

NISHAAN

www.nishaan.com

1 / 2 0 0 1



Sikhs and The Third Millennium
Symbiosis of Science and Religion
Images of A Heritage
A Portrait of Courage

NISHAAN



Cover : Painting of
Guru Gobind Singh
(Govt. Museum & Art Gallery,
Chandigarh).

NISHAAN

1 / 2001

2

Editorial : A Gentleman in Politics

by Darshan Singh Maini

4

Shukrana

by Darshan Singh Maini



12

**A Symbiosis of
Science and Religion:**
Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany
by Prof. Darshan Singh
Maini



5

**Sikhs and the
Third Millennium**
by Dr. Kharak Singh



**Mai Bhago & The Forty
Liberated Ones**
by Gurukirn Kaur Khalsa

24



21

**The Sikhs:
Images of a Heritage**
by T.S. Randhawa



26

A Portrait of Courage :
**The Sikh Regiment in
France and Flanders**
by Pushpinder Singh



44

**Takht Sri
Harmandir Sahib**
by Birinder Singh
Malhans



48

**All Roads to
Fatehgarh Sahib**
by Rishi Singh



A Tribute: 61
Bhagat Puran Singh
by Reema Anand

Editorial Director

Prof. Darshan Singh Maini

Executive Editor

Pushpinder Singh

Editorial Board

Sikandar Singh Bhayee

G. P. Singh

Birinder Singh Malhans

Hardev Singh

Manjit Singh

Editorial Office

D-43, Sujjan Singh Park

New Delhi 110 003 India

Tel: (91-11) 4617234 Fax : 4628615

e-mail : nishaan@lycos.com

website : www.nishaan.com

Published by

The Nagaara Trust

16-A Palam Marg, Vasant Vihar

New Delhi 110 057, India

Designed by

Kraftwerk

kwerk@mantraonline.com

Printed by

Aegean Offset, F-17, Mayapuri

Phase II, New Delhi 110 064

The opinions expressed in the articles published
in the *Nishaan* do not necessarily reflect the
views or policy of *The Nagaara Trust*.

53

The Satguru's Way
by Bhayee Ardaman Singh
Bhayee Sahib of Bagrian

64

A Sikh Heritage Project

A GENTLEMAN IN POLITICS

The recent happenings in Sikh politics and SGPC squabbles, name-calling and abrupt changes at the highest level—the *Takht jathedars*—have added to the woes of the *Panth*, once again in a state of moral crisis. *L'affaire Bibi Jagir Kaur*, the ousted SGPC President, has tainted the Akali polity beyond imagination. The outrage associated with her has caused huge anxieties regarding the entire structure and form of power now ensconced in seats of high authority. The Tercentenary euphoria of April 1999 is behind us already. I had wanted to make this issue the subject of our editorial, but lack of certain statistical figures, and veracity of certain facts, I have instead decided to use an article on Sardar Surjit Singh Barnala which I had, in fact, just completed. I trust, in a strongly suggestive manner, that this should provide some food for Sikh thought. That a person in top political positions can still remain mostly untouched by the compulsions and enticements of power, and remain, at the same time, for over 40 years or so deeply immersed in *Gurbani Vichar*, and seek to conduct his life accordingly, would be something truly marvellous. So, this may serve as a counter-point to the thesis I had wanted to elaborate for the issue in question.

Few politicians deviate into truth or honesty, and not surprisingly, therefore, few persons of integrity and moral vision walk into the parlours of politics which are almost invariably associated with whoredom of the spirit. To be sure, politics *per se* are the very warp and woof of civilised societies and in their larger sweep comprehend great visions and values. That is how when a politician does mature, albeit rarely, into a great statesman (Abraham Lincoln and Jawaharlal Nehru, for instance), we marvel at the mystery of the elements that go into the making of such a personality. Thus, when I chose to draw a brief portrait of a politician whom I have known for over 25 years, and who in the midst of the venalities of wantonnesses and vagaries of both national and party politics has somehow managed to preserve the authenticity of his *self* while holding some of the highest positions including those of Central Cabinet Ministership, Chief Ministership and Governorship, I am, therefore, tempted to treat Mr. Surjit Singh Barnala as a *gentleman* worthy of note in a special way. An advocate by profession, a "Sunday painter" and an occasional writer, his politics have acquired a distractive edge and his personality a distinctive style. And I use the expression "gentleman" in its English essence, a person who embodies politeness, a sense of honour, a concern for the feelings of others, among other virtues. He may not be endowed with very large talents, but the manner in which he has husbanded his given inner and moral resources, and brought his personality to a

pitch of perceptions is a thing that compels admiration. In a long political career of such dimensions and powers, he too has been guilty of a *fax paus* or two, but it was, in each case, a question of misjudgement, not a failure of character. He remains untainted even in the murky and muddled politics of today.

What, indeed, induced me to muse thus over his career, character and personality was his unexpected visit to my place on the eve of his appointment as the first Governor of the new State of Uttranchal, a courtesy visit to see an ailing friend confined to his rooms. He had earlier that day received the message from the Home Minister, and he had wanted to share some thoughts with me before the rush of things started for the journey to Dehra Dun. As it happened, he was closeted with me for over 90 minutes that evening, and was in a contemplative, expansive frame of mind. And that interlude in our traffic of thought after a lapse of three years or so proved in the end an insightful commentary on the state of the nation, on the moral health of the Akali leadership, and on other issues related to the Sikhs and Punjab. As an *insider*, Surjit Singh Barnala's narrative was clear, uncomplicated, though the idiom remained free of acrimony, prejudice or pique. His own difficulties lately were not allowed to cast a shadow over the transparency of his views and sentiments. As he sat in an easy, wicker chair close to me, a tall handsome man in a soft safari suit with a generous flowing white beard, he presented the image of a serene *Gursikh* who had imbibed the Sikh worldview and a humanist culture in tune with the requirements of the moment. In sum, a sense of moral ease and a sense of "arrival" in the evening of his life seemed to mark the proceedings.

Yes, soon enough our reminiscences of the past that traversed the territories of the dragon-ridden days in Punjab held the imagination captive for a while. I did not bring up particularly a couple of events, and tragedies that had once brought us closer to each other, though the echoes and the residues did colour my thought and words. And the events in question—the editing of a special issue of *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, Bombay (for which I used to write regularly at one time) on the menace of militancy in the early eighties in Punjab and the underlying causes and possible remedies, and the assassination of Sant Harcharan Singh Longowal after the Rajiv-Longowal Accord in the wake of "Operation Bluestar" and the horrendous happenings, remained there as meat for my muses. Mr. Surjit Singh Barnala had helped me a great deal in the preparation of that *Weekly* issue, which incidentally, in its new lean format carried an impressive picture of Sant Jarnail

Singh Bindranwale (with a long spear in hand) on the cover-page and soon became a collector's item. As for the Longowal tragedy, I happened to be too close in point of time to that 'martyrdom' to remain untouched. On the fateful day, I received a telephone call from Barnala Sahib, the new Chief Minister of Punjab, to reach his residence for an express meeting with Sant Longowal, due to arrive there in an hour or so. That meeting remained somewhat hurried and incomplete and another meeting was fixed for the next week. Ah, but that was to be the *last word*, for he was shot dead by some militants the same evening. And I poured out the sense of outrage and the general outcry in my telegraphic weekly column in *The Sunday Observer* of Bombay. I remember how Vinod Mehta, the then editor had in a lightning midnight call woken me up, and how I had sat down at my faithful little Olivetti to type out, amidst tears, my story till the small hours of the morning.

Before I come to a strange, unbelievable experience in Mr Surjit Singh Barnala's brief stay in Madras as Governor of Tamil Nadu during the Prime Ministership of V. P. Singh, one significant episode which among many other things, reflected strongly upon his Akali credentials also turned up in his account. When Morarji Desai formed the first Janata Government after the humiliating defeat of Indira Gandhi and her party in the 1977 General Elections, he wanted the Akali members of Parliament to join the Janata Party and work only under that rubric and discipline. And when Mr. SS Barnala, in particular, rejected the proposal out of hand, the intransigent and stern Morarji Bhai threatened to leave the Akalis out in the cold. It was, as Surjit Singh Barnala, later told me, Jai Prakash Narain who had to pull up the stubborn Prime Minister, and remind him of the unparalleled sacrifices of the Akali leaders and ranks during the infamous Emergency of 1975, which, in the first instance, had made it possible to oust a ruthless, authoritarian and arrogant Indira Gandhi from power. Surjit Singh Barnala made it quite clear that the Akali identity had to be maintained at all costs.

However, the incident in Madras, I think, was the *real* story of his evening with me, a story of stories, that I wish to share with readers of the *Nishaan*. Mr. Barnala himself could hardly endorse it even when he vouched for its "truth". Soon after his assumption of office, a astrologer from Coimbatore sought an urgent interview with the new Governor despite Mr. SS Barnala's clear instructions against the whole tribe of soothsayers, palmists and so on. For as a devout Sikh, he had never, unlike other politicians, sought their services. Still, as a matter of courtesy, he heard a story of predictions which he laughed out of court at that time, but which *did prove right* in a most astonishing way. In brief, the keen-eyed, intense-looking Brahmin observed that (a) Mr. Surjit Singh Barnala's governorship was but a small thing in itself, though it had a supra-rational symbolic importance whose meaning had to

unfold itself soon, (b) that he was not going to occupy the Raj Bhavan for long, (c) that the V.P. Singh's government would fall, (d) that the ambitious and adventurous Chandrasekhar would defect, and form a 'pirated' government with Rajiv's machinations, (e) and then the return of the Congress to power would be without Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister. Considered then, the predicted chain of events naturally struck him as too fantastic to merit attention.

Which brings me back to what the Coimbatore man, who soon after vanished from view never to be seen or traced again, had said about Mr. S.S. Barnala's providential "mission" in Tamil Nadu and its larger dimensions. The meaning of the "sign" began later to dawn upon him when on a state visit to the holy town of Rameshwaram, he was taken round to an obscure, dilapidated little monument which had been raised in memory of Guru Nanak Dev's visit to the South during his phase of long travels. A Tamil priest, knowing not a word of Gurmukhi, however, had been opening an ancient copy of the *Guru Granth* for the daily *prakash* with due ceremonies—a long tradition in that family.

This then, was the pilgrimage which Mr. Surjit Singh Barnala had been "commissioned" to perform and initiate a renaissance of Sikh thought in the South of India. For indeed, as Surjit Singh Barnala observed, he had the state archives scrutinized, and set into motion a machinery for the retrieval of the land once a part of that monument. And thanks to his Governorship there, he was soon able to mobilise the Sikh *sangat* of the southern states to raise a splendid edifice—a gurdwara with rooms and amenities for the pilgrims who now visit the place in thousands each year. And if that was "the mission" of the astrologer's word, he had done his bit with a sense of deep devotion. And the setting up of a *Chair for Sikh Studies* at the Madurai University was but only one more step in that direction. The "design" had come to take shape or form.

In some manner, Mr. Surjit Singh Barnala considers his Utranchal appointment "a call" to duty and service even in circumstances of constraint and compulsion. The Udham Singh case and the unrest amongst the Sikh settlers, in particular, could, at best, be only a point to consider, it has no more than a symbolic value. However, it does give "the Sunday painter" an opportunity to find time for putting the brush to canvas and let his imagination of reverence roam over the Kumaon and Garhwal mountains, as, indeed, over the hallowed places like *Nanakmata* and *Hemkunt* where the First Sikh Guru and the Tenth Master left marks of their feet respectively. And there too, he may find time to do his memoirs, having once wandered around *incognito* for months during the years of the Punjab tragedy and found an eager publisher in *Penguin India*, the *picaresque* story of a gentleman in politics.

ਸੁਕਰਾਨਾ ਤੇਰਾ

ਮੈਂ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਕਰਾਂ ਸੁਕਰਾਨਾ ਭਗਵਾਨ
ਤੇਰੀ ਰਹਿਮਤ ਤੋਂ ਹੋਇਆ ਕੁਰਬਾਨ
ਸੀ ਪਿਆ ਬੇਬਸ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦਰ ਸਾਲ
ਸੀ ਬਣਿਆ ਬਾਵਲਾ, ਮੈਂ ਬਹੁਰਾਨ

ਐਸਾ ਕਰਮ ਤੂੰ ਕੀਤਾ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨ
ਖੁਲ ਗਏ ਖਿਨ ਵਿਚ ਕਵਾੜ ਗਿਆਨ
ਇਕ ਨਿੱਕੀ ਜੋਹੀ ਲੋ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਜਾਪੇ
ਜਿਸ ਰਖਿਆ ਉਸ ਪੱਲ ਤੋਂ ਹੈਰਾਨ

ਫੇਰ ਦਿਨੋਂ ਦਿਨ ਮਿਟਿਆ ਅਭਿਮਾਨ
ਇਸ ਰੋਗ ਨੇ ਉਮਰੋ ਰਖਿਆ ਗਲਤਾਨ
ਹਾਂ, ਅਜ ਵੀ ਫਸਿਆ ਪੀੜਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ
ਪਰ ਹੁਣ ਬਣਿਆ ਅੰਦਰ ਮੈਂ ਸੁਲਤਾਨ

ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਮੈਨੀ

A Request, A Prayer

*It's for You, O Lord to erase
The old text, and wash away
The dirt of days riding
Like a shy thief*

*In the attics of my mind
And soiling the copy of belief.*

*Let these ambivalent intimations
Take a form, a stance, a style
So I may raise the pen high
To hoist the Nishaan of trust
And shake it in the blue skies
Where ends the story of our dust.*

*I wait now for the April breeze
When the greening of my soul starts,
A time when the water turns red
In the vats of our hearts,
And blushes, like a bride
Amazed, waiting in alien parts.*

Darshan Singh Maini

Footnote:

Professor Darshan Singh Maini has been afflicted by an obscure neuro-spinal disease since mid-1993. All medical means and an operation gave him no relief of any kind, and he has continued in crippling pain, confined to his rooms for the last four years or so. God's mercy has at last materialised and the "curse" appears to have been lifted. Although still in considerable pain, and unable to move around freely, his spirits are now "on the swing."

Nishaan's readers wish Prof. Darshan Singh Maini, many years of inspired writing!

Executive Editor

S I K H S

And The Third Millennium

The Sikh movement, started by Guru Nanak (1469-1539), culminated in the creation of the Khalsa in 1699 CE. The Khalsa completed 300 years of its birth in 1999, when the Tercentenary of its creation was celebrated with great enthusiasm all over the globe. The occasion also generated intense academic activity which included, *inter alia*, high level seminars, and publication of literature highlighting such features of Sikh philosophy and history as make it a future religion of the world alongside the four earlier and much older world religious faiths. Coupled with literature, the extensive use of multimedia brought about an unprecedented awareness of this young religion among the world community. The Sikh diaspora is almost everywhere, and Sikhs are no more strangers in any part of the world. In fact it is difficult now to find a society without the colourful sprinkling of turbaned Sikhs. Doors of the Sikh religion are open to all. It has thus found takers in all castes, colours, races and nationalities. The keen interest evinced by the non-Sikh world community provides the much desired impetus to further intensify efforts to share our rich spiritual heritage with the rest of mankind.

As we enter the 21st century, the third millennium, it is necessary to recall the message of the Gurus, and to assess our past performance and the present situation for planning our future. For, if one forgets one's past and ignores one's present, one has no future.

The Message

Sikhism, youngest of the world religions, offers a model for spiritual and temporal life. "There is One Father, and we are all His children," says the Guru: all human beings constitute an universal brotherhood, united with the bond of love. There are no high castes or low castes. There is no discrimination on the basis of colour, sex, race or creed. Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Master, declared entire mankind as one race. Significantly, this message of love came when the clash between the indigenous Hindu and the invader Muslim civilizations marked by hatred and intolerance, was at its height in the sub continent.

The Gurus rejected ritualism and laid stress on the essence of religion.

MONOTHEISM : There is only One God (*Ik Onkar*). He is the Creator of the Universe. He loves His creation and is immanent in it.

WORLD VIEW : This world is not an illusion as preached sometimes. It is real. "Since He Himself is real, so is His creation."

TRUTHFUL CONDUCT : Guru Nanak says, "Truth is higher than everything; Higher still is truthful living."

GOAL OF LIFE : It is not personal salvation after death, but the status of *gurmukh* or *sachiar* attuned to the Will of God to be attained in *this* life.

METHODOLOGY : Sikhism rejects the dichotomy between spiritual and temporal life. It is a whole-life system. A *gurmukh* lives in this world as a householder and is engaged in an honest occupation (*ਕਿਰਤ ਕਰਨ*), and sharing his earnings with others in need (*ਵੰਡ ਛਕਨ*), keeping his mind always fixed on God (*ਨਾਮ ਜਪਨ*). These are the three pillars of the Sikh way of life. He sees God in everybody, which promotes love for entire mankind and leads to its selfless service. A Sikh is committed to equality and justice. He is enjoined upon to fight for *dharma* or righteousness and, if necessary, to make the supreme sacrifice for the cause. In fact, it was the Gurus who introduced martyrdom in the Indian religious tradition.

HUMAN DIGNITY : Life is valued as a gift of God to be lived with honour. "He who lives with dishonour, does not deserve the food he eats," says the Guru.

STATUS OF WOMEN : Women have been given perfect equality with men. The Guru pleads, "How can you consider her inferior when she gives birth to kings?"

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY : Sikhs accept social responsibility as a duty, "Liberation for self as well as for the world" is their creed. Politics is not taboo. It is necessary to bring the 'Kingdom of God' on earth.

Special features of Sikhism are in:

UNIVERSALISM : Guru Nanak's teachings are universal, applicable and valid in all situations - social, political or geographical, and for all times. Stress is on eternal values.

SHABAD GURU : This is a unique contribution to religious thought. All the ten Gurus were one. The Word (*Shabad*) revealed by God through them, now enshrined in the Guru Granth Sahib, is the Eternal Guru.

THE SAINT SOLDIER : Side by side with meditation or *Naam Simran* a Sikh is expected to defend justice, equality and freedom, with force when necessary.

ECUMENISM : The Guru claims no exclusive authority to liberation. He seeks the cooperation of all faiths. He says "The world is aflame. Shower Thy Grace, and save it though whichever door it is possible."

The Past

Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikh religion, appeared towards the end of the fifteenth century, when Lodhis ruled over the northern part of the sub continent. The times were marked by political slavery, social divisions based on caste and religion, and a clash between two major cultures. The Hindus constituted the vast majority, but were ruled by the alien Muslim minority who, with superior military strength, had invaded India nearly seven hundred years earlier from the outside and conquered the sub continent without much resistance. Hindus, with their caste system and the widely held belief in *ahimsa*, were no match for the invaders who had no such inhibitions. Hatred between the two communities was at its height. Hindus called the Muslims *malechhas* (barbarians), while the latter called the Hindus *kafirs* (non believers). There was no meeting ground. The rulers were following a policy of repression and forcible conversion of their subjects. The Hindu society was divided into castes, and the lower castes (*Sudras* and *Vaishas*, were treated by the superior castes as worse than animals.

Guru Nanak with his prophetic vision, observed the misery and suffering of the common man, resulting from political subjugation, social discrimination, religious mistrust, hatred and ignorance. The suffering was not confined to India. As Bhai Gurdas says, the Guru saw the whole world virtually aflame. The Guru's sensitive mind felt the pangs of the sufferings of the masses. His heart melted with compassion, and he set out on his long itineraries known as *udasis* to offer solace to the afflicted populace through the divine message of love peace, justice and equality, service and sacrifice. His benevolence knew

no boundaries, geographical, political, social or religious. His travels covered places as far as Assam in the east, Sri Lanka in the south, Mecca in present day Saudi Arabia and Baghdad in the west, and Tibet in the north. His message was received with open arms wherever he went. The presence of his followers in all these places upto this day bears ample testimony to the universality of his message. Guru Nanak is unique among prophets in the sense that he attracted an international following in his own lifetime.

The Guru Successors

The Guru was dealing with a society completely demoralised by centuries of political slavery and religious repression. The Guru in his lifetime had explained his system and recorded it in his *bani*, and those who came in contact with him had benefited from it. He had also provided a model for individual life by his own example and for corporate living through a settlement he established at Kartarpur, which also became the headquarters of his mission. However, much more was required. The Guru aimed at complete transformation of the society from one of helpless cowardly victims of repression to that of strong, confident and self-respecting saint-soldiers ready to resist injustice and high-handedness from any quarters. This could not be achieved in one generation. The Guru, therefore, decided to appoint a successor to carry out his mission. In fact, nine successors followed one after the other and over two centuries later, the Khalsa - the *Guru Panth* - took the final form.

The Khalsa

The Khalsa became an organised body of saint-soldiers committed to the divine cause of righteousness and ready to make the supreme sacrifice in the defence of *dharma* and the weak. Following the example of the Gurus, the Khalsa revolted against repression and forcible conversions. They suffered unprecedented hardships and torture and faced genocide at the hands of the rulers during the 18th century. Perseverance and deep faith in the Gurus and their cause, meant that the Khalsa not only survived, but came out victorious and set up the Khalsa empire or *Sarkar-e-Khalsa* in North India, under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, which brought peace to the people of the troubled land after several centuries. Unfortunately, because of treachery, the golden era did not last more than half a century, and the Empire fell to the British in 1849.

In the struggle for India's independence, Sikhs contributed the major share of sufferings and sacrifices in the form of jail terms, exiles, torture, death sentences, in the run upto 1947. However, Sikh aspirations for an autonomous status and an honourable place in the Indian

Union were not realised, since the Congress leaders went back on the assurances given to the Sikhs to that effect. Even at the time of reorganization of states on the basis of language in 1956, a separate state was denied to Punjabis for no other reason than that Sikhs would be in a majority in such a state. The Sikhs had to launch a protracted struggle to eventually get a truncated Punjabi Suba, with no control over its capital, water resources and power. Thus the Sikhs are still engaged in a struggle for autonomy and return of large Punjabi-speaking areas left out of the depleted Punjab state.

Looking at the past, Sikhs have every reason to be inspired by their history. It was the Sikh Gurus who imparted the values of equality of and social justice to society. It was the Sikhs who, under the inspiration of the Gurus, sealed the North Western Frontier of India against aggression from foreign invaders that had plagued the subcontinent for thousand of years. It was they who fought, and eradicated the evils of this caste system, untouchability and the abhorrent practice of *sati*. It was the Sikhs who fought for human rights and freedom of religion. It was the Sikhs who freed their places of worship from the corrupt *mahants* and stooges of the British Government in early 20th Century.

A result of the recent past is the large scale migration of Sikhs to other countries and there is now a sizeable and ever increasing Sikh diaspora in parts of the world, making them a truly international community.

Present Situation

Despite its past glories, the *Panth* faces numerous problems during the present times. Although the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) runs the government in present Punjab in a coalition with the BJP, and is also a partner in the National Democratic Alliance government at the Centre, the "glow of freedom" the Sikhs have struggled for, is still not visible. The infamous *Operation Blue Star* and the repression that followed continue to cast their painful shadows on the Sikh psyche. The *Panth* is divided into several political parties as well as religious sects. The SAD was originally constituted to look after the political interests of the Sikh community. It has, however, opened its doors to non-Sikhs, and is, at the moment, more worried about its secular image as a Punjabi party. This has considerably diluted its right to be the sole representative of the *Panth*. As a result other "Akali Dals" have appeared, which have only added to the confusion.

There is no unanimity on the long term political goals of the Sikhs. While some sections demand a sovereign

independent state, others prefer autonomy within the Indian Union. The SAD has favoured the Anandpur Sahib Resolution of 1973, subsequently modified in 1978. The Hindu majority, however, considers this secessionist, and is in no mood to concede the demand.

There are challenges to Sikh identity, and concerted efforts are afoot to treat the Sikhs as a sect of Hindus. The *Rashtriya Sikh Sangat* wing of the BJP is busily engaged in confusing the Sikhs on this issue. The Sikhs resent this as an attack on their identity.

Then there is the problem of apostasy, particularly among the Sikh youth. Under the influence of the West and T.V. culture, alarmingly large numbers of Sikhs have dropped the most visible and essential requirement of Sikhism - the unshorn hair.

The Sikhs outside Punjab as well as Sikh diaspora outside India have their own peculiar problems. Besides, there are millions of "tribal" Sikhs like *Vanjaras*, *Sikligars*, *Lobanas*, *Tharus*, known as Nanak Panthis, who are in utter neglect and abject poverty in several states of India, notably Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujrat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and elsewhere. They have received no attention from the *Panth*, and are vulnerable to influence of missionaries of other faiths. To the list of problems must be added the recent controversies over the Dasam Granth, Nanakshahi Calendar, All India Sikh Gurdwaras Act, Sikh Personal Law, seating arrangements in *langar*, the authority of the *Takht jathedars*, and so on.

