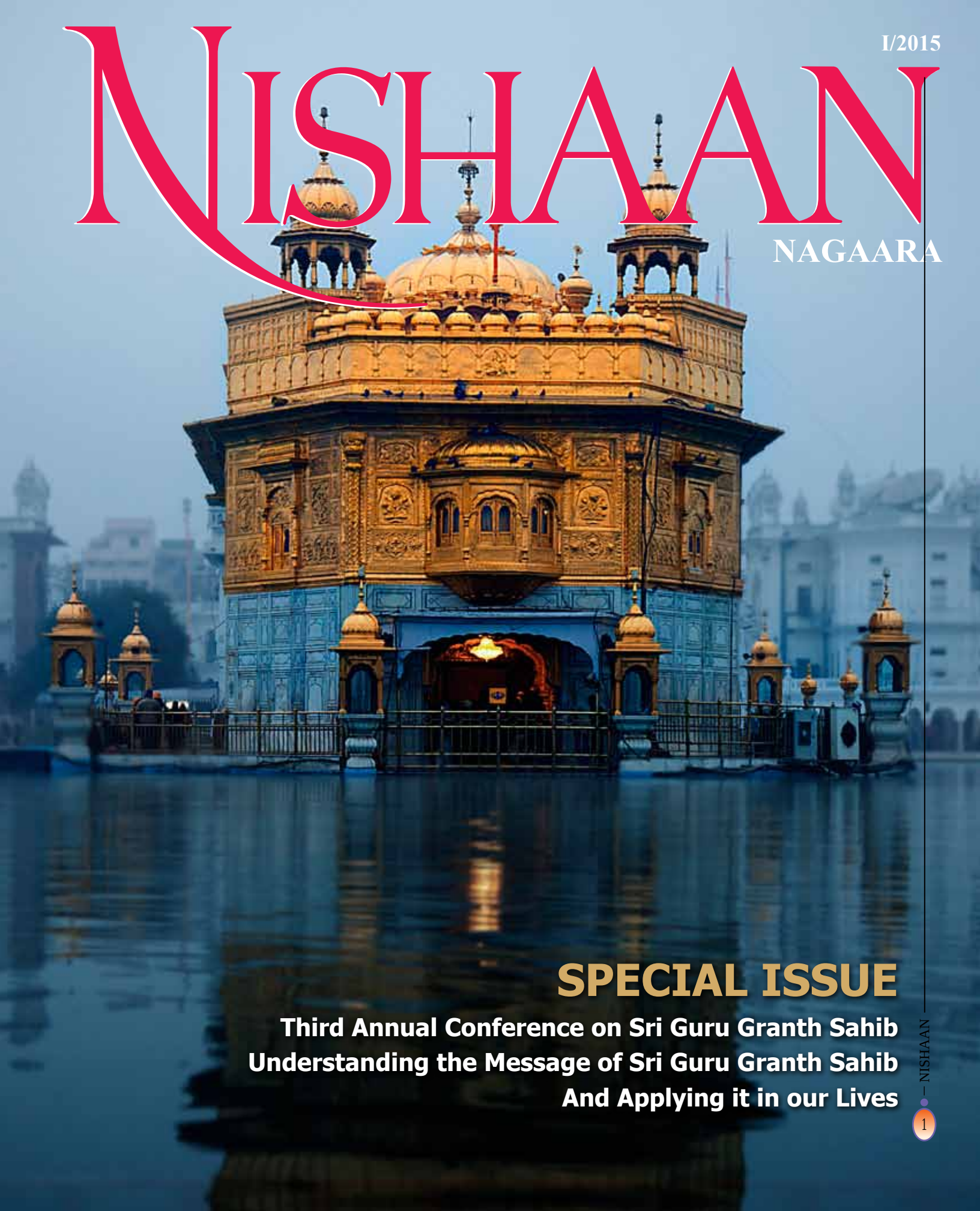


I/2015

NISHAAN

NAGAARA



SPECIAL ISSUE

**Third Annual Conference on Sri Guru Granth Sahib
Understanding the Message of Sri Guru Granth Sahib
And Applying it in our Lives**

*An extraordinary
image taken in
the Durbar Sahib
Complex at Amritsar
by Amardeep Singh.*



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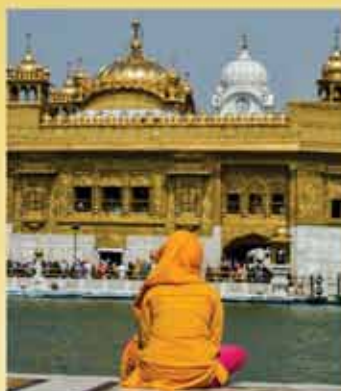
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SPECIAL ISSUE

on third annual conference on
SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB



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GOD IS ONE
HIS IS THE
VICTORY

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Cover: The Darbar Sahib at Amritsar
Photo: by Amardeep Singh

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Understanding the Message

Sri Guru Granth Sahib and applying it in our lives

The Third Annual Conference on the Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, jointly hosted by the Chardi Kalaa Foundation and the San Jose Gurdwara, took place on 13 September 2014 at San Jose in California, USA.

The Guru Granth was written and collated 300 to 500 years ago mainly in the Indian cultural context that was defined by the two predominant religions of that time, Hinduism and Islam. The structure and thematic expressions reflect those realities as well as the languages, cultures, music and mythology of the times and the place.

Yet, the Guru Granth addresses issues that are universal as well as timeless, even as the world has changed. Several centuries, thousands of miles, paradigm shifts in cultures, time and space have cast humanity into a new and different existential reality.

But the overarching theme of these symposia remains unchanged: How does the Guru Granth speak to us today? How does it span the gap in time, cultures, languages and ways of thinking? How does it guide us in interacting with our non-Sikh neighbours or our co-religionists that seem to have taken a different path in their lives?

Our goals and the target audience remains the same as always. How do we deal with all of that which impacts our existence, our sense of self, and the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune across generations; these are issues that Guru Granth dwells upon. And these are the aspects that we need to parse, for the old and for the young, for men and for women; for those who are success-driven as well as for lives that seem to be groping for direction.

We will not always have the answers but the conversation will put us on the path of progress.

As in such past conferences, we welcome an eclectic mix of Sikh scholars and lay persons; scientists and

academicians; men and women, young and old – Sikhs all of them.

We reason together current issues that matter to us today - and tomorrow - and those that drive our passions. Let us even differ but in the spirit of Guru Granth: *Hoi ikatr milo mere bhai, dubidha door karo liv layee; Har namay ke hovoh jori; gurmukh baiso safaa vichhaaye...* *Guru Granth p 1185.*

The Punjab, which constitutes northwestern entity of the Indian subcontinent, where Sikhism arose, has a very special place in the evolution of mankind. As is with the Balkans in eastern Europe, Punjab perhaps constitutes the busiest laboratory of genetic hybridisation in human history.

Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh scripture, is manifestation of this polyglot culture amidst multi-faith, multi-religious realities. Logically, it addresses issues that are many and wide-ranging.

Sikhs have historically been, and arguably will remain, a minority no matter where in the world they make their home. An essential goal for any minority is to work at defining an equal place at the table of society. This goal always remains a work in progress.

How then to define and track progress towards that goal? And how can Guru Granth, the Sikh scripture, guide this process?

Just as good neighbours have fences between their houses, so do productive communities. This is how a community's ethos develops. Yet it is also crucial that the fences remain porous and never become walls that seal communities and neighbours from each other. No minority, in fact no community, can thrive or survive in a hermetically sealed cocoon of its own making.

We need to explore and apply the teachings in the Guru Granth, but how? It is by understanding how it guides and moulds us for the complex world in which we live today.



Only then can we successfully attempt to build bridges with the others.

We need to revisit some strategies and tactics which have been tried with varying degrees of success, while others will be new. Still, our actions must be consistent with the teachings of Guru Granth.

The universal vision of Guru Granth rejects no teachings of any faith or religion of mankind except when it diminishes others. Hybridisation of the genetic pools, the richness and complexity of many languages,

the competing and blending of many cultural habits in Punjab and Punjabis are encompassed in the Guru Granth. And much of the scripture is cast in music from the folk rhythms of Punjab to the intricacies and varied complexities of classical musicology of the sub-continent. The Guru Granth incorporates ragas from different parts of India, comfortably enhancing and existing along with Sufi strains, Persian and Arabic poetry besides Braj and Sanskrit. In the Guru Granth, Islamic ideas and mythology coexist with the essence of Hindu folklore and mythology, even though the Sikh belief categorically does not embrace major aspects of either. In the contemporary diaspora, Judeo-Christian heritage impacts Sikhs in the West.

The many languages in Guru Granth also imply that translations and transliterations in the many languages of mankind remain paramount. This is no simple task. Engaging with the Guru Granth, a uniquely interfaith scripture of mankind, then becomes a consuming affair of both the mind and the heart at the same time - and this is essential.

How exactly does Guru Granth define common ground with the non-Sikh world around us when it clearly does not claim, accept or promote exclusivity of dogma and doctrine?

These matters lie at the root of meaningful interfaith coexistence and Sikhism's place in a complex world.



Young Sikh boys in classroom, Afghanistan

The Import of Knowledge

Sikh means student and Guru means teacher, yet in common stereotypes about Sikhs, education is rarely mentioned in a positive way. The founder of Sikh religion, Guru Nanak, is one of the greatest teachers ever born. The mass education he started and continued by the nine Gurus who followed him, brought about a profound social, religious and political revolution in its wake.

How did our Gurus do this? Besides the divine grace, we should examine the education delivery means used by them to spread their message. These methods include use of regional languages, poetry, music, repetition, use of letters, role of teachers, learning in a class, learning by questioning, graphics and many others. We will find that modern education technology is adopting such and we must improve our secular education system by following methods used by the Gurus.

Guru Nanak indeed was a great visionary and a teacher, inspired by Waheguru Himself. The divine vision and educational process that Guru Nanak presented then transformed a society which was in spiritual and moral darkness. He questioned faith in multiple Gods, the caste system, empty rituals, dominance of the clergy, gender inequality and bigotry of the rulers. He revealed a simple path based on faith in one God, equality of all, compassion, contentment, high moral conduct and truthful living. He and the nine Gurus who followed him, produced a society that was enlightened, one that worshipped one loving God and was committed to truthful living, liberty, justice, dignity and equality for all.

A religious, social and political transformation at such a scale was unprecedented. How did Sikh Gurus do this? In this article are examined some of the educational methods that Sikh Gurus adopted. We may be surprised to find that modern society has 'discovered' many of the same methods after centuries of research, trial and error and there are many others with which we still need to catch up.

We should consider that the field of education has three main components: (a) Knowledge to be delivered (b) Methods used to deliver such knowledge and © Methods used to measure the success of this process. In this paper we will concern ourselves mainly with the second, or methods used to deliver the knowledge.

The education delivery method used by the Sikh Guru Sahibs has several significant components, many of which are enshrined in Gurbani:

- Use of Mother Tongue
- Poetry, Rhymes, Singing and Music
- Listening and Practicing
- Repetitions
- Graphic Presentation
- Use of Letters
- Quantification
- Role of Teacher/Mentor Group
- Role of Class (Sangat)
- Learning by Questioning
- Role of Practice
- Getting rid of social biases against learning

We should consider significance of each of these elements and see how our Guru jis implemented these through Gurbani and teachings in real life.

Use of Mother Tongue: When Guru Nanak Dev ji was born, religious teachings were imparted either in Sanskrit or Persian, which limited spiritual learning to only Brahmins and Maulvis. Instead, Guru ji, adopted the language of the people to write Gurbani. Guru Angad Dev ji perfected the Gurmukhi script so that common people could learn and recite Gurbani as also acquire religious knowledge without the help of priestly classes.

It is now well recognised that early education should be in the mother tongue of a child. Waiting for a child to learn another language before knowledge can be imparted will severely delay such learning and impact development of the brain in formative years.

This issue has important implications for Sikh children growing up in the western world. Unless a child has a bilingual upbringing (in both Punjabi and English), the early education on Sikhi should be given in English as that tends to become primary language of the child. Gurmukhi and Punjabi should be taught alongside as a second language until the child has acquired sufficient proficiency.

It has to be realised that language is not just script and words but includes the social and cultural elements.

Dr. IJ Singh has rightly argued for the need to produce an English translation of Guru Granth Sahib for cultural and social outreach to the Sikhs in the diaspora.

In India, many parents are enrolling children in English medium schools and, while learning English is important in the modern world, without bilingual upbringing in the early years (0-5) one can hurt the intellectual development of the child.

Use of Poetry, Rhymes and Singing: Our Gurus were blessed with the gift of composing poetry and verse. The Gurbani is wonderful literature in itself. Poetry and rhymes make for engaging learning, evoke emotions and enable easy absorption of the central message.

Our Gurus prescribed Kirtan as an essential medium of adoration. In Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Gurbani is set into 31 Ragas. Poetry and rhymes help develop the so called associative memory and make it easy to remember the message. Singing makes repetitions a much more pleasant experience and enables the message to be imbibed subliminally. Poetry and singing can be an important part of secular education as well. I grew up in India. In our elementary school, we learned the multiplication tables by singing them. It made learning them fun and easy to remember. The recent renaissance of Punjabi music confirms that there is no dearth of poetic talent among Punjabis and Sikhs. Some of that needs to be channeled towards education. Imagine how much fun learning would be if the classes ended the often boring lecture with the students singing the lessons taught in that lecture!

In the US there is a 'Science Song Writers Association' that promotes writing songs for learning science. For more details see <http://www.memory-key.com/improving/strategies/everyday/singing-memory>.

Listening and Practicing: Hearing is a physical phenomenon. Listening on the other hand is mindful hearing. Listening is very important in gaining knowledge. Gurbani lays great emphasis on listening and practicing (ਸੁਣੀਐ ਅਤੇ ਮੰਨੀਐ). It is well known to educationists that listening improves mental focus, while practicing builds actual skills. Both of these are required for learning.

Repetition: In Sri Guru Granth Sahib, each message is repeated several times often in different contexts. Repetitions help in memorisation and to deepen understanding, which helps in imbibing the message in one's life. Aristotle said "It is frequent repetition that produces natural tendency."

Memorisation and reflection on repeated ideas has many positive implications for our brain development

too. Memorisation involves making neuron connections. When a message is repeated in different contexts, additional connections are formed reflecting those contexts. These additional connections help in recalling the message more easily.

Graphical Presentation: Modern graphic tools were not available at the time of Guru Sahibs. In many instances they used the language brilliantly to describe their thoughts graphically. There are several examples from Guru Nanak Dev ji's Bani e.g.

ਗਗਨ ਮੈ ਥਾਲੁ ਰਵਿ ਚੰਦੁ ਦੀਪਕ ਬਨੇ ਤਾਰਿਕਾ ਮੰਡਲ ਜਨਕ ਮੇਤੀ ॥

ਧੂਪ ਮਲਾਨਲੇ ਪਵਣੁ ਚਵਰੇ ਕਰੇ ਸਗਲ ਬਨਰਾਇ ਫੁਲੰਤ ਜੇਤੀ ॥

ਜਾਂ

ਸੇ ਦਰੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਕੇਹਾ ਸੇ ਘਰੁ ਕੇਹਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਬਹਿ ਸਰਬ ਸਮਾਲੇ ॥

ਵਾਜੇ ਨਾਦ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਸੰਖਾ, ਕੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਵਾਵਣਹਾਰੇ ॥ ਕੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਰਾਗ ਪਰੀ
ਸਿਉ ਕਹੀਅਹਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਗਾਵਣਹਾਰੇ ॥

A picture is worth a thousand words. Benefits of graphics or graphic language in communicating knowledge cannot be overemphasised. This benefit is well recognised by modern educationists as well. It is because of this that early learning books for children are full of colourful pictures. Pictures from Hubble telescope of galaxies and stars have helped increase an understanding of the cosmos among the public. Microscopic pictures of bacteria and other microorganism help to educate people about the health issues.

Quantification: Guru Sahibs were very aware of assigning quantitative qualities to their subject of worship. Of course for Waheguru, it was always infinite, priceless or indescribable e.g.

ਸਰਗੁਨ ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ, ਸੁੰਨ ਸਮਾਧੀ ਆਪਿ ॥

ਜਾਂ

ਤੁਮਰੀ ਗਤਿ ਮਿਤਿ ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਜਾਨੀ ॥

ਜਾਂ

ਅਮੁਲ ਗੁਣ ਅਮੁਲ ਵਪਾਰ ॥

Quantification is an important aspect of education and Gurbani does not ignore this.

Use of Letters: Guru Sahibs have emphasised the importance of letters.

ਅਖਰੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਅਖਰੀ ਸਾਲਾਹੁ ॥ ਅਖਰੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਗੀਤ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਹੁ ॥

ਅਖਰੀ ਲਿਖਣੁ ਬੋਲਣੁ ਬਾਣਿ ॥ ਅਖਰਾਂ ਸਿਰਿ ਸਜੈਗੁ ਵਖਾਣਿ ॥

Even cavemen used graphics to convey information. Humanity later evolved to use of letters, which form the basic elements of reading and writing.

Through the centuries, Guru Sahiban emphasised the importance of learning at a time when most people were illiterate. Guru Sahiban were also well aware of the limitations of letters, which cannot depict the greatness and glory of God, and must be sensed by the soul itself.

Need of a Teacher: Gurbani emphasises the importance of a teacher for spiritual education.

ਗੁਰੂ ਪਉੜੀ, ਖੇੜੀ ਗੁਰੂ, ਗੁਰੂ ਤੁਲਾਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਉ ॥

“The Guru is the Ladder, the Guru is the Boat, and the Guru is the Raft to take me to the Lord's Name”

ਕਾਲਰਿ ਬੀਜਸਿ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਐਸੀ ਨਿਗੁਰੇ ਕੀ ਨਿਸਾਨੀ ॥

ਸਤਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਝਰੁ ਘੋਰ ਅੰਧਾਰਾ ਡੂਬਿ ਮੂਏ ਬਿਨੁ ਪਾਈ ॥

Without proper knowledge and guidance, even the most well intended efforts can be worthless. In these Gurbani lines, Guru ji illustrates this with example of a farmer who not having proper guidance is tilling and seeding a dry field. Even after all the hard work he is going to be disappointed. The teacher should be selected with care.

ਗੁਰੂ ਜਿਨਾ ਕਾ ਅੰਧਲਾ ਚੇਲੇ ਨਾਹੀ ਠਾਉ ॥

Having a proper teacher is obviously very important as well for secular education.

Importance of Sangat: Gurbani lays great emphasis on having company with those who are also trying to gain enlightenment.

ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਮਲਿ ਸੰਗਤੀ ਸਚਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਵਿਸਾਹ ॥

Participating in Sangat teaches one the importance of cooperation and team work, through which one not only reaches goals much faster but also opens up new opportunities. Modern education realises this aspect very well. In the US, cooperative learning is highly emphasised.

Gursikhs yearn for the company of other Gursikhs, just as good students seek admission to good universities.

ਤਿੰਨ ਕੀ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਦੇਹੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਮੈ ਜਾਚਿਕ ਕੀ ਅਰਦਾਸ ॥

Being involved with the wrong groups in the pursuit of knowledge can be disastrous and there are dangers of students being exposed to vices including drugs under peer pressure, which can ruin their lives and careers.

ਬਗੁਲਾ ਕਾਗ ਨੀਚ ਕੀ ਸੰਗਤਿ, ਜਾਇ ਕਰੰਗ ਮੁਖਿ ਲਾਇਐ ॥

Participation in a group increases commitment, improves focus, allows one to learn about other perspectives on the issue and enhances learning.

Learning by Questioning: Guru Nanak Sahib was a great teacher. He made people learn important lessons by making them ask questions or examine their own

actions. There are several examples of these methods in Sakhis from his life, which include the Janeau ceremony; the Haridwar sakhi; the incident at Mecca; wealth of Duni Chand.

Critically examining knowledge is an important aspect of learning. Questioning encourages a 'growth mindset'. The education departments in most states in the USA are implementing new education standards called 'Common Core'. An essential element of these Common Core methods is that students are encouraged to ask questions and 'discover' answers. They explore different ways of solving the problem. Guru Ji was far ahead of his time.

Learning by Practice: There are several Sakhis from the lives of our Gurus which emphasise learning by practice. An example is that of Bhai Lehna ji who later became the second Guru, as Guru Angad Dev ji. Bhai Lehna ji, before he met Guru Nanak Sahib, was a devotee of Vaishno Devi, and came from a high caste Hindu family. Besides giving Bhai Lehna spiritual knowledge, Guru Nanak Dev ji also taught him the dignity of labour.

He made Bhai Lehna work in the fields, who would appear wearing spotless white clothes and till the land. Once Guru ji asked him to carry a bale of hay on his head to the village. The hay was wet and soil was dripping from it, which soiled his clothes. Normally this kind of work was done by lower caste labourers but Guru Nanak Dev ji wanted Bhai Lehna to experience labour first hand. Similarly he once asked him to retrieve some utensils from a dirty sewer. Bhai Lehna ji did this willingly.

Guru Gobind Singh ji once refused to take water from a wealthy Sikh, who had never done any labour with his hands. All these sakhis emphasise the need for practicing what we believe in and preach. Only by doing things do we learn the value of education.

In the diaspora, many well-off Sikh/Indian families discourage their children from summer jobs. The purpose of these jobs is not only to earn money but also to acquire new skills and practice those already learned. These jobs are a valuable part of education for life.

Everyone Can Learn: One of the greatest blessings that Guru Sahibs bestowed upon humanity was the awareness that everyone is created by the same supreme power and that everyone is equal and has the same potential. This implies that by personal effort everyone can learn. For aeons, the high caste Brahmins had exploited the lower casts by deriding them as unfit for learning. They made it difficult for them to learn by declaring them as 'untouchables'. Education was imparted in Sanskrit and means to learn this were not provided to the lower castes. Guru Sahibs broke that barrier and provided

education in the language of the people. Guru Angad Dev ji perfected the Gurmukhi script so that everyone could learn.

Stereotypes play a very negative role in education. They lower self-esteem of the class of people they are directed at. Even in western world, these are not uncommon as one sees with regret.

Equality of learning extends to all fields of human endeavours. What is important is the appropriate effort should be combined with Grace of the Guru. Guru Angad Dev ji propagated that tradition of *langar*, not only to emphasise equality but also that sewa through physical labour is for all and not only for lower castes. He also prescribed physical fitness for all and did not limit it to the 'warrior class' alone. He encouraged young children to participate in games and wrestling. Even when Guru Gobind Singh ji patronised highly evolved scholars and poets in his court, but as the common men were considered too meek to fight the invaders, Guru Gobind Singh ji dramatically reversed that by declaring that he would "have the sparrows defeat the hawks".

The rest is history. Guru Gobind Singh ji completed the mission that began with Guru Nanak Dev ji. But we should always remember that we are Sikhs, the perpetual seekers of knowledge. Our education and learning must continue following the principles laid in Gurbani from our eternal Guru, Guru Granth Sahib ji and lessons from lives of our Guru Sahibs.

Gurinder Pal Singh



Gurinder Pal Singh is Chairman of Religious and Education Committees at the Sikh Gurdwara San Jose. He is among the founding directors of Guru Nanak Khalsa School, San Jose and Chardi Kalaa Foundation. He is regional coordinator for Sri Hemkunt Foundation Keertan Darbar for the

Western region. He holds a Ph.D degree in Physics from Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, India and M.Sc in Physics (Gold medalist) from Punjabi University Patiala. He has worked as a scientist at Max Planck Institute in Stuttgart, Germany and IBM Almaden Research Center in San Jose, California. He recently retired as Principal Engineer from HGST Company of Western Digital Corporation. He holds 13 patents and 36 publications in fields of Science and engineering.

Universal Sikhi

Across cultures, religions and continents

This is about my personal experience as an American-born Sikh with parents from Christian and Jewish backgrounds; the changing world of Sikhi, and how people from different cultures and continents are connecting with this faith, along with some lessons I have learned, and how I personally apply the teachings of Gurbani and Sikhi in my life - and through SikhNet.

