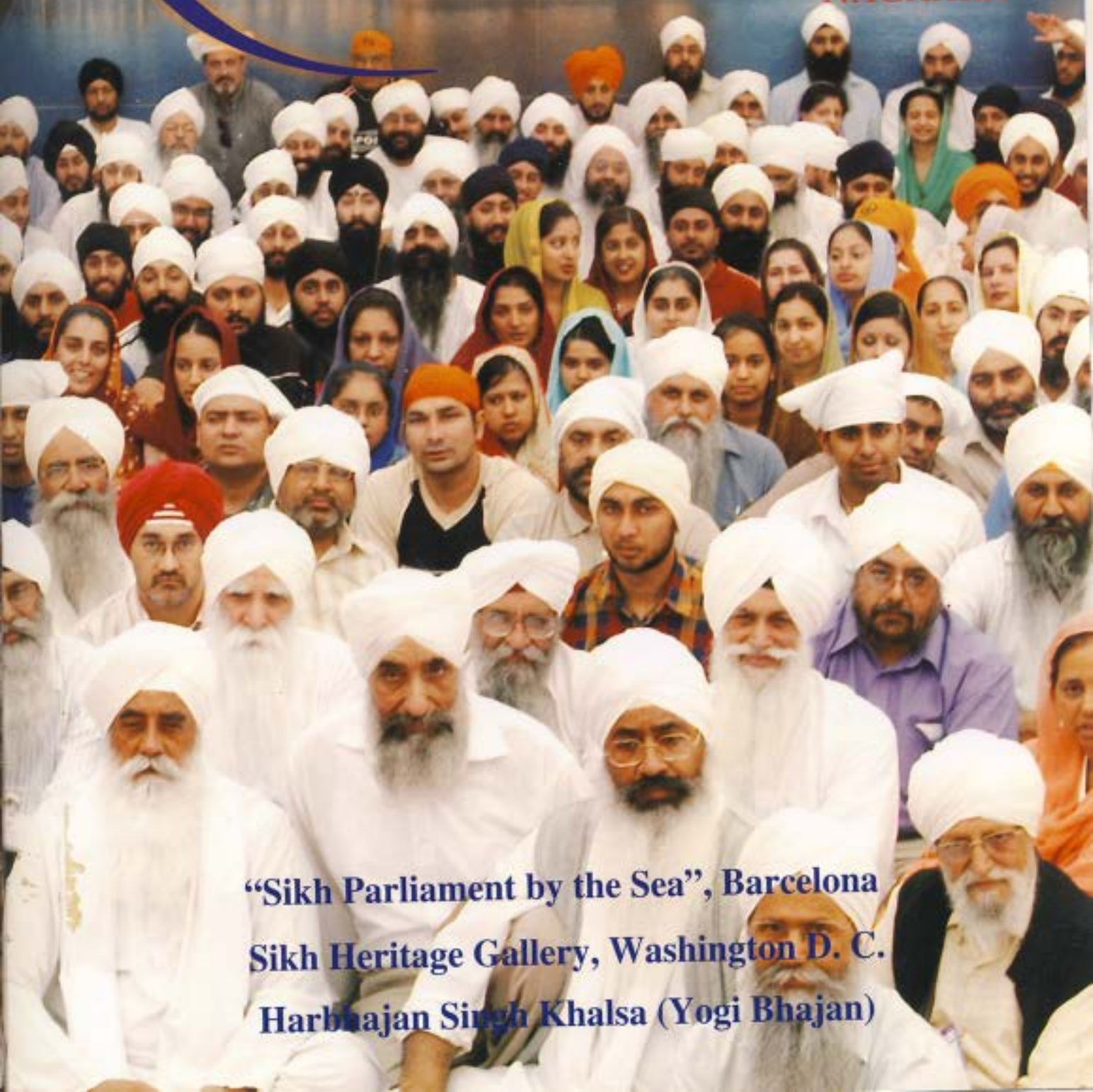


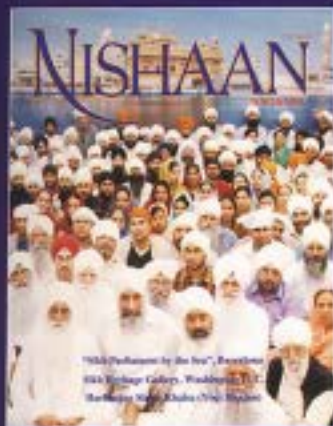
IV/2004

NISHAAN

NAGAARA



**“Sikh Parliament by the Sea”, Barcelona
Sikh Heritage Gallery, Washington D. C.
Harbhajan Singh Khalsa (Yogi Bhajan)**



Cover: "Sikh Parliament by the Sea"
at Barcelona in Spain.
Photograph by S. Hardev Singh

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Readers will note the bias in this Issue towards Sikh events and personalities in the West. While the community rejoices in the spectacular successes at Barcelona in Spain, where the Sikhs of Birmingham welded religions of the world in daily kirtan and langar, it is gratifying that there is now a permanent Sikh Heritage gallery in the world's most renowned museum, the Smithsonian in Washington DC. In the State of New Mexico, the man who brought about a transformation in the lives and values of thousands of Americans, has passed on but left forever a legacy which will inspire millions more to come.

There were those moments, elements and factors that brought Harbhajan Singh Khalsa, popularly called Yogiji, to the critical point where his consecrated mission manifested itself in full Sikh splendour and glory. It was an ordained, watched process and when the hour came, the man who was to become a living legend in contemporary Sikh history made his appearance. It was, to use a scientific expression, an *implosion*, an inner, spiritual phenomenon whose character was determined by the energies imbibed by Yogiji with his mother's milk, so to speak. The *gurbani* lore or the Word Divine, learnt in a pious, devoted Sikh family, must have shaped his sensibility and primed his psyche from childhood, even though perhaps he had little idea at that age of his later calling, and of the mission he was to launch in the United States of America.

Born in 1929 in a village now in Pakistan, his father, who was a doctor, had brought his family across the great divide as refugees in 1947, settled in New Delhi and the young Harbhajan, after his High School education at Dalhousie in a Missionary School graduated in Economics from the Punjab University. He soon joined the Indian Revenue Service where he served for a number of years before migrating to Canada and then to the USA. While at college, he had the reputation of being a polished speaker, a sportsman called "the China Wall" that made him stand out, a man among men, a person to be counted upon.

His migration to Canada with the recommendation of the Canadian High

Commissioner in New Delhi was primarily motivated by his desire to become a teacher there. What followed and how he earned an international reputation as a Sikh missionary who converted thousands of drifting, disenchanted young white men and women to his thinking of Sikhism, is a story richly illustrated and narrated during his lifetime.

The splendid achievements of Yogi Bhajan were, in reality, a gift of his personality and that gift, as the American theological philosopher Nicholas Berdyaev has put it, was a God given endowment, not created by training and circumstance, important as they are, otherwise, in the flowering of personality. To talk of the personality in question is to initiate a discourse on his physical stature and a face lit up by the light within. It radiated bliss and happiness, a lyric smile playing on his lips.

And that brings to my mind my few meetings with Yogiji that I had over a period of time. As I recall those moments, and rotate the scenes before the hour-glass of my memory, I see a tall, well-built person rising before me out of the mist of time. The first meeting, as far as I remember, took place over 30 years ago. I had been invited to a seminar of Sikh writers and thinkers to ponder over the problems then faced by the Sikh community in India, and by the Sikh diaspora in Canada and in the United States. I will try to describe the scene, printed in characters of steel on the tablet of my mind. As we sat discussing the agenda, I looked at a handsome, tall man framed in the threshold of a door, akin to a breathing statue. We got up spontaneously to greet him as he strode majestically towards the seat reserved for him. I cannot recall the remarks he made, but his words left us all awash with wonder. He had the gift of eloquence and even in his cryptic comments, one could see the quality of his expression.

My second meeting with Yogiji took place in 1990 when I was teaching at a summer school on Shakespeare's tragedies and on modern American novels at New York University. I had earlier spent two years at NYU as a Visiting Professor offering graduate courses and had, then, been allotted an

apartment in the University Campus where my wife and I made some great friends, particularly among the Indian residents of New York. In the summer of 1990, I went there alone, and stayed with my daughter, then doing her Ph.D course on American Ethnic Literature at NYU. And it was during that visit that I was invited by that well known hotelier, Sant Singh Chhatwal, who was running a chain of Indian restaurants in the United States. And, on the appointed date, accompanied by my daughter, her husband and the 5-year old son, Angad Singh, I was received by the elevator man

I trust I owe some kind of apology to the reader of this Issue. I've *personalised* a part of the piece for reasons that should soon be clear. As it is, I could not have added more on Yogiji, on whom a tide of writings are fully descriptive and fully illustrated.

I conclude this tribute on a note of deep significance. Yogi Bhajan Singh, as I hinted had divined the moment that was to bring his mission from "readiness" to "ripeness" (both expressions from Shakespeare). And such a moment was called *Kairos* by the Greeks – the "right time" and the "right man". This moment was prophetic.



and shot up to our host's penthouse, located in a posh sector of Manhattan. Yogi Harbhajan Singh Khalsa, as he was then known, was the chief guest that evening. As Sant Singh Chhatwal got up to introduce me to Yogiji, the latter remarked, "Well, I have known Professor Maini for many years, chiefly from his writings in *The Tribune* and in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*." We were soon exchanging views and perceptions. As we were about to leave, he invited me to his ashram in New Mexico which I promised to do during my next visit to the USA. Alas, this was not to be.

Yogi Bhajan has passed on (away is the word used by the British, while on is used by the Americans when a person dies, which perhaps means that the gone soul is now with the Maker, a soul in bliss). The American Master of the Sikhs is no more, but he lives on in our thoughts, in our memories to sweeten the imagination. He has left behind a vast treasure of wisdom, and it is for the next generation of the Sikhs in America — and indeed worldwide — to enlarge upon that precious heritage.

Prof. Darshan Singh Maini

THE SIKH HERITAGE GALLERY

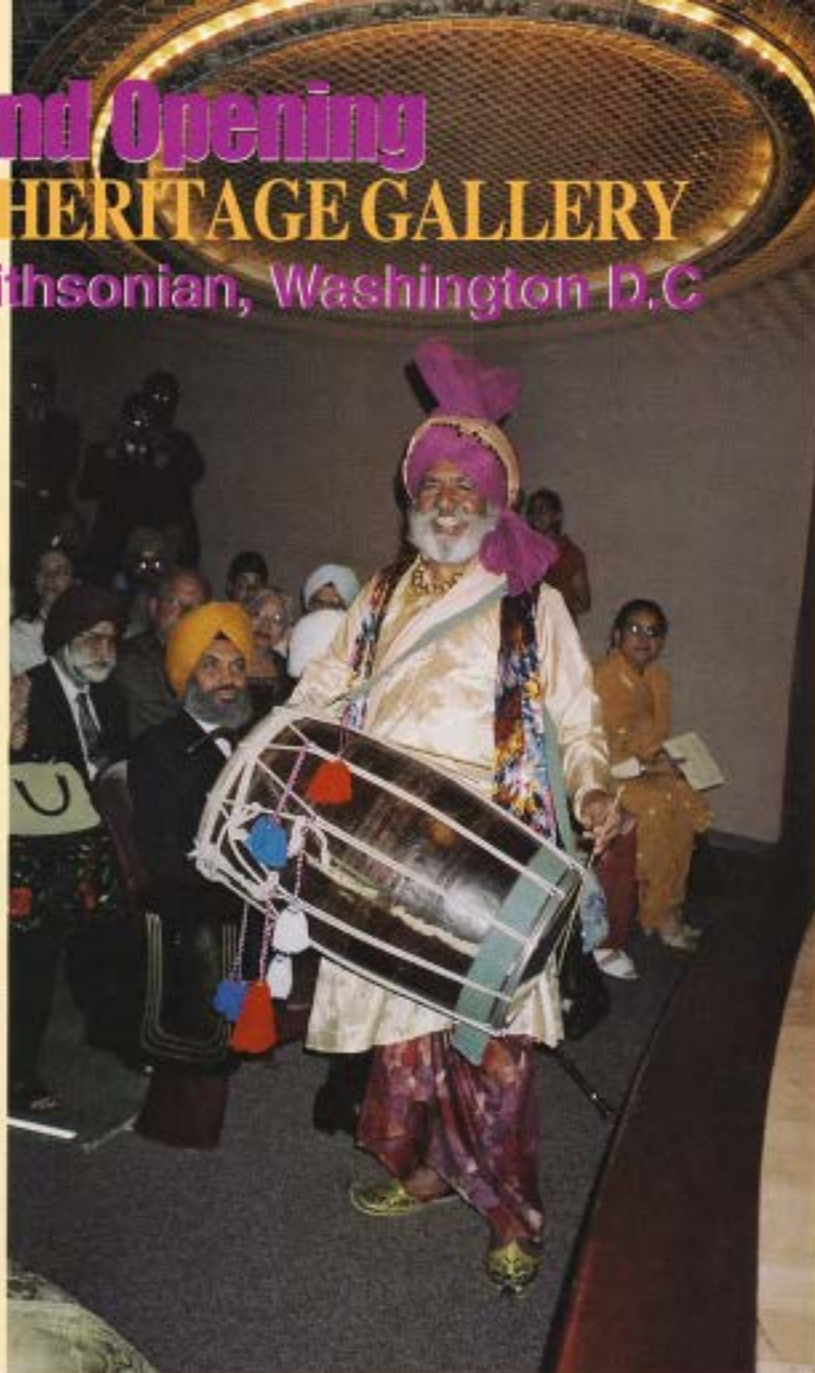
Grand Opening

at the Smithsonian, Washington D.C

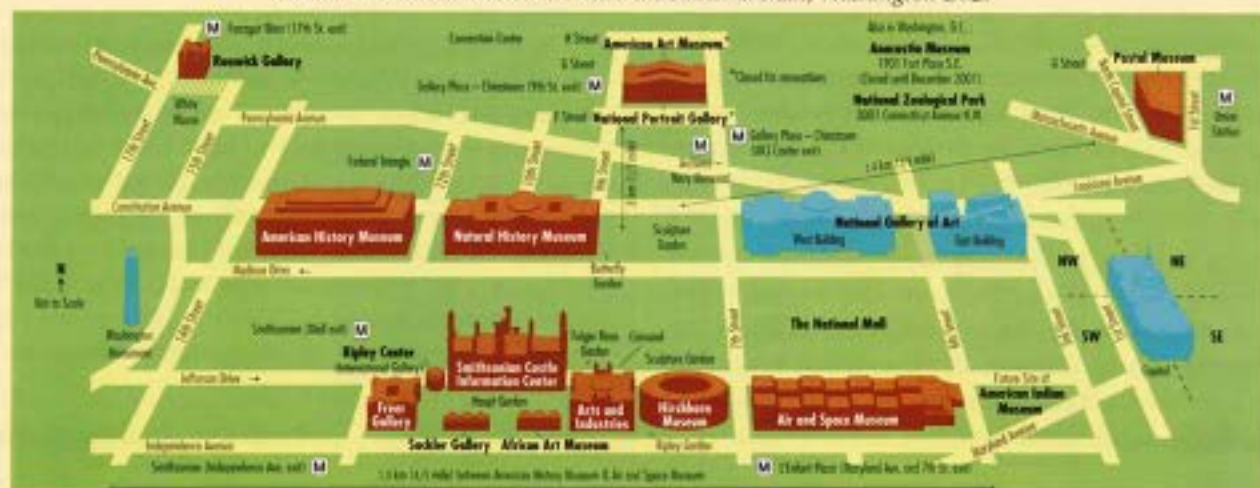
Over 2,000 Sikhs and many others from across the United States thronged the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History in the heart of Washington DC during the 24 July 2004 weekend to celebrate the grand opening of a permanent Sikh Heritage Gallery featuring Sikh manuscripts, art and artefacts of history.

The gallery was inaugurated with an exhibition titled *Sikhs: Legacy of the Punjab*, that features more than 100 items of miniature paintings, arms and armour, traditional textiles and dress, coins, musical instruments, jewellery, sacred texts and also a scale model of the Darbar Sahib, well known as the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar.

Coincident with the occasion, the *Sikh Heritage Foundation* and its numerous partner organisations held several arts and cultural events and lectures, featuring musicians, artists, and academics. Among them were Lal Singh Bhatti, affectionately known as the *Godfather of Dhol*, Bikram Singh, Nihal Mehta, artist Arpana Caur, U.K. resident artists and twin sisters Amrit and Rabindra Kaur Singh and Dya Singh with his world music group from Adelaide, Australia, singing select *shabads* from the *Guru Granth Sahib*.



Smithsonian Museums on and near the National Mall, Washington D.C.



The official opening, which was held at the 600-seat Baird Auditorium of the Museum of Natural History, was packed to capacity, with hundreds left standing in the aisles. An overflow of more than 300 people had to be accommodated in the adjoining cafeteria where a big screen tele-broadcast the welcome speeches that preceded the reception in the Rotunda.

Smithsonian Secretary Lawrence M. Small, in thanking "all those who have generously loaned Sikh artworks", said that the exhibition was evidence of the Smithsonian's mission "to cast a wide net and encourage scholarly contact and research on almost every nation in the world and to increase and disseminate knowledge".

Rakesh Sood, *charge d'affairs* at the Indian Embassy in Washington DC, in his rousing speech said, "As religions go, the Sikh religion is relatively young and yet what a glorious heritage it has in this short period! There is a unique work ethic that the Sikhs bring – the 'can do' ethic, which is a new ethic in a large part of South Asia, if I may say so".

He also spoke of the egalitarianism in the Sikh faith and pointed out that "it's a concept reflected brilliantly in the institution of the *langar* – where everybody sits together and eats, rich and the poor. That is the sense of egalitarianism which is part of the Sikh heritage and legacy".

"Look at the sense of community reflected so well in the saying, *Aape guru, Aape guru cheyla*" the teacher is the student and the student is the teacher. You learn from everybody. It's not necessary to put somebody on a pedestal in order to learn from them, it is something that comes out of life itself and therefore everybody can be a teacher, including the teacher, who himself can be a student and vice versa".

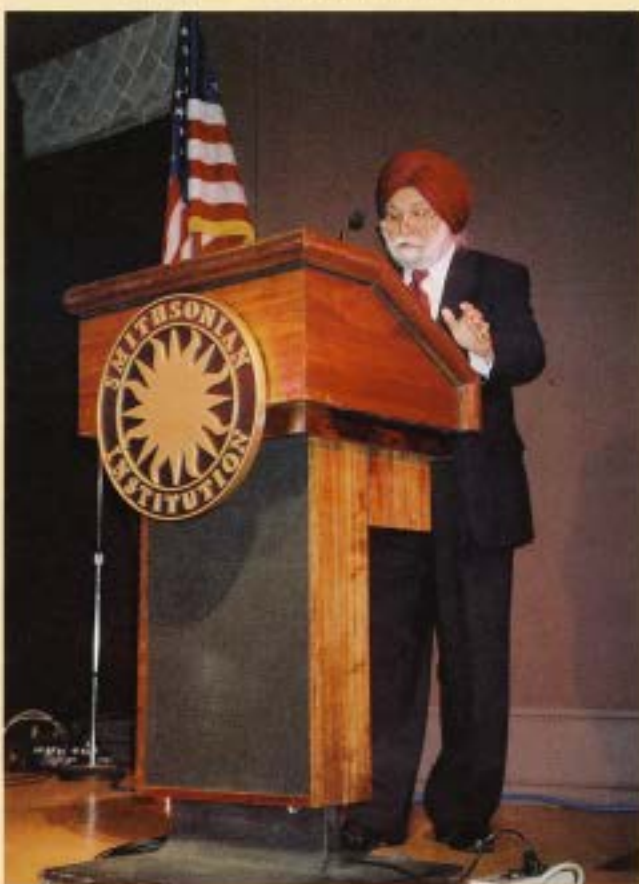
He continued: "I see a lot of women in the auditorium and Sikhism is the religion that right from the beginning – from the time of Guru Nanak – had preached equality toward women which again is something unique, because I don't think any other religion gave women the same kind of equal role as Sikhism has done", Sood emphasised.

Ashraf Hayat, Minister of the Pakistan Embassy, who represented Ambassador Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, said, "The Sikh legacy, clearly in Punjab, is very visible in Pakistan" and spoke of the 18th and 19th centuries as "one of the more memorable periods in Punjab history; that is the time, in addition to the usual trappings of an empire, the art and craft of the culture flourished and this is what enriches that part of Pakistan."

Dr Narinder Singh Kapany of Palo Alto, California – founder of *The Sikh Foundation*, who is known as the 'father of fibre optics', and a driving force behind the establishment



Smithsonian Secretary Lawrence M. Small



Dr. Amrit Singh Chhattha of the Sikh Heritage Foundation.



Baha Sewa Singh from Khadoor Sahib at the Smithsonian on 24 July, 2004



"A sea of turbans filled the Rotunda"

of the gallery and who loaned many of his personal works of art and artefacts for the exhibition – spoke of the Foundation's activities and its pioneering efforts to promote the heritage of Sikhs in the Diaspora "and also to non-Sikhs".

Besides publishing over 70 books on Sikh history and culture in English in the US, Dr.Kapany said that *The Sikh Foundation*, which has already set up an endowed chair in Sikh studies at the University of California in Santa Barbara,



S. Tarlochan Singh, Chairman National Minorities Commission, was "also working to establish two more chairs at the University of California in Riverside and University of California in Irvine" and predicted that they would "be in operation in the next 12-months".

He said that *The Sikh Foundation* was also hoping to set up at least two more such chairs at UC-Berkeley and another at the San Jose State University.

S.Tarlochan Singh, Chairman of India's National Minorities Commission, lauding praise upon Dr.Paul Michael Taylor, Director of the Museum's Sikh Heritage Project and curator of Asian, European and Middle Eastern Ethnology at the Smithsonian, declared, "The man who gave the history of Sikhs to the British and to the West was M.A.McAuliffe, who left his Government Service to write the first book on Sikhism". The allusion with Dr. Paul Taylor's contemporary role was determinally clear!

Tarlochan Singh asserted that it was imperative that Sikhs in the US projected their faith's espousal of peace, "because the world is suffering from militancy, the world is suffering



Young Sikh men at the Baird Auditorium, packed to capacity



American Sikhs, with their boys in patkas, at the Smithsonian

from terrorism, the world can be saved only through spirituality".

"We don't believe in militancy", he said, but unfortunately the perception of Sikhs in the US "has been very wrong". "But please, for God's sake", he exhorted, "tell the people of America who you are, what the *Guru Granth* is. This is a scripture for bringing peace of mind to America. Wherever you go, please tell them to listen to the words of Guru Nanak. Don't forget your duty is to spread the message of Guru Nanak and that message can only spread by opening such galleries", he added.

Dr Amrik Singh Chattha, of Weirton, West Virginia, and founder of the *Sikh Heritage Foundation* who, according to sources, has contributed several hundred thousand dollars to the more than \$ 1.5 million *Sikh Heritage Project*, said, "Many of us have been waiting for this day and it is a dream come true".

"We originally set our goal to have a small window display over a period of five years. Today, we are thrilled to announce that we have surpassed these initiatives in every respect. A small display is now an entire gallery. A five year project has been completed in four years. The gallery is not simply in an American Museum but we are blessed to be partners of one of the world's greatest institutions, the Smithsonian".

Dr Rajwant Singh, founder and chairman of the *Sikh Council on Religion and Education* (SCORE) and former president of the Washington Inter-Faith Alliance who has often been invited to the White House for prayer and inter-faith meetings presided over by President George W. Bush, said that "Hopefully after the 9/11 events, this exhibition and gallery will surely portray the Sikh image in the correct perspective and in positive manner and the contributions the Community has made in India as well here in the United States."

His sentiments were echoed by Vijay S. Chattha, one of the coordinators of the weekend event and one who has also been involved with the project since its inception.

Chattha, who heads the public relations and consulting firm VSC Consulting in San Francisco, California, said that "It acquires significance after 9/11, because the millions who stream in through the Smithsonian will now have an opportunity to find out what Sikhism is really all about".

Aziz Haniffa

[From: "India Abroad"]

24 July, 2004



Ardas before inauguration of the Gallery

4 July, 2004

A day to remember

The day the Smithsonian Museum
Opened a gallery dedicated to the Sikhs.

Years of fund-raising
Years of hard work
Finally paid off
With a place of our own.

The programme started
Surprisingly on time
With ardas being recited
At the gallery site.

A model of Darbar Sahib
Graces the entryway
100 Sikh artefacts
Are on display.

After ardas
We walked down
To the majestic Baird auditorium
For the morning events.

Dya Singh's unique troupe
Filled the air
With soulful renditions
From the Guru Granth

Andrew played the didgeridoo
A sacred aboriginal instrument
Producing deep earthy sounds
That moved my soul.

Dheeraj on the tabla
Played an incredible beat.
Keith on the Greek bouzouki
Reminded me of the rabaab beat.

