and differences between them. They must adopt the true values of Sikhism.
- A global Sikh Parliament should be established where representatives from all communities are included. The selection system of Panj Piaras as explained by Rattan Singh Bhangu in Panth Prakash is most ideal. This system was adopted by misals. Selection system through Parliament where an individual is nominated first and if acceptable by all; recommends another name: two recommend third and three recommend fourth and four recommend fifth and all are accepted unanimously by voice vote. These five are the key to participative management and select one with common acceptance to lead all. The resolution (mata) is finally passed by the parliament and circulated to all Sikhs. If any Sikh has an objection he should put up his viewpoint to the five pyaras who may evaluate; accept and reject any individual idea. If all the members are accepted, they shall be given a term of five years to lead. Parliament will help passing various legislations on which the leaders and the pyaras function. The parliament should represent the global Sikhs and communication developed globally.
- Young leaders must be developed through a central development institute, They may initially help the parliament and the pyaras, and if found to be of worth they can be promoted to parliament and also as pyaras.

Conclusion

Sikhs fully know that 'Shah Muhamda ik sarkar bajhon, faujan jit ke ant nu harian ni'. Sikhs lost the battle against the British because of poor leadership and traitors

within. Sikhs have to choose a leader who meets all the aspirations of the Sikhs, standby by the tenets of Sikhism, and does not deceive them for personal gains. The tragedy, however, is that Sikhs the world over are trying to get rid of self-seeking, incompetent leaders but are not able to replace them with a leader with the characteristics mentioned above. Sikhs must ponder over it and do their best to have the most competent leader so that the suffering community is led towards its global reckoning.



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The first Birth Centenary of Dr. Jaswant Singh Neki falls on 27th August 2025 In Remembrance of a Polymath

DR. MOHINDER SINGH*

A psychiatrist of international fame, a leading metaphysical poet, and a linguist with knowledge of Sanskrit, Braj, Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Persian, and English, Dr. Jaswant Singh Neki was a unique personality- deeply religious, yet totally secular in his outlook; highly read, yet modest about his scholarship; blessed with all the material comforts of life and yet humble. With the passing away of Dr. Neki, the Sikh community lost its best-known scholar, whereas the family and friends have lost a dear patriarch. While I had heard a lot about Dr. Neki's qualities of head and heart, it was during my tenure as a Lecturer at the S.G.T.B. Khalsa College, Delhi, that I got an opportunity of listening to him. I learnt that Dr. Harbhajan Singh, then Head of the Modern Indian Languages Department at the University of Delhi, had invited Dr. Neki for a lecture in the Arts Faculty building of the University. I was advised that if I wanted to listen to Dr. Neki, I should arrive at least 15 minutes earlier to be able to get a seat. When I reached 20 minutes before the schedule, the hall was already packed. I could find with difficulty a little space for standing in a corner. I was so mesmerized by this lecture that I became one of his lesser-known admirers.

It was in 1982, when I took over as Director of the Guru Nanak Foundation, that I had a close encounter with Dr. Neki. We had invited Giani Zail Singh, then President of India, to inaugurate a function. Dr. Neki was sitting in the front row of the audience. An astute politician that Giani ji was, he noticed Dr. Neki's presence. The lecture being over he advised me to bring Dr. Neki and some other scholars for a cup of tea in the Rashtrapati Bhawan. Politically naive as I was, I could not get the sense of that impromptu invitation. During the meeting over a cup of tea, the hidden agenda –

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discussion over the burning issue of Khalistan – became open. It will be impolitic to discuss what transpired during the closed-door meeting but what impressed me most was Dr.Neki's ability to speak the truth unmindful of the consequences. This greatly enhanced my respect for him.

