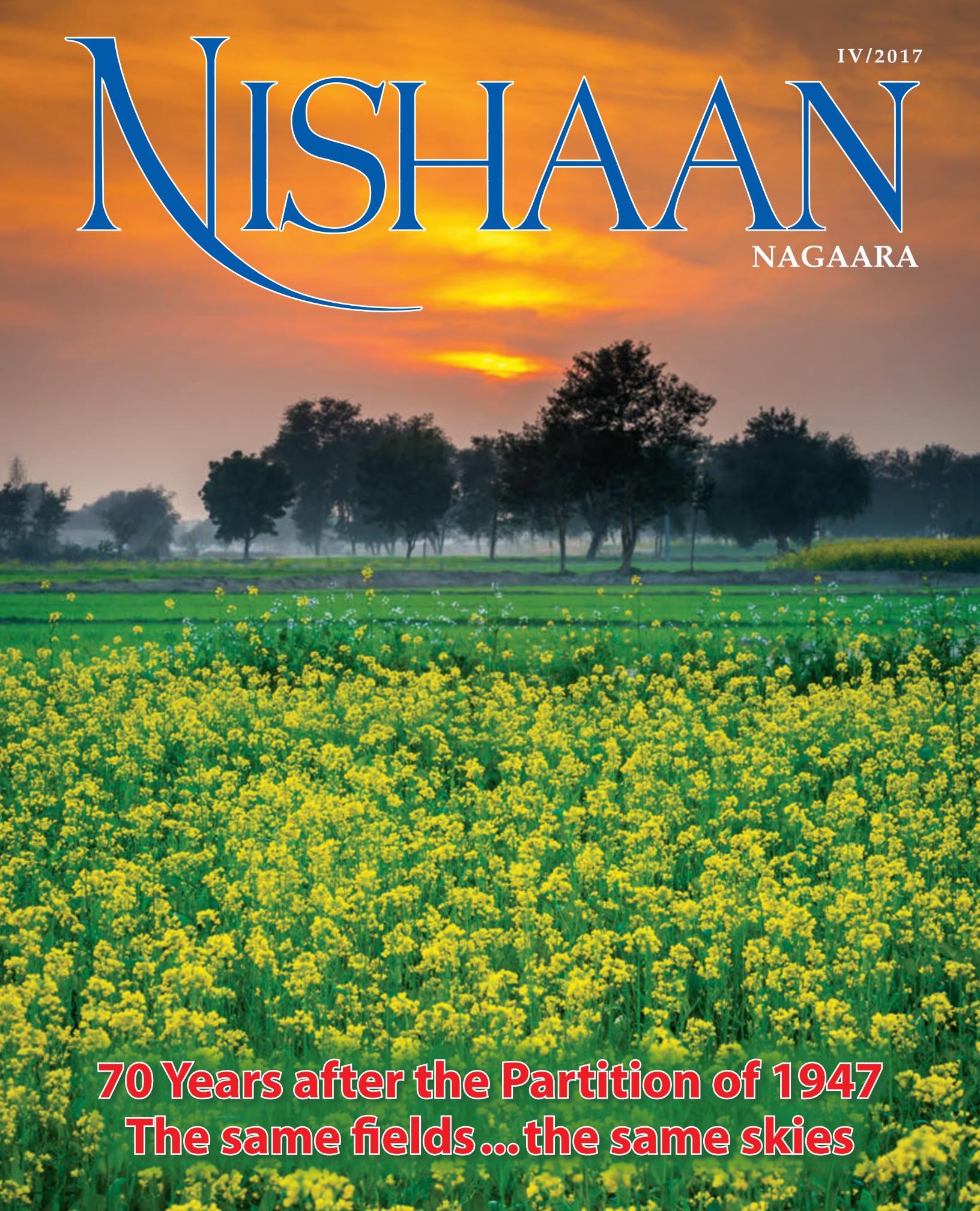


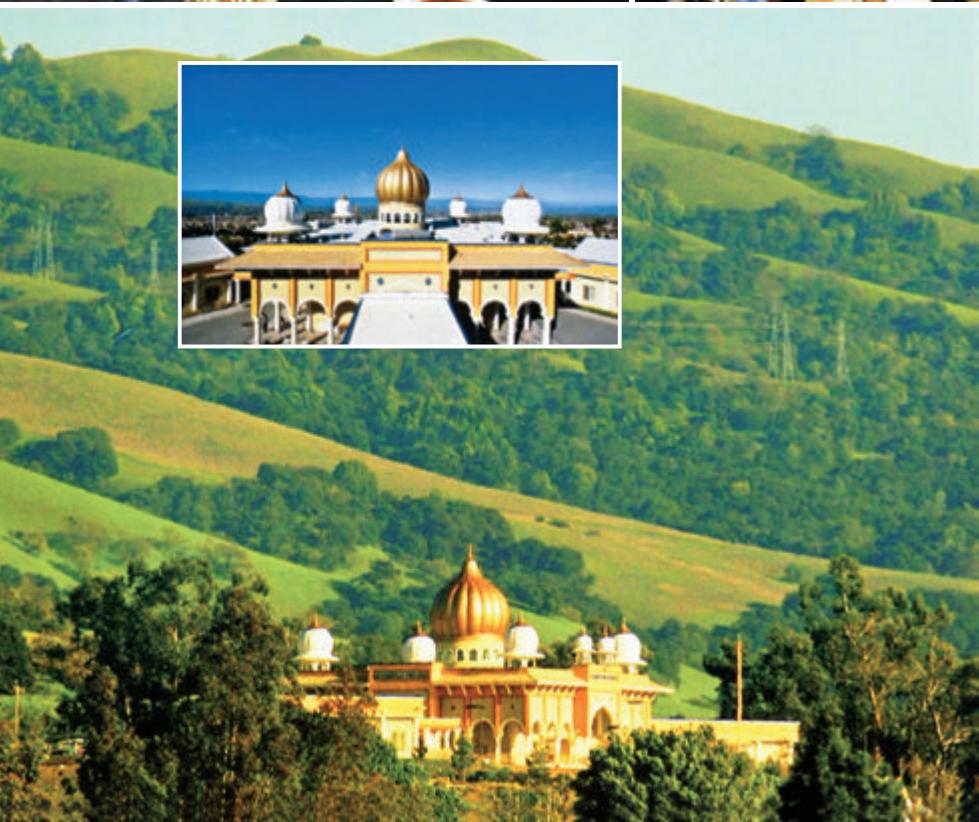
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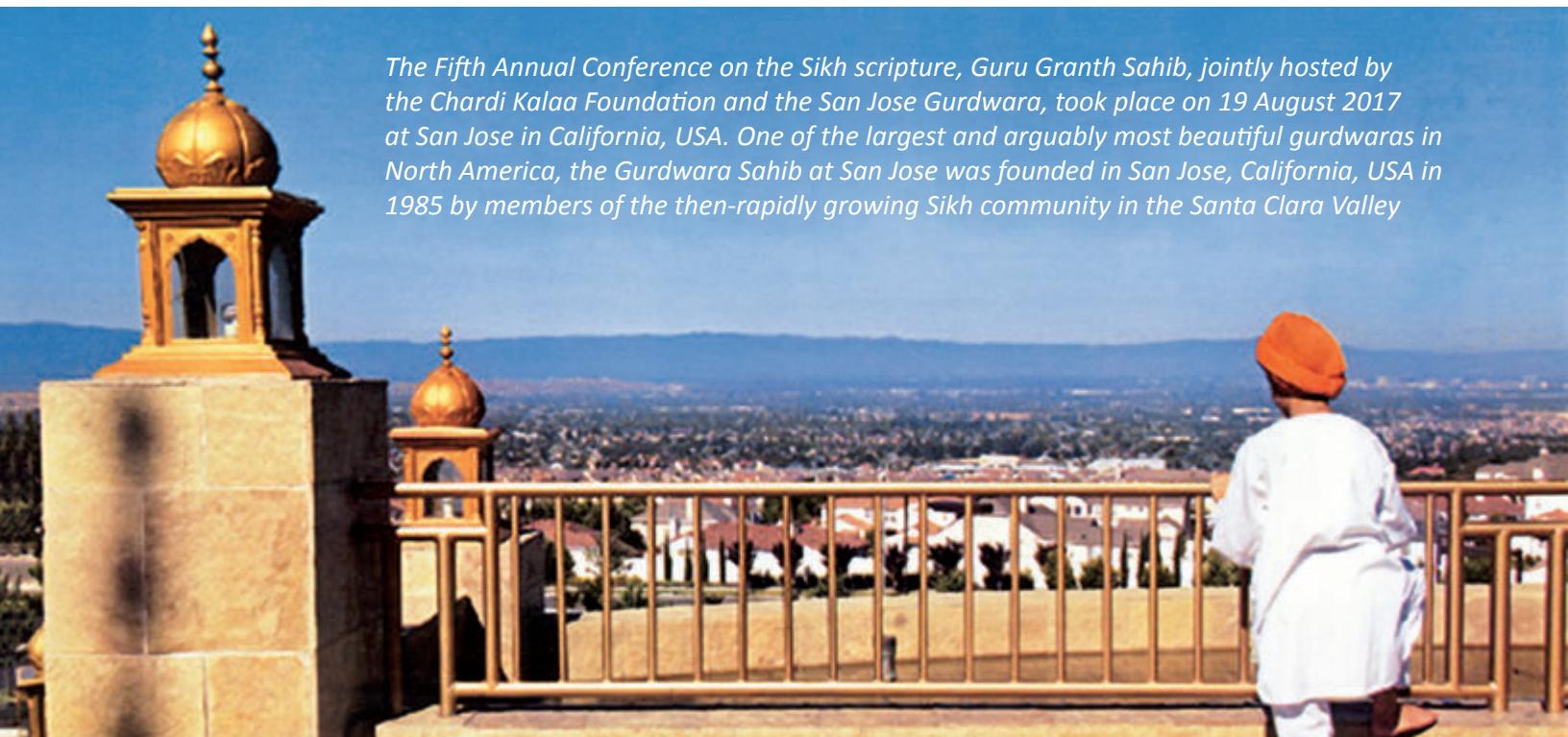
NAGAARA



**70 Years after the Partition of 1947
The same fields...the same skies**



The Fifth Annual Conference on the Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, jointly hosted by the Chardi Kalaa Foundation and the San Jose Gurdwara, took place on 19 August 2017 at San Jose in California, USA. One of the largest and arguably most beautiful gurdwaras in North America, the Gurdwara Sahib at San Jose was founded in San Jose, California, USA in 1985 by members of the then-rapidly growing Sikh community in the Santa Clara Valley



Contents

Issue IV/2017

2 Editorial

The Partition of 1947:
Remembrance of Things Past
IJ Singh



4 Partition of 1947 : The Catastrophic Effect

Extracts from 'Shameful Flight'



16 Multiple Betrayals

Extracts from 'The Sikhs'



21 The Clash of Empires: An Alternative History

Amarpal Singh Sidhu

29 70 years after the Partition

The Museum at Amritsar

33 Yearning for the past: some voices 70 years later

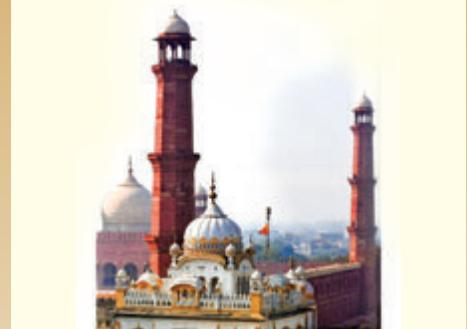
From various sources and online records



36 Nankana Sahib

Symbolic of the Universal Faith

Tarek Fatah



47 Enshrining the Sikh Heritage of Pakistan

Book by Dr Safdar Ali Shah and Syed Javad A. Kazi



54 Baba Guru Nanak and the real teachings of Islam

Ansar Raza

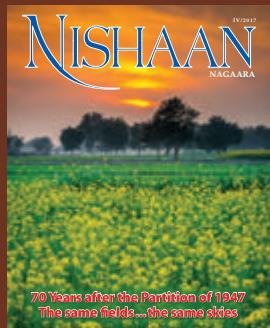


59 'Walking with Nanak'*

Book Review by Monica Arora

62 Planning Baba Guru Nanak University at Nankana Sahib

64 A Corridor for Peace
Pilgrims to Kartarpur Sahib



Cover: Saffron fields of the Punjab

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The Partition of 1947: Remembrance of Things Past

By succinctly capturing the connection of 1947, a defining year in modern Sikh history and focusing on the aftermath of the current realities of the divided Punjab – half in India, the rest in Pakistan – in my view, this issue of *Nishaan* is a signal service to a new generation that is relatively untouched by 1947 and the years that have gone by. *Nishaan* thus maintains its reputation of being an unparalleled compendium of selected and authoritative views and writings on selected issues and themes that are critical to Sikhs and Sikhi worldwide.

India's momentous, though hesitant, steps towards self-determination and independence date from 1947; becoming the Republic of India took another three years to 1950. Nationhood was marked by a bloody partition of the Indian subcontinent into two nations – India and Pakistan. I was too young to be seriously affected, yet old enough to remember the events, and now almost 70 years later, to process them in my mind.

Millions sped hungry, penniless, dazed and terrified across the putative border that divided the two nations. And far too many never survived the experience.

That so many lived itself remains a miracle. The years have seen bitter battles across the border, as if the people of India and Pakistan were always, and forever, enemies. Underlying these acrid realities, even more magically exists the affinity that we still treasure, now two generations later, for the land we abandoned and the people that we now often see as "the others" – almost alien adversaries. I guess blood remains thicker than water.

Without a doubt the events of 1947 were cataclysmic for the subcontinent, but now looking back at those times that roiled the areas of greater Punjab and Bengal, the rest of India remained relatively quiet, peaceful and largely undisturbed. The Pakistani half of Bengal later separated into the nation of Bangladesh while the Punjabi portion continues to define the nation of Pakistan.

Of the three major religions extant in the Indian Subcontinent today, Hinduism has always been the largest, followed by Islam and Sikhism. Christianity, Buddhism and Jainism exist but their numbers are small, even though, except for Christianity and Islam, they originated in India. At that time Islam was the most politically dominant and aggressive in forcing conversions on others. Hindu practices were rife with the reality of the caste system and the inferior place of women.

Sikhism emerged over 500 years ago as a small drop in the large ocean of Hinduism from where most of its converts came. Clearly, religions and their practices are shaped by time and the cultural context in which they arise and exist. Religions do not arise *de novo* and so reflect, often in modified form, text or substance, the existing realities and language of a people. This is how they form working relationships with their neighbours of different persuasions.

The message of Sikhism remains simple, egalitarian and unique. A single Creator common to all creation, not different Creator(s) for Jews, Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, or even agnostics or atheists. A Creator that has no gender, form, colour, race, religious or cultural label, or other limiting features like location; the idea is an infinite presence that our senses cannot perceive and our intellect cannot fathom, but with which our soul can commune.

Ergo, Sikh institutions are not meant to diminish others – non-Sikhs – but to create human communities that work towards the common good with transparency and accountability in a model of participatory self-governance.

Such transformative goals are not achieved overnight. Hence the developmental phase of the Sikh message took a good 240 years, from the advent of Guru Nanak to Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru. Now the compendium of Sikh teachings (*Guru Granth Sahib*), history and practices continue to guide Sikh communities across the world.

The partition of India preceding its independence reminds one that wars are the ultimate determinants of the fate of mankind. Not just of territories but of the minds – of what we are and how we come to terms with the world around us.

Bridges are not the easiest to build or use as pathways; that too is our legacy. History tells us that many a time Muslims were our enemies in battles with the rulers of the day, but at a good many time, they were our allies, like Rai Bullaar, Mardana, Mian Meer, Pir Budhu Shah whose two sons and many followers died in battle fighting on behalf of Sikhs. At other times and places, the local Hindu satraps and rulers were the enemy, attacking Sikhs in battles wherever they could. Some Muslim bards and holy men of the day, like Fareed and Sadhna, were honoured by the inclusion of their writings in the Guru Granth Sahib. Many scholars discern a wonderful connection between Sufi thought and Sikhi. I add that similarly many Hindu saints of the day found a place in the Guru Granth as well. I point out that these Muslims and Hindu poets and saints, many of low caste, would never have sat together and broken bread together in the society of that time. But in the Guru Granth they share the same and adjoining space. This is how the Gurus handled and averted a clash of civilisations.

Sikhi was the smaller partner of the three major religions in the undivided Punjab. Since 1947 when Punjab was divided and the larger Muslim population created a Pakistan, there remain a few very visible Sikhs in Pakistani Punjab – I have met a couple of doctors of that ilk, and know of Pakistani police and army officers who are recognisable Sikhs. And of course, in the Indian part of Punjab there remain villages and townships like Malerkotla that are very visibly Muslim.

Now there is serious talk by Sikhs abroad about underwriting and opening a college in Guru Nanak's name at Nankana Sahib, his birthplace in today's Pakistan. I welcome this world-class endeavour, but the proposal is attracting opposition. Some Sikhs rightly opine that most students would be non-Sikh. So, we would be benefiting students of an 'enemy' nation. Yes, but let's not be so limited in mind. Building good relations require that we open our hearts to the 'enemy' as well; that's how we remove the poison out of the enemy's sting. The best way to win friends here may be to bestow on Pakistani Punjab the gift of education. And keep in mind the

golden rule: Keep your friends close and your enemy closer.

Readers of this issue of *Nishaan* will access much other treasure: A whole lot of Sikh heritage remains in Pakistan and provides an organic connection to our history. Now better late than never, a new museum on the partition of 1947 is coming to life in Amritsar – a citadel of Sikh presence and psyche.

Even today on both sides of the border, the language remains Punjabi, our music and cuisine is Punjabi – a definitely singular, recognisable strain across the border.

A few years ago, I tried to capture the reality of the partition of the country in an essay titled *Partition & I*. Interested readers can access it on the popular Internet portal *Sikhchic.com*. I remember when as a four-year-old I was enrolled in the local Montessori school in Lahore (now in Pakistan), and I remember the Muslim who used to take my sister and me to school and bring us home at the end of the day. I also remember that he came one evening to convince my much-too trusting father to move the family eastwards beyond the new border that divided India and Pakistan or face the daily rioting in the streets. And two days later he came again with a covered truck to escort us to safety. Seventy years later, the toll of death and destruction in the wake of the partition remain largely undocumented and unknown.

It has now become so difficult to answer when people ask me where I am from. My first few formative years were spent in what is now Pakistan; the next thirteen years in India (Simla and Amritsar), and I have spent nearly 60 years in the United States. Most people appear perplexed, and rightly so, if I answer "New York."

Marcel Proust speaks of 'remembrance of things past.' I also think of Thomas Hood who said:

*"I remember I remember; The house where I was born
The little window where the sun; Came peeping in the morn.
He never came a wink too soon; Nor brought too long a day.
But now I often wish the night; Had borne my breath away."*

"You can't go home again," said Thomas Wolfe, and the line often reverberates in my head and heart. Yet, before the end of my days I would like to see the streets where I ran around and the house where I was born.

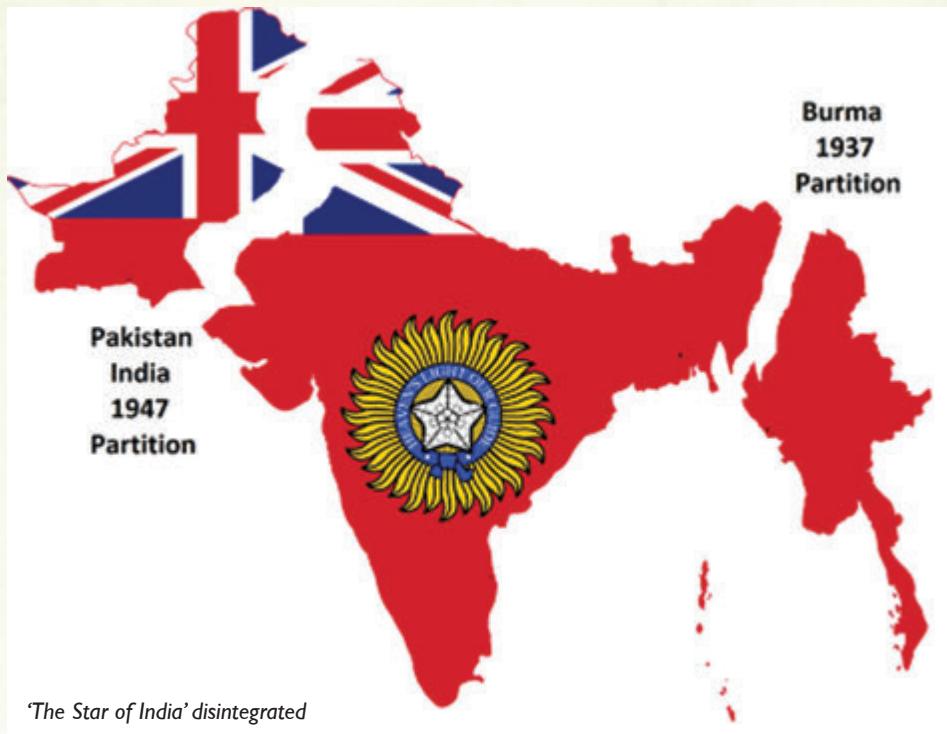
Dr IJ Singh

Partition of 1947: The Catastrophic Effect

A review of the book 'Shameful Flight' by Stanley Wolpert on the last year of the British Empire in India, with extracts.

Britain's precipitous and ill-planned disengagement from India in 1947—condemned as a “shameful flight” by Winston Churchill—had a truly catastrophic effect on South Asia, leaving nearly a million dead in its wake and creating a legacy of chaos, hatred, and wars that has lasted for over seven decades—and continues till the present.

Ranging from the fall of Singapore in 1942 to the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948, *Shameful Flight* provides a vivid behind-the-scenes look at Britain’s decision to divest itself from the crown jewel of its empire.