The universal message of Sri Guru Granth Sahib has spread through the hearts of people all over the world, from all religions and cultures. This article shares a little bit of my story of inspiration, the challenges, and also my experience of how the Guru continues to inspire seekers in places you might not know through many different avenues.

Most Sikhs come from families born in India. However, during the past 40+ years, many small 'sprouts' have sprung in various parts of the world, coming from other cultures and backgrounds. Like ripples in the water they are spreading further and further. These 'seeds' of Sikhism that were planted and are still growing and flourishing today impart new meaning to the slogan we recite after Ardaas "*Raj Karega Khalsa...Aaki rahe na koe, Khawar hoe sabh milainge, Bacheh sharan jo hoe.*"



The author as a child with his parents

What most born Sikhs do not understand is what attracts these souls to this path. It is quite different when you are born into a Sikh family and culturally are raised in this environment. However, when you are born in a different culture, with different language and religious beliefs there are many more bridges that have to be crossed to relate to Sikhs and this lifestyle. If an American named Joe were to walk into an average American Gurdwara and ask questions, there are major communication challenges in explaining Sikhism in a manner that the western mind can understand and relate to.

I am a second generation Sikh born in the mid-1970s in Los Angeles, California bearing the name 'Guru Mustuk Singh Khalsa.' My parents' generation were amongst some of these 'pioneers' embarking on a totally new journey on this path of Sikhism. Both came from mixed religious backgrounds, my mother from a Jewish family and my father from a Christian one, and they were amongst some of the early western/non-Indian people to adopt Sikhism. They were like many others who were inspired by the Universal Message.

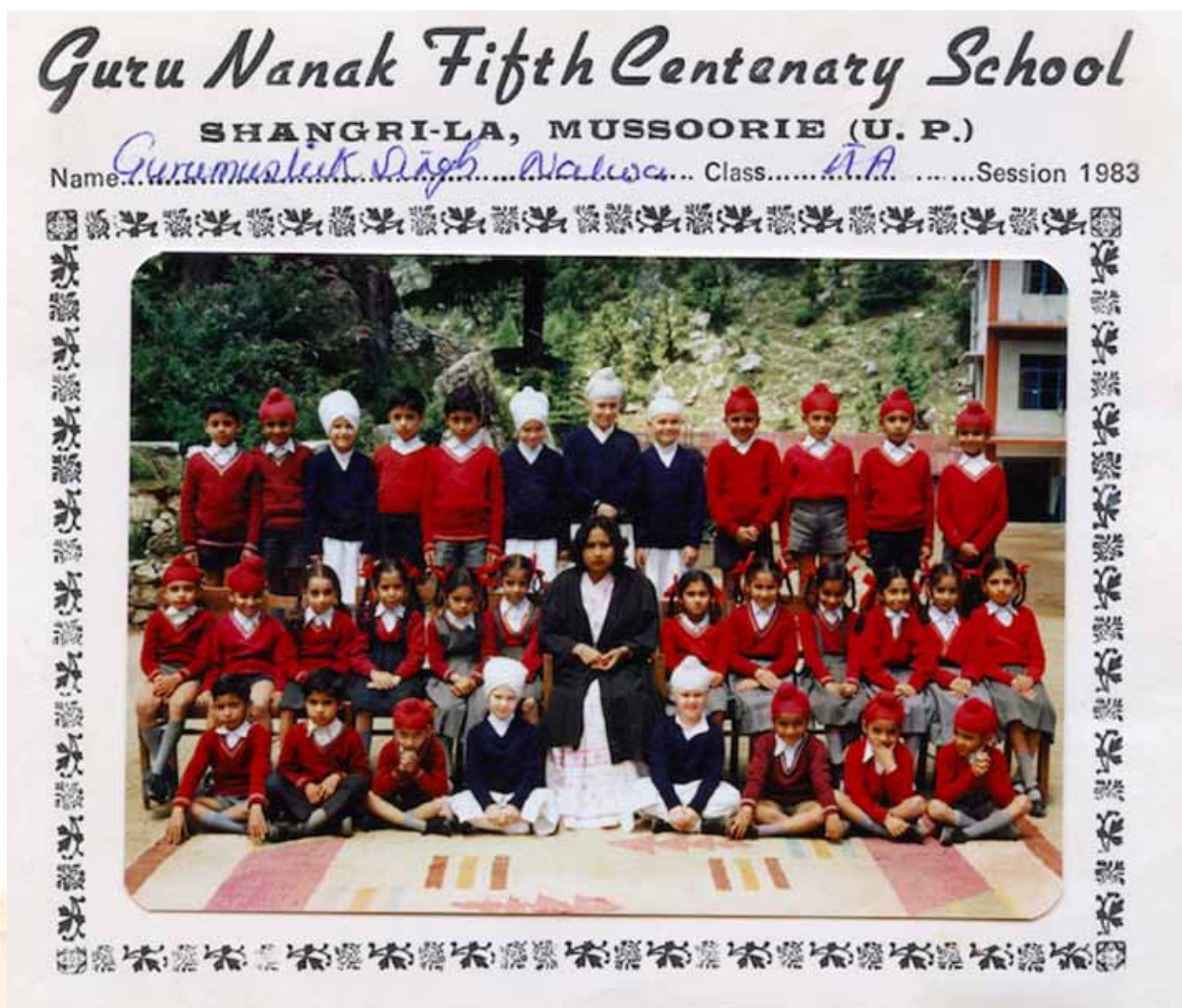


Young Gurumustuk Singh at boarding school

Many underestimate the hardship and challenges that are the

result of someone *not* hailing from a Sikh family and later becoming a Sikh. I know of many friends who have been disowned by their parents because they changed their religion and gave up the 'family name.' Just imagine if none of your friends and family that you grew up with were Sikhs, and if many of them were unsupportive of your choice of wearing a turban, growing your hair and living this lifestyle? It takes attitude to make these choices and adopt the Sikh lifestyle, which is very different from other upbringing.

When I was about 8 years old, I started my own journey, going to boarding school in Mussoorie in India where I continued till graduating from high school. Those ten years really shaped me as the person I am today and gave me the cross cultural understanding which helps me to serve as a bridge builder through SikhNet. Coming from multiple religious and cultural backgrounds has helped me become much more open, compassionate and understanding of other people, faiths and cultures. It enables me to truly appreciate the path of Guru



The class and teacher at Mussoorie

Nanak who preached of One God, many paths and all of us being from the same Creator.

I still get questions from many others querying why I, a white person, am a Sikh? It is almost as if they have missed something, or just could not imagine that the Guru's message and practices would be of value or interest for someone not born into the faith. For me it just shows how disconnected or ignorant most people are regarding the value and message of the Gurus, and the blessed gift that this lifestyle is.

Even though I was born into a Sikh family, it was difficult being a young 'white' Sikh. I would stand out; something was very different, particularly in India, where it was such a novelty for people seeing a 'white Sikh'. In America the stares were there as well with people wondering whom I was since I would stand out at most places. Most kids want to fit in, NOT stand out.

It did not help either that many Sikhs from a Punjabi background would pre-judge and generalise me or the actions of any western-born Sikhs owing to a lack of understanding about whom we were, what we were about, with little or no real understanding of this community of seekers. All that was required was someone to have an open mind and kind heart and look deeply to see the same longing for the Guru, and to get to know me and others like me, as normal people.

Till this day, I and other 'white Sikhs' are generalised and lumped into a category of not being 'real' Sikhs. These sort of labels and categorisations are inaccurate and only divide us and is certainly not what Guru Nanak Dev ji meant, since he always embraced diversity and accepted everyone for what they were.



Amrit prachar in the USA

I am not apologetic for who I am or my daily practice as a Sikh. Whatever I can use to become stronger and connect to the Guru I will use. Every morning when I wake up at *amrit vela*, I start my *sadhana* (daily discipline) with some exercise and yoga, stretch and wake up my body and mind, so that when I recite the *banis* and do *Wahe Guru simran*, I am fully alert. This is how I stay healthy and handle the stresses of everyday life and working actively on a computer all day for SikhNet.

It is pertinent to emphasise on the enefits of exercise, a healthy body and healthy living, through whatever means you prefer. There is no 'right' way to a fit body and mind and it is important for us to open our minds to other

perspectives, without which we fail to grow spiritually. When my parents and many others like them were first learning about Sikhism and adopting the path, they were not armed with an instruction manual. There was (and still remains) much learning along the way. There was the language and cultural barrier that was very real. Everything from how to tie a turban, conceiving a Gurdwara, taking the *hukam*, understanding the reason for *chauri sahib*, making *prashad*, concepts of *langar*, *nitnem*, *kirtan*... everything was new and had to be learned.

Before the digital age, our community relied on 'shabad sheets' that were distributed at the Gurdwara which had English translations and Romanised versions of the Gurmukhi so the *sangat* could sing the *kirtan* and understand the *shabad*. *Ardas* was most often recited in English and even *Akhand path* was read by individuals in either English or Gurmukhi (depending on their ability). For us it was a necessity to have some understanding and connection with the Guru in the language we understood. It made the Guru more accessible to new



New Amritdharis after Amrit Sanchar at the 2013 Summer Solstice Camp

seekers discovering this path.

New beginnings around the world

In 2001, we posted a news article with some pictures and write ups about the first Amrit Sanchar held in Chile (South America) on SikhNet. It was very inspiring to see the faces of these new Khalsa in this far away land having received the gift of Guru's amrit. I could ascertain their love and longing for the Guru.

This same applies to youth (from Punjabi families) growing up in the west who feel distant from Sikhism and who, during their times of trying to ascertain their identity as a Sikh, are 'cast out' of the community and Gurdwaras instead of being understood and supported. Our detractors are many in the Sikh mainstream as well as outside of it. I only wish they would come forward and see the reality for themselves. But such is the malaise of *ninda* (slander): God gave us limited energy on this earth and we can choose it to uplift or destroy.

In this context, the following statement by Marianne Williamson is very relevant and inspiring:

"Our deepest fear is not that we

are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

Experiencing the Guru through Music

Gurbani *Sangeet* and *Kirtan* is very much an integral part of our lifestyle and daily practice. Many musicians have joined their love of the Guru and their love of music as a way to inspire and uplift people. We are used to seeing *ragis* perform *kirtan* in Gurdwara but it is not usual to see non-Sikhs amongst the audience at Gurbani Kirtan.



"We are all meant to shine"



Sikhs of Chile

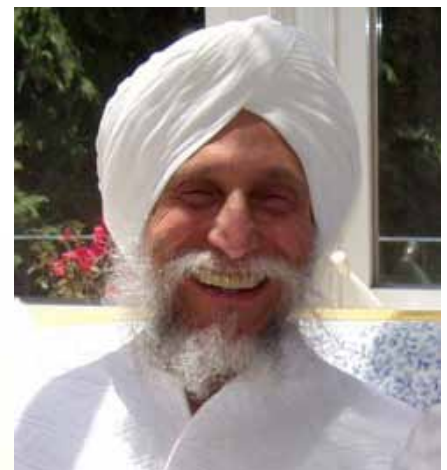
With growing spiritual awareness in the world, many musicians have come forward for sharing kirtan style music with the masses. This has led to a new uplifting genre of New Age music that is meant to be sung and chanted. Gurbani is unique in that the recitation of these words and mantras has the power to heal and change a person, even if one is unable to fully understand the meaning. It becomes a manner for upliftment and change for all beings, Sikh or not.

Over the past ten years, musicians like Snatam Kaur, Satkirin Kaur, Chardikala Jatha, Nirinjan Kaur and many others are reaching out to an enormous audience, getting exposed to Gurbani and thereupon the Sikh faith. These musicians are

like ambassadors for us, sharing values of the Sikh way of life. There are also important events like 'Sat Nam Fest', which is a music festival that draws people from all walks of life and is increasingly popular.

Sikhs in Brazil

Just as my mother and others, I now see an increasing number of people embracing Sikhism from faraway lands including China, Iceland, all across South America (Chile, Brazil, Paraguay, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Argentina) Mexico and through Europe. There is a new generation of seekers coming forth with so much love and innocence. As Sikhism spreads, so does the need to share the message and wisdom in the people's own language, and presented in the context of the local culture, so they can understand and



Singh Sahib Babaji Singh Khalsa

relate to it.

Spanish translation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib

The Sikh community in Mexico has grown over the past few years. Considering the fact that



The first Akhand Paath, the traditional Sikh non-stop reading of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, was performed in Mexico on 17 November 2006

this community of Sikhs primarily speaks Spanish, the importance of translating the *bani* into Spanish was priority. Out of love for the Guru and longing to understand the Guru's *bani* in their own language became the lifelong task for some sevadars to translate the Sri Guru Granth Sahib into Spanish. Work on the translation commenced in 1975 by Singh Sahib Babaji Singh Khalsa and in translating the Sri Guru Granth Sahib to Spanish, he found the sense and purpose of his life. The Guru gave him courage, wisdom, patience and grace to go through the physical pain without suffering from it. Babaji Singh was a happy man when he translated the Sri Guru Granth Sahib from Dr. Gopal Singh's English translation which had taken a period of thirty years.

During the final years of his life, he worked from early mornings along with his wife Guru Amrit Kaur Khalsa on the translations. She remembers him working with such devotion and love, researching the exact meaning of every word, hoping the Spanish speaking community could be able to read and understand the beauty of each word.

Guruka Singh recounts visiting the *ashram* in Mexico City and seeing a small alcove at the back of a classroom where the Spanish translation of the Guru was in *prakash* and available for reading. Beyond the curtain, over the doorway were signs instructing people to wash their hands, to bow and do a prayer before entering and reading. He remembers seeing

students who had no knowledge of Sikhi nor of the Guru, going into the alcove to read from the scripture and watching them emerge later with tears streaming down their cheeks as the Guru's words touched their hearts.

First Akhand Path in Iceland

On 12 August 2013 a small group of seekers conducted the very first Akhand Path in Iceland. Guru Suraj Kaur describes her experience thus:

"Bringing the Guru to Iceland started out as a deep need in my being that I could not ignore. Once that was settled it became very clear that we needed to start with an Akandh Path. If you ask me why, I have no tangible answer; it was just something that needed to happen."

First Akhand Paath held in China

ਵਡਹੰਸੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੩ ਘਰੁ ੧

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

ਮਨਿ ਮੈਲੈ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਮੈਲਾ ਤਨਿ ਧੋਤੈ ਮਨੁ ਹਛਾ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਇਹ ਜਗਤੁ ਭਰਮਿ
ਭੁਲਾਇਆ ਵਿਰਲਾ ਬੁਝੈ ਕੋਇ ॥੧॥ ਜਪਿ ਮਨ ਮੇਰੇ ਤੂ ਏਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ
ਦੀਆ ਮੋ ਕਉ ਏਹੁ ਨਿਧਾਨੁ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਸਿਧਾ ਕੇ ਆਸਣ ਜੇ ਸਿਖੈ ਇੰਦ੍ਰੀ ਵਸਿ
ਕਰਿ ਕਮਾਇ ॥ ਮਨ ਕੀ ਮੈਲੁ ਨ ਉਤਰੈ ਹਉਮੈ ਮੈਲੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥੨॥ ਇਸੁ ਮਨ ਕਉ
ਹੋਰੁ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਕੋ ਨਾਹੀ ਵਿਣੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸਰਣਾਇ ॥ ਸਤਗੁਰਿ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਉਲਟੀ
ਭਈ ਕਹਣਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥੩॥ ਭਣਤਿ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਉ ਮਿਲਦੋ ਮਰੈ ਗੁਰ
ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਜੀਵੈ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਮਮਤਾ ਕੀ ਮਲੁ ਉਤਰੈ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਹਛਾ ਹੋਇ ॥

੪॥੧॥

Wadajans, Mejl Guru Amar Das, Tercer Canal Divino. Un Dios Creador del Universo, por la Gracia del Verdadero Guru Si la mente está manchada, todo está manchado, pues no por bañar el cuerpo, la mente se limpia. El mundo está siendo desviado por la duda, y extraordinario es el que conoce la Verdad. (1) Oh mi mente, contempla el Nombre del Señor, éste es el Tesoro con el cual el Verdadero Guru te ha bendecido.

(1-Pausa) Si uno aprende las posturas de Yoga, y disciplina su ansia sexual, no por eso logra eliminar la impureza de la mente, ni tampoco el cochambre del ego. (2) Ninguna otra disciplina funciona para la mente, más que el Refugio del Verdadero Guru, Conociéndolo, la mente de uno es transformada y su Estado se vuelve indescriptible. (3)

Reza Nanak, conoce entonces al Guru y vive muriendo en la Palabra Eterna, así se quitará la suciedad del ego y tu mente se volverá pura. (4-1)

Tanslation of Vadhans Mahala & Ghar into Spanish

Another small but growing Sikh community is in Shenzhen, China.

"Last January, with a group of 16 Chinese Yoga students, we went to the Punjab. We visited the Golden Temple, Anandpur Sahib and also performed the 84 steps at Goindwal. Bathing in the water after reading the Japji, they had profound experience and felt deep connection to the place, to the Guru, to the Shabd. From that Yatra, bringing the Sri Guru Granth Sahib to China was natural, and holding the Akhand Paath was a natural follow up. I was really surprised to see so many people who were wanting to read the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Sri Guru Granth Sahib is universal and allows people to connect back to their essence, to the essence. One love to all."

Satmukh Singh, who started all this process in China six years ago must be honoured for the mission.

Global Sikhi and Youth of Today



Where do we go from here? It starts with me and you. My hope is that this article has helped reveal a picture of the emerging new generation of spiritual seekers. In order to serve these people and our younger generations, there is strong need for each one of us to become more aware of the things we think about and say. Our words and actions can either support or divide. They can uplift or bring them down, a choice of where we focus our attention. Mistakes are part of life's journey and a way to learn. Our common goal should be to support everyone and cease the habit of tearing each other apart. It is time for us to stop judging something because it differs from one's own frame of reference. I have striven to follow the path of Guru Nanak through my life, He who was ever compassionate, understanding and open to all. Let us all work on this together.



Students from China on their yatra to the Punjab



Chinese Sikhs at Kirtan





First Amrit Sanchar in Chile (South America)



'Langar Chile' a seva group in and around Chile



At a Gurdwara in Brazil



Miri Piri Academy in Brazil: students practice Gatka



Sikhs in Mexico City



'Izzat De Punjab 2010', Group at Espanola, performing bhangra



At a Gurdwara in Mexico

Gurumustuk Singh



Gurumustuk Singh, known by many from his web blog nick name "MrSikhNet", started the SikhNet.com website in 1995 as a teenager out of high school during the beginnings of the world wide web. He also started the first and largest online matrimonial service for Sikhs (*SikhMatrimonials.com*) before any similar service like this existed for the Asian/Sikh community. He later introduced many other innovative and unique web services (including SikhiWiki, Gurbani Media Centre, The Karma Game, Audio Stories for Kids, Youth Online Film Festival), which continue to serve the Sikh community today.

SikhNet (a non-profit organisation based in Espanola, New Mexico) now in its 18th year continues to serve, inspire, educate and inform over 20,000 unique visitors a day from all over the world. Gurumustuk lives with his wife, daughter, and son in Espanola, New Mexico and continues to develop the SikhNet website with the rest of the SikhNet team.

Betrayal, Hurt and Forgiveness

Betrayal is an intrinsic part of human experience. Most of us experience it at some time in our life. Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) provides constructive guidance on how to overcome betrayal without getting embittered and seize it as a moment of growth.

Trust and betrayal are intertwined. Betrayal occurs in the closest and most trusted of relationships. When someone close to us cheats us, lies to us, abandons us, or humiliates us, we feel let down, heartbroken and utterly disillusioned. We feel pain such as we have never experienced before.

The first reaction when one is betrayed is to lash out. We want to hurt back. Our peace of mind is lost. We want to expose the one who has let us down so terribly. We want to get even. Our thoughts spiral down to visions of revenge.

Epic plays have been written on the subject of revenge. Many movies and television shows have revenge as a central theme. Alfred Hitchcock, the master of suspense films called revenge “sweet but not fattening.”

But is it – sweet? Indeed not. We can never get even. Revenge only take us further down the spiral of unconstructive actions bringing more pain and anguish.

A wise man once stated that if you seek revenge, dig two graves – one for yourself. As long as we dwell on revenge, we keep our own wounds raw. When we allow anger to consume us, we lose sight of the bigger picture and become instrumental in hurting our selves further. Sri Guru Granth Sahib warns us of such a course of action:

*Bair birodh kaam krodh moh
Jhooth bikaar maha lobh droh
Ehao jugat bihane kayee janam*

We have wasted several life times staying locked in anger, conflict, slander, greed attachment. (SGGS Page 267)

Slander is another way in which anger expresses itself. It is an equally futile exercise. It neither makes the hurt go away, nor resolves the conflict. Furthermore,

slanderers lose respect because no one likes them. Sri Guru Granth Sahib condemns slandering in harsh terms:

Ninda bhali kisay ki nahin manmukh mugadh karan

It is not good to slander anyone; the foolish and misguided engage in it. (SGGS Page 755)

The outcome, warns the Guru, of slander is horrific:

Muh kale tin nindka narke ghor pavav

The faces of slanderers turn black and they are tossed in hell. (SGGS Page 755)

How, then do we handle betrayal and hurt? Sri Guru Granth Sahib offers an alternative perspective, one that has the power to shift our frame of mind from reproach to acceptance :

Bhulan andar sab ko abhul guru kartar

As human beings, we are imperfect and full of flaws. The only one beyond faults and imperfections is the Creator. (SGGS Page 61)

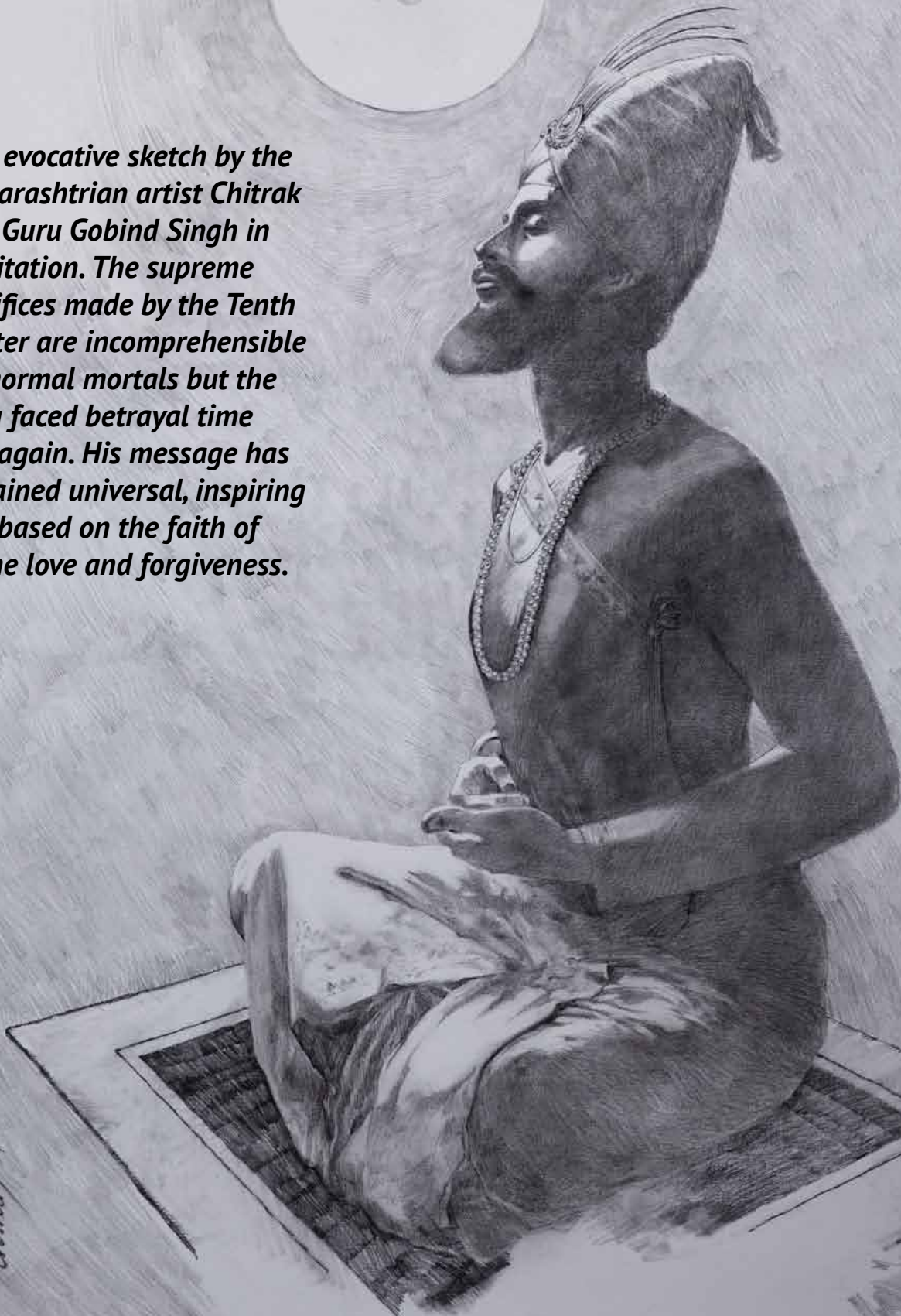
All of us wittingly or unwittingly hurt those whom we love. Some transgressions are minor and easily overlooked. Others are of a more serious nature and harder to ignore. When we anchor our expectations on someone or get emotionally attached, we leave our selves vulnerable. There is another dynamic at play in human relationships. We are attached to our own perspective. When we get hurt, we resist and deny the possibility of any wrong doing on our part; the blame game is in full throttle. We forget the beautiful lesson in humility that Guru Nanak taught us to abide by in all interactions:

Hum nahin chungay bura nahin koay

I am not good; no one is bad. (SGGS Page 728)

Blame has never wrought any good in any relationship. When betrayal occurs the tendency is to debunk the entire relationship. One negative interaction action becomes the entire focus of the relationship and everything that was positive is wiped out. We relive, regurgitate and remain stuck in the moment of hurt. We shatter the equilibrium that keeps us in harmony with our inner self and the cosmos. While swirling in this

This evocative sketch by the Maharashtrian artist Chitrak is of Guru Gobind Singh in meditation. The supreme sacrifices made by the Tenth Master are incomprehensible for normal mortals but the Guru faced betrayal time and again. His message has remained universal, inspiring and based on the faith of divine love and forgiveness.



abyss of pain, if only we could hear the Guru's voice that begs the questions:

Kahe janam gavavho vair vaad

Why waste your life in hatred, vengeance and conflict? (SGGS Page 1176)

Can betrayal possibly lead to something good? Can it help us grow? Could it be a part of a larger plan that the omniscient Creator is unfolding for us? Is it possible to break out of our conditioning of hurt, betrayal and revenge, and open our heart to a much larger and nobler perspective?