These problems should cause serious concern among the community and its leaders, but are by no means insurmountable. What is alarming, however, is that we are not prepared and organised to deal with these problems, which demand solutions and decisions at the Panthic level.

But who is the decision-maker at this level? Is it the SGPC? Is it the *jathedar* of Akal Takht? Is it the council of high priests? Is it the SAD or its President? Or is it an individual who happens to control major Panthic organizations through political authority? It is difficult to give a categorical answer to any of these questions in the affirmative.

While authority of the Akal Takht is accepted by all without question, there is no such unanimity on the absolute authority of its *jathedar*. In fact, we do not have enough evidence in history to show that this position was at all created, or approved of, by the Guru. Also, the spirit of Sikh thought does not provide for any dictatorial authority to an individual, however highly placed. This could be abused by an unscrupulous incumbent as was

done by Arur Singh in honouring the man who had ordered the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919.

The SGPC, often called the Parliament of the Sikhs and is no doubt the most representative body of the *Panth*, is the second alternative. This too, however, is not the ideal choice. Sikhs abroad, and even the Indian Sikhs outside Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Himachal Pradesh, are not represented on it. Its mode of election does not attract men of the required religious calibre among Sikhs. Further, the fact that the SGPC elections are fought by political parties, the goal becomes political authority or hegemony of a group, not management of gurdwaras or serving the *Panthic* interests. In view of this and also because of the existence of other bodies like the Delhi Sikh Gurdwaras Management Committee, the claim of SGPC as the sole representative of the Sikhs is difficult to sustain.

With regard to the council of high priests as the central decision-making body of the *Panth*, nobody is clear as to who are the members of this council. Are they the *jathedars* of the five *takhts*? History does not support this tradition. In fact, until a few years back, there used to be only four *takhts*. And the two *takhts* (Patna Sahib and Hazoor Sahib) had no *jathedars*. They had their high priests who were not under the control of the SGPC and seldom attended the meetings of the council. According to tradition, high priests of these two *takhts* are not supposed to leave their *deras*, and the best they could do was to depute their nominees with the approval of their respective managements. While we consider this alternative, we should also not forget that there are no qualifications prescribed for the high priests, nor are there any satisfactory procedures for their appointment. Not infrequently, their appointments result from political convenience or compulsions of the party in power.

It is clear that there is no agency to represent the Sikh *Panth* and to take decisions on its behalf, which is acceptable to all. During the Gurus' times, the Sikhs looked to the Guru for guidance, direction and decisions. When the Guruship was vested in the Guru Granth Sahib, it was stipulated that the Guru *Panth* or a representative body of Sikhs would take decisions on its behalf. This was the intention of Guru Gobind Singh

when he nominated five *pyaras* to go with Banda Singh Bahadur on his expedition to the Punjab. However, in the post-Banda Singh period when Sikhs had to face repression and exile, this institution could not be formalised. The concept was revived during the *misl* period when the heads of various *misls* used to meet at the Akal Takht on Vaisakhi and Diwali to discuss their problems and a common agenda for the *Panth*. Their unanimous decisions used to be called *gurmattas* and were accepted by all as decisions of the *Panth*. This practice was discontinued by Maharaja Ranjit Singh for his own reasons, and has remained redundant since.

This vacuum is responsible for the prevailing confusion and uncertainty. While there are too many persons or agencies to claim leadership, there is none enjoying the authority of the *Panth*.

It is clear that, for a solution of the present as well as future problems, we have to fill this vacuum. An agency has to be created that can represent and speak on behalf of the *Panth*. The SGPC being the biggest, and comparatively the most representative body, should take an initiative in this direction. With the cooperation of the DSGMC and other major organizations of Sikhs like the Chief Khalsa Diwan, Damdami Taksal and others, the SGPC should convene a meeting of their representatives to discuss this issue. Sikhs abroad should be adequately represented on it. An Apex Body should be created and procedures for its functioning be clearly laid down. The role of *takhts* and their *jathedars* should be defined, as also their qualifications, tenure, mode of recruitment, privileges, and so on.

This Apex Body should be assisted by Advisory Committees consisting of eminent Sikhs and experts from different disciplines, for advice on religious and other technical matters. No decision should be made without reference to these Committees. It should not be forgotten that only sound decisions taken in the interest of the *Panth* will attract compliance. On the other hand, decisions taken in haste, based on personal prejudices, and without adequate thought to possible consequences, are more likely to be defied. Unfortunately, some of the decisions taken by leaders during the recent past, belong to the latter category, and have caused divisions in the *Panth* and immense damage to its prestigious institutions.

It is hoped that the SGPC will take the initiative on the above lines. If the proposed Apex Body of the *Panth* can be set up, it may be the biggest gain of the tercentenary, and the trauma suffered by the community in recent years will not have gone in vain.

The list of problems mentioned above is by no means exhaustive. New problems may continue to arise. But once we have an agency or a body fully representative of the *Panth* to deal with them, there is nothing to worry about.

Political Goal

While this issue should also be decided by the above proposed body, it seems necessary to make a few observations in this regard.

"We are not Hindus", Bhai Kahn Singh thundered in 1897! In fact, Guru Nanak had left no doubt about his religion being an independent

revealed faith, when he refused to sear the sacred thread of the Hindu faith, and when he declared that he looked upon people as 'neither Hindus nor Musalmans'. Guru Arjun Dev later reaffirmed this when he said:

*We neither are Hindus nor Musalmans;
Our body and life is Allah-Rama's.*

The independent identity of the Sikh faith is recognised by all responsible persons and organizations. Stray voices continue to rise claiming Sikhs to be a part of Hindus. Such voices deserve no notice, and should be ignored.

That the Sikhs are a nation is also not seriously disputed anymore. According to Gokal Chand Narang, "Guru Gobind Singh created a nation...", "... when I say the creation of a nation, I mean the words to be taken literally, for when Guru Gobind Singh began his work, there was no such thing as a Hindu antion."

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Sikhs established a powerful state over a vast territory in North India. The subsequent loss of the *territory* does not mean loss of *nationality* as well.

In a brilliant analysis of the question of Sikh nationality, Dr. Gopal Singh concludes: "As I have mentioned earlier, the three incidents of the 1980s have finally consolidated the national consciousness among the Sikhs. It is difficult to foresee a dilution in this consciousness, because in these incidents, the Sikhs as a community suffered humiliation, unforgettable psychological blows, physical injuries, and loss of life and property.

"Therefore, I am of the view that Sikhs today are a nationality like any other nationality in India. I would be happy if someone comes out with a definition of nationality which Sikhs do not fit into."

As a nation and with distinct religious identity, the Sikh claim to a homeland or a sovereign state follows naturally. However, the concept of sovereignty has undergone a considerable change since the Second World War. The so-called independence has yielded place to interdependence. Not long ago, Europe housed over a dozen independent sovereign nation states, fighting one another to their mutual ruin and destruction. They have, in their own interest, agreed to drop part of their sovereignty, and decided to manage their defence, foreign affairs, and currency collectively. Movements within Europe are free, as is the trade, to the advantage of all. They are well on their way to becoming the United States of Europe, on the pattern of the United States of America.

We too can learn from their experience. Instead of fighting for a small independent state, sandwiched between two hostile neighbours and with no access to the sea, it

may perhaps be more prudent to work for a federal structure in India in which the federating units have complete autonomy within. Some common subjects like defence, international affairs, currency, and so on, could be entrusted to the federal government. This demand is shared by most other states as well. The membership of this union should be made so attractive that even neighbouring states of the subcontinent would like to join it. The federating units may even be encouraged to seek membership of the United Nations in some form, which will give the Union added support in the UN. With this kind of freedom and autonomy, no state will ever want to secede from the Union, even if provision to this effect may exist in the federal constitution. The willingness of partners will constitute the real strength of the Union.

The whole of India (*the sub-continent : ed*) is the homeland of the Sikhs. The first recorded reference to the word 'Hindustan' was in the *bani* of Guru Nanak, who traversed the whole of India and much farther beyond its borders. Sikhs have their holy shrines spread throughout the Indian subcontinent. By confining ourselves into a small isolated state we do not want to lose access to these shrines, as has happened in the case of the gurdwaras in Pakistan.

We have made tremendous sacrifices for the independence and defence of India. We cannot afford to throw away the gains of our sacrifices. Economic considerations and the interests of Sikhs living outside Punjab in India and abroad, also demand that the Sikh homeland be a member of such a federation.

International Scenario

Peace has eluded mankind ever since the dawn of history. The twentieth century witnessed two world wars. Huntington, who has made comprehensive study of the prevailing world situation says:

"World War I or the Great War was the 'war to end all wars' and to make the world safe for democracy. World War II, as Franklin Roosevelt put it, would 'end the system of unilateral action, the exclusive alliances, the balances of power, and all the other expedients that have been tried for centuries - and have failed.' Instead we will have 'a universal organization' of 'peace-loving Nations' and beginnings of a 'permanent structure of peace.' World War I, however, generated communism, fascism, and the reversal of a century-old trend toward democracy. World War II produced a Cold War that was truly global. The illusion of harmony at the end of that Cold War was soon dissipated by the multiplication of ethnic conflicts and 'ethnic cleansing,' the breakdown of law and order, the emergence of new patterns of alliance and conflict among

states, the resurgence of neo-communist and neo-fascist movements, intensification of religious fundamentalism, the end of the 'diplomacy of smiles' and 'policy of yes' in Russia's relations with the West, the inability of the United Nations and the United States to suppress bloody local conflicts, and increasing assertiveness of a rising China. In the five years after the Berlin wall came down, the word 'genocide' was heard far more often than in any five years of the Cold War. The one harmonious world paradigm is clearly far too divorced from reality to be useful guide to the post-Cold War world."

In the changed environment, culture appears to play a dominant role in determination of relationships. "In the post-Cold War world, states increasingly define their interests in civilizational terms. They cooperate with and ally themselves with states with similar or common culture and are more often in conflict with countries of different culture...."

"Now that a Marxist-Leninist Soviet Union no longer poses a threat to the Free World and the United States no longer poses a countering threat to the communist world, countries in both worlds increasingly see threats coming from societies which are culturally different....."

"As of early 1993, for instance, an estimated 48 ethnic wars were occurring throughout the world, and in 164 'territorial-ethnic claims and conflicts concerning borders' existed in the former Soviet Union, of which 30 had involved some form of armed conflict."

A "global war of involving the core states of the world's major civilizations is highly improbable, but not impossible. Such a war, we have suggested could come about from the escalation of fault line wars between groups from different civilizations, most likely involving Muslims on one side and non-Muslims on the other."

"At the micro level, the most violent fault lines are between Islam and its Orthodox, Hindu, African, and Western Christian neighbours. At the macro level, the dominant division is between 'the West and the Rest'."

Should, unfortunately, such an escalation trigger a conflict between two civilizations, it will surely engulf the whole world, and with the huge stocks of nuclear weapons available with major powers, the outcome will be catastrophic. Mankind may be completely annihilated marking the end of its history.

Role of Religion

Although religious division has often led to conflict, religion can also play an important role in averting this catastrophe, if its real spirit is invoked. As Régis Debray put it, "It is not the opium of the people, but the vitamin of the weak". Unfortunately, however, the emphasis is on the features that divide, rather than on the ones that unite. Islam and Christianity have followed an aggressive programme of proselytisation. As a result, the percentage of the former in the world population rose from 12.4 in 1900 to 17.1 in 1985, and that of the latter increased from 26.9 to 29.7 during the same period. While such an increase is due to conversion in both cases, in Islam it is also effected through reproduction. As a result projections for 2000 are that there will be 19.2% Muslims and 29.9% Christians in the world.

To put an end to clashes between religions, some well-wishers of humanity would like a common universal religion or a global civilization to emerge.

Ninian Smart says in his *The World's Religions* "So long as humans are brought up in different paths, so they will see the world differently, and for each path some things will seem natural and right and others not. But the paths cross. We can benefit from that social justice, which Marxists struggle for; human freedom, which liberals emphasise; love of God and fellow humans, which Christianity preaches; brotherhood, which Islam promotes; calm and mysticism, which go with Buddhism; devotion and pluralism, which Hinduism points to; harmony with nature, which Taoism commends; the cultivation of interpersonal behaviour, which is a lesson from Confucianism; holism in life, which we find in Africa; finding meaning through suffering, which Judaism has had to emphasise; the importance of inner sincerity, which we find among the Sikhs: these and many other spiritual and moral values are not of course mutually incompatible. In that respect, though we may not achieve a global religion, we may achieve a global civilization in which values from the great traditions are woven together in a glittering net. Perhaps it will turn out like the jewel net of Indra, of which Huayen so eloquently speaks: each stone reflecting every other."

This pious wish, however, is unlikely to be fulfilled at least in the foreseeable future. No faithful follower of a religion will shed his belief in his own religion in favour of any new syncretic universal system. What is required is respect for other religious systems side by side with faith in one's own, or a philosophy of multiculturalism.

This is exactly what Guru Nanak preached. Although his system includes all the elements of a universal religion listed by Ninian Smart, the Guru never called for conversion. He laid emphasis only on the basic values and firmly held that no label of a religious denomination or rituals prescribed by it, can lead to salvation. The salvation of an individual as well as the human

race can only come from an understanding of God's Will and carrying it out in life. God is the Creator. He is immanent in the universe. He is the Father of us all. He is benevolent and looks after and loves His creation. In fact, He is all love, and it is through love alone, that He can be realised. One's love for God can be expressed only through altruistic deeds in the service of mankind.

The salient features of the Guru's system have been listed earlier. The stress in this system is on basic spiritual values, freedom of faith and respect for other faiths, in the practice of one's own religion.

To the Muslim he said:

*Hard it is to deserve the name of Mussalman,
Only one truly so, may such be called.
First, must he hold in love the way of the holy;
Like iron on grindstone should be cast off his possessions.
In the way of the Preceptor should he have faith,
And banish illusion of death and life.
To the Lord's Will should he be obedient:
With faith in the Creator as compassionate he becomes,
May he be called Mussalman.*

To the Pandit, who wanted to initiate him through the sacred thread (*Janeoo*), he said :

*Make compassion the cotton, contentment the yarn;
Continence the knot and purity the twist;
Such is the true sacred thread of the self.
Thou Brahmin-priest! Put this on me shouldst thou have it.
To the Nath Panthi yogi, his message was:
Make contentment the carrings; modesty thy begging-bowl and pouch;
Contemplation thy ashes.
Make thy quilt from realization of thy mortality,
And keep thy body virgin;
Thy code and staff, faith in God.
Let all mankind be thy sect.
Conquering thus thyself, mayst thou be lord of the world.*

The Guru's message is for all. It is the message of love, service and sacrifice. It is the message of happiness and bliss for all. It is the message of justice and equality. It is the message of not just tolerance, but genuine respect for other religious beliefs. It is the message of cooperative effort for eradication of suffering from the planet. The world needs this message, to avert the impending tragedy of clash of civilizations.

Let us disseminate it, and pray with the Guru for the Lord's grace on all (*Sarbat da Bhala*):

*Some utter His name as Rama, others as Khuda;
Some serve the Lord of the universe, others Allah.
Gracious Lord Almighty, compassionate, bestow grace on all.
[Guru Granth Sahib]*

Dr. Kharak Singh

[Excerpts from the Bir Memorial Oration at the India International Centre]

Dr. Kharak Singh was born in 1922, at Rayya near Amritsar, and got his M.Sc in Agriculture in 1954 and Ph.D in Agro Econ. from Ohio State University in 1967. After teaching at the Punjab Agriculture College, Lyallpur and later at Ludhiana, he was with the Government of India's Ministry of Agriculture before serving with the United Nations FAO at Rome from 1968 to 1984. He founded The Institute of Sikh Studies in Chandigarh in 1989.



A Symbiosis of Science and Religion

Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany

When the Spirit took matter to bed,
An eager bride to be ravished.
The earth shook and the skies,
Homo Sapiens in his glory arrived

-DSM

As I write this I am painfully aware of the limitations on my muses. For the sheer magnitude of the subject demands that the imagination rise to a certain pitch to contain "a sum of multitudes", to use a Whitman expression. And that kind of enterprises needs spaces and altitudes, whilst I struggle to contain the chaos within myself. There should have been a time for such a challenge, but then.....!

This longish "epigraph" may perhaps help explain why when seeking to portray a person in all his facundities and transparencies, I will be using pencil and ink when I should have been using rich heavy colours and oil. For the man called Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany has so many aspects and faculties, so many dimensions and directions as to bait the imagination, and rouse it to an engagement on a vast scale. So, this note is fated to be meagre as I see the problem.

Where then to begin? As I scan a clutch of xeroxed pages, extracts, abstracts and others on Narinder Singh Kapany's life and work and achievements, I find a bewildering amount of data - on his origins, his academic career, his scientific reaches and heights, his aesthetic tastes and refinements, his commitment to the faith in which he was born, and the enlargements sought, his professional and business enterprises, his endowments and charities, his international renown and awards and ... the list begins to swell into a volume. Such large minds and imaginations, such extensions of the spirit in worshipful labour remind one of

the Renaissance talents in the European world of great thinkers, writers, artists, explorers and adventurers - of the "brave new world", in sum. And since that moment of moments (15th, 16th centuries), scores and scores of such persons have enriched the human horizons, and continue to do so.

Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany is one such soul, and that is perhaps a measure of the many splendored personality we have on view. Known as "the father of fibre optics" the world over, he is, in fact, a progenitor of so many new ideas in the

Age of Communications that expectations keep rising. Indeed, it is a grand sport running down all the hares to their lairs, the brood of hares he has started in the terrain of fibre optics technology. And it is a great pity that outside of the orbit of scientists in India, he still remains largely unknown. Living in the United States of America since his Ph.D. from the Imperial College in London in 1955 and making a great name there and acquiring fortunes, he has done us proud even as we still know so little about him even in Punjab to whose soil he owes his being, and to which he has been making a yearly "pilgrimage" in a spirit of home-coming and thankfulness.

Ah, but I have yet to give body to a host of thoughts that

characterise this story within the story. First: the dynamics of his warm and rich personality, a God-given thing as Nicolas Berdyaev, a most insightful and erudite Christian thinker of the 20th century, defines it in his great book, *The Destiny of Man*. Distinguishing between *individuality* and *personality*, he writes: "Individuality is a materialistic and biological category, while personality is a religious and spiritual one".... "Personality is not generated, it is created by God."



Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany, the "father of fibre optics."

Despite his long residence in the United States, he has an unmistakable identity as a tall, sturdy *Patialashahi* sardar with his booming voice, warm bear hugs, huge hand shakes, generous laughter, big strides and big words. Not a brooding, reticent "egg-head", a cold academic or an intensely absorbed scientist, as one would expect him to be. That is the paradox of his unique personality, a union of thought and energy, a fellowship of science and religion, of the soil and the sun. It appears, the milk and curds of his native Punjab and the magnanimities of the Californian land of plums and peaches have, in unison, given him airs of an open-hearted person whom you may run into at a roadside *dhaba*, if you like. At times, he strikes me as a Whitmanesque figure without the wild poetic looks about him. And it may be appropriate to recall Professor Puran Singh in whom too there was a grand convergence of science and religion and poetry.

And this reminds me of that deeply spiritual poet of nature, Wordsworth, whose one definition of poetry among others, is so apposite. He called poetry that "truth in the countenance of all science" which is eternal and inviolate. In Guru Nanak's ode to the glories of the earth and the skies, an ode to the Creation's splendour in his *Japji*, such a union of matter and the spirit is seen in all its reaches and altitudes. Indeed, the affinities of science and religion have since Einstein, quantum physics and nuclear sciences been increasingly a subject of profound discussions and thought. In a recent "Sunday Spectrum" of the *Tribune*, I expressed some of these points in an article entitled "Modern Anguish and Anxieties". I quote an appropriate passage:

"Now all quests, religious or secular-scientific aim at enlarging the range of human consciousness with a view to achieving a state of mind close to what the theologians call "godliness", and the secular thinkers human essence in all its fecundities, pluralities and profundities. In reality, the goals are the same, and whatever idiom we may adopt, the idea is to create a human economy of values that is sustainable, self-rejuvenating and evolutionary, reaching out to the riches of nature in fruit and flower, in seed and sod, in mineral and marine worlds, and reaching in to connect the self with those hidden realities that manifest themselves close to the sublime."

If I consider Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany in the company of such scientists today, it is only to see how his thought must have chimed with such observations. For, as a devout Sikh and a great Punjabi, he has shown a remarkable reverence for scientific knowledge, and a reverence for that Sikh virtue, *Sada Vigas*, and Punjabi *joie d' vivre* which characterise persons of such mettle.

I am afraid, I would have to leave the rest to the

imagination if we were to tell even briefly his story of the magnanimities as a philanthropist, as a sculptor and connoisseur of art, as a corporation top executive, as a donor of the Chair of Sikh Studies in the University of California, Santa Barbara, as a Professor Emeritus, as a prolific writer of books and research papers in American journals of science among many an aspect of the first order.

Dr. Kapany's teacher told him that the light travels in straight lines, but his visionary eye saw the promise ahead and wound up creating fibre optics. Has the moment arrived for the highest award in what has been called the Communication Age? India has already produced Nobel *Lauriates* in the sciences. Who knows...?

But I have to say a few words about our connection since my Harvard Fulbright assignment in 1969-1970. It has been, alas, a distant and fading dream, as it were. While I was on the West Coast in June 1970 on my way back to India, I did not miss my date with Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany during a visit to San Francisco. I had been invited to see the activities of *The Sikh Foundation* set up by him. And he joyfully accepted for publication my edited manuscript of Professor Puran Singh's incomplete, unfinished clutch of scrawled pages on the Tenth Sikh Master. I gave it the title, and added two introductory essays to make the slim volume. *Guru Gobind Singh : Reflections and Offerings*. That was but one instance of his vision where his service in the cause of the Sikh faith is concerned. I wonder how I lost that well-produced little volume in green, for I do not find it now in my own little library. Obviously, a borrower's whim! And then my meetings with Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany during that memorable international seminar on "*Sikh History and Religion in the Twentieth Century*" hosted jointly by the University of Toronto and the University of California, Berkeley in February, 1987 following the Punjab tragedy and *Operation Bluestar*. His exuberance and his wit even in that period of horror left an abiding impression of the play of personality on my troubled mind.

And I must not, finally, fail to touch on his visit to my place here in Chandigarh a couple of months ago to see a stricken, ailing friend. He heard about it from the *Nishaan's* editor, Pushpinder Singh, who brought him along to add a touch of warmth in the cold twilight days of my life. His heartiness, candour and human concern were as green as ever before. What a man, I pondered long after when he was gone, what a man, indeed!

A phenomenon extant. I am aware of the fact that my word runs to extravagance, but then it is within that idiom we have to find the truth. So be it, So be it!

Prof. Darshan Singh Maini

Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany

Nishaan (N): How did the idea of bending light occur to you?

Dr. Kapany (K): When somebody said to me that light travels in a straight line, I said no! The idea of bending light occurred to me when I was a student in school in Dehra Dun at the beautiful foothills of the Himalayas. I carried the idea to my college. Actually, it is not an idea. It is a statement of a problem.

N: Would you care to share what led you to convert the idea into a path breaking discovery?

Dr. K: When I was working at the Ordnance Factory, Dehra Dun, I tried to use right angle prisms to show that you can reflect light, you can bend light from one prism to another. But the whole idea occurred to me until I came to London and joined Imperial College and started working on my thesis. My supervisor suggested that the idea was good but instead of prisms which worked on the principles of

plain geometry, I should use cylindrical or three dimensional geometry which was a fibre. That is how the name fibre optics came in my mind and it led to the discovery of fibre optics.

N: Did you visualise the potential of fibre optics at that time?

Dr. K: No, No. Initially my interest was primarily for its use for medical instruments for looking inside the human body. The real potential and the broad potential of optical fiber for other fields did not dawn on me until 1955. It was then that I coined the term fibre optics, and I could visualise the commercial uses of fibre optics.

N: What are the commercial uses of fibre optics?

Dr. K: Medical instruments for looking inside the human body, other applications for transmission of signals through fibres, night vision, communication etc.

Born on 31 October 1927 at Moga, Narinder Singh Kapany's childhood was spent in Dehra Dun, nestled in the beautiful valley between the Himalayan mountains to the north, the Siwalik hills to the south, the rivers Jamuna to the west and Ganges to the east.

Of an acute scientific bent of mind, he graduated in Physics, Mathematics and Chemistry from Agra University in 1949 and became a supervisor for three years in optical instrumentation at the Ordnance Factory Dehra Dun till 1951 when he went to the U.K., to do his D.I.C. Diploma in Technical Optics at the Imperial College of Science & Technology in London. Two years on, he was awarded the Ph.D in Technical Optics at the Physics Department of the Imperial College and, as they say, light has never travelled in straight lines ever since!