Dr.Hans-Dieter Sues
Associate Director of the Museum
Graciously welcomed us
And passed the microphone
To the man of the hour.

Dr.Paul Michael Taylor
Director of the Cultural History
Programme
Gave a synopsis on
"Sikhs - The Legacy of Punjab".

Gave a presentation
On the upcoming museum at Anandpur
Sahib.

The mind boggles
At the enormity of the project
It will be the largest museum
On its completion.

I smile and listen
As he enlightens us
The spirit of Chardi Kala
Rings loud and clear.

The Singh twins from England
Take the stage
With a presentation
Explaining their art.

As I journey into their world
I'm grateful for their guidance.



The Dya Singh World Music Group from Adelaide, Australia

This man has worked
Tirelessly for four years
To get this project
Off the ground.

I'm told, through the years
There were moments of despair
But he and his team marched on
In true Khalsa form.

Sardar Jaspal Singh
From the Khalsa Heritage Complex

Their art has a lot of nuances
With I would have missed.

The Twins through their art
Challenge the notion of individuality
For them - family and community
Supersede the individual.

I look across
And see their father
Sitting stoically
Watching his daughters.



Arpana Caur speaking on "Inspiration of My Art"



Dr. Paul Michael Taylor adorned with a saropa by the 92-year old marathon runner Fauja Singh of England.



Inni Kaur flanked by the artist twins, Amrit and Rabindra Kaur Singh

What must he be thinking?
What must he be feeling?
To see his daughters'
paintings
Grace the walls of the
Smithsonian.

Arpana Caur
The artist based in New
Delhi
Takes centre stage
And walks us through her
art.

Her paintings of Sohni
Mahiwal
And those of Kabir
Leave me with a desire
To see more.

Her paintings of 1984
Send shudders down my
spine.
She says, "It was not a riot,
it was a massacre".
Her words will stay with
me forever.

Her paintings depict
A city in flames
A river of blood
While humanity slept.

Art was her therapy
That soothed her soul
Her paintings project
A tormented soul.

Her series on Nanak
Are closest to my heart

With every painting
Rooted deep in Gurbani.

The evening reception
Surpassed expectations
Baird auditorium overflowed
Into the Atrium Café.

Fauja Singh, the marathon runner
Got a standing ovation.
As he presented a siropa
To Dr. Paul Michael Taylor.

"At the moment we have a small place -
We started small in California
Now we own the state.
So be prepared, Dr. Taylor for a takeover!"

A sea of turbans
Filled the Routnda
Volunteered their time
To make sure
We had a good time.

I will remember
This event for awhile
A feel good event
I haven't been to in awhile.

So, my fellow Sikhs
When you visit Washington
Come to the Smithsonian
And bask in this exhibit.

As I end this piece
A thought comes to mind:
We are only a few miles
From the White House!

Inni Kaur

Splendours of Sikhism

The Heritage Gallery



Entrance to the Sikh Heritage Gallery at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington D.C.

A mid-19th century painting shows off the splendour of a royal court. The monarch is Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the legendary Sikh ruler of Punjab in the 18th century. Also seen in the painting are Europeans, who were taken on to train his army. The painting is part of a set of 24 hand-painted ivory miniatures, on loan from the Kapany Collection of Sikh Art, that can be seen at the National Museum of Natural History's newly inaugurated Sikh gallery.

About one hundred exhibits that will remain on display indefinitely include paintings of the Sikh Gurus, Sikh history, lifestyle, depiction of the five 'Ks', worship and observance of social happening such as weddings.

One of the outstanding pieces is a diamond-pearl necklace of Rani Jindan, the most influential of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's wives. The 19th century exhibit from the Kapany collection is studded with rubies and emeralds.

Another salient feature is a gold-leaf model of the *Darbar Sahib*, the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar, on loan from the West Virginia based *Sikh Heritage Foundation*.

Visitors will get to learn about Sikh weddings where the bride wears her *salwar-kameez* and covers her head with a *chunni*. The groom dresses in an *achkan* (long jacket). At the push of a button, rhythmic Punjabi folk music can be heard. Visitors get to see musical instruments *dholki* (small drum),



Exhibits on display at The Heritage Gallery.



Nyrmala's Wedding II, by Amrit and Rabindra Kaur Singh.

Depiction of the Sikhs in visual form at The Heritage Gallery, Smithsonian Museum of National Gallery.



Map showing the expanse of Sikh territory under Maharaja Ranjit Singh





Entrance to the Exhibition Gallery



Over six million visitors are expected to visit the Smithsonian every year.

Dr. Amrik S Chattha, a member of the Sikh Heritage Foundation. "Events in the aftermath of 9/11 showed that many people have a misperception of our faith, so an exhibition that is open to six million people every year was a great way to spread the culture".

The gallery project was started after a group of U.S.-based Sikhs, concerned about preserving their heritage, established the Sikh Heritage Foundation in 2000. The gallery was scheduled to open in 2005, but was ready six months ahead of time, according to Gurdip Malik who has gifted several of the exhibits to the Foundation, such as model of the Golden Temple.

When the proposal for the project was taken to Dr. Paul Michael Taylor, Director of the Asian Cultural History

programme at the Smithsonian, he received it warmly. Taylor, curator for the Sikh Heritage project, has visited the Punjab in this connection. "I've always said we would like to see this gallery as a flagship of a fleet of related activities", he confirmed.



American Sikhs looked resplendent in the Smithsonian that day

The Foundation also hopes to collaborate with other American institutions. It plans to take up cataloguing of private collection in India, microfilming of endangered manuscripts in India and Pakistan, and production of illustrated catalogues of collections in India and abroad.

Monika Joshi

dhol (large mango wood and goatskin drum), *chhanta* (cymbal), tambourine and the *tabla* that add symphony to life in Punjab.

Phulkaris, the traditional hand embroidered cloth used to make garments of bedspreads, generally handed down over generations, are also on display. Some of the *phulkaris* are part of the museum's rotating gallery that houses fragile objects or those whose colours could fade by prolonged exposure to light, according to Michael Lee, research assistant in the Asian cultural History programme at the Smithsonian and part of the Sikh Exhibit Development Team.

Also part of the rotating gallery is the oil-on-canvas painting "1984" by Delhi artist Arpana Caur that serves as a ghastly reminder of the anti-Sikh pogrom in Delhi and some parts of Northern India in November of that year.

Another gouache-and-gold-dust miniature by London-based twin sisters Amrit and Rabindra Kaur Singh is a narrative of the Indian army's storming of the Golden Temple in June 1984.

The five 'Ks': *kesh* (unshorn hair symbolising pristine state of the body), *kangha* (sign of cleanliness), *kaccha* (breeches, representing a garment worn by warriors), *karlu* (bracelet, representing one god and strength) and *kirpan* (sword, that should be wielded only to fight injustice) are also explained in visual form.

"Sikhs are some of the most visible—and misunderstood—communities in the world", stated

Paul Michael Taylor

Praise came fast and furious for Dr Paul Michael Taylor, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History curator, at the opening of the permanent Sikh Heritage Gallery, which was launched with the Exhibition *Sikhs: Legacy of the Punjab*.

Dr. Taylor, who is also Director of Smithsonian's Asian Cultural Programme and curator of Asian, European and Middle Eastern Ethnology, was presented with the traditional *saropa* by 92-year-old marathon runner and Adidas spokesman, Fauja Singh of the U.K.

All speakers – including some leading lights in the Sikh community who were the protagonists behind the *Sikh Heritage Foundation* that bankrolled the project – said that it never could have become a reality but for the efforts of Dr. Taylor, a research anthropologist by training with a BA from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a PhD from Yale University in anthropology.

The Kansas born Dr. Taylor, 51, who said his interest in Sikh art, culture and history had been sparked by undergraduate courses that he had done on the subject, acknowledged that he never could have envisioned that a window display in the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History four years ago could have metamorphosed into a permanent Sikh Heritage Gallery to be viewed by millions each year; it could not have come at a more crucial time.

Working with Dr. Paul Taylor were Michael Lee and Hanna Szezepanowska, the latter spoke on "Conservation and restoration of Sikh artworks and artifacts".

Some excerpts from an interview with "India Abroad" are reproduced:

How does it feel to be the catalyst for a permanent Sikh Heritage Gallery, and to be showered with such praise from the community and all quarters, four years after visualising a window display in the Smithsonian at best?

It's very humbling, but we knew if we worked together, we would succeed.

When it began four years ago, what was the rationale for wanting to set up a Sikh Heritage Gallery?

The Sikh Heritage Project is a very general project for the preservation of Sikh heritage. We could have had a very successful Sikh heritage project without doing an [exhibition] because many other goals are included in it – preserving Sikh heritage, studying it and celebrating it in many ways. But our advisory group thought our top priority should be a kind of



Paul Taylor seen with Hanna Szezepanowska on the left

window in the National Museum of any size.

This was, in a way, not the easiest goal, but was one where we worked together and we succeeded. We must maintain the momentum and continue to expand the goals of the Sikh Heritage Project – the goals being to support the acquisition, conservation, restoration and exhibition of Sikh collections, to support research on the heritage of Sikhs and to support other Sikh cultural activities at the Smithsonian Institution. These are goals that we are going to need to continue to work on and this is only one part of it.

Having an entire gallery instead of a window display, I guess, is beyond your expectations?

True. [What] was going to be [a window] has now grown into a gallery. We designed it to be this size when we were able to do so. We identified resources and wonderful objects and collections, and we succeeded.

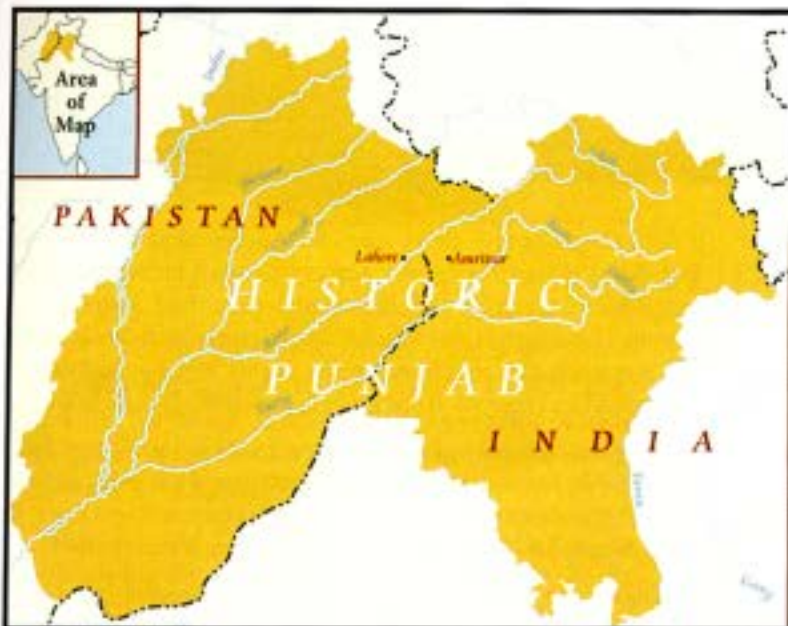
Did the Smithsonian hierarchy give the Sikh community the support and encouragement to establish the gallery?

That is correct. We had to overcome many things and [we] managed to do that.

When you say 'overcome many things', were they bureaucratic, as the Smithsonian is funded by Congress and sometimes these things have to get the green light in terms of legislation?

No. I don't mean that. A lot of Sikh heritage has been lost. Much of it is very fragile. We did a lot of restoration work on the objects and they are in very good shape as a result. It has taken some time doing the research and everything else. But, compared to most projects of this size, we have to thank the community for getting it done in such a [short] time.

I am sure there are many competing interests when it comes to establishing galleries of particular countries, faiths and groups at the Smithsonian. Was that something you had to compete against and lobby for?



"Historic Punjab", arbitrarily divided in 1947: but the legacy is forever!

We will never be able to include every potential subject matter in halls that try to represent the range of human diversity. However, what we are trying to do in our future Asia Hall is identify the areas of strength in our research and our representation of communities and groups.

Historically, we have a very strong collection from Korea due to the early diplomatic period: we have a strong representation of Japan from a period – and Thailand. So we are very pleased the Sikh area, the Punjab area is going to be, we believe, one of our areas of strength.

We have some other areas of strength and we would like to expand our South Asia representation overall and hope to add India. But this is a very important project and one that has never been done at the Smithsonian. This is something that has been waiting to happen!

I believe the Indian and Pakistani Governments came together to lend unstinted support.

We appreciate that very much — and it's unusual. It is to the credit of the importance of Sikh heritage in both countries. That was what it represents and I was pleased to request the help of both Embassies in Washington D.C. I was very pleased that both Embassies participated consistently.

How did you first get involved with the project and with the Sikh community?

It was very interesting. When I was an undergraduate, my first beginning with anthropology courses – I was in high school — but they let us take some courses at UCLA when I was growing up in Los Angeles and I took a course in South Asian anthropology taught by Professor Murray Leas. His field work had been done among Sikhs of the Punjab. So he used many examples of that and he integrated into the study of the region a lot of the critical issues in anthropology.

Later I became an Indonesia specialist, I worked in Thailand [and] the Philippines, but not in India or in Pakistan. In 2000, when I met some leaders from the Sikh community, including Dr [Amrik] and Mrs [Jaswinder] Chattha, Dr [Sohan] and Mrs [Kamaljit] Chaudhary. Not only was this a wonderful opportunity for us to increase representation from an area, where we have had strong representation before, but for me I felt like I was getting back to issues when I first took up [the] anthropology that I had set aside in the study of the region and the study of our field. With the Sikh community's support and a great deal of interest here, we succeeded in putting this together.

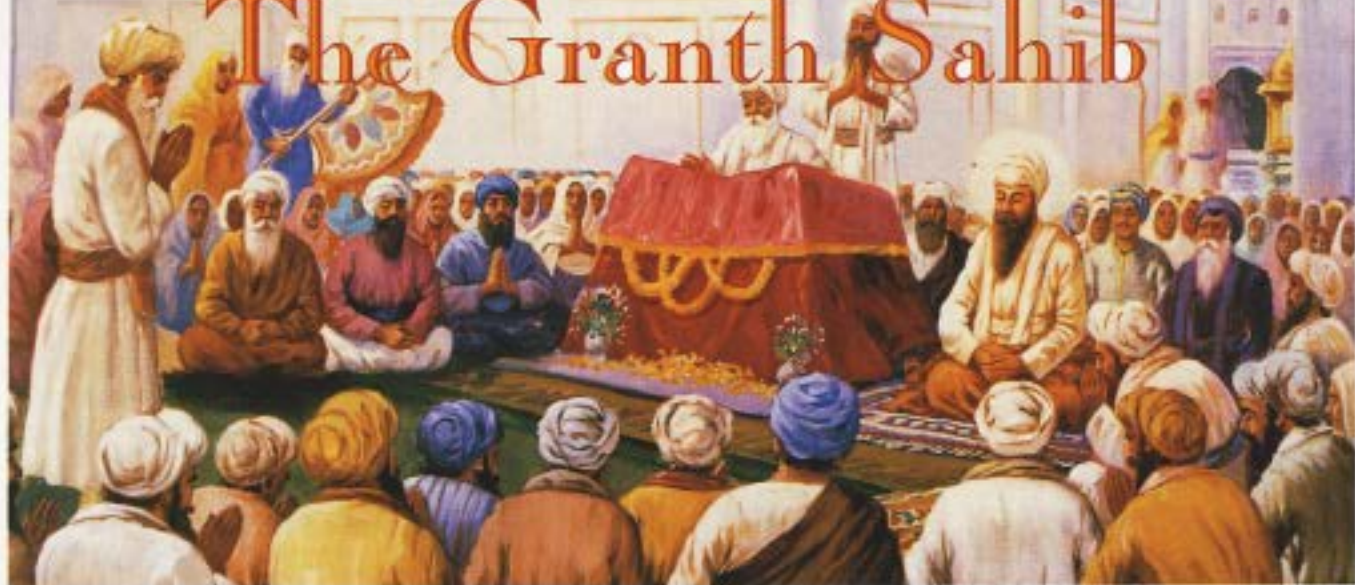
Where do you go from here, in terms of expansion of the gallery as well as the idea of disseminating Sikh heritage through the Smithsonian?

It depends partly on the development of the project based on donor interest and grants and the direction of the research topics. But the real challenge is that a lot of field work should to document Sikh heritage. This research and preservation of endangered objects should be done in collaboration with counterpart institutions in India or in Pakistan.

The exhibition is [financed] almost entirely by loans and attention must be paid to the cycle of rotating paintings, rotating textiles. These are not objects that can be left on display for long, as they are fragile. Others, like the armour and weapons, can be left for long without worrying about rotation. But the paintings on paper, for example, are much more fragile. To stay with the subject matter for an indefinite length of time, we will have to rotate the objects. The subject matter could stay, but the objects have to be rotated.

Aziz Haniffa

Universality of The Granth Sahib



The 400th First Parkash Utsav of Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGS) is being celebrated globally. The word *parkash* means light. And a guru is the one who can take you from darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge.

Guru Nanak had dismissed any arguments regarding the superiority of either a Hindu or a Muslim over the other, for either can suffer for want of good qualities. Guru Nanak's followers from both these communities came to be known as Sikhs. The word Sikh is, in fact, a noun from the Punjabi verb *sikhnaa*, which means *to learn*. Consequently, a Sikh is a learner. In a sense, each one of us is a learner throughout our lives.

Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth guru, collected and collated the *baani* composed by the first gurus, 15 saints (*Bhagats*), 11 other learned writers (*Bhatts*) and three Sikhs into 31 different ragas and compiled these into the *Granth* (Sahib) during 1601-04. Guru Arjan Dev dictated the text to Bhai Gurdas, an eminent Sikh litterateur, to prepare the first master copy. The *Granth* was also called *Pothi Sahib*. He organised its first *parkash* in the Harimandar Sahib ("Golden Temple") at Amritsar and nominated Bhai Budhaji as the first Granthi. The final form of the Granth Sahib was prepared by Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth guru, at Damdama Sahib and this was transcribed by Bhai Mani Singh. The Guru included the *baani* composed by Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru, in his final version. He bowed before this holy Granth and exhorted all Sikhs to accept and treat the Granth as the Guru for all time.

The Guru Granth Sahib contains 1,430 pages. Most of its text is in *Sant Bhasha* with part of the text in other languages, including Sanskrit and Persian. Guru Angad, the second guru, had modified the prevalent *Landa* script into *Gurmukhi*. English translations are available but the teachings contained in the *baanis* are, naturally, best understood and enjoyed, if one is familiar with the Punjabi language.

The Sacred Book is broadly organised into *Mool Mantra*; *Japji*, *Sodar Rehras*, *Sohila*; *Baanis* of the Gurus, saints, bhatts and the Sikhs; and two *shabads*: *Mundavani* (praise of the Amrit Naam) and *Tera Keeta*, or *Gratefulness* to Sat Guru. At the very end, *Rangmala* is incorporated.

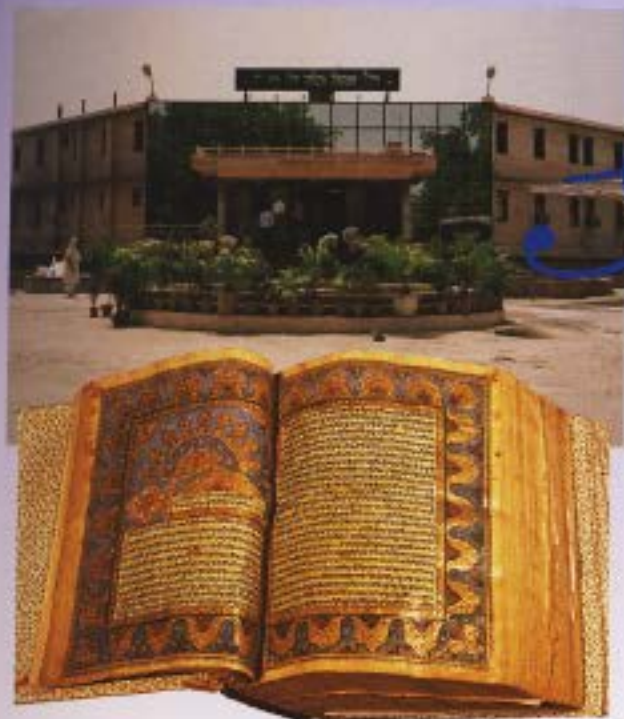
The Granth Sahib essentially incorporates thoughts, beliefs and assertions: enumeration of the traits of the *One Eternal Entity* or *Paramatma*, in a variety of ways, starting with His traits in the *Mool Mantra*. Indeed, there is only one universal religion that can be practised through love and good deeds. No one is a born sinner. Anyone who loves Him can realise Him in his present life in human form and His will prevails. Man-assumed Heaven and Hell are here around us; we can be in Heaven and enjoy His blessings by living a true and blissful life full of love and consideration for others or we can be in Hell by living a false life to satisfy the insatiable temptations of lust, anger, greed, possessiveness—and ego.

All days are the same, there are no auspicious days. Praise and worship are the ways to remember His traits through a very large collection of soothing hymns.

The Granth Sahib provides teachings and guidelines for introspection, living this life through various activities and events, which may provide excitement or depression, worries or relaxation, joys or sorrows.

Jagmohan Singh

[UNESCO has declared the Granth Sahib as heritage for the world].



Guru Granth Sahib Research Centre

devoted themselves to Sikh learning with dedicated zeal. But with the fading away of the said inspiration, recruitment to the field of Sikh scholarship has also tended to reduce.

During the later part of the 20th century, it was felt that an institution, devoted especially to research on the contemporary implications and interpretations of the holy Granth Sahib needed to be set up. It was in 1967 that the foundation stone of a proposed institution of this manner was laid by the then most popular Sikh leader, Master Tara Singh, in the grounds adjoining Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib.

However, the creation of such a Centre was gradually forgotten. So much so that the building that eventually came up at that spot was about to be put to some alien use. Later, President of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, S Prehlad Singh Chandio, however, decided in his wisdom, that it would be the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Research Centre* that shall be housed there. To make this a reality, he also set up a empowered Committee to carry out detailed planning for this Centre.

This Centre has started functioning. A series of regular lectures on diverse aspects of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* by reputed scholars have been delivered here every week since mid-2004.

More recently, it was decided to organise an exhibition of holy Sikh relics and rare art objects at this Centre. The Union Minister of Information, Broadcasting and Culture, Hon'ble Sh. Jaipal Reddy and authorities of the National Museum at New Delhi agreed to loan some relevant relics from the Museum for this exhibition. Dr Daljeet Kaur and her colleagues including Dr. K.K. Chakravarty and Mr. S.P. Singh gave wholehearted guidance and put in untiring effort and inspiration to help bring up an impressive exhibition most expeditiously. This exhibition presents an interesting view of the Sikh heritage.

Dr Jaswant Singh Neeki

Chairman

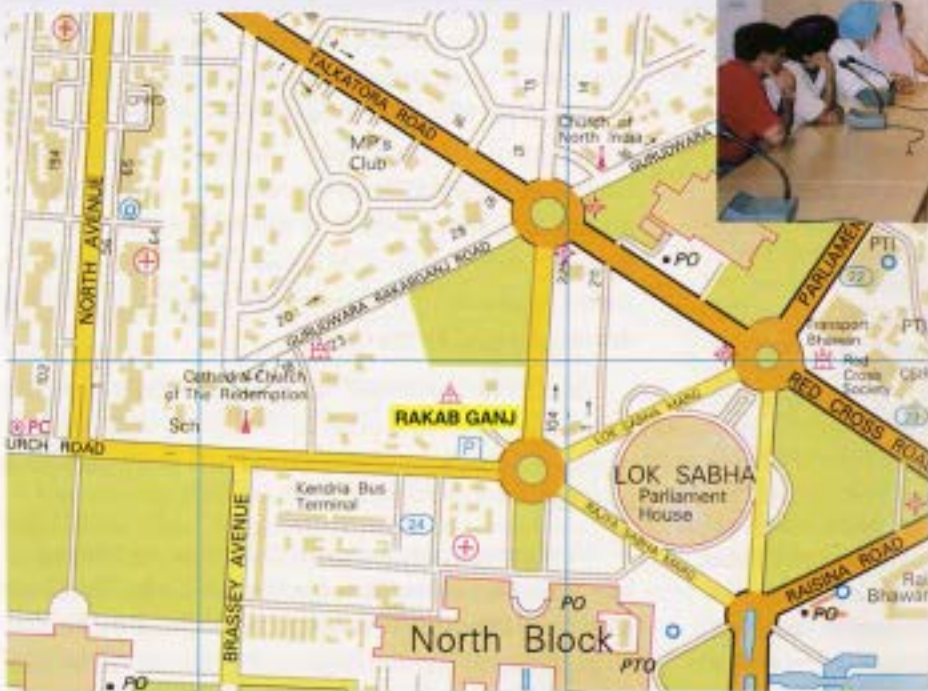
Guru Granth Sahib Research Centre

*S*ri Guru Granth Sahib Research Centre, in the heart of New Delhi, was inaugurated by Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, on 2 September 2004, to commemorate the original installation of the *Adi Granth* in Sri Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar by Sri Guru Arjan Dev 400 years ago.