Some months later, I shared my impression with Dr. Amrik Singh who advised me that it would be appropriate if I could persuade my management to invite Dr.Neki as the General Secretary of the Guru Nanak Foundation. The rationale of Dr. Amrik Singh's argument was, that because of his scholarship standing in the Sikh community, and courage of conviction, Dr. Neki would act as a cushion between me and the management and help develop the institution as the first-rate center of research in Sikh studies in the national capital. Dr. Amrik Singh's suggestion, valuable as it was, could not be put into practice as the conservative management of the Foundation thought, Dr.Neki was too strong to manipulate to suit the interests of a few individuals rather than the Sikh community. However, this dream was fulfilled a few years later when Dr. Manmohan Singh was invited to take over as President of Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, a premier literary organization, where I was then working as Director. Learning from past experience, we did not float Dr. Neki's name for the position of General Secretary but instead authorized Dr. Manmohan Singh to appoint a person of his choice. With his standing as a scholar statesman, he had no difficulty in appointing Dr. J.S. Neki as the General Secretary of the Sadan. With such distinguished scholars and prominent citizens as Dr. Manmohan Singh, Gen. J.S.Arora, Shri Kuldip Nayar, Justice Kuldip Singh, Dr. Amrik Singh, and Dr. J.S. Neki on the Governing Council, Sadan was soon put on the right track and achieved new heights in promoting the writings of Bhai Vir Singh and essentially unifying message of Guru Granth Sahib. It was during the tenure of the new management with leading figures of the time on the Governing Board that the Sadan arranged two International Seminars – one on Guru Granth Sahib and its Context, which was inaugurated by Dr. Manmohan Singh (then Prime Minister of India), in the Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, on 30th October 2005, and the other on Pluralistic Vision in Guru Granth Sahib, which was inaugurated by Smt. Pratibha Patil (then President of India), also in the Vigyan Bhawan on December 16th, 2010. Dr. Neki not only designed these seminars but also ably edited the proceedings which were published by the Sadan.

During my 25 years of close association with Dr. Neki, I found that his faith in the Guru was beyond any doubt. After taking over as President of the Sadan, Dr. Manmohan Singh called a meeting of the office bearers to understand the functioning of the Sadan. During the discussion, it transpired that the Sadan had defaulted on payment of property tax to the N.D.M.C. and there was a huge arrear running into lakhs. Meticulous and law-abiding as he was, Dr. Manmohan Singh pointed out that he would not like to be associated with an institution that was living in 'sin' and advised us to clear the dues forthwith if we wanted him to continue as President of the Sadan. We pleaded that we had no savings to clear the arrears. It was at this critical juncture that Dr. Neki volunteered to find some donors to enable us to clear the arrears. Subsequently, a special meeting was called at Dr. Manmohan Singh's residence for the purpose, where names of three prominent millionaires in California were discussed as possible donors. Dr. Manmohan Singh instructed me to provide full details and telephone numbers of the suggested donors whom Dr. Neki could approach during his visit to California. Back to the office, I gave details of the possible donors to Dr. Neki as directed by the President. I casually asked him how will he approach the donors. His simple reply was, "I have never begged from any individual. I always beg from my Guru". To my surprise, a few days later, I got a phone from Dr. Neki from the U.S. informing me that he had been able to get a cheque of one lakh dollars from someone whose name was not debated in the meeting and was unknown to us in Delhi. Unable to believe my ears I asked him, "Is the cheque for one lakh rupees or one lakh dollars", Dr. Neki's reply was, "I begged from the Guru and the Guru had sent a donor with the required amount." One Lakh dollars when converted into Indian rupees at that time was more than enough to pay the property tax arrears. But Dr. Manmohan Singh put a rider that we would receive the amount only after I was able to arrange permission to receive foreign funds from the Ministry of Home Affairs. After a few days of running about, we got the required permission and funds to be paid as arrears of property tax. Thanks to Dr. Neki's strong belief in divine intervention, we were no longer living under 'sin'.

I would also like to share another incidence of his strong faith in the Guru. One day, while travelling with my friend, who had opened a nursing home near Rohini, I noticed a Nishan Sahib fluttering in a cluster of slums. We halted for a while and asked someone as to which area that was. We were told that this was Sardar Colony. It was later that I found that this was a corner of Sector 36 of the colony, where V.P. Singh (then Prime Minister of India) had given small plots to the victims of the 1984 riots. The colony lacked all basic facilities with no provision for education and health. Back home, I discussed this issue with Dr. Neki, who, like many of us, was not aware that apart from Tilak Vihar another widows' colony also existed in Delhi. He suggested that we should immediately visit the area. His suggestion was more of an order and we decided to proceed to the area immediately. On seeing the condition of the inmates there, Dr. Neki was so moved that he decided that we should set up a dispensary and a primary school there. He asked my wife to perform the Ardas with which our project was 'inaugurated' on the road without any office or funds. I asked Dr. Neki, "How will we run the center without any space and funds?" Quickly came the reply "The Guru will provide the resources". To my utter surprise when I returned to my office in the Sadan I noticed an old gentleman with a flowing beard, carrying a stick waiting in the lobby of the Sadan. I did not know who he was and what was the purpose of his visit? On inquiry, I was told that Dr. Neki had mentioned his new project to him and he had come to donate for the purpose. That beloved son of the Guru was S. Kanwar Singh Bhasin. Soon after, we were also allotted accommodation for the purpose by the Slum Wing of the DDA. Fortunately, this project was taken over by a devout team of the Sikh Humanitarian Society, who have created proper facilities for the children of the lesser God. Promoting Gurus' teachings was one of the abiding passions of Dr. Neki. When the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee set up a Guru Granth Sahib Research Centre, he happily agreed to be its Chairman and I was made the Convener. When we noticed that, like other politicians, those in control of the Gurdwaras, were not serious about the cause they were associating with, we decided to set up such a center in Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan itself. The Guru heard our prayer again and the Central Government gave us a handsome grant for the Centre which, under the guidance of Dr. Neki emerged as an active platform for meaningful research on Guru Granth Sahib.