Perhaps it is time for a new beginning. Perhaps we are now free from a relationship that has done its time. Perhaps it is time to shake off frail bonds and seek something more meaningful. But before this can take place, anger has to be resolved. Healing has to occur. Suffering has to be transformed. Feelings of revenge put to bed. Trust and faith in a larger plan for our good has to unfold in our consciousness.

The key to overcoming betrayal is forgiveness. Forgiveness, however, is not easy. It takes time and necessitates becoming larger than we ever were, and more empathetic and compassionate than we ever thought we could be. It calls for trust in the Divine plan.

Beverly Flannigan, clinical psychologist and author of *Forgiving the Unforgivable* presents a model of forgiveness where both parties let go of their ego and open themselves to listening to the other's point of view. The wrong doer takes responsibility and offers reparations and assures that the offense will not be repeated. There is an outpouring of emotion and a recommitment to the relationship.

The act of relinquishing the ego brings healing:

Haumai mamta maar kay har rakhea ur dhaar

Subduing ego and attachment, the Lord has preserved my heart from pain. (SGGS Page 26)

However, very often the hold of ego is strong and like a thorn in the flesh it is hard to extract.

Sakat har rus saad na janea tin antar haumai kanda hey

The sublime awareness of the Guru's blessing is not experienced when the thorn of egotism is embedded deep within. (SGGS Page 13)

The ego presents many reasons not to forgive. Forgiveness is seen as a sign of weakness. It is also viewed

as an enabler of bad behavior. Very often the justification offered to stand our ground or remain engaged in conflict is that Guru Gobind Singh taught us to stand up against injustice. We ignore that the tenth Guru pulled out the sword in the face of an existential threat after all peaceful means had failed. Guru Gobind Singh showed immense compassion even in the battlefield where he fought against tyranny. His arrows were tipped with pure gold for the last rites of the individuals who died in an attempt to kill him. Compassion for the injurer is the bearer of "har rus" in the quote above.

The loving, merciful, and kind Creator is present where there is forgiveness:

Jahan lobh tahan kaal hai jahan shama the aap

Where there is greed, there is death. Where there is forgiveness, there is God, (SGGS Page 1372)

The confluence of ego, anger and arrogance creates barriers to forgiveness. Conversely, humility, compassion and empathy are an antidote for the calcified heart that shuns forgiveness. Compassion, forgiveness and love are prized virtues recommended as a pathway to the Beloved. They also provide a fertile space in which a profoundly healing process begins for the wounded heart.

Our Gurus and other sages through the ages have demonstrated how not to succumb to anger, hatred or revenge. They have broken out of the confinement of pain and left luminous examples of heroic acceptance. The example of Guru Arjan Dev's *shaheedi* often held up as the epitome of grace under pressure is worth revisiting. Guru Arjan was no ordinary mortal. He lived and died for a higher cause. His life had a unique purpose and mission. He was willing to be tortured to death so millions other could live in liberty. When we chafe at the disappointments and disillusionments in our relationships, the mere remembrance of his last song as he sat on a hot stove with sand pouring over his head should snap us out of self-righteous anger:

Tera kiya meetha laagey

Whatever you do, seems sweet to me (SGGS Page 394)

Can we find sweetness in the challenges we face? Could our experience serve a higher purpose even for our self? Can we steer away from resentment and anger and grasp at forgiveness and taste its sweet release?

Coming in contact with the Guru's wisdom, I have been cleansed

*The fires of ego and desire have been totally quenched.
Relinquishing anger, I have grasped forgiveness? (SGGS
page 233)*

Guru Arjan created a better world for humanity? Can we create a better world for our self; a life that is not engulfed in narcissistic anger? When we are angry and unforgiving, we poison the ecosystem of our being. Our very essence is tarnished by the scars we do not allow to heal. Our emotional angst spills over and hurts those we love.

The Guru assures us:

*Ta ko dhokha kaha biapay ja ko oat tuhari
How can betrayal hurt when You protect me?*

(SGGS Page 711)

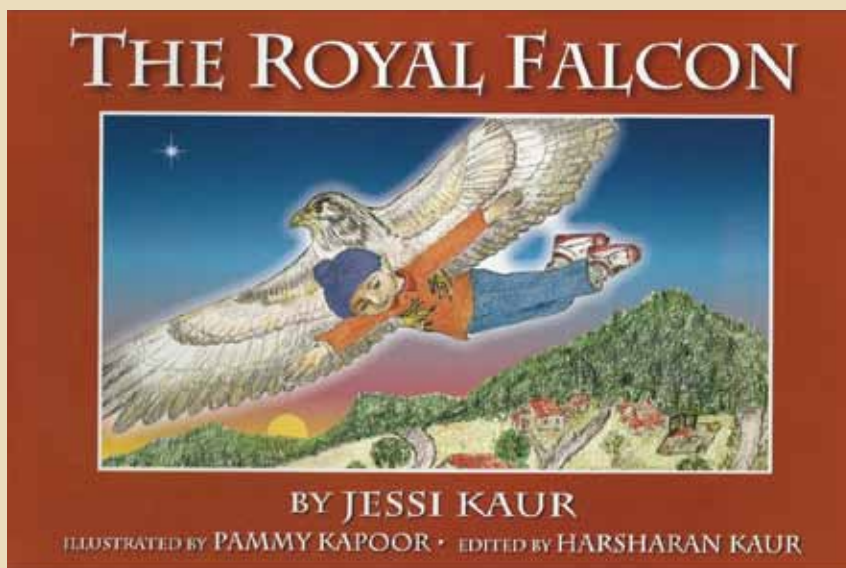
When we gracefully accept what life unfolds even if we don't understand it at the moment, we create the space for healing and wholeness. We allow our self to move on without rancor because we believe that God's plan has something better for us in store. If a relationship has ended perhaps it was meant to be over. Its purpose has been served and something more meaningful lies ahead. If we have lost a job, a better one may be in store for us. Life does, very often, offer beautiful second chances when we become open to them.

It is equally important to forgive ourselves for transgressions we may have made. Self-pity and self flagellation are just as unhealthy as blame and accusations. Forgiveness is particularly difficult when the injurer is unrepentant. Unresolved rage stirs up within us every time we cross paths with the individual who has wronged us. It is for our own good that we need to move forward and not remain fixated on the wrong done to us.

Moving forward does not mean that the wrong doer was right; it simply means that we keep faith in the divine plan that keeps everything in balance. We have so many gifts that outweigh the pain we experienced. The betrayals we face are often an affront to our ego, a rejection of our love or contributions, or a lack of loyalty. Rarely do they pose an existential threat. Rarely do we need to pick up the sword or prepare to annihilate. So, let us put things in perspective.

When dialogue is not possible, when confrontation is guaranteed to lead to further strife, when the wrong doer is cavalier and unrepentant, remember we do not forgive for the good of the other, we forgive for our own well being. We move forward with a lightness of spirit and allow grace to bear fruit in our life just like a pruned tree that yields sweeter and juicier fruit.

Remember, too, that in our daily prayer we ask for forgiveness for all the wrongs that we do consciously or



unconsciously. If we don't practice forgiveness, how can we hope to be forgiven? There is freedom in letting go.

Let the inexorable law of karma settle the score if a score needs to be settled.

Jessi Kaur



Jessi Kaur is the author of *Dear Takuya*, *Letters of a Sikh boy*, and *The Royal Falcon*, highly acclaimed children's books. She is the editor of *Sikhpoint*, (www.sikhpoint.com), a web magazine. A theater aficionado, she produced *The Royal Falcon Musical*, a show that won accolades as the first ever Sikh musical of its kind. She has traveled extensively to deliver workshops and seminars at international conferences and Sikh youth camps. She has been an invited speaker on Sikh tradition and culture in several interfaith and multicultural events including Parliament of World's Religions in Barcelona and Melbourne, and the Smithsonian.

The Pursuit of Happiness

Transcending Sukh and Dukh, happiness and sorrow

We all spend our lives pursuing happiness in one form or another. The US declaration of independence even defines the pursuit of happiness as “a basic human right, along with life and liberty”.

Everyone strives for whatever they believe will make them happy. It starts with the little baby – when it is hungry it wants milk, and it cries. The mother nurses it, and it is happy. Later it misses its mother, and it cries again. The mother comes and holds the baby, and it is happy and smiles. As the baby gets older it wants toys – perhaps the latest toys the child sees on TV. After the kids get toys, they will play with them for a while, but they will get bored and want newer toys. As they get older and become teenagers, popularity becomes important to them. They want their friends to think they are really cool. As they get older, popularity with the opposite sex becomes a big drive. As adults, we pursue money and success in our careers, love, marriage and a family and a bigger house. And we still go after toys, but the toys may be more expensive – a flashy car, neat gadgets like the latest iPhone or an Apple watch.

The pursuit of happiness is never ending. We are always looking for something else, something that we believe will make us happy. As we get what we want, we may be happy for a while, but the excitement wears off. We are again unsatisfied, and the search for happiness continues.

In a recent study [*The Things We Think Make Us Happy... Don't* - http://www.realclearscience.com/blog/2014/07/the_things_we_think_make_us_happy_dont.html] it was found that when people achieve a goal or experience a major positive event in their life, their happiness level goes up, but then it wears off over a few months and drifts back to the same level of happiness as before. The study did find a wide variation in the happiness level of the participants, but each participant's happiness level tended to revert to the participant's base level some months after the positive event in their lives. Those who were relatively happier to begin with eventually stayed

happier and those who were comparatively unhappy stayed that way.

In the words of the author of the study, Ross Pomeroy: “Fame, talent, wealth, beauty; most people think that ‘if I only had these things I would be happy’. But it turns out that the people who have these things are not on average happier than people who lack these things. The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.”

In other words, the things we believe will make us happy do not quite get us there. As we achieve our desires, we may find that our needs grow – or change.

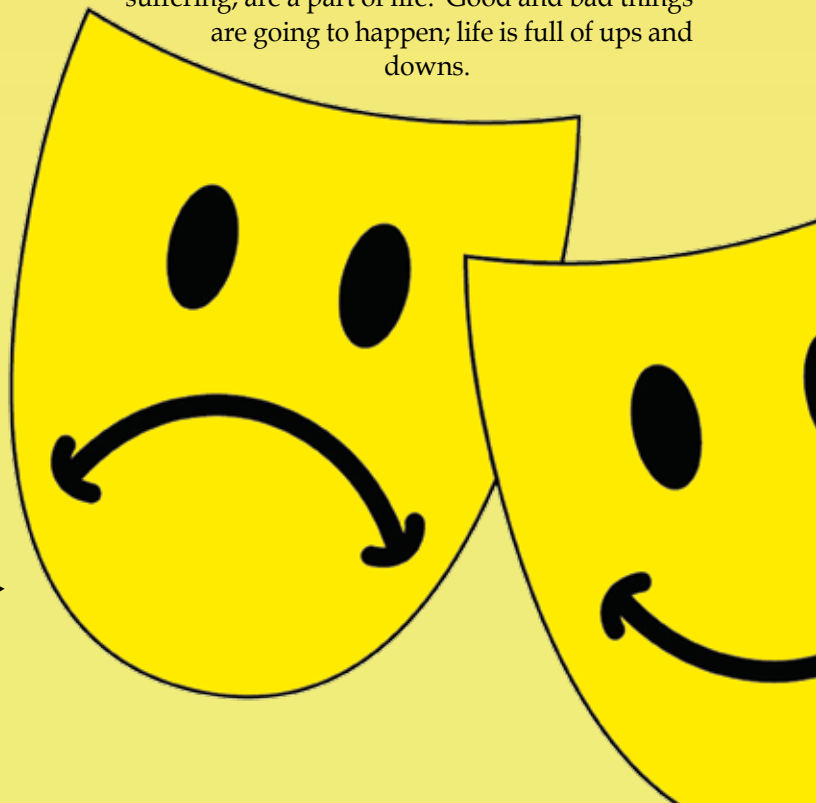
Furthermore, things often do not go our way in spite of all our efforts. Bad things happen – some things work and some things do not.

ਮਾਨਸ ਜਤਨ ਕਰਤ ਬਹੁ ਭਾਤਿ ॥
ਤਿਸ ਕੇ ਕਰਤਬ ਬਿਰਥੇ ਜਾਤਿ ॥

*The mortal makes all sorts of efforts
but these attempts are in vain. | |*
[Guru Arjan Dev, SGGS p. 286]

Happiness and Suffering – the ups and downs of life

Gurbani tells us that Dukh and Sukh, happiness and suffering, are a part of life. Good and bad things are going to happen; life is full of ups and downs.



Our emotional state bounces around with the ups and downs that life hands us. One moment you are promoted at work, and you are all excited and on top of the world. Then, you go home and have a fight with your wife, and you feel terrible!

ਸੁਖ ਦੁਖ ਦੁਇ ਦਰਿ ਕਪੜੇ ਪਹਿਰਹਿ ਜਾਇ ਮਨੁਖ ॥

Pleasure and pain are the two garments given, to be worn in the Court of the Lord. || [Guru Nanak, SGGS p. 149]

So while we chase after things that we expect will make us happy, what occurs is according to His Hukam or Divine Will: good fortune, bad fortune, ups and downs.

ਜਤਨ ਬਹੁਤ ਸੁਖ ਕੇ ਕੀਏ ਦੁਖ ਕੇ ਕੀਓ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਹਰਿ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੇ ਹੋਇ ॥੩੮॥

People make all sorts of efforts to find peace and pleasure, but no one tries to earn pain.

Says Nanak, listen, O my mind: whatever pleases God comes to pass. || 39 || [Guru Tegh Bahadur, SGGS p. 1428]

ਕਬਹੂ ਜੀਅੜਾ ਉਡਿ ਚੜਤੁ ਹੈ ਕਬਹੂ ਜਾਇ ਪਇਆਲੇ ॥

Sometimes, the soul soars high in the heavens, and sometimes it falls to the depths [Guru Nanak, SGGS p. 876]

That is life – we are constantly tossed about on the stormy ocean of life that Gurbani calls *bhaujal*, an ocean full of the waves of Maya of material existence.

We think our happiness or suffering is caused by external events or situations, and that is what we try to control. But in reality it is how we react to them and how we handle these situations that determines our emotional state, much more than what happens to us.

The two types of happiness

There are two significantly different ways in which we think about and use the word ‘happiness.’ The first type refers to that which give us pleasure – wealth, success, fame, etc. This is what most of us spend our lives chasing. The words used in Gurbani for this kind of happiness include *khushi*, *hasna* and *rauna*, *harakh* and *sog*. In English we talk about pleasure and excitement. This type of happiness is externally driven, it depends on the situation we are in, and it is fleeting, leading to emotional ups and downs. This is the type of happiness and suffering that Gurbani cautions us about. We are admonished not to get caught up in it, but to learn to transcend it.

There is a deeper kind of happiness, which we refer to here as true happiness, which Gurbani leads us towards. This happiness is constant and deeper; it is more of an inner mental and spiritual state than something externally driven. In speaking of this type of true happiness, Gurbani uses words like

anand, *sehaj*, *vigaas* (blooming like a flower), *chau* (as in *man chau bhaiya prabh aagam sunya*), and *chardi kalaa*. The phrase *Chardi Kalaa* is not found in SGGS, but it has become an important part of Sikhi vocabulary. Gurbani also uses the imagery of lush greenery (*hariaaval*). There is a beautiful shabad *man hariya khirya baag* (my mind is a lush garden full of flowers in bloom) to describe this kind of blissful state. In English, we often talk about bliss, joy, peace and serenity.

It is this second form of happiness – a constant, joyful, uplifted spiritual state of *sehaj* and *anand* that we should aspire for. This is what Gurbani promises us if we follow its teachings in the way we live our lives.

In terms of the first type of happiness, which is transient, and externally driven, Gurbani urges us to learn to transcend this kind of *sukh* and *dukh*, to treat happiness and sorrow as the same.

ਸੁਖ ਦੁਖ ਦੋਨੇ ਸਮ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਨੈ ਅਉਰੁ ਮਾਨੁ ਅਪਮਾਨਾ ॥

ਹਰਖ ਸੇਗ ਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਅਤੀਤਾ ਤਿਨਿ ਜਗਿ ਤਤੁ ਪਛਾਨਾ ॥੧॥

One who knows that pain and pleasure are both the same, and honour and dishonour as well, who remains detached from joy and sorrow, realizes the true essence in the world. || 1 || [Guru Tegh Bahadur – SGGS p.219]

It is not that we should not feel happiness or sorrow, but that we should be able to take the ups and downs of life in our stride. The Gurmukh learns to maintain an even keel, a level of serenity, of *aatmak adolta*, a state of *sehaj* no matter what happens. The Gurmukh looks at both happiness and suffering as gifts from Waheguru. In Japji Sahib Guru Nanak shows us how even when the worst things happen, he accepts the Divine Will gracefully

ਕੇਤਿਆ ਦੂਖ ਭੂਖ ਸਦ ਮਾਰ ॥

ਏਹਿ ਭਿ ਦਾਤਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਦਾਤਾਰ ॥

So many kinds of distress, deprivation and constant abuse.

Even these are Your Gifts, O Great Giver || [Guru Nanak, SGGS p. 13]

How do we go about achieving this second type of true happiness, this deeper, lasting state of *chardi kalaa*?

Naam Simran: strategies for true happiness

The most basic strategy that Gurbani bestows on us for true happiness is Naam Simran – constant remembrance and awareness of the Divine Presence. Naam Simran is a subject worthy of its own separate article, but very briefly, this is achieved through an integrated process that includes Naam Japna or meditating on the Divine

Name, study and reflection on Gurbani or Paath and Gurbani vichaar, kirtan and prayer or Ardaas.

This leads to a state of sehaj or equipoise and Chardi Kalaa, with which one can transcend pleasure and pain and maintain an even keel through the ups and downs of life.

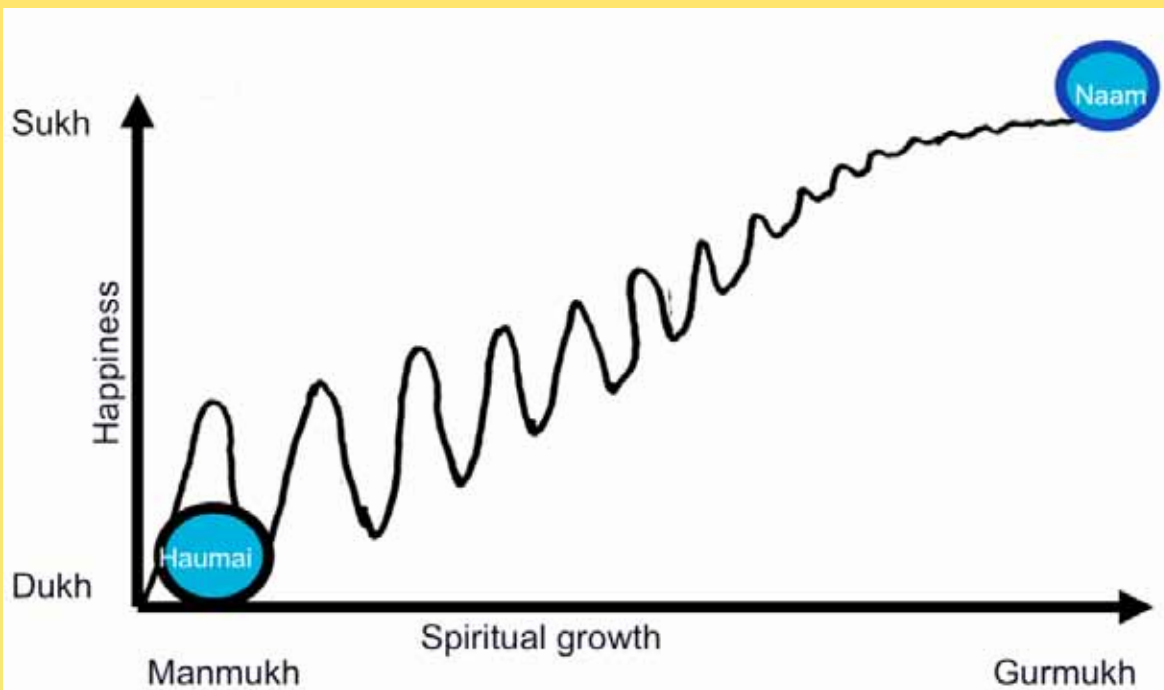
ਕਬੀਰ ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਸਿਮਰਨੁ ਜੇ
ਕਰੈ ਸੇ ਸੁਖੀਆ ਸੰਸਾਰਿ ॥
ਇਤ ਉਤ ਕਤਹਿ ਨ ਡੋਲਈ
ਜਿਸ ਰਾਖੈ ਸਿਰਜਨਹਾਰ
॥੨੦੬॥

Kabeer, whoever meditates in remembrance on the Lord, he alone is happy in this world. Protected by the Creator Lord, he shall never waver, here or hereafter. | | 206 | | - [Kabeer, SGGS p.1375]

This graph & above simply illustrates the process of transformation that Naam Simran can bring about in our lives. The horizontal axis shows the spiritual growth through Naam Simran from the initial state of a Manmukh to that of a Gurmukh. The vertical represents the level of happiness.