It has been said, "There is one spectacle grander than the sea, that is the sky, there is one spectacle grander than the sky, that is the interior of the soul". There is one supreme text of the spectacle of the interior of the soul, and that is *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* which enshrines within it the spiritual wisdom of five centuries, from Sheikh Farid (b.1172) to Sri Guru Tegh Bahadar (d.1675). Besides the works of the Sikh Gurus, this also contains equally revered works of a number of Hindu and Muslim men of God. This is the world's only pluralist holy book. Arnold Toynbee, the reputed historian, observed that in these days of increasing communication, "the Sikh religion and its scripture the *Adi Granth* will have something of special value to say to the rest of the world".

It is only by individuals, and that too sporadically, that research into the content of this unique scripture has been carried out. Some quasi-organised work did come to be produced out of the *bungahs* in Amritsar, but these centres were later dismantled in order to widen the *parikrama* of the *snitar* at that holy shrine.

A number of academic scholars did emerge out of the movements of Sikh Renaissance of the last century, who



(From top):

Gurdwara Rakabganj Sahib, close to which was built the main Government Secretariat to house India's capital.

Map showing the central location of Rakabganj Sahib.

Eastern entrance to Rakabganj Sahib, with India's Parliament House in the background.

(From top):

Map of India showing various places from where sacred contributions to the Granth Sahib were made.

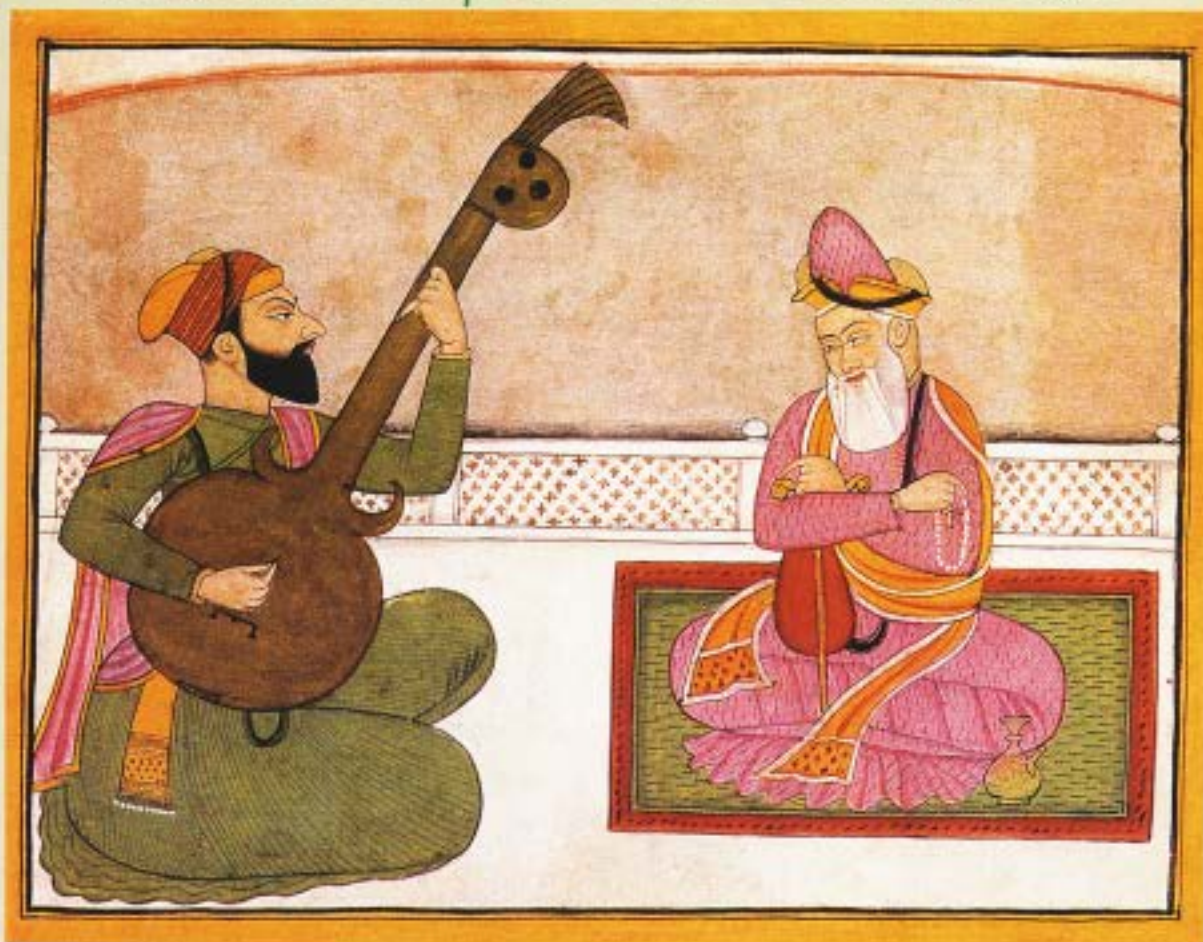
At the centre of the exhibition
Meeting of the Committee

Dr. Daljeet Kaur with some exhibits at the Centre.



Raag, as and ang

in the Music of Sri Guru Granth Sahib



Raag is that music which colours the mind through the emotion it generates. The Gurus sang *Baani* in *raag* to savor *Har Ras* and *Har Rang*, and directed us to do the same. This article proposes that the Guru's style - the ideal music style - is a deeply meditative and restrained, devotional *dhrupad* style. The arguments used are based on the directives on music in, and the poetical structure of, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, historical evidence on Indian *raag* music and elements of *Shabad Kirtan Parampara*. These arguments suggest that contemporary Hindustani *Khayal* style and popular music styles, being entertainment oriented, and are not the ideal genres to experience the depth of *Gurbani*. This article emphasises the role of both the *raagis* and the *sangat* in maintaining the Guru's musical heritage.

Raag in Sri Guru Granth Sahib

Sri Guru Granth Sahib has a natural and complete affirmation of *raag* music as the medium for *Baani*. The inspiration from the Divine came to the Gurus in *raag*, making *Baani* and *raag* inseparable. Evidence suggests that starting from Guru Nanak Dev, most *Baani* was revealed in song form in the *raags* specified in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

The *Janamsakhis* tell us of Baba Nanak addressing Bhai Mardana, "*Mardaneya, rabab bajaa, Baani ahee hai*". This is consistent with independent descriptions of the music of other saint-poets of the Bhakti movement, like Meera, Kabir and Surdas. The norm was to sing devotional poetry in *raag*, often with an accompanying melodic instrument.

More definite evidence comes in the form of *Pothis* (collections of the Gurus' words before Sri Guru Granth Sahib was compiled). *Shabads* have always been written with their specific *raags*, from the Guru Harsahai Pothi, the Goindwal Pothi, and the Kartarpur Pothi to the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Further, these *raags* remain mostly unchanged in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, indicating that the *raags* were not a mere editorial feature added by Guru Arjan Dev.

In fact, Sri Guru Granth Sahib is a unique treasure of the eternal Word as revealed to the poet-composer-singer-prophets - as they received it, in the *raag* that they sang it. Sri Guru Granth Sahib has the distinction of being accurate in both word and *raag* of its composers.

Raag and Svar

A *raag* is a melodic form with an emotional personality. It uses a specified set of notes and movements to express an emotion.

A *raag* is much more than its structure of notes. No degree of competence in technique, voice, creativity and style will suffice, unless life is breathed into the *raag* through the use of the *svar*.

The essence of *raag* music lies in the *svar* - which is not merely a musical note but a musical entity carved in the depth of one's consciousness. The *raag* system of music entails a cultivation of the self - an awakening of the inner self. The musician is required to delve deep into her/his consciousness, and express the feelings in notes called *svars*. To qualify as *raag* music, the *svars* must be the result of inward exploration and emerge from the depth of one's soul. In other words, the musician must recognize her/his own essence and instill the music with this self. This makes *raag* music particularly suitable for connecting with the Universal.

ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣ ॥

O my mind, you are the embodiment of the Divine Light - Recognise your own origin.

ਮਨ ਹਰਿ ਜੀ ਭੇਰੈ ਲਲਿ ਹੈ ਗੁਰਮਤੀ ਰੰਗੁ ਮਾਣ ॥

ਆਸਾ ਮ:੪ ਛੰਡ

O my mind, the Dear Lord is with you; through the Guru's Teachings, enjoy His Love.

SGGS, p.441.

The central purpose of *raag* music is not the beauty of the physical sound, but the profoundness in its expression. What shines is not a superficial luster but the purity of purpose. Indeed, it is the growth in this content that imparts emotional depth to the music of the aging musician whose voice has lost its youthful beauty.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਰਾਗੁ ਸੁਆਦ ਅਨੁ ਤਿਆਗੇ ॥

The Gurmukh renounces other songs and tastes.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਭਗਤੀ ਜਾਗੇ ॥

The mind of the Gurmukh is awakened to devotion.

ਅਨਾਦ ਸੁਣਿ ਮਾਲਿਆ ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ ॥

Hearing the unstruck music of the sound current, this mind contemplates the Shabad, and accepts it.

ਆਤਮੁ ਚੀਨਿ ਭਏ ਨਿਕਾਰੀ ॥

ਆਸਾ ਮ:੧ ਅਸਟਪਦੀਆਂ

Understanding itself, this soul becomes attuned to the Formless Lord.

SGGS, p.415

These rich *svars*, and no ordinary notes, formed the seats for the *Baani* of the Sikh Gurus. They were the medium of expression when the Gurus experienced a profound connection with the Divine. Such *svars* could best communicate the *Bhava* of *Baani* (emotional intent).

And such *svars* are the ones that will best aid us in

ਗਾਵੀਐ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਮਨਿ ਰਖੀਐ ਭਾਉ ॥

ਜਪੁ

Sing, listen, and let your mind be filled with devotion.

SGGS, p.2

Hence, the musician who has practiced and mastered these *svars* can best convey the spirituality of the *Baani* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. And the listener who is attuned to these *svars* can best comprehend the meaning of *Baani*. Our quest for union with the Divine through meditation on *Naam* is most effective when *Baani* is recited with the use of such *svars*. Indeed, to experience the elevated state of being of the Gurus as they sang Divine Revelation - to experience the same *raag*, we must use the same words, and the same *svar* and *raag* and *ms*.

ਗਾਵਿਆ ਸੁਨਿਆ ਤਿਨ ਕਾ ਹਰਿ ਬਾਇ ਪਾਵੈ ਜਿਨ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ
ਕੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਸਤਿ ਸਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਮਾਨੀ ॥

ਧਰਮਰੀ ਮ ਖ, ਦੁਪਦੇ

Their singing and listening is approved by the Lord, who accept the Order of the True Guru as True, totally True.

SGGS, p.669

Raag, Ras and Rang

A *raag* is an emotional entity. Each *raag* was discovered as an emotionally focused (as well as musically pleasing) arrangement of notes. Singing, or playing, within the parameters of a *raag*, therefore, is the most powerful way of experiencing emotion. In musical genres free of these parameters, the intensity of particular emotions is not as deep.

A *raag*'s moods are expressed through the use of specific *swars*, *shrutis* (microtones) and their arrangements. The *raag*'s dominant note, its harmonic relationship to the tonic, and its relationship to the other notes of the *raag*, determine the mood expressed. This is further accentuated by tonal variations, i.e. by the use of *shrutis*.

By staying within the precincts of a specified arrangement of *swars* and *shrutis*, a *raag* centres around a particular emotion, cultivating it and impressing it upon the mind of the listener. The musician and listener become immersed in *ras* (emotion), and imbued with the *rang* (state of consciousness) generated by the *raag*. The result is a depth of feeling unparalleled by other musical systems.

Har Ras and Har Rang in Sri Guru Granth Sahib

While it is true that, like other *sant-bani*, *Gurbani* uses a romantic metaphor for the relationship between the human soul and the Divine, it would not be accurate to categorise the *ras* in *Gurbani* as *Shringaar Ras*.

Shringaar Ras encompasses a variety of emotions including love, devotion, *virah*, *viyog*, tenderness, joy, restlessness, playfulness, passion, flirtation, jealousy and desire of the senses. *Shringaar ras* includes both the romantic and the erotic. *Shringaar ras* has a sensual connotation.

The purpose of *Gurbani* is to take us beyond the sensual into the realm of the spiritual and mystical. The worship is of a *Nirgun*, *Nirankaar*.

The quest is for *Naam*, for *Har Ras and Har Rang*.

ਮੇਰਾ ਬਿਰਹੀ ਲਖੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਤਾ ਜੀਵਾ ਜੀਉ ॥

If I receive my Love, the Naam, then I live.

ਮਨ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਲੀਵਾ ਜੀਉ ॥

In the temple of the mind, is the Ambrosial Nectar of the Lord; through the Guru's Teachings, we drink it in.

ਮਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਰੰਗਿ ਰਤਨਾ ਹਰਿ ਰਸੁ ਸਦਾ ਪੀਵਾ ਜੀਉ ॥

My mind is drenched with the Love of the Lord. I continually drink in the sublime essence of the Lord.

ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਅਤਾ ਮਨਿ ਜੀਵਾ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਾਝ ਮ:੪, ਚੌਪਦੇ

I have found the Lord within my mind, and so I live.

SGGS, p.175

The *raag* is of *Naam*.

ਭੋਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਲਖੁ ਮੰਜੀਠੜਾ ਮਨਿ ਜੀਵਾ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਸੂਹੀ ਮ:੧ ਚੌਪਦੇ

Your Name alone is the colour, in which the robe of my body is dyed. This color is permanent, O my Beloved.

SGGS, p.729

The *raag* is of His Love.

ਆਪੇ ਰੰਗੇ ਰੰਗ ਚੜਾਏ ॥

The Lord Himself dyes us in the colour of His Love.

ਸੇ ਜਨ ਰਾਤੇ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦਿ ਰੰਗਾਏ ॥

Only those who are steeped in the Word of the Guru's Shabad are so imbued with His Love.

ਹਰਿ ਰੰਗੁ ਚੜਿਆ ਅਤਿ ਅਪਾਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਰਸਿ ਰਸਿ ਗੁਣ
ਗਾਵਣਿਆ ॥

ਮਾਝ ਮ:੪

Imbued with the most beautiful color of the Lord's Love, they sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord, with great pleasure and joy.

SGGS, p.117

Correspondingly, Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji provides directives on the emotions that *raags* should generate.

ਗਉੜੀ ਰਾਗਿ ਸੁਲਖਣੀ ਜੇ ਖਸਮੇ ਚਿਤਿ ਕਰੇਇ ॥

Gauree Raga is auspicious, if, through it, one comes to think of his Lord and Master.

ਛਾਣੇ ਚਲੈ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਕੇ ਐਸਾ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ਕਰੇਇ ॥

ਗਉੜੀ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ ਮ:੪

He should walk in harmony with the Will of the True Guru; this should be his decoration.

SGGS, p.311

And,

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਰਾਮੁ ਮਨਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਤਾ ਬਲਿਆ ਸੀਗਾਰੁ ॥

In Raamkalee, I have enshrined the Lord in my mind; thus I have been embellished.

ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਕਮਲੁ ਬਿਗਸਿਆ ਤਾ ਸਉਪਿਆ ਭਗਤਿ
ਬੰਡਾਰੁ ॥

ਦਾਰ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮ:੩

Through the Word of the Guru's Shabad, my heart-lotus has blossomed forth; the Lord blessed me with the treasure of devotional worship.

SGGS, p.950

The "shringaar" is of the mind and soul, not the body. The *ras* is spiritual, not sensual. Hence, the *raag* should be sung in a manner that generates a mystical experience.

ਫੀਕੇ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਰਸ ਥਿਠੁ ਸਾਦ ॥

Without the Lord's Name, flavors are tasteless and insipid.

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਰਸੁ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਗਾਈਐ ਅਹਿਨਿਸਿ ਪੂਰਨੁ ਲਦੁ ॥

ਸਾਹਿਬ ਮ:੫

Sing the Sweet Ambrosial Praises of the Lord's Kirtan; day and night, the Sound-current of the Naad will resonate and resound.

SGGS, p.1219,

The historical context of *raag* music

The period over which the *Baani* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib was revealed to the Gurus (the 16th and 17th centuries) was a period when *raag* music underwent a major change in the courts of the Mughals. Hitherto, *raag* music was essentially for worship. Under Mughal influence, *raag* music became oriented more toward entertainment and artistry – directed toward pleasing the patrons, and less meditative in character.

During the time of Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539 AD), the prevalent genre was that of *Dhruv-pad* (now known as *dhrupad*). *Dhruv* means fixed, and *pad* means verse. The songs were devotional songs in praise of God.

In the *Dhruvpad* tradition, the *sur* and *raag* are expressed at their most profound level. The predominant mood is of *bhakti* - *shaant* (peace), *karun* (pathos), *veer* (valour) and *adbhut* (wonder) *ras*. The emphasis is on depth of feeling, achieved through clean notes, and avoidance of flourishes and embellishments. The tempo is slow and the rhythm is sober. The *taals* typically used are *char-taal*, *sool-taal*, and *dhamaar*. There is a definite emphasis on the text. The poetry is spiritual and composed in verses of two or four sentences. *Dhruvpad* is typically sung in four sections - the *sthaayi* (base), sung in low register, followed by *antaraa* (different), *sanchari* (free-flowing) and *abhog* (completion), to be sung in higher and mixed registers. A *dhrupad* can also be sung in two sections – *sthaayi* and *antaraa*. The singing begins with *alaap* to focus the mind.

With the decline in popularity of the devotional *dhrupad* under the Mughal influence, Indian *dhrupadis* adapted to the preferences of the patrons. Hence developed a *durbari dhrupad* style, different from the traditional devotional style. The *durbari* style gives more emphasis to *alaap*, and improvisation in general, relative to the composition.

The style that grew from the *dhrupad* style, and eventually displaced it in the Mughal courts, is *khayal gaayaki*. The lyrics and the manner of singing the *raags* changed to appeal to non-religious themes. The prevailing *Bhakti ras* became gradually dominated by *Shringaar* (romantic and erotic) *ras*. The new style did not have the stateliness, solemnity and depth of *dhrupad*. Contemporary Hindustani *raag* music consists mainly of the *khayal* style (In addition, there is *thumri*, *daadra*, *tappa*, etc., and of course, the renewed interest in *dhrupad*).



The *khayal* style developed as music for entertainment, as art for its own sake. Indeed, *khayal* means flight of imagination – a departure from the restraint of *dhrupad*. A significant component of *khayal* music is the demonstration of musical artistry for the pleasure of the audience. Musical skill is exhibited through the use of *ankaar* ("aa" vowels) and *sargam* (note syllables), which distract the mind from the text. *Taans* (fast paced embellishments) form a significant component of the performance. In the *khayal* style words are subordinate to the music. In the contemporary *khayal* style, the composition has often been reduced to merely one line of text each for the *sthaayi* and *antaraa*, and sometimes no *antaraa* text at all.

Given the historical context, we can deduce that the Guru's music style could not have been the contemporary *khayal* – it simply did not exist then.

The poetical structure of Sri Guru Granth Sahib

The majority of *shabads* in Sri Guru Granth Sahib are in the form of *padey* – *chaupadey*, *asthpadian*, *dupadey*, *tipadey* and *panjpadey*. These *shabads* (by one scholar's count - 2745 out of a total of 4966 *shabads* of the 6 Gurus) are made up of two or more *padey* (verses), and, typically, some *rahaos* lines.

These *shabads* fit the *dhrupad* format. The *Dhrup* or fixed element is provided by the use of *Rahao* (pause). These lines are to be sung as *sthaayi* (refrain), and the other verses as *antaraa*, *sanchari* and *abhog*.

The many (1476) *sloks* in Sri Guru Granth Sahib provide the words for *alaap* in the form of *mangalaa-charan*.

The poetical form thus matches a musical mode intended for worship.

The directives on raag in Sri Guru Granth Sahib

For *Shabad Kirtan*, the Guru's directives on the use of *raag* music are clear. In Sri Guru Granth Sahib, there are numerous *shabads* emphasising that the appropriate use of the *raag* is not to exhibit mere musical talent, but to orient the mind towards the Divine. The music is not the end, but just the means that aptly merges into the background, allowing the Word to shine.

ਬਿਲਾਵਲੁ ਤਬ ਹੀ ਕੀਜੀਐ ਜਬ ਮੁਖਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਰਮੁ ॥

Be happy and sing in Bilaaval, when the Naam, the Name of the Lord, is in your mouth.

ਰਾਗੁ ਲਦ ਸਬਦਿ ਸੋਹਣੇ ਜਾ ਲਾਗੈ ਸਹਜਿ ਧਿਆਨੁ ॥

The melody and music, and the Word of the Shabad are beautiful, when one focuses his meditation on the celestial Lord.

ਰਾਗੁ ਲਦ ਛੇਡਿ ਹਰਿ ਸੇਵੀਐ ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਾਈਐ ਮਾਨੁ ॥

So leave behind the melody and music, and serve the Lord; then, you shall obtain honor in the Court of the Lord.

ਲਲਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਥੀਚਾਰੀਐ ਚੁਕੈ ਮਨਿ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ ॥

ਦਾਰ ਬਿਲਾਵਲ ਮ:੨

O Nanak, as Gurmukh, contemplate God, and rid your mind of egotistical pride.

SGGS, p.849

More are given on pages 83 (for Sri Rag), 516 (for Gujri), 585 (for Vadhans), 642 (for Sorath), 849 (for Bilaaval), 1087 (for Kedaara), 1176 (for Basant), 1283 (for Malaar), 1419 (for Dhanaasri) and 1425 (for Maaru and Sorath) of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

The Guru has warned that the focus on musical skills alone can lead to ego, the roadblock to Union.

ਗੀਤ ਰਾਗ ਘਨ ਭਾਲ ਸਿ ਕੂਰੇ ॥

The various songs, tunes and rhythms are false.

ਕਿਉ ਗੁਣ ਉਪਜੈ ਬਿਲੈ ਦੂਰੇ ॥

Caught up in worldly modes of thought, one is out of touch with the Divine Reality.

ਦੂਜੀ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਦਰਦੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥

In duality, the pain of their evil-mindedness does not leave them.

ਛੁਟੈ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਦਾਰੂ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਇ ॥

ਬਿਲਾਵਲ ਮ:੧ ਅਸਟਪਦੀਆ

But the Gurmukh is emancipated by taking the medicine, and singing the Glorious Praises of the Lord.

SGGS, p.832

The Guru has asked us to use *raag* to focus on Naam

ਗੁਣ ਗੋਵਿੰਦ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਸਭਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਰਾਗ ਰਤਨ ਰਸਲ ਆਲਾਪ ॥

Sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord of the Universe, all you humble servants of the Lord; chant the jewels, the songs of the Lord with your tongue.

ਕੋਟਿ ਜਨਮ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਲ ਲਿਵਰੀ ਰਾਮ ਰਸਾਇਣਿ ਆਤਮ ਪ੍ਰਾਪ ॥

ਬਿਲਾਵਲ ਮ:੧੫

The desires of millions of incarnations shall be quenched, and your soul shall be satisfied with the sweet, sublime essence of the Lord.

SGGS, p.821

In *Shabad Kirtan*, the *shabad* is the main focus. The music is merely the assistant. Any musical enterprise that compromises the focus on the *shabad* undermines the depth of devotional feeling that the *shabad* can impart.

In the devotional *dhrupad* style the text and composition are of prime significance. Improvisation is limited to the extent that it helps with deepening the devotional mood. Care is taken not to compromise textual clarity to musical artistry.

The Guru's music style

Thus, based on the Guru's directives on *raag* music, the poetical structure of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the historical evidence, we can say that the Guru's music style is predominantly a devotional (not *durbari*) *dhrupad* style (The other element is folk music, incorporated in *vaars*, *allahnaa*, *ghorhiana*, etc.).

It is well known that Guru Amar Das appointed the renowned *dhrupadis*, Satta and Balvand (of Rai ki Talvandi *Gharana*) to do *kirtan* for the congregation.

Parhtaal

A unique variant of the *dhrupad* style, *Parhtaal*, was developed by Sri Guru Ram Das. *Parhtaal* is a distinct feature of *Gurbani* music. There are 55 *parhtaal* compositions in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, composed by Sri Guru Ram Das and Sri Guru Arjan Dev.

This type of *shabad* is rich in metric variation in the poetry, which is highlighted in the singing through rhythmic variations - both of *taal* (metric cycle) and *laiy* (tempo). Different verses are sung in different *taals* and/or *laiy*.

The rhythmic variations draw the listeners' attention to changes in emphasis in the *shabad*, and are a powerful way of tuning into the nuances of the *shabad*.