Dr. Neki had a great sense of humor and sometimes would defuse tense situations by intervening with an appropriate joke. Once during the meeting of our Institute in the office of Prof. Bipan Chandra (then Chairman of the N.B.T.), Dr. Amrik Singh and Prof. Bipan Chandra got into an argument on some issue. When the debate became rather hot and difficult to control, Dr. Neki intervened by narrating a joke that made both of them burst into laughter. After a while, I asked them what I should record. I was told that both of them had forgotten the point of contention. While appreciating Punjabis' sense of humor and ability to laugh at their cost, Prof. Bipan Chandra asked Dr. Neki if he could narrate some more Punjabi jokes, to which he replied he had a treasure of such jokes. Prof. Bipan Chandra asked him, "Why don't you write a book on Punjabi humor which N.B.T. will be happy to publish?" Dr. Neki happily agreed. Lo and behold! At the next meeting, before we could take up the agenda, Dr. Neki handed over the manuscript (which was published by the National Book Trust under the title of Punjabi Haas Villaas in 2008). Ongoing through the manuscript, Prof. Bipan Chandra asked Dr. Neki how he could compile this collection in such a short time. Dr. Neki replied that this was only half of what he had written and he was planning to publish another book on the subject (which was subsequently printed by Aarsee Publishers in 2010 under the title of Hasiay te Rasiye).

Dr. Neki retained his sense of humor till the end. A few days before leaving for the U.S., we went to meet him in the hospital. As he was in the I.C.U., I entered his room with special permission from the doctor. While responding to my greetings, he asked where was my wife? I told him that she had always been accompanying me but did not wish to break the hospital rules by entering the I.C.U. He insisted that she should come and meet him. While greeting Dr. Neki, my wife expressed a wish that in return for her greetings, he should give her a Thapara (pat on the back) rather than just responding to her Fateh. He mustered enough courage and gave Thapara to both of us, which remains our treasured memory. We asked him whether the hospital was taking care of his food to which he promptly replied, "Yes, they are giving me a variety of tablets for breakfast, for lunch, and for dinner". That was the genius called Dr. Neki. □

J.J. Singh Campaigning For Indians To Obtain Citizenship of America

S. TARLOCHAN SINGH*

It is well known that people from India started migrating to North America from 1890 onwards. The Sikh farmers first came to Canada to work in the sawmills and later on, migrated to California USA. Centuries-old Gurdwaras are still places of attraction for our youth. I have gone through the official records and have found that citizenship of America was granted to Indians for the first time through an Act of Parliament in 1946. It is recorded that this was achieved through a sustained campaign led by J J Singh who was then the President of the Indian League of America.

In August 2020, the media published headline stories mentioning that Sabrina Singh had become the first ever Indian-American as Press Secretary to the Vice Presidential nominee of a major political party. She was picked up by Kamla Harris who was elected as Vice President of America. She was earlier the spokeswoman of two Democratic Presidential candidates. The media followed her and discovered that Sabrina Singh was the grand daughter of J J Singh who had been the President of the Indian League of America in New York when India was fighting for independence. She tweeted that her grandfather mounted a campaign in 1940 against the racially discriminatory policies of the US and fought for Indians to obtain citizenship in America.