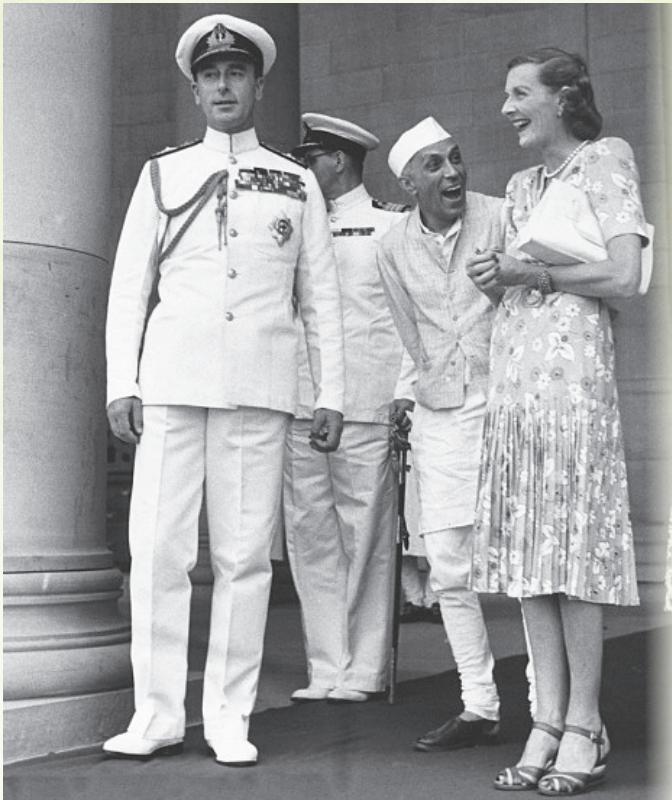


'The Star of India' disintegrated



Last British troops in India, 1st battalion Somerset Light Infantry at the Gateway of India, Bombay before embarkation on troopships

Stanley Wolpert, a leading authority on Indian history, has painted memorable portraits of all the key participants, including Gandhi, Churchill, Attlee, Nehru and Jinnah, with special focus on the British viceroy, Lord Louis Mountbatten. Wolpert places the blame for the catastrophe largely on Mountbatten, the flamboyant cousin of the then British King, who rushed the process of nationhood along at an absurd pace. The Viceroy’s worst blunder was the impetuous drawing of new border lines through the middle of the Punjab



While Mountbatten preened in his 'whites' with wife Edwina and an admiring Nehru in New Delhi ...



...distraught families fled western Punjab for the relative safety of eastern part of the province torn asunder

and Bengal. Virtually everyone involved advised Mountbatten that to partition those provinces was a calamitous mistake that would unleash uncontrollable

violence. Indeed, as Wolpert records, civil unrest among Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs escalated as 'Independence Day' approached, and when the new



The British Army maintained large forces in India and in 1947 had enough troops and firepower to maintain peace in the Punjab and Bengal and firmly arrest the situation which was rapidly getting out of control

boundary lines were announced, arson, murder, and mayhem erupted. Partition uprooted over ten million people and a million died in the ensuing inferno, an event that ignited fires of continuing political unrest that continue to burn in South Asia.

In mid-August 1947 as the world's mightiest modern empire, on which "the sun never set," had abandoned its vow to administer and protect one-fifth of humankind, Britain's shameful flight from its Indian Empire came only ten weeks after its last viceroy, Lord Louis ('Dickie') Mountbatten, took it upon himself to reduce by ten months that already very brief time given by the UK Government cabinet to withdraw from the sub-continent.

Prime Minister Clement Attlee and his cabinet had given Mountbatten until June 1948 to try and facilitate agreement between the major competing political party leaders of India to work together within a single federation. However, the pompous Mountbatten instead presided over the division of British India into fragmented dominions of India, West and East Pakistan. The hastily and ineptly drawn lines of partition of Northern and Eastern India's two greatest provinces, the Punjab and Bengal, slashed through their multicultural heartlands, drawn by an English jurist who had never set foot on either province. Following Britain's flight, a tsunami of more than ten million desperate refugees swept over North India: Hindus and Sikhs were forced to leave their ancestral lands in newly created and hostile Pakistan while Muslims of the eastern Punjab, Delhi and the United Provinces left those parts of India.

Congress opposition to the British Raj from start of World War II was polar opposite of the Muslim League's strongly supportive approach, thus "naturally" inducing British officials, from the viceroy and commander-in-chief down to the youngest members of the Indian civil service and subalterns in the British Indian Army, to view India's Muslims much more favorably than they did the Hindu leaders of the Congress Party. Muslim soldiers and officers continued, moreover, to play a vital role in the British Indian Army. Jinnah was smart enough to take full advantage of such official British favoritism directed toward its "friendly" Muslim part of India's population and lost little time in announcing the new goal of his Party, that to form an independent nation-state of Pakistan. Congress Party leaders were outraged by the Muslim League's demand, Gandhi denouncing it as nothing less than a call for the "vivisection of India." It was

only after Japan's invasion of Malaya, Singapore and then Burma, that the spectre of an invasion of India became a reality. Intense political negotiations were launched by the British Raj to try to keep India secure, while devising constitutional plans to permit its people to enjoy all the benefits of responsible democratic government after the war would end.

'Shameful Flight'

The war was over by August 1945 but the new opposition leader Winston Churchill gave a prophetic warning to Prime Minister Clement Attlee's government for caution. Mountbatten's hyperactive frenzy in accelerating the already tight withdrawal schedule, mandated by Britain's cabinet in June 1948 which triggered Britain's "shameful flight, in a premature hurried scuttle" left South Asia vulnerable to hatred and terror, compounded by ignorant fears and ugly rumours.

Great Britain, just two years after defeating (with American support), the might of Hitler, Mussolini, and Tojo, withdrew in unseemly haste from India which was a tragic error of judgment, compounded by Mountbatten's personal incompetence. The failure of Congress leaders to appreciate what Cripps tried to do thereafter damaged India much more. In August 1942, Congress Party leaders had launched their brutally smothered 'Quit India' campaign, giving Viceroy Linlithgow the opportunity he keenly desired, to lock them up, including Gandhi and Nehru, even as Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah, took advantage to enhance the prestige of his Muslim constituency. Jinnah hereafter kept demanding nothing less than a sovereign Muslim nation of Pakistan ('Land of the Pure'), as Muslim India's postwar reward for the service of loyal Muslim troops on all war fronts and for the support Muslim leaders like himself gave the viceroy and his governors.

Britain's first postwar elections held in 1945 had brought Clement Attlee's Labour Party a thumping majority and he tried once more to bring the Congress Party and the Muslim League together within a single federal union of India, sending Stafford Cripps back to India with two other cabinet colleagues. That 1946 cabinet mission was closer to success than that four years earlier, but ultimately failed to break India's political deadlock. Preoccupied as they were with Britain's own growing postwar domestic problems and diminishing resources, the British cabinet soon enough lost interest in India's problems.

When Attlee appointed Admiral 'Dickie' Mountbatten, the favorite cousin of King George VI to serve as Britain's last viceroy, the prime minister hoped that with his famous "irresistible charm," Mountbatten might bring Gandhi, Nehru and Jinnah around to resolve the problems. Britain could then withdraw its troops with dignity and take credit for leaving independent India unified. But Mountbatten was neither wise nor patient enough nor had the humility or good sense to listen to India's two senior



Mountbatten with Nehru and Jinnah

political leaders, Mahatma Gandhi and Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah, warning him to stop the runaway juggernaut towards Partition before it was too late.

The final maps of India's partition revealing the butchered boundary lines drawn by Sir Cyril Radcliffe through the Sikh heartland of Punjab and east of Calcutta in Bengal, were locked up on Mountbatten's orders, hidden from all for precious days within New Delhi's Viceregal Palace. If only the governors of Punjab and Bengal had known what to anticipate, they could well have saved countless lives

by dispatching troops to what soon became lines of fire and blood. But Mountbatten had resolved to wait until India's "Independence Day" festivities were all over, his medal-strewn white uniform viewed with admiration by millions from Buckingham Palace to the White House.

Only in the desperate days and weeks after those celebrations of 14-15 August 1947 did the horrors of Partition begin to emerge. No British officers or troops now remained to keep the peace in shattered

Punjab, or in Bengal, nor in the state of Jammu & Kashmir, left in deadly limbo to become the source of increasingly violent conflicts between India and Pakistan, the cause of three wars since waged between them over the following seven decades.

The previous Viceroy, Field Marshal Sir Archibald Wavell had reiterated his anxieties about the Punjab. He seemed to think that it was the Pakistan idea which would cause them most concern and the governor of Punjab, Sir Bertram Glancy, was "anxious" about Muslim-Sikh relations in his province. To encourage greater



Millions of families were uprooted from their homes and hearths in the savage partitioning of a land that had remained a single entity for aeons

Sikh security as well as more overall Hindu and Muslim support for the war, he suggested that a postwar body be established, consisting of representatives of the United States as well as the Commonwealth dominions and Great Britain, to "work out a constitution for India."

An independent Sikh nation-state

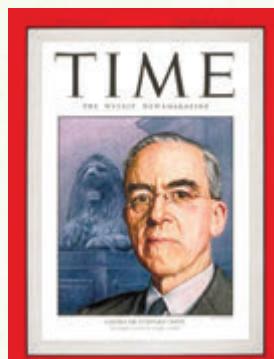
Situation for the Sikhs was getting very difficult. As recorded, "Cripps met with a deputation of four Sikh leaders the same day he saw Gandhi. They were naturally interested in questions concerning the protection of the Sikh minority and of possible redistribution of several portions of Punjab in order to carve out a province in which the Sikhs would have the decisive voice." Master Tara Singh called for the creation of a separate 'Sikhistan', a Sikh nation-state within the Punjab, where the majority of Sikhs lived and where their founder, Guru Nanak, was born. "But Cripps pointed out to them the successive stages at which they might hope to exert pressure that would enable them either to remain part of the single Indian Union or to get some provincial autonomy within the second Union if such was formed." He had not given serious thought to the Sikhs wanting their own dominion, even though "only six million strong". Like Punjabi Muslims, Sikhs had long been regarded by the British as a 'martial race' of fearless soldiers, their Regiments sustaining the highest number of casualties in the British- Indian army.

Still, "If and when the constitution was finally settled (and) the Moslems decided that they had not got sufficient concessions to enable them to remain within the Indian Union," Cripps tried to explain to the Sikh leaders, "then it would be necessary for them to obtain a vote of non-accession... in the Punjab (and) they would no doubt be anxious to... try to get the Sikh vote to support their action... possibly... agreeing to... a semi-autonomous district." None of the Sikhs seemed satisfied with what they expected for their valiant community. Without Sikh soldiers, after all, British officers a century earlier might never have recaptured Delhi after the 1857 'Sepoy Mutiny,' led by Bengali Hindus and the Muslims of Oudh.



Sikhs formed nearly 20% of the British Indian Army in the late 19th and early 20th centuries

As Punjab's governor Sir Bertrand Glancy wrote to Viceroy Wavell "Some believe that his main idea is to extract from Jinnah a definition of Pakistan and thus expose the hollowness of 'vivisection.' If this is his object, it seems scarcely conceivable that Jinnah will fall into the trap. If the C.R. [Rajagopalachari] formula were accepted, this would mean that twelve districts of the Punjab (the whole of the Ambala and Jullundur divisions plus the district of Amritsar) would be excluded from Pakistan, and such a dismemberment of the Province would find few supporters amongst Punjabi Muslims. There are some faint indications that Muslim intelligentsia might be satisfied with a united India provided that Muslim representation at the Centre were... increased. This would certainly be a saner solution than to create a Pakistan, which has every appearance of being the direct route to civil war in the Punjab."



TIME magazine even put Stafford Cripps on its cover in November 1947

In fact, three years and eight days before the Punjab's partition, Glancy had accurately predicted the result of the misguided division: *civil war*. He also warned that Punjab's Sikhs "loudly condemned the approaching negotiations," as several million Sikh farmers had virtually created the richly watered central heartland of Punjab's wheat-basket, spread across the Ambala and Jullundur divisions. He feared that if Jinnah was able to win his 'Pakistan,' then their rich and beautiful Punjab might be cut through its mid-section, leaving millions of Sikhs forced to live either under Muslim rule, which they found intolerable, or to abandon their fields and homes to seek refuge in Hindu-majority India. The option many Sikh leaders now hoped for and wanted was an independent Sikh nation-state of Sikhistan.

Hobson's Choice

Field Marshal Wavell had warned Pethick-Lawrence that Jinnah "seriously demands immediate grant of Muslim majority provinces from the rest of India by plebiscite of Muslims only... Governor of Punjab says, 'If Pakistan becomes an imminent reality, we shall be heading straight for bloodshed on a wide scale... Sikhs are not bluffing, they will not submit peacefully to... Muslim Raj.'" Wavell noted two days later that the 'Pakistan idea' was stronger in Muslim minority provinces than in those where Muslims "are already well on top," since there they would generally gain nothing from a Pakistan. "In Bengal the Muslims, though numerically dominant, are inferior to the Hindus in wealth and education." He urged the importance of quickly exposing the "crudity of Jinnah's ideas" by launching a high-level inquiry into Pakistan, even though Jinnah would probably "boycott it."

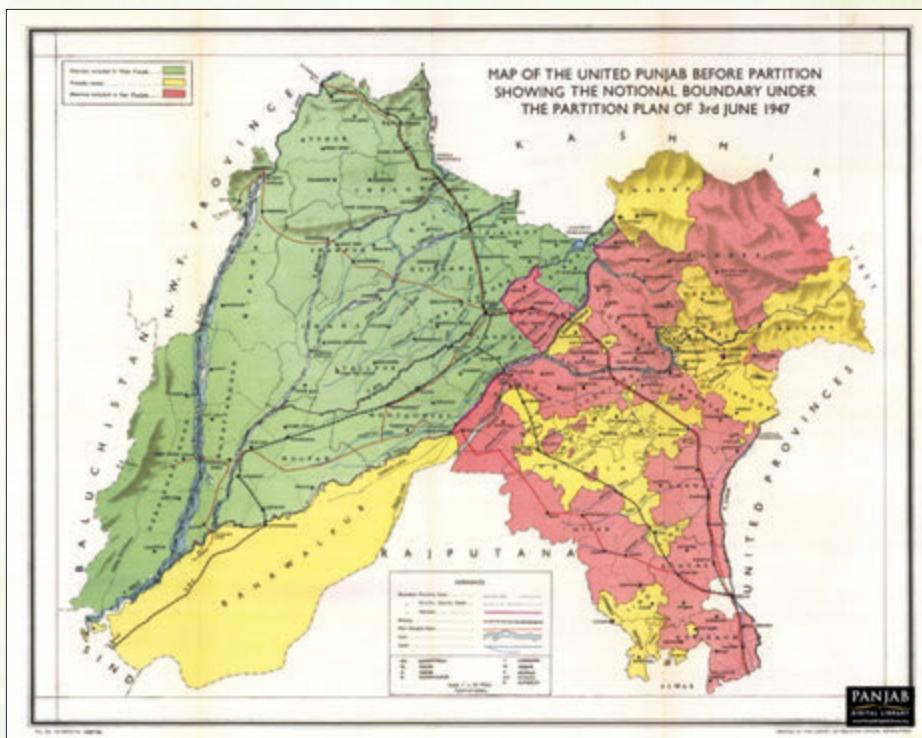
The total population of Punjab in 1941 was 28.4 million, 16.2 million of whom were Muslims, the rest Hindus and Sikhs. The British delegation was met by the Sikhs, three of whom, led by Master Tara Singh, warned that to "divide India would be a very... risky game." If there was to be any 'division,' the "Sikhs could not... remain either in Hindustan or in Pakistan." They argued that Sikhs were content to remain within united India, but if Pakistan were granted to the Muslims, then Sikhs wanted a nation-state of their own, a *Sikhistan* or *Khalistan* carved out of central Punjab, where four million Sikhs lived. Not even one district of Punjab had its own Sikh majority, however. When this was pointed out by the cabinet delegation, the Sikhs suggested the transfer of Sikhs from other districts to those in which Sikhs owned more of the land than Muslims, between Lahore and the sacred Sikh city of Amritsar. If Punjab was divided, that region should become 'Sikhistan,' Tara Singh insisted; otherwise the Sikhs would not feel secure.

The delegation continued to meet daily with leaders of most of India's parties from all of its provinces through 10 April, feeling by then that they had to draft their own scheme to present to the Congress Party and to the Muslim League, hoping to bridge the communal gap between the distant visions of South Asia's future. On 11 April they wrote to Attlee to report that there seemed only two "possible bases of agreement": Scheme A, which would be "a unitary India with a loose federation at the Centre charged primarily with control of Defence and Foreign Affairs," and Scheme B, "a divided India, the Pakistan element consisting only of the majority Muslim Districts that is roughly Baluchistan, Sind, North-West Frontier Province and Western Punjab... and Eastern Bengal without Calcutta but with the Sylhet District of Assam." They feared that unless they could get both Congress and the League to agree to either of those schemes, "we risk chaos in India." The Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief both "fully" agreed.

Two days later, Attlee wired that the cabinet agreed that, while Scheme A was "preferable," Scheme B would be acceptable, if it seemed to hold the only chance of reaching agreement.

Punjab's Partition "unthinkable"

Still Governor Jenkins strongly felt that he considered Punjab's partition "unthinkable" and "impracticable."



Of Punjab's 28 million residents, some 16 million were Muslims, 12 million Hindus and Sikhs. The two western divisions of Rawalpindi and Multan were 'Muslim country,' while the two eastern divisions of Jullundur and Ambala were non-Muslim. The central Lahore Division was 'common ground,' with a Muslim majority, but with Sikh 'Holy Land,' including Guru Nanak's place of birth and death, and mostly non-Muslim "economic interests," he predicted that partition would probably "destroy the Punjab economically."

Our minorities problem will not be solved. Both States (particularly the non-Muslim State) will have considerable and probably discontented minorities.... Lahore must go to one State or the other.... But Lahore has been created by all Punjabis.... The non-Muslim State will have the lion's share of our power resources; the Muslim State will inherit the colony districts.... We shall have reduced what might be a powerful country to two petty States incapable of real economic development, overloaded with overhead charges, and useful only as 'buffers' between the rest of India and the outer world. Partition solves no problems and does not really make sense.

As the fires of partition spread, Jenkins visited Attock and Rawalpindi and found some 60,000 terrified non-Muslim refugees. "Attacks on non-Muslims have been organised with extreme savagery," he reported. "Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi believes that in his district alone there may be 5,000 casualties including those killed, injured and missing... feeling between communities is very bad indeed." A few days after that, Punjab's Muslim League leader, Raja Ghazanfar Ali, came to see Jenkins to urge him to put a League ministry in power in Lahore. "I said I would resign sooner than see one [Muslim League ministry] in office at this juncture," Jenkins replied. "The massacre had been conducted in the name of the Muslim League,

and senior Military Officers thought that it had been carefully planned and organised. Non-Muslims with some justice now regarded the Muslims as little better than animals... If a Muslim League Government took office, there would be immediate fighting, and the Government would find it impossible to hold even a single session of the Assembly... I said that the troubles of the Muslim League were due to folly and bad leadership."

Even as late as on 4 June 1947, Mountbatten said that: "My own feeling was that a united India was, of course, the right answer but only if communal feeling and goodwill allowed it. So, while I did my best to get the Cabinet Mission scheme accepted... the riots and bloodshed throughout the country made the prospects of its acceptance obviously pretty remote." He reported that he had learned from meetings with leaders of the League as well as the Congress Party "that the people of India should take it upon themselves to make up their own minds what they wanted to do for the future of their country." Clearly, the best way to ascertain that would have been by "the adult franchise plebiscite," for that was the "democratic" way, Mountbatten conceded. Only "such a process was utterly impracticable... when we wanted a very quick answer and speed was the one thing which everybody desired."

Mountbatten clearly equated himself with "everybody." He was particularly anxious to try to



As the agonising reality of partition became clear, Sikhs of Western Punjab volunteered to defend their Gurdwaras against all marauders

explain how he had agreed to partition the Punjab, knowing full well this would cut the Sikh community in half. "I found that it was mainly at the request of the Sikh community that Congress had put forward the Resolution on the partition of the Punjab... I was not aware of all the details... but when I sent for a map and studied the distribution of the Sikh population under this proposal, I must say I was astounded to find that the plan which they had produced divided their community into two almost equal parts. I have spent a great deal of time... seeing whether there was any solution which would keep the Sikh community more together... I am not a miracle worker and I have not found that solution." His confession that he had approved a plan affecting the lives of millions of people without knowing "the details" or looking at a map reflecting his monumental ignorance of the dangers and indifference to the consequences of Partition were hallmarks of his tenure in India. But his ego made him add how many "solutions" he had found "in the course of these very high-speed talks," when it "became apparent" to him that "all leaders wanted speed in the actual transfer of power... anxious to assume their full responsibility at the earliest possible moment." Perhaps unaware of his own confession, he rhetorically asked, "Why should we wait? Waiting would only mean that I should be responsible ultimately for law and order." Mountbatten understood by then how impossibly ugly and crushingly difficult a job that would become, how far beyond him, and deleterious to his royal reputation and to that of the British Raj.

Master of doublespeak

Master of doublespeak that he was, Mountbatten thus turned "abject disinterest" into "extreme goodwill." A new high-speed record would, indeed, be set by completely dividing in ten weeks what had taken all of British India's army, and the successor of governors-general, viceroys, and civil servants, well over a century to unite.



Historic picture of Gurdwara Panja Sahib in Hasan Abdal, sacred to the memory of Guru Nanak (as seen in 1932)

"Throughout July 1947, Punjab sizzled, not only from lack of rain but from growing fears among its Sikhs and Hindus as well as its Muslim majority. Most of Punjab's Sikhs started to wear black armbands of mourning as well as black turbans, and Sikh shops in Lahore and Amritsar remained locked shut on 8 July to protest the province's partition. "There is great soreness in the Punjab... among the Sikhs," Jenkins warned Mountbatten. He feared that unless the Sikhs retained their major gurdwaras east of the Chenab River and 'Nankana Sahib', the sacred gurdwara near Lahore where the founder of their faith, Guru Nanak, was born, they would launch a revolt that could start a civil war. He worried about the impact of the release of the boundary commission's report, which he expected to trigger Sikh violence, either just before or shortly after 15 August 1947 the date not only of India's independence but also the day Mountbatten had chosen for the start of final withdrawal of all British troops from the Punjab. Instead of urging the viceroy to send more troops to his province immediately to avert that disaster, however, Jenkins advised the opposite: "I think it will be wise to avoid postponing the relief of British troops for too long. It would be awkward if trouble on a large scale started while the relief was in progress. My own advice would therefore be to make the change before the end of July."

As with his handling of the arson that ravaged Lahore, Jenkins feared the engagement of any

British troops in Punjab's worst communal conflicts, and Mountbatten was eager to agree with him. He visited Lahore in late July to accelerate the "relief" of British troops, and to meet with Punjab's partition committee, urging Radcliffe to work faster, since "the risk of disorder would be greatly increased if the [boundary] award had to be announced at the very last moment" before 15 August. But in August, when Radcliffe delivered his maps early, Mountbatten put them under his strictest embargo until after all the jubilant independence day celebrations had ended, by which time all of Punjab's British troops had been fully relieved.