The appropriate choice of *taal* and *laiy* is a matter of great importance. Rhythm has a direct relationship to the pulsations in our being. It can excite or calm the body and mind. The aptly used rhythm recognizes the spirit of the composition and aids the *shabad* and the *raag* in generating the intended *ras* and *rang*.

Shabad-Reet

The melodies composed and approved by the Gurus were not notated by them, and, as with all Indian music, have passed on orally through generations of *raagis* in the form of *shabad-reet*s. Since the early 20th century, there has been a significant decline in the singing of original compositions.

The importance of original melodies is recognised by our Gurus, when they instructed, for example,

ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਕੀ ਭਯਾ ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ਮਲਕ ਮੁਹੀਦ ਭਯਾ
ਚੰਦ੍ਰਕਾ ਜੋਹੀਆ ਕੀ ਸੁਣੀ ਗਾਵਣੀ ॥

Vaar in maajh, and shaloks of the first mehl: To be sung to the tune of "malik mureed and chandratraa sohee-aa"

(SGGS, p.137)

Other instances occur on pages 317, 462, 508, 947, 1237, 1278 and 1312 of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

Since these instructions on melodies are not written for every *shabad*, but only for nine *vaars*, the assumption is that unless otherwise specified, all *shabads* are to be sung in the Gurus' *dhronis* (tunes, compositions).

Original compositions are significant because they best convey the thought and emotion of the composer. They are

imbued with the essence of the composer. The original melodies for *Gurbani* bring out the meaning of the *shabads*, as the Guru intended it. The music - the notes, the rhythm - is used in a way that brings focus on certain words and their import.

In *Shabad Kirtan* the Word is the gem, the music, the setting. And the best setting, the best music, is that of the Guru.

In the contemporary popular tunes, the notes may sound beautiful and the rhythm may be enticing, but they draw upon the pleasures of the senses. The music becomes the end in itself. The mind is distracted from the Word, the *Shabad*. This is especially so, when instrumentation departs from the main melody. There is enjoyment, but not deep meditation.

Shabad Kirtan based on contemporary *raag* music too must strive to adhere close to the spirit of the original and traditional compositions of the *dhrupad* style, so that the depth of *Har Rang* and *Har Ras* are not lost to *Shringaar Ras*.

There is a rich heritage of *Shabad Kirtan Parampara*, which follows the directives of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Bhai Avtar Singh Ragi, in the CD *Gurmat Sangeet*, 1999, presents melodies dating back to the time of Guru Nanak Dev, as well as, *parhtaal* melodies composed and sung by the 4th and 5th Gurus.

Much of the contemporary singing, however, has departed so much from that tradition that it has lost much of the essence, and depth, of that style. There is need to return to the Guru's heritage:

ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਖਰਦੇਸੀ ਦੇ ਖਿਆਲੇ ਆਉ ਘਰੇ ॥

ਅਸਾ ਮ ਖ ਛੋੜ

O my dear beloved stranger mind, please come home!

(SGGS, p. 451)

The raagis and the sangat

The responsibility of maintaining the Guru's heritage lies with both the *raagis* and the *sangat*. There is need to ensure that the traditional melodies and style are not lost because of the predominance of lighter tunes and styles. There is need to nurture and re-establish the Guru's tradition by listening to and learning from *raagis* who have preserved, and who remain close to, this heritage.

ਭਲੇ ਭਲੇ ਹੇ ਕੀਰਤਣੀਆ ॥

Blessed and good is such a kirtaneva, who sings such Praises.

ਰਾਮ ਰਮਾ ਰਾਮਾ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਉ ॥

He sings the Glorious Praises of the Lord,

ਛੇਡਿ ਮਾਇਆ ਕੇ ਧੰਧ ਸੁਆਉ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

And renounces the entanglements and pursuits of Maya.

॥ 1 ॥ Pause ॥

ਉਯੋਕਾਰਿ ਏਕੁ ਧੁਨਿ ਏਕੈ ਏਕੈ ਰਾਗੁ ਅਲਾਪ ॥

He sings the song of the One Universal Creator; he sings the tune of the One Lord.

ਏਕਾ ਦੇਸੀ ਏਕੁ ਦਿਖਾਵੈ ਏਕੈ ਰਹਿਆ ਥਿਆਏ ॥

He lives in the land of the One Lord, shows the way to the One Lord, and remains attuned to the One Lord.

ਏਕਾ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਏਕਾ ਹੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਏਕੈ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਜਾਏ ॥

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮ:੫ ਚੋਖਦੇ

He centres his consciousness on the One Lord, and serves only the One Lord, who is known through the Guru.

॥

SGGS, p.885

The role of the listener is significant. Indeed, the listener's preferences shape the musician's style. And the listener's preferences are shaped by her/his awareness and appreciation of the ideal.

In the Japji, the Guru tells us,

ਸੁਣਿਐ ਲਾਗੈ ਸਹਜਿ ਧਿਆਨੁ ॥

Listening-intuitively grasp the essence of meditation.

SGGS, p.3

and

ਸੁਣਿਐ ਹਾਸ ਹੋਵੈ ਅਸਗਾਹੁ ॥

ਜਪੁ

Listening-the Unreachable comes within your grasp.

SGGS, p.3

The Guru describes the listener's ideal state of consciousness,

ਲੋਇਣ ਰਤੇ ਲੋਇਣੀ ਕੰਠੀ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥

His eyes are imbued with the eyes of the Lord, and his ears ring with celestial consciousness.

ਜੀਭ ਰਸਾਇਣਿ ਚੁਨੜੀ ਰਤੀ ਲਵਾਇ ॥

His tongue drinks in the sweet nectar, dyed crimson by chanting the Name of the Beloved Lord.

ਅੰਦਰੁ ਮੁਸਕਿ ਝਕੋਲਿਆ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਕਹੀ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥੨॥

ਮਾਰੂ ਵਾਰ ਮ:੧

His inner being is drenched with the Lord's fragrance; his worth cannot be described. ॥ 2 ॥

SGGS, p.1091

In essence, Sri Guru Granth Sahib prescribes music that stills the mind, orients it inward and harmonises it with the Universal Consciousness. The Guru has instructed that *raag* must generate *Har Ras* and *Har Rang*. Based on historical evidence, the structure of poetry in Sri Guru Granth Sahib and what is available of the Guru's musical heritage in the form of *Shabad Kirtan Parampara*, this article proposes that the Guru's style, the ideal style, is a restrained, devotional *dhruwad* style. This tradition can only be maintained with a commitment from *raagis* and *sangat* alike, to this music, which is the ideal medium for imbibing *Gurbaani* and experiencing *Har Ras* and *Har Rang*.

ਹਰਿ ਗੁਰ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਰਸੁ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

Through the Guru, I have obtained the Lord's spiritual wisdom. I have obtained the Sublime Essence of the Lord.

ਮਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਰੰਗਿ ਰਾਤਾ ਹਰਿ ਰਸੁ ਪੀਆਇਆ ॥

My mind is imbued with the Love of the Lord; I drink in the Sublime Essence of the Lord.

ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਲਖੁ ਮੁਖਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਥੋਲੀ ਮਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਫੁਲਿ ਫੁਲਿ ਪਉਦਾ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਮਾਝ ਮ:੪

With my mouth, I chant the Name of the Lord, Har, Har; my mind is filled to overflowing with the Sublime Essence of the Lord. ॥

SGGS, p.95

Dr. Inderjit N. Kaur

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July 2004, Barcelona, Spain

Sikh Parliament



A perspective view of the magnificent site by the Mediterranean Sea in Barcelona, constructed by the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewa Jatha from Birmingham in the U.K. with the structures housing the Darbar Hall, Kirtan pandal, exhibition halls, kitchen and langar area. Next to the langar kitchen, are refrigerated vans which brought fresh fruit, vegetables and milk to the site around the clock, while the smaller

A unique and impressive assembly of spiritual intellectuals and religious activists celebrated the Quad-Centennial of the First Installation of the Sikh Scripture, *Adi Guru Granth Sahib*, in the world-renowned city of Spain. Barcelona is an exciting city on the Mediterranean Sea, a popular destination where the state of Catalonia had built the UNESCO Centre to host the "Universal Forum of Cultures". The *Parliament of the World's Religions* chose this venue to hold their 2004 gathering, the last such having been held in Cape Town in South Africa.

Against an awesome vista of the shining sea, over a hundred Sikh scholars interacted with 8000 delegates from 75 countries representing over a hundred spiritual and religious traditions. Several hundred other Sikh devotees were at the meeting to register their solidarity and make themselves known on the global scene. They were there in record numbers, colourful and dignified and offering an inspiring gamut of programmes and presentations. Amongst those from India included Dr. Jaswant Singh Neki, Bibi Inderjit Kaur and S. Hardev Singh whose massive enlargement of Darbar Sahib provided the backdrop in the main hall.

by the Sea



tents to the right housed the scores of volunteers from England, Spain and India. Near 10,000 partook the langar, three times a day for a week, and was open not only to the participants of the "Parliament of the World's Religion" but to the people of Barcelona who came in increasing numbers as the word spread through the city (note queues on the left side of the picture).

The occasion was the 2004 Parliament of the World's Religions, which met in Barcelona from 6 to 14 July 2004, "to deepen spirituality and foster understanding and respect in midst of diversity of beliefs in the newly emerging global environment". The Sikh congregations rose to the occasion and claimed their respectful place in the world community. Their participation was a significant advance on their previous participation, such as the same parliament held in Cape Town and Chicago and the United Nations Summit of World Religious Leaders which took place in New York during 2000.

Sikhs have been major partners in organising the Parliament of World's Religions. The Guru Nanak Nishkam Seva Jatha of Birmingham, England, under the leadership of Bhai Mohinder Singh, was a leading partner and supporter of the Parliament. Dr. Balwant Singh Hansra was in management of the Council of the Parliament of World's Religions (Chicago) as a member of the Board of Trustees. Rajinder Singh Mago was member of the Executive Committee of the Council. There were Sikh members of various planning committees. Sikhs were active in organising



The site plan illustrates the layout of the Forum Car Park, which is divided into several functional zones. At the top, a 'VEHICLE ENTRANCE' leads into a large 'WALK THROUGH TIME EXHIBITION' area. To the left of this area is an 'ACCOMMODATION' section containing 'TOILETS' and four 'WC' (Water Closets) units. Below the accommodation area is a 'HINTERLAND EXHIBITION HALL' and a 'FARMER (Pop Shop) FIELD'. To the right of the hall is a 'KITCHEN AREA' and a 'SEMINAR AREA'. Below the hall is a 'CONCU EXHIBITION FIELD'. A 'WALK THROUGH TIME EXHIBITION' area is located to the right of the kitchen and seminar areas. At the bottom, there is an 'ENTRANCE' leading to a 'LAPININ' area. A 'VIP AREA' is located near the entrance, and a 'LACED STREET' is at the bottom left. The plan also shows various dimensions and distances between different sections.

Barcelona: from the airport to the site of "Sikh Parliament by the Sea"



the pre-Parliament meeting in New Delhi, Vancouver, Chicago and Dallas. Local Sikh congregations of Barcelona worked for months to assist the myriads of projects to help organisers of the Parliament in holding this meeting.

At the Parliament itself, Sikhs participated in a broad ranging celebration of their spiritual heritage as manifested in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. They took part in equally broad ranging deliberations on the challenging conditions that they are facing within and without Sikh institutions. Sikh scholars and artists participated in 41 different programmes and made 65 different presentations.

There were over a dozen musical presentations of Sikh holy hymns, several exhibitions on Sikh history and faith and above all, the Sikhs erected a large replica of their holiest of holies, *Sri Harmander Sahib*, located in the *Golden City* of Amritsar in India. The Sikh presence in Barcelona was so

GNNSJ's Participation in Symposia

The 2004 Parliament featured over 400 lectures, workshops, symposia, and performances exploring matters of religious identity, inter-religious dialogue and opportunities for shared action, all in relation to the need and conditions for peace. Some 10,000 persons from a wide variety of diverse religious and spiritual communities and other guiding institutions attended, returning home informed, inspired and well equipped "to make a difference".

Prior to the 2004 Parliament event, the Council had hosted a three-day Assembly at the renowned Montserrat monastery just outside Barcelona from 5 to 7 July. Bhai Mohinder Singh was invited to participate at the Assembly, which brought together religious and spiritual leaders, in order to consider the role and contribution of religion and spirituality to a better world. This process of community building and creative engagement continued a meaningful tradition of Assemblies associated with modern Parliament events held in 1993 and 1999. The Montserrat Assembly made significant contribution on four pressing needs in the world: issues of increasing access to clean water, improving the plight of refugees, cancelling international debt for developing countries and overcoming violence, especially when religiously motivated or targeted. It aims to model new ways for religious and spiritual communities to work together with other guiding institutions.

The Assembly participants were inspired to commit to "simple and profound acts" in their home communities that would have local impact and global implications.

Council for a Parliament of the World's Religion

The 2004 Parliament of the World's Religions was organised by the *Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions* (CPWR), in partnership with the Universal Forum of Cultures – Barcelona 2004 and in association with the UNESCO Centre of Catalonia.

The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions works to cultivate harmony among religious and spiritual communities and to foster their engagement with the world and other guiding institutions in order to achieve a more peaceful, just and sustainable world.

Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jathi (GNNSJ) of Birmingham in the U.K. contributed significantly to the Parliament event in Barcelona in July 2004. Their activities including preparing and serving *langar* for upto 10,000 delegates for 7 days, an exhibition on the Sikh faith, writing and producing of small booklets on related topics of Sikh traditions and participating in some seven Symposia.

'*Akhand Paath*' took place following which '*Amrit Sauchar*' was also conducted. *Keertan* was performed in the early mornings and late evenings.

over-powering that a local newspaper called the event as *Parliament of the Sikhs*. Actually this writer was reporting on the *Parliament by the Sea* that was erected to provide a walk through time which consisted of exhibits depicting evolution of the earth and life itself, with a "sacred space" set aside for prayer, meditation and contemplation.

Although the Guru Granth celebrations mingled with every other programme of the Parliament, *Parliament by the Sea* was the major venue for a week-long celebration of the quad-centennial of completion of the Sikh Scripture. The scripture was later finalised and ceremoniously canonised in 1708. Sikhs of the world are now beginning to prepare for the next celebration, in 2008, of the Ter-Centennial of their book of hymns acquiring status as their eternal guru.

At this beautiful venue by the sea, daily meditations and singing of holy hymns were organised. The community kitchen served some 10,000 visitors every day. True to their traditions started by Guru Nanak with his feeding of starving holy men of different faiths, Sikhs at the *Parliament* really reached the hearts of the attending delegates. Here they also received, and honoured, leaders of world faiths who were invited to make presentations and mingle with their Sikh hosts. Information on Sikhism was disseminated through exhibits, paintings and distribution of Sikh literature.



The Darbar Hall



Devotees preparing langar



Thousands ate at the langar hall everyday



Walk through the Exhibition halls



Model of Keshgarh Sahib at Anandpur



Bhai Mohinder Singh and Sikhs at the GNNSJ Exhibition hall



S. Hardev Singh of New Delhi who created this magnificent enlargement of Darbar Sahib in Amritsar



Bhai Mohinder Singh at the Montserrat Monastery, on the outskirts of Barcelona



Bhai Baldeep Singh rendering kirtan



Bhai Avtar Singh and party doing kirtan in the "sacred space near on the sea".

Although Sikh scholars were invited by many organisations to make presentations in their global programmes, the *Parliament* scheduled many symposia specifically for the Sikhs to spread their message on the event of their celebration. There is not enough space to list all of the Sikh presentations, but here, I give some highlights as an illustration.

There was the symposium entitled *Sri Guru Granth Sahib: Quad-centennial Celebrations of Interfaith Scripture*. Other symposia on the *Guru Granth* included, *Guru Granth Sahib: Promoting Religious Pluralism, Equality, Social and Economic Justice*; *Sikh Spirituality as an Interfaith Message of the Guru Granth Sahib*; *Spiritual Power as Envisioned through Sri Guru Granth Sahib*; *Ideological Roadblocks on Pathways to Peace and Suggested Solutions from Sri Guru Granth*; *Guru Granth and World Ecology*; and many others.

Some examples of symposia on the temporary problems of Sikhs included *Challenges Facing Sikh Identity*; *Lessons from Phoenix* (a Sikh was killed after the 11 September terrorist

attack); *Rethinking Martyrdom through a Sikh perspective*; and *Mistaken Identity*.

The most overpowering event took place on 12 July when part of the Plenary Session was designated for celebrations of the 400th anniversary of *Guru Granth Sahib*. The 3300-capacity auditorium was overflowing with attendance. The famous party of Sikh cantors, Bhai Avtar Singh and party performed *kirtan* for the audience. Then Bhai Mohinder Singh of the *Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha* gave an impressive presentation of the teachings of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. Parliament officials and other world dignitaries paid homage to the *Granth Sahib* and the Sikhs for bringing this universal message to the world's attention.

It was well acknowledged that the Sikhs had engaged impressively in deliberating their preparedness in facing globalisation of their religion and community. They had debated on changing cultures and inspirations of their diaspora, contemporary interpretation of their scripture, modernisation of their governing institutions and defining



Scenes at the "Sikh Parliament by the Sea" at Barcelona: thousands of visitors from the West and East listened to kirtan, partook langar and many were baptised with amrit.

their relevance in the new world, all of which figured in their presentations.

It was clear that the Sikh participants, nearing a thousand in number, had succeeded in inserting Sikh presence on the global map, exposed Sikh identities to world faiths and aroused much appreciation of Sikh tenets among world's faith leaders. The interesting fact was that, true to real Sikh tradition, both attendees and the organisers were from the general Sikh public and Sikh congregations. Representatives of their so called "epic bodies" in India were conspicuously absent from this meeting – as they always are at other global platforms.

At the finale, everyone hoped that this momentum continues to attend to the Sikhs' global problems and challenges. As was clear in Barcelona, the Sikh diaspora can well take on the major responsibility of disseminating the Sikh message to the Western world without looking to their epic bodies in Punjab. During this historic event in Barcelona, Sikhs gained the unique experience that they did not have to either depend on or seek leadership from their homeland state of the Punjab. They could also do without Sikh clergy in the matters of disseminating their theology. The strong and confident Sikh community worldwide is now well placed and mature to take on global responsibilities in the new century.

Dr. Bhui Harbans Lal

History of the Parliament

1893 Chicago: The Parliament of the World's Religions held its inaugural event as part of the Columbian Exposition. This historic gathering is widely regarded as the beginning of the inter-religious movement worldwide.

1993 Chicago: Eight thousand people from around the world came together for the centennial Parliament celebration to foster harmony among religious and spiritual communities and to explore their responses to the critical issues facing the global community.

1999 Cape Town: The Parliament convened in South Africa to promote inter-religious dialogue and cooperation and call the world's attention to the powerful role that religious and spiritual communities had played in the struggle against apartheid.

The unique 2004 international inter-religious gathering took place within the context of the 141-day Universal Forum of Cultures, with an unprecedented series of conferences, congresses and debates exploring peace, diversity and sustainability.

The right to Our Turbans



"Accept all people as your equals and let them be your only sect; conquer your mind and you shall conquer the world (SGGS, Japji)" Painting by Michelle Shook.

Recent developments in the French Legislature pertaining to the ban on "religious symbols" has created serious problems for various communities in regards to exercising their respective rights to their religion.

The "ban" also demands Sikhs to refrain from wearing their turbans at educational institutions! The French government in their eagerness to practice and propagate their concept of ostensible secularism has created great upheaval in the general population which comprises of various religious minorities. Their children are not allowed to wear any ostensible religious symbol which would mean Muslim headscarves, Jewish kippots, Christian crosses—or Sikh turbans. But here there is an essential difference.

Over the past year, various Sikh organisations, human rights groups and local Gurdwara committees launched a movement to safeguard their right to wear turbans in French schools, as it is part of their well being. During the meetings held with the French government officials, these groups were repeatedly assured that their basic rights would not be violated. The Gurdwara committee also received a letter from the Prime Minister's office, dated 10 May 2004, in which Mr. Michel Boyon assured that the community representative would be consulted before a final decision was taken and all efforts would be made for a smooth continuation for Sikh students at schools.

However, in spite of such assurances – written or verbal – the issue took an ugly turn when three young boys Jasvir Singh, Manjit Singh and Vikramjit Singh were barred from attending classes along with other school students at their Lycee for three consecutive days. The parents still continued sending the kids to the school thus abiding by the law, according to which children under 16 must be sent to school by their parents. On the fourth day, the Children were allowed

to enter school but sit in the canteen and self-study. The refusal to enter or the permission to sit in the canteen went on for few more days until one day, these three students were even refused entry into the school premises. Jasvir's father, Gurdyal Singh, then wrote to the school principal for which he never received a reply. Following this, the three students were expelled from the school. Gurdyal Singh reported this incident to the police and a complaint was filed.

At the same time, talks were going on with the *Inspection Academique Seine Saint-Denis* the local school governing body. Earlier in August, the head of this governing body had agreed that the Sikh students could cover their hair with any accessory instead of a turban what would allow the forehead, ears and the neck to show!

This entire issue has compelled representatives of the French Sikh community to come to India and request all organisations, representative groups, the educational community as well as the Prime Minister and his government which could lead to an understanding on this issue. The delegation comprises of Gurdayal Singh, President, International Human Rights Organisation, France and Iqbal Singh Bhatti, Administrator Gurdwara La Courneuve, Kudrat France. They have met eminent social, religious and political personalities including the Prime Minister so that a peaceful and acceptable solution can be reached after talks with the French government. The delegation also addressed various conferences in different cities to create general awareness and gather support.

Various organisations in India have come to the fore and will be organising programmes on this issue including the Lok Bhalai Party, SGPC and United Sikhs. The Organisation appeals not only to the Sikh community but all other individuals and organisations to come forward and take up this fundamental cause of "the right to our turbans".



A Loving Memory of *Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa (Yogi Bhajan)* *1929-2004: Espanola, New Mexico, October 2004*

There are people that you meet in your life who have more than just a passing influence. They do something, they say something that affects the very core of your identity - of whom you are, how you view life, the path that you decide to take. For hundreds of thousands of people worldwide, Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji had such an impact. For me, personally, he had that impact and so much more.

How does one say goodbye to a teacher? A father? A beloved and cherished friend?

I'm not sure. I haven't said goodbye yet.

In the brisk pre-dawn mountain morning of 23rd October, hundreds of mostly Western Sikhs came together for the Bhog ceremony 17 days since the Siri Singh Sahib had left his body. The Gurdwara tent, especially erected for the occasion, was beautifully decorated with thousands of fresh multi-coloured carnations forming the symbols for the Adi Shakti and Ek Ong Kaar. Rich golden fabrics draped the tent, a myriad of tiny

white lights hung gracefully on their strands. Sadhana began at 3:40 am with Japji Sahib.

Hours later, there would be close to 2000 people present on the property of the Hacienda de Guru Ram Das ashram in Espanola, New Mexico. They would take part in a five hour Memorial Service filled with dignitaries and interfaith leaders. Yet for those few morning hours, it was the time of purity and devotion, of love and prayer. The greatest tribute to the man who had brought Sikh Dharma to the West - that his students had gathered together from all over the world to pray, as Sikhs, before the Siri Guru Granth Sahib.

It was a testament to Siri Singh Sahib's reach and his touch that the Memorial Service, itself, drew an amazing array of people from so many different cultures, faiths and backgrounds. The Governor of New Mexico, Bill Richardson, a long time friend flew in specially to spend time with Dr. Inderjit Kaur and the family.



Following the passing of the Siri Singh Sahib's on 6th October, Governor Richardson ordered the U.S. flags in all state building to be flown at half-mast for the next two days. Never in the history of the United States had any Sikh American or Indian American received such an honour.

During his public address, Richardson fondly recalled the first time he met Yogi Bhai. "My first contact with Yogi Bhai was not the best one because I got one of those lectures that many of us have gotten," he said. "He told me my hair was too long, that I needed to lose weight, that I should speak slower in Spanish and that the only way to win was to shake every single hand - an impossible task. When the meeting concluded...he smiled and those huge arms enwrapped me

and he kissed me. And I looked up at him and that beautiful smile, that I want us all to remember, flashed."

After his speech, Governor Richardson formally declared 23rd October to be known as *Yogi Bhai Memorial Day*.

Other political dignitaries graced the stage of the Memorial Programme, which was broadcast live across the world through SikhNet.com. Messages were read from world-leaders such as U.S. President George W. Bush, U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman, Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin. U.S. Congressman Tom Udall from New Mexico, a long-time friend, also spoke.