We start by being relatively unhappy, and bouncing up and down as we are buffeted by good and bad experiences. As we progress through our lives practicing the teachings of Gurbani and growing spiritually, our overall level of happiness and feeling of well being is elevated, while the amplitude of emotional swings is reduced. In advanced stages, a Gurmukh learns to maintain a more constant state of bliss. When things do not go our way, we should not despair or get angry with others or with God. When good fortune strikes, we are thankful.

Most of us are somewhere in the middle. We start out somewhere towards the left end and hopefully by Waheguru's Grace, we move along to the right and upwards as we follow the teachings of the Guru. Our average level of happiness steadily increases, and the oscillations in our emotional state get reduced as we learn to take things in our stride and maintain our Chardi Kalaa. When something unfortunate happens we are able to snap back quicker, and when good fortune



strikes, we accept it with humility and Grace and do not get diverted from the path of Sikhi.

Naam Simran is the core, basic path for achieving true happiness. We will now look at some other specific areas that we can work on, which are in fact all related to Naam Simran.

Sharan and Ardaas

An important enabler for transcending the ups and downs of life and maintaining our serenity is to constantly lean on Waheguru (*sharan vich aana*), to always depend on Him, praying to Him and knowing that we can always count on Him to take care of us.

ਊਠਤ ਸੁਖੀਆ ਬੈਠਤ ਸੁਖੀਆ ॥
ਭਉ ਨਹੀ ਲਾਗੇ ਜਾਂ ਐਸੇ ਬੁਝੀਆ ॥੧॥
ਰਾਖਾ ਏਕੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਸੁਆਮੀ ॥
ਸਗਲ ਘਟਾ ਕਾ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Rising up, I am at peace; sitting down, I am at peace.

I feel no fear, because this is what I understand. | | 1 | |

The One Lord, my Lord and Master, is my Protector.

He is the Inner-knower, the Searcher of Hearts. | | 1 | | Pause | |
[Guru Arjan, SGGS p. 1136]

The Gurmukh knows that Waheguru is the kind, loving parent of all. He has no doubt that God knows what is good for us much better than we do and will take care of us.

ਤੁਮ ਕਰਹੁ ਭਲਾ ਹਮ ਭਲੇ ਨ ਜਾਨਹ ਤੁਮ ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਦਇਆਲਾ ॥

ਤੁਮ ਸੁਖਦਾਈ ਪੁਰਖ ਬਿਧਾਤੇ ਤੁਮ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਅਪੁਨੇ ਬਾਲਾ ॥੩॥

You do good for us, but we do not see it as good; You are kind and compassionate, forever and ever. You are the Giver of peace, the Primal Lord, the Architect of Destiny; please, save us, Your children! || 3 ||

Prayer or ardaas is a great source of spiritual strength and confidence. It is also an important part of building a strong personal relationship with Waheguru.

Hukam

Another key component of the pursuit for true happiness is recognising His Hukam, knowing that all that happens is according to the Divine Will. This is an important part of dealing with the down part of the up and down cycle to live in tune with His Hukam and accept it cheerfully.

ਤਿਸ ਕਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਬੂਝਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

Understanding His Hukam leads to peace and happiness [Guru Arjan, SGGS p. 281]

We have to gracefully accept whatever happens, both good and bad, as His Hukam

ਜੇ ਤੁਧੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸਾਈ ਭਲੀ ਕਾਰ ॥

ਤੂ ਸਦਾ ਸਲਾਮਤਿ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ॥੧੬॥

Whatever pleases You is the only good done,

You, Eternal and Formless One! || 16 ||

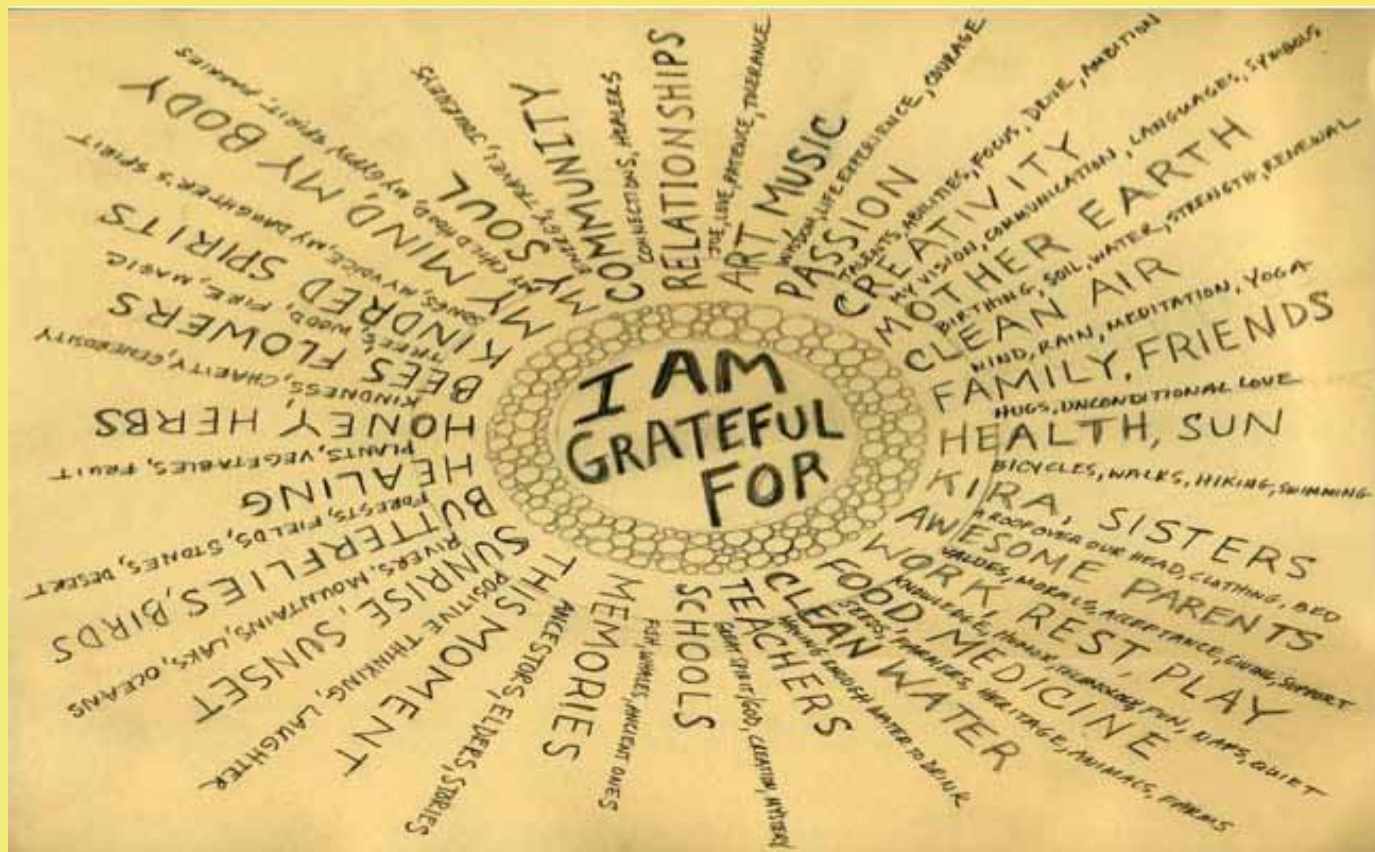
[Guru Nanak, SGGS p. 3]

Most of the time we think of God only when things go wrong. We treat God like a spare tyre, to be invoked in times of trouble. We should instead think of Him as the steering wheel of our life, who is needed all the time to guide and shape our lives. When something goes wrong, think of Him and offer your prayers to him. When something goes well, think of Him and thank him. Always remember that this all is His Hukam: He is the steering wheel of your life.

Gratitude

Which brings us to one of the most important components of our 'true happiness strategy': gratitude. Let us remember Him not only in times of trouble, but also when things go well and thank him for all our blessings.

Much of the time we are unhappy because we feel we do not have something that others have. We compare ourselves with others in various ways. A billionaire like



So many blessings we must be grateful for!

Larry Ellison with a huge house worth over \$200 million looks at someone with a still bigger house and he is unhappy that he doesn't have the biggest house in the world – maybe it is only the second or third biggest! So we can always find someone who has more. We forget that there are so many more people who have so much less.

If we just stop to count our blessings, and remember to be grateful for them, this can be one of the most important steps towards a happier life.

Even when there is nothing special or unusual happening, there are so many things to be grateful for if we only stop to think about it. A key secret to true happiness is to count our blessings and be grateful.

One thing that I try to do, but don't always remember, is to go over all the good things that happened during the day before going to sleep, and thank Waheguru for them. And in the morning, thank Waheguru for another beautiful day. The entire day goes so much better when I remember to do that at the two ends of it.

Forgiveness

Another very important step is to learn to let go of any grudges or anger that lingers in our hearts towards any one.

ਪਰ ਕਾ ਬੁਰਾ ਨ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਚੀਤ ॥

ਤੁਮ ਕਉ ਦੁਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਭਾਈ ਮੀਤ ॥੩॥

Do not harbour ill will towards others in your mind,

And you shall not be troubled, my brothers, my friends.
|| 3 || [Guru Arjan, SGGS p. 386]

We all face situations where someone has hurt us in some manner. But if we carry that sense of hurt or anger in our hearts, that weight becomes a major obstacle to our own happiness and peace of mind. You sit down for Naam Simran, and your mind runs off such that you cannot concentrate. This hurts oneself more than hurting the other person. Holding a grudge against someone is like giving that person rent-free space inside your own head!

Forgiveness is so powerful, it has been equated to the Presence of God himself: *Jahaan khimaan tahaan aap.*

Seva and Parupkar

Seva or selfless service and parupkar or doing good deeds for others, which form an important part of the Sikhi ethos, can be a powerful source of personal fulfillment and happiness. Interestingly a study reported that people involved in caring for others had the highest

levels of happiness: those working for NGOs, often working in poor areas in the third world, and members of the health sector, particularly nurses and other assistants. These people who are dedicating themselves to serving others led happier, more fulfilling lives than success-driven people focused on only doing well in their own careers.

There is more happiness in giving than in receiving. Gurbani tells us that those who are spiritually enlightened delight in doing good things for others:

ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰ ਉਮਾਰਾ ॥

The God-conscious being delights in doing good to others.
[Guru Arjan, SGGS p. 273]

Seva and parupkar are not limited to volunteering at the Gurdwara or for non-profit organisations. It can be what we can do for a spouse, children and parents, for friends and neighbours, or at work. The work environment can be very competitive, but if instead of just focusing on personal success and advancement, we try and help our colleagues and subordinates to be successful, we can get more self-fulfillment in our jobs, and probably be more respected which helps our own careers.

Of course, this only works if it is voluntary. Those forced into serving others because of poverty or other personal situations can instead be unhappy. Those forced into taking care of sick parents or relatives can become resentful and angry but those who willingly do things for their parents, children and others are among the happiest of people.

The perils of seeking 'Happiness'

Now let us look at a kind of paradoxical message from Gurbani about happiness.

As we recite in Rehras every day, Guruji tells us that happiness can be a disease and suffering can be a cure: *dukh daaroo sukh rog bhaiya.*

But how can that be? How can suffering be good and happiness a disease?

Let us look at the downside of 'happiness', or when good things happen or that we think will make us happy.

Often we take credit for our good fortune, thinking it is all our doing, instead of recognising the Divine Hukam. We get arrogant and look down upon others. It strengthens our haumai or ego. We know from Gurbani that haumai is one of the biggest obstacles on the path of spiritualism.

ਹਉਮੇ ਨਾਵੇ ਨਾਲਿ ਵਿਰੇਧੁ ਰੇ ਦੁਇ ਨ ਵਸਹਿ ਇਕ ਠਾਇ ॥

Ego is opposed to the Name of the Lord; the two do not dwell in the same place. [Guru Amardas, SGGS p. 560]

We see this even in the field of religion. Some of the most dedicated religious people can develop a 'holier than thou' attitude, and start preaching to others and becoming very critical of those whom they may condemn as sinners. Some may become religious leaders and acquire followers, but lose their own way along the process:

ਕਬੀਰ ਸਿਖ ਸਾਖਾ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਕੀਏ ਕੇਸੇ ਕੀਓ ਨ ਮੀਤੁ ॥

ਚਾਲੇ ਥੇ ਹਰਿ ਮਿਲਨ ਕਉ ਬੀਚੇ ਅਟਕਿਓ ਚੀਤੁ ॥੯੬॥

Kabeer, he has made many students and disciples, but he has not made God his friend.

He set out on a journey to meet the Lord, but his consciousness failed him half-way. [Kabeer, SGGS p. 1369]

Furthermore, even after we get something, we want more. Satisfaction eludes us and we get greedy. This is one of the reasons why nothing seems to keep us happy for long.

ਸਹਸ ਖਟੇ ਲਖ ਕਉ ਉਠਿ ਧਾਵੇ ॥

ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਿ ਨ ਆਵੇ ਮਾਇਆ ਪਾਛੇ ਪਾਵੇ ॥

Earning a thousand, he runs after a hundred thousand.

Satisfaction is not obtained by chasing after Maya. | | [Guru Arjan Dev, SGGS p. 278]

We also look at others who have more and then get envious.

The more good things that happen to us, the more we get entangled in them and life gets more and more complicated. If you have more money, you have to invest it wisely, and watch out for scammers who want to cheat you out of your wealth. You have to worry about taxes,

consult tax specialists to set up clever tax shelters. If you have a huge, beautiful mansion, you have to deal with maintenance, get alarm systems, or if you are in India, hire a *chaukidaar*. If you are leaving town, you have to get somebody to house-sit for you.

ਵਡੇ ਵਡੇ ਜੇ ਦੀਸਹਿ ਲੋਗ ॥

ਤਿਨ ਕਉ ਬਿਆਪੇ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਰੋਗ ॥੧॥

Those who seem to be great and powerful, are afflicted by the disease of anxiety. | | 1 | | [Guru Arjan, SGGS p. 188]

For all these reasons, what appears to be good fortune can, in fact, distract us from the spiritual path and actually keep us from achieving real happiness in our life. For those of us who are blessed with these things which are supposed to make us happy - wealth, success, a happy family - the more God blesses us with worldly happiness, the harder we need to work on our spiritual side to inoculate ourselves from these downsides of 'happiness'. We need an extra amount of Naam Simran and a strong sense of gratitude to handle good fortune.

The readings of Gurbani

If we follow the teachings of Gurbani about true happiness, we can aspire to a constant state of chardi kalaa as experienced by Gurmukhs. This is beautifully expressed in these words by Guru Arjan Dev Ji:

ਦੁਖੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਸਭੁ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੀ ਹੈ ਰੇ ਏਕੇ ਏਕੀ ਨੇਤੈ ॥

ਬੁਰਾ ਨਹੀ ਸਭੁ ਭਲਾ ਹੀ ਹੈ ਰੇ ਹਾਰ ਨਹੀ ਸਭ ਜੇਤੈ ॥੧॥

He has no pain, he is totally happy and at peace. With his eyes, he sees only the One Lord.

He does not see any one as evil, all are good. There is no defeat, he is totally victorious. | | 1 | |

[Guru Arjan, SGGS p.1302]

Dr. Inder M. Singh



Dr. Inder M. Singh is the Chairman of Chardi Kalaa Foundation, and has served on the boards of several Sikh non-profit organisations including SALDEF and The Sikh Foundation.

He is the Chairman of Lynx Software Technologies and was CEO until 2006. He founded Excelan, and served as its chairman, CEO and president. He was a co-founder of Kalpana, one of Cisco's early acquisitions. Dr. Singh has served on the boards of several high-tech companies. He holds Ph.D. and M.Phil. degrees in computer science from Yale University, an MSEE from Polytechnic Institute of New York, and B. Tech (Hons) in Electronics from IIT, Kharagpur.

Translation and Transliteration of Gurbani

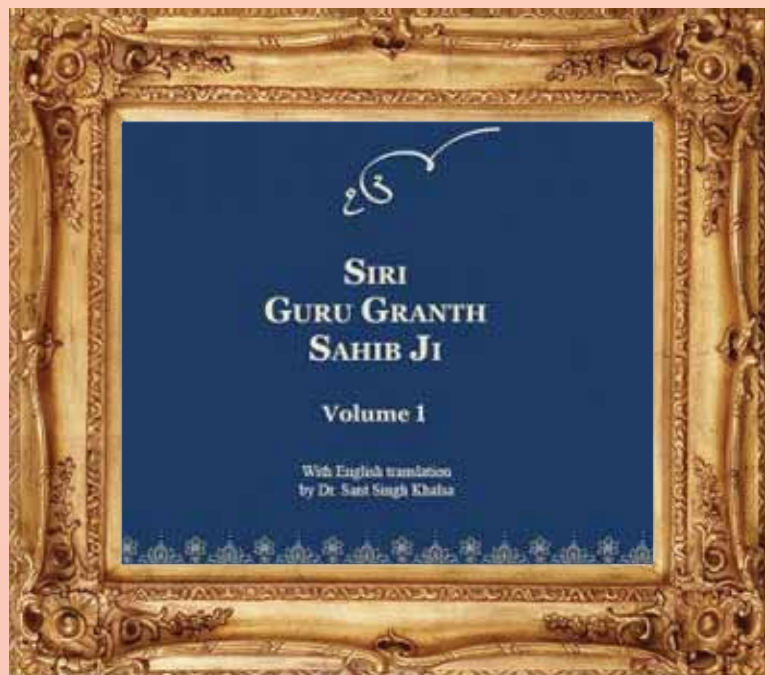


It is an honour to be starting the day-long conversation on how Guru Granth speaks to us today. I need not tell you that for it to be universal and timeless, the Guru Granth must speak to us today in America as it did to countless others centuries ago in Punjab. Otherwise it loses all relevance.

Other speakers will parse the message; I will talk about how we come to terms with the message.

Today, there is perhaps no continent or country where Sikhs are not. Wherever we have ventured, we have taken our lifestyle, family values, cuisine, song and dance, and our enterprising spirit but most vitally along with Sikhi – a unique, universal and timeless heritage that makes us what we are. We now enjoy the globally connected existence of a nation without walls. And now more than ever, Sikhs are growing up outside the linguistic and cultural cocoon of the Punjab.

The mythological antecedents of India shaped us, not because they were essential to Sikhi, but because mythology was the overarching cultural context of India. This is now quite alien to a new generation of Sikhs.





We, in the diaspora, dearly value our mother tongue, Punjabi, but within our lifespan it has diminished to a transactional presence, limited to social banter, music and humour. We are not comfortable enough to pick up a book of poetry, history or philosophy in it, so we usually don't. In English, too, our command of the language is largely transactional. So, the education of the mind is often effectively stalled in both languages, even though I recognise the growing number of exceptions to this in the new generation of Sikhs.

The repository of our spiritual heritage, Guru Granth Sahib, traditionally penned in the Gurmukhi script, contains little of present-day modern colloquial Punjabi. With copious references to mythology, Gurbani showcases many Indic and Middle Eastern languages extant when it was composed 300 to 500 years ago.

Guru Granth does not endorse mythology but is written in the vernacular and frames the message to resonate with the average Indian of that time. Why? Clearly, no matter the topic, teaching is best couched in the culture, context and language of the student or else the lesson is lost.

Two imperatives emerge when we engage with the Guru Granth Sahib. Translations connect us to Gurbani without disconnecting us from the modern world in which we live. But there are many languages in Guru Granth, including Arabic and Persian with Semitic roots, and also Sanskrit, and Braj from the tree of Indo-European languages.

Remember that India is a country of nation states that were for much of history semi-autonomous, each with its own narrative. Add to this *mélange* the fact that Indian languages, like others, show many regional and dialectical variations. English, French and Spanish are classic examples that are chockfull of such structural intricacies.

Moreover, Sikhs are “and will remain” a minority no matter where they live, even in India. This reduces Punjabi in Gurmukhi script effectively to a minority language that is not commonly studied. For many Punjabis, including Sikhs, Punjabi is mostly a spoken language today.

That is why there is a generation of Sikhs, who do not comfortably read Gurmukhi. True that a minimal commitment of a day or so would enable anyone to read it competently but human inertia being what it is, many Sikhs remain relatively clueless in reading the Guru Granth. They need *translations* to comprehend Guru Granth and transliterations into Arabic or Roman script to read it. So, translation has an equally troublesome twin beside it and that is *transliteration*.

Also keep in mind that Guru Granth Sahib is mystical revealed poetry, teeming with allegories, metaphors and analogies, as all good poetry is. In this potent mix the enormity of the task of translating Guru Granth into modern English or any other language becomes obvious.

We need different sets of professionals to do things right: for translation we need linguists and scholars of Sikhi who know the

two languages intimately their lexicon, grammar and historical cultural context and who can seamlessly travel between the two. For *transliteration* we need masters of phonetics in the two spoken languages and the cultures involved. These must be mavens of the *phonemes* involved in the exchange.

Transliteration frustrates us but should be easier to tame. Let us first dive into the issue of translations of Gurbani.

Some translation issues

Think a moment: any conversation, no matter how simple, no matter if it is with an arch enemy or a soul mate. Isn't it accompanied by some thought about what the other person really means or understands? Understanding the other demands tuning into (translating) the other's moods, gestures, body language and words, and mining them for meaning.



Translation remains the only effective insight into another mind. War and peace stem from translating or mis-translating each other. The literary output of past civilisations comes to us via translations. That's how we know of Homer, the greatest poet of ancient Greece,

and of Virgil and Ovid, of similar standing in Rome, or Kalidasa, the preeminent playwright and poet of ancient India.

How accurately does a translation capture the mind and insights of a poet and the beauty of his metre and language? Such questions are rarely laid to rest, but they give birth to new scholars of the original language and also the one in which a translation is done. Countless new PhDs result.

Times change as do cultures and languages; the vernacular becomes opaque, literary language even more so. For instance today, just a few hundred years later, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* defy comprehension without translation into modern English. Similar hurdles abound in engaging with classics, such as the writings of Plato, or German and Latin Masters. I offer you a line from Gurbani: 'Bako Shubh Rasna.' *Shubh rasna*, of course, speaks of a kind generous tongue but *bakko* as speech and as directing one to speak has now colloquially morphed into *bakwas* that is best translated as cheap or trash talk in American English.

How good is any translation? This admits no easy answer but it deserves an exploration. As examples, let's revisit two classics and then we will segue into translations of *Guru Granth Sahib*.

Omar Khayyam's poetry and New Testament Bible

A Persian poet and astronomer, Omar Khayyam, lived around 1050. Some of his quatrains (*Rubaiyat*) have seen at least 15 translations into English and into many other languages. Why so many English versions? Obviously, scholars saw a lack of fidelity. Some derisively labeled the popular version by Edward FitzGerald as the *The Rubaiyat of FitzOmar*. FitzGerald himself published five editions in 30 years with significant variations among them.

My second example, even more instructive, comes from Christianity. Many versions of the New Testament Bible exist. Followers of John Wycliffe gave us the first English translation of the Christian Bible but it was banned in 1409. King Henry VIII authorised an English translation; later another version (The Bishop's Bible) came in 1568. The puritans who were part of the Church of England did not approve these versions.

In 1604, King James I convened the Hampton Court Conference for a new English translation. This — the Authorised Version of the Bible — was prepared between 1604 and 1611 by 47 scholars, all from the Church of England. Keep in mind: seven years and 47 scholars!

Opposition to this Bible surfaced quickly. Hugh



Broughton, a Hebraic scholar, condemned it in 1611, saying that “I would rather be torn in pieces by wild horses than that this abominable translation should ever be foisted upon the English people.”

But a hundred years later, it became the Bible in all Anglican and Protestant denominations. It remains unchallenged today, except by the Roman Catholic Church.

My purpose is not to judge any scripture but to explore problems inherent in translation and transmission of a heritage. Many Sikh sites on the Internet are abuzz these days with translation projects. I welcome them - and I also wonder.