But two weeks before Mountbatten's partition deadline, violence escalated. On 30 July, Jenkins



Lone jawan of the Punjab Boundary Force in ravaged house : "too few, too late"

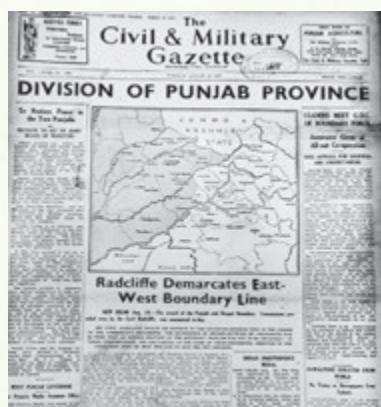
reported, "Feelings in Lahore are perhaps worse than ever... daily fires, stabbings and bomb explosions." Bombs were thrown in railway workshops and stations and inside crowded cinemas. The death toll rose daily. In Amritsar a bomb wounded fifty people inside a courthouse. Outside Amritsar, rural villages and towns were attacked, leaving many dead. On 5 August the Sikhs planned a Punjab-wide strike, and Jenkins feared "a considerable muddle" by mid-month. "It would be difficult

enough to partition within six weeks a country of 30 million people which had been governed as a single entity for 93 years, even if all concerned were friendly," he wrote, as if the enormity of what they were about to do had only just dawned on him. Migrations from among the 27 percent non-Muslim minority of West Punjab had begun moving east, even as some of the 33 percent Muslim minority around Amritsar started moving west. Soon those early trickles grew to giant snaking processions of millions, bearing all they owned on their backs or in bullock carts, continuing to move until they arrived or dropped dead.

But Mountbatten was above it all. As he wired the cabinet "The country as a whole is quiet, with the exception of Punjab, where there have been continued disturbances..." Attlee had just congratulated him on doing so 'remarkable' a job and proposed his name to the king for an earldom, so Mountbatten did not want to alarm London with any depressing details.

On that first day of August 1947, intelligence reports from Amritsar told of major communal fighting. But Radcliffe was even more eager than Mountbatten to finish his job and escape from India before mid-August, so surprising the viceroy by reporting he was ready to "announce" his Punjab Boundary Commission's "award" on 9 August. Mountbatten immediately met with his staff to ask them "whether it would in fact be desirable to publish it straight away," since "without question, the earlier it was published, the more the British would have to bear the responsibility for the disturbances which would undoubtedly result".

He cared nothing for the fact that a week's advance notice of the actual location of the new boundary would have given all those people most frightened and



The die is cast

eager to move enough time to do so before they found themselves trapped in the wrong country. Mountbatten's chief concern was to avoid British responsibility for the hurricane they could all see looming on Punjab's horizon. Hoping to escape blame for what he had so ominously accelerated by his passion for speed, "the Viceroy emphasised the necessity for maintaining secrecy, not only on the terms of the award, but also on the fact that it would be ready that day." Campbell-Johnson reported that "on administrative grounds it was argued that earliest possible announcement would be of help to Jenkins and would enable last-minute troop movements to be made into the affected areas in advance of the transfer of power."

On 11 August 1947, Jinnah flew from Delhi to Karachi, the city of his youth, first capital of Sind Province, now to become the capital of Pakistan. As president of Pakistan's Constituent Assembly, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah addressed his elected followers that evening. "A division had to take place," Jinnah told them. "Any idea of a United India could never have worked and in my judgement it would have led us to terrific disaster.... Now what shall we do?... [I]f we want to make this great State of Pakistan happy and prosperous we should wholly and solely concentrate on the well-being of the people, and especially of the masses and the poor." It was Jinnah's noblest speech, a statement of his personal vision of Pakistan as a liberal, egalitarian state, where everyone would "work together in a spirit that everyone of you, no matter to what community he belongs... no matter what is his colour, caste or creed, is first, second and last a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges and obligations." The Pakistan that Jinnah envisioned was neither a narrow-minded theocracy nor a feudal tyranny or martial dictatorship, but a democratic polity governed by law and equal opportunities for all. "You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any

other place of worship in this State of Pakistan.... You may belong to any religion or caste or creed.... We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens of one State.... My guiding principle will be justice and complete impartiality, and I am sure that with your support and co-operation I can look forward to Pakistan becoming one of the greatest Nations of the world."

Jinnah perhaps really meant this, but tragically, was mortally ill and could barely continue to work. He could do little more than to articulate his secular and liberal ideals to his Muslim followers, many of whom found them impossible to comprehend. For most of his last pain-filled year, Governor-General Jinnah lacked the strength to help Pakistan create and securely establish the vital democratic institutions it so desperately needed. He was so frail during his last months that he remained bed-ridden.

However, Admiral Lord Mountbatten flew to Karachi in his best dress whites on 13 August to attend the ceremonial flag-raising birth of the Dominion of Pakistan with Governor-General Jinnah on 14 August, flying back to Delhi that evening to prepare for Dominion India's "freedom at midnight", which was chosen after several Hindu astrologers warned that 15 August was "a most inauspicious" day. Nehru hoped that by inaugurating India's dominion with his



eloquent 'Tryst with Destiny' speech in New Delhi's Constituent Assembly Hall of Parliament shortly before midnight, India might elude astral rage and fury for ignoring the warnings of heavenly map-readers.

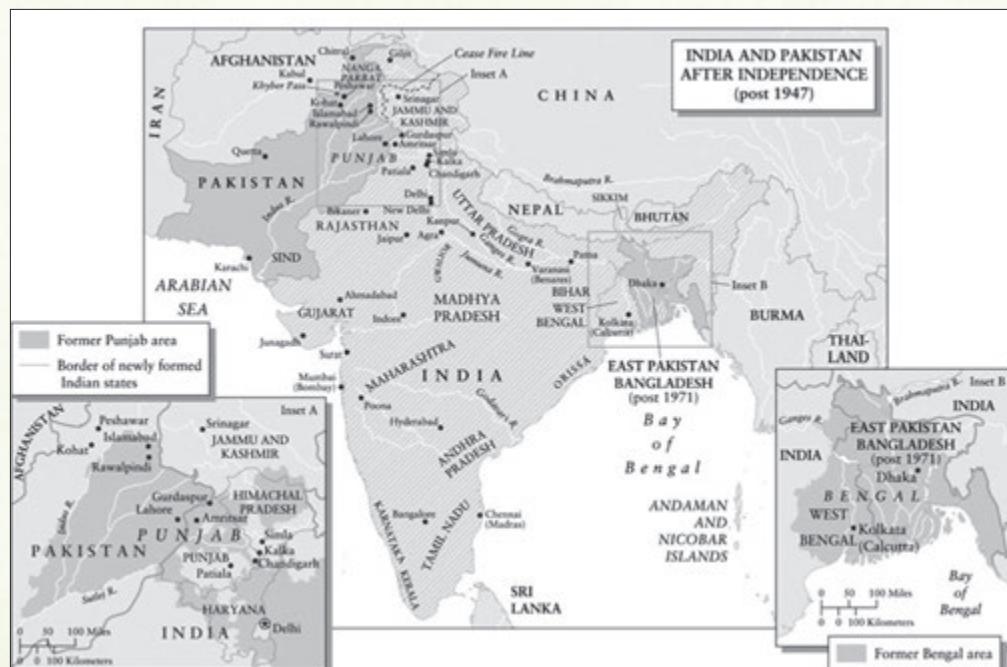
Jenkins's final letter as governor of the Punjab was his most grim. "Raids and murders are now so frequent that it is difficult to keep track... Amritsar district has become generally unsafe. There have been several attacks on trains. Parties of unescorted Muslim refugees have been attacked and butchered." As the news of brutality spread to Lahore, Muslim vengeance against Sikhs and Hindus grew so violent that "neither the railways nor the main roads are safe," Jenkins reported. He now felt that Amritsar district alone would have needed two more "full-strength" British Brigades, since the Lahore attacks would lead to Sikh retaliation raids against Muslim villages, with communal hatreds escalating by the hour. But the British brigades had all gone away. "Hindus are thoroughly terrified, and the Muslim movement from the East is balanced by a similar movement of Hindus from the West." Human chains of tragedy would grow from fifty to one hundred miles in length over the next few months, the refugees moving in opposite directions toward uncertainty and possible accelerated death.

Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck's assessment of Punjab's "situation" on that inauspicious mid-August day was this: "The area is large and the troops are few. There is no remedy for this, unless the troops are permanently posted in villages as armed police and this is neither practicable or desirable.... Several houses were burning in Amritsar City as I flew over it and four or five villages within ten miles of the City were apparently completely destroyed by fire and still burning." As for Lahore itself, most of its police had "defected" and joined the looters and arsonist-killers roaming through the old city. "But

for the presence of the Army there would by now be a complete holocaust in the City... "A large number of houses were still burning and a thick pall of smoke hung over the City. Delay in announcing the award of the Boundary Commission is having a most disturbing and harmful effect... It is realised of course that the announcement may add fresh fuel to the fire, but lacking an announcement, the wildest rumours are being spread by mischief makers... The position is thoroughly bad and is getting worse." When asked why he did not remain in New Delhi to "celebrate" the birth of India's dominion, Gandhi replied that he would "fast" in Calcutta instead. "We do not have food grains, clothes, ghee or oil," he sadly explained. "So where is the need for celebrations? On that day we have to fast . . . and pray to God." He was sleeping when Nehru spoke of him and how

Long years ago, we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge... wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom... The future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving so that we might fulfill the pledge we have so often taken... The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity. The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye.

70 years on, there remain unending tears.



Scenes of desperation

From the west to east and east to west, ten million refugees sought the relative safety of two nations newly created by the cynical machinations of the erstwhile British rulers during the closing months of 1947.



[Many of these images were taken by cameramen of LIFE magazine]

Multiple Betrayals

In his book, 'The Sikhs', author and environmentalist Patwant Singh traces the multiple betrayals of the Sikh community by the British, Hindu and Muslim leadership as the 'Great Game' was played out in 1946-47. Some extracts:



At a New Delhi conference on the partition of India are (left to right) Communications Member Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar; Defence Minister Sardar Baldev Singh; President of the Indian National Congress Acharya JB Kripalani; Home and Information and Broadcasting Member Vallabhai Patel; Advisor to the Viceroy Sir Eric Melville; Vice President of the Interim Government Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru; Lord Mountbatten, Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Finance Member Liaquat Ali Khan

What the Sikhs had acquired by shedding their blood on countless battlefields would be bartered away at negotiating tables by Congress aspirants to India's leadership. The die was cast. It was in fact the Arya Samaji Lala Lajpat Rai who in the 1920s first suggested that Punjab should be divided into West and East Punjab, with the Muslims concentrated in the former and non-Muslims in the latter. Although he did not conceive of a separate nation for the Muslims, his suggestion shows how such

ill-conceived ideas can come home to roost. No wonder Chowdhury Rahmat Ali, who later fleshed out the specifics of Pakistan, approvingly observed that "Lala's proposal was a decisive step in the right direction."

While Jinnah and the Congress's Brahminical elite drew on their immense reserves of political wile to position themselves for power, the Sikhs — not very adept at striking deals — witnessed their once vast territories divided in half by Partition in 1947, and in three different segments after Independence, in



Delegation of Sikh representatives visiting 10 Downing Street in London for representation to the British Prime Minister



Rare photograph of Field Marshals Montgomery, Lord Wavell and Sir Claude Auchinleck outside South Block in New Delhi.

1966. The British, who had drawn upon the Sikhs' fighting skills in the wars they fought around the world, betrayed them firstly by ignoring their interests during negotiations with the Hindus and Muslims, and then by letting the massacre of tens of thousands of Sikhs take place before the transfer of power in 1947.

Through craftily worded proposals and a shrewd mix of political skills and worthless promises the Sikhs were persuaded to accept arrangements — before and after Independence — which, when the time came, none of the signatories would honour. The



Master Tara Singh meeting the Viceroy of India, Field Marshal Archibald Wavell along with Mohammad Ali Jinnah; the latter had reportedly "offered" an autonomous Sikh nation within a Pakistan, but this was not accepted by Sikh leadership



At Karachi in August 1947, on establishment of Pakistan : Lord Louis Mountbatten and wife flanked by Mohammad Ali Jinnah and his sister Fatima

most invidious agreement arrived at between the Congress, Muslim League and the British was to divide India by taking population as the basis of Partition. As 1947, the year of Partition, dawned, some very unpleasant surprises awaited the Punjab. The scale and savagery of the killings on either side of the dividing line between India and Pakistan exceeded all expectations, with a bitter price paid by the Sikhs, who had neither asked for nor were expecting a separate homeland since they had always considered themselves an integral part of India. They were more dismayed than most at the very thought of Punjab's dismemberment.

Options for the Sikhs

That the Sikhs had options which they turned down is illustrated by an account of a meeting between their leaders and Mohammad Ali Jinnah in 1946. Jinnah suggested at the meeting with the Maharaja of Patiala, its aim to win the Sikhs over to the Muslim League's point of view. But Jinnah was reluctant to go to Patiala for the meeting. Sardar Hardit Singh Malik, the state's prime minister at that time and a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service who was held in high regard by the Sikhs, also favoured the idea of a meeting on neutral ground and arranged it at the New Delhi home of his brother, Sardar Teja Singh Malik. The five persons who met there were Jinnah, the Maharaja of Patiala, Sardar Hardit Singh Malik and the two Sikh political leaders Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh.



*The partitioned map of India as proposed by Rahmat Ali, Founder President of the Pakistan National Movement in the 1930s
[Courtesy: Partition Museum, Amritsar]*

According to Malik, Jinnah was “most anxious that the Sikhs should accept Pakistan and agree to live there after it was created, and he went on to explain that if we did he would agree to everything that we would wish for to safeguard our interest as a minority.” Malik, while thanking him for his generous offer, asked: “You will have a Cabinet, a Parliament, the Judiciary, the Armed Forces. What exactly will be our share in all these?” Jinnah responded by narrating a story about Zaghlul Pasha, Egypt’s virtual ruler after the country became independent. When a delegation of the Copts, Egypt’s influential Christian minority, went to see the Pasha to seek guarantees concerning their position in the new Egypt, he asked them to think carefully about what they wanted and bring back their demands in a written document. When the Copt leader gave him the written demands at their second meeting, Zaghlul Pasha, without even reading them, wrote ‘I agree’ on the document. Jinnah said: “This is how I will deal with you — as Zaghlul Pasha did with the Copts.”

After their meeting the Sikh leaders — who were not even agreeable to the establishment of a Pakistan, let alone have any dealings with it — decided to convey their reply in a manner which would also counter any false propaganda that might follow their meeting with Jinnah. That very day, as Malik recorded, ‘I went and saw UN Sen [Sir Usha Nath Sen, a veteran journalist], who wielded considerable influence in press circles in those days and was an old friend, and I said to him, “My friend, I have never asked you to do anything for me, but today I have a request to make, a very important request.” I then told him about the meeting with Jinnah and added, “I want you to see to it [that] *The Statesman* carries on its front page the next morning the headline in the largest letters, “The Sikhs will under no circumstances accept Pakistan”. Sen promised to do his best and sure enough the next day *The Statesman* carried the headline that I had asked for. And that was our answer to Jinnah. We could have had Sikhistan if we wanted, as that was what Jinnah was really hinting at, because he knew full well that we could never agree to live in Pakistan. That was the price he was offering us, to agree to Pakistan.’

The price that the Sikhs paid, once their stand became clear to the Muslim League, is graphically described by Alan Campbell-Johnson in his book *Mission with Mountbatten*. Recording his impressions of a visit with the Mountbattens (Lord Mountbatten had just taken over as Viceroy from Lord Wavell) to



Maharaja Yadavendra Singh of Patiala, in Army uniform visiting the new frontier during late 1947



Lord Louis Mountbatten and his wife at ravaged Kahuta, in the suburbs of Rawalpindi in March 1947

Kahuta near Rawalpindi in early 1947, he wrote: “we arrived to find that the havoc in the small town was very great. Picking our way through the rubble, we could see that the devastation was as thorough as any produced by fire-bomb raids in the war. This particular communal orgy involved the destruction of Sikhs and their livelihood by Muslims.”

To the testimony of the scale of the tragedy that overtook the Sikhs in what would become West Pakistan, belongs the account by VP Menon, the Viceroy's adviser who had a ring-side seat throughout that critical period, in his book *The Transfer of Power in India*: "one must appreciate that the Sikhs had been driven out of their homes, contrary to all their hopes and expectations; that they had been deprived of their lands and property, their shrines and holy places; that their losses in men and property had been comparatively greater than those of any other community affected by the communal upheaval; that nearly forty percent of the entire Sikh community had been reduced to penury and had become refugees with the necessity of having to start life afresh."

The handling of the transfer of power by the Congress, the Muslim League and Britain resulted in the massacre of hundreds of thousands of Sikhs in a few months. Among the deals that precipitated the moral and physical perversions of 1947, the most astounding was the Congress Working Committee's March decision to accept India's partition and seek the League's co-operation in "a division of the Punjab into two provinces, so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part." This was an obvious sellout of the Sikhs as it concerned their homeland: the only state in which they were concentrated. "Violence escalated after the Congress Resolution... [and] those who survived

initiated the greatest mass migration in history. Their bitter memories cemented the walls of Partition," wrote Nit Bhattacharjea in his excellent book *Countdown to Partition*.

By agreeing to Partition on the assumption—or so people were led to believe—that Jinnah would not accept a truncated and 'moth-eaten Pakistan', duplicitous Congressmen ignored the League's determination to break with India at any cost. They refused to face the prospective human costs involved in dividing Punjab: the Sikhs stranded in Pakistan could be expected to be either killed or forced to leave their fertile lands, urban wealth, extensive properties and lucrative businesses to the not-so-well-off Muslim majority there. Which is exactly what happened. The question is: is this what the Congress mandarins wanted?

The genocidal killings of Sikhs (and Hindus) starting in Kahuta and Rawalpindi and spreading rapidly across West Punjab, intensified with the Congress's ill-conceived 1947 *Partition Resolution*. Even Gandhi's reservations about it were brushed aside by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (known as India's 'Iron Man', who became the first home minister of India after Independence): "It has been difficult to explain to you the Resolution about the Punjab. It was adopted after the deepest deliberation. Nothing has been done in a hurry or without full thought."

These 'deep deliberations', whose direct outcome was mass genocide, leave many questions unanswered in Sikh minds till today.

The author concludes: The Sikhs' expectations of new beginnings in an emergent India had been bought with their blood. What they couldn't know at the time was that they were coming into a flawed inheritance, that their certitudes and hopes would be stone-walled by the same communal intolerance as that which had set the subcontinent on a suicidal course and sundered it in two.



"On their shoulders".... Governor General of India C Rajagopalachari and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru seen with Defence Minister Sardar Baldev Singh

Amarpal Singh Sidhu on

The Clash of Empires

An Alternative History of India consequential to a Sikh Victory at Ferozeshah, 1845



Nothing can change the fate and future direction of countries so decisively as does war. At stake can be the loss or gain of huge territories, great wealth and the squandering of the flower of its youth on the battlefield. The outcome, whatever it may be can bring in great social and political change or perhaps even the loss or gain of independence or empire. The issue of alternative endings relating to the great battles and wars of yesteryear is therefore both an entertaining—and a very serious issue.

What If ?

What if a battle or campaign had been won instead of being lost or vice versa? Numerous books, especially novels, have covered this issue over the last century and more, alternative histories of the Second World War being the most popular, not surprisingly. Philip K. Dick the famous Sci-fi author, in 'The man in the high

castle' wrote of slavery being legalised in the USA after its defeat and occupation by Nazi Germany and Japan. In 'Fatherland', the author Robert Harris too imagines a Germany triumphant after WW2. In SS-GB, Len Deighton the well-known British thriller writer wrote about a German-occupied Great Britain.

Other periods of history and wars also have their own popularity. In 'The years of Rice and Salt' Kim Stanley Robinson writes of a Europe, instead of gradually recovering, being entirely destroyed by the Black Death in the medieval ages, with the rest of the world continuing to develop. In 'The Alteration' by Kingsley Amis, the author imagines Henry the VIIIth never becoming King with the result that Protestantism was never created and with Martin Luther becoming Pope. Perhaps the most recent words on this subject come from best-selling author Stephen King. In his recent novel '11/22/63' he speculates on the future if JFK had been saved from assassination, and narrates a story where the world takes a turn for the worse rather than for the better.

From a military perspective, many of the wars in recorded history were one-way affairs in which an alternative ending was never likely. In a select few contests however the result rested on a knife-edge. A change in tactics by a commanding General, or momentary indecision, treachery by a high placed official, or perhaps rashness or over confidence by troops are some of the things that can often tilt the scales one way or the other in an otherwise evenly matched contest.

In European history, the battle of Waterloo is a prime example. What if Blucher the Prussian General had not reached the battlefield at the time he did. Surely the British line would have been overrun with Wellington's centre almost entirely shattered. It is safe to say a victory for Napoleon would have propelled Europe in an entirely different direction and future.



Charge of the 3rd King's Own Light Dragoons at the Battle of Moodkee on 18th December 1845

The Battle of Ferozeshah

On the Indian subcontinent, the battle of Ferozeshah is a prime example of the near run thing and with more at stake than in most battles of the subcontinent. Fought in the pitch-black night of 21 December 1845 and then on the morning of the following day, the battle held the fate of the future of two empires – that of the Lahore State and of the East India Company. The British force commanded by Sir Hugh Gough and accompanied by the Governor-General Henry Hardinge himself were in confident mood that day as they had arrived before Ferozeshah village where the Sikh army had dug in a few days earlier.

Initially the British had a modicum of success, managing to penetrate the Sikh camp to the village. However as heavy hand-to-hand fighting continued during the early hours of the morning, the gravity of the British situation quickly became apparent to both Gough and Hardinge. The British guns had no shot



Perspective map of the area between Ludhiana and Ferozepur, where battles of the First Anglo-Sikh War took place in 1845-46

to fire, all ammunition having been expended in the early exchanges with the Sikh guns. The infantrymen too had entirely expended their ammunition. Having expected an early victory and a return to the British camp at Mudki ('Moodkee') the same evening, Gough had failed to bring any camp baggage, food or other supplies of any kind as well. What was equally obvious was that the Sikh army faced no such problems.



HM 29th Foot in the British attack on the Sikh Camp at the Battle of Ferozeshah

It seemed to Gough and the Governor-General that they were looking at an ignominious defeat in the morning when the battle resumed. However, they decided to keep their nerve and see what the new morning would bring. Luckily for them, (the traitor) Lal Singh who was leading the Sikh army at Ferozeshah had no wish to bolster the confidence of the Sikh army panchayats (army committees) with a victory and ordered a retreat of the whole Sikh army before sunrise on the 22nd. Gough and the British force awoke to find the Sikh camp largely deserted and a victory was conjured out of the jaws of defeat.