From across the Pacific Ocean, dignitaries from India came to take part in the memorial weekend. Jathedars Joginder Singh Vedanti from Akal Takhat Sahib, Tarlochan Singh from Keshgarh Sahib and Iqbal Singh from Patna Sahib took part in the memorial ceremonies. In a remarkable moment during the Diwan that preceded the Memorial Service, the Jathedar of the Akal Takhat, Joginder Singh Vedanti, affirmed Inderjit Kaur's title of Bhai Sahiba for Sikh Dharma. Although Inderjit Kaur, affectionately known as Bibiji, had served Sikh Dharma as the Bhai Sahiba, Chief Religious minister, for many years - it was an amazing tribute to her selfless efforts on behalf of the Sikh community when the Akal Takhat recognized her in that role. And it was the first time in history that a Sikh woman was addressed with the title Bhai Sahiba from the Akal Takhat.

Indian Member of Parliament and Chairman for the National Minorities Commission Tarlochan Singh read the message from Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. In addition, he honoured the man who globalised the Sikh religion.

"It is a rare occasion in our history that our head priests are here with you to acclaim that Yogi Bhajan was a man with vision. He is the one as declared today by our head priest of Akal Takhat as who globalised Sikhism. We are registered today as a separate religion in America because of Yogi Bhajan."

Other dignitaries and long-time friends shared their memories and appreciation of the Siri Singh Sahib, including Dalmegh Singh, the Secretary of the SGPC, Dr. Shamsher Singh of the World Bank, Bhupinder Singh, son of Bibi Jagir Kaur, the President of the SGPC and Baba Daljit Singh from Chicago.

The voice of Interfaith leaders joined the chorus, with touching stories, loving statements and prayers for the strength and growth of the community. Satya Sai Baba Chalanda Sai Ma, Rabbi Nahum Ward-Lev, Father Richard Murphy and others shared their messages of love and remembrance with those gathered.

Long-time friend and director of Kashi Ashram Ma Jaya Sati Bhagwati recalled her loving and devoted relationship with the Siri Singh Sahib. "I never knew anybody who had such an Interfaith heart," she said.



wearing black velvet shoes with upturned toes, a pink turban and taking pictures with a little instamatic camera.

"He told me he had a vision of an organisation called 3HO," said Shakti Parwaha Kaur. "He said it's everybody's birthright to be healthy, happy and holy. He didn't start by talking about Sikh Dharma. He didn't preach. He didn't convert any of us....Our souls recognised where we belonged and that is when and how we became Sikhs."

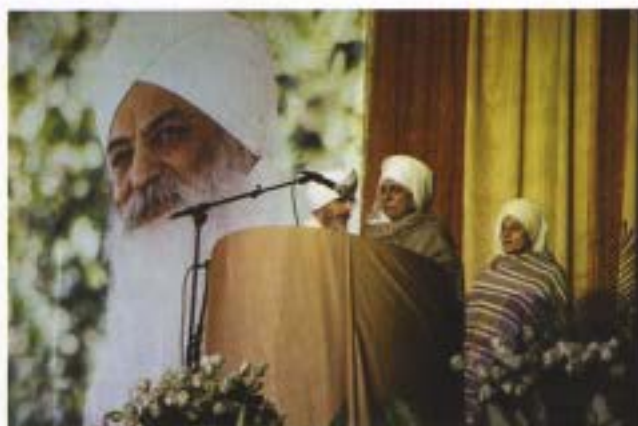
Ranbir Singh, the Siri Singh Sahib's eldest son, gave a moving speech about the lessons his father had taught him. "It is so ironic. When he was alive, I didn't trust this world. Now that he has left his

body and his soul is ever-present, my soul is starting to trust."

Sat Simran Kaur Khalsa, the Secretary of State for Sikh Dharma, traveled with the Siri Singh Sahib for 15 years. She witnessed at first hand the Siri Singh Sahib's commitment, in the spirit of Guru Nanak, to spreading the message of One

Yet the highlight of the Memorial Service came when the family of the Siri Singh Sahib shared their remembrances.

Shakti Parwaha Kaur Khalsa was Yogi Bhajan's first student and is known as the Mother of 3HO. In 1968, before 3HO or Sikh Dharma of the Western Hemisphere ever came into form, she met Yogiiji. Those were the days he was a tall yogi



God. "As a teacher, a mentor, a friend, a spiritual leader or a family man - he always related to the strengths in each of us and gave us ways to build on those strengths," she said. "He often said there are only two religions - the believers and the non-believers and he was always working to bring the believers together, because he believed in the power of prayer to bring peace to this earth."

Bibiji expressed her gratitude for the life she shared with her husband. "The Siri Singh Sahib always said Guru Ram Das is the house of humility and we are here to serve everyone."

Guru Amrit Kaur Khalsa, the Secretary General of Sikh Dharma and newly appointed Siri Sikhdar Sahiba, spoke eloquently of the Siri Singh Sahib's spiritual mission. "He came knowing that he had a huge mission and he had a big passion to fulfill that...it was very clear that he wanted to serve humanity and his methodology to do that was to create teachers and leaders who would share Sikh Dharma and the Sikh way of life....we are here acknowledging that gift...that a holy man of God came to this planet to help clear the karmas of humanity."

There were public voices, speaking on behalf of thousands. But to hear the private voices, sharing their memories, their stories, their deep gratitude for a man who in some way or the other had touched their lives, will remain with me forever.

How does one say good-bye to a teacher? A father? A beloved and cherished friend? I came to New Mexico expecting an interesting class and a certificate that would increase my market value as a teacher. What happened, instead, is that my world got rocked. He came into class the first Saturday afternoon while we all sat chanting, "Healthy am I, happy am I, holy am I." He stopped the chanting and yelled, that how none of us were happy. How, we did not understand what it meant to be a teacher? And how just one mistake, as a teacher - could cause us to be reborn as a cockroach!



"I am the chisel, you are the stone, and sparks are going to fly," he roared.

I had no idea how that course, how meeting him would change my life. He pierced through the walls of my ego and saw something in me...something more beautiful, more peaceful, more graceful than I could ever have seen in myself. In the years since 1996, our relationship remained that - he the chisel, I the stone and the endless, endless sparks. Slowly,



ਸਤਿਨਾਮ

ਮਾਨਸ ਜਾਤੀ ਤੇ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ
ਕਿ ਸਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ
ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਪ੍ਰਤਾਪ ਹੈ।

ਸਾਡਾ ੪੦੦ ਸਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਸੁਭਾਗ ਹੈ
ਕਿ ਸਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਚਿਨ੍ਹ ਮਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਰਿਵਾਜਿਆ ਹੈ
ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਤੇ ਚਾਹਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਹੁਣ ਅਕਵੇਰਿਅਨ ਜੁਗ ਨੇ ਮਾਨਸਿਕਤਾ
ਨੂੰ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ,
ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਰੇਖ ਲਿਆਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਆਪ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਲੋਂ ਬਖਸ਼ੀ
ਇਹ ਮਹਾਨ ਦਾਤ ਦਾ ਆਨੰਦ
ਆਪਣੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਮਿਤਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਕੇ ਮਾਣੋ

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ
ਹਰਿਭਜਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਫਿਰੋਜ਼ੀ ਜੀ

Greetings from Bhaji Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa

persistently, insistently, he chipped away at my fiery-hot temper, my freezing fears, my insecurities and my self-defined limits. There were times I rebelled, as my very core was being chiseled, but eventually the form he saw in me slowly became visible to my own eyes. I could hardly believe it was possible to experience in this lifetime that...yes...something Divine does live inside of me, too.

A teacher doesn't hear - he's deaf. He doesn't speak - he's dumb. He doesn't see - he's blind. He just carries the teachings. A teacher only sees the flow of God and is just a vehicle. Have you seen a water tap in a building, where you press the button and water comes? You quench your thirst and you leave? There are some souls who come to you and you are the water tap. They press and bow and open their mouths and you, through the nectar of wisdom, give them the Heavens. Beyond that you are nothing..."

What I know now is that the Siri Singh Sahib really came into my life to share with me the Shabd Guru and the path of Sikh Dharma. He came to teach me that the Sound Current of Gurbani, is the method to overcome the pull of my mind and live in the purity and grace of my own soul. A path



completely different from the one I knew. He taught me to lead a life like Guru Gobind Singh had led, as a householder, as a warrior, as a meditator and that to live such a life was very, very precious.

If the life of the Siri Singh Sahib can be summed up in one line, it's that by his actions he has changed the face of Sikhism for the entire world forever. And for that, some of his contemporaries will never forgive him. Yet, somebody had to take the Guru's teachings and share them with other cultures, in the context of those cultures. Someone had to let all of us out here - who have been in pain and suffering - know that God did actually create a universal solution to the problems of humanity in the form of the Siri Guru Granth Sahib. Someone had to reach us, on our level and help us understand the message...that the purpose of human life is to be healthy, happy and holy.

For better or worse, whether we are richer or poorer because of it, in sickness and in health, the Guru chose him for that mission.

I'm not asking you to trust me. I'm asking you to experience it (the Shabd Guru). If it doesn't work for you, throw it away, along with me. There's no need of hanging in with something which doesn't work for you. But at least give yourself a chance. At least give God a chance. At least give your distance and destiny a chance.

How does one say good-bye? With a man such as this, with a soul as vast, loving and committed as his, perhaps it is not possible. How can you say goodbye to someone who touched your heart, changed your life, gave you faith? Maybe one day I will be able to say good-bye, but not today. Today, all I can really say is thank-you. Thank you so much for all the teachings you shared. And in love and gratitude for those teachings, may we practice them with devotion, find the Divine Light within ourselves and continue on.

Sat Nam.

Ek Ong Kaar Kaur

[All illustrations from Sikh Dharma, Domain of Western Hemisphere]

Sat Nam,

*'For 400 years we have been blessed
with the Shabd Guru.*

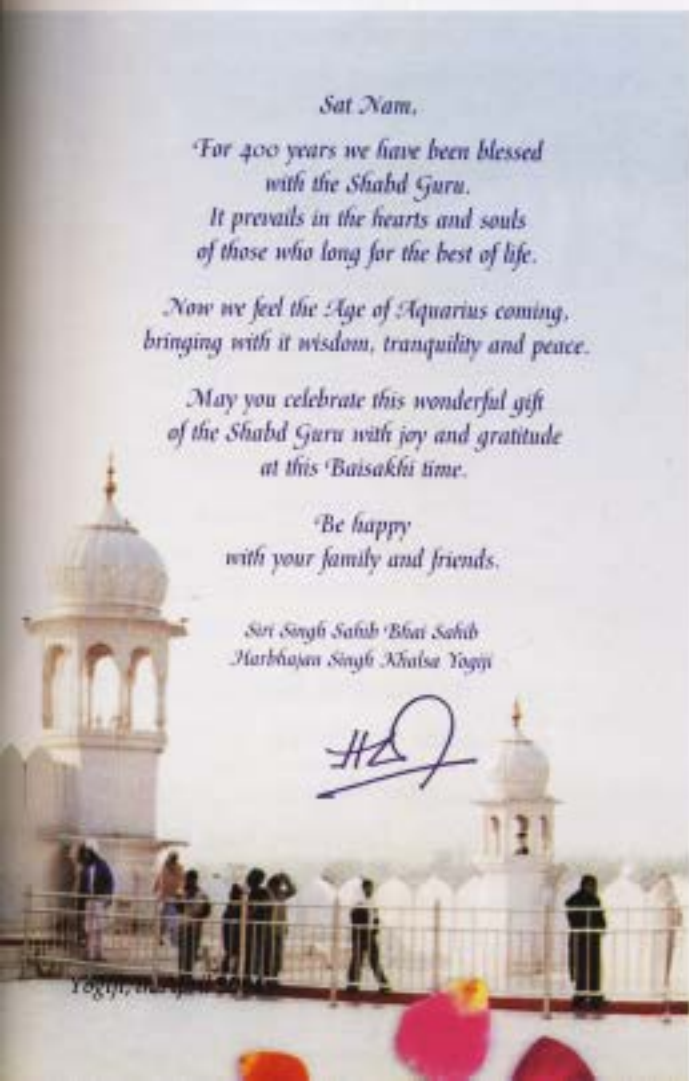
*It prevails in the hearts and souls
of those who long for the best of life.*

*Now we feel the Age of Aquarius coming,
bringing with it wisdom, tranquility and peace.*

*May you celebrate this wonderful gift
of the Shabd Guru with joy and gratitude
at this 'Baisakhi' time.*

*'Be happy
with your family and friends.*

*Siri Singh Sahib 'Bhai Sahib
Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogi*



A Master's Request: Don't Cry for me, Children of Sikh Dharma

Written at the request of the Siri Singh Sahib Ji

Who was this man called Yogi Bhajan
Who came into our lives from 'cross the sea?
A Father, A Teacher, A Master.
Servant for all humanity.

He came from the East just to teach us.
There is one God who dwells in all.
Happiness begins with commitment.
Fulfillment from answering the call.

He said, Don't cry for me Children of Sikh Dharma.
My love for you will live eternally.
Keep walking with your grace and strength and courage.
Chant the name and set your spirit free.
Chant the name and serve humanity.

In sandals in the snow drifts of Toronto.
His mission began so humbly.
Touching the hearts of the hopeless.
He helped them regain their dignity.

Through every trial he kept on winning.
To show us that we could do it too.
With kindness, compassion, with laughter.
He said royal courage will see us through.

Don't cry for me Children of Sikh Dharma.
My love for you will live eternally.
Keep smiling with your grace and strength and courage.
Chant the name and set your spirit free.
Chant the name and serve humanity.

He sculpted every being with precision.
No matter what their status or their state.
Poking, provoking, confronting.
His only purpose to elevate.

He gave us our home as a temple.
Our marriage as a path to One.
Our wealth as a way to serve our neighbour,
Our future through our daughters and our sons.

Don't cry for me Children of Sikh Dharma.
My love for you will live eternally.
Keep singing with your grace and strength and courage.
Chant the Name and set your spirit free.
Chant the Name and serve humanity.

Don't cry for me, you are Sikh Dharma,
Let your love live eternally.
Keep walking with your grace and strength and courage.
Chant the Name and set your spirit free.
Chant the Name and serve humanity.
960 million we will be.

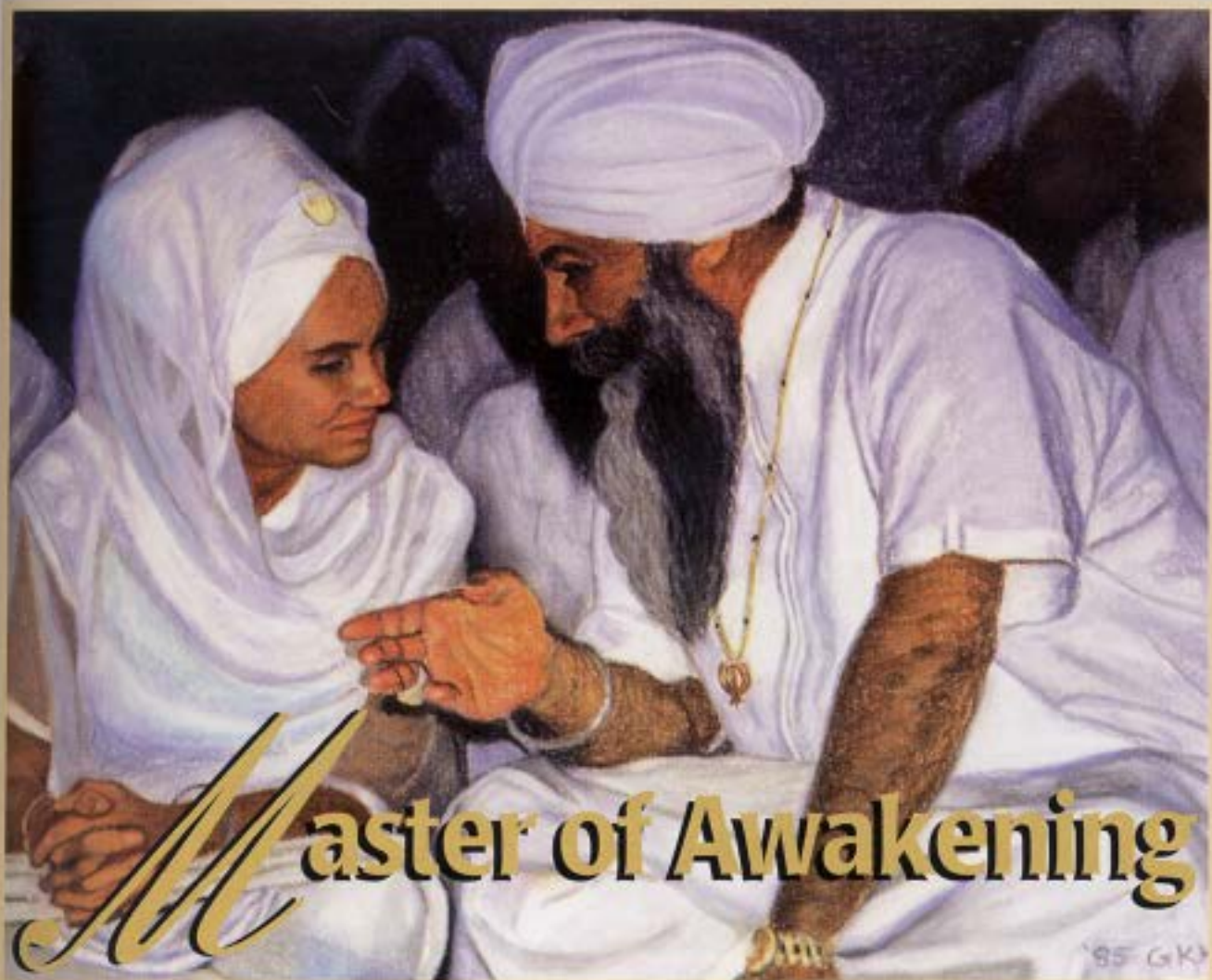
Sat Siri Siri Akal
Siri Akal Maha Akal
Maha Akal Sat Nam
Akal Moort Wahe Guru

Sat Siri Siri Akal
Siri Akal Maha Akal
Maha Akal Sat Nam
Akal Moort Wahe Guru

Sat Siri Siri Akal
Siri Akal Maha Akal
Maha Akal Sat Nam
Akal Moort

*Dev Suroop Kaur, Sangeet Kaur
and Ek Ong Kaar Kaur
Espanola, NM*

*The website for listening and ordering is:
<http://www.devsuroop.com/>*



Seekers of the West, looking for a sign
Found the answer to their prayers in 1969
A master from the East took his place by their side,
As the light of Aquarius rose in the sky.

Son of Mother India, ancient holy land,
He was born to rule, raised to command,
His saintly grandfather took him by the hand,
Taught him to be a graceful, noble man.

As the Guru's Sikh, he learned God is One,
By divine will, everything is done,
Guru Ram Das' most blessed son,
Shared his love of Naam with everyone.

Destiny declared that he would be a king,
By ruling himself, he could conquer anything,
He learned at the feet of Sant Hazara Singh,
Mastering the means of divine awakening.

With power unlimited, faith unconfined,
Four years he cleaned the floors of Harimandir Sahib,
Washing off tarnish of ego and pride,
By *amrit* of humility, cleansed and purified.

Bearing these gifts, he travelled West,
At every step and turn, put to the test,
Seeing God in all, everyone is blessed,
The hand of the Master lays pain to rest.

The teaching of these secrets, the turning of the age,
Bring to light wisdom of saint and sage,
Writing a new chapter on history's page,
Story, most profound, of ancient healing ways.

Singing sweet songs of God's infinity,
A healer, a teacher for humanity,
Giving the future a lasting legacy,
Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji.

*Text and painting by Gurukim Kaur Khalsa,
San Antonio, Texas*

Paris To Amravati



Quarter Century of Divine Love

It has been a great spiritual experience. And also a humbling one. When I was posted to Paris in 1973 (I had previously worked in our embassies in Egypt, China, Belgium and Guinea) little did I know that God had planned a completely different course of life for me. From my work as a junior diplomat in our Foreign service in commercial, political and administrative duties, I would work among leprosy patients at Tapovan, the haven of leprosy patients in Amravati created by Dr. Shivajirao Patwardhan which would become for me more glorious than all the pleasures of Europe, Asia and America.

As I complete 25 years of my life with leprosy patients at Tapovan in Maharashtra, I look back at the divine call in Paris where, in addition to my official work, I was graced to sometimes work for elderly French Catholic people on weekends as member of a local social service organisation called *Petits Freres Des Pauvres* ("Little Brothers Association for the Poor"). My spiritual masters envisaged for me a life of dedication for the down trodden but I was instructed from within that merely reciting the name of God was not enough. It must be translated into service. Indeed, even in Paris, I had served in old people's private homes as their "little brother",

on petty errands ranging from cleaning houses and linen to walking the partially paralysed for exercise, but I had tried to spiritualise their existence by asking them, in French, to think of Jesus all the time so that they would not be alone. A French old lady, Mme Coiral had blessed me, on my departure to India, to work devotedly for leprosy patients when I had told her that this would be my field of work in India. Horrified at first that I had chosen such a field, she blessed me when I said God had chosen this work for me. "Bhagwant, you have restored my faith in Jesus and I heartily bless you to work for the lepers", she had said.

Guru Granth Sahib had prepared me for the life of the Spirit, Guru Gobind Singh commanded me to treat all human beings as equal, but what brought me to leprosy was the re-reading of Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography, in the introduction of which I had come across some such words "To see God face to face one has to love the meanest creation as oneself". I could not believe that anyone could be thought as "mean" but it dawned on me that the leprosy patient was indeed considered as the "meanest". The die was cast and I thought that I should leave my job, learn to become a doctor in the manner of Albert Schweitzer who became a doctor in

his fifties and worked for leprosy patients in Africa. I tried to look for avenues to study medicine, but friends in India told me that if I could get some basic training as a leprosy technician in India, it would be enough. After a 9-month course in Vellore in the CMC & Hospital, I was ready to become a volunteer. After seeking voluntary retirement in 1979, I joined Dr. Shivajirao Patwardhan in this new life in the service of leprosy patients.

Even when I was being trained at Vellore, I discovered that in addition to medical treatment, patients needed love, comfort, social acceptance and above all, the recognition of humanity which had been snatched from them because of the prevailing stigma, stigma so horrible that even able-bodied leprosy patients, who could be treated at home or could be safely kept in jobs, were turned out of their homes and jobs because of ignorance, fear or religious prejudices. Since I was neither a medical expert, nor a hospital administrator, I concentrated on love, psychological help, personal affection, human and humane handling. While at Vellore, I had written two long articles dispelling the ignorance and fear of healthy people about leprosy but when I started living in Tapovan, I came face to face with men, women and children who had been thrown out of their own homes just because they had some connection with leprosy, even if some of them had only a mild form of disease.

Dr. Patwardhan, a great humanitarian, a freedom fighter and above all, the friend of leprosy patients, not only welcomed them and treated them warmly and humanely but had also decided that he would put them on their feet by providing for them not only food and shelter but also work. In Tapovan, we had several workshops for training and production of furniture both wooden and iron, a printing press, handloom and powerloom, durrie-making, besides having a high school and two primary schools. But the most important and impressive aspect of life at Tapovan was the warmth and friendliness which Dr. Patwardhan had imparted.

When I arrived there on 5 October 1979, drenched in gratitude to God for providing me with this opportunity of translating my love of God into love of the downtrodden, I did not know where to start. Dr. Patwardhan had so arranged working at Tapovan that the leprosy patients themselves were trained or partially trained as nurses, wardboys, office workers and workshop heads. Today the vast sprawling centre is managed by ex-patients themselves. The Executive Committee includes some ex-patients and the Director, but the entire work including accounts, para-medical work, kitchen work and workshops are responsibility of the patients themselves. Even our Secretary is an ex-patient. Indeed we have a doctor and teaching staff from outside but even in the school, there have been some teachers who are, or were, patients.

I began by visiting the wards, talking to the patients, cleaning their beds, helping their movements and, in the evening, singing bhajans with the old and dilapidated cases in the curiously labelled "Old and dying patients" Wing. This has remained my activity in the evenings for the last 25 years. There were so many wonderful experiences.

One day, an old Muslim patient, in acute pain called me: "Sardarji, would you come and press my legs? I am in terrible pain". I took it as a call of God and responded. A few days later, the patient passed away.

An old patient with suppressed nose, told me: "I know your Guru Nanak. How wonderfully he has taught you: no one comes near us and yet you clean our beds, sit on our beds and talk pleasantly. God will bless you".

Hundreds of patients with whom I have lived and worked have gone but they remain vividly etched in my memory in



two ways: recognition of the Guru's grace through them and the immense love that they showered on me.

But let me write of Dr. Patwardhan's love. Once he knew that he could rely on me for writing articles to spread health education among people and seek attention to the patients, he would spend hours with me, bring me the blessings of my Guru by saying: "You have written this with concentration on your Guru's grace" whenever he liked the writing. But whenever he did not find it worthwhile, he would say: "No, your thoughts were away from your Guru". I found him also to be a real spiritual, self-effacing loving human being. Sometimes he would sit and talk about his jail days, his experience of freedom-fighters and so on. But, always finding me at early morning prayers, he would come and sit without interruption. His phenomenal love and understanding of the patients would always inspire. He was always trying to get Ministers and high dignitaries to employ cured leprosy patients so that it could be demonstrably shown that leprosy was curable. He wanted that a cured leprosy patient should become an MLA or MP but he could not succeed in this.