Widely acknowledged as the "Father of Fibre Optics", Narinder Singh Kapany explored the basic physics of light transmission in fibres, frustrated total reflection and wave propagation in optical waveguides. With his comprehensive background in electro-optics and associated physical sciences, Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany developed the current techniques for fabrication, testing and processing of optical fibres for numerous applications.

His research and over 100 patented inventions have encompassed fibre-optics, communications, lasers, bio-medical instrumentation, solar energy and pollution monitoring. Along with Dr. H.H. Hopkins, Dr. Kapany worked on transparent fibres for the transmission of optical images in 1955-56 and went on in 1959 to write his paper on high resolution fibre optics using sub-micron multiple fibres. A year later he articulated on endoscopes using fibre optics and then on a hypodermic probe using fibre optics.

A Magnificent Obsession



N : What kind of problems or challenges did you face as a young inventor who was onto something big?

Dr.K: Oh my God ! So many problems. Unbelievable. When I was at the Imperial College, London and I wanted to show the phenomenon that you can transmit light through fibres, I took some very high optical glasses to Cilkington Glass Company in England and asked to make them into glass fibres. After some months I received spools of glass fibres and later found out that it was bottle green as in the case of beer bottles and it transmitted very little light.

So I had to use carbon arc source, a very bright source to show that you can transmit image through a bundle of fibres. It was very difficult.

N : What helped you press on with your work during your difficult days ?

Dr.K : Firstly, it was the scholarship from the Royal Society. It was very nice. Then I had my professors. They were advising me and encouraging me at the Imperial College. And when I came to this country (the USA), I got a lot of help and encouragement from technologists, industrialists

In all, he has over eighty scientific papers to his credit and is the author of four books, two of which are considered definitive texts in the field of fibre optics, as also on lasers, including his analysis on green laser photocoagulator using fibre optics which he submitted in 1972.

After four years as manager of the optics section of the Physics Division of the Illinois Institute of Technology Research Institute, he was President and Director of Research at Optics Technology Inc. at Palo Alto, California. In 1973, he became President and Chief Executive Officer of Kaptron Inc., later a subsidiary of AMP Inc. at Palo Alto for 20 years and has, of late, started K2 Optronics, also in Palo Alto.

His wide and roving scientific temper led him to investigate into solar energy and contribute to the all di-electric compound parabolic concentrator in the mid-70s. As an academic, Dr.Kapany has taught and supervised research activity of postgraduate students. He was a Regents Professor at the University of California, Berkeley (UCB), and at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC). He was also Director of the Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurial Development (CIED) at UCSC for seven years. At Stanford University, he has been a Visiting Scholar in the Physics Department and Consulting Professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering.

There is more, far more to Dr.Narinder Singh Kapany than his great scientific achievements. As a philanthropist of world renown, Dr.Kapany has been active in education and the arts. He has been the founding chairman and major funder of *The Sikh Foundation* of Palo Alto in California and its activities for over 30 years. In collaboration with international institutions and publishers, the Foundation runs programmes in publishing, academia and the arts. In 1998, Dr.Kapany endowed a Chair of

and later on when I started my own company I received considerable help from investors. Nobody does it alone. A lot of people join together. I could demonstrate my results to them.

N : Had you remained in India, could you have accomplished your goal and achieved success ?

Dr.K : No way. Firstly, resources needed for developing a new technology were not available. Secondly, even if technology was there, there were no resources to convert the technology into a product.

Industrial and commercial resources were not available. And finally, investment for business would not have been there. It would not have worked in India in those days. Infrastructure was not there.

N : When did you start patenting your discoveries ?

Dr.K : In the early fifties. Exactly in 1952 when I was in the UK. Two, three, four patents were registered every year. Some were totally in my name, some were me and my colleagues and some of them belonged to the companies where I worked.

Sikh Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His gift in 1999 of \$ 500,000 to the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco has helped establish a gallery in its new building displaying the works he has donated from his collection of Sikh art. In 1999, he endowed a Chair of Opto-Electronics at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He is also trustee of the University of California, Santa Cruz Foundation. He has served as a trustee of the Menlo School in Menlo Park, California.

As an art collector, Dr. Kapany has specialised in Sikh art. He was the prime mover and provided a major loan of paintings for the internationally acclaimed 'Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms' exhibition. The exhibition started in March 1999 at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, then proceeded to the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco with the Sikh Foundation as its major sponsor, and thereafter opened in May 2000 for four months at the Royal Ontario Museum in Canada. The exhibition follows 'Splendours of the Punjab: Sikh Art and Literature in 1992' organised by Dr. Kapany in collaboration with the Asian Art Museum and UC Berkeley to celebrate the 25th anniversary of *The Sikh Foundation*.

As an artist, Dr. Kapany has created 40 "dynoptic" sculptures which were first displayed in a one-man show at the Exploratorium of the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco in 1972. Since then, the collection has been viewed at museums and art galleries in Chicago, Monterey, Palo Alto, and Stanford.

Dr. Kapany lives in the Bay Area (San Francisco) with his wife, Satinder. His son, Rajinder is a hi-tech executive; and his daughter, Kiren is an attorney and film maker.

N : How many patents have registered till now ?

Dr.K : Between 125 to 150.

N : Since you have sold your company to AMP, in what technical pursuits you are now engaged?

Dr.K : (A hearty laughter). It is a trade secret. When I was a young student in London, there used to be a magazine called *Picture Post*. It was a light magazine. The magazine used to publish four pictures on a page.

A colleague asked me about the potential of the paper. My answer was "phenomenal." And same is the answer to you. Probably the potential is stronger. Whatever needs to be done in the fields of electronic and fibre optics, is not yet done. It is a lot more interesting, exciting, challenging. There is a potential for the next 15 and 20 years.

N : How do you look at the progress of Indian science ?

Dr.K : There is no doubt that India is getting better in some areas like software. It is now on the international map. It is doing a lot in transforming technology into products. I am optimistic about India, Indian industry particularly in the hi-tech areas.

N : How much time will it take for India to reach the level of developed countries ?

Dr.K : That is a difficult question. You are dealing with a very fast moving situation here. Technology is developing and becoming obsolete at such a fast rate that it is difficult to predict that when India will be able to reach that level of development and commercialisation as is there in the Western countries and Japan. I don't know. I think it should be possible to do that if there are adequate resources, regulations and training of personnel. Lower labour cost is a major advantage for India. India can produce and export. And here lies a great potential.

N : People must be coming to you and asking for your advice.

Dr.K : Yes. But is easier said than done. The most important thing is to have strong management. In some areas, management in India is second to none. In software industry and in hi-tech areas India is going well. It requires a number of efforts that need to be done.

Basically, India should start with education and training. Then come resources and facilities and the entrepreneurial talent is needed to exploit the same for commercial gains. Investment, government regulations and tax benefits that allow for investment are equally important.

N : Let us come to your passion for Sikh heritage! How did it all start ?

Dr.K : During my stay in the UK, the USA and other English speaking countries where there is a large Sikh population, I found questions that haunt them. Why do the Sikhs look

different from others ? Why do they grow a beard, moustaches? Why don't they cut their hair and wear a turban? The generation of the Sikhs that is born and brought up abroad which does not have any contact with the Punjab and Sikh tradition have these questions.

There is no doubt that there are hundreds of gurdwaras in these countries where a large section of Sikhs gather and listen to *shabad-kirtan* by priests.

As in all other religions, the younger generation is generally out of tune with the happenings in the gurdwaras as they do not understand the language of the priests. All this pushed me towards preserving the Sikh heritage and making the new generation know of its importance in the language they understand.

To address these concerns and to ensure that Sikh traditions will be handed down to future generations of Sikhs born in Europe and North America as well as non-Sikhs, I founded the *Sikh Foundation* in 1967, located in Palo Alto.

N : What is the Foundation's mandate ?

Dr.K : The *Foundation* works to pass on to the Sikh diaspora in the West, particularly the youth, introduce the world to ethics, mysticism, arts, literature and heroism of the Sikhs, and advance Sikh culture.

It has produced a large number of books and other material for children, general readers and academics. I firmly believe that there is a definite Sikh history, Sikh culture and Sikh heritage. With the passage of time Sikhism has become a universal religion. But the work of the *Foundation* is not for the Sikhs alone.

N : How important are Gurdwaras in spreading Sikhism ?

Dr.K : They are important in spreading the message of the Sikh Gurus, but it is limited to rituals. That is why I founded an endowment in the honour of my mother Kundan Kaur and gifted \$ 350,000 to the University of California Santa Barbara for establishing a chair in Sikh studies with the sole object of preserving and propagating rich Sikh heritage.

N : How did you plan for the tercentenary of the Khalsa ?

Dr.K : I started planning for that five years earlier. With the active collaboration and association of the Victoria and Albert Museum, I organised the first international exhibition of the artistic heritage of the Sikhs.

The exhibition had original Sikh art relics from the archives world over. The exhibition opened at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London from March 25 to July 25, 1999 and then came to The Asian Art Museum, San Francisco from September 22, 1999 to January 2000, and thereafter to the Royal Ontario Museum, in Toronto, Canada.

Adopted from the India Post

An illustrated journey through Narinder Singh Kapany's life and times



1942: As a youth in Dehra Dun—on a Sunday, after shower, drying hair in the sun.



1948: Sikh Student Literary Society, Dehra Dun—an interview with Purshotam Das Tandon, a freedom fighter.



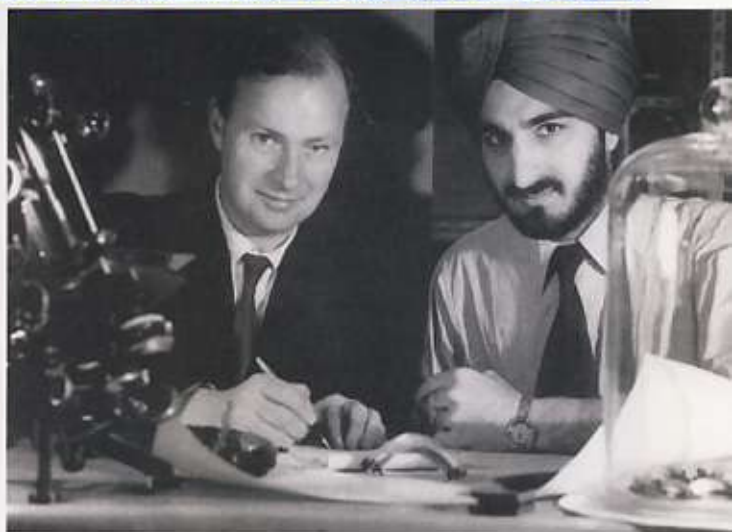
1948: Editorial board of "Deepak"—a publication of the Sikh Students Literary Society, Dehra Dun. Note the late S. Dalbir Singh (extreme left).



1952: At the Imperial College of Science & Technology, London.



1953: First lab. demo of 'fibre optics'—at the Imperial College of Science & Technology, London.



1953: With his thesis advisor Dr. H.H. Hopkins and the first fibre optics device.



1955: With his wife Satinder (on his left) and friends.



1955: On his sea passage to America.



1963: At a picnic in California with daughter Kiki.



1963: Demonstrating the first laser retinal coagulator.



1964: On television: the programme "Service in Action" with ruby laser for eye surgery.



1963: Cutting the ribbon for opening of his first company—Optics Technology Inc. at Stanford.



1964: With Prof. Arthur Schawlow, nobel-laureate and co-inventor of the laser.



1967: Members of the National Inventor Council with the US Vice President.



1967: Receiving a saropa from S. Swaran Singh at Sisganj Sahib gurdwara.



1967: Receiving the Watumull award from Mrs. Chester Bowles (US Ambassador to India) and Mrs. Watumull.



1970: At Cape Kennedy to observe the launching of Apollo 4.



With George Harrison M.D. of Stanford Hospital demonstrating the first fibre optic Cardiac Oximeter.



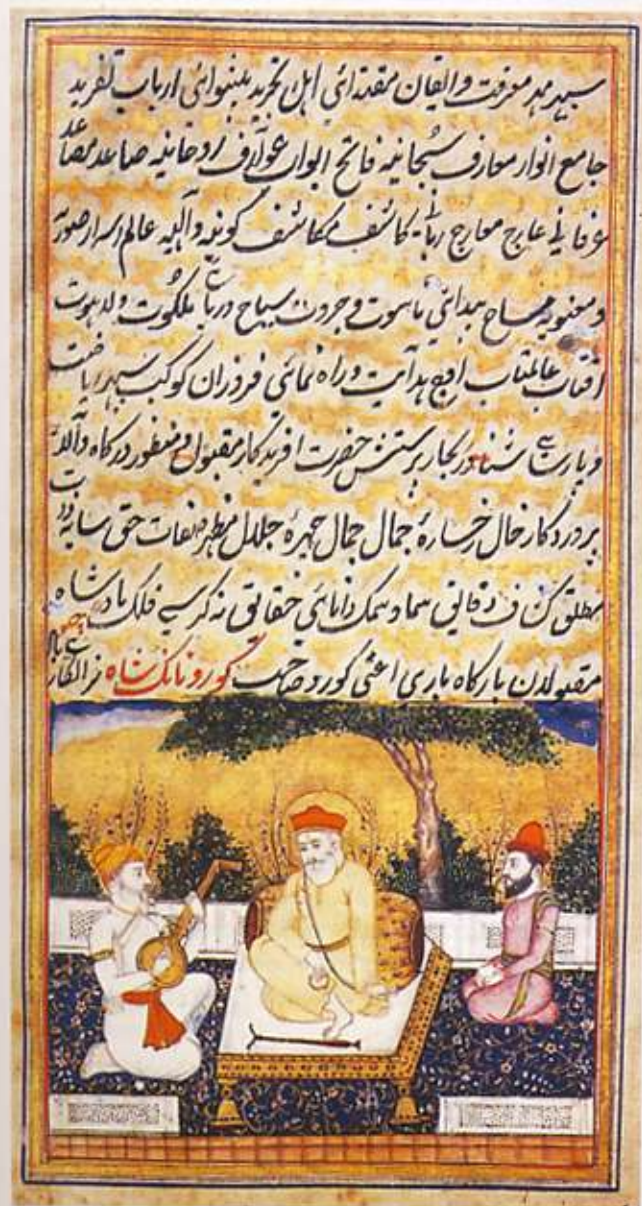
Full page ad in 'Time' and 'Wall Street Journal' -1968.

He became president with the help of our crystal ball.

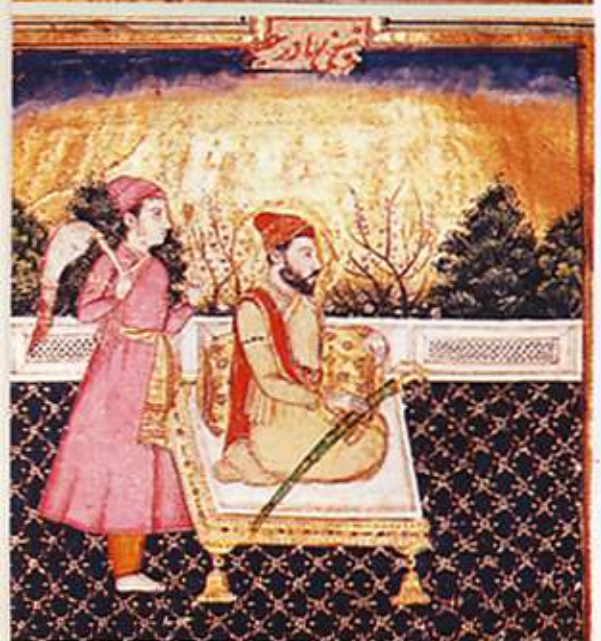
Images of a HERITAGE

Authored by Tejinder Singh, an alumnus of the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, and a senior officer of the Indian Administrative Service, this brilliantly illustrated large format book is a fascinating collection of visual images of the Sikhs and their realms from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century.

The Arts



Illustrations in the Persian manuscript *Gulgashat-i-Punjab*
Clockwise from left: Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Dass



Compiled for the first time as the "best of such collections remaining in India" this is a poignant reminder of on the fact that the other "best" collections are now virtually permanently abroad, in Britain, the United States and Canada in the main.

This is the first in a series of two books dedicated to the legendary Dr. M.S. Randhawa, "for his earnestness in acquiring miniature paintings of Punjab and the hill states for Indian museums. Many works had already left the country during British times and after independence the exodus would have quickened, except for these efforts of his. A large number of the paintings illustrated in this book are part of the collection acquired by him for government galleries".

Of special significance for the Sikhs are the paintings of the ten Gurus which are the focus of this review of Tejinder's brilliant book.

The two broad themes of Sikh painting were religious and court portraiture. Stylised paintings of the Sikh Gurus were being painted in Guler and other hill areas even before the advent of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Also popular were *janamsakhi* series based on the life of Guru Nanak. A typical *janamsakhi* would consist of a number of folios with paintings of Guru Nanak along with the narrative. The paintings would be of notable episodes in his life and some were indeed well rendered. Even though the art of miniature painting in Punjab was soon to wane, some brilliant works were done. The paintings done at Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court at Lahore and the paintings of the Sikh Gurus done at the Patiala court, around the middle of the nineteenth century, were as marvelous as the best of other miniature paintings.

The Sikh religion is unique to have teachings and examples on extremes of human conduct, that of piety and forbearance preached by Guru Nanak and the call to arms of Guru Gobind Singh. The Sikh Gurus in between also occupy special positions for their contributions to the Sikh religion, their acts of resistance and martyrdom in the face of oppression from the Mughals and the process of moulding the Sikh identity. Initially when Guru Nanak founded the religion the identity of Sikhs was not too conspicuous as Sikhism welcomes people of all religions, castes and classes. Only over the years, under the later Gurus, Sikh identity crystallised, culminating with the forming of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh in April 1699. In the painted images, therefore, the largest number are those of the founder Guru Nanak and of Guru Gobind Singh. Individual portraits of other Gurus are also there as well as those on specific themes like the compilation of the Guru Granth Sahib, the establishment of the Golden Temple, depiction of sacrifices and acts of martyrdom by the Gurus.

Guru Nanak is invariably shown with his companions Bala and Mardana in lively scenes from the *janamsakhi* series, and sometimes even with Guru Gobind Singh, apart from other paintings depicting all the ten Gurus together. The paintings of the Sikh Gurus were never contemporary to their lives and were on the basis of historical facts and legends. Guru Gobind Singh was the ideal of the Sikh painters and has been lovingly depicted in the various series. He was a warrior saint and his entire family was martyred, including his four sons. He was also a man of letters and among other treaties wrote the *Dasam Granth*. These qualities and his turbulent life and struggle made him the most important icon for the painters. In the paintings Guru Gobind Singh is always shown as a gentle warrior, baptising the Sikhs or with his 'beloved five', the *panj pyare*. His courage as well as literary skills come out very clearly in his famous *Zafarnama* to the evil emperor Aurangzeb which includes:

"Did I not know that thou, O faithless man, wert a worshipper of wealth and perjurer? Thou keepest no faith and observest no religion. Thou knowest not God, and believed not in Muhammad. He who hath regard for his religion never swerveth from his promise. Thou hast no idea of what an oath on the Quran is, and canst have belief in Divine Providence. Wert thou to take a hundred oaths on the Quran, I would not even then trust thee in the slightest. Hadst thou any intention of keeping thine oath, thou wouldst have girded up thy loins and come to me.

When thou didst swear by Muhammad and called the word of God to witness, it was incumbent on thee to observe that oath. Were the Prophet himself present here, I would make it my special object to inform him of thy treachery. Do what is incumbent on thee, and adhere to thy written promise. Thou shouldst have cheerfully fulfilled it, and also the verbal promises of thine envoy. Everybody ought to be a man of his word, and not utter one thing while he meditath another. Thou didst promise to abide by the words of thy qazi.

If thou hast spoken truly, then come to me. If thou desire to seal thy promise on the Quran, I will gladly send it to thee for the purpose. If thou come to the village of Kangar, we shall have an interview. Thou shalt not run the slightest danger on the way, for the whole tribe of Bairars are under me. Come to me that we may speak to each other, and that I may utter kind words to thee".

**The Sikhs: Images of a Heritage*

Text and photographs by T.S. Randhawa
Published by Prakash Book Depot,
New Delhi 110001

Clockwise from top left (opposite page):
Guru Arjan, Guru Har Gobind, Guru Har Rai,
Guru Har Krishan, Guru Tegh Bahadur,
Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Master.



MAI BHAGO

& THE FORTY LIBERATED ONES*

Back to Majha, forty men did ride,
They who had left the Guru behind,
Denying him, the note they signed
Their faith and Guru both defied.
To us, their women, it was not right,
Those forty, such a pitiful sight,
Running like dogs, day and night,
From their master and his terrible plight.
As a blow in the face, they felt our ire,
If they failed to return and apologize
Into battle would ride their wives
Wearing their weapons and battle attire.

In my mind, the Guru's eyes,
Asked the ultimate sacrifice,
Are you willing to pay the price
For the freedom that courage buys?
We must, so we prepared to fight,
To erase the stain of that awful flight,
Quickly to ride, by day and night,
To ask the Guru, this wrong to requite.
I led the men, lance held high,
South we went, the Guru to find,
Forgiveness heavy on our mind,
To the side of a lake, nearly dry.

At Lake Khidrana, we stopped by the side,
The Guru, behind us, on a hill up high,
Soon we heard the enemy cry.
We pitched cloths on the bushes far and wide.
A trick, those sheets, resembling the sight
Of a well-armed camp, left and right,
Convincing the enemy of our might,
Our willingness to stand and fight.
They fell upon us like bees from a hive,
Stinging us with arrows, bullets, and knives,
We fought bravely with our lives,
Only Mahan Singh and I did survive.

Holding Mahan Singh, tears in his eyes,
The Guru said, "Your end is nigh,
Yet you and your comrades shall never die,
I offer a boon before your spirit flies."
Struggling against fast approaching night,
Mahan Singh fixed the Guru in sight,
Saying, "We our own souls did indict,
Destroy the note, turn wrong to right."
"Done," he said, "Dear son of mine,
Your wrong is truly nullified,
Forever, you will be glorified,
Free within God's kingdom divine."

Mahan Singh let go his final sigh,
For the last time, closed his eyes,
Claiming for them the victory prize,
Treasure which no money could buy.
1. still alive, lay off to the right,
Stunned by a blow to the head in the fight,
Seeing the future, with divine foresight,
The Guru knew I would be all right.
He himself performed their last rites,
Muktiars, immortal, beyond death and life,
Forever free from earthly pain and strife,
With the One, eternally, to reunite.

After the battle, with the Guru came I,
Death did not come for me this time,
Bathed in his presence, most sublime,
I am happier than ever, I cannot deny.
Dressed in blue, ever ready to fight,
To punish the wicked, uphold the right,
With ten other Sikhs, I guard him at night,
Gazing upon his face, most beautiful sight.
We are all muktiars when we finally decide
That the Word, our spirit, most truly inspires,
When God's Name satisfies our every desire
The Holy Granth, our undying guide.



*Guru Gobind Singh, "great king, on high":
stained-glass window at the Gurdwara.*

I, not a woman, by his side,
I, a warrior, ready to die.
Tearing the air with victory cry,
To the battlefield, together we ride.
He astride horse of purest white,
Above us, Chittia Baz in flight.
Steel blades flashing sharp and bright,
We fell our enemies left and right.
Watching over him day and night,
I never let him far from sight.
To shield him from all pain and strife
Now and forever, I shall try.
His throne the earth, his crown the sky,
To his mission, I give my life.

Guru Gobind Singh, great king, on high,
Your humble servant, Mai Bhago, am I.
Guru Gobind Singh, great king, on high,
Your humble servant, Mai Bhago, am I.

Gurukirn Kaur Khalsa



*Gurukirn Kaur Khalsa
at the Guru Nanak
Dwara in Phoenix,
where she feels "blessed
to live within its
midst."*



With her younger son Har Rai Singh and a neighbour's son.

**From "Pure Longing Fulfilled" by Gurukirn Kaur Khalsa. An award-winning poet and artist, Gurukirn Kaur Khalsa lives with her husband Jodha Singh and children in Phoenix, Arizona. A member of the Inter Faith Action Coalition of Arizona, she is Executive Secretary of Guru Nanak Dwara in Phoenix and a juried member of the Arizona Artists Guild. As she acknowledges, 'Jaspri Singh and Teresa's layout work has made the book a work of art'.*

A PORTRAIT OF **COURAGE**

The Sikh Regiment in
France and Flanders: 1914-15



Painting of the legendary attack by the 47th Sikhs on German defences at Neuve Chapelle in Northern France, October 1914.