Even now however the Sikh army could have achieved their victory. For later in the day, a fresh Sikh army under Tej Singh approached, having made its way from Ferozepore. Again, with the no ammunition to fight back with, defeat or surrender was contemplated in the British line. However, (again the traitor) Tej Singh also withdrew his force for the same reasons as Lal Singh had twelve hours earlier and the British force was miraculously (to some in the British line) saved from defeat a second time.





The British were preparing for surrender on that cold night of 22 December 1845

Treachery at twilight

This was what actually happened. But what if we assume that both Lal Singh and Tej Singh had instead distinguished themselves at Ferozeshah by striving for a victory rather than resorting to treachery. What would have happened? And what sort of different future for the Punjab, for India and for the British Empire would we be looking at now? This alternative scenario raises many fascinating possibilities.

The immediate result on that cold 22nd December day of 1845 would have been the offer of surrender by Gough and the Governor-General. This outcome had already been prepared for during the night in the British camp. Both had little desire to see their men mown down by Sikh artillery and muskets with nothing to fire back with. Hardinge had had his private papers burnt during the night to prevent them falling into Sikh hands. He had also sent his son away from the battlefield handing him his sword, which formerly belonged to Napoleon Bonaparte. The Crown Prince of Prussia, who was travelling with the British force had

also been sent away. Hardinge had no wish for him to become a prisoner as well in a fight which was not his own.

The surrender not just of the British Commander-in-Chief in India but also the Governor-General along with a complete British army of 18,000 men with 71 guns (seven European infantry regiments and one European cavalry regiment along with eleven Native Infantry and six native cavalry regiments) would have been an unprecedented event in British history and would have had correspondingly huge political and territorial implications. The loss of this kind of force (and the cream of British officers and Generals in India) is very difficult to imagine as it never happened before and, indeed, would not happen in the remaining hundred years of the British Raj. The army that gave battle at Ferozeshah amounted to almost the entire strength the British force had in Northern India at the time and included the bulk of the European regiments stationed in north India. Quite what it would have precipitated in India is open to speculation. But

certainly it would have been included as one of the greatest British disasters in history and of world military history.

A Greater Punjab

With this army either surrendering or being annihilated, further disasters and setbacks would also

have quickly followed as the Sikh army advanced towards Delhi with no force to oppose them. Gough had not brought any heavy guns with him for the battle, the necessary logistics having not been in place. However by the time of the Battle of Ferozeshah, a siege train of nineteen heavy guns in total accompanied by a huge amount of ammunition

and supplies loaded up on over 4,000 wagons, hackeries and pulled by tens of thousands of bullock, camels and elephants was heading to reinforce Gough's army. This had been organised and sent by John Lawrence in Delhi. Accompanied only by a single native infantry regiment, this would have been easily captured by the Sikh army on their way to Delhi. Capturing the siege train would have been a victory no less significant than that at Ferozeshah as it would have left Delhi almost entirely defenceless. The most immediate repercussion would have been the advance of the Sikh army towards Delhi and the capture of the city. This had been the stated aim of many of the Sikh leaders prior to the war and in the writer's opinion, Delhi would have been in Sikh hands two weeks after Ferozeshah. The other direction that Sikh forces would have been able to expand southwards towards the Sind and the Arabian Sea.

The matter of the Cis-Sutlej rulers is an interesting one. It's quite likely that the Cis-Sutlej Sikh states, once aware of the disaster for the British would have re-analysed their allegiance to them. This was by no means a sure way of uniting the Sikh forces for these states were wary of being annexed



British cavalry worsted by Sikh irregulars on the battlefield



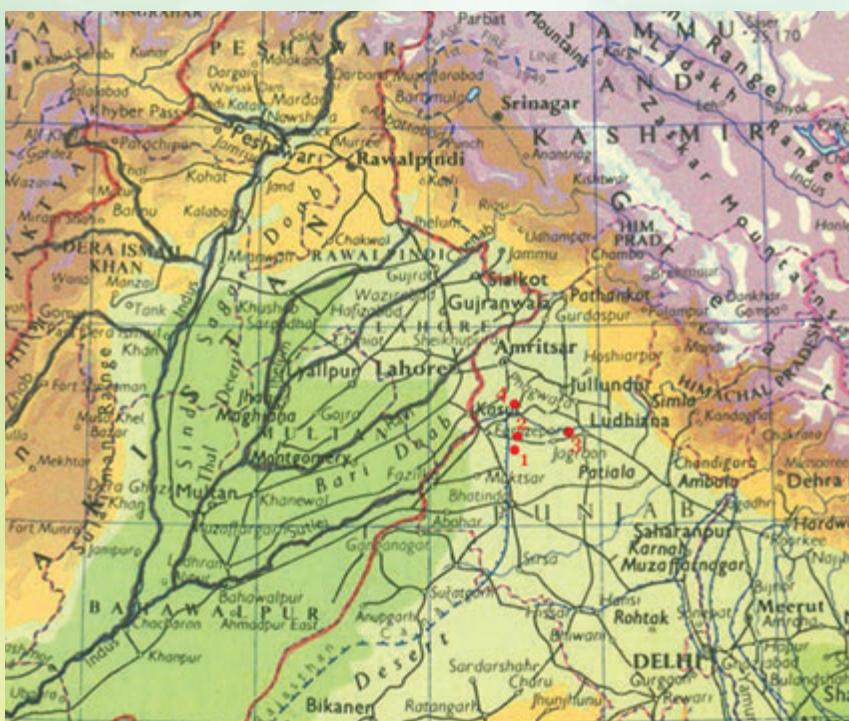
Painting of the Red Fort, on banks of the river Yamuna, which could well have been taken by the Sikh forces in 1846

themselves by the Lahore State. It's my opinion that they would have reached some sort of settlement with the Lahore state in return for continuing independence. For Punjab, the victory at the Sutlej would primarily

have meant its continuing independence and in fact a considerably extended border running towards Delhi. It would have also meant the province of Kashmir continuing to be united with the Punjab.

In terms of the Lahore State's western frontier with Afghanistan, the Lahore state would have, after cease of hostilities with the British, been freed from what remained of the tripartite agreement signed by Ranjit Singh and the British Government in 1839 with Shah Shuja. Although Shah Shuja had since been replaced by Dost Mohammed, there had been an acceptance of the Afghan border with the Punjab and an agreement for the Lahore State not to pursue any expansionist policy with Afghanistan.

On the northern front, Kashmir would have stayed within, and as part of the Lahore State. This province was of course separated from Lahore and awarded to Gulab Singh after the First Anglo-Sikh War as reward for treachery.



One of the more interesting speculations concerns Sind, the area south of the Lahore State annexed by the British in 1843 under the general-ship of Sir Charles Napier. Any catastrophic defeat in the Punjab would have meant that this recently annexed but not quite tamed area may have reasserted its independence. Ranjit Singh, of course, always had his eye on Sind, and it's not beyond imagination to speculate on Sikh ambitions being aroused again for this province.

Greater Punjab and fate of the sub-continent

What therefore becomes clear is a much strengthened Punjab emerging after the first Anglo-Sikh War with

The fate of the rest of the Indian subcontinent and whether the British hold on the subcontinent would have continued is entirely open to speculation. Would the various Princely states have taken the chance to throw off the British yoke? Would the sepoys in the British East India Company's forces have decided to rebel themselves? Certainly many of the reasons that caused the Indian Mutiny of 1857 – a decade later – were already manifesting themselves. British power in India always rested on the allusion of invincibility, for there were never enough European troops to occupy the whole country. With the British Governor-General as well as the Commander-in-Chief in captivity at Lahore and busy negotiating their own release, it is safe to say there would have some



The end: painting of the battle at Subraon, climaxed by the treachery of so-called Sikh generals

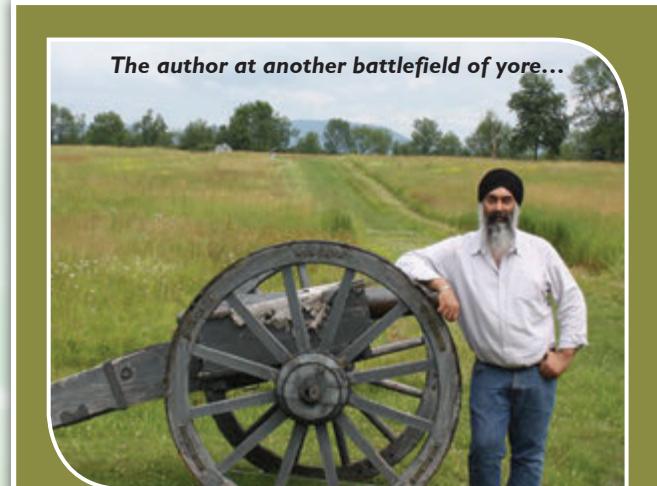
the picture beyond its borders much more unsure. With no British hold on the Punjab it also becomes clear there would have been no issue of any creation of a separate country of Pakistan a century later. The Punjab of that time had little of the friction between Muslim, Hindu and Sikhs that developed or was fostered by the divide and rule politics of the British Government. The Punjab would have continued, as it was then, to be a separate country and state albeit stretching much further south and including Delhi.

element of confusion and uncertainty as to what to do in the three British Presidencies. Pushing more troops towards the Punjab and thus denuding the rest of the country would have been a risky strategy considering the acute reliance of the British on their sepoy army. That Sikh victory at Ferozeshah may well have triggered off a mutiny of sepoys twelve years earlier than it happened. With no Punjab to draw resources and recruits from to fight the sepoys, that struggle too would have had a different ending.



But, Ferozeshah today

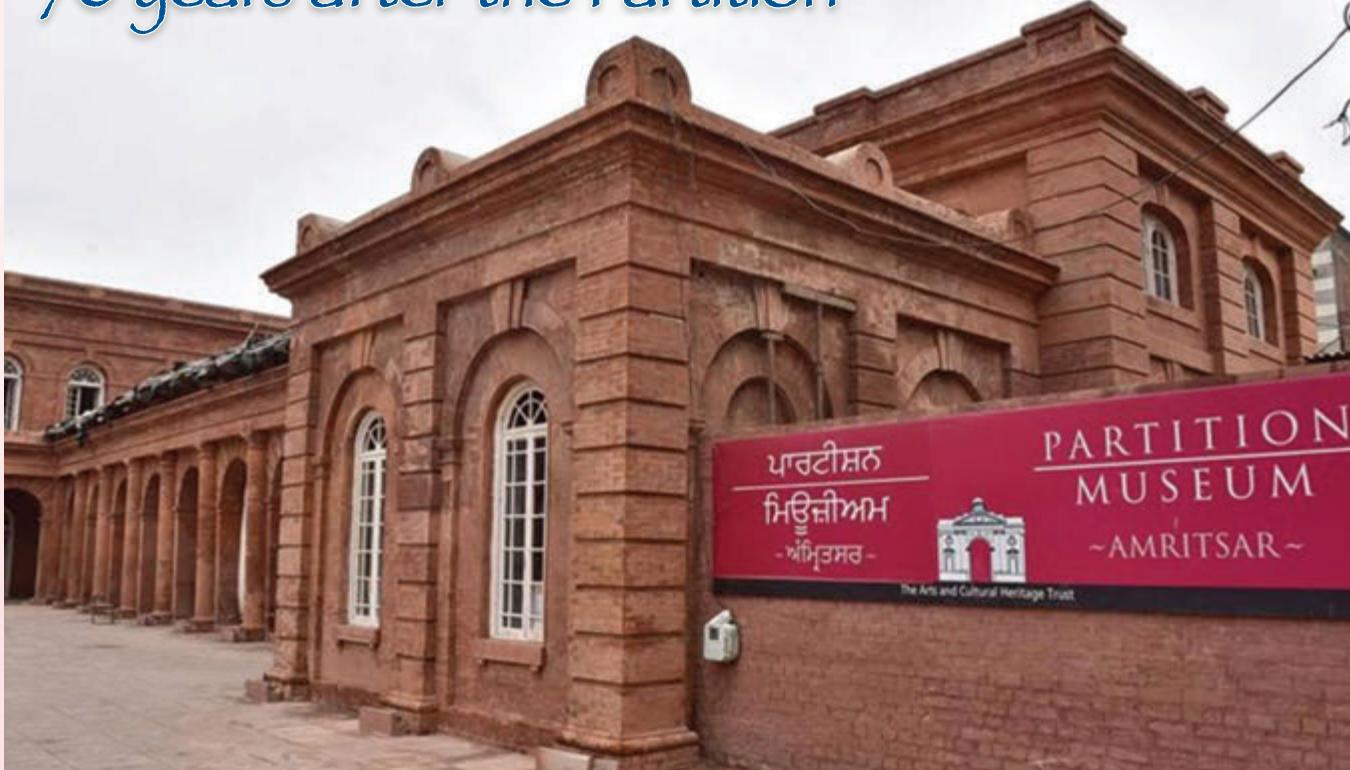
The countryside today which encompasses the historical battlefields of Mudki and Ferozeshah hardly reflects the tumultuous events which took place here, one and a half centuries back. The roads from Ludhiana towards Ferozepur are narrow, with scant traffic, while the only reminder of the epic battles at Mudki and Ferozeshah are the soothing strains of kirtan emanating from the local gurdwara while the British-built obelisk in the centre of agricultural fields, marks site of the battlefield itself.



The author at another battlefield of yore...

Amarpal Singh Sidhu, who is resident in the UK, was born in the Punjab and spent over 20 years working in the software industry before turning to his real interest in military history and the exploration and analysis of battlefields. His first book *The First Anglo-Sikh War* was extremely well received in 2010 and this was followed by its sequel, *The Second Anglo-Sikh War* in 2016. Amarpal has also appeared and collaborated on history programmes for several TV channels and currently lives in London with his wife and two sons.

70 years after the Partition



The Museum at Amritsar

In the 70 years since India and Pakistan were created from the former British Empire, there has been no effort to record those traumatic times and preserve

the memories of so many who were directly affected by that chaotic and bloody chapter in history — until recently. A museum on the Partition of the Indian subcontinent was inaugurated on 17 August 2017, as both India and Pakistan marked seven decades as independent nations.



Entering the Museum, the visitor looks at the map of an undivided India: "Saare Jahaan Se Achcha" as the great poet Mohammad Iqbal exulted. Ironically, he was later considered as the great proponent of a divided Hindustan and the creation of a Pakistan

"If you look at any other country in the world, they've all memorialised the experiences that have defined and shaped them. Yet this event that has so deeply shaped not only our subcontinent but millions of individuals who were impacted has had no museum or memorial 70 years later," said Mallika Ahluwalia, CEO of the Partition Museum.

The exhibitions, housed in the red-brick Town Hall building in the north Indian border city of Amritsar, include photographs, newspaper clippings and donated personal items meant to tell the story of how the region's struggle for freedom from colonial rule turned into one of its most violent episodes, as communal clashes left a million Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs dead and another 10 million displaced from their ancestral homes.

The pigeons who have made their home in the long-neglected Town Hall building at Katra Ahluwalia near the Golden Temple complex flutter their wings in surprise as their home is coloured, spruced up and gradually coming alive. The Partition Museum on which work has been on for two years, was inaugurated by the Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on 17 August 2017.



The iconic Town Hall at Amritsar, seen at night. A wing of the building has been dedicated to house the Partition Museum

The shamianas were up in the compound in contrast to the grim stories that a walk through this unhappy memory lane unfolds through poetry, first-person accounts, paintings, mementos, art and artefacts. But that is not all for hope follows despair at Partition Museum and this was the very purpose of collecting the pieces and reminding the generations to come that such a painful chapter of communal divide should not repeat itself in the history of the sub-continent, on the pattern of holocaust museums elsewhere in the world.

The inspiration for the Museum came from the stories of Urdu writer Saadat Hasan Manto, who is remembered as a brutally honest chronicler of that violent divide. He belonged to Amritsar and his family home in Gali Vakilan was among the many houses burnt down in the communal violence during Partition. This is revealed by Kishwar Desai, the driving force behind this first attempt of a museum of its kind in India. "In the 50th year of Independence and Partition, I started working on Manto's stories for television. It was then that I thought there should be a museum to Partition and it has taken me two decades to translate this dream into reality," says Desai.

Put together through individual efforts, supported by the government in giving this colonial building for display, the museum is to be seen as a work in progress with material related to 1947 trickling in as people share mementos related to the troubled times.



The outer façade of the Partition Museum



A giant saw installation cutting through a brick wall is symbolic of the Partition

Why Amritsar? "Because it was reduced to an inferno at that time with half the population fleeing across borders drawn by the Radcliffe Line. The city was the transit point of the massive migration on both sides of the border." There are more pictures, narratives on videos and paintings by a few artists of those times, including Satish Gujral, SL Prasher and Krishen Khanna who migrated from Lahore, the cultural capital of undivided India.

There is a hall of the freedom struggle with piped songs of resistance from the two regions most active in the struggle and finally cut into two pieces. One can hear the plaintive poem by Amrita Pritam addressed to Waris Shah in which she laments the abduction, rape and killing of women.

A wall-hanging in the Hall, reads that "9,423 abducted women were recovered from India and sent



Using memorabilia, personal effects, letters and rare testimonies from survivors, the museum will weave a story and create an immersive experience

to Pakistan between December 1947 and July 1948. 5,510 women abducted women recovered from Pakistan were sent to India."

Screens display video interviews with the now-elderly survivors. The last of the museum's 14 galleries is called the 'Gallery of Hope', where visitors are invited to scribble messages of love and peace on leaf-shaped papers before hanging them on a barbed-wire tree. The idea, Mallika said, was to have visitors participate in the 'greening' of the tree and to think of peace and reconciliation between the torn-apart nations. Re-living all this pain, the viewer finds oneself in the *Hall of Hope* with paper



Created as 'The Tree of Hope', this is installed on the first floor of the Museum

hangings of migratory birds leading the way. This huge *Tree of Hope* has been fashioned out of barbed wire by designer Neeraj Sahai.

"You end up feeling so grateful to that generation who, I think, helped rebuild the nation, despite having suffered such trauma," Mallika reflected. She said she wanted to create the museum after years of hearing her 83-year-old grandmother's tales of the subcontinent before it was divided, before she had to flee her Lahore home as a 13-year-old girl. What must it have felt like for her, to one day come from, you know, a relatively affluent family, have a normal background, and the next day all you have left of your things is a small suitcase," Mallika felt. The personal experience led her to believe it was important to set



Mallika Ahluwalia, CEO of the Partition Museum

up the museum, "especially as we saw that generation leaving us."

While the bloody events of Partition have become a foundational part of India's history and identity, sparking countless works of art, literature and film, there has been no official expression of regret, and India's leaders have been cautious in mentioning the communal violence that coincided with the country's earliest days. There are no memorials to those who perished. Sociologist Shiv Visvanathan suggested that the topic has simply been too painful for many to dwell on, and that reconciliation would need to be two-sided to work. Even the museum, he said, should reflect realities on both sides.

"If a nation-state becomes the repository of memory, it becomes a one-sided memory," Visvanathan felt. "We have to acknowledge the mutuality of violence. There is no one truth. No one victim."

Many people donated items to the museum, including 81-year-old Sohinder Nath Chopra, who included an autobiographical novel set in his old

village near Gujranwala in Pakistan. His family had been warned by a Muslim cleric to flee the village as weaponised mobs went on killing sprees against Hindus and Sikhs in the newly declared Islamic republic. He was 12 years old as they crossed the border into India, and remembers "big arches welcoming the refugees." "Hindi film songs were being played loudly," Chopra stated. "There were people standing on both sides, holding bread, vegetables, water. And everybody started crying."

The family of Pushpindar Singh Chopra contributed considerable material to the Museum including priceless images of Amritsar during those traumatic months and specifically establishment of the border post on the Grand Trunk Road, nearly midway between Amritsar and Lahore. This was on 11 October 1947 by his father (then) Brigadier Mohindar Singh Chopra, commanding 123 Infantry Brigade, who poignantly grew up in Amritsar but had his family home in Lahore, now divided by the Radcliffe Line.

It was a sombre moment when the Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh unveiled the museum's plaque at the historic Town Hall at a special commemoration ceremony in which it was decided to observe 17 August as the *Partition Remembrance Day*. A minute-long silence was observed after the ringing of a bell. The museum is an initiative of The Arts and Cultural Heritage Trust (TAACHT).

In his speech, Captain Amarinder Singh called for learning lessons from history to ensure such sad events do not occur again and lauded the efforts of UK-based economist and Labour politician Lord Meghnad Desai in giving shape to the first-of-its-kind museum which had "recreated a very sad chapter of our history." He said the museum along with the Azadi Memorial in Jalandhar and similar initiatives would help the younger generation understand the past and learn from it, adding that no country can do well without learning lessons from their history.

The occasion was marked by a series of events, including a poetry recital by eminent poet and lyricist Gulzar, panel discussions by publisher Urvashi Butalia and poet Surjit Patar, a short play on Partition by Kahaniwala and Sufi music recital by Hashmat Sultana sisters. Gulzar also launched his newly translated book 'Footprints on Zero Line: Writings on the Partition', on the occasion.



Biba Uppal (standing) and Amolak Swani (seated) at the Partition Museum in Amritsar. Both their families moved to India from the other side of the new border

Monica Arora at Amritsar
and extracts from Hindustan Times

Yearning for the past: some voices 70 years later

70 years ago, millions of people traded places in India and Pakistan. In their bloodied border crossing, they left behind homes, people and belongings, but they took with them vivid and lasting memories of their birthplace and their unwilling escape from it.

Rescued by one of the men in the mob, who handed me over to a Sikh family for safely.' Ali Shan: Ranguwal to Kasur

Ali Shan, who now lives in California, was a six-year-old boy in Ranguwal in Indian Punjab when he saw a mob kill his mother and brother. He survived being shot at and, in an ironic twist, was later rescued by one of the men in the mob, who handed him over to a Sikh family. Shan was fostered by them for six months before being taken to a refugee camp in Lahore. (India and Pakistan had an agreement that those who'd been abducted or separated from their families would be returned to their families.) Shan's maternal uncle found him at the camp and took him home to Kasur in Pakistani Punjab.

'We're settled now.' Rajinder Kumari Sabharwal: Jaranwala to Mumbai

Rajinder Kumari Sabharwal, who now lives in Mumbai, left her village near Jaranwala in western Punjab a few days before partition. While she arrived safely, her parents had a dramatic departure some days later. They hid in their Muslim neighbour's home when rioters ransacked Hindu homes in the village. The next morning, they retrieved gold jewellery they had hidden beneath the stove and left for the Indian border escorted by a gun-wielding Muslim man from the village. Sabharwal compared the violent mobs to terrorists and said their actions had nothing to do with



religion. Yet she feels talking about partition will only deepen fissures between Hindus and Muslims. "What's the point of raking up these issues?" she said. "We're settled now."