Jag Jit Singh (JJ Singh) was born in a Sikh family on October 5, 1897 in Rawalpindi (now in Pakistan). His father was a Judicial Officer. He studied in the U.K. and migrated to the USA. He opened a fabric store in New York and started importing textiles from India. In 1941 he was elected President of the India League for America, a New York-based organization that spoke for India and Indians living in the United States. At that time there were about 4000 Indians in the USA but they did not have citizenship rights. J J Singh along with S. Anup Singh and Mubarak Ali Khan lobbied in Washington corridors of power and met Senators and led a sustained campaign with the support of leading Americans which resulted in the passage of the Luce –Cellar Act of 1946. This law granted for the first time citizenship rights to these 4000 Indians living there and established a quota of 100 Indian immigrants every year. The Act was signed by President Harry Truman on July 2, 1946, and after signing the Act, he gifted the pen with which he had affixed his signature to JJ Singh who was standing with him in the

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White House. Interestingly, that pen is now with Sabrina Singh, who has been Deputy Press Secretary to President Joe Biden.

Another landmark of J J Singh to help India was reported in "New York Times" on 28th Feb. 1944, United Nations Relief & Rehabilitation Administration in a meeting in Atlantic City, decided to provide help to the millions of people who were starving due to the Second World War. Burmese Refugees were included but not the Indians. J.J Singh went to Washington to lobby and organized a campaign to get an amendment to feed the hungry Indians alongside. Finally, the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate approved the Amended Bill. The singular efforts of JJ Singh brought huge relief to millions of people in India.

He remained a bachelor to fully devote his time and energy to the cause of India. Finally at the age of 54 in October 1951 he married Malti Saksena daughter of Sh. R.R. Saksena, High Commissioner for India to Canada and Former Consul General in New York. The couple had two sons who were born in America.

In 1959, JJ Singh decided to move back to India to raise his children in his home country. It was reported that his farewell lunch before departure was quite a gathering which included the Supreme Court Justice, W-O-Douglas, Vice President, Richard Nixon, and the Mayor of New York, R. F. Wagner. The New York Times reported on 18 January 1959 "U.S. Loses 'Envoy' to the call of India." There was also an editorial on him in the paper. The Mayor of New York hosted a lunch for him. M.C. Chagla, the then Ambassador of India in the USA, called JJ Singh "a great unofficial Ambassador of India to that country". He further added that future Ambassadors from India would miss JJ Singh's advice about American politics and culture. The Times named him "The Life and Soul of Indian League".

Back in India, J.J. Singh settled in Delhi and enjoyed an active social life. He remained an avid supporter of the civil rights and social justice movements. He fully supported Jayaprakash Narayan's campaign to save democracy.

He died in 1976 in Delhi and later, both his sons Man Mohan Singh and Manjit Singh migrated to the USA.

It is astonishing that such an illustrious person who earned so much goodwill for India in the USA and generated a great deal of support from the American media for the cause of the country and Indian immigrants was totally ignored by the Government of Independent India. This is in stark contrast to the recognition accorded to Krishna Menon, by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who was also credited fighting for India's cause in London. It is high time that at least the historic role that JJ Singh played for India is properly recognized and displayed in India's Diplomatic Centres in the USA.

□

Tribute To Dr. Surinder Bir Singh Ex-Principal Guru Nanak Dev Engineering College, Ludhiana

DR. KANWARPREET SINGH (MBBS, MD)*

Dr. Surinder Bir Singh was born on 20 September 1946 at Gujarkhan (Now in Pakistan). Father: S. Gurbaksh Singh, Mother: Smt. Agya Kaur. He was a highly qualified mechanical engineer with a brilliant academic record. His qualifications included BE, M.Tech, PhD & MBA. He joined Guru Nanak Dev Engineering College, Ludhiana, as a lecturer (1971) & went on to become the principal of the college (2005-2006).

The year 2000 was the turning point in his life when he lost his elder brother (Jatinder Bir Singh). His whole attitude to life changed, and he started wearing a white kurta pyjama at all times. The family formed a trust in Jatinder Bir's name to financially help poor students in their education. It was during his tenure as Principal of GNDEC that Dr. Surinder Bir Singh started counselling students, especially from rural Punjab & poor families. He guided them about JEE, organized their training & did career counseling. He made them aware of fee waiver programs and scholarships (especially government schemes). He not only gave them a roadmap but also provided handholding till they stood on their own feet. He always encouraged students to do at least their bachelor's degree in India before going abroad to serve as a safety net in case things did not work out as planned. He was against students selling their family land / taking loans in lakhs, and going abroad.