The first troops to land in France were, in fact, the XV (Ludhiana) Sikhs, part of the 8th (Jullundur) Brigade, themselves part of the 3rd (Lahore) Division, whose other battalions were the 47th Sikhs, 59th Scinde Rifles (Frontier Force) and 1st Manchesters.

They were on the convoy which had reached Marseilles on 26 September 1914, the Indian Corps disembarking the same day and proceeding to camp. This was the first time Indian troops had stepped ashore on the European continent, and they were greeted by the local population with great cheers and enthusiasm.

As reported in *The Times*, "the arrival of the Indian Corps at Marseilles was a landmark in history. No episode in this extraordinary war was more remarkable or, for Britons, more inspiring than the presence of Indian troops on the Continent of Europe. For India, the event was, if possible, of even greater significance. The march of her sons through the streets of Marseilles was kind of an initiation. A phantom had been laid that shadowed her prestige. Invisible barriers had been broken down. New vistas of honour were opened out before her.

Throughout the forenoon while the troops were landing, excitement had been steadily rising in the city, and the dispatching of the British and Indian soldiers through the streets in the afternoon *en route* to their camps was a signal for the whole of Marseilles to turn out *en fete* — gaily-dressed streets were packed with a seething mass of humanity.

First came a detachment of Sikhs, for the greater part head and shoulders above the spectators. They received the plaudits of the crowd with the imperturbable smiling composure so

typical of their race. The police guarding the road were swept aside, the ranks were rushed, men and women shook the Sikhs by the hand, and young girls showered flowers upon them, pinning roses in their tunics and on their turbans. Tricolours were distributed with prodigal favour, old ladies with bitter memories of 1870 pressed forward the better to admire these handsome, bearded men, and it would be difficult to conjure up anything more touching than the sight of those frail women patting the bronzed giants on the back and calling down blessings on their heads."

At Marseilles, the Indian troops were re-equipped with new high-velocity rifles and given some practical firing practice, albeit briefly. Entraining on 30 September, the Jullundur Brigade arrived at Orleans two days later, proceeding to camp where they were organised in accordance with the new platoon establishment and the 1914 drill was adopted.

The Lahore Division camped at the Champs de



Men of the XV "Ludhiana" Sikhs after disembarking at Marseilles.

The Great War begins

India, as part of the British Empire, was drawn into the vortex of the most terrible war mankind had known, after Germany invaded Belgium on 4 August 1914, followed by Britain's ultimatum the same day.

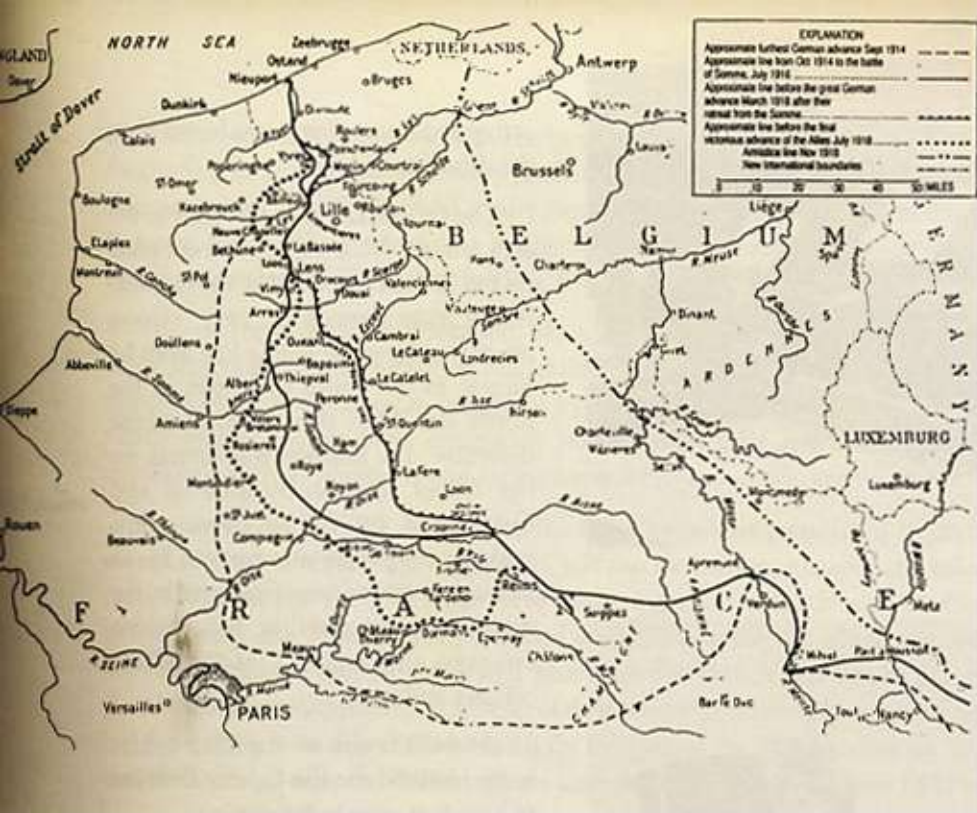
Two days later, on 6 August, the Imperial War Council took a decision to invite the Government of India to send troops to Egypt for reinforcing the Suez Canal defences and thus freeing regular British troops for service on the Western Front. The Government of India offered a Corps of two Infantry and two Cavalry divisions for service "wherever required".

The Indian Army had always possessed a triple function: the preservation of internal peace in India itself, the defence of the Indian frontiers; and preparedness to embark at short notice for Imperial service in other parts of the globe. In this third aspect, India had for long been one of the most important units in the scheme of British Imperial defence, providing the British Government with a striking force "always ready, of admirable efficiency, and assured valour". Indeed, the Indian Army during the High Victorian period was one of the main pillars of the British Empire and of the *Pax Britannica*.

On 1 August, 1914, the Indian Army consisted of 39 Cavalry and 126 Infantry Regiments, known by titles resulting from Kitchener's reorganisation of 1903. The total Indian strength of the Army in India was 239,561 officers and men which included 193,901 combatants and 45,660 non combatants. In addition, there were 72,209 British other ranks and 4744 British officers stationed in India. By the end of the war, another 1,340,437 Indian troops had been recruited and a grand total of 1,381,050 (including 285,037 British and 1,096,013 Indian personnel) had been sent on service overseas.

Just twenty days after the commencement of war, the first Indian combat troops of the 3rd (Lahore) Division had sailed from Karachi and Bombay westwards, vanguard of the million more who were to follow.

Instead of Egypt, however, the Indian Expeditionary Force were diverted to France where the British Expeditionary Force (the "Old Contemptibles") were shattered and exhausted after two months of bitter fighting against the German Army's overwhelming numbers.



The front in France and Belgium, during the Great War.

Cercettes, about 6 miles from Orleans till 18 October, the period being utilised in completing transport detail, getting reserve ammunition, warm clothing etc. but many difficulties were encountered as supplies were short.

On that very wet day, the Division entrained for Arques and Blendercqnes, where they arrived on 20th October, the Indian troops getting their first experience of billets. The Jullundur Brigade arrived at Witzernnes, going into billets near the GHQ at St. Omer and on the following day proceeded on a long march to Meteren, now truly experiencing field conditions, establishing outposts in heavy rain with no rations issued till the late evening. Several aircraft were observed in the sky, the Brigade's heavy baggage wagons had yet to

The von Moltke grand plan, subsequently developed by Graf von Schlieffen, had laid down a strategy of fighting on two fronts, the main German force attacking France, striking through Belgium into the department of Champagne, smashing the French armies, isolating Paris and securing the Channel ports to prevent British reinforcements. Meanwhile in the East, a smaller Army but in co-operation with Austria, would strike at Russia through Galicia.

In the event, the Belgians and French resisted gallantly which slowed down the German advance while unexpectedly, strong Russian advances in East Prussia necessitated withdrawal of some Corps from the West. The impetus in the West came to a standstill at the battle for the Marne fought by a combined Anglo-French Army and sections of the Western Front then developed a new type of siege warfare which spread over much of the 500-miles of front line from the Swiss border to the English channel. Complicated trench systems evolved, reinforced with timber and sometimes steel and concrete, with mazes of barbed wire. Under appalling conditions of rain and sleet and snow, massive infantry battles were fought amidst ferocious artillery barrages and machine gun cross-fire, often with severe hand-to-hand fighting for the gain of just a few yards. Casualties were to run into several hundreds of thousands.

As written by the Rt. Hon. Earl Curzon.

"The Indian Army Corps was to be pitted against the most powerful military organisation on the globe, against a European enemy who had brought to the highest pitch of sinister perfection both the science and the practice of war, and who was about to plunge not Europe alone, but the entire civilised world, into such a welter of continuous devilry and horror as the mind of man had never imagined and history had never known. The landing of the two Indian Divisions, numbering 24,000 men, on the quays of Marseilles in September and October 1914, was a great event, not merely in the annals of the Indian Army, but in the history of mankind.

That the Indian Expeditionary Force arrived in the nick of time, that it helped to save the cause both of the Allies and of civilisation, after the sanguinary tumult of the opening weeks of the War, has been openly acknowledged by the highest in the land, from the Sovereign downwards....the nature and value of that service can never be forgotten.

Anyone who visited the Western Front during the period, and saw the Indian regiments either in the trenches or in reserve, will carry away with him many a picture of the good fellowship prevailing between British and Indian soldiers, of the deep and characteristic devotion of the latter to their British officers and of the happy relations between the men in *pagris* and the inhabitants of the country".



The Indian Corps march into camp at Marseilles.



The most beloved Field Marshal Roberts ("Bob Bahadur") with officers of the Sikh Regiment in northern France, 1914.

The 34th Sikh Pioneers march to battle.



arrive and heavy firing was heard from the direction of Lille.

The Lahore Division marched to the area around Wallon Cappel and Lynde on the 21 October, the day the German Army commenced a very strong offensive along the whole line from La Basse in the south to Menin in the north, the B.E.F. being pinned to the defensive. The position was critical, for the Allies were outnumbered and outgunned by the German army, making desperate attempts to break through but these were frustrated by the dogged fighting ability, indomitable courage and tenacity of the allied officers and men.

At 0450 hours on the 23rd orders were received for the Lahore Division to march at once to Estaires.

La Basse was held by the Germans under the Crown Prince of Bavaria as also the La Basse - Leele canal and country immediately to the south and east. The British II Corps had been facing the onslaught for 10 days and after continuous fighting, were wilting under the strain. Fortunately, the Lahore Division under Lt. General Watkis had arrived, albeit with just the Jullundur Brigade. The Jullundur Brigade were at once utilised on the left of the II Corps, taking over the ground held by the Cavalry who were then moved north.

The Commander-in-Chief, General Sir John French was in the market square at Estaires when the 15th Sikhs, 34th Sikh Pioneers and 59th Rifles (F.F.) of the Jullundur Brigade marched past him in column of route, which continued down the La Basse Road to Rouge Croix where they went into billets. The Sikh Company of the 59th took up an outpost line beyond Rouge Croix and enemy shelling was now first encountered, many British wounded being passed and the road crowded with French refugees streaming back from the front. The 1st Manchester's and

47th Sikhs were relieved by the 59th Frontier Force and 15th Sikhs at dawn on 24 October and dug themselves in at once, under enemy shelling. At dusk that day the 59th moved forward to take over the line occupied by French Cavalry piquets. A new line of trenches was dug and it is interesting to record that this line, established by the 59th, was to remain virtually unchanged in British and Allied possession till it was lost, in 1918, when held by a Portuguese Division.

The rushing in of Indian troops into battle without proper plans or equipment was an indication of the desperation of the situation but could hardly be considered an auspicious beginning, with troops split up and pushed in piecemeal by battalions, by half battalions and even companies, in totally strange environment, completely isolated from their own Commanders and brigades, in appalling weather conditions and facing terrible fire and attack from superior odds.

For over a week, till 1 November, the three battalions were fated to undergo a harrassing experience, outnumbered and outgunned, without the bombs, grenades and other munitions freely used by the enemy. The 15th Sikhs were on the right and in touch with the Gordon Highlanders (8th Brigade). The 59th Rifles (F.F.) carried on the line to the left where one company of the 34th Sikh Pioneers took over an advanced post from the French and linked up with the 59th. This detachment was attacked within an hour of their relieving the French and engaged in severe fighting but the defence was ably carried out till the evening of the 26th October by Subedars Sher Singh and Natha Singh after the British officers Captain Bailey and Lt. Browne had been wounded.

On the 26th, the Germans took up strong entrenched positions opposite the Jullundur Brigade and a heavy attack developed against the 59th centre, which was reinforced by the 15th Sikhs. A vigorous fire fight ensued but after an hour, the Germans were beaten back to their trenches all along the line. On the 28th, two more attacks were launched but were beaten off and a night attack repulsed on the following night.

In spite of heavy artillery bombardment on the 59th, 34th and 15th, the line had been held and, in fact, reinforced by two Companies of the 47th Sikhs, which were a very welcome addition as the situation was rapidly becoming critical.

The weather was extremely trying, very wet and cold and the Jullundur Brigade had been fighting without sufficient food and with little or no sleep for two days, soaked to the skin. Snipers were worrying the Brigade and so patrols from the 15th Sikhs carried out house-to-house search. Further attacks were repulsed with the aid of machine guns and artillery. On the 27th evening, the 15th Lancers were sent up as reinforcement, representing absolutely the last available reserves. Fortunately, the Germans had taken a severe mauling too and there were no further attacks. On 1 November, the battalion were relieved by the other units, one of which, the 47th Sikhs, had meanwhile been heavily engaged in the attack on Neuve Chapelle and covered themselves with glory.

Messages poured into the Jullundur Brigade from Lord Kitchener, Sir John French, GOC II Corps and the GOC Lahore Division congratulating the troops "for the splendid courage and endurance in battle... and the fighting powress they have shown... giving the enemy a severe blow, successfully frustrating all their efforts".

On 26 October, the Germans had managed to gain a footing after a violent struggle on the north-east side of Neuve Chapelle, having advanced under cover of the Bois du Biez woods which were slightly to the east.

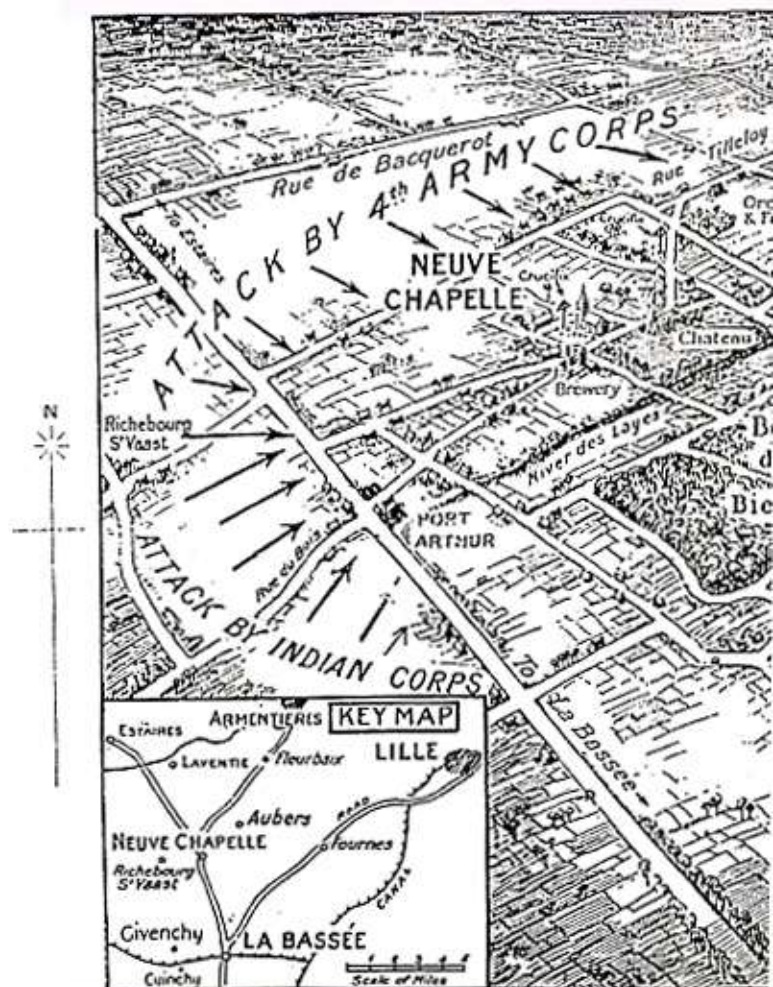
During the 27th, desperate hand-to-hand fighting took place for possession of the village and in spite of vigorous counter attacks by the 7th and 9th Brigades of the 3rd British Infantry Division, the Germans still clung to their hold. Heavy German reinforcements were brought up and British troops, fighting the greatest valour, were forced back and the entire village taken by the Germans.

Neuve Chapelle

The German salients had created a dangerous situation and it was imperative to rectify this without delay. At 1700 hours on 27 October, the Germans broke to the south of Neuve Chapelle forcing the West Kents, Wiltshires and South Lancshires to retire. The danger of a gap being created between the 3rd and 5th British Divisions could seriously affect the entire position of II Corps. The 9th Bhopal's were ordered at once to counter attack in the direction of Pont Logy in order to outflank the Germans, now advancing west of Neuve Chapelle. Confused fighting took place in the hamlet south of Neuve Chapelle and during the chaotic fighting, many casualties were suffered. By now, the two Companies of 47th Sikhs and Nos. 20 and 21 Companies Sappers and Miners, under Major S.R. Davidson, had moved into line on the left of the Bhopal's but considerable gaps remained. Frequent attacks were made throughout the night by the Germans but were repulsed while heavy machine gun fire, with searchlights from Neuve Chapelle, were sweeping the front and trenches all night.

A brief description of the village of Neuve Chapelle and the area immediately around it would be pertinent. It lies in a flat, marshy, dyke chequered country, but close behind it to the east the ground begins to rise gently towards a ridge, which comes westward in two spurs. At the end of one spur is the village of Aubers, at the end of the other is the village of Lillies, both places were within the German lines. Beyond the junction of the spurs the ridge runs away north-east, from Fournes to a point two miles south-west of Lille; and along this ridge is the road to Lille, to Roubaix and to Tourcoing, three of France's chief manufacturing towns. Possession of the ridge was so important a step towards the possession of Lille that its occupation was regarded as almost implying the capture of that town. Neuve Chapelle formed the gateway which gave access to this ridge. The capture of Lille would indeed have been of the highest importance. It would have placed the Allies in a fair position to move against the Germans between that point and the sea. For this the capture of Neuve Chapelle was a necessary preliminary.

The village, although it occupied a considerable area, was of a straggling character; the population being quite small. A little river, the River Des Layes ran behind it, to the south-east; and behind the river, a good half mile from the village, was a wood, the Bois du Biez. On the west, almost at right angles to the river, the village was skirted by the main road from Estaires to La Bassée. At the north of the village was a triangle of roads, where were a few big houses, with walls, gardens, orchards. Here the



An artist's depiction of the town of Neuve Chapelle and surrounding areas.



Adapted by permission of the 'Daily Mail'

Germans had established a strong post, which flanked the approaches to the village from that side. Their trenches at this point were only about 100 yards from those of the British. In other parts of the line, however, the distance was much greater, and therefore a much larger space of open ground had to be covered by the attacking forces before they could reach the enemy's lines.

Behind this area the Germans had established a post with machine guns at a bridge over the river, and one a little further up at the Pietre mill. Lower down the river, at the junction of a road into the village with the main La Basse road, they were fortified in a group of ruined buildings known as "Port Arthur", whence a great network of trenches extended north-westward to the Pietre mill.

The Germans were also established in Bois du Biez, and in shattered houses on its fringe. They were well and strongly placed, though their forces just here were not large. For the German method at that time was to man their front trenches thinly, and keep large reserves in readiness to go where wanted, by means of their excellent lines of communication.

The British-Indian line now ran in a curve round the village, with the German's closest at about one hundred yards distant. It was held from right to left by the 1st Royal West Kents, 21st Company S&M, two Companies of the 47th Sikhs, 20th Company S&M, the 4th Royal Fusiliers and 1st Lincolnshire.

Sir John French, the C-in-C had visited II Corps headquarters and directed it to maintain and strengthen its position but also to seize every opportunity for vigorous local offensive. The condition of II Corps, owing to the heavy losses and the fatigue of every battalion of both the 3rd and 5th Divisions was such that the C-in-C met Generals Smith-Dorrien and Willcocks at Merville and worked out arrangements for the relief of II Corps by the Indian Companies.

The operation orders for 28 October, issued by General Smith-Dorrien at 2300 hours on 27 October directed that, whilst other troops remained on the defensive, the 3rd Division should counter attack the Germans at Neuve Chapelle. The Indian troops west of Neuve Chapelle were placed under command of the Division whose 7th Brigade, the 14th Brigade of the 5th Division and the 2nd Cavalry Brigade were tasked to support some units of the 6th Division, the French chasseurs and cyclists of General Conneau's Corps and the Royal Scots were also detailed to support the attack. However, in the event most of the troops were too exhausted by the previous day's fighting to co-operate, except by fire.

Gallantry of the 47th Sikhs

Fog and mist prevented an early advance and it was not until 11.00 a.m. that a short general bombardment of the positions was begun by four British and nine French batteries. At 11.15 a.m. the artillery lengthened five hundred yards and the Infantry should have moved forward. However, no properly combined movement between the units of the three different nationalities involved resulted, and the attack on Neuve Chapelle was carried out solely by four companies — two of the 47th Sikhs, with the 20th and 21st Companies of the Sappers and Miners on either side of them — with the greatest of gallantry. Their right was to have been protected by the 9th Bhopal's but as the unit advanced, it came under very heavy fire and halted, and only continued to fire from a trench they had reached. The Sikhs and Sappers went on. Covering the seven hundred yards of open ground between them and Neuve Chapelle by rushes alternating with fire, as if on a training ground, the four companies reached the ruins of the village. Casualties were numerous but the excellence of their fire control saved much heavier loss. The Sikhs drove out the Germans (battalions of the famous 16th Bavarian Regiment) by close hand-to-hand fighting.

"When our men were about 100 yards from the outskirts of the village, the Germans in the front trenches began to bolt, pursued by the gallant Sikhs and Sappers with the bayonet, a few being killed and others captured. The Indians then tore on into the village, Sikhs and Sappers mixed together, and worked in parties up the streets, under a furious fire from the roofs of buildings.



*Preparing for battle:
the 47th Sikhs before their epic action
at Neuve Chapelle on 28 October, 1914.*



By degrees, the houses were cleared after desperate hand-to-hand fighting in which a soldier of the 47th Sikh captured 3 Germans out of 8, having previously killed the other 5. From another house, the 47th recovered a wounded British soldier and 2 wounded Germans. The latter were searched, and one of them lifted his voice and wept bitterly, evidently thinking that our men were feeling for a soft place in which to insert a bayonet, until comforted by a stalwart Sikh who patted him kindly with the words "Be not afraid".

On reaching the cross roads in the centre of the village, the troops came under frightful machine gun fire. Captain McCleverty, always in advance, cheering on his men just as he had cheered on the regimental hockey team, dashed across the roads, the rest following close on his heels, but he was shot dead at a corner by a German concealed only a few yards away. A PM of the Sappers soon stalked the German and killed him on the spot. Losses were rapidly becoming serious from enemy rifle fire in the houses and several machine guns posted outside Neuve Chapelle which swept the mainstreet. The Indian troops had even penetrated to the eastern and northern borders where they were met by heavy shell and machine gun fire and counter-attack after counter-attack was launched against them.

"The blood of our men was up and nothing could stop them. After a prolonged and ferocious struggle, the whole of the main street was captured".

The Germans held on like a vice and each house turned a small fortress which had to be stormed before further advance could be made. The Sappers & Miners were also taking terrible losses, especially their officers, charging with impetuous valour ahead of the men.

The fighting went on, counter-attack following counter-attack, the German's using the bodies of their own dead as

cover. Major S.R. Davidson of the 47th Sikhs was collecting his men for a final charge when the Germans came on in overpowering numbers from the North and East and at the same moment, the machine gun fire re-doubled its fury down the main street. Without immediate reinforcements, the position of the 47th was now quite untenable as their losses had been very heavy. Thus Major Davidson was compelled to give up all he had won at such fearful cost, and retire, the line lying over some 500 yards of open ground, exposed to a tornado of shell and machine gun fire and the bodies of the gallant Indians soon lay thick on the ground. Eventually, the remnants of the two Companies of the 47th got back to comparative safety,—but only 68 out of the gallant 289 actually collected on the La Bassee road.

The troops were suffering terribly from want of water and were already dead beat but the Germans were counter-attacking all along the front and every man was required. Major Davidson was ordered to collect at Rouge Croix as many of the 47th Sikhs as were left with a view to holding the cross roads, which were almost certain to be attacked.