Translations of Gurbani

Our sacred writings are cast in inspired poetry that, to us, is divine. And I don’t need to tell you the difficulty in deciphering the mind of a poet when he plays with words, language and meter. For example, take the root word *chinta*, meaning worry. It occurs in Guru Granth as *chint*, *chinta*, *chinti*, even as *Chind*; I suppose the variations reflect the demands of versification. Or look at the verse from Aasa Vaar: *Gyan ka badha munn rahay; Gur bin gyan na hoye*. Is the word *gur* here poetic shorthand for Guru? Should “*gur*” be translated as *Guru* since *Guru* is the source of *gyan* or should the word be literally rendered as *technique* or *technology*? The *Guru* gives us the *Gur* that is method or technique. Similar

concerns abide in another line: *Ete channan hondya(n) Gur bin ghor andhaar*. In understanding the verse either word, *Guru* or *Gur*, would suffice. The translational difficulty here is likely harmless, but not always.

Yet, critical are good faith efforts to translate the poetry of Guru Granth to capture its message; how else would we understand or adopt it as a blueprint for our life.

When my interest in the Guru Granth awakened, my intimacy with its language and grammar was minimal. My stumbling eased when I discovered the 1966 UNESCO publication, an English translation of selections from Guru Granth and related writings by five iconic masters of the grammar and lexicon of Sikh scriptures: Trilochan Singh, Jodh Singh, Kapur Singh, Bawa Harkishen Singh and Khushwant Singh, and edited by an English poet, George Fraser. I find this by far the best translation, way better than any that I have seen. It captures the magic, even though now the language seems a little archaic, and the book remains incomplete.

The early 1970s saw complete translations of Guru Granth Sahib in English. (Ernst Trumpp’s translation was way earlier, but it was incomplete.) Manmohan Singh’s phraseology was often awkward, and the meaning not always clear. As translations by Gopal Singh, Trilochan Singh, Sant Singh Khalsa, Pritam Singh Chahil, and Kartar Singh Duggal appeared I eagerly pounced on them, but was left at sea by the language, style or clarity.

In time, I graduated to exegesis in Punjabi by Bhai Vir Singh and Professor Sahib Singh. At times they, too, appeared to mix mythological lore with the pristine purity of the Guru’s message.

All existing translations bar two are solo efforts – one person’s endeavour. Exceptions are the UNESCO publication and the four-volume *Shabdarth* in Punjabi which is not a translation, but a guide to difficult words and concepts in the Guru Granth; it is published by the SGPC and no single author is identified.

Of many that are possible, I offer you brief examples where the traditional translations often leave me baffled.

Should one literally interpret Farid’s recommendation to kiss the feet of the enemy? Or, for that matter, what to make of the traditional take on the cycle of birth and death; or that even our smallest action is controlled and prewritten by God, which would then leave us no free will and no option to act otherwise. I do not quite see that a Creator – that Gurbani assures us repeatedly cannot be measured, has no form, shape, colour, caste or gender – sits out there somewhere micromanaging my puny existence, keeping track of all my sins committed

or contemplated, and yet all of my actions are in accord with God's prewritten dossier on me. It strikes as a wholly anthropomorphic model of God as the supreme puppeteer.

Such matters often leave one wondering what exactly the Guru meant. Literal rendition leaves us entirely lost while an interpretation free of the cultural context seems to go beyond the mandate of a translator. Perhaps we need a literal rendering accompanied by a footnote with interpretation of the poetry in modern English.

As I see it, living a life in *Hukum*, like walking in the shadow of the Creator, transcends Gurbani's literal rendering. To me it asks us to live wholly in the present – in the moment – to have the courage to change the things we can change, to accept with serenity (as *Hukum*) what we cannot change, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Translating Gurbani is a never ending process

Gurbani is mystical poetry, full of allegories, analogies and metaphors, seldom to be literally translated.

A translator has to know two cultures intimately: their languages, idioms and traditions, the land and the people, the history and mythology that have shaped them. And then the translator has to navigate between the two realities seamlessly. In the process an early loss is the inability to capture the rhythmic flow and cadence of inspired poetry that transcends the literal rendition.

Given the richness of the original language, grammar and mythology, any translation project promises to be a life-long unfinished quest. *A translator needs to merge the cold-blooded mind of an analyst and grammarian with the warm joyous heart of a poet in an existence of faith.* A daunting task but surely, many dedicated translators will come out of it steeped in Sikhi.

I offer you a brief detour: Even when the language is not so alien or abstruse, differences in interpretation between equally brilliant minds are not uncommon. Look at the laws of any country. Without plausible and differing interpretations of the same law a society would not need thousands of lawyers, so many different layers of judiciary, and the courts would never be so busy striving mightily to ferret out the truth.

For example: what exactly did the framers of our (USA) Constitution really mean: is ours (USA) a Christian nation? How is the line between Church and State to be interpreted? Do differences in interpretation of civil rights exist or don't they? And have some such understandings changed with time?

This says to me then that I, or any Sikh, will always

have to struggle to make sense of what the Guru likely meant from an inadequate translation, no matter how good it appears to be. And that becomes the lifelong path of a Sikh.

But when I get lost I am reassured by Gurbani that my smallest, hesitant step towards the Guru would be reciprocated by the Guru covering miles towards me. In other words, grace would pervade and prevail. And that with reading and cogitation a sense of the poetry would emerge. When I realised this, I knew that I was on my way home.

That's how I grew to like 'less than perfect' translations – that do not seem so easy or adequate. They place the onus on me. I then stop and wonder if the Guru could have meant what the translator implies. If the translations had been excellent, I might never have made the struggle my own.

Guru Granth tells us (p. 594) *Dithay mukt na hoveyee jichhar sabd na karay vichhaar*, it is not the sight of the Guru Granth Sahib but thoughtful engagement with the Word that will liberate us.

No interpretation may be guaranteed to be totally true forever. The best scholar or translator, like an honest lawyer, can only guarantee sincerity of effort, not purity of result.

Translation initiatives? Yes, embrace them but beware of the rocky road ahead. What we translate today is *not* for ever; it would need retranslating and tweaking by every new generation. Explore the translations, and keep at hand the original text of Gurbani. Will it be easy? Never! Is it necessary? Like breath to life!

Transliteration Issues

This now brings us to the second, but I think the more manageable riddle of *Tranliteration*.

Just look at many imaginative ways that the opening alphanumeric of Guru Granth Sahib – *Ik Oankaar* – is rendered in Roman script – *Oankaar, Omkar, Onkar, Ongkar* more such variations abound.

A phonetics expert could teach us the correct standard enunciation devoid of the baggage of regional variations and could help us record it precisely in Roman or any other script so that a non-native speaker of Punjabi could sound it out accurately, precisely and reliably.

A phoneme is defined as the smallest contrasting unit in the sound system of a language that is capable of conveying a distinct meaning. The American language system recognises a set of 20 to 60 distinctive phonemes or sound units – a different number for each spoken

language that can be captured in Roman script.

Rules of pronunciation, in English, often seem to be arbitrarily derived from geography, social class, and from the worldwide British colonial experience over two centuries. Nevertheless, there are standards of phonetics that are both trustworthy and replicable.

Phonetics is not always a perfect science or art. For example some tribal languages have guttural sounds and clicks as distinct parts of their lexicon and there is no way to render them adequately in the Roman alphabet as we know it.

I am not aware if anyone has systematically identified how many and which specific phonemes capture the Punjabi language, and if any gaps remain. Clearly, some sounds in the Gurmukhi alphabet and in Gurbani are not easily rendered into Roman script. But in transliterations of Gurbani today there are as many systems as there are people doing them. In today's expanding global reality perhaps Roman script, the most commonly used alphabet system, could stretch its dimensions beyond its 60 phonemes.

But in this process we do start with a supreme advantage. Punjabi, like most Indic languages, is a precisely designed phonetic language and to determine the variety of phonemes that capture should not be that complex if we can find dedicated experts in phonetics to take on the task.

All languages have blind spots. A simple example: the Punjabi ear does not distinguish between the sounds of 'v' and 'w' because the language does not make the distinction, whereas English has no phonemes for the distinctions between the hard 'd', the soft 'd' and for the combined 'dh.' A phonetics expert can capture these distinctions but likely cannot show them in written form in the Roman script as it exists today. Exactly how and by what standards a transliteration is done into the Roman script may spell the difference between war or peace, success or failure.

Both the writer and the reader need to be on the same page. An arbitrary decision on pronunciation serves little purpose except to sow discord. Please note that

what follows next is not a judgment of what is right or wrong. It is merely an example where an amateur like me can easily go astray.

Look at the expression 'Guru Fateh' – universally used by Sikhs. I have seen 'Guru' spelled as "Goroo" and if I was learning to read by sounding it out, as in grade school, I would be lost.

I have seen 'Fateh' transcribed as 'Fatih, Fatah, Phatih or Phatah.' Now look at how a reasonably sane English educated non-Sikh would sound it out. Certainly 'Guru Fatah' reminds us of the Palestinian organisation 'Al Fatah,' while the last choice here 'Guru Phatah' pushes us towards a totally unacceptable rendering in Punjabi where 'Phatah' means "torn" like a piece of cloth, and to say the Guru is torn is not so good a greeting; it sounds almost blasphemous.

To summarise

In summary, the issue is how to standardise the way to capture sounds from the languages of gurbani that don't normally exist in English into Roman script. Remember that 'sounding it out' is how all of us mastered the fundamentals of ABC and the joy of reading.

The sole purpose of translation and transliteration is to enhance communication of the message, particularly with those who are on unfamiliar territory. We are talking here of the reasonably educated common man or woman, not one at home with the intricacies of linguistics and phonetics, or the time and energy to pursue them.

There is no question that we need both a standardised translation and transliteration of Gurbani and these are not what a single scholar, no matter how good, can or should handle alone. We need linguists steeped in Sikhi as well as mavens of phonetics to work in tandem and produce a standardised body of knowledge that remains a work in progress and puts us on the path to progress. This is eminently doable.

Translation and transliteration are very different species of animal but each demands our full, enduring and clearheaded engagement. Nothing less will do.

Dr. I J Singh



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Being and Becoming a Sikh

Spiritual journeys are never ending, and rarely progress in a straight line. They are more like a downward meandering spiral into the core of one's being, bringing us back to the same spot, again and again, only to

reveal a deeper shade and meaning of the Truth that is always present. The Truth, at some level, is already homogenised, much like butter in milk and flint in wood. The implicit knowledge of our connection to the Universe around is embedded in

us. It takes constant 'churning' to bring it forth.

Such, indeed, has been my journey with my Guru - so far. Over the years, I have discerned a similar process playing out in my

A Journey in Consciousness



own development as a Sikh, fueled by an ongoing inner dialectic that can best be described as *Being and Becoming A Sikh*.

The philosophical notion of 'Being and Becoming' is an old one, going back to Plato. In this narrative, I wish to use *Being and Becoming* as a concept to capture

the fundamental difference – and a dynamic tension – between being born a Sikh and becoming a Sikh.

To me, the difference between *Being and Becoming* can be summed up as the difference between acquired belief and authentic faith; between meaning and experience; between passive internalisation and active absorption; between acting on handed down cultural scripts and writing one's own story. Birth alone does not a Sikh make, that there is a transcendent quality to becoming a Sikh that involves making conscious choices.

To frame this in Sikh parlance, *Being and Becoming a Sikh* reflects the divergence and ongoing conflict between the limiting and circumscribing demands of our empirical self and ego consciousness (*Haumai*) and the compulsion of our Spirit (*man toon jot saroop hain*) to soar and be freed from the very restraints that tether us to our *Haumai*.

This tension and dialectic between *Haumai* and *Hukam* actually symbolises the human condition.

Being and Becoming a Sikh means to live in the balance between these two seemingly antithetical positions. We are – whether we know it or not – constantly crossing the boundary between *Being and Becoming*, going back and forth, creating another space that overlaps the two but exceeds the previous.

Theory U: Learning from the Future as it Emerges

I have borrowed a framework from organisational change management called *Theory U* to explain the developmental process inherent in *Being and Becoming a Sikh*. My motivation in doing so stems from my conviction that the onus to revisit and re-examine the tenets of Sikhi is squarely on the individual Sikh. Instead, we have abrogated this right to a new breed – Gurdwara Granthis, so-called Sikh theologians and *Katha Vachaks*.

There is simply no mandate for ordained clergies to act as intermediaries, arbiters or interpreters of *Sikhi*. As has been rightly pointed out, "What is needed is 'not years of schooling or clergy' for its interpretation, but an open mind and a willing heart".

I also believe it important to continually explore and re-examine the basic tenets of the faith in the language and the world-view of the times in which we live. It is in this spirit that I have attempted to represent the developmental process of *Being and Becoming a Sikh* in terms of the lingua franca of the day – Science and Business.

The U-process is based on a concept called 'Presencing', first developed by Peter Senge in his pioneering work on Learning Organisations, *The Fifth Discipline*. A blend



of two words, 'presence' and 'sensing', 'Presencing' stands for a heightened state of attention that allows individuals and groups to shift the inner place from which they function. When that shift happens, an individual - or group - develops the capacity to operate from a future space of possibility that they feel ('presence') is waiting to emerge. Being able to facilitate that shift is, according to Senge and his colleagues, the essence of leadership. "Sensing and actualising one's highest future possibility - acting from the presence of what is wanting to emerge."

Since it emerged around 2006, Theory U has come to be understood in three primary ways: first as a framework; second, as a method for leading profound change; and third, as a way of being - connecting to the more authentic of higher aspects of our self. I have attempted to adapt the model to explain the journey of a Sikh, which requires a similar shift - from a Manmukh to a Gurmukh. It is an archetype of the human journey.

The U-process is so called because of the shape of the journey. In order to get to the deepest point

of transformation, indicated at the bottom of the U, it is necessary first to go down the left side.

There are 3 phases labeled 'Sensing', 'Presencing' and 'Realising' and seven gestures, signifying milestones in the journey.

Sensing: seeing one's own seeing and transforming perception.



a. Haumai, the Blind Spot or The Ego System (KuR di Paal)

In tracing the dialectic between *Being and Becoming a Sikh* on the U Curve, our starting point is Haumai located on the upper left side: this equates to Being a Sikh by birth. Being a Sikh by birth means being a Sikh by habit. Adherence to an inherited belief system provides us with the formality of being a Sikh. Our assertion, made quite freely, that we are Sikhs by birth must be viewed as no more than the conditioned reflex of a believer trained

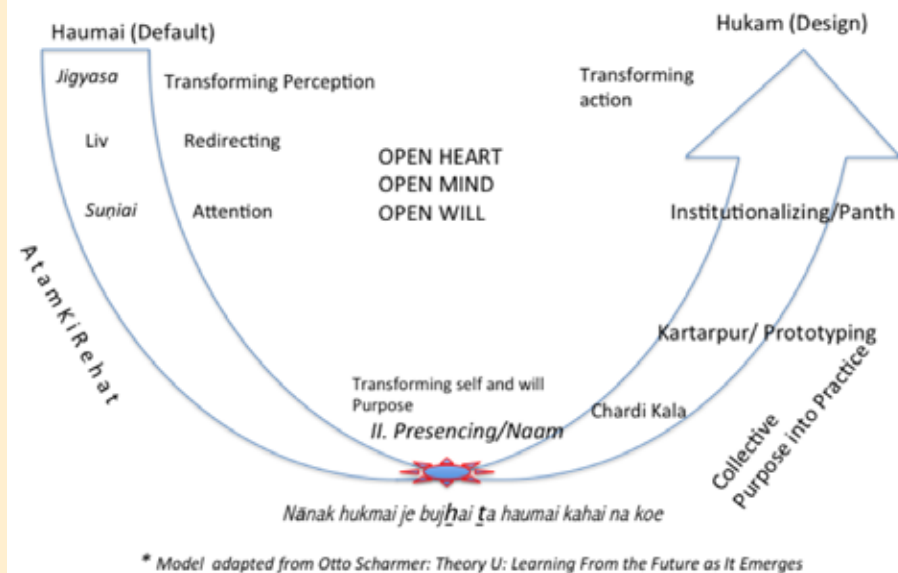
to accept cultural myths and authorised beliefs, often with a vested interest in preserving and perpetuating the status quo.

This is not to suggest that belief is without value. Belief systems help us translate and affix meaning to the external world, making it possible to navigate through life. They also provide the necessary glue to hold communities together, making social life possible.

But here is the paradox: the very conditioning process that ensures our survival in the external world



BEING AND BECOMING A SIKH – A JOURNEY IN CONSCIOUSNESS Manmukh to Gurmukh - From Psychological Lead to Spiritual Gold



also thickens and coagulates our Haumai at the same time – effectively shutting off our capacity to experience our true source or Reality. Gurbani alludes to this in various places.

This conditioned self that Gurbani calls Haumai is our blind spot, the KuR di Paal that Guru Nanak refers to early on in the Japji. In Gurmat terms, Haumai is the blind spot that accepts reality as it is presented to us – immediate and unmistakable. It limits our awareness. More importantly, Haumai or the process of individuation, also signifying our symbolic existence, also impels us into a self-centered narcissism, obscuring Hukam and our true purpose.

But it appears that we are wired to have Haumai. Indeed, Haumai is fundamental to Creation.

The malady of Haumai was instilled in humans. SGGS: 1140:16

A Sikh by birth is primarily a product of genetic and cultural conditioning that is contained and driven by a strong sense of

Haumai. Beliefs, rituals, mythic structures, prevailing stereotypes are important support structures for Haumai. Preservation of the status quo is indispensable.

Haumai-laden, we become a Manmukh, inured to a Haumai based existence.

Ensnared in this transitory drama, they (Manmukh) have lost their moorings; they are neither here nor there. SGGS: M3: 29:2

b. Suspending or Jigyasa

Fortunately for us, the Guru offers hope and a way out. Our affliction (Haumai) carries the seed of its own remedy.

Haumai is a chronic affliction, but its remedy lies within it. SGGS p.466: 5

The term Sikh offers some clues: becoming a Sikh means being a student or a disciple and that implies a developmental process that involves a life-long apprenticeship to the Guru. It requires that we look at the world with fresh eyes, that we drop habitual ways of thinking. It requires the boldness of questioning

of the very basis of one's acquired beliefs.

Transforming perception or 'seeing your own seeing' becomes the basis for change. The term in Punjabi is *Jigyasa*, which stems from the Sanskrit root 'curiosity' and denotes 'desire for knowledge'.

To 'Question is a Quest'. Where Socrates deemed an unexamined life as not worthy of living, Guru Nanak admonished us in a similar vein, calling it an animal existence, *Mool na bhujan āpnā, se pasūā se dhor jīo*.

The awakening of what we call Jigyasa in Punjabi or 'Questing' becomes the basis for change and enables redirecting inwards.

c. Redirecting or LIV vs. DHAT

Gurbani tells us that two orientations are available to us: Liv and Dhat. 'Liv dhāt due rāh hai,' (GGGS p 87).

A Haumai-based existence (or an ego system) is fueled by fear and anxiety, characterised by what Gurbani refers to as Dhat or Dhaturbazzi - the vicious cycle of our daily grind (rat race) that snares us into this worldly web of existence (Maya), causing us in turn to lose our inner bearing and spiritual compass. Becoming a Sikh is to heed our inner voice, to heal our fractured connection to reality. Our Haumai-driven Dhaturbazzi needs to be offset and balanced by cultivating the capacity to see through the veil of Maya ("Seeing Our Own Seeing").

This is the journey of 'presencing' and begins by 'redirecting' our attention inward. Redirecting is the movement downward on the left hand side of the U-curve and represents this inner journey. In Gurbani, this process of inversion is represented by the term Liv that



stands for an anchoring of our existence in inwardness – or inner centeredness. We become Gurmukhs by remaining externally driven (engaged with the world) but internally centred.

d. Letting Go/Haumai or *Suniyeh*, *Manniyeh*

Becoming a Sikh is radical and a profound change that is transformational. This transformation requires work, a deep inner and private practice that should be rooted in a broader social practice (*sangat*). It is a lifelong apprenticeship to the Guru.

According to developers of the U, 'the foundational capacity of the U is listening. Listening to others. Listening to oneself. And listening to what emerges from the collective. Effective listening requires the creation of open space in which others can contribute to the whole.' This is very similar to Guru Nanak's insistence on developing this capacity (which he calls *suniyeh*). Guru Nanak's core teaching rests on the cultivation of attentive listening (*suniyeh*). Although listening comes naturally to most of us, Guru Nanak's repeated emphasis (almost a tenth of the Japji) begs the obvious question: are we not listening already, or, is there another kind of listening

that Guru Nanak wants us to cultivate. If so, what might that be?

Ordinary hearing is passive, inattentive and shrouded by our inner mental chatter, filtering out most of what is heard. We hear what is agreeable and that only serves to reinforce our habitual patterns. Attentive listening, on the other hand is a dynamic process, requiring a quiet and open mind. Listening, for Guru Nanak, is the foundation for spiritual formation and growth, leading ultimately to communion with Naam. Naam becomes the journey as well as the goal.

Gurbani is very clear – and insistent – that the '*ears were attached to our bodies so that we could listen to the Truth.*' [GGS: 922] All other hearing is but '*falsehood blowing around in a gust of wind; only listening to the Word of the Guru can be deemed successful.*' [GGS: 577].

In the Japji Sahib, *suniyeh* is followed by *manniyeh*, which literally means "by believing" or "being firm in" or "being held in one's mind." If *suniyeh* emphasises listening as the means, *manniyeh* can be thought of as complete absorption or immersion in the sabad (the Word). This practice is popularly called Naam or Naam



Simran and is the discipline or practice recommended to activate the power of listening or attention (*dhian*).

The allegory of a goldsmith using an alchemical process to transform baser metals to gold, beautifully illustrated in the 38th Pauri of the Japji, points to Guru Nanak's foundational message on how to transform our 'manmukh' nature into that of a 'gurmukh' by aligning to Hukam. A Sikh cultivates his inner environment through the application of Guru Nanak's recommended spiritual technology of attentive listening and immersion in *Sabad* (Word), *Gurmukh āpnā man māriā sabad kasvatī lāe*. (GGS p.87).

The cultivation of inner virtues (devotion) listed in the 38th PauRi is what gives a Gurmukh the necessary purity of motive, integrity of action and autonomy to transcend dogma (*Mannai mug na chalai panth*), materialistic bias and narcissistic self-obsession (*Haumai*). In other words, a Gurmukh withdraws from the lure and pull of established mental patterns exemplified by our attachment to instinctive behavior such as *kaam*, *krodh*, *lobh*, etc. and moves towards the call of Hukam through the practice of the discipline of Naam.

This is, indeed, the process of

becoming a truly cultured and integrated personality, a necessary condition for a successful life. This central teaching has been amplified and explained by succeeding Gurus in no uncertain terms. It is only from this existential fulcrum that a truly fulfilling, purpose-driven life is possible.

Presencing or Naam: Ik Oankaar

What happens at the bottom of the U?

Here is what the developers say about the transformational experience at the bottom of the U:

At the bottom of the U, lies an inner gate that requires us to drop everything that isn't essential. This process of letting-go (of our old ego and self) and letting-in (our highest future possibility: our Self) establishes a subtle connection to a deeper source of knowing. The essence of Presencing is that these two selves, our current self and our best future self, meet at the bottom of the U and begin to listen and resonate with each other. Once a group crosses this threshold, nothing remains the same. Individual members and the group as a whole begin to operate with a heightened level of energy and sense of future possibility. Often they then begin to function as an intentional vehicle for an emerging future.

In Gurmata, this is Naam - the process, the practice and the destination. Here is where a Sikh, through the practice and inversion transforms from a Manmukh to a Gurmukh by apprehending directly the truth of Gurbani, *Man toon jot sarūp hain, āpnā mool pachhān*.

There dawns an awakening that there is a remarkable power (Naam in Gurbani) that runs through everything and is latent in the individual well. Outwardly, a Gurmukh life may appear conventional, but inwardly, a very different consciousness is now at work. A Gurmukh does not live simply for individual goals or accomplishments - biological, social, political or economic - but is inspired by a higher or larger purpose, and acts as an instrument of Hukam to create a new "social blueprint" or social order that is characterised by Halemi Raj.