'Love in a refugee camp'
Balraj Bahri Malhotra: Malakwal to Delhi

A few days before 15 August 1947, Balraj Bahri Malhotra's family — parents and siblings — set off from Malakwal to make the journey across the border. Balraj's father was a bank manager in Malakwal, a town near Lahore. Since there were very few banks

in the town and even fewer people who knew how to run them, the local Muslims didn't want the elder Malhotra to leave. They forcibly yanked him off the Amritsar-bound train but promised to send him on after six months. "That's when my grandfather realised that he's now the patriarch of the family and has to look after everyone. He was just 19 at the time," recalls Aanchal Malhotra, granddaughter of the late Balraj Bahri Malhotra, who went on to set up Delhi's famous independent bookstore, Bahrasons, in Khan Market. In Amritsar, the family had to share a tent with another family while Balraj did odd jobs - selling pens on the railway platform and even pulling a rickshaw - to make ends meet, recalls Aanchal, an artist and archivist who was inspired by the objects her family carried across the border to write a book, *Remnants of a Separation*. "Later, my grandfather and the rest of his family moved to Kingsway Camp in Delhi and eventually set up the book store," says

Anchal. Aanchal's grandmother came to Delhi with her four siblings and her widowed mother. "They came to stay with my grandmother's elder sister in Karol Bagh. But my great-grandmother figured out that her hosts saw her as a "burden" and her pride didn't allow her to stay on. She decided to go back to Pakistan with her children. She reached Old Delhi Railway Station and demanded a ticket back to Pakistan. The station master showed her trains filled with corpses and begged her to stay back. But she said it was better to die in her own land than be a burden on someone in an alien place," says Anchal. A social worker somehow convinced her to come with him to a camp in Meerut. Eight months later, Anchal's great-grandmother landed a teaching job in Delhi and moved her family to Kingsway Camp. Once there, the elder Mr Bahri met his wife and the rest, as they say, is a love story. Despite his love for his hometown in Pakistan, Aanchal's grandfather never forgot his debt to Delhi. "Independence forced us to flee, made us refugees, but Dilli forced us to stand on our own feet. We have built this city and it has built us," he told Aanchal.

'Missing a train, but staying alive's Mohindra Dhall: Lyallpur to Ferozepur

It was 13 September 1947 and Mohindra Dhall, who was born in Lyallpur (now Faisalabad), had just turned six that day. His father worked for the canals division of the Public Works Department in Pucca Dalla. "There was firing in the village next to ours, so my father decided to leave with 45 other Hindu families," recalls Dhall, now aged 75, speaking from his home in Edinburgh. Dhall, his parents and four brothers, the youngest of whom was just a year old, left at midnight and walked through the night towards Chur Khanna, over 40 km away, to catch a train to India. At 6 am there was chaos. "A train was coming full of people who had been killed," Dhall said. At 11.30 am they stopped at a village to rest but soon heard screams as people walked past dead bodies in a Hindu temple. Terrified, they grabbed their belongings and set off again. At night they reached Sacha Sauda where they slept under trees. But at 2 am they were woken by firing because the collector of that town, who was a Hindu, had been killed and his house looted. They reached the train station at 3 pm the next day, only to learn there was no train for the next two days. On the third day, the train arrived and thousands of people were waiting to get on. Almost everyone in the family managed to get on. But an hour before the train left, Dhall's father got off along

with the rest of the family. "The next day we heard the whole train had been butchered, including 20 of the families we had been with," Dhall said. They finally got on a train three days later that stopped at Lahore where army officers rifled through everyone's luggage and confiscated weapons. "People were carrying guns, swords and knives to protect themselves," he recalled. After reaching Ferozepur, the family moved into a large house that had been vacated by Muslims. "Both sides saw this as a land-grabbing opportunity," felt Dhall.

'Yearning for Amritsar, Shukat Ali: Amritsar to Lahore'

On 18 August 1947, Chaudhary Barkat Ali bundled his family and some belongings in a truck and set off for the new country of Pakistan from Amritsar. He reached Pakistan as a refugee and began his new life in Lahore. But he never forgot the city he left behind. "My sister Zohra was very young and pretty. My father was very concerned about her security on the way, but with prayers we reached Pakistan and settled in Lahore," said Chaudhary Shaukat Ali, son of Barkat Ali, on the phone. The Chaudhary family owned a house in Kucha Dabgaran in Katra Mahna Singh, once a vibrant locality of Amritsar. Despite being 10 years old at the time, the pangs of Partition have not faded from Shaukat Ali's memory. He remembers how the family ran a roaring slate business in Amritsar and never imagined they would have to migrate from their hometown.

Shaukat Ali schooled in Lahore and later became a civil servant. He married in 1968, and retired as the deputy commissioner of Islamabad in 1995. Since Partition, Shaukat Ali has visited Amritsar twice to locate the grave of his sister, Sakina, who died of cancer two years before the great divide. Recalling her father's memories of his sister and their birthplace, Amritsar, Shaukat's daughter, Sumaira Servat, said, "My father regrets leaving behind his home and Sakina, his darling sister, buried in a graveyard close to their house in Kucha Dabgaran. He often says 'Sakina, we left you alone there'." Sumaira, a yoga teacher in Pakistan, says both she and her young daughter Sayeda Natalia yearn for their roots and wish they could live again in Amritsar. "It was our hometown. Now the situation has changed as bitterness has replaced love and affection. Governments of both nations should give special access to people to visit the hometowns they left behind during Partition," Sumaira says.

From various sources and online records

The well-known author of his times, S Khushwant Singh, wrote on Sikhism as

“Bridging The Gulf”

An important facet of Sikhism is its attempt to bridge the gulf between Hinduism and Islam. Guru Nanak's life-long companion and first disciple was the Muslim minstrel, Bhai Mardana, who put the Guru's hymns into different ragas of Indian classical music.

Nanak has many hymns on Islamic themes.

Mehar masit sidak musalla...

If you would be a Muslim true;
Let your life these rules pursue;
Let your mosque be the abode of kindness;
In it spread your prayer-mat of faith;
And as you read the Koran, think of righteous acts;
And gentle acts the fasts you keep;
Let the reward of good deeds be your Kaaba;
And truth your preceptor;
Let the Kalima be your acts of mercy;
And as you tell the beads of the rosary;
Dwell upon the Lord's commandments;
Says Nanak, the Lord will preserve your honour.
Then,

Musalman kahavan muskal ...

To be a Mussulman is not easy;
Only he who is one should make the claim;
He should first follow in the footsteps of the holy;
And accept their bitter words as sweets;
Rid himself of worldly goods;
As sandpaper rids iron of rust;
A Muslim's faith is to follow his leader;
Caring neither for life nor death;
To believe that there is a God above;
Whose will is law;
And abandon all thoughts of self;
O Nanak, if the Creator is merciful;
Will you become a true Mussulman.

The attempt at bridge-building continued till the Fifth Guru Arjan Dev, who compiled the Sikhs' sacred text, the Adi Granth, in 1601 AD. He not only included hymns of holy Muslims and Sufi saints but also invited Mian Meer from Lahore to lay the foundation stone of Harmandar Sahib (today's Golden Temple) in Amritsar.

Ironically, he became the first Sikh martyr to bigotry. The second was the Ninth Guru Tegh Bahadar who was beheaded in Delhi in 1675. Quoted is one of his hymns which his son, the Tenth and last Guru Gobind Singh, incorporated in the final edition of Granth Sahib:

Jo nar dukh main dukh nahi mania...

He who in adversity grieves not;
He who is without fear;
He who fails not in the snare of sensuality;
Who has no greed for gold knowing it is like dust;
He who does not slander people when their backs are turned;
Nor flatters them to their faces;
He who has neither gluttony in his heart;
Nor vanity nor attachment with worldly things;
He whom nothing moves;
Neither good fortune nor ill;
Who cares not for the world's applause;
Nor its censure;
Who ignored every wishful fantasy;
And accepts what comes his way as it comes;
He whom nothing can lure;
Nor anger command;
In such a one lives God Himself;
On such a man does the Guru's grace descend;
For he knows the righteous path;
O Nanak, his soul singles with the Lord.
As water mingles with water (Sorath)

Nankana Sahib

Symbolic of the universal faith

In their daily *Ardaas*, Sikhs beseech the Lord to grant them free access to their holy shrines, now in Pakistan, from which they were wrenched in 1947. Many Muslims acutely feel that way, as also Tarak Fateh who celebrates the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak and prays for a future of pluralism and tolerance



On 7 November 2017, it was the 548th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, founder of the Sikh faith and one of the greatest symbols of pluralism and tolerance in the world. On this Gurpurab, as always, millions of Sikhs and their friends around the world are celebrating, but few outside India know the significance of this day or its history.

The 5,000-year old Indian civilisation, born on the banks of the Indus and nurtured for many millennia by the Ganges, still enchants the rest of the world. With a cacophony of cultures and a myriad of languages, India is truly incredible. A place where diversity is not just taught, but experienced as life itself. The land of Krishna and the Vedas is the natural home to Hinduism, but under its umbrella Hinduism has nurtured other



Nankana Sahib is just an hour's drive from Lahore, erstwhile capital of the Sikh kingdom

major religions of the world and provided refuge to those fleeing persecution. Be they Zoroastrians from Persia, Thomas the Apostle, or the descendants of Prophet Muhammad escaping the Arab Umayyad Armies, India has accepted all without any conditions and stands as a power that has never once invaded its neighbours throughout its chequered history.

Mahatma Gandhi may epitomise India for some in the West, but he is just one of the many colossal figures of history that have shaped the land, its culture and its religions. Poets such as Tagore and Iqbal immortalised India in verse while emperors like Ashoka and Akbar ruled over dazzling domains that stunned the visitor. Among the great philosophers and thinkers that India gifted to the world are two men who tower far above the rest: Gautam Buddha and Guru Nanak Dev, the founders of Buddhism and Sikhism. While Buddha



Thousands of devotees from India, Europe, the Americas, Southeast Asia and Pakistan congregate at Nankana Sahib during Gurbirab – but then soon are gone !





The Wagah-Attari border, on the Grand Trunk Road, midway between Amritsar and Lahore, is the only official land link between the estranged countries. Established in October 1947, it witnesses a pantomime-like ceremony carried out by border guards every evening to entertain visitors, but is also severely jingoistic

is well known in the West as a result of his creed and followers, Guru Nanak, whose birthday we celebrate is yet to be entirely 'discovered'.

Let this Muslim introduce you to the man who founded the world's youngest religion, Sikhism and who had a profound role in shaping my Punjabi heritage, but alas, one that was torn to shreds by the bloody partition of India in August 1947.

Today, the place where Guru Nanak was born in 1469 is a city that was ethnically cleansed of its entire Sikh population during the bloodbath of 1947. Nankana Sahib, a place where the Guru spent his childhood with Muslim and Hindu friends is akin to a Bethlehem without Christians; a Medina without Muslims. For a few days the town will bustle with Sikh pilgrims from all over the world, but soon they will depart and nary a turban will be seen until the Sikhs return the following year.

The city of Nankana Sahib lies near Lahore, my maternal ancestral home, where my mother and father were born. My mother told me how she as

a Muslim girl grew up with Sikh neighbours and how she was part of the Sikh family's celebrations at the time of Gurpurab and how she would travel with her friend to Nankana Sahib. Decades later she would still recall her lost friend who left Pakistan to seek refuge across the border. Today Nankana Sahib celebrates, but there are no Muslim girls accompanying their Sikh friends. None. It is sad.

Sad, because Sikhism and Guru Nanak were intertwined with Islam and Muslims. The Guru's closest companion was a Muslim by the name of Bhai Mardana. It is said when Mardana was dying, the Guru asked him, how would you like to die? As a Muslim? To which the ailing companion replied, "As a human being."

Five hundred years later, a border divides Muslim and Sikh Punjabis. A border where two nuclear armies and a million armed men face each other. As a Muslim Punjabi I feel the British in dividing Punjab separated my soul from my body and left the two to survive on their own. Muslim Punjabis lost their neighbours and family friends of generations. Most of all they lost their language that today languishes as a second-class tongue in its own home. We kept Nankana Sahib, but lost the Guru.

However, the tragedy that befell the Sikhs was far more ominous and deserves special attention. For Sikhs, the Punjabi cities of Lahore and Gujranwala, Nankana Sahib and Rawalpindi were their hometowns and had shared a history with their Gurus. With the 1947 Partition, not only was Punjab divided, but the Sikhs were ethnically cleansed from Pakistan's Punjab.

As a result of the creation of the Islamic State of Pakistan, the Sikhs lost absolute access to the following holy sites: Gurdwara Janam Asthan, the birthplace of Guru Nanak, in Nankana Sahib; Gurdwara Panja Sahib in Hasan Abdal; Gurdwara



The joy of returning "home", however short-lived, is manifest in these images taken of Sikh devotees leaving for Pakistan...



...and their arrival at Lahore Railway Station, enroute Nankana Sahib

Dera Sahib in Lahore, where the Fifth Guru, Arjan Dev, was martyred; Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib in Kartarpur, where Guru Nanak passed away; the shrine of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Lahore, and so much else.

When the killings and cleansing of 1947 ended, not a single Sikh was visible in Lahore. Of course, Muslims too were chased out of the eastern parts of Punjab, but they were not losing their holy places of

Muslims who cannot empathise with the loss of the Sikhs need to ask themselves why they do not.

Before 1947, Punjabi Muslims did not consider Sikhism as an adversarial faith. After all, from the Muslim perspective, Sikhism was the combination of the teachings of Sufism, which was rooted in Islamic thought and the Bhakti movement, an organic link to Hindu philosophy. It is true that Mughal emperors had been particularly vicious and cruel to the leaders



Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana (Painting by Jarnail Singh)

Mecca or Medina. Even though we Muslims despair the occupation of Jerusalem, we still have the comfort of knowing that Muslims still live in and around the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. But what about the Sikhs?

To feel their pain, Muslims need to imagine how outraged we would feel if, God forbid, Mecca and Medina were cleansed of all Muslims and fell under the occupation of, say, Ethiopia. How can we Muslims ask for the liberation of Muslim lands while we institutionalise the exclusion and ethnic cleansing of all Sikhs from their holy sites inside an Islamic state?

of the Sikh faith, but these Mughals were not acting as representatives of Islam. Not only that, the Mughals inflicted even harsher punishments on their fellow Muslims.

With the creation of Pakistan, the Sikhs lost something even more precious than their holy places: diverse subcultural streams. One such stream flourishing in Thal region (Sind Sagar Doab) in what is now Pakistan, near Punjab's border with Sind and Baluchistan, was known as the *Sewa Panthis*.

The Sewa Panthi tradition flourished in southwest Punjab for nearly 12 generations until 1947. This sect



During Gurpurab: Durbar Sahib of Nankana Sahib Gurdwara



(variously known as Sewa Panthis, Sewa Dassiey, and Addan Shahis), is best symbolised by Bhai Ghaniya, who aided wounded Sikh and Muslim soldiers alike during the Tenth Sikh Guru's wars with Mughuls. Sewa Panthis wore distinctive white robes. They introduced a new dimension to the subcontinental religious philosophies. They believed that sewa (helping the needy) was the highest form of spiritual meditation — higher than singing hymns or reciting holy books. The creation of Pakistan dealt a devastating blow to the Sewa Panthis and they never got truly transplanted in the new 'East' Punjab.

The organic relationship between philosophies and land, indeed, requires native soil for ideas to bloom. Other such sects and deras (groups) that made up the composite Sikh faith of the 19th and early 20th centuries included Namdharis, Nirankaris, Radha Soamis, Nirmaleys, and Sidhs — all were pushed to the margins, or even out of Sikhism, after that partition.

The tragedy of the division of Punjab is best captured in a moving poem by the first prominent woman Punjabi poet, novelist, and essayist Amrita Pritam, *Ujj Akhaan Waris Shah Noo* (An Ode to Waris Shah), which she is said to have written while escaping in a train with her family from Pakistan to India. Pritam wrote:

*Today, I beckon you Waris Shah,
Speak from inside your grave.
And to your book of love, add the next page.*

*Once when a single daughter of
Punjab wept, you wrote a wailing
saga.*

*Today, a million daughters cry to
you, Waris Shah.*

*Rise, O friend of the grieving; rise
and see your own Punjab,
Today, fields lined with corpses, and
the Chenab flowing with blood.*

And as I celebrate the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak I read some profound words of wisdom the Guru left for his Muslim friends. He wrote:

*Make mercy your Mosque,
Faith your Prayer Mat,
what is just and lawful your Qu'ran,
Modesty your Circumcision,
and civility your Fast.*

So shall you be a Muslim.

*Make right conduct your Ka'aba,
Truth your Pir, and
good deeds your Kalma and prayers.*



Tarek Fatah, born 20 November 1949, is a Canadian writer, broadcaster, secularist and liberal activist. Fatah is a founder of the Muslim Canadian Congress and served as its communications officer and spokesperson. He advocates a separation of religion and state, opposition to sharia law, and advocates a "liberal, progressive form" of Islam.

Some images of the Holy Land of Sikhs, today



Gateway to Nankana Sahib



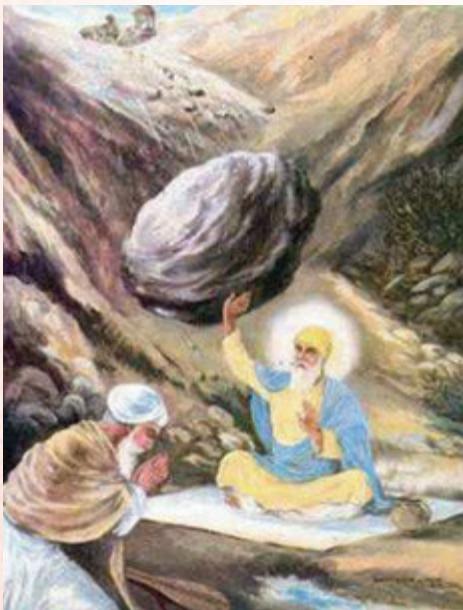
Devotees visiting Gurdwara Panja Sahib



Front view of Janamasthan, marked by the main gurdwara at Nankana Sahib



View of Gurdwara Panja Sahib at Hasan Abdal



Painting depicts Guru Nanak stopping the rock hurled from the hill by Hazrat Shah Wali Qandhari. Imprint of the Guru's hand on the rock is revered and is foundation of the gurdwara at Hasan Abdal



Gurdwara Dera Sahib at Lahore where the Fifth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Arjan Dev was martyred



Gurdwara Tambu Sahib, not far from Nankana Sahib, marks the place where young Nanak gave away all his money to feed ascetics. Hesitant to face his father's ire, he hid himself under a large van tree whose branches touched the ground making it look like a tent (tambu in Punjabi)



Gurdwara Rohri Sahib at Jhaman, some 15 kilometres south of Gujranwala

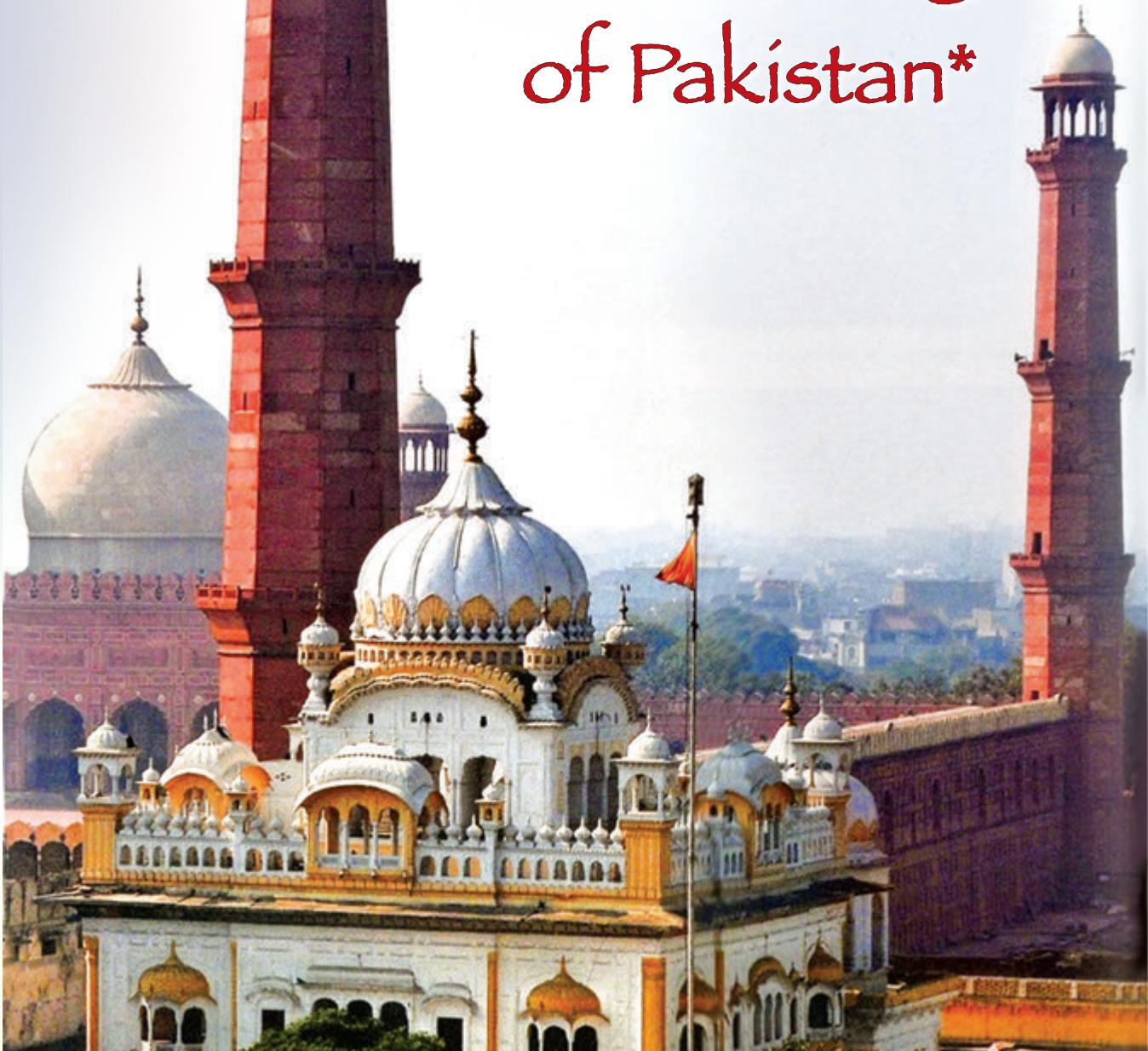


Gurdwara at Kartarpur Sahib where Guru Nanak passed away, just some hundred yards away from the international border between India and Pakistan



Torn asunder ! Gudwara Kartarpur Sahib photographed from the Indian side of the border (see page 64)

Enshrining the Sikh Heritage of Pakistan*



Symbolising the composite culture of Islam and Sikhism at Lahore, is the Samadhi of Maharaja Ranjit Singh with the Badshahi Mosque in the background

The heritage, culture, language and customs, nay even the DNA, of peoples in the erstwhile united Punjab are intrinsically interlinked owing to the fact that they were but the same country

till the imperial designs of the British in 1845 and machinations by the same people one hundred years later, led to the heart-wrenching partition of 1947. Despite some searing memories of that difficult period

70 years ago, the hearts of people on both sides of the Radcliffe Line still beat for each other and memories of the life left behind continue to haunt them.