Another thing that he loved was taking part in interactive workshops with the youth to improve their lives. He taught the students the concepts of having a vision and setting goals to realize their dreams. He would give all students a pen & paper & make them write details of their personal particulars, family background, & aim in life to get a

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better idea of every individual participating in the workshop. He would even take these papers home & work on them till late in the night, creating a database for future workshops & communication.

He himself led a life of simplicity. He not only believed but lived by the Sikh principles of "Kirat Karo, Naam Japo & Wand Chhako". He always dressed in a white cotton kurta pyjama with a sling bag and always exuded positive vibes – "Chardikala". He donated his car to the students of GNDEC to use its parts in their projects. He would pick up a scooter even past the age of 70 to visit schools and colleges to deliver lectures / conduct workshops. At times, he would even take a bus. He was so passionate about his mission that he did not mind waiting outside a school or college for hours to meet the Principal to get permission and to speak and interact with the children.

He loved reading & music, and his books / musical instruments filled every corner of his house. He encouraged everybody to do the same.

Dr. Surinder Bir Singh suffered a cardiac arrest and passed away on the morning of 12th February, 2025, leaving a void in the lives of those who knew him or loved him. As destiny would have it, he delivered his last lecture in his Alma Mater, GNDEC, on 11th February, 2025.

The best tribute to Dr. Surinder Bir Singh would be to lead a simple life and help spread the awareness about the need to be educated/help educate youth. □

ਸੰਤਾ ਕੇ ਕਾਰਜਿ ਆਪਿ ਖਲੋਇਆ ਹਰਿ ਕੰਮੁ ਕਰਾਵਣਿ ਆਇਆ ਰਾਮ ॥
ਧਰਤਿ ਸੁਹਾਵੀ ਤਾਲੁ ਸੁਹਾਵਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਜਲੁ ਛਾਇਆ ਰਾਮ ॥

The Lord Himself has stood up to resolve the affairs of the Saints;
He has come to complete their tasks.
The land is beautiful, and the pool is beautiful;
within it is contained the Ambrosial Water.

[SGGS : 783]



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Bhai Sahib,

Your article on your School friend Captain M S Kohli is a piece of Archives and you have narrated the history of the village founding of All India Sikh Students Federation and its growth. The article is a proper tribute to Dr. Jaswant Singh Neki. About Khanda Ghat camp a special train from Kanda Ghat to Kalka was commissioned and I organized Buses from Patiala Bus Service at Kalka. The Camp venue was the residence of the Engineer so no expenses. Sri Nagar Kothi VIP Guest House was also made available. Bhurpur Singh was declared the best camper.

Tarlochan Singh, Ex-M.P

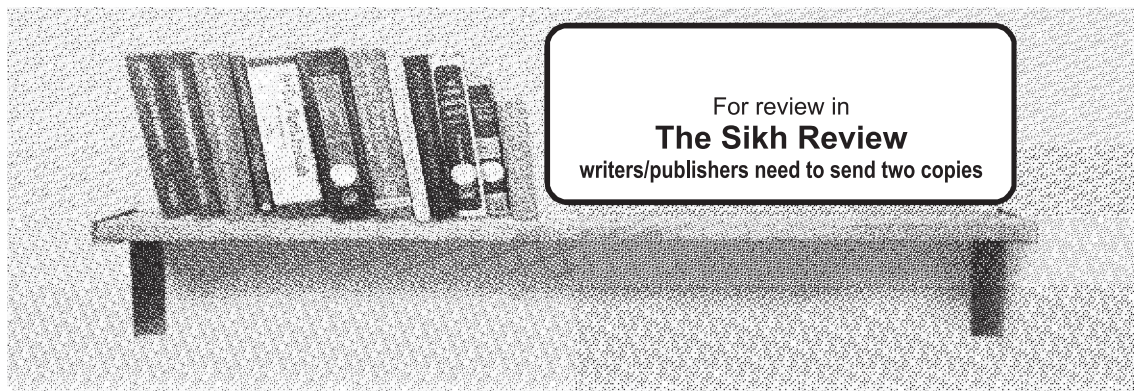
Former Chairman
National Commission Minorities.