Realising or Hukam

We have seen that it is by turning to the Guru that we obtain the discernment of naam, the key that unlocks the secret of Hukam. In fact, Hukam and Naam are synonymous in Gurbani. Once an individual goes through the proverbial eye of the needle at the bottom of the U, an awareness of Hukam, labeled on the upper right of the U, surfaces. One discerns a deeper and more extensive source of Reality that is largely insulated from direct human experience or comprehension. There is also the discernment that Hukam is the creative or regulatory agency that operates at all levels of existence. In today's terms, we could, perhaps, think of Hukam as the spiritual impulse that drives evolution of the species, regulates the natural order, establishes the moral and ethical framework, and exists in us as the sense of self.

This impulse or drive can be seen as the intersection of the formless God (*nirgun*) and expressed in time and history as creation (*sar gun*). Although Hukam is ultimately beyond the comprehension of the human intellect, it lies within the range of human experience. There is embedded in us another knowing or understanding that surpasses the intellect and it is to this mystical faculty that we must turn to understand Hukam. This knowledge, (also called a priori knowledge by western philosophers) is with us from birth in a dormant state (forgotten, or *Vismaran*) but can be brought to surface by the process of recollection (*Simran*).

Hukam is the Future that is seeking to emerge.

Becoming a Sikh

Becoming a Sikh, then, involves a deliberate choice and a fundamental shift in focus and orientation: from being a believer to a seeker of Truth; from claiming Sikhi as a birthright to becoming a student – as the term Sikh implies. It requires stepping outside the margins of acquired belief and embarking on a pilgrimage of self-discovery, travelling on the path of metamorphosis bringing about an inner change in orientation from being a Manmukh to a Gurmukh.

An authentic Sikh's life can thus be likened to a lifelong alchemic process of apprenticeship to the Guru where psychological lead (*manmukh*) is cast in the mould of love to become spiritual gold (*Gurmukh*). In constructing the picture of an ideal person in *Gurmat* – a *Gurmukh* – we have seen that by choosing the right orientation (*liv* vs. *dhat*) and invoking the power of attentive listening (also referred to as *dhian*), a *Gurmukh's* consciousness finds its inner centre where the writ of *Hukam* becomes clear.

Hukam becomes the lighthouse by providing clarity of purpose and direction as it guides us across the sea of life. The practice of attentive listening cultivates a *Gurmukh's* inner environment (consciousness) so that virtues like compassion, contentment and service can flower and bloom. Combined with 'bhao' or the self-

regulating restraint and discipline that manifests as inner devotion and love of God – these form the foundation and the roadmap of a *Gurmukh's* life.

A *Gurmukh*, then, is guided by *Hukam* as it plays out in our individual lives and acts out of a sense of *Dharam* – duty and righteousness – and is imbued with inner devotion in service to society and love of God.

Experiences like *vismaad* (awe and wonderment), *bairāg* (inner withdrawal) and *biraah* (separation), are feelings that perceived as necessary components of spiritual formation. These experiences or feelings should be viewed as markers on the road to becoming a *Gurmukh* – a goal that we should all aspire to.

What is new and unique about a *Gurmukh* is a fundamental change in the structure and process of identity formation. A *Gurmukh's* identity is not frozen or stuck in some semblance of a given 'social' character. A *Gurmukh's* identity is fluid and mobile, more susceptible and adaptable to change, more open to variation. A *Gurmukh's* identity is not based on any 'belongingness' to the tribe. It is not tribal. It is universal in that it is committed to similarities as much as differences. A *Gurmukh's* identity is not totally a part or apart from the inherited culture. A *Gurmukh* is at once new and old, traditional and modern.

I would like dwell on some of the implications of this. While it is the individual who is wrestling with himself, this is by no means something to be done in isolation from the world.

I have not dwelt on the right side of the U, which is the social manifestation of a *Gurmukh's* action. The implication is that personal mastery (as represented on the left side of the U) must, after passing through the bottom switch to the right side. In other words, spiritual formation that does not find social manifestation is just narcissism.

A Sikh must be a socially active Renunciate.

Ravinder Singh



Ravinder Singh spent his formative years in Singapore and Delhi and has lived in the US since 1976. He graduated from the Simon School of Management at the University of Rochester. He has worked with multinationals in Singapore, London and New York and currently works for a Financial Services company. His consuming passion is Sikhs and Sikhi in all its flavours and dimensions. Founder and convener of the Talking Stick, a weekly online colloquium devoted to a dialogue around Gurbani that appears on the online magazine, Sikhchic.com. Ravinder Singh has served as the Executive Director of the Sikh Research Institute and is currently on its Board of Directors. He is also on the Editorial Board of *Khoj Gurbani*, an online crowd-sourcing platform that aims to provide Sikhs with educational resources. He moderates a weekly online discussion on Gurbani and *Gurmat*. Since 1997, he has lived in Westerville, Ohio, with his wife, Harjit and his daughter, Simran.

Jeevan Mukta



The concept of Mukti in Sri Guru Granth Sahib

In order to understand the concept of *mukti* in Gurbani, we first need to understand the overall context in which *mukti* and related concepts have been discussed in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. A foundational principle enunciated in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, including in the first *pauri* of Jap ji Sahib is that our spiritual journey is the journey of our *surat*, our consciousness, and not that of our physical body. This important principle underlies various aspects of our spiritual mission.

In response to a question from the yogis, Guru ji said:

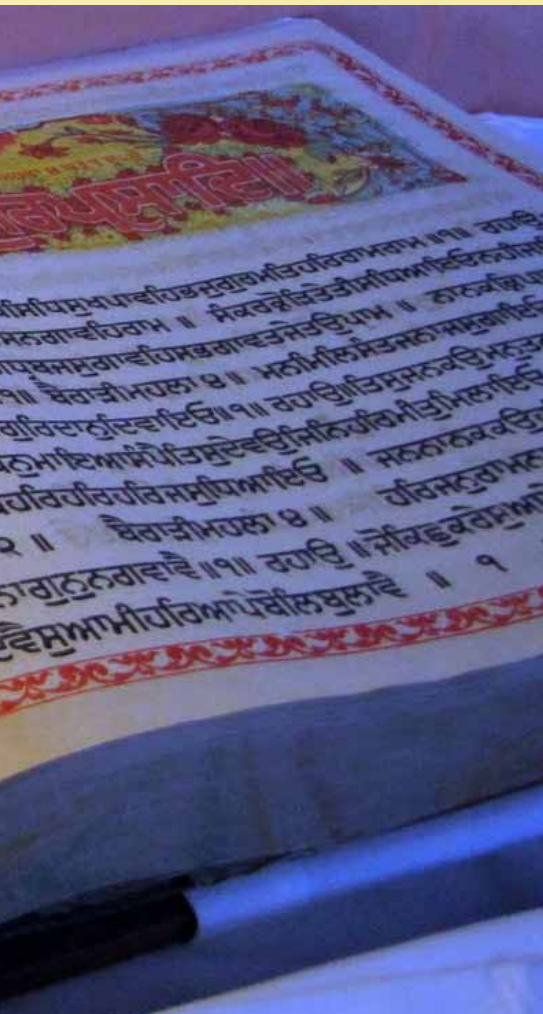
**ਪਵਨ ਅਰੰਭੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਮਤਿ ਵੇਲਾ ॥ ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ
ਸੁਰਤਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਚੇਲਾ ॥...॥੪੪॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 943}**

*The air marks the beginning of life.
This life is the time to follow True
Guru's Teachings. The Shabad is
the Guru, and my consciousness the
disciple.*

Neither our Guru (*shabad*), nor the follower (*surat*), is a physical body. Thus it is for our *surat* to undertake the spiritual journey, not for our body.

In addition, all our spiritual striving, including the focus of all our prayers, meditation, and adoration, is related to the Creator itself, and not to any creation. This is independent of whether something has been created directly by the Creator (such as the Stars, the Sun, the Moon, various animals and other living beings, or inanimate objects), or it has been crafted or established by humans or other animals, such as buildings, idols, a specific language, caste, various religious traditions, or other divisions among humanity. The above principles

form the framework for all aspects of our spiritual life, including irrelevance of rituals, the meaning



of Guru's darshan and naam simran, the approach to mukti, the mukti itself, and ultimately the concept of being one with Waheguru.

The concept of mukti in Sikhi

In Sikhi, mukti means liberation from maya and the vices that control us.

ਏਕ ਨਗਰੀ ਪੰਚ ਚੋਰ ਬਸੀਅਲੇ ਬਰਜਤ ਚੋਰੀ ਧਾਵੇ ॥ ਤਿਹਦਸ ਮਾਲ ਰਖੇ ਜੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਮੇਖ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਸੇ ਪਾਵੇ ॥੧॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 503}

In the one village of the body, live the five thieves; they have been warned, but they still go on stealing. One who keeps his spiritual assets safe from the three modes and the ten passions,

O Nanak, attains liberation and emancipation.

ਬੰਧਨ ਕਾਟਿ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਜਨੁ ਭਇਆ ॥ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਨ ਦੂਖ ਭ੍ਰਮੁ ਗਇਆ ॥...॥੩॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 289}

The bonds of the humble servant are cut away, and he is liberated. The pains of birth and death, and doubt are gone.

ਕਾਮਿ ਕ੍ਰੋਧਿ ਲੋਭਿ ਮੋਹਿ ਮਨੁ ਲੀਨਾ ॥ ਬੰਧਨ ਕਾਟਿ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਗੁਰਿ ਕੀਨਾ ॥੨॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 804}

The mind is engrossed in sexual desire, anger, greed and emotional attachment. Breaking these bonds, the Guru has liberated me.

Mukti: while we are still alive

In many traditions, *mukti* and related concepts, like heaven and hell, are generally related to what happens to us after we die, i.e., after we leave our body. However, according to Sri Guru Granth Sahib, *mukti* is a goal for our *surat*, and not that of our body. Since it is what our *surat* has to achieve, it can be achieved by the actions of our *surat* and not those of our body. And since it is liberation from *maya* and the vices that control us, this liberation can be achieved while we are alive. It is not something that would be granted to us after we die if we perform some designated rituals or live our life in a prescribed way.

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਭੇਟਿਐ ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੁਗਤਿ ॥ ਹਸਦਿਆ ਖੇਲਦਿਆ ਪੈਨਦਿਆ ਖਾਵਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ॥੨॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 522}

O Nanak, meeting the True Guru, one comes to know the Perfect Way. While laughing, playing, dressing and eating, he is liberated.

In fact, many shabads in Sri Guru Granth Sahib directly emphasise that mukti is not something that is granted to us after our death.

ਬਾਕਾ ਤੇਜੁ ਉਡਿਆ ਮਨੁ ਪੰਥੀ ਅਰਿ ਅੰਗਨਿ ਨ ਸੁਖਾਈ ॥ ਬੇਈ ਕਰੈ ਸੁਨਹੁ ਰੇ ਭਗਤਹੁ ਮਰਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕਿਨਿ ਪਾਈ ॥੫॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 93}

Your light has gone out, and the bird of your mind has flown away; you are no longer welcome in your own home and courtyard. Says Baynee, listen, O devotee: who has ever attained liberation after death?

ਮੁਏ ਹੂਏ ਜਉ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਦੇਹੁਗੇ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਨੈ ਕੋਇਲਾ ॥...॥੨॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 1292}

If You grant liberation after the death, none will even know about such liberation.

ਜਉ ਤੁਮ ਮੇ ਕਉ ਦੂਰਿ ਕਰਤ ਹਉ ਤਉ ਤੁਮ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਬਤਾਵਹੁ ॥ ਏਕ ਅਨੇਕ ਹੋਇ ਰਹਿਓ ਸਗਲ ਮਹਿ ਅਬ ਕੈਸੇ ਭਰਮਾਵਹੁ ॥੧॥ ਰਾਮ ਮੇ ਕਉ ਤਾਰਿ ਕਹਾਂ ਲੈ ਜਈ ਹੈ ॥ ਸੋਧਉ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕਹਾ ਦੇਉ ਕੈਸੀ ਕਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦੁ ਮੇਹਿ ਪਾਈ ਹੈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਤਾਰਨ ਤਰਨੁ ਤਬੈ ਲਗੁ ਕਰੀਐ ਜਬ ਲਗੁ ਤਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥ ਅਬ ਤਉ ਬਿਮਲ ਭਟੇ ਘਟ ਹੀ ਮਹਿ ਕਰਿ ਕਬੀਰ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥੨॥੫॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 1104}

If You keep me away from You, then tell me, what is liberation? You, the One, dwell within all of us assuming many forms; how can You confuse me now? || 1 || Waheguru, where will You take me, to save me? Tell me where, and what sort of liberation shall You give me? By Your Grace, I have already obtained it. || 1 || Pause || As long as people don't understand the essence of reality, they talk of salvation and being saved. I have now become pure within my heart, says Kabeer, and my mind is pleased and appeased. || 2 ||

Death as spiritual death, not physical death

The concept of *mukti*, which is the aim of our *surat* and not that of our body, is related to the concept of being spiritually alive. At many places, SGGGS enunciates the fact that it is spiritual death, and not the physical death of our body, that is of consequence in our spiritual journey.

ਆਖਾ ਜੀਵਾ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਉ ॥...॥੧॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 9}

Remembering Waheguru, I live;

forgetting Waheguru, I die.

**ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਤਾਂ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਬੀਵੈ
ਹਰਿਆ ॥੧॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 1429}**

*O Nanak, if I am blessed with the
Naam, I live, and my body and mind
blossom forth.*

Thus keeping our conscious
attuned to Waheguru is critical to
being spiritually alive. At the same
time, being attuned to Waheguru is
all that is needed to achieve mukti:

**ਉਹੁ ਧਨਵੰਤੁ ਕੁਲਵੰਤੁ ਪਤਿਵੰਤੁ ॥ ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ
ਜਿਸੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਭਗਵੰਤੁ ॥...॥੮॥੨੩॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 294}**

*He is wealthy and prosperous, and
of noble birth; he is Jeevan Mukta –
liberated while yet alive; in whose
heart the Lord God abides.*

Viewing it from these points of
view, mukti is linked to the state of
being spiritually alive as we course
through our life, rather than to the
state of being bodily dead.

Sacrificing our 'self'

In a similar way, the act of
sacrificing ourselves, or of giving
up our head, also relates to our
surat, rather than to our body or to
our physical head. In fact, giving
up our 'self' is critical to adopting
Guru's message and to living in
Waheguru's will.

**ਤੇ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੀ ਬਾਤ ਜਿ ਆਖੈ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਿਆ
ਦੀਜੈ ॥ ਸੀਸੁ ਵਢੇ ਕਰਿ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਵਿਣੁ ਸਿਰ
ਸੇਵ ਕਰੀਜੈ ॥...॥੧॥੩॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 557-558}**

*One who brings me a message from
my Lord and Master says Nanak,
what shall I offer him? Cutting off my
head, I shall offer it to him to sit upon;
renouncing my 'self', I shall serve
Him.*

**ਸੁਣਿ ਯਾਰ ਹਮਾਰੇ ਸਜਣ ਇਕ ਕਰਉ ਬੇਨਤੀਆ
॥ ਤਿਸੁ ਮੇਰਨ ਲਾਲ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਹਉ ਫਿਰਉ
ਖੇਜਤੀਆ ॥ ਤਿਸੁ ਦਸ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰੀ
ਉਤਾਰੇ ਇਕ ਭੇਰੀ ਦਰਸਨੁ ਦੀਜੈ ॥...॥੧॥ {ਪੰਨਾ
703}**

*Listen, O my close friend – I have
just one prayer to make. I have been
wandering around, searching for that*

*enticing, sweet Beloved. Whoever
leads me to my Beloved I would cut off
my head and offer it to him, even if I
were granted the Blessed Vision of His
Darshan for just an instant.*

In addition, such offer of
sacrifice, or total surrender, is
not in exchange for any demand,
including the demand for mukti,
as that would make it a trade.
Instead, it is the expression of
pure unconditional love for, and
devotion to, one's beloved.

Since Waheguru communicates
to us in the language of
unconditional and boundless love...

**ਸਾਚਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਾਚੁ ਨਾਇ ਭਾਖਿਆ ਭਾਉ ਅਪਾਰੁ
॥...॥੪॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 2}**

*Waheguru is eternal, Waheguru's
logic is eternal; Waheguru's language
is boundless love*

...it is such complete,
unconditional love for, and devotion
to, Waheguru and Waheguru's Will
that rids us of our attachments and
other afflictions.

**ਜਉ ਹਮ ਬਾਧੇ ਮੇਰ ਫਾਸ ਹਮ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਬਧਨਿ ਤੁਮ
ਬਾਧੇ ॥ ਅਪਨੇ ਛੂਟਨ ਕੇ ਜਤਨੁ ਕਰਹੁ ਹਮ ਛੂਟੇ
ਤੁਮ ਆਰਾਧੇ ॥੧॥ ਮਾਧਵੇ ਜਾਨਤ ਰਹੁ ਜੈਸੀ ਤੈਸੀ
॥ ਅਬ ਕਰਾ ਕਰਹੁਗੇ ਐਸੀ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ {ਪੰਨਾ
658}**

*While I had been bound by the noose
of emotional attachment, I have
bound You with the bonds of my
love. How would You escape from
this bond of love, Lord; I have escaped
by worshipping and adoring You.
O'Lord, You know my love for You.
Now, what will You do?*

Even hell and heaven are not
physical places that we go to after
our death

Gurbani refers to heaven in a
similar manner as mukti:

**ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸ ਮਹਿ ਆਸ ਨਿਵਾਰਹੁ ॥ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ
ਰਾਮੁ ਸਮਾਰਹੁ ॥ ਜੀਵਤ ਪਾਵਹੁ ਮੇਖ ਦੁਆਰ
॥ ਅਨਭਉ ਸਬਦੁ ਤਤੁ ਨਿਜੁ ਸਾਰ ॥੧॥ {ਪੰਨਾ
343}**

*Give up your hopes (on fasting,
ritualistic bathing etc.) on the day of
the new moon. Remember the Lord,
the Inner-knower. You shall attain the
Gate of Liberation while yet alive. You
shall experience Shabad, Waheguru's
Word, and the essence of your own
inner being.*

**ਸਰਬ ਬੈਰੁਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਮੇਖ ਪਾਏ ॥ ਏਕ ਨਿਮਖ
ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਏ ॥...॥੮॥੨੦॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 290}**

*Everything is obtained: the heavens,
liberation and deliverance, if one sings
the Lord's Glories even for an instant.*

If mukti, or heaven, were to be
granted to us only after death, then
what would be the meaning of such
attainment through ਏਕ ਨਿਮਖ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ
ਗੁਨ ਗਾਏ (singing Waheguru's praises
for even a moment), since ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਗੁਨ
ਗਾਏ is possible only when we are
physically alive? For example, if we
surmise that singing Waheguru's
praises at this time would qualify
us for mukti or heaven after our
death, then what would be the
consequences of our irresponsible
actions once we have attained
such early-admission to post-death
mukti or heaven?

The above also brings up
another related concept, that to sing
Waheguru's praises does not refer
to a physical activity. If that were
the case, then one could simply
call Waheguru to be great ("ਹਰਿ ਕੇ
ਗੁਨ ਗਾਏ"), for just a moment ("ਏਕ
ਨਿਮਖ"), and achieve mukti ("ਸਰਬ
ਬੈਰੁਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਮੇਖ ਪਾਏ"). The connotation
of 'hir ky gun gwey' is to be attuned
to Waheguru, i.e., for our conscious,
our surat, to be completely imbued
with the essence of Waheguru, as
in:

**ਹਰਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਭਿੰਨੇ ਲੇਇਣਾ ਮਨੁ ਪ੍ਰੇਮਿ ਰਤਨਾ
ਰਾਮ ਰਾਜੇ ॥ ਮਨੁ ਰਾਮਿ ਕਸਵਟੀ ਲਾਇਆ ਕੰਚਨੁ
ਸੇਵਿਨਾ ॥ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਰੀਗਿ ਚਲੁਲਿਆ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨੁ
ਤਨੇ ਭਿੰਨਾ ॥ ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਮੁਸਕਿ ਝਕੇਲਿਆ ਸਭੁ
ਜਨਮੁ ਧਨੁ ਧੰਨਾ ॥੧॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 448-449}**

*My eyes are drenched with the Nectar
of the Lord, and my mind is imbued*

with His Love, O' Lord King. The Lord applied His touch-stone to my mind, and turned it into pure gold. By following the Guru, I have been dyed in the deep red of the poppy, and my mind and body are drenched with His Love. Servant Nanak is drenched with His Fragrance; blessed, blessed is his entire life.

Attaining mukti

As mentioned above, attaining mukti refers to achieving liberation from *maya* and the vices that control us. It is generally very difficult to liberate ourselves from these afflictions.

ਮਾਇਆ ਮਮਤਾ ਛੋਡੀ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥ ਸੇ ਛੂਟੇ ਸਚੁ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਈ ॥...॥੧॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 1024}

Love and attachment to Maya cannot be abandoned. They alone find release, who practice deeds of Truth.

ਹਉ ਵਿਚਿ ਮੁਰਖੁ ਹਉ ਵਿਚਿ ਸਿਆਣਾ ॥ ਮੇਖ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕੀ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਜਾਣਾ ॥...॥੧॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 466}

In ego they are ignorant, and in ego they are wise. They do not know the value of salvation and liberation.

Our misled attempts to attain mukti

In our attempt to attain mukti or heaven we often follow an approach that has been practiced over centuries. It involves actions and rituals associated with our body. However, Sri Guru Granth Sahib emphatically cautions us that such an approach does not work, because anything done at the level of our physical body is irrelevant to attaining a state of mukti or of being in heaven. Waheguru is not naïve to mistake our ablutions and other bodily actions as achievements of our conscious.

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਮੇਲੁ ਜੇ ਤੀਰਥ ਨਾਵੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਬੇਰੁਠਨ ਨ ਜਾਨਾਂ ॥ ਲੋਕ ਪਤੀਏ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਹੋਵੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਰਾਮੁ ਅਯਾਨਾ ॥੧॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 484}

With filth within the heart, even if one

bathes at sacred places of pilgrimage, still, he shall not go to heaven. Nothing is gained by trying to please others – the Lord cannot be fooled.

However, we still keep engaging in such ineffective rituals at the level of our bodies, whether it is observing fasts, dipping in sarovars (bodies of water) or fulfilling the duty of reading Gurbani as an obligation, without living our life according to the message of Gurbani or without even paying attention to what we are reading. We should realise that many of us do engage in rituals that are contrary to the message of Gurbani.

ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਪਾਖੰਡ ਜੇ ਦੀਸਹਿ ਤਿਨ ਜਮੁ ਜਾਗਾਤੀ ਲੂਟੇ ॥ ਨਿਰਬਾਣ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਕਰਤੇ ਕਾ ਨਿਮਖ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਜਿਤੁ ਛੂਟੇ ॥੧॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 747}

The religious rites, rituals and hypocrisies that are seen, are plundered by the Messenger of Death, the ultimate tax collector. Without any desires in return, sing the Kirtan of the Creator's Praises; contemplating Waheguru in meditation, even for an instant, one is saved.

ਅੰਨੁ ਨ ਖਾਇਆ ਸਾਦੁ ਗਵਾਇਆ ॥ ਬਹੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਦੂਜਾ ਭਾਇਆ ॥...॥੨॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 467}

One who does not eat, misses out on the taste. One experiences great pain, in the love of duality.

ਨਾਵਹਿ ਧੋਵਹਿ ਪੂਜਹਿ ਸੈਲਾ ॥ ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਤੇ ਮੇਲੇ ਮੇਲਾ ॥ ਗਰਬੁ ਨਿਵਾਰਿ ਮਿਲੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਾਰਥਿ ॥ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਜਪਿ ਹਰਿ ਕਿਰਤਾਰਥਿ ॥੩॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 904}

You bathe, wash, and worship stones. But without being imbued with the Lord, you are the filthiest of the filthy. Subduing your ego, you shall receive the supreme guidance of God. Meditating on the Lord, the mortal is liberated.