Several historians, scholars, researchers as also art and architectural aficionados have undertaken projects, including writing of researched accounts and photographing these remnants of history and compiling them as chronicles of the glory that was once an united Punjab. These books are both from India and from Pakistan. *The Nagaara Trust*, publishers of the *Nishaan* journal was engaged in the publishing of '*Lost Heritage: Sikh Legacy Pakistan*' by Amardeep Singh in 2016. In this same vein, Pakistani author Dr. Safdar Ali Shah in tandem with his photographer colleague Syed Javaid A Kazi, have produced an impressive publication *The Sikh Heritage of Pakistan*. Which was released in April 2012. As the author articulates, "The Sikh shrines and monuments are not only testaments of local history, they are sparkling jewels of our cultural heritage as well. More importantly, they are strong bonds of affinity between the Sikhs and Muslims, which extend beyond borders and political dispensations. Apart from the existing socio-cultural, ethnic and linguistic moorings which hold them together, frequent interactions between the two communities, outside the subcontinent and post partition realities, have further strengthened the abiding relationship."

In preserving the priceless memories of this everlasting legacy, Safdar and Javaid have worked on this beautifully illustrated book "as a bridge between those on both sides of the border." For the senior generation, this is a great memorial to recall the bygone era and for the youth, this wonderful book

provides immense architectural and religious insight into the life and times of Guru Nanak Dev, including details on Gurdwara Janamasthan, which marks his place of birth, as well as shrines erected to mark other spiritual and politically potent landmarks in the history of Sikhs and Sikhism.

In the pre-Partition era of 1947, statistics reveal that despite the fact that Sikhs comprised only 10 to 12 per cent of Punjab's population and thus were a seemingly "minority community", their contribution to society by virtue of their hard work was such as to be regarded a very vibrant and an integral part of the eco-system. The fact is that advent of Sikhism was centred in and around today's Pakistani Punjab, which makes the region a holy land where several hundred Sikh shrines are located. Over the many decades after 1947, as the Sikh diaspora spread to other parts of the world, there are increasingly more frequent visits by people from all over, to pay obeisance at these spiritual centres, which continue to illuminate the brilliance of Sikhism.

The Sikh Heritage of Pakistan is a must for collectors owing to the magnificent photographs, which form an integral part of the book and capture the essence of not just the physical or architectural aspects of many Sikh monuments in Pakistani Punjab, but also the spiritual and religious aspect of these shrines. Impeccably researched and painstakingly put together, the book enshrines much of importance in recent history, thereby making it even more vital in the tumultuous atmosphere of deteriorating relations between India and Pakistan. This is a sobering offer on how the majority of peoples want to overcome differences but whose voices get overwhelmed in the milieu of political ambitions and vested interests.

The olden temple once again was lit bright

The abode of A'zar glowed with Abraham's light

The call of oneness of God rose from Punjab again

India was awakened from slumber by a perfect man

بُت کدہ پھر بعد مدت کے مگر روشن ہوا
ٹور ابراہیم سے آزر کا گھر روشن ہوا
پھر انھی آخر صد اتوحید کی پنجاب سے
ہند کو اک مردِ کامل نے جگایا خواب سے

Nanak by Allama Muhammad Iqbal (Poet, Philosopher)

The book begins with the *Mool Mantra* from Japji Sahib and the ode to Nanak written by Allama Muhammad Iqbal, the poet, philosopher, and politician, in British India, who was also regarded in later years as the 'Spiritual Father of Pakistan.'

Contents of the book embrace various aspects in the Sikh heritage of Pakistan including emergence of the new faith, which evolved into the Khalsa Panth and whose identity is clearly defined in movements since the late 19th century. There are chapters on the Sikhs in Pakistan today, Muslim-Sikh relations and gurdwara architecture, with considerable emphasis on Nankana Sahib and various gurdwaras associated with Guru Nanak, but also others in the entire country from Peshawar in the north to Karachi in the south.

Reproduced are some extracts from the book:

Muslim-Sikh Relations

Sikhs and Muslims of the Punjab were ideological allies, spoke the same language, and were knit in ethnic bonds. They shared a common folklore and literary heritage. More importantly, the founding Guru of Sikhs, Baba Guru Nanak Dev ji, was revered by the Muslims as a saint. No Guru ever said anything against Islam, despite political conflicts in some cases with the Mughal emperors, or any Muslim ever speak ill of the spiritual leadership of the Sikhs. Besides respect and reverence of Muslims for Baba Guru Nanak Dev ji, one of his close companions was a Muslim by the name of Bhai Mardana. Likewise, the man who first recognised the spiritual status of Guru Nanak Dev ji at an early age was a Muslim by the name of Rai Bular. He bequeathed 18,750 acres of land to the Gurdwaras in and around Nankana Sahib, besides annual *jagirs*. His descendants still welcome and serve the pilgrims at Nankana Sahib. Guru Nanak Dev ji had very cordial relations with Muslim saints like Shah Farid and Pir Jala-ud-Din Quarishi.

Emperor Akbar treated Guru Amar Das ji with utmost reverence and granted a vast tract of land where later the Golden Temple at Amritsar was built. Hazrat Mian Mir, a Muslim divine from Lahore, had fraternal relationship with the Sikh Gurus as evident from the fact that he was invited to lay the foundation-stone of Harmandar Sahib (Golden Temple).

Guru Hargobind not only had friendly ties with Muslim Sufis, he also built a mosque in his native

village Shri Hargobindpura, which is called *Guru Ki Maseet*, which still stands as a monument of Sikh-Muslim harmony. While many Hill rajas and extremist Hindus had an issue with the Sikhs for allowing untouchables into their fold, and they also tormented Guru Gobind Singh ji, there was no clash on such issues with the Muslims. A Muslim, Syed Budhan Shah Sadhuri (or Peer Buddhu Shah) sent an army under his son to help Guru Gobind Singh against the Hill rajas in the Battle of Bhangani near Paonta Sahib. Together, they defeated them but two sons and a brother of Budhan Shah fell in action. Syed Budhan Shah was later executed for helping the Guru. In the second encounter at Anandpur in 1759, two Muslim warriors, Amin Beg and Mamun Khan, stood with the Guru. Even his bodyguards, Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan, were Muslims. Bahadur Shah, the son of Aurangzeb, not only presented the Guru Sahib precious jewels and title on his accession to the throne, but also appointed him the 'Governor' of Nanded (Deccan). Maharaja Ranjit Singh's trusted chief minister and foreign minister was a Muslim called Faqir Azizuddin. His two brothers were also in the Sikh court. Muslims were part of the Sikh Army in their fight against the British East India Company.

There was a strong tradition of communal co-existence in the Punjab as most of the native converts, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, belonged to the same social groups, such as Jats. The real cause of conflict was political power. The rulers who had all religious denominations in their armies invariably used religion for political advantage. "Despite the tradition of distrust, village communities were able to co-exist in peace and even to assume a façade of amity, often simulating kinship."

All Punjabis enjoy the folk stories of Heer Ranjha, Sassi Punu, Sohni Mahinwal, Mirza Sahiban, etc., sitting together sometimes for the entire night. Every village had a place of meeting where interested people gathered. Non-Muslims largely joined the Muslims Moharram processions and other occasions like marriage or death ceremonies.

Folklore of the Punjab contributed much to harmonious relations between the Muslims and the Sikhs. Mahya, Tappa, Bolian, Waran, Jugni, Chhalla and other folk songs were beloved by both and on any cultural event all the Punjabis enjoyed these folk songs together and with equal fervor. The conversions



Gurdwara Bhai Joga Singh at Peshawar. This splendid edifice was commissioned by Hari Singh Nalwa and dedicated to the memory of Bhai Joga Singh, a devout disciple of Guru Gobind Singh

Our Spiritual Land

Reacting to then Defence Minister of India, the Goan Manohar Parrikar's inappropriate remark in mid-2016 that, "A visit to Pakistan is like a visit to hell itself", eminent Punjabi playwright and director Atamjit Singh stated that Pakistan could be hell for Parrikar or some people of his ilk, but for him and the Sikhs "it is the land where their cultural and religious values are deeply rooted."

He added that his mother was born in Peshawar and father in Lahore. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was born in Nankana Sahib. Baba Farid, the first great poet of the Punjabi language, was born in Multan. "When so much in that land belongs to us, how it could be hell for me and other Punjabis like me? There would not have been great literature in the absence of legendary poetical narrative of Heer Ranjha written by Waris Shah, who was born in Jandiala Sher Khan. Half of my creative and spiritual strength comes from that part of the sub-continent which is now known as Pakistan. Some immortal songs of my language are sung by legendary singers such as Reshma, Nusrat Fateh Ali and Ghulam Ali who belong to the Punjab of the other side."

within caste, mainly the Jats proved a blessing. The Muslims were sympathetic towards the Jat Sikhs who were their relatives by blood. They had changed their religions but still were brothers, the land of five rivers had been a liberal society and there were no persecutions or clashes at the time of conversions. Cultural traditions overrode religions in some areas of life. [Today, there are Gills, Randhawas, Grewals and Bajwas on both sides of the Punjab. Interestingly, the current Pakistani Army Chief is also a Bajwa].

Unfortunately, most Sikh-Muslim perceptions have been cultivated and distorted, primarily to keep apart the two communities, that are natural

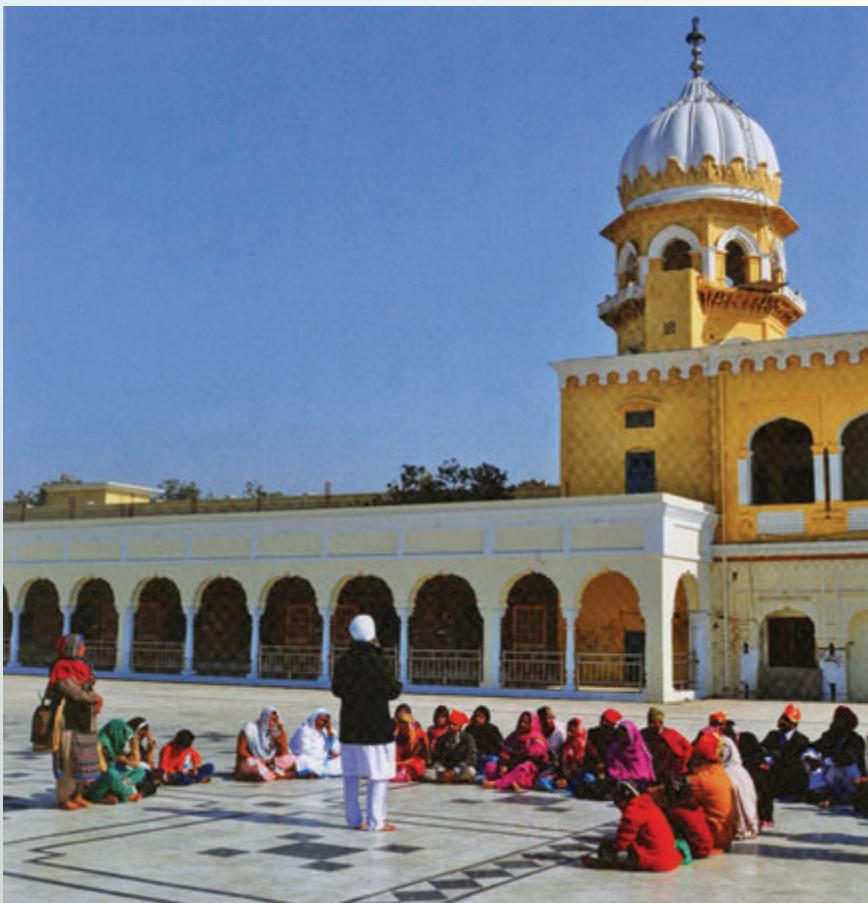
allies. This is what awaited a Sikh visitor, Kulmeet Singh, who was painted a grim picture of Pakistan, and was strongly dissuaded against his visit plans. He later recalled: "I noticed how similar the journey was to my drive from Amritsar to Lahore, via Wagah. I saw the same people, wearing similar clothes. Street-hawkers in Lahore yelled out the same rhythmic calls that I have heard in Patiala...I noticed more in common between the people of Amritsar and Lahore, than the people of Amritsar and Delhi."

The Sikhs in Pakistan today

The Sikhs that chose to stay in Pakistan have a natural affinity with the land and its people. They live in harmony with local communities and actively participate in socio-cultural events. They have been contributing to development of the country. A number of Sikhs have distinguished themselves at the national level, such as members of the legislative bodies, like Jaswant Singh Bugti and Kalyan Singh Kalyan. Jassi Lailpurya is a popular singer at home and abroad. Hercharan Singh became the first Sikh officer to graduate from the Pakistan Military Academy (*the photo on next page is of Major Hercharan Singh and his new bride after their marriage at Nankana Sahib*). A Sikh officer of the traffic police in Lahore is a celebrity: everyone is keen to talk to him and exchange pleasantries. Dr. Gulab Singh, a young homeopath, is as proficient with his language skills as his healing ability; so is Dr. Mimpal Singh who is known for his expertise as a Child Specialist at the Mayo Hospital, Lahore.

The Sikh community in Pakistan is gradually growing in number and influence, with many Sikhs having flourishing businesses and also being in the professions such as medicine, education, and others. They are also active in public life, especially in areas where they are settled in larger numbers such as Nankana Sahib (Punjab), Buner, Peshawar and the tribal areas (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa).

During Sikh festivals, when devotees from around the world visit Pakistan, especially Nankana Sahib, there are joyous celebrations where also Muslims participate in large numbers, particularly during the Gurpurab of Guru Nanak Dev ji. The Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (PSGPC) oversees the upkeep and development of Gurdwaras and monuments, besides taking care of various welfare schemes and also looks after wellbeing of



the community. Through its efforts, Pakistan Government enacted the Anand Marriage Act in November 2007, which enables the Sikhs living in Pakistan or anywhere else to register their marriages in the Sikh tradition.

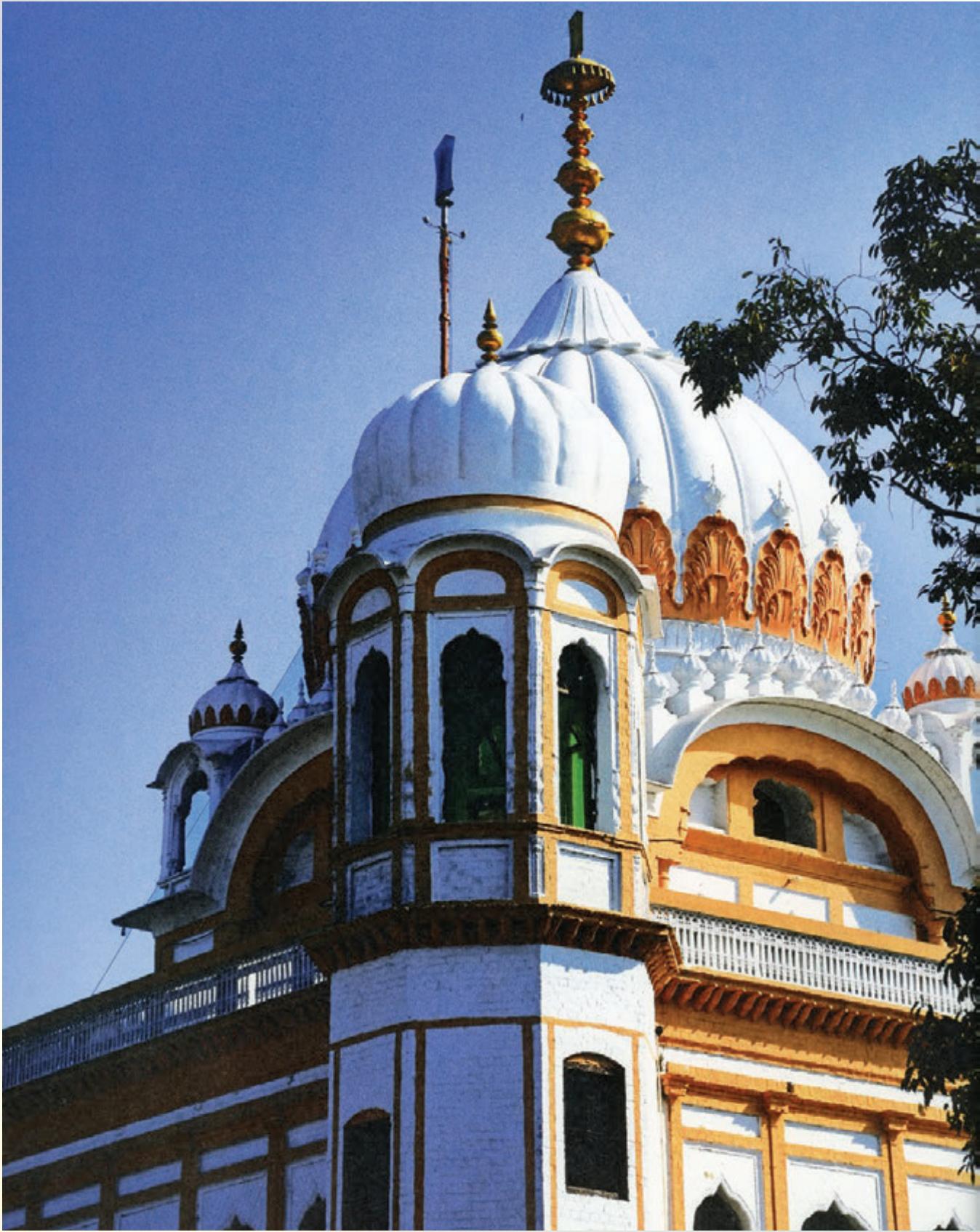
Young Sikh children during a lesson at Gurdwara Janamasthan at Nankana Sahib

***Book: The Sikh Heritage of Pakistan**

Authors: Dr Safdar Ali Shah and Syed Javaid A. Kazi

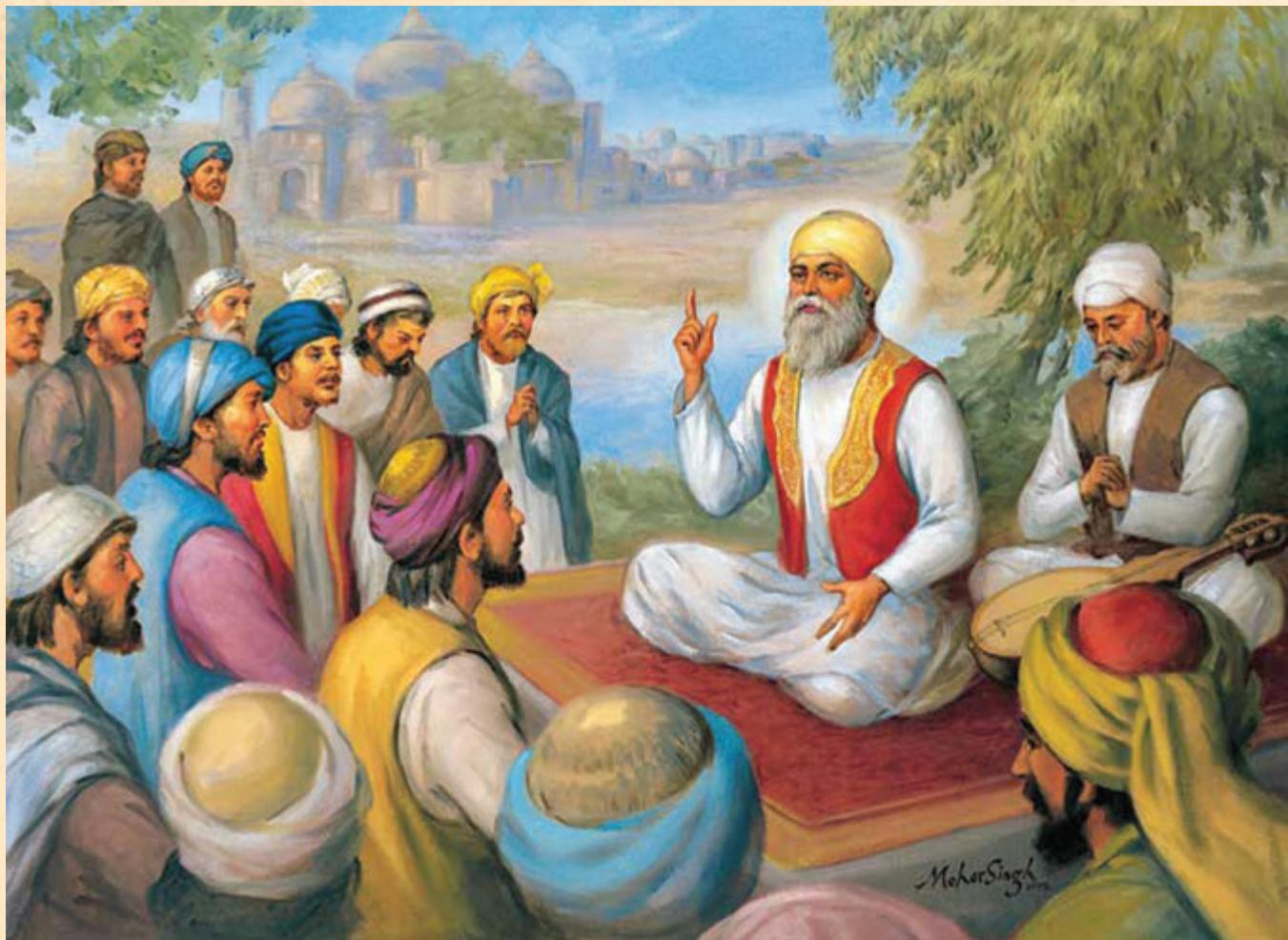
Publisher: Constellation Plus, Islamabad

ISBN: 978-969-01-6



Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur Sahib, Norowal, within sight of the border between India and Pakistan

Baba Guru Nanak and the real teachings of Islam



As the turmoil of religious strife overwhelmed the subcontinent from the 15th century onwards, there appeared Baba Guru Nanak in the Punjab whose advent at the time is regarded as providing spiritual balm in the midst of intolerance."