"He asked his men whether they could do it, exhausted as they were, and to his delight, found that they clearly resented such a question. Off they marched again towards Rouge Croix, but were met by orders to go into billets".

Such was the spirit of the Sikhs and it is on record that during the retreat from the village, under a fire described as hellish, the men were laughing and joking with each other and Captain Brown, afterwards killed at Neuve Chapelle, stood up at the halts to fire, his example being followed by many of the men. Major Davidson had throughout this confused and dingdong fighting shown the highest qualities of bravery and leadership and was awarded a brevet Lt.Coloncy in



recognition of his services.

In the end, the 20th Sappers & Miners were left with just 20 men in the centre of Neuve Chapelle. Lt. Rait-Kerr, leading some reinforcements, was wounded but Sapper Dalip Singh stood over and kept up rapid fire to deter several parties of Germans from advancing, incredibly charging a party of 20 Germans who simply turned and fled. He then carried his officer back to safety. Another officer Lt. Nosworthy displayed an incredible example of bravery combined with an irrepressible love for fighting!

As recorded in official war history "The attack (on Neuve Chapelle) was magnificently carried out and was within an ace of success. It is probable that, had reinforcements been available, the 47th Sikhs and Sappers would have held the village which they took with such superb elan and at such a heavy cost".

The magnificent conduct of the troops was recorded for posterity by Field Marshal Sir John French who, in his despatch dated 20 November 1914, recorded "On the 28 October 1914, especially the 47th Sikhs and the 20th and 21st Companies of the Sappers & Miners, distinguished themselves by their gallant conduct in the attack on Neuve Chapelle, losing heavily in officers and men"

As General Sir James Willcocks later wrote,

"The 47th Sikhs were raised in 1901 and have no battle honours on their colours. Throughout its service in France, this magnificent Regiment never failed to answer all calls. Its reputation would be secure and its right to fight shoulder to shoulder with the best British troops would be established, if based only on the record of Neuve Chapelle, but this action was only one of many in which the 47th Sikhs distinguished themselves".

The 47th Sikhs esprit de corps

The 47th Sikhs had been raised as a Class Regiment of Sikhs in 1901 and previous to the date of the Great War had served in Sialkot, North China, Dera Ismail Khan and Jullundur, but as a Regiment had not been on active service.

From the day of formation a high standard of military efficiency had always been aimed at and as far as demonstration of results without the acid test of War can show, had been attained. Above all things *esprit de corps* amongst all ranks was undoubtedly excellent.

In the pre-war days in India one school of military thought held that the training of the Indian Army should be confined to the requirements of War with "uncivilised enemies" only. Fortunately, this never became the official teaching and when the Indian Corps was sent to France on the outbreak of War the training of its Units was well up-to-date as the "civilised" German Army would soon learn at its cost.

Official and other recorders of the doings of the Indian Corps in France later adopted an apologetic tone in certain respects. They claim that the conditions of the War in Europe as regards climate, accommodation, food, etc., and the weapons introduced by modern science constituted a handicap especial to Indian Troops.

The 47th Sikhs repudiated this claim to special consideration on such grounds and held that their record refuted the necessity for it. They glory in having taken a full share on equal conditions with their white brothers-in-arms in stemming the German rush to the Channel Ports the second vital thrust for early victory and they claim that their record showed no need for apologies during any portion of the long drawn out War.

One special disability there was, and one which at times gave rise to anxiety and this was the failure in the supply of drafts both as to quality and readiness when required. This undoubtedly was a handicap in that a Regiment was often depleted when it required its full strength and morale was endangered. On many occasions it was only *esprit de corps* that pulled things through.

The proudest boasts of the 47th Sikhs is that no Regiment of the Indian Army did more actual front-line work and hard fighting, that it never lost a yard of trench in any theatre of War, that on no occasion was it ever withdrawn for reconstruction though reconstruction was often rendered advisable by casualties, that no Regiment was more often specially mentioned in orders and despatches, and, finally, that on returning to India after the conclusion of War it was the only unit of the Indian Army given the Honour of a Royal Colonel-in-Chief in recognition of its services during the War.

As written in the Foreword of the 47th Sikhs History, "All who at the present and in future have the Honour to belong to the 47th Duke of Connaught's own Sikhs should know the glorious War records of the past and strive to emulate or surpass them in the future".



The Jullundur Brigade Trophy

The 1st Battalion, Manchester Regiment, the 47th Sikhs and the 59th Scinde Rifles F.F. served together in the 8th Jullundur Brigade from 1912 to 1919. The great friendship and liaison which existed between these three battalions contributed largely to the magnificent reputation gained by the Brigade. To commemorate such splendid association, three identical centre-pieces were ordered from the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Company of Regent Street, London, the centre-piece consisting of a triangular column rising from a triangular base, surrounded by a winged figure of Victory. At each corner of the base there is a silver model of a soldier of each battalion—an Englishman, a Sikh, a Punjabi-Muslim.

Each battalion is now in possession of one of these centre pieces, presented by the remaining two battalions. In 2001, or eighty plus years after the event, the trophies are proudly displayed by the three battalions, now part of the British, Indian and Pakistan Armies respectively.

Lined up at the victory parade in London, troops of the Indian Army, bobbies and spectators.

The great victory parade! The 47th Sikhs, led by their officers, march down the Pall Mall in London after the War.



"A part of France..... forever Sikh"

On the eve of their departure from France in late November 1915, the Prince of Wales received detachments, consisting of 2 British and 2 Indian Officers, 4 Havildars, 4 Naiks and 8 Sepoys from Regiments of the Lahore Division, at Chateau Masingham. After inspecting them he read out the following message from H.H. the King Emperor :-

"Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and Men of the Indian Corps. It is more than a year ago that I summoned you from India to fight for the safety of My Empire on the battle fields of France. The confidence which I then expressed in your sense of duty, your courage and your chivalry you have since then nobly justified. I now require your services in another field of action. (Mesopotamia) but before you leave France I send my dear and gallant son to thank you in My name for your services. British and Indian comrades in arms, yours has been a fellowship in toils and hardship, in courage and endurance often against great odds, in deeds nobly done and days of memorable conflict. You have worthily upheld the honour of the Empire and the great traditions of my Army in India. I have followed your fortunes with the deepest interest and watched your gallant actions with pride and satisfaction. I mourn with you the loss of many gallant officers and men. Let it be your consolation as it was their pride that they freely gave their lives in a just cause for the honour of their Sovereign and the safety of my Empire. You leave France with a just pride in memorable deeds already achieved and with my assured confidence that your proved value and experience will contribute to further victories in a new field of action. I pray God to bless you and guard you and bring you back safely when the final victory is won, each to his own home, there to be welcomed with honour among his own people".

A farewell message was received from the Indian Cavalry Corps who were remaining in France, and Sir John French issued a special Order of the Day, in which he congratulated the Corps on the good work it had done in the past thirteen months and bade it farewell.

Entraining at Lillers on the 13 December 1915, the 47th Sikhs were railed to Marseilles in two parties, and arriving on the 15th marched straight to the docks and embarked on the Cunard Liner "Franconia".

They sailed away to Mesopotamia on the 17th and officially the Indian Corps in France ceased to exist as such on the 8 December 1915.

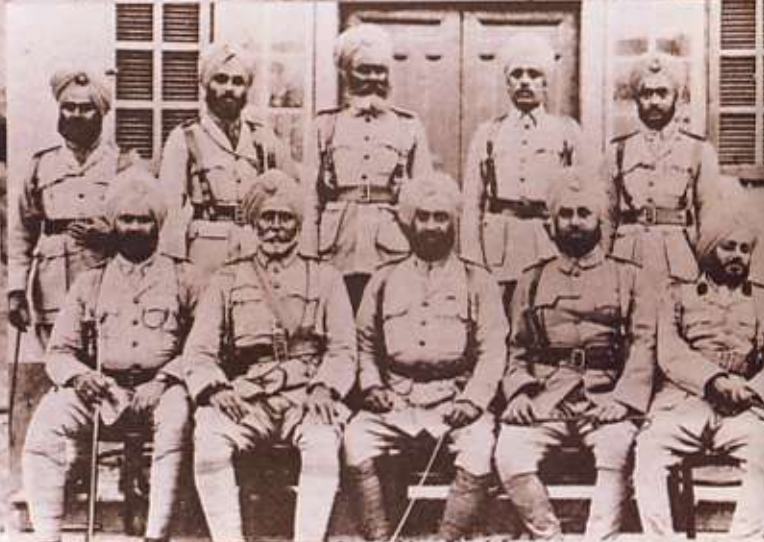
"Of the Indian Corps it may be said that as much was asked of them as of any troops at any period in any theatre of this war. They stemmed the first German onslaught through the late autumn of 1914 which ended in the bitter fighting at Givenchy. They played a glorious part in the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, the Second Battle of Ypres, the struggle for the Aubers Ridge and the desperate assaults at Loos. All claimed a toll of blood from this devoted Corps. They were asked to do much and they did everything they were asked".

The battle casualties of the 47th Sikhs in France and Flanders alone, were:

British Officers	killed	9	wounded	24
Indian Officers	killed	7	wounded	29
Other Ranks	killed	211	wounded	1311
		227		1364

There is a part of northern France which will forever remain Sikh.

The Patiala State Forces in France



Maharaja Bhupindra Singh of Patiala sent some of his best troops from the Patiala State Forces to fight alongside the allied armies in France.

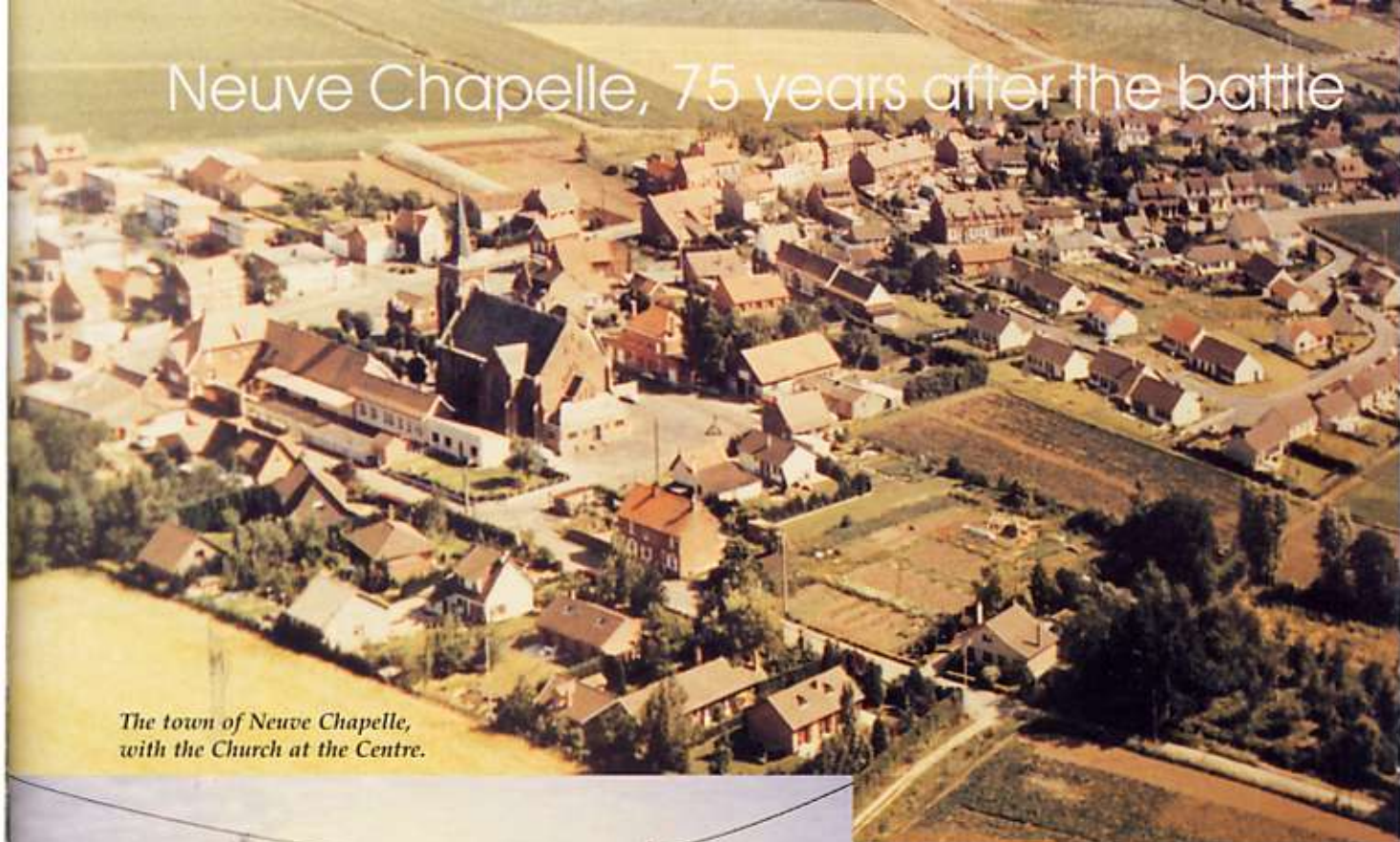
The Maharaja is seen (top left) in northern France with the British General and staff of the sector where the Patiala forces were deployed.

Sikh troops also took part in the world's first combined infantry-armour attacks (seen here with "Mother", the world's first operational tank in 1917).

(Right) Lt. Hardit Singh Malik, the first Sikh fighter pilot in history, with his "front line" aircraft in France, 1917.



Neuve Chapelle, 75 years after the battle



*The town of Neuve Chapelle,
with the Church at the Centre.*



The road leading to Neuve Chapelle.

*Visiting Neuve Chapelle in 1989
were veterans of the Indian,
Pakistani and British Armies,
heirs of the 47th Sikhs, 59th Scinde
Rifles (FF) and 1st Manchesters
who, as part of The Jullundur
Brigade, had fought so gallantly
here, 75 years earlier.*



The town's church, seen from the Bois du Biez.



*Major General Mohindar Singh Chopra
with the Duke of Kent at the Indian
Army Memorial at Port Arthur*



At the Indian Army Memorial, Port Arthur.



*Serving and retired officers of
the 59th Scinde Rifles (FF).*



*The memorial to the fallen of
the Indian Army, at Port Arthur.*



*At the cross roads between La Bassée and Estaires
in northern France.*

The 47th Sikhs today: 5th Battalion, The Sikh Regiment



Quarter guard of the 5th Sikh with thier Jullundur Brigade Trophy displayed to advantage.
Captured drum of the 16th Bavarian Regiment at the 5th Sikhs officer's mess and flag of the German Army, are also seen.

The ninety-year old and continuing relationship between the 47th Sikhs (now 5th battalion of the Sikh Regiment) and 1st Manchesters (now 1st battalion of the King's Regiment) has been sealed with an official alliance between the two formations.



Inspecting the troops (left), Major General Peter Davies, then Colonel of the King's Regiment and Brigadier James Percival of the British Army seen visiting the 5th Sikh at their location in the Himalayas. At the battalion gurdwara (below) and joining the bhangra (above).



The 47th Sikhs (5th Battalion, The Sikh Regiment) are marking their Centennial in 2001.

86 years on

Lecture at the Imperial War Museum

"A Portrait of Courage"

On 25 October 2000, almost 86 years to the day, the feats and gallantry of the 47th Sikhs were recalled in a very well attended, first in a series of annual lectures on Sikh military history, which took place at London's Imperial War Museum on Lambeth Road.

Organised by The Maharajah Duleep Singh Centenary Trust (MDSCT) of the UK, in association with the Imperial War Museum, the talk "A Portrait of Courage": *The Sikh Regiment in France and Flanders 1914-1915* was delivered by S.Pushpinder Singh of The Nagaara Trust, New Delhi, and executive editor of *The Nishaan*.

It was "house full" at the Museum's lecture theatre, while many others stood outside in the main exhibition hall which was resplendent with a sea of turbans, the Sikhs of Britain mingling with ministers of the British Government and generals of the British Army, both serving and retired. The speakers included Field Marshal Sir John Chapple, former Chief of General Staff and Governor of Gibraltar, John Spellar, the Hon'ble Minister of State for the Armed Forces, S.Harbinder Singh Rana of the MDSCT and Amandeep Singh Madra, co-author of the *Warrior Saints*.

Highlighting the event was the special message from HRH the Prince of Wales which was read out to the gathering (reproduced below):



ST. JAMES'S PALACE

I was delighted to hear that the Imperial War Museum and the Maharaja Duleep Singh Centenary Trust have come together to tell the remarkable story of The Sikh Regiment in France and Flanders 1914-1915. It is, truly, a portrait of courage, of selfless sacrifice and of international friendship. The re-telling of such history serves a wider purpose than the interest of military historians. In March this year I attended an Army ethnic minority recruiting fair at Wembley Arena. I said on that occasion that young people from our minority groups need to know that they, too, are heirs to an honourable military tradition and that they have their own cultural and religious traditions which could be accommodated within the regimental structure of the British Army. This evening's lecture could not make the point more clearly. It is my sincere hope that, through a continuing process of education, coupled with the different initiatives now being undertaken by the Armed Forces, and groups like the Maharaja Duleep Singh Centenary Trust, we will see the heartening upward trend of recruitment from all our ethnic minorities continue to increase. Events such as this evening's lecture are a vital part of that process.

Charles



Some of the audience at the Imperial War Museum: nearest camera is Pushpinder Singh, and then Field Marshal Sir John Chapple, the Hon'ble John Spellar, M.P. Minister for Armed Services, Maj. Gen. Kevin O' Donoghue, Asst. Chief of General Staff, Sardarni Kamaljit Kaur. Second row has members of the MDSCT and ex-Indian Army veterans from Southall.

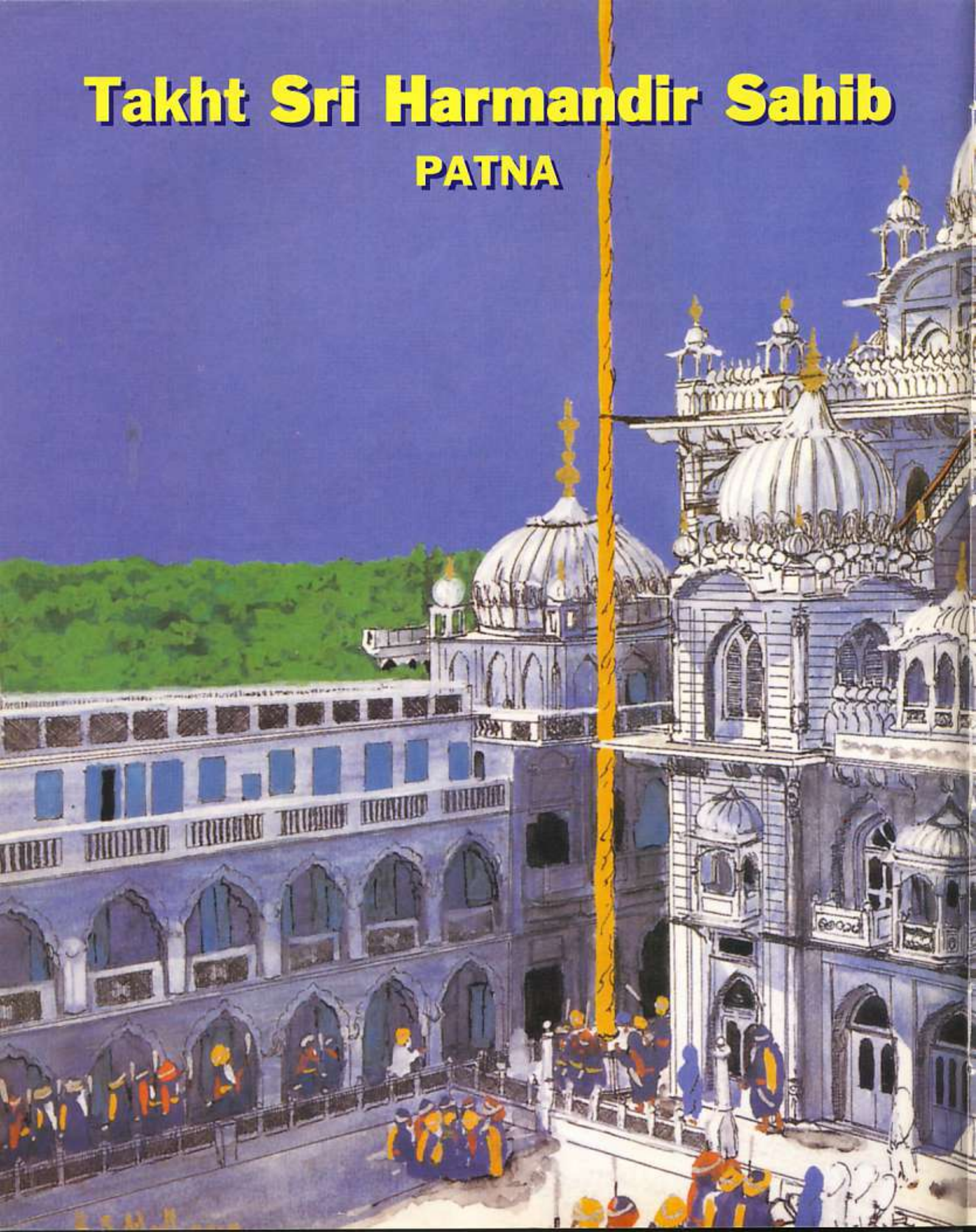


Col. Asa Singh (in the chair), of the 2nd Royal Bn., The Sikh Regiment ("XV number") and other war veterans, now living in the U.K.



Takht Sri Harmandir Sahib

PATNA



Gurdwaras of the Sikhs



Painting by Birinder Singh Malhans.

Patna, ancient Patliputra, now capital of Bihar State is reverently called Patna Sahib by the Sikhs because of its consecration by Guru Nanak Dev, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. The latter was born here during Guru Tegh Bahadur's tour of eastern Bihar, Bengal and Assam from 1666 to 1670. Patna Sahib is situated on the right bank of the River Ganges.

Gurdwārā Pahilā Barā (lit. the first and larger), commonly known as Gurdwārā Gāe Ghāt, is dedicated to Guru Nanak Dev, who during his visit to Patna stayed here with Bhāi Jaitā, a pious man, confectioner by trade, who became the Guru's follower and later converted his house into a *dharmśāl*. The congregation that gathered here came to be called Bari Sangat or Gāe Ghāt Sangat. Later, Sālas Rāi, a wealthy jeweller, became a convert and took the Guru to his own place where, too, a small community of Sikh believers was formed into what was known as Chhoti Sangat. A new building comprising a spacious square hall with the sanctum in the middle was constructed during the 1980s. Two relics are preserved here—a rebeck claimed to be once Bhai Mardana's and a stone called Mata Gujarī's grindstone.

Takht Sri Harimandir Sahib, the principal shrine at Patna Sahib and one of the five Takhts or the highest seats of religious authority for the Sikhs, marks the site of the Chhoti Sangat. Guru Tegh Bahadur had first alighted at Bari Sangat at Gae Ghat from where he was brought in procession to this place which had once been the commodious mansion of Salas Rai, the jeweller, and where Raja Fateh Chand Maini now built a new house to accommodate the holy family. Guru Tegh Bahadur himself, leaving his family here in the care of his brother-in-law Kirpal Chand and the local *sangat*, proceeded on further to the east. Guru Gobind Singh was born here on the seventh day of the light half of the lunar month of *Poh* in 1723 *Bikrami* corresponding to 22nd December 1666.

He spent his early childhood here until his departure for the Punjab in 1670. The house continued to be maintained as a holy place of worship. Its building was replaced by Maharaja Ranjit Singh during 1837-39 with a square flat-roofed hall surrounded by a covered passage for circumambulation. Rulers of Patiala, Jind and Faridkot jointly added several rooms and a gateway to the compound in 1887. An earthquake in 1934 seriously damaged the older building of the Takht Sahib. The present five-storey building was constructed during 1954-57 through *kār-sevā* under the supervision of Sant Nischal Singh and Sant Kartar Singh. The sanctum sanctorum representing the room where Guru Gobind Singh was born has a circumambulatory passage around it. Adjacent is the spacious high-ceilinged congregation hall. The arch of the door of the inner sanctum opening on the congregation hall is covered with glided copper plates embossed with floral design matching the marble sculpture on the interior walls. Of the three canopied seats facing the hall, the central one has Guru Granth Sahib seated on it with a large-size portrait of Guru Gobind Singh behind it in place of an officiant. Guru Granth Sahib is placed on the seat on its right and the Dasam Granth on the one on the left, both attended by *granthis* holding whisks over them. The compound of the Takht Sahib also has several blocks of rooms for staff and visitors as well as for *Guru kār Langar*.