ਬੇਦ ਕਤੋਬ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਸਭਿ ਸਾਸਤ ਇਨ੍ਹ ਪੜਿਆ ਮੁਕਿਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥...॥੩॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 747}

One may read all the books of the

Vedas, the Bible, the Smritees and the Shaastras, but they will not bring liberation.

Mukti cannot be achieved as a barter in exchange for specific deeds

Anything done with the expectation that we would get mukti defeats the very purpose, because by definition it becomes a trade, or a barter deal.

ਧਰਮੀ ਧਰਮੁ ਕਰਹਿ ਗਾਵਾਹਿ ਮੰਗਹਿ ਮੇਖ ਦੁਆਰੁ ॥...॥੨॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 469}

The righteous waste their righteousness, by seeking the door of salvation.

ਕਿਰਿਆਚਾਰ ਕਰਹਿ ਖਟੁ ਕਰਮਾ ਇਤੁ ਰਾਤੇ ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ॥ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਮੇਲੁ ਨ ਉਤਰੈ ਹਉਮੈ ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਬਾਜੀ ਹਾਰੀ ॥੧॥ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਕੁਰ ਰਖਿ ਲੇਵਹੁ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਧਾਰੀ ॥ ਕੋਟਿ ਮਧੇ ਕੇ ਵਿਰਲਾ ਸੇਵਹੁ ਹੋਰਿ ਸਗਲੇ ਬਿਉਹਾਰੀ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 495}

They perform the four rituals and six religious rites; the world is engrossed in these. They are not cleansed of the filth of their ego within; without the Guru, they lose the game of life. || 1 || O' my Lord and Master, please, grant Your Grace and preserve me. Out of millions, hardly anyone is a servant of the Lord. All the others are mere traders.

Does it mean that we should not live by the Naam, or engage in sewa etc? We should, but not because we want something in return. We should do so because we feel love for it, because we get joy in it by itself, because it comes natural to us.

ਰਾਜੁ ਨ ਚਾਹਉ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਚਾਹਉ ਮਨਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਚਰਨ ਕਮਲਾਰੇ ॥...॥੧॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 534}

I do not seek power, and I do not seek liberation. My mind is in love with Your Lotus Feet.

ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ਸੁਣੀ ਦਾਤਾਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਢਾਢੀ ਕਉ ਮਹਲਿ ਬੁਲਾਵੈ ॥ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਦੇਖਦਿਆ ਦੁਖ ਭੁਖ ਗਈ ਢਾਢੀ ਕਉ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ॥...॥੮॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 1097}

God, the Great Giver, heard the prayer, and summoned the minstrel to the Mansion of His Presence. Gazing upon God, the minstrel was rid of all pain and hunger; he could not think of anything else to ask.

**ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸਾਖੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਬਾਣੀ ਪੀਵਤ ਹੀ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ
ਭਇਆ ॥ ਦਰ ਦਰਸਨ ਕਾ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ
ਬੈਰੁਨੈ ਕਰੈ ਕਿਆ ॥੩॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 360}**

The Teachings of the Guru, the Ambrosial Bani, drinking them in, one becomes accepted. Unto the one who loves the Lord's Court, and the Blessed Vision of His Darshan, of what use is liberation or paradise?

What does help in achieving mukti?

Such unconditional love and devotion, as mentioned above, comes to us with Guru's bakhshish. We can then be liberated from our spiritual afflictions.

**ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੁ ਕਮਾਏ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਉ
ਸਦ ਹੀ ਰਹੈ ਸਮਾਏ ॥ ਗੁਰ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਤੇ ਮਿਲੈ
ਵਡਿਆਈ ਹਉਮੈ ਰੋਗੁ ਨ ਤਾਰਾ ਹੇ ॥੮॥ {ਪੰਨਾ
1058}**

One who lives the Word of the Guru's Shabad becomes Jeevan Mukta – liberated while yet alive. He remains forever immersed in the Lord. By Guru's Grace, one is blessed with glorious greatness; he is not afflicted by the disease of egotism.

**ਨਾਨਕ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਅਤਿ ਨੀਕਾ ਨਾਨੁ ਹੋਇ ਸੁ
ਜਾਇ ॥ ਹਉਮੈ ਮਨੁ ਅਸਬੁਲੁ ਹੈ ਕਿਉ ਕਰਿ ਵਿਚੁ
ਦੇ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਹਉਮੈ ਗਈ ਜੇਤਿ
ਰਹੀ ਸਭ ਆਇ ॥ ਇਹੁ ਜੀਉ ਸਦਾ ਮੁਕਤੁ ਹੈ
ਸਰਜੇ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਇ ॥੨॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 509-510}**

O'Nanak, the gate of liberation is very narrow; only the very tiny can pass through. Through egotism, the mind has become bloated. How can it pass through? Meeting the True Guru, egotism departs, and one is filled with the Divine Light. Then, this soul is liberated forever, and it remains absorbed in celestial bliss.

**ਤਜਿ ਅਭਿਮਾਨ ਮੋਰ ਮਾਇਆ ਫੁਨਿ ਭਜਨ ਰਾਮ
ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਵਉ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਹਤੁ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਪੰਥ ਇਹੁ
ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹੋਇ ਤੁਮ ਪਾਵਉ ॥੨॥੫॥ {ਪੰਨਾ
219}**

Renounce your egotistical pride and your emotional attachment to Maya; focus your consciousness on the Lord's meditation. Says Nanak, this is the path to liberation. Attain it by following the Guru.

Once we are liberated from our spiritual afflictions, we attain freedom from suffering in our life. In fact, the very distinction between what we generally consider suffering or happiness just disappears.

**ਦੁਖੁ ਸੁਖੁ ਏ ਬਾਧੇ ਜਿਹ ਨਾਹਨਿ ਤਿਹ ਤੁਮ ਜਾਨਉ
ਗਿਆਨੀ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਤਾਹਿ ਤੁਮ ਮਾਨਉ
ਇਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਕੇ ਜੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ॥੩॥੧॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 220}**

Those who are not bound by pleasure and pain – know that they are truly wise. O'Nanak, recognise those mortal beings as liberated, who live this way of life.

Such a state of mukti is achievable in our very life, and it does not need us first leaving our body. There are several examples from the life of our Gurus and other Gursikhs. When Guru Arjan Dev was tortured, it is not just that he was able to bear such brutal torture. He had achieved such spiritual heights that suffering did not matter to him. He had attained the rare state of surat where all there was to it was Waheguru's Will.

**ਤੇਰਾ ਕੀਆ ਮੀਨਾ ਲਾਗੈ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਪਦਾਰਥੁ
ਨਾਨਕੁ ਮਾਂਗੈ ॥੨॥੪੨॥੮੩॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 394}**

Your actions are sweet to me. Nanak seeks the treasure of the Naam, the Name of the Lord.

With Guru's bakhshish, we can rise above all distinctions between good and bad. Living in Waheguru's Will becomes a natural part of our being, our very existence.

**ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਆਤਮ ਹਿਤਾਵੈ ॥ ਜੀਵਨ
ਮੁਕਤਿ ਸੇਊ ਕਹਾਵੈ ॥ ਤੇਸਾ ਹਰਖੁ ਤੇਸਾ ਉਸੁ
ਸੋਗੁ ॥ ਸਦਾ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਤਹ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਓਗੁ ॥ ਤੇਸਾ
ਸੁਵਰਨੁ ਤੇਸੀ ਉਸੁ ਮਾਟੀ ॥ ਤੇਸਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਤੇਸੀ
ਬਿਖੁ ਖਾਟੀ ॥ ਤੇਸਾ ਮਾਨੁ ਤੇਸਾ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ ॥ ਤੇਸਾ
ਰੰਗੁ ਤੇਸਾ ਰਾਜਾਨੁ ॥ ਜੇ ਵਰਤਾਏ ਸਾਈ ਜੁਗਤਿ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਓਹੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਕਹੀਐ ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ॥੧॥
{ਪੰਨਾ 275}**

One who, in his soul, loves the Will of God, is said to be Jeevan Mukta – liberated while yet alive. As is joy, so is sorrow to him. He is in eternal bliss, and is not separated from God. As is gold, so is dust to him. As is ambrosial nectar, so is bitter poison to him. As is honour, so is arrogance. As is the beggar, so is the king. Whatever God ordains, that is his way. O Nanak, that being is known as Jeevan Mukta.



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ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ
ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ
ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

To die while living, every moment

ਸੂਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ਘਰੁ ੭ ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥
ਗਲੀ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥
ਏਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਕਰਿ ਸਮਸਾਰਿ ਜਾਣੈ, ਜੋਗੀ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੋਈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਜੋਗੁ ਨਾ ਖਿੰਬਾ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਡੰਡੈ, ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਭਸਮੁ ਚੜਾਈਐ ॥
ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਮੁੰਦੀ ਮੁੰਡਿ ਮੁਡਾਇਐ, ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਸਿੰਛੀ ਵਾਈਐ ॥
ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ, ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਐ ॥੧॥
ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਮੜੀ ਮਸਾਣੀ, ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਤਾੜੀ ਲਾਈਐ ॥
ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਦੇਸਿ ਦਿਸੰਤਰਿ ਭਵਿਐ, ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਈਐ ॥
ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ, ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਐ ॥੨॥
ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਭੇਟੈ ਤਾ ਸਹਸਾ ਤੂਟੈ, ਧਾਵਤੁ ਵਰਜਿ ਰਹਾਈਐ ॥
ਨਿਝਰੁ ਝਰੈ ਸਹਜ ਧੁਨਿ ਲਾਗੈ, ਘਰ ਹੀ ਪਰਚਾ ਪਾਈਐ ॥
ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ, ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਐ ॥੩॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀਵਤਿਆ ਮਰਿ ਰਹੀਐ, ਐਸਾ ਜੋਗੁ ਕਮਾਈਐ ॥
ਵਾਜੇ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਸਿੰਛੀ ਵਾਜੈ, ਤਉ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਪਦੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥
ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ, ਜੋਗ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਤਉ ਪਾਈਐ ॥੪॥

Anak, jevtyaa mar rahiye, aisa jog kamaaiye.
Part of the last verse of this beautiful shabad of Guru Nanak, this message recommends living and dying as confluent processes,

and in fact, as an attribute of union with the divine. Unlike our usual thinking of living and dying as opposing, this shabad posits not only the possibility of their conflux, but their convergence as an ideal state. What is this manner of living, and this manner of dying? How can one be in both simultaneously? And what is that ideal state of their confluence? In this article, I explore the message in Sri Guru Granth Sahib of this simultaneous living and dying, and then reflect on what that might mean in practical terms, every day, every moment.

Looking at this shabad in detail, one can see a number of features that bring together the theme of divine union. The shabad is in raag *Suhi*, the raag of many shabads in Guru Granth Sahib that speak of love and union with the divine. The shabads of the laavaan portion of the Anand Karaj wedding ceremony, and the preceding milni (meeting) of families, are chants (6-line verse-form) in Suhi. Shabads sung in engagement ceremonies are often from the Suhi section of Guru Granth Sahib. One finds under Suhi, shabad sub-headings such as *Goonvunttee* (virtuous) and *Soochujjee* (pure), and also *Koochujjee* (unworthy), all in reference to divine love.



The theme of this particular shabad is *jog* – divine union. The rahao lines state that divine union cannot be attained by mere talk. It requires the recognition of the One in all, and the upholding of all to the same One standard. The first three verses emphasise that rituals too are ineffective means. It is rather by staying virtuous in a world steeped in vice that divine union is attained. In the last verse, Guru Nanak describes the state of divine union as one of dying while living, and one where the unsounded, sounds.

What is this dying while living, and why is it an attribute of divine union?

The following shabad by Guru Arjan in raag *Maru*, describes fruitful living in detail.

ਜੀਵਨਾ ਸਫਲ ਜੀਵਨ, ਸੁਨਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਪਿ ਜਪਿ ਸਦ ਜੀਵਨਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ॥
 ਪੀਵਨਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਮਨੁ ਆਘਾਵੈ, ਨਾਮੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਰਸੁ ਪੀਵਨਾ ॥੧॥
 ਖਾਵਨਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਭੂਖ ਨ ਲਾਗੈ, ਸੰਤੋਖਿ ਸਦਾ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤੀਵਨਾ ॥੨॥
 ਪੈਨਣਾ ਰਖੁ ਪਤਿ ਪਰਮੇਸੁਰ, ਫਿਰਿ ਨਾਗੇ ਨਹੀ ਬੀਵਨਾ ॥੩॥
 ਭੋਗਨਾ ਮਨ ਮਧੇ ਹਰਿ ਰਸੁ, ਸੰਤ ਸਸੰਗਤਿ ਮਹਿ ਲੀਵਨਾ ॥੪॥
 ਬਿਨੁ ਤਾਗੇ ਬਿਨੁ ਸੁਈ ਆਨੀ, ਮਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਭਗਤੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਸੀਵਨਾ ॥੫॥
 ਮਾਤਿਆ ਹਰਿ ਰਸ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਤੇ, ਤਿਸੁ ਬਹੁਤਿ ਨ ਕਬਹੂ ਅਉਖੀਵਨਾ ॥੬॥
 ਮਿਲਿਓ ਤਿਸੁ ਸਰਬ ਨਿਧਾਨ, ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਲਿ ਦਿਸੁ ਦੀਵਨਾ ॥੭॥
 ਸੁਖੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੰਤਨ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ, ਚਰਣ ਸੰਤ ਧੋਇ ਪੀਵਨਾ ॥੮॥

[Note: rather than English translations of Gurbani, I am using my interpretations.]

Living is to always hear and meditate the divine. Rahao
 Drinking is of divine nectar that satisfied the heart-mind-soul. 1

Eating is that which brings lasting contentment. 2

Wearing is that which is respectful in the divine view. 3

Enjoyment is of divine essence in the company of the virtuous. 4

Attaching of the heart-mind-soul is to divine worship. 5

Intoxication is of divine essence, everlasting. 6

All these, obtained through divine grace. 7

Nanak, peace is in imbibing virtues and serving the virtuous. 8

To live, then, is to be in a process where the *mun*n (heart-mind-soul) can be nourished and nurtured with divine qualities. Indeed, Gurbani tells us: *mun*n, too *jot saroop hai*, that our *mun*n is the very embodiment of the divine. It is this *jot-saroop mun*n, which is equally in all of us, that needs to live, to shine forth.

And what is to die, while living? That too is with respect to our *mun*n. In Sorath, Guru Amar Das guides us:

ਸਬਦਿ ਮਰਹਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਜੀਵਹੁ ਸਦ ਹੀ ਤਾ ਫਿਰਿ ਮਰਣੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ

Dying in the shabad, live forever, never to die again

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਦਾ ਮਨਿ ਮੀਨਾ ਸਬਦੇ ਪਾਵੈ ਕੋਈ ॥

Divine qualities forever sweeten the heart-mind-soul, but few embody.

And in Maajh, he tells us:

ਸ਼ਬਦਿ ਮਰੈ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਰੈ ਅਪੁਨਾ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਕਾ ਦਰੁ ਪਾਵਣਿਆ ॥

To obtain liberation is to merge the heart-mind-soul in Shabad.



ਕਿਲਵਿਖ ਕਾਟੈ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਨਿਵਾਰੇ ॥

It is to eliminate vices and fury.

ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਰਖੇ ਊਰ ਧਾਰੇ ॥

It is to embody Shabad.

ਸ਼ਚਿ ਰਤੇ ਸਦਾ ਬੈਰਾਗੀ ਹਉਮੈ ਮਾਰਿ ਮਿਲਾਵਣਿਆ ॥

It is to be immersed in truth, to eradicate materialism and egotism.

Thus, to die is to merge the heart-mind-soul in Shabad, and that is also to live forever, to attain liberation and divine union. It is to immerse the munn in divine virtues, and eliminate vices, fury and egotism. In other words, the dying is of the egotistical munn, the haumai-

munnn, driven by the five thieves of *kaam-krodh-lobh-moh-ahankaar*.

The process of dying while living entails the overcoming of our haumai-munn and the nurturing of our jot-saroop munn. Not only are the two aspects of this process simultaneously possible, they are mutually reinforcing. The more one overcomes the humai-munn, the more the jot-saroop munn can blossom forth, leading toward divine union. This, as I see it, is the message of Gurbani in the words *Nanak, jeevteyaa mar rahiye*.

Applying this message in our daily lives requires practicing divine attributes, such as *Sat, Santokh, Dya, Sanjam, Nirbhau, and Nirvair*. Such practice is required



in each and every day-to-day thought and action, and is of course, far from easy. As Guru Nanak says in Asa, So Dar:

ਆਖਿਣ ਅਉਖਾ ਸਾਚਾ ਨਾਉ ॥

Not easy, to always speaks/practice true divine qualities.

Personally I have found it immensely effective to always keep in mind Guru Arjan's lead: *Guru merai sung sada hai naale* – the Guru is always with me. Thinking of the Guru as always by me, not only watching me but enveloping and supporting me, gives me tremendous strength and courage to attempt the rightful, especially when it involves talking truth to power.

Going back to the Shabad, this paper started with, and the line from which the paper title is drawn: *Nanak, jeevateyaa mar rahiye, aisa jog kamaaiye*, I turn now to focus on the two verbs here – *rahiye* and *kamaaiye*. *Rahiye* emphasises a continuous process : to keep on doing it, to make it a habit. *Kamaaiye* stresses that one needs to earn it, and work at like a job, with the same sort of energy and dedication required to achieve competence and excellence there. This continuous effort should be such that ultimately doing the righteous thing becomes intuitive and automatic.

I use the metaphor of decolonising munn. Our munn gets colonised by materialistic priorities and webs of power play. It gets colonised by *kaam-krodh-lobh-moh-ahankar*. The haume-munn colonises the jot-sarop munn. As a result our humanity gets colonised. This happens at individual and societal levels. Our Guru Sahibaa's lives and teachings were dedicated to the development of virtuous individuals and ethical societies. The achievement of this goal requires each societal member to inculcate discernment (between right and wrong) along with non-discrimination (across identity vectors such as economic class, race, gender and sexuality). It requires that the jot-sarop munn in each person be equally acknowledged, but also that each person be upheld to the same ethical standard. Only then can there be hope for a just and egalitarian society, something that our gurus gave up their lives for.



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Conquer One's Own Mind

How to win the war within!

The Guru Granth Sahib teaches us the gurmata way to win a battle or overcome any dilemmas raging within one. This is the purpose of human life which we cannot accomplish in non-human births (*joon*).

ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਜੇਨਿ ਸਬਾਈ ॥

Out of all the 8.4 million species of beings,

ਮਾਣਸ ਕਉ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਦੀਈ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥

God blessed mankind with glory.

ਇਸੁ ਪਉੜੀ ਤੇ ਜੇ ਨਰੁ ਚੁਕੈ ਸੇ ਆਇ ਜਾਇ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਦਾ ॥੨॥

That human who misses this chance, shall suffer the pains of coming and going in reincarnation. || 2 ||

If we lose this chance, we will be reincarnated again and again. Only a few realise that this life gives us an opportunity. Most people lose the battle before they even start fighting. Their lives remain controlled by the five evils (*vikars*) as they remain unable to hear their inner voice.

Under the influence of the five evils, people cannot differentiate between right and wrong. Evils overpower the mind and one doesn't recognise the light of truth within, when in reality, the mind is the pure light of truth (*jot saroop*). This is akin to a puddle of mud wherein one sees only the mud. Similarly, you only see the five evils, not the pure mind.

Guru Sahib reassures us that it is difficult but we can win the mind.

ਬਿਖਮੇ ਬਿਖਮੁ ਅਖਾੜਾ ਮੇ ਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿ ਜੀਤਾ ਰਾਮ ॥

Meeting the Guru, I have won the most arduous battle in the arena of life.

ਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿ ਜੀਤਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਤਾ ਭੂਟੀ ਭੀਤਾ ਭਰਮ ਗੜਾ ॥

Meeting the Guru, I am victorious; praising the Lord, Har, Har, the walls of the fortress of doubt have been destroyed.

ਪਾਇਆ ਖਜਾਨਾ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਨਿਧਾਨਾ ਸਾਣਬ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਪਿ ਖੜਾ ॥

I have obtained the wealth of so many treasures; the Lord Himself has stood by my side.

What exactly do we mean by 'controlling the mind'? The mind is not the body comprising nerves, skeleton, bone or blood so how does one control it? According to Gurmata, controlling the mind is purifying the mind and cleansing it of negativity.

ਕਬੀਰ ਮਨੁ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਭਇਆ ਜੈਸਾ ਗੰਗਾ ਨੀਰੁ ॥

Kabeer, my mind has become immaculate, like the waters of the Ganges.

ਪਾਛੇ ਲਾਗੇ ਹਰਿ ਫਿਰੇ ਕਹਤ ਕਬੀਰ ਕਬੀਰ ॥੫੫॥

The Lord follows after me, calling, "Kabeer! Kabeer!" || 55 ||

Control of the mind means redirecting it from the five evils towards spiritual awareness (*atma bibek*). It is like sculpting the mind, back to its original pure form (*nij ghar*). Bhai Randhir Singh says, "When selfish (*mayavi*) thoughts are abolished, one can see the glimmer of pure inner soul." In other words:

ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਸਰੋਵਰਿ ਨਾਤੇ ॥

Bathing in the nectar tank of Ram Das,

ਸਭਿ ਉਤਰੇ ਪਾਪ ਕਮਾਤੇ ॥

All sins are erased.

ਨਿਰਮਲ ਹੋਏ ਕਰਿ ਇਸਨਾਨਾ ॥

One becomes immaculately pure, taking this cleansing bath.

ਗੁਰਿ ਪੂਰੇ ਕੀਨੇ ਦਾਨਾ ॥੧॥

The Perfect Guru has bestowed this gift. || 1 ||

Another expression for this process is to 'kill our mind.' That is abolishing self-derived intelligence (*manmat*). As long as we are listening to our own mind, our lifestyle is influenced by it, and we remain *manmukh*. When we follow gurmata in our life, then all our actions will intuitively be in accordance to its tenets. Guru Sahib says:

ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਆਵੈ ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਜਾਵੈ ॥

The self-willed manmukh comes, and the self-willed manmukh goes.

ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਚੇਟਾ ਖਾਵੈ ॥

The manmukh suffers beatings again and again.

ਜਿਤਨੇ ਨਰਕ ਸੇ ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਭੋਗੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਲੇਪੁ ਨ ਮਾਸਾ ਹੇ ॥੧੨॥

The manmukh endures as many hells as there are; the Gurmukh is not even touched by them. ||12||

The intelligence of the manmukh mind is incomplete. Nothing useful will come of discussions and debates and we will always be reincarnating.

ਚੇਰੀ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੀਸੈ ॥

He serves the maid, and does not see his Lord and Master.

ਪੇਖੁਰੁ ਨੀਰੁ ਵਿਚੇਲੀਐ ਮਾਖਨੁ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੀਸੈ ॥੧॥

Churning the water in the pond, no butter is produced. ||7||

Butter will never come from churning water. Similarly nothing will emerge from an unclean mind. But before we sculpt the mind, we should understand its properties. If somebody wants to make a sculpture in iron, they need to understand the properties of iron. We have to heat the iron, strike it hard and only then we can mould the ore into a sharp sword.

The mind includes a never-ending mix of thoughts, concepts and desires, influenced by five evils. They continue even when we sleep. We see them in our dreams.

But the mind seems identical to the soul. Guru Sahib says that our mind comes through many births. It is a reflection of the soul.

ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਕੇਤਕਿਆ ਜੁਗ ਭਰਮਿਆ ਥਿਰੁ ਰਹੇ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇ ॥

Having wandered through so many ages, the mind continues coming and going.

ਸਲੋਕੁ ਮ॥ ੩ ॥

Shlok, Third Mehl:

ਜਨਮ ਜਨਮ ਕੀ ਇਸੁ ਮਨ ਕਉ ਮਲੁ ਲਾਗੀ ਕਾਲਾ ਹੋਆ ਸਿਆਹੁ ॥

The filth of countless incarnations sticks to this mind; it has become pitch black.