The leprosy stigma was so bad that even well educated people preferred to leave their own homes and seek the shelter of our Centre. An M.Sc (Agriculture), who later became a respectable professor, whilst at Tapovan, was just a leprosy patient like any other uneducated villager. National integration was complete. No one thought of any one being a Hindu, a Muslim or a Christian. Everyone had one caste—that of leprosy. Common misery bound them all.

Since all that I had learnt was to love, to care and to share their misery, my job was clear for me. We also used to have leprosy-stricken murder convicts in Tapovan which was temporarily called "an open jail" and I found that they were all very well behaved. It was a great experience associating with them and in fact, once went all the way to Aurangabad to deliver a family message. Later in 1981, I became a member of the Executive Committee or *Vidarbha Maharogi Seva Mandal* of Tapovan.



I happened to contribute to two Committees dealing with leprosy patients' problems both at the Centre and at the State level. At both the Committee proceedings I urged that whatever deliberations and decisions were taken, we should be sure that this was what we would want, if we ourselves had been leprosy patients. On many an occasion I had the opportunity to show Governors, various dignitaries, ordinary citizens and various groups around Tapovan. Every time I took a dignitary to see the patients, I emphasised that the inmate were here because of *our* ignorance. They need not have been here if society had treated them kindly and with some understanding.

I persuaded Dr. Patwardhan to let me meet every patient who came to Tapovan for treatment or admission and also to assess what work he/she could do. I made it a point to make the patient sit on the chair in front of me, talk to him/her as my child/brother/relation and console him on society's indifference. The relief on the face of the patient was immense. Having been shown all kinds of discourtesies and disrespect even at home the patient would suddenly find some reassurance. Once a 20-year old girl, in very bad shape

and totally dumb would not respond to any affection, nor reply to my questions. After struggling for some time, I asked one of the girls in office to show her around. But when she came back, the burden on her mind was no less. Meanwhile, her brother who had brought her told me in her absence that she was to have been married in a month's time, but on the suspicion of her having a leprosy scars her "would be" had rejected her. Anyway, since I used to take rounds every evening to see the newly admitted people and to the women's ward as also the old and dying patients wing for bhajans, I had an opportunity to talk to her every now and then and lo! one evening I actually found her smiling. Dr. Patwardhan was in tears when I told him the news. He said in tears: *ek rote hue ko hasa dia, bass ho gaya*; even if we are able to make one weeping person to laugh, we should be grateful". This was Dr. Patwardhan, whose company I was privileged to have for 5 years in Tapovan and for one more year during my visits to him after he had left Tapovan.

My interest in administration or external trappings was subdued by my love and direct association with the patients, in the wards or in the colony. And that greatly enriched me. Living in voluntary poverty myself, I found these poor people full of love and enthusiasm, as also of contentment. My visit every evening to the old people's prayer meetings was full of wonderment. This everyday contact with them made me their family member and I became their "papaji" for all times to come. I then remembered the words of our Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib: *Sabkai meet ham apni keena, ham sabhna ke saajan* ("I made everyone my friend and I became the friend of all"). The curious result of this association is now even more wonderful!

For 22 years I lived and ate at the common kitchen until I went down with typhoid and malaria and lost my usual vigour. And now with various stomach problems, enlarged prostate, some spinal chord difficulties, I cannot eat in the common kitchen and have to have someone cook and look after me. I spend a month or two at Tapovan, then go away for treatment but come back again and again to live with my family of patients, who wait for me as eagerly as I do for them.

A long time ago, I thought I should spend some time in dressing the patients myself. Since arrangements already existed for the dressings, I began spending half-an-hour on this exercise for two reasons. One, I wanted the patients to feel that I was really at their service and secondly, I wanted to believe that by washing their feet and wounds I was trying to pray for my life of unity with them. Sometimes this became an experience of playfulness. I would intentionally take my scissors too near the shins or fingers while cutting the dressing bandage and pretend that, by mistake, had cut into

their limb. *Kapa, kapa* ("cut it, cut it"), they would scream and then begin to laugh among themselves, *papaji hamshi gusai karte* ("Papaji is playing with us"). And smiles galore! I was blessed. Another thing I noticed that when you did a very small favour to the poor or even when you talked politely and gently to an unprivileged person, his gratitude was unlimited. (I am reminded of Guru Nanak's words:

Neechan andar neechi jait.....

"(I belong to the caste that is lowliest of the low; no, even lower than that; what have I got to do with the highly placed? Wherever the lowliest are cared for, there is the grace of the Lord)."

Playfulness of children is boundless. We have around 450 children in Tapovan, their number having increased while the number of adults has fallen. When I came to Tapovan, there were around 1400 inmates in all but now there are only around a thousand. The children in 1979 were around 300, but now they count for nearly half the total. Stigma having been reduced, our school has now enrolled many non-leprosy affected children from the surrounding areas, whereas in the past, people would hesitate to send their children to a "leprosy" school. In fact the school had been started only because ordinary schools in the past did not admit leprosy children or did not treat them well.

I have fallen in love with the children, almost every child knows me and I know them, although I cannot remember all their names. But for them "papaji" is easy. And wherever I go, the children greet me *namaste papaji*, but when I visit their hostels, they have become so used to *anand karo prabhu ke gun gao* (Live in bliss and sing the praises of the Lord) that they begin to sing this spontaneously. After a while, I ask them: *najhi mulgi koun* (who is my daughter)? And there is the chorus "mee, mee!"

Now that I have several problems with my body, even as I go on believing that I am all right but the vigour with which I used to attend to their needs, offer affectionate help and counsel and love them, is waning. When I have to leave Tapovan to attend to my own physical problems or when I remain here in the company of someone who serves me, I feel

really ashamed that in order to be able to enjoy the love of my patients, someone has to also serve me.

My own two daughters, my only children, live in the USA and my wife who used to spend some time here from time to time, is now also resident in the USA. Those who look after me when I come to Tapovan are really my prayer companions who too enjoy receiving the love of patients. In fact these companions in groups have been here numerous times for the love of the patients and to sing the praises of the Lord with them.

It is here that every child is my child, every man is my son, or brother, every woman is my sister or daughter and old man is my father, every old woman is my mother. None of



them are from my religion, from my state, from my background, from my social strata, from my language-group. But here there is only one religion, *the religion of love*, and there is only one caste, *the caste of humanity*.

And the wonder of wonders is that these forgotten and condemned patients have now come into their own. Stigma is forgotten, misery is forgotten, they look to the future, not the past. They produce good furniture, good durries, good printed material, good bedsheets and good bandage cloth and sometimes so exquisite is their production, that one begins to feel ashamed of having created this for them as "charity".

Even those missionaries who used to work for them talked about leprosy with connotations of sin and stigmatised patients unintentionally. With great difficulties, campaigners in the USA got the word *leper* removed from the leprosy vocabulary, but it is still used with reference to a 'lowly' or 'hated' person. Although "Hansen's Disease" is now used in

SEWA



A documentary film on S. Bhagwant Singh Dalawari of Tapovan, presented by Ms. Reema Anand, was screened at the Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, New Delhi on 1 October 2004. The documentary was later screened at the Sikh Film Festival at Toronto, Canada, on 5 November 2004.

Picture shows Reema Anand with S. Bhagwant Singh Dalawari at New Delhi.

Society which now serves many causes from education to health to the alleviation of poverty.

It is I who should be eternally grateful to God and the patients for such divine experience for a quarter of a century. I now boast of a family of thousands whose love I value and respect in fulfilment of my commitments to my Guru, Guru Granth Sahib whose teachings inspired me to engage myself in *simran* (remembrance of the Lord always) and *sewa* (the service of humanity). I have become a somewhat better human being, having lived in voluntary poverty with



Inspiration from Guru Granth Sahib has engaged Bhagwant Singh Dalawari in selfless service at Tapovan for 25 years.

place of "leprosy" in the USA, in India we still call HD as "Leprosy".

The work of people, nay saints, like Dr Shivajirao Patwardhan and Baba Amte and many others who selflessly work in the field, has shown that the very people whom were rejected or stigmatised are very fine human beings indeed. My 25 years of living with these people has given me not only immense pleasure and honour, but I have been given the title of "social worker". The S.G.P.C. awarded me the Bhagat Pooran Singh Award seven years ago and the Bhai Kanahiya Award Committee in Delhi has awarded me another. With both these awards, we created Guru Granth Sahib Charitable

these people and shared their joys and sorrows. I certainly know that love, happiness, contentment are not necessarily the results of material affluence. These attributes are divine and this divinity comes only from living in practice the dictates of one's Maker and clearly demonstrating that we are all the children of one God.

I conclude this article of divine love with a *bhajan* I sing with the patients:

*Mujh mein Ram tujh mein Ram sab mein Ram Sanaya
Sabse kar lo pyar jagat mein koi nahin paraya.*

Bhagwant Singh Dalawari
Tapovan, Amravati (Maharashtra)

1984-2004

Advocate Harvinder Singh Phoolka has spearheaded the long and arduous legal battles for victims of the 1984 pogrom in Delhi and other parts of India against the Sikh community. Two decades after filing the first case, he recounts the continuing fight for justice.

How did you get associated with the 1984 riot cases?

I was preparing affidavits for the riot victims when an elderly person told me that in his family only four minor girls had survived. Their father, mother, brother and uncle had been murdered by the mobs. His granddaughters were then sent to the Nari Niketan. He wanted to take them in his custody but did not have any money to pay the court fees. That was the first case that I filed in the high court. In May 1985, when the government appointed the Mishra commission, I suggested we float an organisation so that we could pool our resources to take on the government. Various human rights groups met at Soli Sorabjee's house and formed the Citizens Justice Committee. Sorabjee, General Aurora, Justice Tarkunde, Khushwant Singh and Justice R.S. Narula signed up as members. Justice Sikri was made the president. I was appointed the secretary and became the main counsel of the (Justice Ranganath) Mishra Commission.

What kind of challenges did you face during the course of investigation and trial?

HKL Bhagat and Sajjan Kumar were politically very powerful those days. My wife gave me full support though other members of my family said this was very dangerous work. Slowly, young men and women joined our team. They visited areas dominated by Kumar and Bhagat and worked day and night. We were getting threatening letters, but nobody was bothered. Sorabjee, Tarkunde and Sikri were with us through all this.

Hundreds of survivors, scared witnesses and powerful political leaders. It must have been a difficult time in court.

Yes, the victims are victimised in the courts too. The Mishra commission's terms of reference were very limited. It had only to ascertain whether the violence was premeditated. Sorabjee advised me to concentrate on this rather than filing thousands of affidavits. I had interviewed more than 3,000 victims and prepared affidavits. Ultimately, I filed only 575 of these.

How much time did it take you to interview these persons?

It took two months. But it was not just me, but the team. I cross-examined these 575 persons to check whether they would stand scrutiny. Justice Mishra, however, concentrated on the flaws in the affidavits. He put these on to investigating agency. They focused not on getting the culprit, but on (technical) errors in the affidavits!

It was primarily a team headed by a police officer from outside Delhi?

Yes, an IPS officer from Orissa cadre, Mr Meena, was heading it. Justice Mishra started calling evidences at random. A total of 620 affidavits had come before the commission. But

there were 2,200 affidavits filed against these victims. Sikhs had sworn in these affidavits how the police and their MP had saved them from mobs. Justice Mishra decided to call 25 witnesses from both sides every day. On the first day, all witnesses from the victims side appeared but only one from the other side who said that he had not filed any affidavit. The one filed in his name was forged! This was widely reported in the newspapers. Next day, Justice Mishra banned press reports as the hearing was in-camera.

After that Justice Mishra decided not to call those witnesses. In his report too he wrote that he would ignore all those affidavits. But in the end we realised that he had examined many witnesses in his chamber. He did not give their statements nor did he allow us to cross examine them. There was only one way in which we could tell the world what was happening: the Citizen's Justice Committee withdrew from the commission. They then approached the victims and pressurised them to procure counter-affidavits. Though the last date of filing such affidavits was 9 September 1985, Justice Mishra accepted affidavits even in December.

But many more commissions and committees came up after Mishra commission.

Nine commissions and committees! First came the Mishra commission. Justice Mishra said it was not part of his terms of reference to identify anybody. Mishra recommended three separate committees: Jain-Banerjee panel to recommend registration of fresh cases, another committee on the role of the police and the third to ascertain the number of killings. These committees were appointed in February 1987, but two and a half years later not even head counts had been done. We submitted a list to Justice Mishra containing names, addresses and complete details of 3,870 people killed in Delhi. But the police said "only" 1,419 were killed. Cases of only these people were registered. And the Delhi government filed a list of 2,300 people killed.

What do you expect from the Nanavati commission? You are again the counsel for the victims.

Firstly, all the cases have not been even registered. Many of those registered were closed by the police and did not reach the courts. From the Nanavati commission, we are expecting two things: Registration of murder cases and reopening of about 300 cases which were closed without any challan or charge-sheet being filed. Also, there has not been any exhaustive inquiry on who is responsible and how all this happened.

From: The Times of India



On the 1984 Anti Sikh Riots

Sikhs—winning, and winning

From the ashes of a terrible tragedy has risen a more positive generation. As a success story, there are few that can match them. There are scars, nightmares, justice denied, but at the end of two decades, a moral victory!

It is now exactly 20 years since what is commonly called the "1984 anti-Sikh riots." An unemotional term swathed in red-tape and apathy. Because behind the terse description is an event that shook the roots of a community. In all these years, have the Sikhs asked for anything more than their share of justice?

The men who assassinated Prime Minister Indira Gandhi have been hanged long since. Has anyone been hung for the gruesome murders of Sikhs that began on the night she died? Whom does a father go to seek sanity for his son, who has grown retarded because of what happened in November 1984?

These are unanswered questions and will perhaps remain unanswered for some time. So the Sikh community has found some answers on its own, drawn from centuries of struggle and the simple realisation that they live in a civilised world. And that in such a world, no violence is justifiable. So while the struggle for justice continues, the community has refused to be overcome by this one event. It has moved on to find its peace.

It is a terrible fact that people of their religion were attacked and killed. In another era, weapons would have been used to get justice. This time, even before the embers of 1984 died out, the community had chosen to use logic as its main weapon. They realised that to be a successful member of society one needs to adapt. They found that which has stood them in good stead these difficult two decades.

It's all about what you chose to build. When a community starts building up a defence mechanism it automatically creates known and unknown enemies. But when it arms itself with a position attitude and rebuilds itself from and beyond the debris, it creates a space for itself. A bigger and better space than ever existed. That is the Sikh community then. Not a ghetto that an injured minority huddles into usually, but a robust part of the mainstream again.

This lesson was learnt by not only an individual, but an entire community together. Each Sikh has contributed to this positive attitude.

And that is why they are winning, and winning!

Sandeep Pal Singh

"Hang these politicians"

Mention the 1984 anti-Sikh riots to these women and an air of silence envelopes them. They live in isolated worlds of poverty and tragedy, but are inextricably joined by one event – their husbands were massacred in that burst of violence 20 years ago. It's a silence that speaks of their tragic tales. They've lived many nightmares since they saw their husbands murdered before them. Eye-witnesses for a moment, victims forever. What has followed is an aching wait for justice and a life of unending struggles.

"It's been twenty years since the 1984 riots. A lot has been written, but little has been done. Twenty years down the massacre I'm still struggling to meet both ends without my husband, looking after my three children and their families".

"Politicians would come every once a year, during elections and remind us of the traumatic phase we went through. They make promises, collect their votes and vanish. A new face enters this colony every year only to be replaced by another face the next year", says Kuldeep Kaur, one of the many widows living in Tilak Vihar.

Tilak Vihar, known as the 'Widows Colony', is one of the localities where women took asylum after losing their husbands to the 1984 bloodbath.

They have been residing here ever since. The colony comprises several building blocks, identical with three floors each. There are about 16 to 20 families residing in each block. The blocks are interconnected with narrow lanes and by-lanes of Tilak Vihar, with a powerful stench one's permanent companion. These blocks overlook the Tilak Vihar Police Station and Nishkam, an NGO, which was established in 1984 to help the victims of riots.

Kuldeep Kaur works in an MCD school as a peon and lives in an accommodation provided by the government in 1984, with her two sons, their wives and children and her daughter. Two small rooms and a small kitchen. Fractured floors, dilapidated walls and ceilings, broken electricity switchboards.

That is the house they live in. Kuldeep's older son drives an autorickshaw while the other is jobless. Her daughter runs a small beauty parlour at home.

"We are 10 members living under one roof. Each day is a struggle and each of us tries to contribute however we can. There are water problems in this colony, the sewage pipes are broken. To make matters worse there are 16 families staying in one building and the police officials have a price tag to resolving every complaint", says Kuldeep Kaur.

Kuldeep reminisces about her first encounter with the police, on 1 November, 1984. After her husband was set afire, she crawled to the Nangloi police station in a badly bruised condition to seek help. To her horror she discovered there was just one officer attending to a crowd of victims. He said just one thing, "Shut up! Or you too will die like your husbands".

Looking at the floor she frowns and continues talking. "There is no difference in their conduct during those days—and now. House

extensions, civic problems or personal troubles, these corrupt police officers have been of no help at all". The government's apathy towards the widows and their families and their poor standard of living form only a fraction of their miseries.

Half way into her story Kuldeep Kaur is angry, her wrath impossible to appease. Her pitch rises as she goes into a flashback talking about the court trials and what she went through in order to seek justice. For her seeking justice has meant more injustice.

"I never got support from the government during and after the 1984 carnage. The killers of my husband weren't a group of Hindus, it was the government. They were the minds behind this bloodbath".

"I distinctly remember that in those days we stood in queues for hours to get a litre of kerosene oil and here, hoards of Hindus possessed tankers of kerosene oil. Who do you think were the suppliers? It was the government".

"The killers got 50 rupees for every killing, and it was the government who enticed them. Don't blame Hindus for what happened to the Sikh community, it was these politicians who are the masked killers. If at all anybody wishes to do anything for us they should unmask these politicians—and hang them", says Kuldeep, visibly furious.

For years she kept making the rounds of courts in the hope that her husband's killers would be penalised someday. She even took her children to the courts, but nothing has happened. Trial after trial, date after date, until this day when she finally decided not to knock the doors for justice.

Her cries only fell on deaf ears. "When I couldn't get justice after recognising the killers in the courts, do you think now I would ever get it?" questioned Kuldeep Kaur.

Today, Kuldeep is unaware and unbothered about of the status of the case. Her only worry is her family's survival. She's not alone. There are other widows like Darshan Kaur and Anwar Kaur who went to courts alleging that Congress leaders Sajjan Kumar and HKL Bhagat led the mobs that killed their husbands, but they say everything possible was done to shield the politicians and deny justice to the victims. Ten Hindus were convicted of murder, while 150 people were punished of minor offences like rioting and violation of curfew orders. A majority of those arrested for minor offences belonged to the Muslim community. No political leader has so far been convicted for complicity in the 1984 massacre!

The Citizens Justice Committee was the main representative of the '84 victims. It was set up with the sole aim of arriving at the truth. However, it withdrew from the proceedings halfway through the inquiry because it claimed the inquiries carried out during the trials left no stone unturned to protect the criminals.

As one goes deeper into the dingy lanes of Tilak Vihar, darker realities unfold. Judi Bai, another old widow, never knocked the doors for justice. Her reason for doing so was to protect her grandchildren from further trauma. Her accommodation is on the first floor. Reaching there is an experience in itself, climbing the rickety stairway is somewhat akin to rock-climbing.

The moment she realises that she is to take a walk down memory lane and narrate her harrowing experiences, this petite, wrinkled widow stares at the ceiling for a couple of minutes, as though preparing herself for the nightmare ahead – of retelling her horror.

Judi Bai's husband and son were killed during the 1984 riots, leaving her to take care of her three grandchildren.

A Sikh woman from a village in Bihar, Judi Bai had never stepped outside the house, like most village women, confined to household chores. Judi Bai, like Kuldeep, saw her husband murdered before her eyes. In retrospect, it is difficult to tell what hardened her more – the shock of the incident or the aftermath.

"I was illiterate, didn't know anything, so I decided to become a masseuse, offering my services from house to house. That money along with the money given by the government was my saviour", said Judi Bai, giving a toothless smile.

Despite talking about her traumatic days, Judi Bai sounds calm. Harsh realities have made her so bitter and cold that nothing seems to affect her anymore.

The old widow stays with three of her grandsons, out of which two are married having two children each. "Out of three of my grandchildren, only one of them earns. The remaining two just while away their time. One of the two has got into bad company and is heavily into drugs".

There's no place to sleep in the house, there's no money, we don't even know where our next meal is coming from", grieved the old widow.

The personal narratives of the widows, reflecting their constant struggle with life and widowhood, throws a light on the plight of the victims. They claim that even today they are treated as an invisible community. Medical aid, education, nothing is free for the victims.

But these women speak of their struggle with remarkable courage. None dissolves into tears. The hardships of two decades have dried their tears and today they are ready to face the worst. And unanimously they say that they've seen all in the past 20 years – grief, sorrow, apathy, hatred. The only thing they don't see is justice.

Fortunately, in December 1999, a fresh judicial inquiry into the whole issue of the 1984 carnage was ordered by the Vajpayee government. In Parliament, members of all the parties, including the Congress party, passed a resolution supporting the Government's decision. The subsequent appointment of the Justice G.T.Nanavati Commission, despite a lapse of 16 years, was a momentous decision as a large number of victims responded enthusiastically by filing affidavits and producing evidence in public hearings before the Nanavati Commission.

There were some widows who fought but quit under frustration of delayed justice, Kuldeep Kaur being one of them, but some continue to fight.

Gurdwaras: The First Targets, The First Defence

If turbans have become the ubiquitous symbol of the Sikhs, the gurdwaras are the touchstones of their faith. When Indira Gandhi fell to the bullets of her Sikh security guards, however, they became red flags to hordes of enraged rioters. For the first time in the history of free India, places of worship became the target of mob attacks. Of about 450 gurdwaras in Delhi, some three-quarters were either damaged or destroyed. In fact, they were the first targets of the 1984 rioters, perhaps to prevent Sikhs from collecting there and putting up a combined resistance. The first targets also became the last refuge of most Sikh families.



At a time when Sikhs had lost faith in all authorities, gurdwaras became not just a source of strength but also a reaffirmation of the spirit of the Sikh community. The gurdwaras have come a long way since 1984 and no physical scars remain of the horror attack mounted 20 years ago. But these have been repercussions.

The gurdwaras have shored up their defences, says Bhagat Singh, manager of the Nanavati commission office at Rakabganj gurdwara. "There used to be a two-foot wall, but 1984 exposed their vulnerability", says Singh. "So the gurdwara committees decided to build higher walls – a 10 foot wall with an additional two feet grill with sharp edges".

"Today no one can scale these walls. This can be seen in almost all the major gurdwaras of Delhi, including Bangla Sahib".

Same is the case of the gurdwara in the posh New Friends Colony. On the night of 31 October 1984, the gurdwara was ransacked and set on fire. But today no traces of that dark event remain. The gurdwara is surrounded by an eight-foot wall and a strong steel gate guards the gate. A fortified wooden door awaits the visitor at the entrance of the sanctum sanctorum.

Security is indeed a priority for the gurdwara management. "The gurdwara gates are manned at all times. There are three shifts of eight hours each."

"And the guards are armed with *barsas*, a thick wooden stick with a short sharp-edged point on top".



What threat do these *barsas* guard against? Mainly, fear. "If the outside periphery is secure, we don't need to worry about anything", asserts Bhagat Singh. Not all are so security conscious. President of Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC), Prehlad Singh Chandok, says, "There is no need of any precautions. We are not scared of anyone. The only time we had ever taken precautions was at the time of the riots.