Gurdwārā Bāl Lilā Maini Sangat, in a narrow lane close to Takht Sahib marks the house where Rājā Fateh Chand Maini lived. His childless Rani had developed special fondness for the young Gobind Das, who, too, often came here to sit in the Rani's lap giving her immense delight and spiritual solace. She fed the Sahibzada and his playmates, at his demand, with boiled and salted gram. Even now boiled and salted gram is served as *prasād* (consecrated food) in this Gurdwara, which, unlike the other shrines in Patna Sahib, is served by Nirmala Sikhs. A wood carving on the old front door is dated *Assu sudi 1, 1725 Bikrami* corresponding to 28th August 1668, but the hall housing the sanctum and other blocks of rooms in the inner compound have been reconstructed during recent decades.

Gurdwārā Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ghāt is where the child Gobind Das used to play with his playmates on the bank of the Ganges. *Ghat* means a place on the bank, usually paved, for bathing, drawing water or for landing or harbouring boats. This *ghāt*, about one furlong from Takht Harimandir Sahib is marked by a gateway over which this Gurdwara is situated in a single room. The river has, however, receded since away to the north.

Gurdwārā Guru kā Bāgh is about three kilometres east of Takht Harimandir Sahib where Guru Tegh Bahadur first alighted in a garden (*bāgh*) belonging to Nawabs Rahim Bakhsh and Karim Bakhsh, nobles of Patna, and where the *sangat* of Patna came to receive him back from his four-year long odyssey. Its present building was constructed during the 1970s and 1980s. An old well still in use and a dried stump of the *imli* tree under which the *sangat* met Guru Tegh Bahadur, still exists.

The following relics of the Tenth Guru are kept at the Takhat

- Cot used by the child Gobind Rai
- Four arrows
- Small sword
- Small khanda
- Small kataar
- Kanga made of sandalwood
- Kharanwaan - sandals made of ivory
- Parchment inscribed with alphabets of Panjabi by the young Gobind Rai

Also kept are

- Kharanwaan - sandalwood sandals of the 9th Guru.

Through dense fog on the morning of 26 December 2000 our Wagon R paved its way towards the land of the five rivers. We had left Delhi and would soon cross Ambala.

Suddenly colourful buntings, banners and smiling Sikhs serving *langar* welcomed us with folded hands. We were already amongst the humble and high-spirited Punjabis. The warmth of the devoted, blessed followers of the Guru everywhere overcame the shivering cold. That day, all roads led to Fatehgarh Sahib.

We stopped to partake from the *langar* at a village. The historic event marking martyrdom of Sahibzada Fateh Singh ji (6 years old) and Sahibzada Zorawar Singh ji (8 years old) was being enacted by *Dhaddi Jathas*. Soon, we were on the Grand Trunk Road again. No sooner had we entered Sirhind, we found ourselves virtually floating with the converging Sikh *Sangat*, moving slowly towards Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sahib. As the number of colourful turbans increased, so did the spirits. There were all modes of transport, all age groups, all castes and races together in the spirit of *Deg Tegh Fateh*.

A feeling of pride, engulfed me, and I pitied the "wisdom" of the then Nawab of Sirhind who thought that an extinction of this Sikh spirit would follow elimination of the young Sahibzadas.

Out of the car, we plunged into the ocean of

Gurdwara
Fatehgarh Sahib.



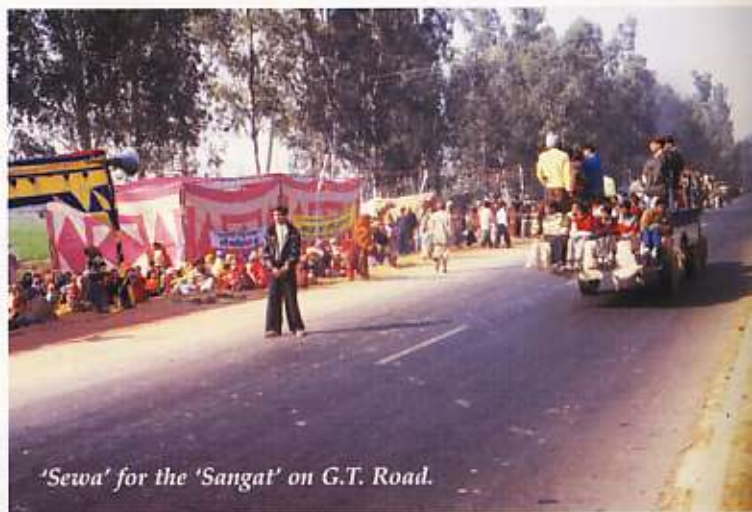
All roads to FATEHGARH SAHIB

turbans and virtually swam to Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sahib. Emerging very prominently from the mist, Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sahib and Gurdwara Thanda Burj reminded one of that supreme sacrifice, which has no parallel in the annals of human history.

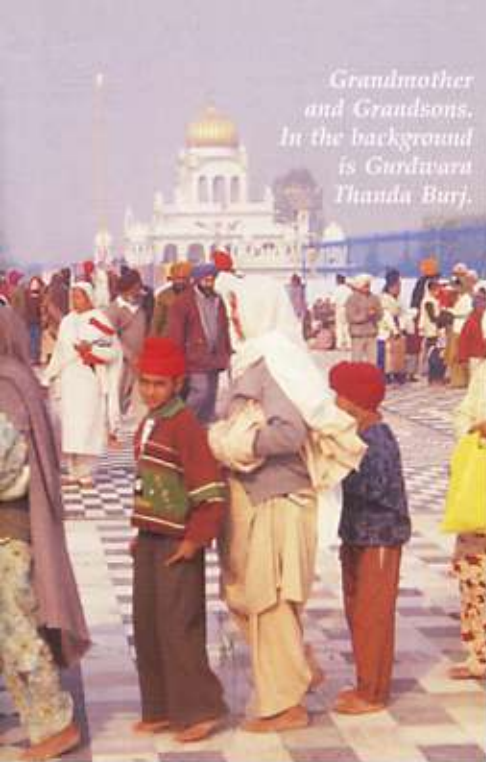
Guru Gobind Singh, founder of the Khalsa had, after prolonged battle with the Mughal forces, left the fort of Anandpur. In the dust and din of fighting, the two younger sons, Sahibzada Zorawar Singh and Sahibzada Fateh Singh along with their grandmother, Mata Gujri were separated from the family. They passed through difficult terrain, but walked fearlessly together, hands huddled with their grandmother.

On getting a clue of their whereabouts, Gangu, Guruji's domestic servant for long, then arrived and assured them that they would be safe with him. But destiny was to play its role. Gangu instead confided to the *Kotwal* of Morings that Guruji's mother and sons were with him. They were soon taken to Sirhind, where they were lodged on top of a tower exposed to the biting cold of the northern Indian winter. This is where Gurdwara Thanda Burj stands today.

Next morning, the Mughals took the two Sahibzadas to the Nawab of Sirhind's court. The young Sahibzadas of the Guru walked to the court boldly, forward through a small gate of the court. They understood that the Nawab wanted them to bow before him while entering but they did not. Nawab Wazir Khan asked them to recite the Muslim benediction '*Kalma*', and take their freedom in return. The Sahibzadas refused. The Nawab tried to persuade them but to no avail. The Nawab scared them by saying, "Embrace Islam or you will be bricked alive". Both Sahibzadas proclaimed fearlessly, "We shall



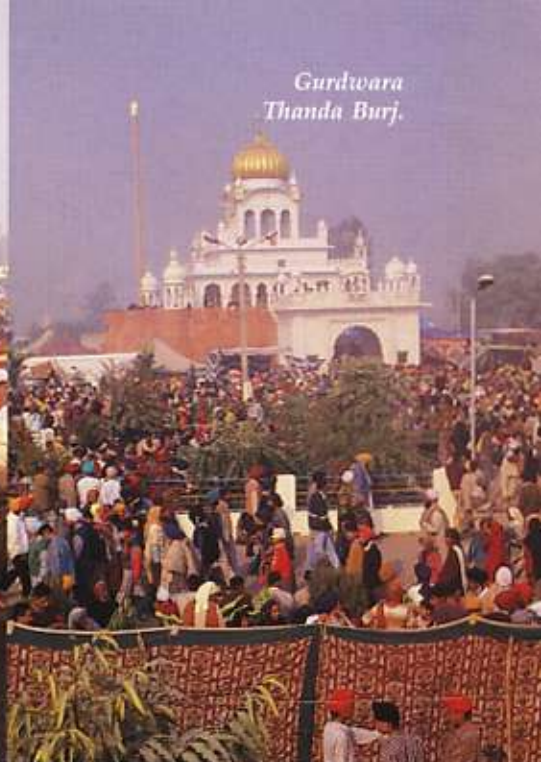
'Sewa' for the 'Sangat' on G.T. Road.



Grandmother and Grandsons. In the background is Gurdwara Thanda Burj.



Another view of the Gurdwara Thanda Burj.



Gurdwara Thanda Burj.

never give up our faith, whatever may be the consequences. Death cannot deter us".

The Nawab was taken aback by their determination and firmness. The constables took the Sahibzadas away to be bricked alive. They were brought to the place where the wall was to be raised. The Qazi again tried to persuade them to embrace Islam. But the young and determined Sahibzadas told the executioners, "Raise the wall fast and bury the Mughal Raj quickly".

The Sahibzadas started reciting the *Japji* while the wall was being raised, brick by brick. The wall went up higher. Soon the Sahibzadas became unconscious : keeping the flag of Sikh honour flying high at that young age, they had been martyred.

On hearing the tragic news, Mata Gujri in meditation, breathed her last at the Thanda Burj itself.

For a moment, I trembled standing there even while I tried to understand what must have been happening every moment to Mata Gujri, during the time the young Sahibzadas were being martyred.

Somebody touched me, "Sardar Sahib, *parshad* lavo ji..." and I came back to the present. I went around the *Sangat* and saw their great enthusiasm. The Sikh spirit was resplendent in an elderly lady who had come to Fatehgarh Sahib with her two grandsons so that they too would be inspired by the young Sahibzadas.

How can anyone shake a community like this ?

From the Gurdwara premises, we went to the big fair, where the *Jor Mela* was being held. A *Khalsa* on *Columbus* ! Ladies selecting household things, kids everywhere. Young farmers procuring implements for their fields some purchasing new *kirpans*. The fair was bursting with life.

As we moved away at the setting sun, we saw no end to the pouring *Sangat*. I felt proud of having been born in a community where celebration is a manner to remember martyrdom.

*Kabir jis marne te jug drai mere man aanand
Mame hi te paiyecai puran parmanand*

[Kabir, the world is afraid of death,
That death fills my mind with bliss,
It is only by death that perfect,
Supreme bliss is obtained.]



'Sangat' at Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sahib.

Epitome of a Gurumukh: *Bhai Mehtab Singh*

It is always difficult to talk about one's father even when one is distanced from him by over half a century. For one's emotions and *sanskara* are so deeply intertwined with that image as to put "the imagination of loving" - to use a Jamesian phrase - to an exacting test. For the distancing, one needs to draw a portrait in order to achieve the right perspective. In a way, I have already waited long enough in terms of time, but in the evening of my own life, stricken and waiting for the call, I find the figure of my father more than a putative fact of life. In a most compelling way, his life, work and heroic death in the communal *ghalughara* of 1947 draw my spirit, to bring it closer than ever before, to the Sikh ethos, heritage and world-view. For he had become a living symbol of the *Gurmukh* ideal well before his brutal killing by an incensed Muslim mob, a vibrant soul in labour- and action, in word and deed. And, now, when nostalgia and memories peak up in my days of pain, his image beckons me from afar. The fact that he turns up in my dreams so frequently in so many forms and aspects only testifies to the nature of my enterprise. The problematics of portraiture, then, become at once a question of rhetoric and metaphysics.

There is only one surviving photograph of Father - Bhai Mehtab Singh, as he was known - in which he's in his summer dress, a white *kurta* with the *kirpan gatra* slung across his front, and wearing a spotless white turban. He always used khadi, and I recall how, in winter, dressed in a dark brown *achkan* and *chooridars*, he was a vibrant presence to be felt. Soft-spoken, a person of few but telling

words, there was an aura of quiet dignity about him.

As far as I know, or remember, he always retired early to bed after the daily recitation of the *Rehras Sahib* and dinner, and was up in the small hours of the morning to be ready, summer or chill winter, for ablutions and *simran* and the session with the *Guru Granth* in the room upstairs. Then the daily visit to the main Gurudwara on the river Jhelum, a complex of buildings raised during his stewardship of the shrine as President.

An affluent timber merchant in that timber town, he used the best part of his time, resources and energies in the affairs of the community and the nation. Drawn ineluctably into such historic *sakas* as the Nankana Sahib tragedy, *Jaito-da-morcha*, *Guru-ka-bagh morcha* and the Singh Sabha Movement, he later threw himself, heart and soul, into the freedom struggle, which culminated in his incarceration in the Gujrat Central Jail during Gandhiji's Civil Disobedience Movement. He had succeeded Avtar Narain Gujral (father of former Prime Minister, Inder Kumar Gujral) as



Bhai Mehtab Singh of Jhelum.

President of the Jhelum Congress Committee at the time of his arrest. When he was in jail, I recall our weekly visits to the prison (meant for "A" class political prisoner) which then housed, amongst others, "Frontier Gandhi" Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlu, Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava, Devadas Gandhi and Master Tara Singh.

I recall - some 70 years later - the scene of his release from the Gujrat Jail under the Irwin-Gandhi Pact, a scene etched in my memory in vivid detail:

It's an open car decked up ceremoniously, threading through the milling crowds its triumphal passage over the Jhelum bridge: "As the festooned vehicle honks and honks to make way, crowds carrying all kinds of welcome banners, and chanting slogans and songs of *Inquilab* to beat of country-drums and trumpets whip up the moment into a frenzy of sounds, cascading over our garlanded heads. I watch, wonder-eyed, a boy of 11 years, those spectacular proceedings from the vantage point of my father's lap on the rear seat amidst a mound of marigolds, and next to me on the seat is Inder Kumar Gujral (later India's Prime Minister) nestling in the lap of his own father, and drinking in the tone of that hour of grace and glory. We appeared then to be sitting, as it were, across the hump of history. (A passage from my unfinished autobiography, *My Three Lives*).

However, I must return from that nostalgic scene, or interlude, to father's strenuous and unsleeping quest for the *nirvana* embodied in the songs and Scriptures of his faith. Which brings me back to my childhood days, and to the aura or ambience of a Sikh home. There was always an air of lightness even during the most vexing days when father's business suffered huge losses as a consequence of his '*Jail Yatra*'. For he had steadily honed his life and style in rhythm with the Sikh philosophy of *bhiana*, or a graceful acceptance of the ordained ordeal. I remember one major and memorable turn his life took when he undertook the crowning project of his life devoted to the ideals and insights of Sikhism. A scene flashes across my mind of the family's annual journey by train and on horse-back to Sri Chohan sahib, Rohtas, on the occasion of the Vaisakhi festival. For this historical Sikh shrine some 30 miles away, had been obscure little place housing a small chashma, or water spring, associated with the name of Guru Nanak. According to the prevailing legend, the great Guru, during his divine mission in those parts, had struck this spring of clean, fresh water with his stick when the thirsty Mardana was in great torment in that wilderness of stonecrop on a plateau just below the Rohtas Fort, now a crumbling edifice gone to sand and seed for the most part. Reportedly, Guru Nanak's celebrated dialogue with Gorakh Nath, the *Sidh Yogi*, was conducted around this part of the sprawling hills. It was, then, this site which attracted the roving and revering eye of father, and he set about raising not only a beautiful temple and a big blue water pool, but also a complex of resting rooms, a large area, a dispensary and other creature amenities. As a result of his visionary labour, Sri Chohan Sahib became a known place of pilgrimage, and drew thousands of devotees each year. I wonder if, after Independence, this shrine has anything of that name which it enjoyed for a brief space of history. I guess, like most such shrines now in Pakistan, it could have in 50 years'

time gone into neglect, or even appropriation. A, point, I suggest, for the SGPC to ponder, which reminds me of father's long and fruitful membership of that apex Sikh body. For I recall his periodic visits to Amritsar, and the sustained interest in the polity and progress of the community. I'll come to his newspaper and magazine articles in such journals as *Phulwari*, *Pritam* and *Fateh* some other time when I am in a position to go through files of old magazines in our libraries. But suffice it to say here that his political pieces, theological essays and scriptural explications were all of a piece, and constituted a corpus of insightful commentaries.

In 1936, I was taken by Father to the Khalsa College, Amritsar, from where I graduated with Honours in English in 1940 before moving to Lahore for the Master's degree. He wanted his son to be initiated at the premier Sikh institution of higher learning, a thing he considered a matter of pride and prestige, of duty and faith. The first thing that he did on arrival in Amritsar was to take me to the Darbar Sahib for *darshan ishman* and blessings. That done, he took me straight to the *kothi* of Bhai Vir Singh, the great Sikh poet, essayist and savant. There I had my collateral initiation, so to speak, and the Sikh sage launched me into a life of the imagination with a touch of his noble hand on my head. I was soon to drift away to other ideologies and pursuits at college, but the poet's impress was a part of my poetics when I published, 43 years later, *Studies in Punjabi Poetry* (Vikas publishing House, New Delhi 1979).

This, again, rings a bell in my mind, and I find myself in our ancestral Jhelum house in a winding, narrow, blind street close to the river. It's winter evening, and after an early round of prayers and dinner, the family gather around father bed. Tucked in woolens and quilts, and children are treated to readings from Bhai Vir Singh's romances of Sikh life and lore, *Sundari* and *Satwant Kaur*, in a serial manner. For it was father's view that the nexus between Word, Vision and Valour had a deeply Spiritual character, and he wanted his children to imbibe such a lesson under his benign paternity before the world of commerce and career could close in on us. That was the way, he thought, to prepare us for the life of the spirit in accordance with the Sikh world-view.

We are now approaching the end of this story of a person who, till the age of 67 or so, when he died in the highest Sikh tradition in Sept. 1947 at Jhelum, had virtually proved his being and his personality. And the story returns me first to my father's own paternity and lineage.

Son of an Army havildar, and bereaved when young, Father set out from our village, Vahalee (Jhelum District),

a medieval kind of country place with a huge Gothic structure (Sardarn-du-Mari) and a crazy rambling group of hamlets, huts and stone-houses-all gingerly placed atop a small undulating hill. And he always remembered with pride that his great grandfather, Sardar Rattan Singh, a high ranking cavalry officer in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Khalsa army, had declined the Maharaja's offer of a big *jagir*, saying that the entire kingdom was a khalsa commonwealth, and that such Jagirs were redundant extravagances. That great ancestor, it may be added, was killed in battle in the famous encounter with the British Army known as *Mudki-ki-Larai*. An earlier story links the Maini family with Raja Fateh Chand Maini of Patna Sahib and the childhood association of Guru Gobind Singh with that House.

And thus to the appointed or ordained day of destiny in September 1947, a day for which his life, his work and his vision had, since his youth, prepared and primed him. And to such persons, to stand up in the midst of flame and fire, and give battle to the last ounce of their moral energies, death in action and in the service of a great Cause, comes as the ultimate test of their being and becoming, of their quest and arrival. And it's in this state of his roused mind and puissant soul that Father achieved his *mukti* or *nirvana*. I reproduce below some extracts from my long-article, "An Agonised Spectator of Holocaust" commissioned by the *Tribune* in its series on the 50th anniversary of India's freedom:

..... And then one awful evening in September, I saw my mother my brother alight from a truck in front of the Khalsa College gate at Amritsar. No, I had lost my father I was soon to learn. He had not made it, for he too, as he believed, had a *tryst with destiny*-a tryst authenticating his Sikh traditions of battle, engagement and sacrifice when challenged, or pushed to the wall. He was a man cast in the heroic mould, and he lived upto the top of his bent.

And the story of his *martyrdom* as the leading Punjabi daily in Urdu, *Ajit*, Jullundur, said in an editorial later, was in the classic vein, redolent of the great Sikh sagas, it was, in a manner, the summation of all his energies of thought, purpose and deed. There are some natures that are called upon - in moments of spiritual or moral crises - to life to the full pitch of their potentials. Difficulties, hardships and sufferings then become part of the developing vision, and begin to act as agents of action and redemption. Indeed, Father's entire life, in a manner, constituted a metaphor of spiritual gaiety in the midst of ideals. And this concept of *sada, vigas*, or spiritual, gaiety that we find apotheocised in the poetry of the two of the great Sikh savants, Bhai Vir Singh and Prof. Puran Singh, is something that Sikh history and scriptures have sanctified time and again.

It was not, therefore, surprising that when everyone was fleeing Jhelum for dear life, he decided to stand up and face the coming tragedy. No, he could not desert the post of duty. Which was, as I learnt later, to see the weak and the helpless quit first before he could even, think of his own safety. And that's how he and my family remained trapped there till, early September 1947. What happened on that fateful day of his killing by an incendiary Muslim mob of hooligans is something that I picked up, piece by piece, from the story narrated to me by my mother and younger brother, for they were the sole survivors of that heroic scene. It appears from their account that Father's high profile as a freedom fighter, as a Sikh leader worthy of repute and as a doughty warrior in behalf of lost causes had apparently brought the mob to our door. He was then considered a prime target a, thing, that the assailants remained to regret woe-fully."

For, with a nephew's gun, Father kept firing over two hours to keep the bellowing mob at bay, felling many in the process. At the age of 67 he took up the gun again after passage of 40 years or so, his hunting days in the hills of Vahalee a whole dream behind him. But Providence so wished, and he only left his post when the house was going to be set on fire, and a passing company of British soldiers prevailed upon the besieged families to come out. It was then that a sneak sniper perched on top of a tree perhaps let loose a valley of bullets, and my father, hit in the thigh, could manage to limp his way to the police-station, a hundred yards away. Later that evening he breathed his last with the name of his Creator on his lips. Tossed, reportedly, into the Jhelum river along with scores of others slaughtered on that day, his bones, finally, came to rest in the waters which in the years of his health and vigour, he used to swim across from one side to the other, and his soul, I trust, found its true and happy habitat, to wit, the House of *Waheguru*.

In his swan song, *The Four Quartets*, T.S. Eliot initiated the poem, *East-Coker* thus:

"In the beginning, is my end".

My father knew when he set out from his village, in his late teens around the turn of the century that he had a long journey ahead, full of challenge and promise. He never faltered once; he knew his direction and his bearings. He vindicated his 'beginning' in his 'end', and his "end" in the "beginning". It was truly a consummation that a Gurmukh sought in full faith and wakefulness.

Darshan Singh Maini

[Earlier published in *The Sikh Review*, Calcutta]

THE SATGURU'S WAY

When we look round, we see that the idea of Dharam, i.e. Religion, came to the human mind when the mind craved for equilibrium, equanimity, harmony and peace. In fact all the spiritual schools of thought and great religions of the world are together at the root and again join at the top. The differences lie in between. Some of them lead through labyrinths and roughness, some are hard and difficult to ascend, some are easy to tread, while the faith of some others is full of hurdles and passes through wilderness, full of prowling predators. Humans manage to pass through some of them, while in others man gets totally lost. But for sure they are all meant to lead one to a "City of Bliss," Anandpur, and that is where the Satguru's way of life, Guru Nanak/Guru Gobind Singh's way leads us to.

The Sat Guru's way of life is the clearest and also the cleanest. The ascent may be tough, as is bound to be, but it is well defined. This Way of Life i.e., the *Panth*, is called Sikhism. It is based on rational understanding, intellectual argument, realisation of the Truth (Sat) and enlightenment through knowledge (Gyan), and interpretation of the Word (Shabad) while living a normal life. The stress is on deed, and it aims at forging of the individual character of man and formation of a society of such men, -man of God. It lays down the basic principle of attuning one's mind to the Will of the Supreme Being and rooting out selfishness. No amount of intense thinking, or stoppage of mentation, or possession of worldly goods, science or technology, or any system of superficial philosophies, sometimes imposed by institutionalised religion, regimented society, social or moral laws, or any kind of imposition, can quench the basic human search. Only the right approach and discipline of the mind counts.

If the mind is subdued the world is conquered

ਮਨ ਜੀਤੈ ਜਗ ਜੀਤਿ (ਜਪੁ)

Thus the only aim is to control one's mind and to forge it into a correct attitude so that it may get attuned to, and comes in harmony with the Will of the Supreme Being.

"Cheerfully follow His will which is inborn in us and ingrained".