S. Prabhjot Singh Ji,

I am thankful to you for writing a very elaborate article in Sikh Review August Edition on S. Arvinder Pal Singh. You have very properly mentioned that for the first time in the World a Turbaned Sikh is heading 'Lions Club International' which is the largest service philanthropist organisation. His father, a well known Sikh leader Baba Jaswant Singh was my close friend. The Sikhs all over the World feel proud of AP Singh. Sikh Review has done a commendable job by publishing this article to motivate others.

Tarlochan Singh, Ex-M.P

Former Chairman
National Commission Minorities.



Book Title : **My Spiritual Voyage Through Word Divine
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji)**
Author & Publisher : **Surinder Jit Singh Pall**
Distributor : **Kes Sambhal Parchar Sanstha, New Delhi**
Price : **Rs. 1300 • US\$20**

A Review by Santokh Singh Bains*

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is unique in several respects. It is the only scripture in the world that has been accorded the status of an eternal Guru. Unlike other scriptures, it contains hymns of several holy people of different religions (Hinduism and Islam), also including some persons who were treated as outcasts. The Sikh Gurus and other holy persons, whose compositions have been included in the Granth, flourished at different periods spanning from the 12th century to the 17th century AD. The Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is a voluminous scripture, containing 5,872 hymns and spanning a total of 1,430 pages. Several languages and dialects have been used, although the entire Granth has been written in Gurmukhi script. While outrightly rejecting asceticism, ritualism, and idol worship, it promotes the concepts of Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man. The Granth has been arranged according to 31 Ragas (musical measures) in which hymns are expected to be sung.

From time to time, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji has been translated into English by some eminent Sikh scholars like Dr. Gopal Singh, Manmohan Singh, and Gurbachan Singh Talib. But there has been a dire need of a comprehensive commentary on the entire Sikh scripture in the English language because till now, only a few English

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commentaries have been published on some selected compositions like Japji Sahib and Sukhmani Sahib only.

It may be mentioned here that several Punjabi commentaries on Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji were published in the past. Prof. Sahib Singh's 10-volume, enormous commentary is undoubtedly a magnificent work. But Faridkot Teeka, which had been prepared by some Sikh scholars under the patronage of the Raja of Faridkot, is believed to be the earliest commentary on the Sikh scripture in Gurmukhi.

Surinder Jit Singh Pall's recently published book titled 'My Spiritual Voyage Through Word Divine (Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji)' appears to be the first bold attempt at preparing an exhaustive commentary on the Sikh scripture in English. Written in a lucid style, the author has avoided sectarian interpretations. On the other hand, he has emphasized the positive aspects of Sikhism's central scripture.

There are 23 appropriate chapters in the book. The Preface (pages 7 to 10) and the Introduction (pages 11 to 18) throw light on various significant aspects of Sikh history and the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

The appropriate meanings of important words have been provided wherever considered necessary. At some places, before properly explaining the Sikh viewpoint, deeper meanings of some words have been mentioned while also explaining the words' significance in different religions. For example, on pages 91 and 92, the concept of Maya has been explained according to Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain philosophies. The views of Lynn Foulston and Wendy Doniger have also been stated. Thereafter, the concept has been dealt with in detail according to the Sikh religion.

Long before undertaking the project of preparing an outstanding commentary on Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji in English, S.J.S. Pall had authored two Punjabi books titled 'Guru Te Gurbani' and 'Gursikhi Jiwan.' Later, Hindi and English versions of these two books were also published. His Punjabi book titled 'Sadi Shahidian' dealt with the history of Sikhs in the 18th century. Pall's 'Bharat Da Aamdan Kar Kanoon' was an amazing Punjabi book on the subject of Income Tax.

S.J.S. Pall has rendered yeoman's service to the Panth by preparing the amazing commentary in the English language. He certainly deserves hearty congratulations for this exemplary endeavour. Hopefully, other volumes of the commentary will also be published shortly.

The unique first volume should definitely be on the shelves of all important libraries administered by gurdwara management committees and various Sikh organizations in India, as well as in foreign countries. Also, educated Sikh individuals would do well to buy copies of this splendid book for themselves and also for presenting it to their close Sikh and non-Sikh relatives, friends, and acquaintances.