What was happening was

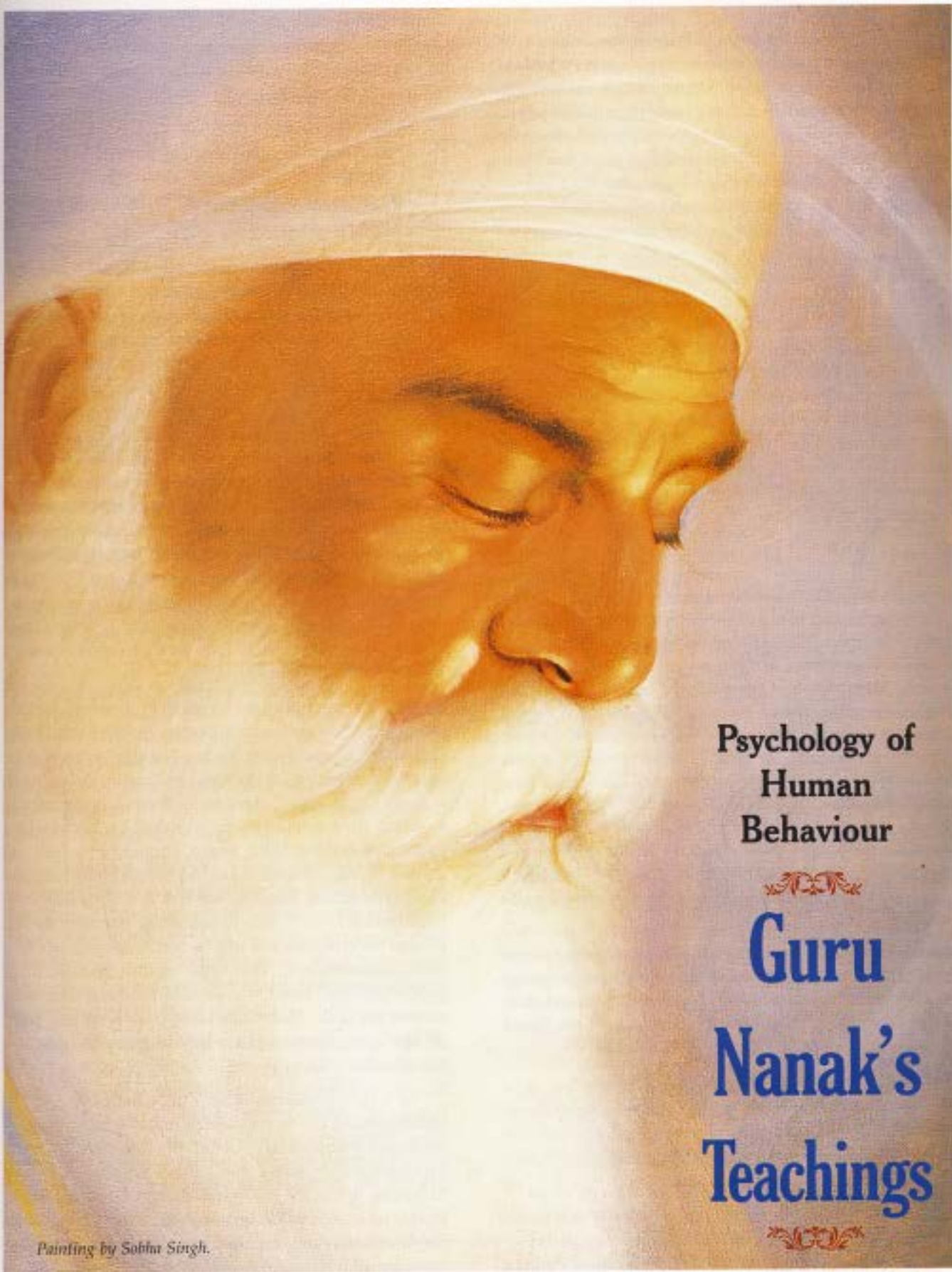
evil and we had to stop it. But today we are not scared of anyone".

Some gurdwara managers have more faith in their Gurus than security systems. "No one will ever be able to enter this holy place to repeat 1984. "We'll make sure of that", a manager at Seeshganj Sahib asserts.

On being asked if they would use weapons to stop the mischief-makers, he replies angrily, "We don't need any weapons. The men are enough for them!"

That's the spirit that dominates not just the community but also their religious symbols. The tall sprawling structures all over the city give out only one message. As Chandok says, "We are not scared of anyone and we will never let 1984 to ever repeat itself".

Sakshi Arora
(From "Traditions")



Psychology of
Human
Behaviour



**Guru
Nanak's
Teachings**



Painting by Sobhu Singh.

Religious Leaders and Prophets are known to be keen observers of human behaviour. They not only understand workings of the human mind, but are also very sensitive to human suffering and are actively engaged in its alleviation. Jesus Christ was deeply moved by the plight of the common people of his time and sacrificed himself in his opposition to the oppressive rulers of the time. Gautam Buddha could not bear the sight of human suffering and forsook his kingdom and family to find the 'right path' which would lessen the pain of suffering humanity. His emphasis on "the middle way" had a psychological meaning. Excessive desire would result in more frustration in the event of loss or failure than lesser levels of want. Mohammed saw increasing feuds between tribes in the region and helped them to unite under the banner of Islam. His emphasis on eating together and other activities had a psychological effect in bringing these tribes together. The 'reincarnation' view in Hinduism states that whenever there is oppression and deception and corruption becomes rampant, God comes to this world in human form to protect humanity from such evils and to put mankind on the right path.

Guru Nanak had particular understanding of human behaviour. His insight of human conduct, his psychological approach to problems and his sensitivity to human suffering and its causes would startle many trained psychologists of today. Throughout his life he approached people, including his critics and opponents, in a manner which would not offend anyone. More often than otherwise, the critics and opponents would be convinced of his viewpoint. He used logical arguments, employed language of the people and similes from daily life of the people in his verses. His writings are in verse and are set to music. Modern psychologists agree on the great impact on people of poetry and music rather than of prose. Poetry and music have emotional appeal but when the thoughts and ideas expressed in them are also rational and logical, their effect is doubly reinforced. Here, I will attempt to present the psychological aspects of Guru Nanak's teachings.

It is a well established principle of psychology that people tend to identify easier with those who speak their 'language' and talk about matters which are part of their lives and, thus, interest them most. The following two sayings of Guru Nanak are examples of the use of similes from daily life:

*These are the secrets of true husbandry,
The body is the field; let mind be the ploughman,
Good deeds thy ploughing,
Let thine honest strivings be the runnels
That irrigate the field.
Sow the seed of the Holy Name
Make the clods of the field level with contentment;
Wear, as a farmer, the peasant garb of humility.*

*Our transient life is our shop
These are the secrets of honest shopkeepings;
And the Holy Name is the merchandise
With which we are entrusted;
Alertness of mind and purity of deed
Are the warehouses in which to store the Name.
Let thy dealings be with the saints;
They are sound, reliable customers.
Take a fair profit and be happy*

During his extensive travels, Guru Nanak's observed many instances of superstition, but always convinced people of the uselessness of their ritualistic ways, perpetuated by the priestly classes for their own benefit. A typical incident occurred at Hardwar. At that sacred Hindu place, on the banks of the Ganges, he saw people throwing water towards the east. When asked as to what they were doing, they replied that they were offering oblation to their ancestors in the other world. Nanak thereupon started throwing water towards the west. When asked what he was doing, he answered, "I am a farmer from Kartarpur to the west of here (250 miles), and I am watering my fields over there". When people laughed at this, he asked them, "If your water can reach millions of miles to the other world, cannot mine reach even 250 miles on this earth"? This had a psychological effect on people and they realised their follies. If Nanak had criticised them directly, it would probably have infuriated people and not achieve the desired effect.

Guru Nanak rejected the humiliation of caste distinctions and preached the oneness of humanity. He usually lived with "low caste" people during his travels. He once stayed at the house of a carpenter, Lalo by name and thus invited the wrath of local "high caste" Hindus. In their opinion, he was lowering the esteem of his father's faith by dining with a Sudra. One of them, Malik Bhago, arranged a big feast and invited Nanak to partake of it. Finally, the Malik, who was also a local official, asked his servants to bring Nanak to his presence by force. When Bhago asked him why he had refused his invitation and why he was instead eating with a Sudra, Nanak replied, "Your bread contains the blood of the poor, while Lalo's bread, who earns by the sweat of his brow, is sweet like milk". He brought home that it is not any "high" or "low" caste, but the deeds, which determine one's status in life.

As a clinical psychologist, I have been interested in understanding the factors which cause mental illness or emotional problems. Until 1950, the dominant theory of psychopathology was Freud's psycholo-analytic theory. According to this, the functional emotional disorder (where there is no organic pathology involved or the organic factors play a secondary role) is caused by an overly strict super-ego (conscience) which is instrumental in the repression of an

individual's instinctual wishes and impulses. The ideas and memories associated with painful conflicts are actively buried from awareness (repressed) by certain powerful forces within the personality. The symptoms represent the ego's unsuccessful attempts to defend against the "return of the repressed".

As the important determiners of man's adjustment are, in Freud's view, buried in the unconscious, his view of man is that of a helpless creature, a plaything of unconscious forces. Such Freudian theory has come under criticism from several quarters. Behaviourists, following Pavlov's work on conditioning, consider socialisation and the process of habit formation as very important factors determining the adjustment or maladjustment of a person.

While Freud considered super-egos as the culprit in the etiology of mental illness, Mowrer considers that violation of the moral code, the caste of irresponsibility results in emotional difficulties.

Mowrer's thesis is that "in psychopathology the primary or, basic cause is deliberate, choice-mediated behaviour of a socially disapproved, reprehensible nature which results in emotional disturbance and insecurity.

The 'symptoms' which then ensue represent ways in which the individual is trying to "defend" himself against and hide his 'disturbance' and suspicion-arousing emotions".

Until now we have been accustomed to placing the blame on others: "parents, friends, wife or husband treated the patient badly". Mowrer's theory puts the blame back on the individual himself, where it actually is. Thus, as opposed to the Freudian view that neurosis is caused by an overly strict super-ego, Mowrer's position is that neurosis is caused by something against the "rules" of the conscience or super-ego and then concealing such wrong-doing.

The first link in the chain of events leading to neurosis is the "foolish, unthinking, harmful" or "immoral behaviour" of the individual. This type of behaviour makes the individual socially vulnerable. So, he starts hiding his deviant acts from others. In order to hide, he has to tell lies. Thus, he becomes entangled in a game of lies, cover-ups, and becomes more and more secretive, seclusive and alienated.

There are two ways open to such an alienated person for reduction of the dissonance in his personality. Either he can reveal his real self and become an open person or he can start believing his own lies and his unreal world. The second alternative leads to the typical syndromes of schizophrenia. The world of delusions and hallucinations becomes the real world for the individual and the world of reality (his real self) becomes "unreal" to him.

Guru Nanak emphasised the importance of truth and true conduct in the following lines:

*There are many dogmas,
There are many systems,
There are many scriptural revelations,
Many modes to fetter the mind;
But the saint seeks for release
through Truth;
Truth is higher than all these,
And higher still is the life lived in Truth.
Truth makes us free, Truth destroys doubts,
Truth destroys every sickness of the soul.*

Guru Nanak's emphasis on truth is in line with the major focus of humanistic psychology, the emphasis on social interaction, based on truthfulness, honesty and openness. Several techniques as encounter groups, sensitivity training, T-groups, and so on are employed to help a person to learn to be truthful and open and to know and experience himself through interaction with others. Guru Nanak not only recognised the importance of knowing and controlling the self, but also emphasised the value of interpersonal relationships. Wherever he went, he asked people to establish *sangat* (congregation) and *panjat* (community dining). He decried asceticism and any withdrawal from life and enjoined upon his disciples to fulfil their responsibilities to their families and communities.

The Sikh is required to live this world like a lotus flower:

*As the lotus flower
Does not drown in the pool,
As the duck
Is not made wet by the pond.
As the flowers thrusts upwards
As the duck swims,
So with the mind intent
Upon the Word of the Guru
One can safely cross
The great sea of life.*

As opposed to the psychoanalytic view of a helpless man, Guru Nanak's view of man is that he is master of his will and can decide for himself the nature of his actions and reactions, as he is made in the image of God. Only by realising his true nature, can he find the true path.

Through his teachings, Guru Nanak emphasised man's social responsibility and the importance of truthful interaction with his fellow beings. Guru Nanak's emphasis on "brotherhood with every man on earth" is a principle which is very relevant in today's world, torn by wars, riots, different political ideologies, religious and racial tensions.

In my use of behaviour modification techniques, I have found that 'positive reinforcement' is more effective than 'negative reinforcement'. The depth of Guru Nanak's psychological understanding and insight is evident from his

positive approach in describing what a Brahmin, a Yogi, a Hindu, or a Muslim should be like.

Modern behaviourists stress the role of actions and reactions in the formation of adaptive and non-adaptive habits. The behaviourists and other psychologists, however, would sometimes lose sight of the role of morality in their attempts at behaviour modification. Mowrer discussed the role of morality and considers violation of social and moral codes (acts of irresponsibility) as significant factors in the causation of mental illness. Guru Nanak, while emphasising the role of behaviour, does not lose sight of the moral principles. Like a super psychotherapist, he first diagnoses the problem. He sees people committing acts of extreme irresponsibility against their fellow beings:

*In this age of darkness,
Men have become as dogs,
They eat the ill-gotten gains,
And bark out their lies;
Giving no thought to righteousness
They have no honour in life,
And leave an evil name after death.*

Guru Nanak emphasised that a "person does not become a sinner because someone says so". They are his deeds and not words, which determine his behaviour. According to Guru Nanak, "mind is the paper and our actions (are) the ink. Virtue and vice are the two writings inscribed thereon. We are driven into paths determined by our past actions".

Guru Nanak laid the foundation for man's uplift, not on such short-cuts "as mantras, miracles, or mysteries but on man's own humanity, his own character". He raised the spirit of man "with a belief that he was not a helpless creature in the hands of a Being of arbitrary will, but was a responsible being endowed with a will of his own, with which he could do much to mould his own destiny".

Though man inherits tendencies from his own past as well as that of his family and race, which contribute to the formation of his character, he is given a free will with which he can modify the inherited and acquired tendencies of his past and determine his future conduct.

The similarity with the modern view in psychology should be understood with reference to the role of heredity and environment in the development of personality. The role of heredity and environment is considered to be that of interaction. The behaviourists also emphasise the fact that behaviour, including inherited and acquired tendencies, can be modified.

I have tried to look at the teachings of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, from a psychological point of view. I have indicated how Guru Nanak, by practical application of psychological principles, was able to convince

people about the futility of their ritualistic and dogmatic practices. I have also described some current trends in psychology, especially new behaviourism with its emphasis on behaviour (actions) and humanistic psychology with its emphasis on social interaction based on truthfulness, honesty, openness, sensitivity and appreciation of beauty.

I have particularly referred to Mowrer's theory of psychopathology, viz., violation of the social and moral code and concealment of violation(s) leading to the development of emotional maladjustments. Comparing these trends with psychoanalysis, I have shown how these theories view man as a rational, self-willed being, capable of 'self-actualisation' as well as 'self-destruction', as opposed to pessimistic view of psychoanalysis, which states that human actions are determined by inherited biological tendencies and by unconscious forces over which the individual has no control.

It is explained as how Guru Nanak presaged the above mentioned positive trends in modern psychology. His emphasis on truth and truthful living, honesty and frankness (as exemplified by him in his life) are the values which lead to the development of a healthy and creative personality.

Guru Nanak's criticism of an individual's withdrawal from life, of idle meditation, of ritualistic and supersititious religion and of the various orders of asceticism, with his emphasis on man's social responsibility and on *sangat* and *panjgat* moulded formation of the Sikh character. Guru Nanak's concept of social interaction was a very broad concept and involved interaction with all human beings, irrespective of caste, creed, colour, national origin or any other similar distinction. He preached universal brotherhood, taught respect for other religions and reminded man of his divine essence.

Guru Nanak laid emphasis on actions (behaviour), pointing to man's free will in choosing his actions. He reminded him of the consequences (misery, suffering, anxiety, depression) of a wrong choice, while at the same time, showing him the 'right path', which would free him from his egoism ("I-am-ness") and lead him toward realisation of his true self.

Guru Nanak criticised evil practices in the oppressive politics of rulers and exploitation in the name of religion. He taught the love of one's fellow beings, a love based on truthfulness, honesty, justice and openness. He laid the foundation of healthy interpersonal relationships among men; he was aware of the psychological fact that positive social interactions are basic to the development of physical, emotional and moral health of mankind.

Dr. Santokh Singh Anant, Ph.D.
(Formerly Professor of Psychology,
University of Lathbridge, Alberta, Canada)

Historical Ties between the British and Sikhs

Not a lot of people know that the world famous Koh-i-Noor diamond which is set in the Queen Mother's platinum crown, came into British hands after the annexation of the Sikh Kingdom of the Punjab and that Queen Victoria was Godmother to Maharajah Duleep Singh's children!



With some of these aspects very much in mind and with the imminent launch of their new heritage trail the *Maharajah Duleep Singh Centenary Trust* (MDSCT) was keen to understand whether youngsters in the UK realised the extensive links between the Sikh and British nations and then carried out a survey with astonishing results.

Whilst almost two thirds of the children questioned, all between the ages of 9 and 14, knew who the last Maharajah of the Punjab was



Statue of Maharaja Duleep Singh at Thetford town centre.

World War Veterans Reunite

If it was not for the Anglo-Sikh Heritage Trail, George Marsh and Rajinder Singh would never have met despite serving in Burma together during World War II and they would never have been able to share their experiences and memories together. It is a fact that very few young people today know about such historical connections between the Sikhs and British. Many are also unaware of the part that Sikhs played in the World Wars, and even more will not be aware that there are many locations, artefacts and treasures that have strong connections to the Sikh Kingdom that are literally on their doorstep.

The *Maharajah Duleep Singh Centenary Trust* was established in 1993, the centenary year of the death of Maharaja Duleep Singh, when it organised an Anglo-Sikh Festival in Thetford, East Anglia to commemorate the occasion - attracting more than 10,000 visitors. This was repeated again in 1998, when a bronze statue was unveiled - which was later officially unveiled by HRH the Prince of Wales.

The aim of the Trust is to highlight and promote Anglo Sikh Heritage. Recent initiatives have included the 'Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms' exhibition in collaboration with the V&A, and the annual 'Portrait of Courage' lectures at the Imperial War Museum, London.



with more than 50 per cent answering correctly that Lahore was the capital of the Sikh Kingdom of Punjab during the time of Ranjit Singh. But almost 90 per cent of those questioned had no idea as to the number of landmark buildings that contain items that are relevant to the Anglo-Sikh heritage which are on display around the country. Similarly, only 33 per cent could name the royal residence associated with Duleep Singh: *Osborne House*.

The survey was conducted in preparation for the launch of MDSC's new web-based Anglo-Sikh Heritage Trail in July 2004, which allows members of the public to research the close historical links between Sikhs, Britain and the history of the past and the present using the internet.

The website - www.asht.info - was launched on 2 July 2004. This web based trail is a unique project which aspires to change the cultural landscape of Britain and enable people to follow on-line and visit real life institutions across the country. Conceived as a national initiative, the trail draws together all relevant UK locations, institutions and artefacts into one inspirational project. From the final resting place of the first Sikh in Britain, to royal treasures and palaces, the

project vividly demonstrates the deep historical roots that make the Sikh community no strangers to the United Kingdom.

For the first time the trail will bring to life a little known feature of British history. Visitors to the ASHT website will be able to follow the trail through a series of locations, exhibits and institutions, plan actual visits and explore the themes which provide historical background to the trail. In explaining the Anglo-Sikh relationship by way of a demonstratable presence within the historical environment, the trail promises to be a major source of information, education and inspiration. It will also develop dynamically with new materials and partners joining the initiative continually.

As Harbinder Singh, Director of the Project, has stated, "People do not realise how Anglo-Sikh heritage is so closely knitted together and how the Sikhs made such an immense contribution and sacrifice for Britain before and during the World Wars. We are launching this project to encourage an understanding of these connections and ensure that the historical links carry on".

Dr Manmohan Singh's initiative on Kashmir

57 years after the two countries went to war over Kashmir, this area has remained the world's most vexed political problem and dangerous military flashpoint but the new Prime Minister of India Dr Manmohan Singh has taken several initiatives to begin dialogue to confront the problem. As stated by the highly regarded political analyst, Kuldeep Nayar, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had several options to discuss when he met General Musharraf in New York, however with some riders. Firstly, there would be no territorial adjustment and secondly, no division on the basis of religion, as this could revive the horrors of partition. In spite of General Musharraf's 7-region proposal, the crux "problem" remains the Vale of Kashmir but also to be considered is the matter of "the other Kashmir under Pakistan's occupation". Over the past 57 years, the two parts of the state have changed in many ways. While the Indian Kashmir is essentially Punjabi-speaking, that under-Pakistani control is Kashmiri-speaking. Amongst suggestions for resolution are that both Kashmirs should be given autonomy except for Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications, much the same that the erstwhile Maharaja Hari Singh gave when he signed the Instrument of Accession to integrate J&K with India on 26 October 1947.

Kuldeep Nayar further suggests that the border between the two Kashmirs be made "soft" so that its citizens could travel freely to either part. Both the Indian and Pakistani armies should be systematically withdrawn, Kashmir



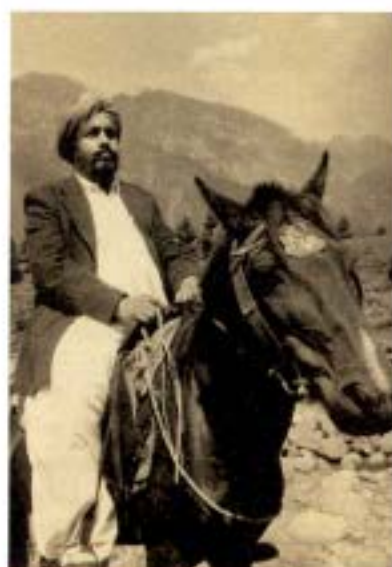
Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh with Shaukat Aziz, Prime Minister of Pakistan

becoming "demilitarised" with the United Nations guaranteeing security of the areas after de-militarisation.

Meanwhile the MQM leader from Pakistan Altaf Hussain has advocated conversion of the LoC into an international border for about 20 years during which time India and Pakistan could resolve all outstanding issues and get much closer by allowing free travel across the borders and boosting trade. He bemoaned that partition in 1947 was the "greatest blunder in the history of mankind" but with acceptance of this reality, he has pleaded that citizens of both countries

should be provided with education and health and not weighed under weapons and missiles. He made an emotional appeal for India-Pakistan amity, expanding on the initiative of people to people contact from what has brilliantly begun as the "Punjab-to-Punjab" brotherhood.

Meanwhile, other forums in New Delhi have clearly stated that "anti-federalism and autocratic policies



S. Attar Singh of Baramulla in the Vale of Kashmir, astride his horse

of the Central Government followed over the past half century" have led to the marginalisation of people in Jammu and Kashmir and the north-eastern states, fomenting anti-national and secessionist feelings among them. Only pluralistic and genuine federalism policies in the country can help the country to resolve the political crisis in these "troublesome areas", said the political experts in New Delhi.

Most appropriately, Sikh leaders of Jammu & Kashmir have urged that they be included in the Indo-Pakistan talks on Kashmir which could also result in permanent settlement of the 1947 refugee problem. Expectations of people belonging

After his treaty with the English, which kept the *firangees* confined to the eastern side of the Sutlej, Maharaja Ranjit Singh forayed from his capital at Lahore to the south and west, expelling the Afghans firstly from Multan then crossing the Indus at Attock and occupying Peshawar. In 1811, the Sikhs had moved in force to Rawalpindi, apart from taking the Salt Ranges between the Jhelum and Indus.

After containing Jammu, the Punjab Army moved over the Pir Panjal to the Kashmir Valley, which was first taken in February 1813 and annexed after several campaigns, eventually an almost bloodless victory.

The northern and north western part of the sub-continent upto the Khyber Hills was now part of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Empire, a secular state where Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus shared power and prosperity.



Generations of Sikh families have been part of the Kashmiri composite culture for nearly two centuries. Here Jagat Singh Ranhotra, resident of Baramulla is seen with his brothers on the banks of the river Jhelum which flows through this town, north-west of the capital Srinagar.

to various ethnic groups including the displaced Kashmiri Pandit families have also risen after Dr Manmohan Singh's initiatives. The historical fact is that the state of Jammu & Kashmir, became part of the greater Indian sub-continent after incorporation in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's kingdom in the nineteenth century. It was the imperialistic machinations of the British who "sold" it to Gulab Singh after annexation of the Punjab in 1849. The Sikh population in Jammu & Kashmir is very integral with the State and, although a minority, have been greatly respected even through the five decades of strife and turmoil. The Sikhs of Kashmir are settled in many places of the Valley, particularly Baramulla, and there are many predominantly Sikh villages close to the LoC in the Tangdhar Valley, close to Tithwal. The Sikhs of Jammu are well known for their entrepreneurial skills, being energetically engaged in industry, commerce and agriculture.

It is the fervent belief of many that J&K epitomises the finest composite cultures of the subcontinent and the State could well become the bridge of harmony and goodwill between India and Pakistan. As the former Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan G.Parthasarthy has stated, "we should endeavour to make Kashmir a region that *unites* rather than *divides* India and Pakistan".

Increased Airlinks between India and Pakistan

A year ago, Indian and Pakistan civil aviation authorities negotiated the restoration of airlinks between the two countries, one of the key confidence building measures (CBM) which was to boost people to people contact between the two countries. There were also economic compulsions to make this a reality as a large number of Indian carriers had to



undertake circuitous routes to avoid Pakistani airspace. Today, Pakistan International Airlines operate four services a week from Lahore to Delhi, three times a week from Lahore to Bombay and five times a week from Karachi to Bombay. Indian Airlines fly twice a week from Delhi to Lahore but do not operate to Karachi.