ਹੁਕਮ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਲਠਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਲਲ (ਜਪੁ)

The question is, how to understand and know the Divine Will. The Guru's shabad, the Word, resolves this, if we act upon it and live upto it. This cannot be achieved by nursing one's ego. But, with the help of the *Gurshabad*, completely submerging the self with the Will of God, one perceives His Will. Anyone with a will, faith, and devotion along with a clear conscience (ਲਿਖਮਲ ਮਨ) and "discriminating" intelligence, so as to sift the good from the bad (ਬਖੇਕ ਬੁਧ), can achieve this. Until we reach that ultimate stage when we receive "the Word", we have, of course, the *Gurushabad* i.e. *Gurbani* as contained in our Scriptures, provides us the light and guidance.

"I know not what to say;

ਹਦਿ ਅਘਹੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਨ ਜਾਣਦਾ,

I have only communicated the Commands" (Suhi M.5)

ਮੈ ਕਹਿਆ ਸਭੁ ਹੁਕਮਾਇ ਜੀਉ। (ਸੁਹੀ ਮ: ੫)

Duty towards Creator and His Creation

Sikhism enjoins upon us to fulfil our duty both towards the Creator and His Creation, where to He has been pleased to send us. We have to live this life purposefully, effectively, actively, and joyfully, —not bewailing or repenting. Our duty is to continued effort; dilligent, hearty and consistent effort. Hence the emphasis on *Sewa* (service). The result, the fruit, lies in the hands of the Omnipotent Bestower. This we must accept, feel content with and be in happiness.

"Whatever thou bestoweth satiates; I wander not elsewhere" (Todi M.5)

ਜੋ ਤੂ ਦੇਹਿ ਤਹੀ ਇਹੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤੇ ਆਨ ਨ ਕਤਹੁ ਧਾਵਉ। (ਟੋਡੀ ਮ: ੫)

The Sikh Approach

Sikhism is not based on any set of mantras, rituals, formalism, or talismans, postures of worship, (Yogic Asans), fasts or penances, signs or symbols, ablutions or trances. There is no place in Sikhism for any Karamkand, pilgrimages, austerities, giving up of family life, or renunciation of the world. Mere reading of the scriptures, recitation of hymns and numbering of prayers or their mechanical repetition, dispensing alms and even charities, giving up food or going naked, attainment of supernatural powers or physical exercises, show of miracles or magic,

have absolutely no place in Sikhism. Principles of Varnashram, Incarnation, and Idol Worship are basically repudiated. It is explicitly said :

"Reflecting on the Guru's Word,

I am rid of sense of any colour caste and tribe" (Sarang M.5)

ਜਾਤਿ ਬਰਨ ਕੁਲ ਸਹਸਾ ਚੂਕਾ, ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਬੀਚਰੀ । (ਸਾਰੰਗ ਮ : ੫)

"Neither Vedas, nor Shastras, nor Smritis,

Nor the Semitic Texts lead to one's emancipation" (Suhi M.5)

ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਭਿ ਸਮਤ, ਇਨ ਪੜਿਆ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨਹੋਈ । (ਸੁਹੀ ਮ : ੫)

"Burnt be that tongue which sayeth God is cast into the womb" (Bhavi M.5)

ਸੇ ਮੁਖੁ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਨਕੁਰ ਜੋਨੀ (ਭੈਰਉ ਮ : ੫)

It is the lesson of life for us to live in such a way as to earn the pleasure and blessing of the Master. We are not to stop at only adoration of the Master, like other Soofi and Bhagati Margs postulate. But the aim is to continue loving Him till He starts loving us.

"What should I say and how act so that
He may start loving me" (Jap)

ਮੁਹੇ ਕਿ ਬੋਲਣੁ ਬੋਲੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਸੁਣਿ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰ । (ਜਪੁ)

Sikhism believe in the theory of Karam only up to the principle of "cause and effect" which obtains in the whole Universe. But it then takes us further by holding that every individual is responsible for his own Karam and if our actions i.e. Karam, are "approved," the Grace of the Master will liberate us and take us out and raise us above the labyrinth of the Karam Network.

"Crores of sins are washed off on remembering the One Lord"

ਕੋਟਿ ਅਯਾ ਗਏ ਨਾਸ, ਹਰਿ ਇਕੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ । (ਵਾਰ ਜੈਤਸਰੀ ਮ : ੫)

"On dawn of Wisdom, network of Karam vanishes"

ਗਿਆਨਭਇਆ ਤਹ ਕਰਮਹ ਨਾਸੁ । (ਭੈਰਉ)

Divinity Formless

The essential structure of Sikhism is based on Divinity's concept of being Formless (ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ, ਨਿਰਗੁਣ) . The conception of our Godhead is of the Formless and Timeless reality, the Truth that was, is and shall ever be. So is the Guru Formless in "the Shabad". Similarly the Sikh way of worship is also 'formless,' being solely singing of the devotional music (Keertan)-praise of the Lord.

Simran leads to Realisation

Simran and Sewa are the two main pillars of Sikhism. Simran means remembrance. We have to remember Him

always and without break, practising the presence of the Omnipresent Sustainer of the Universe. This will lead to the realisation of His presence everywhere, around us and in us, and our being present in Him, in His lap. We become aware of His unfailing presence with in us, and around us and feel that we cannot hide even our inner thoughts from Him.

"Nothing can be concealed from You, the Omnipresent,
Who watches everywhere"

ਆਗੁ ਦੇਖੈ ਪਿਛੁ ਦੇਖੈ ਤੁਝ ਤੇ ਕਹਾ ਛੁਪਵੈ । (ਗਉੜੀ ਚੋਤੀ ਮ : ੧)

Our actions, our thoughts, our feelings, our living will become unblemished and we will be on the right path . Simran will take us nearer to the Fountainhead of Life. Such "nearness" and "presence" will generate saintly virtues and Godly values in us and make us God conscious (ਗੁਰਮੁਖ). The basic purpose of Simran is to control the human mind and train it to become attuned to and in harmony with the Divine Will (ਹੁਕਮ). Thus Simran leads up to nearness and to the presence of the Master.

Sewa Through Learning and Earning

Sewa mean service. We have to live a life of usefulness, of service, help and assistance to others who need it.

"Woe be to the hands and feet that do no service;
All other efforts are futile".

ਬਿਨ ਸੇਵਾ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਾ ਹਥ ਪੈਰ ਹੋਰ ਨਿਹਫਲ ਕਰਨੀ । (ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ)

Sewa can be physical, social, mental as well as spiritual. Service to humanity is a way to win the Creator's pleasure, because the Master resides in His Creation.

"The Creator is in the created

And the created in the Creator, Who is all pervading"

ਖਾਲਿਕੁ ਖਲਕ ਖਲਕ ਮਹਿ ਖਾਲਿਕੁ ਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਸਭ ਧਾਈ । (ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤੀ)

But to do service, we must have the capability and capacity to do so. Physical fitness is an essential prerequisite. We must, therefore, first be "learners" and good "earners". If we have enough to share, it is only then that we can give to others. Sewa in Sikh parlance is described under a triple head; Firstly (ਨਾਮ ਜਪਣਾ) remembering the Name, the Master. This includes bringing around others to do the same i.e. realising the "Presence of God" everywhere. Secondly (ਕਿਰਤ ਕਰਨਾ) to earn by hard, dilligent, and honest work. If we have enough, we do not look to others for help, but are in a position to help others. Thirdly (ਵੰਡ ਛਕਣੀ) to share with others what we have earned and learnt. We can share our learning, share our food, share our riches, comforts, and all the good that we can spare. This cannot be done through "Renunciation", but is possible only by living a successful and useful, worldly and family life.

Sangat and Pangat-the Equalizers

Sangat is the congregation where Sikhs get together under the Satguru's blessings. Pangat is the line of diners in the community kitchen. Here in we get the first lesson in Sewa when we take care of the shoes of the Sangat, prepare the stage and meeting place, cleanse the utensils, serve food and water to all who sit together irrespective of caste or creed. Feeding the needy, *Langar* has become an integral part of the Sikh way of life.

The Satguru's commands are very clear:

"Spend, but share-Means will ever expand".

ਖਾਵਹਿ ਖਰਚਹਿ ਰਲਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਭਾਈ, ਤੋਟਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਵਧਦੇ ਜਾਈ।

(ਗਉੜੀ ਗੁਆਰੇਰੀ ਮ: ੫)

By whose grace thou eatest delicacies

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਛਤੀਹ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਖਹਿ

Bear that Master in mind.

ਤਿਸੁ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਕਉ ਰਖੁ ਮਨ ਮਾਹਿ।

By whose grace thou appliest scents to thy body

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁਗੰਧਤ ਤਨਿ ਲਾਵਹਿ

Meditate on Him and attain Bliss.

ਤਿਸ ਕਉ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਪਰਮ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਵਹਿ।

By whose grace thou livest peacefully in abode.

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਬਸਹਿ ਸੁਖ ਅੰਦਰਿ

Reflect on Him in thy mind for ever,

ਤਿਸਹਿ ਧਿਆਇ ਸਦਾ ਮਨ ਅੰਦਰਿ।

By whose grace thou enjoyest family life and comforts

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਸੰਗਿ ਸੁਖ ਬਸਨਾ

Utter His Name night and day,

ਆਨ ਪਹਰ ਸਿਮਰਹੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਰਸਨਾ।

By whose grace though enjoyest love and luxuries

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਰੰਗ ਰਸ ਭੋਗ

Nanak meditate on Him alone who is worthy of worship.

ਨਨਕ ਸਦਾ ਧਿਆਈਐ ਧਿਆਵਨ ਜੋਗ।

By whose grace thou wearest silks

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਪਾਟ ਪਟੀਬਰ ਹਚਾਵਹਿ।

By whose grace thou hast healthful golden body

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਅਚੇਗ ਕੰਚਨ ਦੇਹੀ।

By whose grace obtained thy precious body

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਪਾਈ ਦੁਰਲਭ ਦੇਹ।

By whose grace thou ridest horses and elephants

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਅਸਵ ਹਸਤਿ ਅਸਵਾਰੀ।

O mind forget not ever that Lord.

ਮਨ ਤਿਸੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕਉ ਕਬਹੂ ਨ ਭਿਸਾਰੀ।

By whose grace thou gettest orchards, wealth and territories

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਬਾਗ ਮਿਲਖ ਧਨਾ।

By whose grace thou hast lovely figure

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਤੇਰਾ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਰੂਪ।

By whose grace thou obtainest glory,

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਤੇਰਾ ਪਰਤਾਪ।

By whose grace all thy works are accomplished

ਜਿਹ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਤੇਰੇ ਕਰਜ ਪੂਰੇ।

Feel His Presence ever in mind.

ਤਿਸਹਿ ਜਾਨੁ ਮਨ ਸਦਾ ਰਜੂਰੇ। (ਗਉੜੀ ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਮ: ੫)

All the wealth, riches, comforts are for your enjoyment,
The only overriding conditions is gratefulness:

Be grateful to Him whose bounties you enjoy.

ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਖਾਵਣਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਕਹੀਐ ਸਾਥਸਿ। (ਵਰ ਆਸਾ ਮ: ੧)

If we live life in ever gratefulness to the Bestower, all luxuries, enjoyments are justified. Gratefulness creates attachment, love, and nearness and thus the Pleasure and blessing of the Bestower Master are all ours.

The Mission

The Mission of the Guru and so that of the Sikh, in the words of the 10th Satguru, is :

To uphold and advance righteousness, and to emancipate the good "the saint is us".

ਧਰਮ ਚਲਾਵਨ ਸੰਤ ਉਧਾਰਨ।

To extirpate evil and evildoers root and branch

ਦੁਸ਼ਟ ਸਭਨ ਕਉ ਮੂਲ ਉਪਾਰਨ।

Thus if any hurdle comes in the way of achieving the above objectives, it must be faced and conquered. Martyrdom of Guru

Arjan Dev, the Fifth Nanak, set the supreme example – when even life was offered as sacrifice by him (ਅਰਜਨ) for a cause, values, and for principles and it is found to be in-effective, it must not be taken as a surrender of those values/ideals. It then becomes incumbent for a Sikh to take up arms, “for the just cause”. We find the Sixth Guru taking up the Sword to uphold and protect them. The light that was thought to have been extinguished, with the sacrifice of the Fifth Guru, flared into a blaze which eventually consumed its antagonists

Conflicts, Struggle and Power for Victory

Dharam is the duty that we must fulfil towards our Creator and His creation. If in doing so, any obstacles come in the way, it has to be swept away. It was with this perspective that the Sixth Nanak, Guru Hargobind, wore the two Swords, of ‘Piri’ and ‘Miri’, representing the spiritual and the worldly powers. These two Swords were later merged, in the hands of the Tenth Satguru, into the double-edged Sword, the *Khanda*. And this *Khanda* became the “Creator” of the Khalsa. About our duty (*Dharam*) the instructions of the Tenth Guru are clear. He says :

“Blest is his life in this world who repeateth God’s name with his tongue and meditateth on struggle in his heart”.

ਧੰਨ ਜੀਉ ਤਹਿ ਕਉ ਜਗ ਮੇ, ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਚਿਤ ਮਹਿ ਜੁਧ ਬੀਚਰੈ ।

“The body is fleeting and shall not abide for ever, those embarking the ship of fame (earned out of good deeds), shall swim across the ocean of the world”.

ਦੇਹ ਅਨਿਤ ਨ ਨਿਤ ਰਹੈ ਜਸ ਨਾਵ ਚਰੈ ਭਵ ਸਾਗਰ ਤਰੈ ।

Make this body a house of calm resignation,

Light thine understanding like a lamp.

ਧੀਰਜ ਧਾਮ ਬਨਾਇ ਇਹੈ ਤਨ, ਭੁਖ ਸੁ ਦੀਪਕ ਜਿਉ ਉਜੀਅਰੈ ।

Take the broom of Divine Knowledge into thy hands

And sweep away the filth of timidity.

ਗਿਆਨਹਿ ਕੀ ਬਛਨੀ ਮੈਨੇ ਹਾਥ ਲੈ ਕਾਰਤਾ ਕਤਵਾਰ ਖੁਰੈ ।

The conflict, the struggle, the fight on all fronts has to fought continuously and persistently. As long as life lasts, the struggle must continue. Sikhism does not believe in any escape from it, and there is no place for Sanyas; for

“When the end of life comes, let me die courageously in the battlefield”.

ਜਬ ਆਵ ਕੀ ਅਧਿਧ ਨਿਦਾਨ ਬਨੇ ਅਤਿ ਹੀ ਰਣ ਮੈ ਤਬ ਜੁਧ ਮਰੇ ।

Says the Guru.

The cause has to be fought for and won. We do not take anything lying down. The Satguru has enjoined upon us to live a life of action, as an integrated whole of spiritual intellectual, social, and political activity.

Special Features of Sikhism

There are some special features peculiar to Sikhism that make it stand out as an independent and distinct identity (ਪੰਥ ਨਿਰਾਸ਼).

The Scripture

Our Scripture is the Guru Granth Sahib. Without any disrespect to anyone, the fact is that this is the only Scripture in the world which is written, prepared, and sealed by the founder who directly received “the Word” (ਬਾਣੀ). We know that the scripture of the Buddhists was written 400 years after the death of its founder, Gautum Buddha. The great Geeta was not written by Shri Krishan Maharaj, nor was the Bible composed by or during the presence of Jesus Christ. Similarly the Quran was not written by Prophet Mohammad. Who wrote the Vedas and when were they composed is not even known.

We find in the Guru Granth Sahib the Bani of the Gurus, the Nanaks, and along with it there is the Bani of 35 other men of God, Bhagats and Bhatts, who belonged to different castes and regions, schools of thought and religions, but who had understood the Master. Their Bani is given equal status and position to that of the Sikh Gurus. The sikh scripture thus attains a greatness and special status, making Sikhism unparalleled in terms of the cosmopolitanism, catholicism, and tolerance. It will not be incorrect to say that no other Scripture can claim this unique and universal position. This is real secularism.

Circle of life

Human life begins when the spark of the Individual Soul is separated from the Universal Soul. It can adopt forms according to its deeds and actions. Until it is reabsorbed in the Omnipresent Universal Soul, the circle of life goes on. The Tenth Master has vividly described this process in the following Kabit of his ‘Akal Ustat’:

As from one fire millions of sparks arise

ਜੇਸੇ ਏਕ ਆਗ ਤੇ ਕਨੂਕਾ ਕੋਟ ਆਗ ਉਠੇ

Though rising separately, they unite again in the fire

ਨਿਅਰੇ ਨਿਅਰੇ ਹੁਦਕੈ ਫੇਰ ਆਗ ਮੈ ਮਿਲਾਹਗੇ ।

"As from one heap of dust
Several particles of dust fill the air".

ਜੇਮੇ ਏਕ ਧੂਰ ਤੇ ਅਨੇਕ ਧੂਰ ਪੂਰਤ ਹੈ

And on falling on it again blend with the dust;

ਧੂਰ ਕੇ ਕਨੂਕਾ ਫੇਰ ਧੂਰ ਹੀ ਸਮਾਯਗੇ।

As is one stream millions of waves are produced,

ਜੇਮੇ ਏਕ ਨਦ ਤੇ ਤਰੰਗ ਕੋਟ ਉਪਜਤ ਹੈ

"The waves, made of water, all become water;"

ਪਾਨ ਕੇ ਤਰੰਗ ਸਭੇ ਪਾਨ ਹੀ ਕਹਾਯਗੇ।

So from God's form

Nonsentient and sentient things are manifested,

ਤੈਮੇ ਬਿਸ ਰੂਪ ਤੇ ਅਭੂਤ ਭੂਤ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੋਇ

And springing from Him, shall all be united in Him again.

ਤਾਹੀ ਤੈ ਉਪਜ ਸਭੇ ਤਾਹੀ ਮੈ ਸਮਾਯਗੇ।

Salvation

Sikhism does not aim at salvation or deliverance as the end, which means a static merger with and reabsorption of the Individual Soul in the Universal Soul and so to be finished with. This tentamounts to virtual suicide. This is left entirely to the grace of Akal Purakh. Our duty is confined to right thinking and right actions.

"I seek no Dominions, nor Deliverance either,

ਰਾਜ ਨ ਚਾਹਹੁ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਚਾਹੁ

I crave for nothing but the love of His lotus feet".

ਮਨਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਚਰਨ ਕਮਲਚੇ। (ਦੇਵ ਗੰਧਰੀ ਮ ੫)

Democracy

From the very beginning, the Satguru laid the foundations, deep and sound, of real democracy in the Panth. When the Tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, administered the Amrit to the five Beloved Ones, and then begged of them to administer the same to him, he had passed on the Guruship to the Khalsa, under the Spiritual Sovereignty of the Gurshabd, the Gurbani incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahib. With the Spiritual Light and Guidance in the Gur Shabad (ਜੋਤਿ) for the interpretation in actual life and matters of policy (ਜੁਗਤਿ) the Guruship was transferred to the Khalsa. The body (ਕਾਇਆ) was eliminated with the declaration that there was to be no Guru after the Tenth Master in any perceptible body.

"The light was the same, the way the same,
Only the body changed".

ਜੋਤਿ ਓਹਾ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਾਇ ਸਹਿ ਕਾਇਆ ਫੇਰ ਪਲਟੀਐ (ਵਚ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ)

Thus he established some very important principles. The first, that there would be no 'personality cult' amongst the Sikhs. Second, henceforth there would be collective leadership and collective responsibility.

The tenth Satguru himself implemented and brought these principles into actual practice. When Anandpur Sahib was evacuated, the Satguru told the Sikhs that this step was not well-advised and would do great harm. But when the majority of the Sikhs persisted in their demand, he finally agreed. The subsequent tragedies that fell them, we all know about. But he never complained that in spite of his advice they had taken a wrong decision. Similarly the move out of the fortress at Chamkaur Sahib was in compliance with the orders of the Khalsa.

A Healthy Family Life

Celibacy or bachelorship is discouraged in Sikhism. When Sikhism was founded over five hundred years ago, people who renunciated and gave up their homes were looked up to with reverence. It was said, preached and driven into the people that no one could attain spiritual heights as long as he did not give up his family life and repaired to wilderness, nor could person other than of the priest class could perform any religious duty. In Sikhism all these ideas were rejected. A family man was declared by the Guru as much nobler and more useful than he who had given up his own family and home and thus, become a burden on the others.

Why repair to the wilderness to seek Him.

ਕਹੇ ਰੇ ਬਨ ਯੋਜਨ ਜਾਈ।

The Omnipresent, the Detached, is always within thee.

ਸਰਬ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ਸਦਾ ਅਲੇਪਾ, ਤੋਹੀ ਸੰਗ ਸਮਾਈ।

As fragrance is in flower and reflection in mirror.

ਪੁਰਖ ਮਧ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਸ ਬਸਤ ਹੈ ਮੁਕਰ ਮਾਹਿ ਜੇਮੇ ਛਾਈ।

So is He within thee; seek Him within.

ਤੈਮੇ ਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਥਮੈ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਘਟ ਹੀ ਯੋਜਨੁ ਭਾਈ। (ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮ: ੯)

The Gurus set the example by themselves taking to family lives and performing their worldly duties alongwith their religious missions. Even today, some schools of thought applaud bachelors, celibates and hermits. In Sikhism there is no place for them. On the contrary such persons are considered as parasites on society.

The Guru in the Khalsa

The institution of the Guru amongst the Sikhs, is very special and unique. Next to God is the place of the Guru. The need of the Guru is essential to gain light and guidance.

"Without the Guru it is pitch dark
and nothing can be perceived".

ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨ ਘੋਰ ਅੰਧਾਰ ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨ ਸਮਝ ਨ ਆਵੈ । (ਸਵਾਈ ਮ : ੪ ਕੇ)

It is the touch of the Guru that energises the godly values and saintly virtues that are inherent in the individual and lie dormant.

"There are many gems, jewels and rubies in the mind.

ਮਤ ਵਿਚ ਰਤਨ ਜਵਾਹਰ ਮਾਣਕ ।

Only if one were to hearken to the voice of the Satguru".

ਜੇ ਇਕ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸਿਖ ਸੁਣੀ । (ਜਪੁ)

and

"Without the true Guru, no one attaineth the Sublime State".

ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਿਨੈ ਨ ਪਾਈ ਪਰਮ ਗਤੇ । (ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤੀ ਮ : ੫)

The Satguru's Shabad is being broadcast at all times as it permeates and prevails in all things. Any one who wishes to listen to it and take a lesson, has just to tune-in his mind to that wave length. The Guru's "class room" is open to all who have a wish to learn, irrespective of class, creed, or country.

"Nanak, the Guru, hath instructed all in Divine Wisdom.
And whosoever heareth is ferried across."

ਗੁਰੂ ਲਲਖੁ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਕਹਿਤੁ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਸੁਣੈ ਸੋ ਪਾਰਿ ਪਰਾਨਸ । (ਮਥੂ ਮ : ੫)

The Guru the Disciple and Disciple the Guru

The Gurus functioned in ten human forms, after which the form, the body, was discontinued. The spirit (ਜੋਤਿ) remained, conserved in the Gurbani, the Shabad, the Word, and under its presiding guidance, the Guruship was transferred to the Khalsa. The Sikhs are also known as, and called the Panth. For every Sikh there is a threshold which when he or she crosses, and after having received the *Amrit*, becomes the Khalsa, a member of the Akal Purkh's *Fauj*, a class of God-conscious men of warrior-saints. The dynamic presence of the Guru in Gurshabad functions as the driving force. A Sikh works like a tool in the hands of the Sat Guru. For a Sikh, the Guru is ever present, and supportive (ਹਜਰ ਲਜਰ, ਅੰਗ ਸੰਗ), Omnipresent. With the delegation of Guruship to the Khalsa, the difference between the Teacher-the Master, and the Disciple was,

for the first time in human history, eliminated. Never before had any religious leader, Avtar or Prophet, treated his followers as such and given them a status equal to himself. It was the Tenth Staguru who lauded his followers and declared:

My victories in battle have been through their (Sikhs) favour,
Through their favour I have made gifts.

ਜੁਧ ਜਿਤੇ ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ, ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁਦਾਨ ਕਰੇ ।

Through their favour all my troubles have been removed.
Through their kindness again my house is replenished.

ਅਘ ਓਘ ਟਰੇ ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ, ਇਨਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਧਨ ਧਮ ਭਰੇ ।

Through their favour I have acquired knowledge,
Through their kindness all my enemies have been vanquished.

ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁਭਿਦਿਆ ਲਈ, ਇਨਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਸਭ ਸ੍ਰ ਮਰੇ ।

Through their kindness I am exalted, otherwise,
There are millions of poor people like me.

ਇਨਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕੇ ਸਜੇ ਹਮ ਹੈ ਨਹੀ ਮੇ ਮੇ ਗਰੀਬ ਕ੍ਰੋਰ ਪਰੇ ।

To serve them pleaseth me,
Service of any other is not dear to me.