Book Title	: Exploring the Sikh Roots in Eastern India
Author	: Jagmohan Singh Gill, Mentor, Guru Nanak Chair, JIS University, Kolkata
Publisher	: Singh Brothers Bazar Mai Sewan, Near Golden Temple, Amritsar
Pages	: 208

A Review by Dr. Bhai Harbans Lal*

Exploring the Sikh Roots in Eastern India is an insightful and meticulously researched work that delves into the lesser-known history of Sikhism in the eastern part of India. Written with historical depth and cultural sensitivity, this book explores how Sikhism, a religion traditionally associated with the greater Punjab region, found its roots and flourished in places like UP, Bihar, Bengal, Orissa, and Assam.

Content and Structure

The book is structured around chapters tackling different aspects of the Sikh community's growth and evolution in eastern India. It begins by tracing the early migrations of Sikh communities from Punjab into these regions, providing a clear historical context for how and why Sikhs started to settle there. The author highlights key historical figures, events, and socio-political changes that influenced the community's establishment and development in these areas.

One of the book's most striking aspects is its attention to detail regarding the various contributions of Sikh communities to the cultural and economic landscapes of eastern India. Whether it is their role in trade, agriculture, or education, the Sikh diaspora is portrayed as an integral part of the region's history. The book also touches on the rich tradition of Sikhism in Eastern India, examining the religious practices, rituals, and institutions that evolved in these areas.

Historical Insights

The author does an exceptional job of challenging the conventional narrative that Sikhism is solely a Punjab-based religion. By providing in-depth historical context, the book showcases how Sikhism adapted to the cultural and geographical variations in India's eastern states. It also reviews the influence of Sikh Gurus and how their

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teachings resonated with the local population, helping to bridge religious and cultural divides. This exploration of the Sikh religious traditions in an Eastern Indian context is an intriguing and much-needed contribution to the broader study of Sikhism.

Cultural and Social Context

Beyond history, the book examines the social and cultural dynamics of Sikh communities in Eastern India. The author examines how Sikh values, like equality, community service (Seva), religiosity, and devotion, shaped the interaction between Sikhs and other local groups. The interfaith dialogues, particularly between Sikhs and Hindus, and the role of Sikh Gurudwaras as community centers are discussed thoughtfully and comprehensively.

The book also illuminates some of the challenges Sikhs face in these regions, including cultural integration, identity preservation, and their relationship with the state. Through interviews, personal anecdotes, and a wealth of historical documentation, the author offers a nuanced picture of Sikh life outside of Punjab. He notices that the Sikh population speaks local languages and is gradually forgetting Punjabi. On the positive side, the author recognizes the expansion of the Nanak Panthi community, particularly the community that migrated from the West during and after the partition of India in 1947. The author names unique villages where the Gurudwaras of Nanak panthis flourish, specifically mentioning Gurdwara Bal-Leela. Nirmala mendicants do impact Nanak Panthis. Nanak Panthis do not insist on a commitment to Punjabi Sikh culture.

Writing Style and Accessibility

The writing style is clear and engaging, suitable for academic readers and those interested in history and culture. The book is well-researched, drawing from primary and secondary sources, including archival materials, interviews, and surveys. Though the subject matter is rich with historical facts and details, the author maintains readability without overwhelming the reader with excessive jargon.

Conclusion

Exploring the Sikh Roots in Eastern India is an outstanding and valuable addition to studying Sikhism and Indian history. Focusing on the Sikh experience in the eastern part of India, the book offers new perspectives and challenges long-standing narratives. It's essential for anyone interested in religious studies, Indian history, or the diaspora communities shaping India's cultural mosaic.

Overall, this book is an enriching experience that offers historical depth and a powerful exploration of Sikh identity, religion, and cultural integration. □

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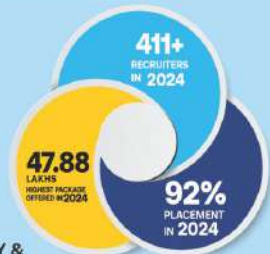
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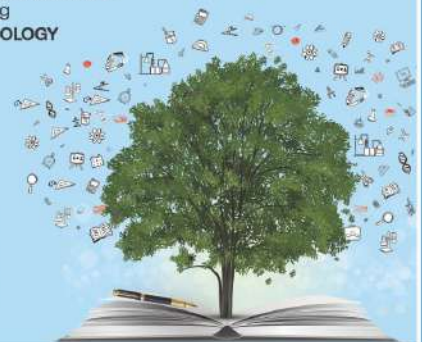
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