The photograph shows Satyendra Singh, Director General Civil Aviation of India shaking hands with his counterpart M.Ashraf Chaudhry of Pakistan.

Celebrating Gurpurab at Nankana Sahib

After 57 years, thousands of Indian Sikhs joined their brethren at Gurdwara Nankana Sahib travelling in a "Sikh pilgrim special train" that left Attari railway station on 21 November 2004. 15 gold-plated and five steel domes were installed at Gurdwara Nankana Sahib on the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev on 26 November, where a large number of Pakistani Sikhs and Muslims partook in the *karsewa*, according to Baba Amrik Singh, chief *sewadhar* with Baba Jagtar Singh Jeevan Singh Karsewawale from Tam Taran.

About 11 skilled artisans completed *sewa* of the copper domes, which were plated with about 7.5 kgs of pure gold. The gold domes, wrapped in white sheets, were brought to Attari in special vehicles and were placed in special vessels, carried on the heads of devotees to the platform. The babas also began the *karsewa* of *sarais* at Nankana Sahib and Gurdwara Janamasthan Guru Ram Das, Chura Mandi Lahore. Baba Jagtar Singh, chief *sewadhar* of the dera said that 57 years ago, Baba Gurmukh Singh, who was head of their sect had performed the gold *sewa* in Pakistan.

It is estimated that nearly 10,000 devotees were at Nankana Sahib on 26 November 2004, these including many thousands of Sikhs from Britain, Canada, the USA and South East Asia apart from the 3,000 from India and many thousands of Pakistani Sikhs.

New Gurdwara at Castel Gomberto

Italy's largest gurdwara has been opened in the north eastern city of Castel Gomberto in Vicenza province, a sign of the growing Sikh presence in the country and their economic well being. The new Sri Guru Singh Sabha gurdwara was purchased by the community in the countryside, where many of them live. There are some 3,000 Sikhs in Vicenza and their numbers are growing.

The gurdwara, which was inaugurated on 9 November, has large premises, a modern kitchen and *langar* hall. The prayer hall on the first floor, where the Guru Granth Sahib is kept, can accommodate 1,000 people.

There are some 60,000-70,000 Sikhs from the Punjab now resident in Italy and their number is growing. There are about 15 gurdwaras across the country, the oldest one being in Reggio Emilia in central Italy where many members of the community are engaged in agriculture.

However, as the community becomes more accustomed to the Italian way of life, they are moving into industrial clusters in the northeast, particularly the Vicenza province. A large number of them work in the leather and machinery industries there rather than in agriculture. Most live in rented houses and have obtained legal employment and residential permits. The Sikh community in Vicenza has grown rapidly with the arrival of families and a large number of women, children as well as elderly parents are now part of the community there.

The Castel Gomberto gurdwara was originally located in rented premises at Arzignano, in the same province, but it was decided to move this to this large self owned premises after obtaining clearances from the local government. Harbant Singh, president of the Sri Guru Singh Sabha in Vicenza, is readily credited with being the spirit behind setting up of the new gurdwara and creating a community spirit, but generous contributions from the community in Italy helped in setting up the gurdwara in the new premises.

GND Varsity Institute of Guru Granth Sahib Studies

A national institute of Guru Granth Sahib studies is to be established at Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar at an estimated cost of Rs.20.68 crore. Dr.S.P.Singh, Vice Chancellor has said that this Institute would be constructed in two phases, having a museum, a library, an auditorium, a conference hall, a media centre, a record room, a gurmat sangeet room and a music section.

The board consisting of the director and seven professors of Sikh literature (Sikh philosophy, Hinduism, the Bhakti

Movement, Islam, Buddhism and Jainism) would undertake research on comparative religious studies.

Foundation stone of the institute has already been laid by the President of India, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. The university had signed an MoU with the All India Pingalwara Charitable Society to establish the Bhagat Puran Singh chair at the campus for which the society had donated Rs 25 lakh. A Sufi Chair would also be established in collaboration with the Sufi Foundation of India.

The University had invited students of the Punjabi department, Punjab University, Lahore, and its Vice Chancellor to participate in the "Punjabi Week" Celebrations.

Under a scheme, genetic tests for the mentally challenged would be conducted by the university free of cost for families who had two or more children with the affliction. The tests would be conducted with a special grant released by the Max Plank Institute for Molecular Genetics at Berlin, Germany.

The Syndicate has accorded its approval for the award of Ph.D. degrees to Meena, Sukhdip Gill, Harsh Changotra, Manjit Singh Hundal, Balwinderjit, Bhupindra Prashad, Lovedeep Kaur, Sarbjit Singh and Ashwani Kumar in various faculties.

50,000 Sikhs Take Part in Yuba City parade

Around 50,000 Sikhs participated in the 25th annual Sikh parade at Yuba City in the USA to commemorate the first installation Guru Granth Sahib. The parade marked conclusion of the weekend-long celebration of readings, devotional singing and conferences commemorating the occasion.

The four mile parade featured floats and a procession of resplendently attired Sikhs. As the parade left the gurdwara premises, rose petals were dropped on the participants from a helicopter.

"During the celebrations, the Sikh community prepared and served more than 100,000 meals", stated Didar Singh Bains, the parade chairman.

Gurinder Chadha Honoured at House of Commons

Gurinder Chadha, director of *Bride and Prejudice*, has been honoured at the House of Commons in London for her outstanding achievement and contribution to the British film industry.

Describing her hit film *Bend It Like Beckham* as the biggest British-financed and distributed film, Keith Vaz, MP, and former Minister for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs said

that it was impossible to quantify the achievements of Gurinder Chadha. "Her *Bend It Like Beckham* is the biggest British financed and distributed film and *Bride and Prejudice* remains the No.1 in the box office chart in Britain, he said at a reception hosted in her honour.

"Gurinder Chadha has made a fantastic contribution to the British film industry over the past 15 years. She is one of those rare British film makers who has won artistic and popular acclaim from all over the world".

Gurinder, who was emotionally moved, said it was for the first time that a film director was honoured at the House of Commons "in this way". Recalling the hardships her father faced when he came here from Kenya over three decades ago, she said "it was a very difficult time to get a job because he had a turban and beard. The films I make are rooted in the heart of British Asians and they are a testimony to the fact that how much progress the British Asians have achieved over a period of time", she added.

Surjit Singh Barnala appointed Tamil Nadu Governor

Former Punjab Chief Minister Surjit Singh Barnala was sworn in as the Tamil Nadu Governor, for the second time, at Raj Bhavan in Chennai on 3 November.

Madras High Court Chief Justice B.Subashan Reddy administered the oath of office to Mr Barnala at a simple and brief ceremony. While Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J.Jayalalithaa, her Cabinet colleagues and Speaker K.Kalimuthu were present, the Opposition too was in full strength to celebrate their "so called victory" in getting Surjit Singh Barnala according to the wish of DMK President M.Karunanidhi. Judges of the High Court and diplomats were also present.

Barnala, along with his family members flew in from Hyderabad and were received at the airport by Ms Jayalalithaa, Tamil Nadu ministers and top officials of the state administration in a ceremonial welcome.

He was earlier the Governor of Andhra Pradesh. Surjit Singh Barnala is said to be very close to Mr. Karunanidhi, who "very much wanted him back as the Tamil Nadu Governor."

British Students "must be familiar with six religions"

As well as studying Christianity throughout their time at school, pupils should learn about the five other principal religions in Britain and be taught a secular world view "where appropriate", according to a U.K. Government directive.

The first national framework for religious education, which sets out the principles all state schools should follow, said that by the age of 16 pupils needed to have "encountered in sufficient depth" Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.

They should also have had opportunities to study other religious traditions such as the Baha'i faith, Jainism and Zoroastrianism, and secular philosophies such as humanism. The report said pupils should be encouraged to reflect on "the important contribution that religion can make to community cohesion and the combating of religious prejudice and discrimination".

Launching the framework Charles Clarke, the Education Secretary, said it "set out a system that places value on the ethos and morals that religious education can establish, independent of any faith".

General Joginder Jaswant Singh is next Chief of Army Staff

In August 1947, the very new (independent) Indian Army had a British Commander-in-Chief as the senior-most King's Commissioned Indian Officers (KCIOs) were barely one-star Brigadiers, although the majority of them were battle veterans after five years of the Second World War, winning many distinguished and gallantry awards.

The Indian Army too had been partitioned in 1947, some two-thirds remaining with India, the balance constituting the new armed forces of Pakistan, tragically soon pitted against each other in Jammu & Kashmir. When that "civil war" (it amounted to that, with erstwhile brothers-in-arms of a few month's earlier now shooting at one another) cease-fired on 1 January 1949, the Indian Army was sought to be re-organised, re-equipped and expanded.

In 1949, there were a dozen two-star Generals; sixty per cent of them being Sikhs, not surprisingly as the numbers that



Gen. J.J. Singh with some of his Corps, Divisional and Brigade Commanders

formed the armed forces reflected that proportion. Over the next ten years, however, most of these had been systematically retired, while the senior most Sikh Lt.General of the time (Kalwant Singh, GOC-in-C Western Command and regarded as the strategist behind the Army's operations in J&K) was not appointed as the Army's Chief in 1958, even though he had the finest credentials.

In 1962, the Indian Army was humbled by the Chinese in NEFA, the then Army Chief and Corps Commander being removed from their positions after the debacle.

Lt General Harbaksh Singh, another hero of the Kashmir war, had very fleetingly been given the task of defending NEFA and had he been allowed to do so, military history would have been different. In the event, the erstwhile IV Corps Commander was returned by his mentor Nehru to Tezpur but only to preside over the Army's ignominious retreat. Harbaksh Singh's mettle and resolve of steel was dramatically seen just three years later, in September 1965 when, as Army Commander West, he smashed the enemy offensive into J&K and the Punjab, in spite of panic at Army Headquarters in New Delhi.

But when it came to the logical turn for him to become Chief of Army Staff, Indira Gandhi side-stepped him too, as she did six years later with Lt.General Jagjit Singh Aurora, the Army Commander East in 1971 and hero of the Bangladesh war.

There have literally been dozens of Sikh Army Commanders, scores of Sikh Corps Commanders and principal staff officers and hundreds of Sikh Divisional or Staff Commanders over the 57 years of India's independent existence. But none were given the top 4-star position.

Until now, when Lt.General Joginder Jaswant Singh was appointed as the next Chief of Army Staff, certainly not because he is a Sikh, when the Prime Minister is also a Sikh, but in spite of that, "JJ" being not only the senior most three-star General, but with the finest operational and staff record in the Army extant.

SE Asian Airlines to Amritsar

"Sat Sri Akal Singapore!" exclaims the Singapore Airlines announcement: from 1 October 2004, Singapore Airlines are operating three direct flights weekly to Amritsar every Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. Flying the Boeing 777-200, configured for 30 business and 293 economy seats, this world-leading carrier is providing 1000 seats per week with an introductory Rs.17,000 return fare from Amritsar to Singapore and back. Commander of the first flight was Capt. Gurmit Singh of SIA (in picture).

It is learnt that Malaysian Airlines and Cathay Pacific are also planning to introduce non-stop flights to Amritsar in the next few months, the former operating Airbus A.330s from Kuala Lumpur, while the latter would operate directly from Hong Kong.



Curiously, Indian carriers are yet to operate air links to Amritsar from any of the metros, including Delhi, there only being a "linking" flight to Delhi, operated by Indian Airlines during the night from Sharjah, four times a week. Having declared Amritsar an 'international airport', there is still no airline of international standing flying there, with only Ariana Afghan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan Airlines operating services to Afghanistan and the Central Asian republics.

In sharp contrast, less than 50 kilometers away, the Lahore international airport is served by no less than 19 airlines including SIA, Cathay Pacific, Malaysia, Gulf Air, Emirates, British Airways, Saudia, Qatar, Kuwait, Royal Brunei, Syrian Arab, Turkish, United, Asiana, Continental and China Airlines, apart from PLA and Indian Airlines, the last named serving Lahore directly from Delhi twice a week.

Newfoundland Sikhs Dedicate First Gurdwara

The Newfoundland Sikh Society of Canada held a two day conference on 9-10 October 2004 at St.John's to celebrate the QuadriCentennial of the Guru Granth Sahib compilation. Sikh families from all over Newfoundland were joined by their friends from England, Ontario, Quebec, Texas, New York and Nova Scotia. Hindus, Jains, Muslims, Buddhists and other religious communities thronged to the first Gurdwara in the Maritimes and participated with great enthusiasm, paying homage to Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

Andy Welch, Mayor of the City, brought greetings from the city officials, welcoming religious activities of the Sikh community and offered any assistance needed to promote

Sikh projects in the area. Law Enforcement officials and several academics from the local educational institutions welcomed the Sikh Society in their state.

Prof. Manjeet Singh of McGill University made two presentations, speaking on the interfaith scope of Sikhism and on Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Dr. Amarjit Singh Gill recounted important events from recent Sikh history while S. Balwant Singh of England spoke on the current problems of Sikh practices among the youth.

Dr. Bhai Harbans Lal made two presentations on guiding principles of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib which will impact on the world society of the twenty-first century.

S. Manmohan Singh Bindra and Party from Montreal performed *Kirtan* and also narrated main themes of many hymns from Sri Guru Granth Sahib that he and his companions rendered. Dr. Pali Kamra and Mrs. Renu Gill presented a children's programme. S. Raminder Singh Wadhawa and S. Pritam Singh Cheema welcomed and thanked the speakers and other participants. Members and their guests much enjoyed the *langar* on both days.

The Newfoundland Sikh Society represents around 25 Sikh families settled in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, being founded nearly 30 years ago to promote religious and cultural activities among the Sikh population, and have been active in various neighbourhood activities. To build the Gurdwara on this island was a challenge to the small community but their friends in North America and co-religionists on the island helped. The Gurdwara's popularity among its neighbours may be judged by the 400-strong community participation at the celebration of the Gurdwara opening.

New Gurdwara in Peterborough

A new Gurdwara has been opened in the multicultural town of Peterborough in England. Built at a cost of nearly £500,000, the Gurdwara replaces an earlier smaller one in the city which had been built in 1974.

In the early 1970s there were only about a dozen Sikh families in Peterborough. Peterborough has grown over the last 30 years and so has the Sikh community. Today there are more than 1,000 Sikhs living in Peterborough. A larger Gurdwara means being able to do much more for the community as it is more than a place of religious activity.

First Gurdwara in Eastern Europe

Eastern Europe's first Gurdwara at Warsaw, in Poland is now very active, with *langars* every Sunday attracting large numbers of Sikhs and others. It was earlier in 2004 that the Polish Government gave the Indian community "permission" to open a Gurdwara which was a challenge for the small Sikh community, which consists of only a dozen families who took the initiative to persuade other Indians, particularly the majority Sindhi community, to contribute funds to start a proper Gurdwara. The Amritsar-based Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandak Committee has sent four preachers to the Gurdwara for two years. Indian Ambassador Anil Wadhwa expressed his satisfaction over the Gurdwara's smooth working. "It has become a place for the Indian community to celebrate their common festivals, apart from Sikh religious festivals, the *Guru Purabs*".

Sikhs in Texas

To mark the 400th anniversary of compilation of the Guru Granth Sahib, a unique commemorative plaque of the Golden Temple on US postal stamps has been produced by the Golden Temple Credit Corporation (GTCC).

The Hon. Governor presented a Proclamation issued by him in celebrating the 400th Prakash Diwas of Adi Granth Sahib. Jasbir Singh Sethi, President of GTCC, Houston, thanked the Governor, and presented him the Commemorative Plaque along with a publication also produced for this occasion : the 400th Prakash Diwas of Adi Granth Sahib.

Prayers were led by Mrs. Jatinder Kaur and followed very reverently by some 150 visitors. At the conclusion of meeting with the Governor, the office resounded with *jaikaras* : "Bole So Nihal – Sat Sri Akal".

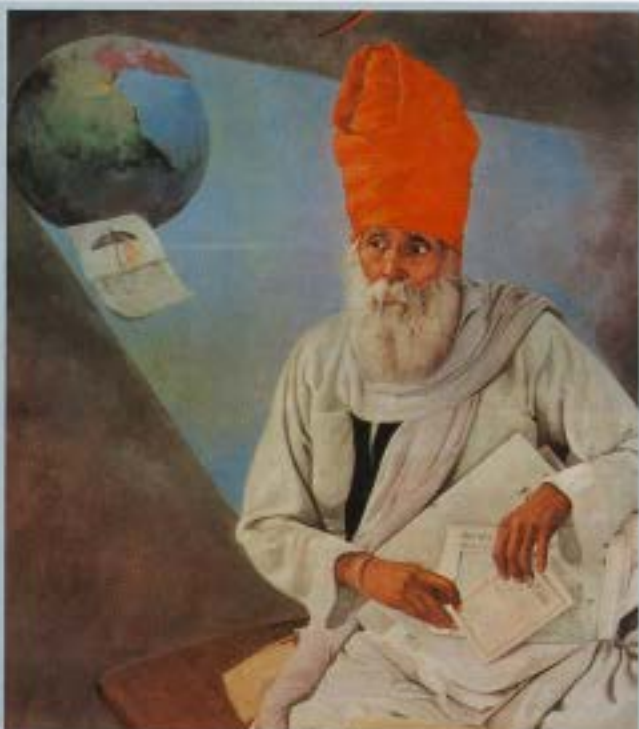
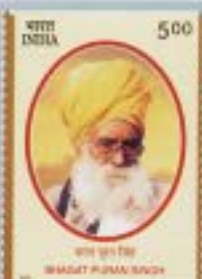
Those present at this ceremony included, S. Jasbir Singh Sethi, President GTCC; S. Harinder Singh, V.P. Marketing (GTCC); Dr. Bhai Harbans Lal, President of The Institute of Guru Granth Studies, from Arlington, Texas; Dr. Pritam Singh, from Karta Technologies, San Antonio, Texas; S. Amarjit Singh, Consultant International Business Development from Toronto, Canada, Mrs. Surjit Kaur Sethi from Houston; Mrs. Jatinder Kaur of Hewlett Packard, Houston; Mrs. Amrit Kaur Lal; S. Manjit Singh Randhawa, businessman from Houston; S. Amar Prakash Singh, businessman and President of the Sikh Society in Austin, Texas and S. Jaswant Singh, Director Audio Visuals.

The Hon. Mr. Perry expressed his desire to visit India and Pakistan, particularly the Golden Temple at Amritsar and Sri Nankana Sahib in Pakistan. The GTCC invited the Governor to be their guest and would accompany his party to the sub-continent.

Birth Centenary of Bhagat Puran Singh

The All India Pingalwara Charitable Society of Amritsar, whose *Mukh Sewadar* is Dr. Inderjit Kaur, has marked the Birth Centenary of Bhagat Puran Singh in appropriate manner. The commemorative postage stamp on Bhagat Puran Singh was released at a special function at New Delhi on 10 December 2004 where the noted environmentalist Sunder Lal Bahuguna presided, while Dr Shakeel Ahmad, Minister of State released the stamps.

Guests of Honour included Arun Shourie and S.Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa, both former Cabinet Ministers as well as Chief Justice Ranjit Singh Narula, and R.Ganesan, Secretary Department of Posts.



Noble gesture by Marshal of the Indian Air Force Arjan Singh DFC

India's first and only 5-star Marshal of the Indian Air Force, and continuing legend Arjan Singh DFC, is not only the pride of the Service but in a most noble gesture has endeared himself forever to the Service that he headed in the 1960s.

In an exceptional step, as exceptional as everything else about his life, Marshal of the Air Force Arjan Singh has donated Rs 2 crore of his personal money to set up a fund for the welfare of retired IAF personnel and their families. The fund will be administered by the *Marshal of the Air Force and Mrs Arjan Singh Trust* which was set up in November 2004 for this purpose.

"My wife and I have led a very happy life. Our life has been the Air Force. We now want to leave something behind", the Marshal said. The thought entered his mind a year ago after he was approached by several retired IAF personnel – some of them in financial straits – for assistance. The Marshal has sold a flourishing orchard in Mehrauli in October to raise the funds. The decision was not easy. "I belong to the farming community. This land was bought in 1961 and tended lovingly for 43 years", he admitted.



"Return of the Sikhs"

Bitter memories are like festering sores. But sometimes the slate is wiped clean: the old order is altered, the forbidden becomes the preferred and hope comes calling in renewed vigour.

When Lt. General Joginder Jaswant Singh was named the new army chief, the first Sikh to hold this position in India's 57 years of Independence, the effect on the community was similar. Many Sikhs have nursed an emotional grievance that the turban was discriminated against when it came to the army's top job.

But the new turn of events has changed all that. As senior Akali leader Kanwaljit Singh puts it, "The development carries the message that suspicions on the loyalty of the Sikh community towards the nation since 1984 has finally been demolished".

This is the Sikh century. Be it governing the nation, handling its economy or protecting its frontiers the community is enjoying its finest moment in decades. So what if he has "no political base", Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is perhaps the most respected Chief Executive that the country has had. So is Montek Singh Ahluwalia, vitally heading the country's Planning Commission. And when J.J. Singh becomes India's army chief early next year, the triangle will be complete. Sitting on his favourite chair in his Sujana Singh Park residence, writer Khushwant Singh smiles and says, "It's a sea change. I think the period of alienation is over".

Twenty years ago, the Sikhs were an alienated people. Punjab had been ravaged by para-military excesses and was virtually under siege. But as the army's invasion of the Golden Temple led to the killing of thousands, extremism gathered deeper roots. After 31 October 1984, when Indira Gandhi was assassinated, thousands of Sikhs were massacred. Says the 90-year old Khushwant Singh, "It was not spontaneous but organised. It took place only in the Congress-governed states. Then the sense of alienation really became acute".

Slowly over the years, peace has returned to the Punjab. And the 20-million-strong community, spread throughout India, have now returned to the mainstream – and how! The signs are there for everyone to see. Hindi cinema, that unfailing barometer of the popular pulse, shows a distinct approval of the Sikh visage. Who would have imagined a passionate *Sardar* lover – beard, turban and all – in a Hindi film? But Sunny Deol – in the superhit *Gadar* of 2001 – well caught that change in the air.

More than half the dialogues in this year's biggest Bollywood hit, *Veer Zaara*, is in Punjabi with Amitabh Bachchan playing a Sikh character. And, although Daler Mehndi doesn't sell a million albums anymore, Bhangra pop continues to thrive. Rabbi is the new avatar of Sufi-pop. "The turban", says satirist Jaspal Singh Bhatti, "has gained both acceptance and approval like never before".

The transition was tough. The feeling of alienation continued to increase in the post-1984 years. Many poor and helpless Sikhs were often picked up by lawmen for questioning. "Whenever there was a bomb blast, the police used to harass us. The logic seemed to be: since these guys

survived the riots, they must be working on revenge", says riot victim Surjit Singh.

Even in 1987, a Sikh was often looked at with suspicion. Playwright Gursharan Singh recalls fellow passengers discussing contents of his bag during a train journey from Delhi to Lucknow. "Is he carrying bombs, they were wondering aloud", he recalls.

A vigorous community's return to the mainstream – the ebbing away of alienation – is not so much an event as a process. But lawyer H.S. Phoolka, who is still fighting the cases of 1984 riot victims, believes that the tide started turning in the early nineties. "For the first time, during V.P. Singh's tenure as Prime Minister, the government admitted to wrongs which needed to be rectified. Even during Chandrashekhar's brief regime some cases were reopened", he says. These were the first hesitant beginnings in a long quest for justice which continues even today.

But Kanwaljit Singh, who has also served as Punjab's finance minister, believes that the change came about with the emergence of coalition politics and by reverting the focus of policy-making to the region thereby giving it its due importance.

A minority community often looks out for signals and messages which underscore a government's intent towards it and which make or break its collective perceptions. To a greater or lesser degree, depending on their own personal experiences, most Sikhs are quietly pleased with the recent developments.

And the feeling holds good even for the overseas Sikh, many of whom had migrated during the peak of Punjab militancy and who continue to be vocal critics of the Indian state. During a visit to the US last July after Manmohan Singh became Prime Minister, Gursharan Singh was surprised at the change of tenor in most Sikh newspapers published there.

"Their usual tone was that the Sikhs are having a difficult time in India. There was a change in that trend this time. Now with J.J. Singh set to be the army chief, it is likely to get even more positive", he says.

But Patwant Singh, author of the seminal work, *The Sikhs*, believes that the wounds cannot heal until the guilty of 1984 are punished. He has a direct query: "Why has nobody been convicted so far?"

It is a question many riot victims are asking as well. For men like Surjit Singh, who lost 13 family members, forgetting is impossible. For him, as for those who have been through the worst of the killings, little has changed.

Yet, undeniably, for most Sikhs the past few months have rung in hope and promise. Having the Prime Minister and the Chief of Army Staff from their own community has filled them with a sense of community pride and given them the feeling of being an integral part of the Indian mainstream. As litterateur Ajeet Cour says, "History is full of such wounds. Life demands that one reconciles. It is important to forgive, even if one cannot forget. And move on".

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