Thus recorded Thomas Patrick Hughes, a British missionary working in India from 1865 to 1884, who wrote many books including *Dictionary of Islam* wherein he added a chapter on *Sikhism*. The reason offered by him to include *Sikhism* in a book about

Islam is that: "...it is enough for the purposes of this chapter to have established the fact that *Sikhism*, in its inception, was intimately associated with *Muhammadanism*; and that it was intended as a means of bridging the gulf which separated the Hindus from the believers in the Prophet."

Reverend Hughes opined that Bābā Nānāk intended to create a bridge between Hindūs and Muslims: "The literature and traditions of *Sikhism* present a intermingling of Hindū and Muhammadan ideas

and this is so palpably apparent that even superficial inquirers have been led to conclude that Nānak purposely intended his creed to be a compromise between those two great religions."

Regarding the origin of Sikhism, Reverend Hughes examined the Janam-Sākhīs, or biographical sketches of Nānak and his associates, which contain a profusion of traditions and throw considerable light on the origin and development of the Sikh religion. "From these venerable books we learn that, in early life, Nānak, although a Hindu by birth, came under Sufī influence, and was strangely attracted by the saintly demean of the faqīrs who were thickly scattered over Northern India and swarmed in the Punjab... It is, therefore, only reasonable to suppose that any Hindū affected by Muhammadanism would show some traces of Sufī influence. As a fact, we find that the doctrines preached by the Sikh Gurus were distinctly Sufīstic and, indeed, the early Gurus openly assumed the manners and dress of faqīrs, thus plainly announcing their connection with the Sufīstic side of Muhammadanism. In pictures they are represented with small rosaries in their hands, quite in Muhammadan fashion, as though ready to perform *Zikr*."

Reverend Hughes further writes that although Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru was the first to lay aside the dress of a faqir in the doctrines but the Sufī terminologies were still used by all the Gurus. Guru Granth mentions God as the Only Deity; the True One; the Light; the Beloved One; and many other similar expressions found both in Sufī literature and Guru Granth Sahib. He writes: "Another remarkable proof of Persian influence is found in the form of the *Adi Granth* itself. It consists of a collection of short poems, in many of which all the verses composing the poem rhyme together, in singular conformity with the principle regulating the construction of the Persian *ghazal*. This resemblance is rendered more striking by the fact that the name of Nanak is worked into the composition of the last line of each of the poems. This last characteristic is too persistent to be considered the result of accident, and while it is altogether foreign to the practice of Hindu verse, it is in precise accord with the rule for the correct composition of the *ghazal*. The foregoing facts seem conclusive as to time influence of Persian on the origins of Sikhism."

Reverend Hughes quotes Dr Trumpp (the first translator into English of Gūrū Granth Sahib), who,

while discussing the philosophy of the *Adi Granth*, admits the intimate connection between Sikhism and Sufīsm in the following words:

"We can distinguish in the Granth a grosser and a finer kind of Pantheism.... In this finer shade of Pantheism, creation assumes the form of emanation from the Supreme (as in the system of the Sufīs); the atomic matter is either likewise considered co-eternal with the Absolute and immanent in it, becoming moulded into various, distinct forms by the energising vigour of the absolute *jyoti* (light) or, the reality of matter is more or less denied." The teaching of Nanak was, however, very practical. His followers are daily reminded in the Japji that; "Without the practice of virtue there can be no worship." Reverend Hughes quotes many passages of Guru Granth wherein not only a plain claim of kinship with the Sufīs, but the incorporation of several of their favourite terms is found.

Besides Guru Granth Sahib, Reverend Hughes also presents evidences from Janam Sakhis, which he studied from oldest manuscripts he found in the India Office Library in London. "The traditions of Nanak preserved in the Janam Sākhi, are full of evidences of his alliance with Muhammadanism. He was a Hindu by birth, of the Vedi Khattri castes; son of the patwari, or village accountant, of the place now called Nankana, in the neighbourhood of Lahore. In his very early days, he sought the society of faqirs, and liberally bestowed them with alms. At fifteen years of age, he misspent the money which his father had given him for trade, and this induced his parents to send him to a relative at Sultanpur, in order that he might be weaned from his affection for faqirs. His first act in his new home was to join the service of a Muhammadan Nawab, Daulat Khan Lodi, and while serving him, continued to give to faqirs all his earnings, except the bare maintenance he reserved for himself.

While in the service of this Muhammadan, Nanak received the ecstatic exaltation which he felt to be Divine inspiration. It is stated in the tradition of his life that Nanak went to the river to perform his ablutions, and that whilst so engaged, he was translated bodily to the gates of Paradise. "Then a goblet of *amrita* (the water of life) was given (to him) by command of God. The command was 'This *amrita* is the goblet of my name; drink thou it.' Then the Guru Nanak made salutation, and drank from the goblet. The Lord (Sahib) had mercy (and said) Nanak, I am with

thee, I have made thee happy, and whoever shall take thy name they all shall be rendered happy by me. Go thou, repeat my name, and cause other people to repeat it. Remain uncontaminated from the World. Continue (steadfast) in the name, in alms-giving, in ablutions, in service, and, in the remembrance (of me). I have given to thee my own name: do thou this work." Here we have notions closely akin to those of the Sufis, who lay much stress on the repetition of the name of God, which they term *Zikr*, on religious ablutions [*Wazu*] and on meditating on the unity of God [*Wahdaniyah*].

Reverend Hughes further refers to those incidents that happened after this experience when Bābā Nānak was summoned by his employer and investigated about his utterances. It is stated that Bābā Nānak then proceeded to offer prayer with the whole congregation and the news spread in the town that Bābā Nānak "has become Muslim".

No sooner had Nanak recovered from his trance than he uttered the essence of his future system in the celebrated phrase, "There is no Hindu, and there is no Musalman". The Janam Sākhi then goes on to say that, "The people went to the Khan (his former employer) and said, 'Baba Nanak is saying, there is no Hindu, there is no Musalman.' The Khan replied, "Do not regard his statement, he is a faqir." A Qazi sitting near said, "O Khan! It is surprising that he is saying there is no Hindu and no Musalman." The Khan then told an attendant to call Nanak, but the Guru Nanak said, "What have I to do with the Khan?" Then the Baba (Nanak) was silent. When he said anything, he repeated only this statement "There is no Hindu, there is no Musalman." The Qazi then said, "Khan is it right that he should say, there is no Hindu, there is no Musalman." Then the Khan said, "Go, fetch him." The attendant went, and said "Sir, the Khan is calling (you)." The Khan said, "For God's sake give me an interview [*Panj aj bara Khuda, i de tan,i = Persian azbara, iKhuda*, I want to see thee]." Guru Nanak arose and went, saying, "Now the summons of my Lord (Sahib) has come, I will go." He placed a staff upon his neck and went.

The Khan said, "Nanak, for God's sake take the staff from off thy neck, gird up thy waist, thou art a good faqir." Guru Nanak took the staff from off (his) neck, and girded up his loins. The Khan said, "O Nanak, it is a misfortune to me that a steward such as thou shouldst become a faqir." Then the Khan seated the Guru Nanak near himself and said,

"Qazi, if thou desist to ask anything, ask now; otherwise this one will not again utter a word." The Qazi becoming friendly smiled and said: "Nanak what dost thou mean by saying 'There is no Hindu, there is no Musalman?'" Nanak replied: "To be called a Musalman is difficult; when one (becomes it) thou he may be called a Musalman. First of all, having made religion (*din*) sweet, he clears away Musalman wealth. Having become firm in religion (*din*) in this way brings, to an end the revolution of dying and, living."

When Nanak had uttered this verse, the Qazi became amazed. The Khan said: "O Qazi, is not the questioning of him a mistake?" The time of the afternoon prayer had come. All arose and went (to the mosque) to prayers, and the Baba (Nanak) also went with them. Nanak then demonstrated his supernatural power by reading the thoughts of the Qazi. "Then the Qazi came and fell down at his feet, exclaiming, "Wonderful, wonderful! On this one is the favour of God." Then the Qazi believed; and Nanak uttered this stanza: "A (real) Musalman clears away self; (he possesses) sincerity, patience, purity of speech: (what is) erect he does not annoy: (what) lies (dead) he does not eat. O Nanak! That Musalman goes to heaven (*bihisiht*)."
When the Baba had uttered this stanza, the Saiyids, the sons of the Shaikhs, the Qazi, the Mufti, the Khan the chiefs and leaders were amazed. The Khan said: "Qazi Nanak has reached the truth; the additional questioning is a mistake." Wherever the Baba looked, there all were saluting him. And the Baba had recited a few stanzas, the Khan came, and fell-down at his feet. Then the people, Hindus and Musalmans, began to say to the Khan that "God (*Khuda*) was speaking in Nanak."

From the foregoing it is clear that the immediate successors of Nanak believed that he went very close to Muhammadanism and we can scarcely doubt the accuracy of their view of the matter, when we consider the almost contemporaneous character of the record, from which extracts have been given, and the numerous confirmatory evidences contained in the religion itself... Another significant fact is that when Nanak speaks of himself as the servant of God, he employs the word *Khuda*, a Persian Muhammadan term, but when his brother-in-law Jairam speaks of God, he uses the Hindu word. *Paramesur*. It will, also, be noticed that Muhammadans are affected by the logic and piety of Nanak, and to them he shows himself

so partial that he openly accompanies them to the mosque, and thereby causes his Hindu neighbours and friends to believe that he is actually converted to the faith of Islām. But, of course, the most remarkable expression of all is the emphatic and repeated announcement that "There is no Hindu, there is no Musalman." This can mean nothing else than that it was Nanak's settled intention to do away with the differences between those two forms of belief, by instituting a third course which should supersede both of them.

Reverend Hughes further writes that while meeting Muslim dervishes, Guru Nanak used to greet them with Islāmic greeting of "*Assalam-o-Alaikum*" and receiving back the same greeting of "*Wa-Alaikum-Assalam*". Then Reverend Hughes describes the intimate and close relationship of Guru Nanak with Shaikh Farid that lasted for twelve years. Sometimes this Shaikh Farid is mistaken as Baba Farid Shakar-Ganj who had lived many centuries earlier than Guru Nanak. Reverend Hughes writes:

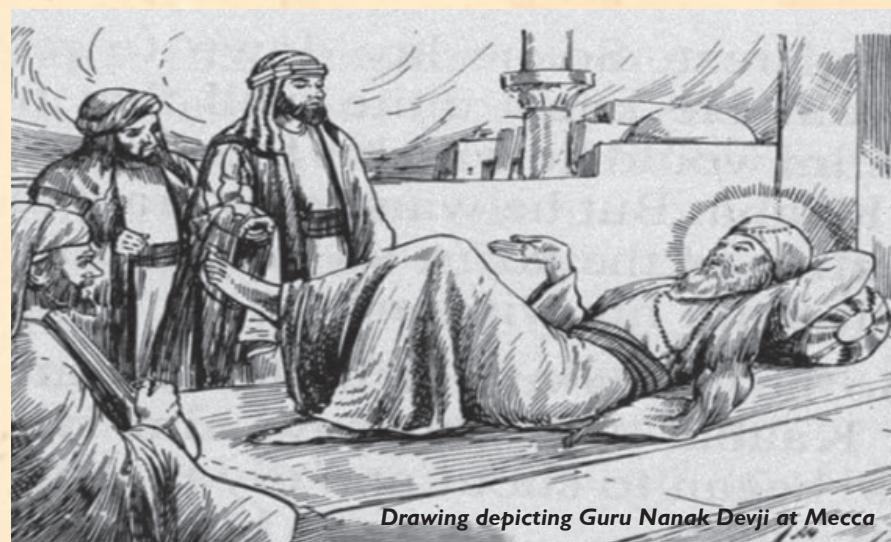
"The most significant associate which Nanak found was, undoubtedly, Shaikh Farid...This strict Muhammadan became the confidential friend and companion of Nanak; and if all other traditions had failed, this alone would have been enough to establish the eclectic character of early Sikhism. The first greeting of these famous men is significant enough, Shaikh Farid exclaimed, '*Allāh, Allāh, O Darvesh*', to which Nanak replied, '*Allāh* Is the object of my efforts, O Farid! Come, Shaikh Farid *Allāh, Allāh* (only) is over my object' The words in the original being *Allāh, Farid, juhdi; hamesa au, Sekh Farid, juhdi Allāh Allāh*.' The use of the Arabic term *juhdi* implies the energy of the purpose with which he sought for *Allāh*; and the whole phrase is forcibly Muhammadan in tone.

An intimacy at once sprang up between these two remarkable men and Shaikh Farid accompanied Nanak in all his wanderings for the next twelve years. The intended compromise between Hinduism and Islām is shown not only in the fact of this friendship but in the important circumstance that no less than 142 stanzas composed by Shaikh Farid are admitted

into the *Adi Granth* itself. An examination of these verses still further proves the mingling of the two religions which Nanak effected....The fact that the compositions of a genuine Sufī should have been admitted into the canonical book of the Sikhs, and that they should contain such a clear admixture of Hindu and Muhammadan ideas, is conclusive evidence that Nanak, and his immediate successors, saw no incongruity in the mixture.

As soon as Nanak and his friend Shaikh Farid begin to travel in company, it is related that they reached a place called Bisiar, where the people applied cow-dung to every spot on which they had stood, as soon as they departed. The obvious meaning of this is, that orthodox Hindus considered every spot polluted which Nanak and his companion had visited. This could never have been related of Nanak had he remained a Hindu by religion.

Reverend Hughes also describes the meetings of Bābā Nānak with Shaikh Ibrahim, who saluted him a Muslim, and had a conversation with him on the unity of God; Miyan Mitha, who called upon him for the *Kalimah* which leads to a long conversation, in which Bābā Nānak lays emphasis on the Sufī doctrine of the unity of God. In this conversation, Nanak says, "The book of the Qur'ān should be practised." He also acknowledged that "justice is the Qur'ān." When the Miyan asked him what is the one great name, Nanak took him aside and whispered it his ear, "*Allāh*". Immediately the great name is uttered, Miyan Mitha is consumed to ashes; but a celestial voice again utters the word *Allāh!*" and the Miyan regains life, and falls at the feet of Nanak.



Drawing depicting Guru Nanak Devji at Mecca

Regarding the pilgrimage to Mecca by Guru Nanak. Reverend Hughes writes that, "In precise conformity with this deduction is the tradition of Nanak's pilgrimage to Mecca. The particulars of his visit to that holy place are fully given, in all accounts of Nanak's life, and although, as Dr. Trumpp reasonably concludes, the mere invention of the tale is enough to prove that those who most intimately know Nanak considered his relationship to Muhammadanism sufficiently close to warrant the belief in such a pilgrimage in the course of his teaching in Mecca, Nanak is made to say: "Though men, they are like women, who do not obey the Sunnat, and Divine commandment, nor the order of the book (i.e. the Qur'an)." He also admitted the intercession of Muhammad, denounced the drinking of *bhang*, wine, &c., acknowledged the existence of hell, the punishment of the wicked, and the resurrection of mankind; in fact, the words here ascribed to Nanak contain a full confession of Islām. These tenets, are, of course, due to the narrator of the tale, and are only useful as showing how far Nanak's followers thought it possible for him to go."

In an interesting story, a Muslim saint tells his disciples that the Muslims of his time have become *be-iman* (faithless) and now a Hindū is entering *Behisht* (Paradise). Narrating this story, Reverend Hughes writes:

A curious incident is next related to the effect that Makhdum Bahā' u 'd-Din, the Pir of Multan, felling his end approaching, said to his disciples, "O friends, from this time the faith of no one will remain firm; all will become faithless (*be-iman*)."⁵⁸ His disciples asked for an explanation and in reply he delivered himself of an oracular statement: "O friends, when one Hindu shall come to Heaven (*bihisht*), there will be brilliancy (*ujala*) in Heaven." To this strange announcement his disciples replied: "Learned people say that Heaven is not decreed for the Hindus; what is this that you have said?" The Pir told them that he was alluding to Nanak and sent one of his disciples to ask Nanak if he, also, had received an intimation of his approaching death.

In this anecdote we have the extraordinary admission from a Muhammadan that Nanak would succeed in breaking up the faith of Islām. It is in consequence of a Hindu's having conquered Heaven itself, and vindicated his right to a place in the paradise of Muhammad, that those who were then in the faith

of the Prophet would lose confidence in his teaching. . Here again, the words employed are useful for the Pir is made to say that Muslims will become *be-iman*, the Arabic term specially applicable to the 'faith' of Islām; and Heaven is called in the Panjabi story *bhisat*, that is *bihisht*, the Paradise of Muhammadans; for had the Hindu heaven been intended, some such word as *swarg*, or *paralok*, or *Brahmalok* would have been used.

At His passing

It is also very well known that the Hindus and the Muslims disputed regarding the final rites of Guru Nanak when he passed away. Both wished to perform his funeral according to the teachings of their religions believing Guru Nanak to be one of them. Regarding this, Reverend Hughes writes:

"The final incident in the life of this enlightened teacher is in precise accord with all that has been said of his former career. Nanak came to the bank of the Ravi to pass away—in conformity with Hindu custom—by the side of a natural stream of water. It is expressly said that both Hindus and Muslims accompanied him. He then seated himself at the foot of a Sarib tree, and his Assembly of the faithful (Sangat) stood around him...Then the Hindus and Musulmans who were firm in the name (of God), began to express themselves (thus) the Musalmans said, 'We will bury (him)' and the Hindus said, 'We will burn (him).' Then, the Baba said, 'Place flowers on both sides; on the right side those of the Hindus, on the left side those of the Musalmans, (that we may perceive) whose will continue green tomorrow. If those of the Hindus keep green, then bury (me).' The Baba ordered the Assembly to repeat the praises (of God) and the Assembly began to repeat the praises accordingly. After a few verses had been recited he laid down his head. When the sheet (which, had been stretched over him) was raised, there was nothing (under it): and the flowers of both (sides) remained green. The Hindus took away theirs and the Musalmans took away theirs. The entire Assembly fell to their feet."

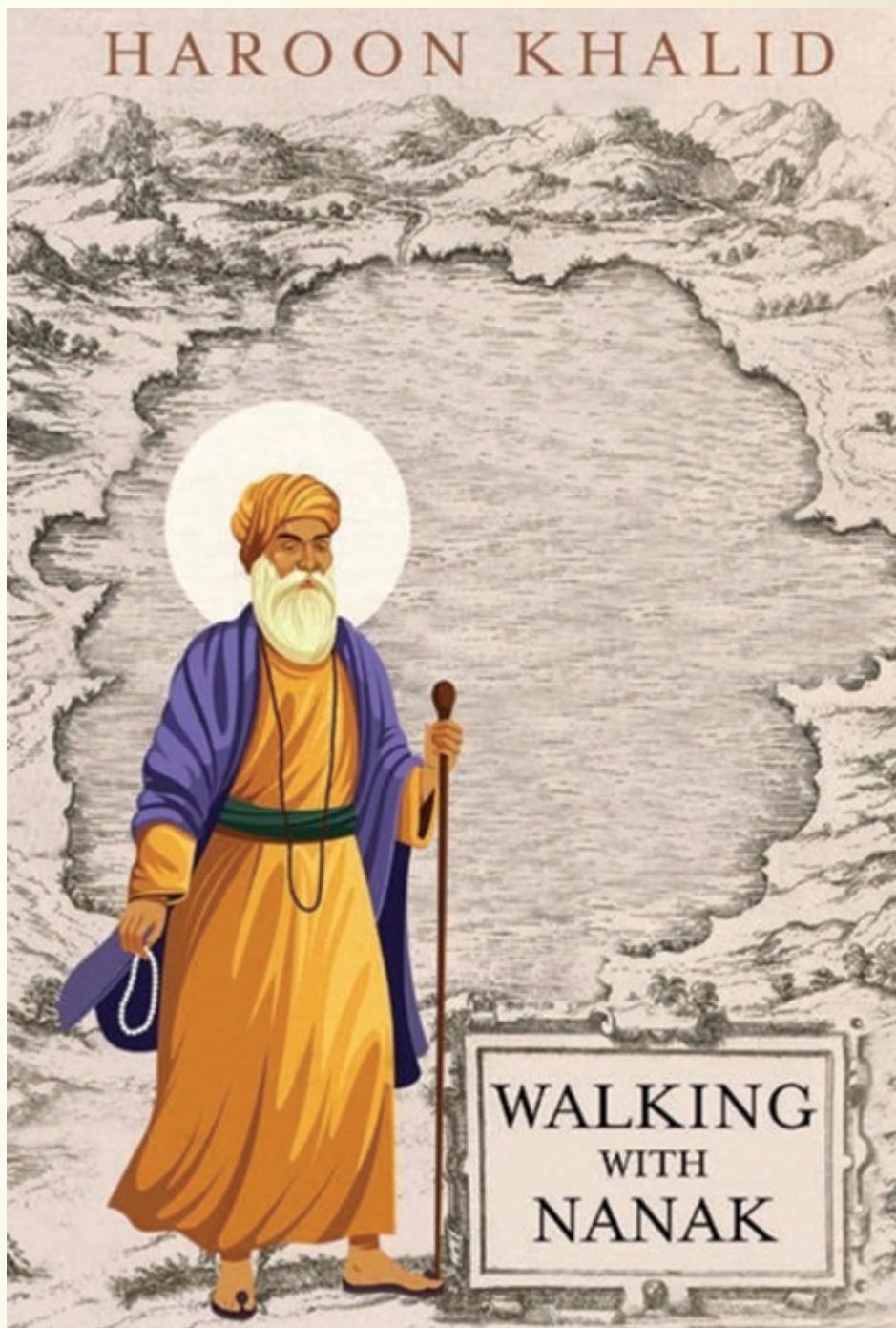
All of the above, is a work written not by any Muslim but by a non-Muslim; an evangelical priest and an opponent of Islām, which bear witness to the fact that Bābā Nānak inspired not only the Hindūs of his age but also the Muslims, drawing their attention towards the real teachings of Islām.