ਸੇਵ ਕਰੀ ਇਨਹੀ ਮਨ ਭਾਵਤ, ਅਉਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ ਸੁਹਾਤ ਨ ਜੀ ਕੈ ।

To bestow gifts on them alone is proper,
To make gifts to others is not profitable

ਦਾਨ ਦੀਯੋ ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਭਲੇ, ਅਰੁ ਆਨਕੇ ਦਾਨ ਨ ਲਾਭਤ ਨੀਕੇ ।

To bestow gifts on them alone will bear fruit hereafter
and bring praise in this world,
To bestow on others is altogether useless.

ਆਗੈ ਫਲੈ ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਦਯੋ, ਜਗ ਮੈ ਜਸ, ਅਉਰ ਦਯੋ ਸਵ ਫੀਕੇ ।

All the wealth in my house,
With my soul and body is for them.

ਮੇ ਗ੍ਰਹ ਮੈ ਮਨ ਤੇ ਤਨ ਤੇ ਸਿਰ ਲਉ ਧਨ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ।

For the first time, the Guru became the Disciple and the Disciple the Guru.

"Wah, Wah, wonderful Gobind Singh;

You are the Guru and you are the Disciple."

ਵਾਹ ਵਾਹ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਘੇ ਗੁਰ ਦੇਸਾ ।

Freedom from all Fears

The Guru is never without his powers, strength and forces. They are an integral and inseparable part of the Guru. So when the Guru and the Sikh become one, all values, virtues, forces and powers of the Guru become a

part and parcel of the Sikh as well. That is how a single Khalsa becomes equal to a lakh and quarter (in common parlance) and every Sikh in whom the Guru functions, works and functions like an institution by himself. Having been provided with an anchor in the Fearless, all powerful One, the Khalsa is freed of all fears: i.e. the fear of the priest class, the fear of the high class and high castes, the fear of the State and the fear of the ruler, the mental fear created by supersition and institutionalised formalism and ritualism of religion, and above all, the fear of death itself.

"With the Fearless one dwelling within thee;
Where do you get the fear from?"

ਨਿਰਭਉ ਸੰਗਿ ਤੁਮਰੈ ਬਸਤੇ, ਇਹ ਡਰਨੁ ਕਹਾ ਤੇ ਆਇਆ। (ਗਉੜੀ ਮ: ੫)

And

"Death is the privilege of Brave.
Provided they die for an approved cause".

ਮਰਨੁ ਮਣਸਾ ਸੁਰਿਆ ਹਕੁ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਹੋਇ ਮਰਨਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੇ। (ਵਡਹਰੀਸ ਮ: ੧)

The Khalsa therefore does not bow to, does not owe allegiance to, any perishable creature-but, only and solely to the Wah Guru the Almighty, the Akal Purkh.

Khalsa the Invincible

The above precepts inculcated over the years, infused such fearless courage and virile strength in the Sikhs that the Khalsa became invincible. The rule of tyranny was overthrown and the tide of fanatic bigotry stemmed. It turned human beings into gods. It turned serfs and slaves into Sirdars and valiant knights. It turned sparrows into hawks and cows into lions. The downtrodden, depressed and exploited became such formidable fighters that Rajas and Nawabs shuddered before them.

Khalsa, Its Identity and Guru's Image

The Khalsa was thus created in the Satguru's own image. That is why we have unshorn hair. Every Sikh is duty bound to rever, preserve and uphold this image and identity as the Satguru's Standard of Victory. These have to be kept aloft and respected even at the cost of one's own life.

"Khalsa is my own image. I reside in the Khalsa".

ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਖਾਲਸਾ, ਖਾਲਸੇ ਮੇ ਹਉ ਕਰੇ ਨਿਵਾਸ।

We know that our very existence depends on and is bound with our independent separate identity and image. Once we lose these, we will be drowned in the unfathomable morass of what is called Hinduism. That is why the injunction is:

"So long as the Khalsa retains independent identity,

ਜਬ ਲਗ ਰਹੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਨਿਆਰਾ।

I will bestow on them full glory.

ਤਬ ਲਗ ਤੇਜ ਦੀਓ ਮੈ ਸਾਰਾ।

But the moment they adopt Brahmanical ways,

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਗਹਿਰੇ ਬਿਪ੍ਰਨ ਕੀ ਗੀਤਿ।

I will not trust them."

ਮੈ ਨ ਕਰਉ ਤਿਨ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ।

and the injunctions is:

"Do not present yourself without Keshas and Arms".

ਬਿਨਾ ਸਸਤ੍ਰ ਕੇਸੰ ਦਿਉ ਨ ਦੀਦਾਰੇ।

Unbounded courage

This Merger of the Guru with the Khalsa, therefore, created such overwhelming energy, daring courage, bravery, and readiness always to help the needy and the oppressed, that the Sikh history became resplendent with golden deeds of the Khalsa. When Ahmad Shah Abdali, after ransacking Delhi and the countryside, was taking away some 30000 Hindu women and girls to be auctioned in Afghanistan, the Khalsa, unmindful of the risks, pounced upon the Abdali forces and rescued those helpless women. Not only that, these women were then escorted safely and honourably back to their respective homes by the Sikhs. Then again, when a Brahman came to Amritsar and complained that the Nawab of Qasur had taken away his daughters, the Khalsa rushed to Qasur, punished the Nawab and restored the daughters to the Brahmin.

Sri Sahib - The Sikh's 'Sword'

The Sikh sword, the Kirpan, is not meant to be brandished irresponsibly. It is a symbol of duty to resist aggression, tyranny, and injustice, and meant to sweep aside obstacles that obstruct performances of one's Duty. It is meant to destroy evil. It is not a butcher's knife but a surgeon's lancet. *In short, the kirpan is a symbol of the will and power and determination of a Sikh to live a true Sikh's life.*

The kirpan has to be used very judiciously and that too as a last resort when all other means of argument persuasion, diplomacy, and reasoning, have failed. When the bigotted communalist element among the majority community in India forgetting the sacrifice and martyrdom of their own saviour, Guru Teg Bahadar, the Ninth Nanak, tried to assault his mausoleum, Sis Ganj, in Old Delhi, the shining steel of the Sikhs, ready at hand, was never touched or flashed.

At the same time, there should be no doubt, the Sikh's kirpan is not meant to be a mere show piece. The injunction of our Tenth Master is:

"When all other remedies have failed,

ਚੁੰ ਕਾਰ ਅਬ ਹਮਾ ਹੀਲਤੇ ਦਰ ਗੁਜ਼ਸਤ ।

It is righteous to have recourse to the Sword".

ਹਲਾਲ ਅਸਤ ਬੁਰਦਨ ਬ ਸਮਸੇਰ ਦਸਤ ।

The Sword is an allegorical reference to the force of righteousness. For a Sikh, therefore, the legitimate use of force in the defences of human values is not only right but becomes incumbent, when or if an occasion arises—because he refuses to submit to evil.

When the Sword is brought to function, it must be effective and decisive. The Tenth Master invokes the Sword in these words :

"Thou art the Subduer of countries,

The Destroyer of the armies of the wicked,

In the battle field thou greatly adornest the brave".

ਖਗ ਖੰਡ ਥਿਹੀਡ ਖਲ ਦਲ ਖੰਡ ਅਤਿ ਰਣ ਮੰਡ ਥਰਥੰਡ ।

Thine arm is infrangible, Thy brightness refulgent,

Thy radiance and splendour dazzle like sun.

ਭੁਜੁ ਦੰਡ ਅਖੰਡ ਤੇਜ ਪ੍ਰਚੰਡ ਜੋਤ ਅਮੰਡ ਭਲ ਪ੍ਰਭੰ ।

"Thou bestowest happiness on the good,

Thou terrifies the evil,

Thou scatterest sinners, I seek Thy protection".

ਸੁਖ ਸੰਤਾ ਕਰਤ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਦਰਣ ਕਿਲ ਥਿਖ ਹਰਣ ਅਸਿ ਸਰਣ ।

Hail ! Hail the Creator of the world,

The Saviour of creation, My cherisher,

Hail to thee, O Sword!

ਜੈ ਜੈ ਜਗ ਕਾਰਣ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟ ਉਥਾਰਨ ਮਮ ਪ੍ਰਤਿ ਪਾਰਣ ਜੈ ਤੇਗੰ ।

(ਬਚਿਤ੍ਰਨਾਟਕ ਪਾ: ੧੦)

The Khalsa, Integrated Perfect Whole

That the exact moment in time of the birth of the Khalsa is known is unique to creation of a Nation. This is the special status of the Khalsa. The Khalsa was not created out of vengeance or in an impulse. Nor was it created as a "time-server", a tactical or strategic step or as a reaction to any barbourous oppression in particular. After 200 years of meticulous preparation and planning, the Khalsa was created in 1699 at the pleasure of the Akal Purkh (ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੀ ਮਹਿਮਾ) and as ordained by Him, after full thought, thorough deliberation and meticulous planning in the Perfect, Whole, and Masculine Image, (ਤਬ ਸਹਿਜੇ ਰਚਿਓ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਾਬਤ ਮਰਦਾਨ). The Khalsa was created by the Satguru, at Lepel Griffin has said, like Jupiter taking out Minerva from his thigh, like Durga producing Chandi from her forehead.

Being an integral, integrated, perfect whole, a Sikh is like a Brahmin when he reads the scriptures, recites the Gurbani, leads in prayers, delivers a sermon, preaches at the Sangat, performs religious rites and social ceremonies. When he wields the sword, fights battles, sprints to the help of the helpless and defends his family and country, he is a Kashatrya. He is a Vaish when he tills the land and does a craftsman's job. When he cleanses the dirty utensils of the community kitchen (*Langar*), dusts the shoes of the Sangat, sweeps the house and the Gurdwara compound, takes the farm-yard manure on his head to the fields, and does other service to the needy, that very Sikh is a Shudra too. And when he radiates his "Sikh-life" (ਸਿੱਖੀ), provides light and guidance to others, he becomes a Missionary.

When defining a Sikh, the Satguru said :

"Nanak craves for the Dust of that Sikh of the Guru,

Who always remembers himself.

And makes other remembers the Name (God)".

ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਧੂਤਿ ਮੰਗੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਖ ਸਿਖ ਕੀ

ਜੋ ਆਪਿ ਜਪੈ ਅਵਰਹਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਵੈ ।

There are no taboos on the food or drinks in Sikhism. The Satguru says:

"All foods and drinks are pure,

That God hath bestowed for sustenance"

ਖਾਣਾ ਪੀਣਾ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰ ਹੈ, ਦਿਤੇਨੁ ਰਿਜਰੁ ਸੰਥਾਰਿ । (ਵਾਰ ਅਸਾ ਮ: ੧)

The only condition is :

"O Friend; the food and pleasure are vain,

That corrupt the mind and pain the body".

ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰੁ ਖਾਣਾ ਖੁਸੀ ਖੁਆਰੁ ।

ਜਿਹੁ ਖਾਧੈ ਤਨੁ ਪੀਤੀਐ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰ । (ਸ੍ਰੀ ਰਗ ਮ: ੧)

History records that Guru Nanak cooked venison at Krukshetra and from the time of Nanak II, Guru Angad, meat was served in the *Langar*.^{*} Principal Teja Singh and Dr. Ganda Singh in their *History of the Sikhs* have stated that Sikhs are essentially non-vegetarians.

A Sikh when he is baptised, is told that he has now taken rebirth in the Satguru's House and henceforth his father is Guru Gobind Singh and mother Mata Sahib Devan and he becomes the citizen of Anandpur.

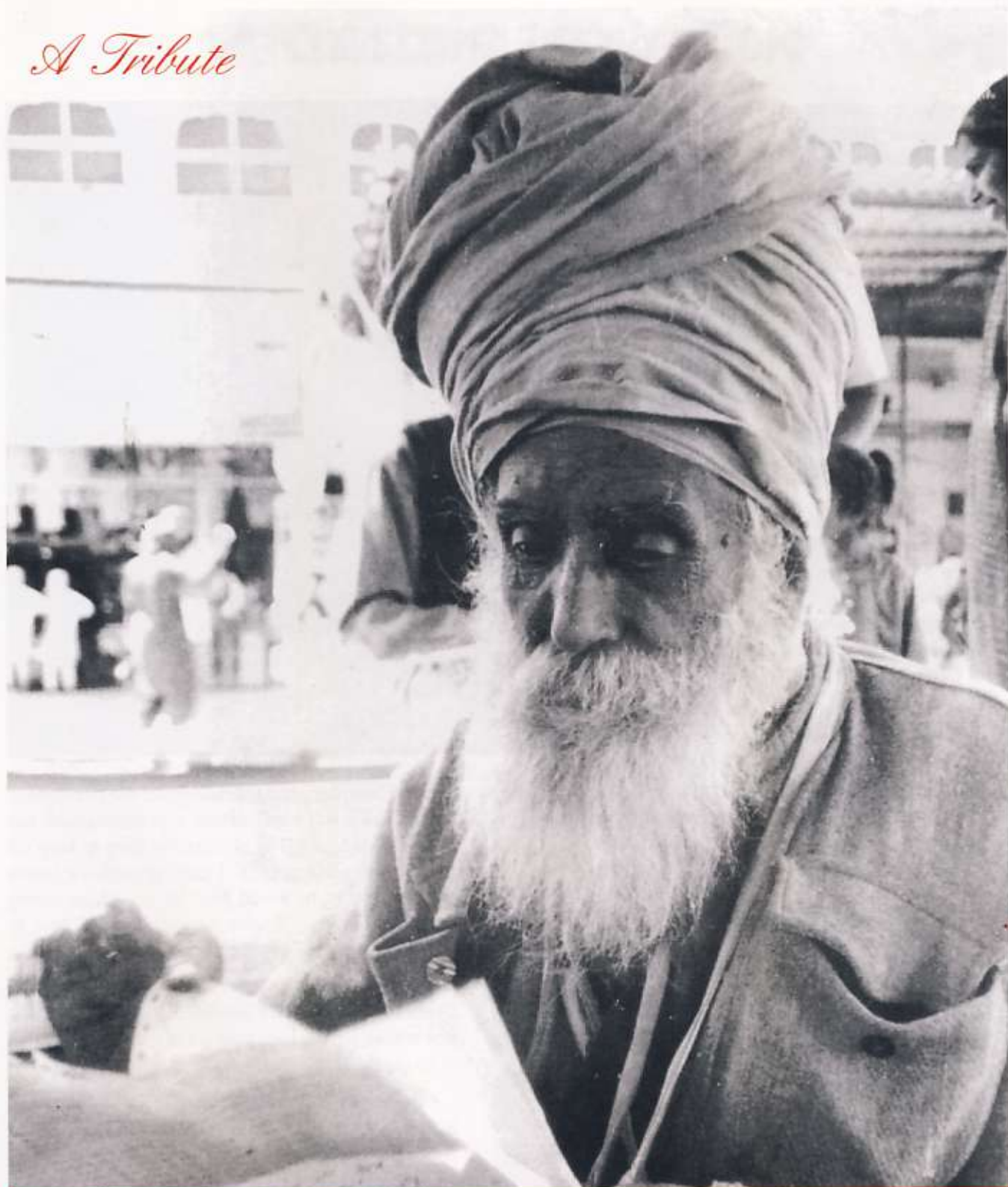
Anandpur is the City of Peace and Eternal Bliss. That is where the Satguru's way of life takes us to.

Bhayee Ardaman Singh

Bhayee Sahib of Bagrian

^{*} Guru Amar Dass before he presented himself to Guru Angad, had to partake meat prepared in the *Langar* specially, in order to confirm the former's total abrogation of his Vaishnavite antecedents.

A Tribute



Bhagat Puran Singh

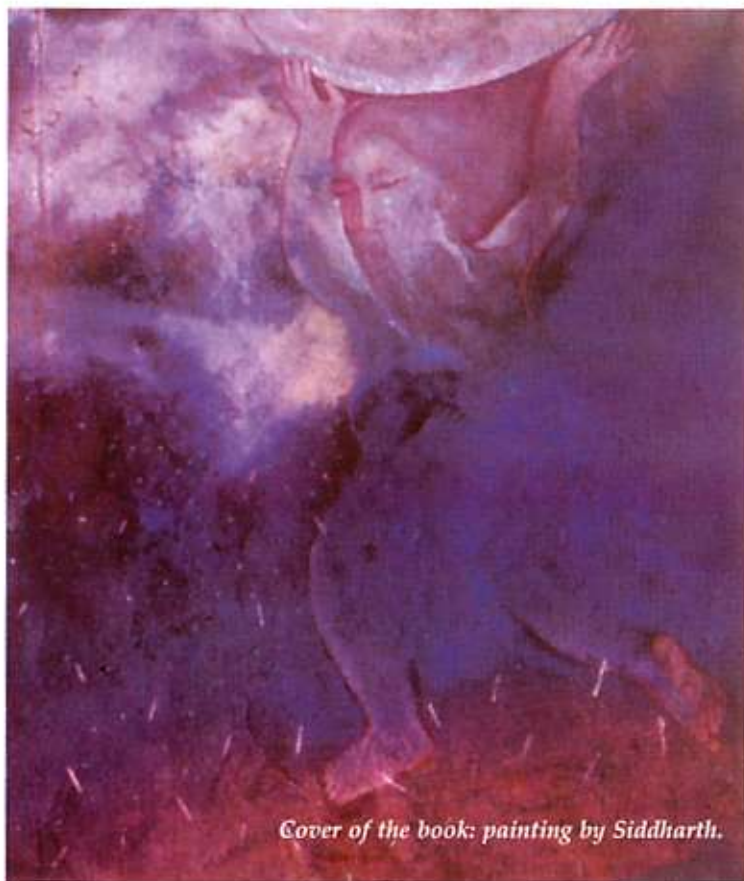
HIS SACRED BURDEN

It was an extraordinary evening at the India International Centre in New Delhi on 3 December 2000 when Reema Anand's biography on the life and times of Bhagat Puran Singh, *His Sacred Burden* was formally released. Preceding the ceremony was a screening of the documentary film made on Bhagatji by Reema and her lawyer husband, Amit Singh Chadha, and completed just a short while before the Saint of Pingalwara passed away in August 1992.

Hushed by the images and sobered by the realisation that this great Saint of our times had lived and then passed on virtually without real understanding of what he had gifted to mankind, the speakers on the dias were full of eulogies for the great samaritan.

S.Khuswant Singh was emotional while Sushma Swaraj, who released the book, was inspired in her speech. Bhagat Puran Singh was a universal being for whom *Manas kee jaat sab ek hee Pahchaantoo* ("regard all mankind as of one caste", Guru Gobind Singh had exhorted).

For Reema Anand, this was very personal homage too, having been gifted the chance to meet Babaji, as she called him, while she was very young and then to do the documentary film on the life of Bhagat Puran Singh, the only such record of this great person and the activities at Pingalwara. After his passing, she travelled extensively to gather



Cover of the book: painting by Siddharth.

material from his ancestral village. In the 20 chapters, Reema has juxtaposed various experiences with her own impressions: "The attempt has been to keep off the traits of a biography ... I grew up with the letters and small notes he would send me I have strong memories of his personality my effort has been to bring out the significant events in his life"

The book was co-released at Amritsar on 13 December and then at Chandigarh two days later, the first edition having been sold out in the very first week of its publication.

The legacy is forever; as Sunder Lal Bahugana, a legend himself, has often stated, "Bhagat Puran Singh was my inspiration".

If there ever was a noble human being who deserved the Nobel Prize, it was the Saint of Pingalwara, Bhagat Puran Singh.

His Sacred Burden by Reema Anand

Published by Ajanta Books International, Delhi 110007

Pages 154, illustrated



S. Khushwant Singh, Reema Anand and Sushma Swaraj at the book launch.

A Constant Inspiration



BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION
NEW DELHI, INDIA
12 June 99.

Dear Dr Inderjit Kaur,

I must tell you we will always keep an extraordinary memory of our visit to Pingalwara. We can understand how the constant inspiration of Bhagat Puran Singh keeps your marvellous work going. His life would touch the most cynical. What an extraordinary model to follow.

Thank you for your letter and kind thoughts, but, of course we are the grateful one.

Your objective is to boost the morale of the handicapped. so as well to boost the morale of non handicapped people, like us, who can get very depressed at the extent of the problems and do nothing about it. Visiting your institution gives me faith in actually doing something.

We will try and keep the links with the UK going and hope to succeed.

With our very best wishes and renewed thanks for your generosity
Yours sincerely,

Catherine Young



Sir Rob Young, the High Commissioner for Britain in India and Lady Catherine Young visited Pingalwara and are seen here with Dr. Inderjit Kaur and others at the Home.

What can you say about a place like this? I think that there is a joy, a hope and a sense of optimism here that eclipses the tragedy behind the patients. I think that their smiles are the most valuable that I have ever seen, Puran Singh, in my view was a man of infinite compassion and wisdom. I bow to him.

Kirsty Louise Duckett
Shrewsbury Shropshire, England

I consider it a privilege and special divine grace to be along with Inderjit Kaur, successor of Bhagat Puran Singh Jee to continue the Truthful Missionary Service of Pingalwara at Amritsar. I feel much impressed to see the museum. The way Bhagat Puran Singh Jee has served the lepers, homeless, orphans and needy. Bhagat Puran Singh enjoyed the special blessings and Grace of Nirankar. The world should learn from Bhagat Jee's service and follow in his footsteps. No one can serve lepers and the poor without genuine love in the heart; It is love who rules the courts, and the groves, the

saints above and the men below, because love is heaven and love is God, he sacrificed his life for the service of the poor and retarded, homeless and poor, that is why it is truly said, the greatness of individuals and nations, lie on the amount of sacrifice of its people. More you commit, the more He (God) Blesses the job. I wish from the inner recesses of my heart to lend all my co-operation in this holy cause of helping the nation.

Swami Arvindanand.
Evergreen Street, Anaheim, California 92805

A Sikh Heritage Project

AT THE SMITHSONIAN

Amongst the 14 museums that constitute the Smithsonian Institution in the heart of Washington D.C., there will soon be a permanent exhibition on Sikh Heritage. Attracting tens of millions of visitors every year, the world-renowned "Smithsonians" include the National Air and Space Museum, the National Museum of American History and the National Museum of Natural History. It is at the latter that the U.S.-based *Sikh Heritage Foundation* have set upon to create a centre which will display selected exhibits which shall eventually include a detailed study of every Sikh artefact and manuscript in existence, all to be micro-filmed and catalogued in the form of a pictorial album.

The project has been conceived and promoted by the *Sikh Heritage Foundation*, comprising a number of Sikh-American professionals who have also set up a Heritage Fund to support the Smithsonian project, according to the Pittsburgh-based neurologist, Dr. Amrik Singh Chattha.

Dr. Paul Michael Taylor, Director of the Asian Cultural History Programme and Curator of Asian, European and Middle Eastern Anthology, was in India during the last week of December 2000 for some ground-work on this project. Accompanying him was the 28-year old Jeevan Singh Deol, Fellow at the St. Johns College, Cambridge, who has a doctorate in Medieval Punjabi Literature and has previously been involved in London's Victoria and Albert Museum on similar efforts.

The project is rather exhaustive and the task is estimated to take at least five years to complete. As for the permanent exhibits, while some antiques will be purchased, others will either be borrowed or taken on loan, or if possible, on donation. It is proposed to contact private collectors in Britain and the United States who own priceless Sikh antiques, along with some of Punjab's distinguished Sikh families, such as the Bagrians and the royal house of Patiala.

"If the Punjab government agrees to donate some 20-30 objects, duly identified by a committee from the Smithsonian Institute, the display section can open in six months". The cataloguing, however, promises to be both arduous and time consuming for, according to a preliminary study prepared by Jeevan Deol, some of the most important Sikh manuscripts and relics are either "gathering dust" in museums in Pakistan, or at Patna. As in India, Pakistani law on antiquities specifies that objects over 100 years old cannot be exported without the government's permission, and it is here that the Smithsonian's vast global reach is expected to prove invaluable.

Most manuscripts can be classified into two groups — those written in Persian-Arabic script and others in the Indic scripts (Gurmukhi and Devnagri). While the first group is catalogued and accessible, it is the second which remains uncatalogued and inaccessible, as many such manuscripts are termed "evacuee" property, abandoned during partition of the Punjab. Many of these Indic manuscripts, are unceremoniously dumped on storeroom floors. The Punjab University Library in Lahore contains some rare Gurmukhi collections. The latter, in fact, is one of the largest in South Asia, housing as many as 110 rare Gurmukhi manuscripts.



Dr. Amrik Singh Chattha.



S. Tarlochan Singh and Dr. Paul Michael Taylor.