Monica Arora reviews the book

'Walking with Nanak'*

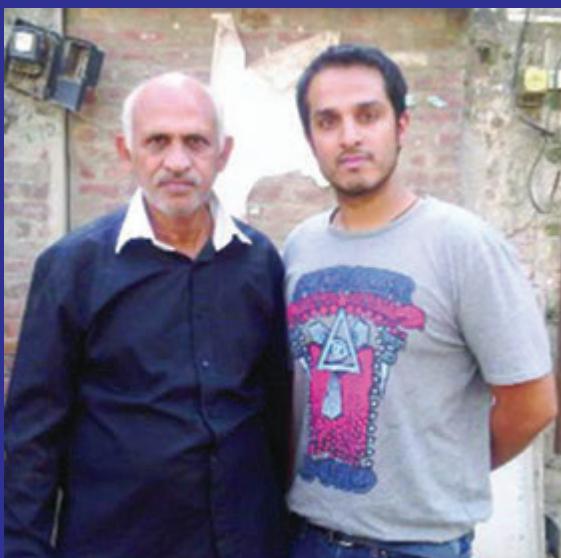
Walking with Nanak' is Pakistan-based author Haroon Khalid's third book wherein he writes on a subject very close to his heart. Born in Lahore and residing in Islamabad, Khalid is an anthropologist and also works as an educationist and columnist. When his mentor Iqbal Qaiser, author of 'Historical Shrines of Pakistan', recited the *Babur Bani*, Haroon's lifelong fascination with Guru Nanak was "re-ignited". As Haroon writes, 'The beauty of Nanak's poetry lies in his sarcasm. It is believed that Nanak wrote the *Babur Bani* when the first Mughal Emperor from Kabul crossed the Indus and attacked India.'

During his varied conversations with Iqbal, Haroon learnt that Guru Nanak Dev undertook several journeys during his lifetime, known commonly as *udasis*, and that he traversed to many places outside the sub-continent but those in today's Pakistan have become sites of landmark gurdwaras. Haroon Khalid undertook many journeys with Qaiser and whenever he would visit any of those historical gurdwaras with his mentor, he would feel akin to Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana on one of their myriad trysts.



Historical Sikh Shrines in Pakistan

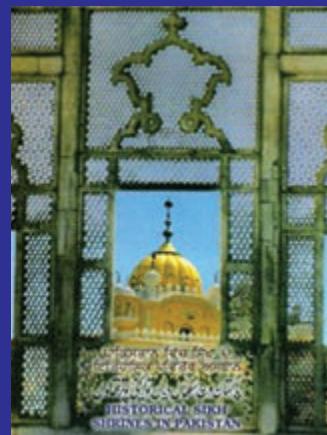
Written by Iqbal Qaiser and first published by the Punjabi History Board at Lahore in 1998, this veritable encyclopedia is a priceless record of gurdwaras and other historical places rich in Sikh history, which are spread throughout today's Pakistan. It begins with the sacred land which is the area between the rivers Ravi and the Chenab, known as Sandal Bar, in which is located the holy town of Nankana Sahib where Guru Nanak, who stood against the forces of darkness and ignorance, was born in 1469.



Haroon Khalid and Iqbal Qadir (on left)

As the author writes in his Preface, "It took me five years to locate these milestones in history" relying for much information from Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha's famous book 'Mahan Kosh', covering 25-30,000 kilometres in his odyssey and using all available means of transportation. He ends with the following words:

'This work is being published at a time when we have completed 50 years of our independence and the Sikh nation would be celebrating her 300th birthday in the coming year on 13 April 1999. This makes me extremely happy and I present this work as a gift on behalf of my nation to the Sikh nation on its 300th birthday. I dedicate this book to the close ideological harmony that exists between Baba Farid and Sat Guru Nanak Dev ji.'



Haroon's 'discovery' of Guru Nanak and the tenets of Sikhism as elucidated by his philosopher-guide Iqbal Qaiser are expressed with much reverence as illustrated in the following extract from the book referring to Iqbal Qaiser's wife who was constantly troubled by his interests. She was bothered by his unorthodox religious views:

To her, Iqbal Qaiser was a Sikh. Once when he put up a poster of Nanak in his room, his wife immediately took it down thinking that it would be a sin to have a picture of a Sikh saint in a Muslim household. I too have gone through similar incidents of being labelled a Sikh or biased against Muslims, because of my fascination with Guru Nanak. Often, my family members, my students and my friends say in a derogatory manner that I am a Hindu or a Sikh, implying that I was somehow inferior to them. My mother and sisters have told me several times to write about Muslim saints and buildings instead of our Sikh or Hindu heritage. In a country where everyone is researching Islam,

it seems there is no space to do any research outside the fold of Islam.

Following his failure in business, Iqbal Qaiser dabbled in literature and history. Today, he is the author of fifteen books, a majority of which are of Punjabi poetry. His most celebrated work is 'Historical Sikh Shrines in Pakistan'. This book brought him international acclaim as it was popular with expatriate Sikhs.

Drawing information from the *Janam sakhis*, the Sikh texts on Guru Nanak Dev's life written by his devotees, chronicling his life and times, the author traces the story of the founder of Sikhism as a son, wanderer, poet, father, friend and so on through this book 'Walking with Nanak'. Moreover, he also explores the times of all the nine Sikh Gurus after Guru Nanak and researches as to how an unorganised spiritual movement evolved into the institutionalised Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh.

The book fructified as a result of intense conversations between mentor Iqbal and student Haroon wherein they discussed the history of Punjab and in particular evolution of the Sikh religion, which is amongst the youngest of the major world religions, originated and primarily developed in the 15th-17th century. The system of religious philosophy and expression has been traditionally known as *Gurmat* or counsel of the Gurus. The principal belief of Sikhism is faith in *Waheguru*, represented using the sacred symbol of *Ik Oangkar*, the Universal God. Sikhism advocates the pursuit of salvation through disciplined, personal meditation on the name and message of God. He quotes:

*As Nanak once wrote sitting under a tree,
All the sounds we hear are but a part of the mighty roar
of Thy torrent,
All the sights we see are but a part of Thy vast creation,
Thou art the taste
Thou art the fragrance
O mother of mine! No other hath these qualities.
My Master is One
He is One, brother, the only One.*

Further, the book 'Walking with Nanak' features anecdotes and personal stories which explain how Guru Nanak Dev became a saint whilst embarking on the journey of life and spreading the faith. How he was moved by the plight of the suffering masses at the atrocities of the Mughal Emperor Babur and how he spoke of a Universal God and a call for unity of all religions particularly Islam and Hinduism, and went on to teach his words of wisdom through his poetry as well as his actions and deeds, some of which form an integral part of 'Walking with Nanak'.

For instance, when one of his devotees asked Nanak if he could perform miracles, Nanak said:

*Dwell then in flames uninjured,
Remain unharmed and eternal ice,
Make blocks of stone thy food,
Spurn the solid earth before thee
With thy foot,
Weigh the heavens in a balance
Then ask thou that Nanak perform wonders.*

The book is indeed a rich amalgam of philosophy, of Sikhism, the miracle of creation as well as an account of Guru Nanak's thoughts and emotions as observed by the author through his years of study on his favourite subject as well as his excursions. In a simple,

conversational style, Haroon Khalid takes forth to readers his perception of Sikhism and its tenets.

He writes: 'Nanak preferred to stay on the outskirts of the village of Ghavindi. This is a recurrent theme in Nanak's travels. Wherever he went, he chose to stay aloof from civilisation, yet he was always close enough, that he did not completely abandon it. This is also in tune with his philosophy that preached moderation in religious endeavours and worldly affairs. He believed that a human being should follow a middle course.'



That this Pakistan-citizen author has chosen Guru Nanak Dev and Sikhism as the subject of his book is a great statement on how sanity, secularism and sheer love rise above divisions, boundaries, differences and intolerance, sometimes even mindless violence.

I perceive it as a beacon of truth and positivity for the future !

*Book: Walking with Nanak
Author: Haroon Khalid
Publisher: Tranquebar Press
ISBN-13: 978-9385152993

Planning Baba Guru Nanak University at Nankana Sahib

So near yet so far! Passengers in airliners watching the progress of their journey on in-flight entertainment screens, would be surprised to observe that even as they begin descent towards landing in Delhi just some 30 minutes away, the aircraft is actually over Nankana Sahib, in Pakistan.

The city of Nankana Sahib is named after the first Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Nanak, who was born here in 1469. The city remains of immense historic and religious value and an important pilgrimage destination for Sikhs from all over the world. It is located some 80 km west of Lahore and about 75 km east of Faisalabad, having a population of approximately 70,000.

Nankana Sahib and its surroundings were formerly a tehsil of Sheikhupura District but in May 2005, the provincial government raised its status to that of a district in a manner to promote development in the area. District Nankana Sahib has three tehsils: Nankana Sahib, Shah Kot, and Sangla Hill.

In 2007, the Pakistan government announced plans to set up a university on Sikh religion and culture at Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak. Then Chairman of Pakistan's Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB), Lt. Gen (R) Zulfikar Ali Khan, said that "The international Guru Nanak University planned at Nankana Sahib would have the best architecture, curricula and research centre on Sikh religion and culture. The new proposed university will be a centre of academic learning and excellence open to all men and women in Pakistan and from across the world irrespective of their race, colour, religion or nationality thus symbolising Guru Nanak's teachings of community cohesion to make an inclusive society and a just world possible. Integrity, respect and trust between different communities would lead to dignity for all people."

A meeting to finalise the structure and faculties for the proposed University initially took place at Lahore in mid-June 2007 and was attended by Sikh representatives from across the globe. These included

Sardar Avtar Singh Makkar then president of the SGPC, Sardar Paramjit Singh Sarna, then president of the DGPC, Sardar Bishan Singh President of the PSGPC along with members of the Evacuee Trust Board, Pakistan.

Representatives from the UK included Councillor Gurcharan Singh, former mayor of the London Borough of Ealing and Sardar Anup Singh Choudry, a former London lawyer and member of *World Muslim Sikh Federation*, which had prepared a detailed draft and 3-dimensional concept plan as blue print for the proposed university.

Sardar Gurtej Singh, the eminent scholar from Chandigarh also produced a detailed proposal at the meeting while Sardar Avtar Singh Makkar provided a brochure on the proposed Guru Granth Sahib University in Fatehgarh Sahib as a model and sought affiliation of these two new universities. The meeting, after considerable deliberation accepted the request from *World Muslim Sikh Federation* for 2500 acres of land as was explained on concept plan instead of 350 acres which was initially allocated for the project. It was also resolved that the university would be an independent international university and located at Nankana Sahib—and not at Lahore.

The meeting also resolved to name the University as *Baba Guru Nanak International University*. There was unqualified and unanimous support from all delegates and the government for setting up of this university. The Government of Punjab under the auspices of Chief Minister Chowdhary Pervaiz Ellai also devised urban plans to upgrade Nankana Sahib as "one of most beautiful cities of Pakistan" which will be known as the 'City of Knowledge', with facilities rivaling the best extant. The University will 'inter alia' have a centre for Sikh Studies and Comparative Religions, a department for development and consolidation of Sikh law, and department for scientific research on the basis of Gurbani.

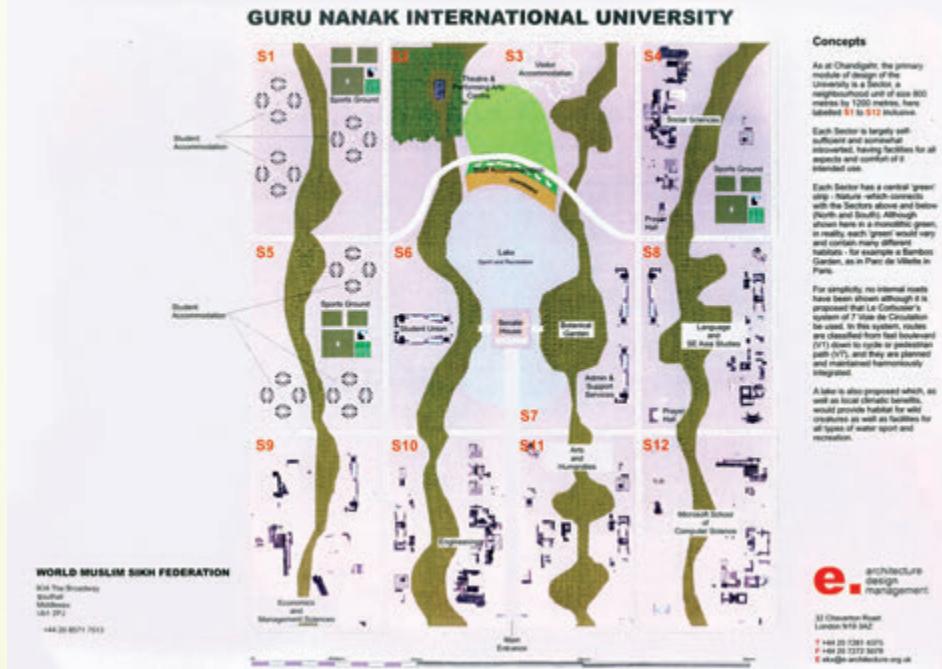
Recently, however, in September 2017, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC)

were concerned on the Pakistan-based Evacuee Trust Property Board's decision to scrap its original plan of establishing the Baba Guru Nanak University at Nankana Sahib but to establish the main campus of the university at Islamabad and sub-campuses in other provinces. A Pakistani daily quoted sources in the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) as saying: "The main hurdle in setting up the university in Nankana Sahib has come from the legal fraternity, besides local tenants who have been occupying the ETPB land. The ETPB even offered them alternative land for agriculture and other purposes, but they rejected the offer."

Taking note of this development, SGPC chief Kirpal Singh Badungar said the university should be established at the birthplace of Guru Nanak. "If it is set up at any other place, it will lose its relevance and will be heartbreaking for Sikhs worldwide. The Pakistan government should ensure that the main campus of the university be set up at Nankana Sahib in time to mark the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak in 2018," said Badungar.

Ramesh Singh Arora, the first Sikh member of Pakistani Punjab assembly, said: "Being a Sikh, I also want the university to be established in Nankana Sahib, but its main campus has been shifted to prevent any land dispute. However, a section of people belonging to the Muslim community, who earlier opposed setting up of the campus in Nankana Sahib, have begun realising that it would be big economic loss for them too. Sub-campuses of the university would be established at Choorkana, where Gurdwara Sacha Sauda, a historical shrine associated to Guru Nanak, is situated." He also said that the plan of setting up the campus at Nankana Sahib has still to be finalised.

However, recently on 20 September 2017, the provincial assembly of Pakistani Punjab confirmed its resolve to establish the Baba Guru Nanak University at Nankana Sahib. Citing sentiments associated with the place and advantage to the area, the legislature unanimously raised its voice in support of establishing the university at Nankana Sahib, as per the original plan and not as was being proposed by some, to Muridke.



Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) chief Kirpal Singh Badungar lauded this logical move and credited the Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, and particularly the member of Pakistani Punjab assembly, Ramesh Singh Arora, for their persistent efforts.

Layout of Nankana Sahib

According to the proposal, Nankana Sahib is sought to become a well-planned urban city, with the undulating terrain of the area quite similar to that of Chandigarh. In fact it is mooted that it would be appropriate to adopt the Chandigarh urban plan for Nankana Sahib so that "development of second most beautiful city in Pakistan based on a grid system can begin at the outset."

It is proposed that Janam Asthan and all sites relating to the life of Baba Nanak be set in a grid system and appropriately landscaped, to be known as Sector 1. The university would be in Sector 2, while other Sectors could be numbered as the town expanded.

It is expected that millions of pilgrims and visitors would visit Nankana Sahib annually in the times to come. Thousands of students would be studying there and growth of the town would bring in economic opportunities for the manufacturing and service industry, thus generating employment. "It is therefore important that the town is planned as the most beautiful place to live, receive and accommodate everyone with all the facilities and amenities of a well-developed city."

A Corridor for Peace



Pilgrims to Kartarpur Sahib

The gurdwara at Kartarpur Sahib, situated just 3 km inside Pakistan from the international border with India is emotively one of the most revered places for the Sikhs.

For several years, Sikhs from both sides of the divided Punjab have sought a special 'corridor' for pilgrims to walk to and pay obeisance at the Gurdwara Sahib, which is located in the Narowal district of Pakistan, the path beginning from Dera Baba Nanak in the Gurdaspur district of India.

In April 2016, the Punjab-based Society for Promotion of Peace (SPP) and National Press Club (NPC) of Pakistan, initiated the proposal, supported by both then ruling parties in the Punjab. A few months later the Sangat Langha Kartarpur (SLK), an organisation spearheading the campaign, urged the United Nations to take up the issue of having such a corridor but the Indian Government did little to support this request.

Then Pakistan President General Parvez Musharraf had reportedly suggested that pilgrims could visit Kartarpur Sahib from India "without passport and visa", but till today this recommendation has



Map showing the proximity of Kartarpur Sahib from the International border

had no response. On the contrary, in May 2017, a Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs shrugged off the suggestion, and instead stated that, "four high-resolution telescopes are installed at Dera Baba Nanak through which pilgrims could view the shrine from the 3 km distance separating the Indian border and the gurdwara."

The sheer insensitivity of this statement is inexpressable.

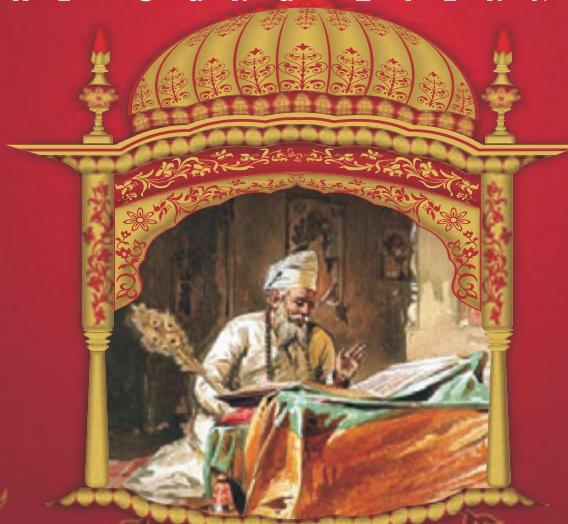


ਪੈਖੀ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਕਾ ਥਾਨੁ ॥

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Guru Granth Sahib

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Dr. Mohinder Singh

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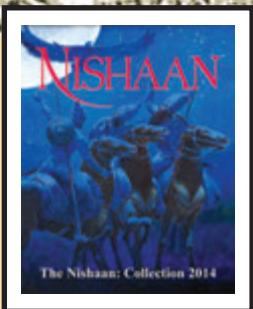
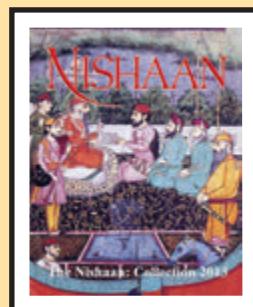
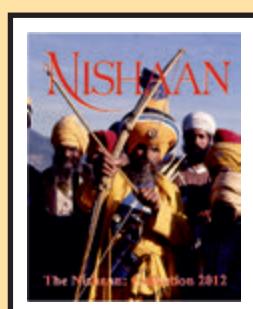
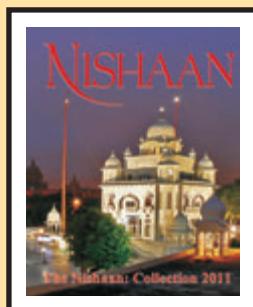
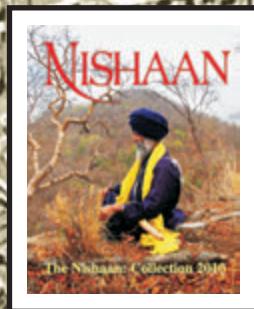
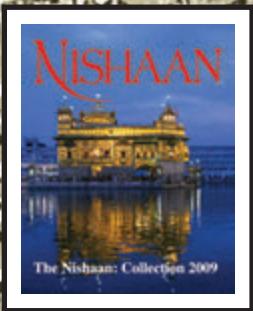
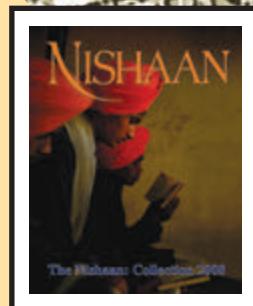
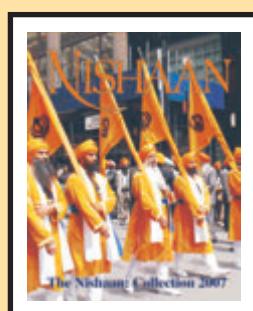
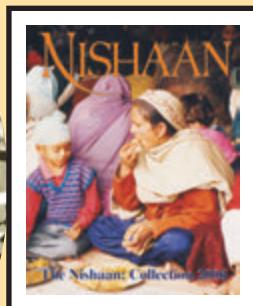
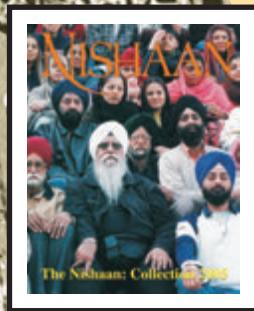
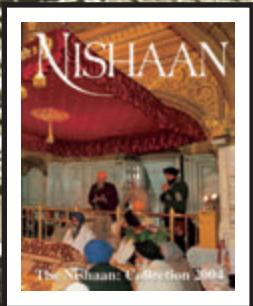
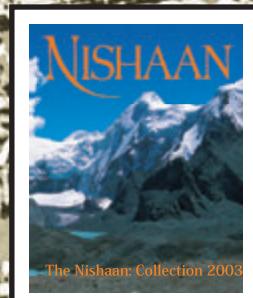
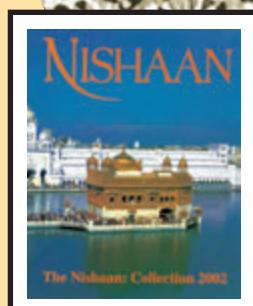
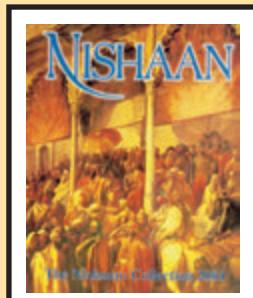
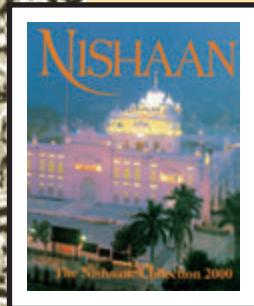
Pictures of *Mool Mantra* in the hand of Guru Arjan Dev, Guru Hargobind, Guru Har Rai, Guru Har Krishan, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh in different rare *Birs*, *Hukamnamas* and relics of the Sikh Gurus.



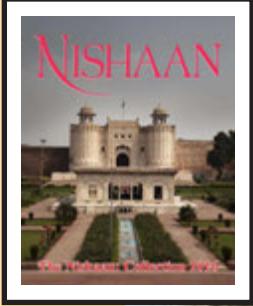
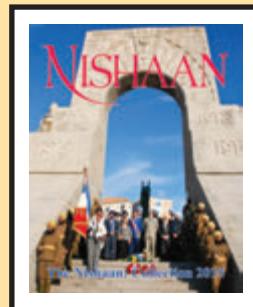
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