ਖੰਨਲੀ ਧੋਤੀ ਉਜਲੀ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜੇ ਸਉ ਧੋਵਣਿ ਪਾਹੁ ॥

The oily rag cannot be cleaned by merely washing it, even if it is washed a hundred times.

ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਜੀਵਤੁ ਮਰੇ ਉਲਟੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਮਤਿ ਬਦਲਾਹੁ ॥

By Guru's grace, one remains dead while yet alive; His intellect is transformed, and he becomes detached from the world.

ਨਾਨਕ ਮੇਲੁ ਨ ਲਗਈ ਨਾ ਫਿਰਿ ਜੇਨੀ ਪਾਹੁ ॥੧॥

O Nanak, no filth sticks to him, and he does not fall into the womb again. ||1||

With Guru's kripa, the intellect is transformed. Then no more filth sticks to the mind, and one is free from reincarnation. Gurbani helps us understand the original form of the mind (jot saroop).

ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥

O my mind, you are the embodiment of the Divine Light – recognise your own origin.

The mind is dirty and we have to unsoil it – really cleanse it. There is only one cleanser: Naam, Shabad, Akaal Purakh. Discussion by myriad manmukhs will not clean their minds, just as rubbing dirty clothes together will not clean them. The filth may simply transfer from one to the other. Without soap they will not get clean. Maharaj says;

ਭਰੀਐ ਮਤਿ ਪਾਪਾ ਕੇ ਸਾਗਿ ॥

But when the intellect is stained and polluted by sin,

ਉਹੁ ਧੋਏ ਨਾਵੇ ਕੇ ਰਾਗਿ ॥

it can only be cleansed by the Love of the Name.

.....

ਸਹਸੈ ਜੀਉ ਮਲੀਣੁ ਹੈ ਕਤਿ ਸੰਜਮਿ ਧੋਤਾ ਜਾਏ ॥

The soul is polluted by scepticism; how can it be cleansed?

ਮੰਨੁ ਧੇਵਹੁ ਸਬਦਿ ਲਾਗਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਉ ਰਹਹੁ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਇ ॥

Wash your mind by attaching it to the Shabad, and keep your consciousness focused on the Lord.

In the beginning, the mind will not agree with us. We will have to force it...

ਕੂਟਨੁ ਸੇਇ ਜੁ ਮਨ ਕਉ ਕੂਟੈ ॥

He alone is a pimp, who pounds down his mind.

ਮਨ ਕੂਟੈ ਤਉ ਜਮ ਤੇ ਛੂਟੈ ॥

Pounding down his mind, he escapes from the Messenger of Death.

ਕੂਟਿ ਕੂਟਿ ਮਨੁ ਕਸਵਟੀ ਲਾਵੈ ॥

Pounding and beating his mind, he puts it to the test;

ਸੇ ਕੂਟਨੁ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਬਹੁ ਪਾਵੈ ॥੧॥

Such a pimp attains total liberation. || 1 ||

Social courtesies dictate that one should not upset others. Even if someone is drinking poison in front of us, but rather than stopping them we let them continue. We have to shoot arrows of truth to pierce our intellectual shield.

ਕਬੀਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸੂਰਮੇ ਬਾਹਿਆ ਬਾਨੁ ਜੁ ਏਕੁ ॥

Kabeer, the True Guru, the Spiritual Warrior, has shot me with His Arrow.

ਲਾਗਤ ਹੀ ਭੁਇ ਗਿਰਿ ਪਰਿਆ ਪਰਾ ਕਰੇਜੇ ਛੇਰੁ ॥੧੯੪॥

As soon as it struck me, I fell to the ground, with a hole in my heart. || 194 ||

This is the nature of the Gurbani of Satguru ji. This was not initiated by the mind. Akaal Purakh himself sent it from his court.

ਇਹ ਬਾਣੀ ਮਹਾ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੀ ਨਿਜ ਘਰਿ ਵਾਸਾ ਹੋਇ ॥੪੦॥

This is the Bani of the Supreme Being; through it, one dwells within the home of his inner being. || 40 ||

No philosophy, intelligence, or knowledge originating from the mind can make the mind pure or can dwell within the home of the inner being, neither can it sculpt the mind. We cannot win our mind without quitting our own intellect. We have to surrender our mind, our intelligence and our knowledge. until we have reached that level;

ਤੂ ਸਮਰਥੁ ਵਡਾ ਮੇਰੀ ਮਤਿ ਥੋਰੀ ਰਾਮ ॥

You are great and all-powerful; my understanding is so inadequate, O' Lord.

Until that time, the light of Guru Sahib's knowledge will not dwell within us.

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਇਸੁ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਕਰਮਿ ਵਸੈ ਮਨਿ ਆਏ ॥੧॥

Gurbani is the Light to illuminate this world; by His Grace, it comes to abide within the mind. || 1 ||

Gurbani's recitation, meditation, and singing (kirtan) are the techniques by which we discipline the mind.

In this battle of the mind, the devil is said to be at war with the saint. Somebody asked a noble person that in the battle between two wrestlers (good and evil), who would win the war? The noble person answered that 'whosoever we feed properly, will win the war'. You become what you eat. Similarly in case of the mind, thoughts and ideas emerge from what we watch, read, speak or whom we interact with. If we watch movies and programmes with sexual and violent content all the time, or if we gossip all the time, what kind of mind would that become? With sangat of Gursikhs, listening to Gurbani and katha vichaar, what kind of mind will it become? Feed the mind properly to win. Bhai Gurdas says:

Akhee vaekh n rajeeaa bahu ra(n)g thamaasae ||

The eyes are not satisfied with beholding sights and exhibitions

Ousathath ni(n)dhaa ka(n)n sun rovan thai haasae ||

The ears are not satisfied with hearing praise or blame, mourning or rejoicing.

Saadhee(n) jeebh n rajeeaa kar bhog bilaasae ||

The tongue is not satisfied with eating what affords pleasure and delight.

Nak n rajaa vaas lai dhuraga(n)dhh suvaasae ||

The nose is not contented with good or evil odour.

Raj n koe jeeviaa koorrae bharavaasae ||

Nobody is satisfied with is span of life, and everyone entertains false hopes.

Peer mureedhaa(n) pireharree sachee reharaasae || 9 ||

But the Sikhs are satisfied with the Guru and theirs is the true Love and delight.(9)

Actually, the mind always wants to remain unsatisfied and hence it keeps on reincarnating. We have to tighten the reigns of the mind. The mind can roam around the globe in seconds. Kabeer Jee says;

ਗਉੜੀ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ ॥

Gauree, Kabeer Jee:

ਦੇਇ ਮੁਹਾਰ ਲਗਾਮੁ ਪਹਿਰਾਵਉ ॥

I have grasped the reins and attached the bridle;

ਸਗਲ ਤ ਜੀਨੁ ਗਗਨ ਦਉਰਾਵਉ ॥੧॥

Abandoning everything, I now ride through the skies. || 1 ||

ਅਪਨੇ ਬੀਚਾਰਿ ਅਸਵਾਰੀ ਕੀਜੇ ॥

I made self-reflection my mount,

ਸਹਜ ਕੇ ਪਾਵੜੇ ਪਗੁ ਧਰਿ ਲੀਜੇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

And in the stirrups of intuitive poise, I placed my feet. || 1 || Pause ||

ਚਲੁ ਰੇ ਬੈਰੁੰਨ ਤੁਝਹਿ ਲੇ ਤਾਰਉ ॥

Come, and let me take you to heaven.

ਹਿਚਹਿ ਤ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕੇ ਚਾਬੁਕ ਮਾਰਉ ॥੨॥

If you hold back, then I shall strike you with the whip of spiritual love. || 2 ||

ਕਹਤ ਕਬੀਰ ਭਲੇ ਅਸਵਾਰਾ ॥

Says Kabeer, those are the best riders,

ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬ ਤੇ ਰਹਹਿ ਨਿਰਾਰਾ ॥੩॥੩੧॥

Who remain detached from the Vedas, the Koran and the Bible. || 3 || 31 ||

Sant Kabeer is talking about that spiritual state where the mind's reigns have been tightened.

ਚਰਣ ਚਰਣ ਚਰਣ ਗੁਰ ਸੇਵੇ ਅਘੜੁ ਘੜਿਓ ਰਸੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਥਾ ॥੩॥

I serve the feet, the feet, the feet of the Guru, and manage the unmanageable. I have found the nectar, the sublime essence. || 3 ||

ਸਹਜੇ ਆਵਾ ਸਹਜੇ ਜਾਵਾ ਸਹਜੇ ਮਨੁ ਖੇਲਾਇਆ ਥਾ ॥

Intuitively I come, and intuitively I go; my mind intuitively plays.

The mind has reached the heaven of the inner being.

The five *vikaars*, lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego, are extremely powerful. Many religious people have vainly tried to win them over, control them and even stop them. They have failed because they used the efforts of the body instead of the mind to win them over. Or they have used their own intellect. This way the mind remains unconquered in duality. Only Gurmat naam, simran and gurbani can conquer the mind.

ਬਸੰਤੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੯ ॥

Basant, Ninth Mehl:

ਪਾਪੀ ਹੀਐ ਮੇ ਕਾਮੁ ਬਸਾਇ ॥

The heart of the sinner is filled with unfulfilled sexual desire.

ਮਨੁ ਚੰਚਲੁ ਯਾ ਤੇ ਗਹਿਓ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

He cannot control his fickle mind. || 1 || Pause ||

ਜੋਗੀ ਜੰਗਮ ਅਰੁ ਸੰਨਿਆਸ ॥

The Yogis, wandering ascetics and renunciates -

ਸਭ ਹੀ ਪਰਿ ਡਾਰੀ ਇਹ ਫਾਸ ॥੧॥

This net is cast over them all. || 1 ||

ਜਿਹਿ ਜਿਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਮ੍ਹਾਰਿ ॥

Those who contemplate the Name of the Lord

ਤੇ ਭਵ ਸਾਗਰ ਉਤਰੇ ਪਾਰਿ ॥੨॥

Cross over the terrifying world-ocean. || 2 ||

ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਕੀ ਸਰਨਾਇ ॥

Servant Nanak seeks the Sanctuary of the Lord.

ਦੀਜੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਰਹੇ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਇ ॥੩॥੨੨॥

Please bestow the blessing of Your Name that he may continue to sing Your glorious praises. || 3 || 2 ||

Anyone who contemplates the Naam, who sings the Naam, only he can succeed.

ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਲੋਭੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਜੀਤਹੁ ਐਸੀ ਖੇਲ ਹਰਿ ਪਿਆਰੀ ॥੨॥

Conquer sexual desire, anger, greed and worldly attachment; only such a game is dear to the Lord. || 2 ||

Everyday we need to wake up and fight battles of the mind.

ਕਾਮ ਕਰੋਧੁ ਨਗਰ ਮਹਿ ਸਬਲਾ ਨਤਿ ਉਠਿ ਉਠਿ ਜੂਝੁ ਕਰੀਜੇ ॥

Sexual desire and anger are very powerful in the body-village; I rise up to fight the battle against them.

Some say, if we have read Gurbani once and understood its essence, Why the need of reciting the Naam like a parrot, again and again? What benefit can one achieve with simran and kirtan? Oh my dear, this mind is betraying you. Don't we breathe again and again? Don't we eat again and again?

ਹਰਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਭੋਜਨੁ ਨਿਤ ਭੁੰਚਹੁ ਸਰਬ ਵੇਲਾ ਮੁਖਿ ਪਾਵਹੁ ॥

So imbibe the Ambrosial Name of the Lord as your food; put it into your mouth at all times.

ਜਰਾ ਮਰਾ ਤਾਪੁ ਸਭੁ ਨਾਠਾ ਗੁਣ ਗੋਬਦਿ ਨਤਿ ਗਾਵਹੁ ॥੩॥

The pains of old age and death shall all depart, when you constantly sing Glorious Praises of the Lord of the Universe. || 3 ||

The five *vikaars* will prevent and deter you.

ਨਿਤ ਉਠਿ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ॥

Rise early, and sing the Glorious Word of God's Bani.

ਆਠ ਪਹਰ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਹੁ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ॥੨॥

Twenty-four hours a day, meditate in remembrance on the Lord, O'mortal. || 2 ||

ਜੈਸੇ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਕਮਲੁ ਨਿਰਾਲਮੁ ਮੁਰਗਾਈ ਨੈ ਸਾਣੇ ॥

The lotus flower floats untouched upon the surface of the water, and the duck swims through the stream;

ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਭਵ ਸਾਗਰੁ ਤਰੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੇ ॥

With one's consciousness focused on the Word of the Shabad, one crosses over the terrifying world-ocean. O'Nanak, chant the Naam, the Name of the Lord.

In this state of mind, there is little effect of Maya. Actually, in this state, the mind wants to be continuously (*athey peher*) attuned in the celestial sound of Waheguru. If we don't attain this state, then we will always be under the influence of Maya.

Some people always want to use their own concepts of conquering mind as they feel that whatever concept they follow is correct. They use their own mind to understand Gurbani. In reality, they should use concepts of Gurbani to check the direction of their mind.

ਮਨਹਨ ਬੁਧੀ ਕੇਤੀਆ ਕੇਤੇ ਬੇਦ ਬੀਚਾਰ ॥

*There are so many stubborn-minded intelligent people,
And so many who contemplate the Vedas.*

ਕੇਤੇ ਬੰਧਨ ਜੀਅ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮੇਖ ਦੁਆਰ ॥

*There are so many entanglements for the soul. Only as
Gurmukh do we find the Gate of Liberation.*

ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥੫॥

*Truth is higher than everything; but higher still is truthful
living. ||5||*

Guru Sahib states :

ਸਹਸ ਸਿਆਣਪਾ ਲਖ ਹੋਰਿ ਤ ਇਕ ਨ ਚਲੈ ਨਾਲਿ ॥

*Hundreds of thousands of clever tricks, but not even one of
them will go along with you in the end.*

....

ਰੇ ਜਨ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਧਉ ਸਿਉ ਲਾਈਐ ॥

O'humble people, link your mind to the Lord.

ਚਤੁਰਾਈ ਨ ਚਤੁਰਭੁਜੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

*Through cleverness, the four-armed Lord is not found/
begotten. ||Pause||*

ਚਤੁਰਾਈ ਸਿਆਣਪਾ ਕਿਤੇ ਕਾਮਿ ਨ ਆਈਐ ॥

Cunning and cleverness are of no use.

ਤੁਠਾ ਸਾਹਬਿ ਜੇ ਦੇਵੈ ਸੇਈ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥੩॥

*That which the Lord Master gives, by the Pleasure of His
Will – that is pleasing to me. ||3||*

ਜੇ ਲਖ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਈਅਹਿ ਕਛਿ ਪਵੈ ਨ ਬੰਧਾ ॥

*One may perform tens of thousands of actions, but
attachment to things is not satisfied.*

ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੀਤਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਰ ਹੋਰੁ ਛੋਡਿਆ ਧੰਧਾ ॥੪॥੧॥੧੦੩॥

*Servant Nanak has made Naam his support. He has
renounced other entanglements. ||4||1||103||*

This cleverness and cunning nature is of the mind. With such a state, it is difficult to leave manmat and attain gurnat. It is easier to bring an innocent person to gurnat.

The Guru Granth Sahib states :

ਪਾਇਓ ਬਾਲ ਬੁਧਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਰੇ ॥

Adopting the innocent mind of a child, I have found peace.

....

ਧੰਨੈ ਸੇਵਿਆ ਬਾਲ ਬੁਧਿ ॥

Dhanna served the Lord, with the innocence of a child.

ਤ੍ਰਿਲੋਚਨ ਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿ ਭਈ ਸਿਧਿ ॥

*Meeting with the Guru, Trilochan attained perfection of
the Siddhas.*

Childlike innocence is very important. If we want to sculpt our minds, then we need to practice Gurshabad, simran, kirtan and praise the Lord. There is no other way.

ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਮਨੁ ਜੀਤਿਆ ਗਤਿ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਘਰੈ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਇ ॥

*Through Word of the Guru's Shabad, the mind is conquered
and one attains the State of Liberation in one's own home.*

It is not easy to win over the mind; we need to surrender to the Guru Granth Sahib, we need to request again and again. We need to forego our ego and self respect and beg in front of Waheguru.

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

Gauree, Fifth Mehlā :

ਰਾਖੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਮੇਰੇ ॥

Save me, O'My Father God.

ਮੇਰਿ ਨਿਰਗੁਨੁ ਸਭ ਗੁਨ ਤੇਰੇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

*I am worthless and without virtue; all virtues are Yours.
||1||Pause||*

ਪੰਚ ਬਿਖਾਦੀ ਏਕੁ ਗਰੀਬਾ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਰਾਖਨਹਾਰੇ ॥

*The five vicious thieves are assaulting my poor being; save
me, O'Savior Lord!*

ਖੇਦੁ ਕਰਹਿ ਅਰੁ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਸੰਤਾਵਹਿ ਆਇਓ ਸਰਨਿ ਤੁਹਾਰੇ ॥੧॥

*They are tormenting and torturing me. I have come seeking
Your sanctuary. ||1||*

ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਹਾਰਿਓ ਅਨਿਕ ਬਹੁ ਭਾਤੀ ਛੋਡਹਿ ਕਤਹੂੰ ਨਾਹੀ ॥

*Trying all sorts of things, I have grown weary, but still,
they will not leave me alone.*

ਏਕ ਬਾਤ ਸੁਨਿ ਤਾਕੀ ਓਟਾ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਿ ਮਿਟਿ ਜਾਹੀ ॥੨॥

*But I have heard that they can be rooted out, in Saadh
Sangat, the Company of the Holy; and so I seek their
Shelter. ||2||*

ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸੰਤ ਮਿਲੇ ਮੇਰਿ ਤਿਨ ਤੇ ਧੀਰਜੁ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

*In their Mercy, the Saints have met me, and from them, I
have obtained satisfaction.*

ਸੰਤੀ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਦੀਓ ਮੇਰਿ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਕਮਾਇਆ ॥੩॥

*The Saints have given me the Mantra of the Fearless Lord,
And now I practice the Word of the Guru's Shabad. ||3||*

ਜੀਤਿ ਲਏ ਓਇ ਮਹਾ ਬਿਖਾਦੀ ਸਹਜ ਸੁਹੇਲੀ ਬਾਈ ॥

*I have conquered those terrible evil-doers, and my speech is
now sweet and sublime.*

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਨਿ ਭਇਆ ਪਰਗਾਸਾ ਪਾਇਆ ਪਦੁ ਨਿਰਬਾਣੀ

॥੪॥੪॥੧੨੫॥

*Says Nanak, the Divine Light has dawned within my mind;
I have obtained the state of Nirvana. ||4||4||125||*

Guru Sahib states in the Gurbani :

ਸਲੋਕੁ ॥

Shlok:

ਫਾਰੇ ਕਾਟੇ ਮਿਟੇ ਗਵਨ ਫਤਿਹ ਭਈ ਮਨਿ ਜੀਤ ॥

*The noose of death is cut, and one's wanderings cease;
Victory is assured, when one conquers once's mind.*

ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਥਤਿ ਪਾਈ ਫਿਰਨ ਮਿਟੇ ਨਿਤ ਨੀਤ ॥੧॥

O'Nanak, eternal stability is obtained from the Guru, and

one's day-to-day wanderings cease. || 1 ||

We need to concentrate on one more aspect of self-discipline. Where Guru Sahib talks about winning the mind, he also talks about winning the soul.

In Gurbani appears as thus:

ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕਉ ਸਿਮਰਹਿ ਤਿਨ ਆਤਮੁ ਜੀਤਾ ॥

Those who remember God conquer their souls.

ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕਉ ਸਿਮਰਹਿ ਤਿਨ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਗੀਤਾ ॥

Those who remember God have a pure and spotless lifestyle.

....

ਸਲੋਕੁ ॥

Shlok:

ਆਤਮੁ ਜੀਤਾ ਗੁਰਮਤੀ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਏ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ॥

The soul is conquered, through the Guru's Teachings, singing the Glories of God.

ਸਤੰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦੀ ਭੈ ਮਿਟੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਿਨਸੀ ਚਿੰਦ ॥੧੫॥

By Grace of the Saints, fear is dispelled, O'Nanak, and anxiety is ended. || 15 ||

ਸਾਧਸੰਗੇ ਨਾਮ ਰੰਗੇ ਰਣੁ ਜੀਤਿ ਵਡਾ ਅਖਾੜਾ ॥

In the Saadh Sangat, imbued with the Naam, the Name of the Lord, I am victorious on the great battlefield of life.

ਬਿਨਵੀਤਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਣਿ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਬਹੁੜਿ ਜਮਿ ਨ ਉਪਾੜਾ ॥੪॥੩॥੧੨॥

Prays Nanak, I have entered Sanctuary of the Lord and Master; the Messenger of Death shall not destroy me again. || 4 || 3 || 12 ||

To win, we need the sangat of Gursikhs imbued in gurmata naam. This is the reason we have to work seriously towards regular sangat of Gursikhs imbued in naam. Guru Sahib assures us :

ਸੇ ਹਰਿ ਸਰਣਾਈ ਛੁਟੀਐ ਜੇ ਮਨ ਸਿਉ ਜੁਝੈ ॥

He alone is emancipated in Sanctuary of the Lord, who struggles with his own mind.

ਮਿਨ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਪੁ ਕਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਦਰਗਹ ਸੀਝੈ ॥੧੧॥

One who contemplates and meditates on the Lord in his mind, succeeds in the Court of the Lord. || 11 ||

....

ਤਨਿ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਲਾਇ ਚਾਬਰੁ ਮਨੁ ਜਿਣੈ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜੀਤਿਆ ॥

Applying the whip of the Lord's Love to his body, the Gurmukh conquers his mind, and wins the battle of life.

ਅਘੜੇ ਅੜਾਵੇ ਸਬਦੁ ਪਾਵੈ ਅਪਿਉ ਹਰਿ ਰਸੁ ਪੀਤਿਆ ॥

He trains his untrained mind with the Word of the Shabad, and drinks the rejuvenating essence of the Lord's Nectar.

Even in the light of Gurbani, manmukhs do not tend to agree.

Guru Sahib states;

ਮ ੩ ॥

Third Mehla :

ਮਨਮੁਖੁ ਲੇਰੁ ਸਮਝਾਈਐ ਕਦਰੁ ਸਮਝਾਇਆ ਜਾਇ ॥

The self-willed manmukhs may be taught, but how can They really be taught?

ਮਨਮੁਖੁ ਰਲਾਇਆ ਨਾ ਰਲੇ ਪਇਐ ਕਿਰਤਿ ਫਿਰਾਇ ॥

The manmukhs do not fit in at all. Because of their past Actions, they are condemned to the cycle of reincarnation.

ਲਿਵ ਧਾਤੁ ਦੁਇ ਰਾਹ ਹੇ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਇ ॥

Loving attention to the Lord and attachment to Maya are The two separate ways; all act according to the Hukam of The Lord's Command.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਆਪਣਾ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਸਬਦਿ ਕਸਵਟੀ ਲਾਇ ॥

The Gurmukh has conquered his own mind, by applying The Touchstone of the Shabad.

ਮਨ ਹੀ ਨਾਲਿ ਝਗੜਾ ਮਨ ਹੀ ਨਾਲਿ ਸਥ ਮਨ ਹੀ ਮੰਝਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥

He fights with his mind, he settles with his mind, and he is At peace with his mind.

ਮਨੁ ਜੇ ਇਛੇ ਸੇ ਲਹੈ ਸਚੇ ਸਬਦਿ ਸੁਭਾਇ ॥

All obtain the desires of their minds, through the Love of The True Word of the Shabad.

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਦ ਭੁੰਚੀਐ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਇ ॥

They drink in the Ambrosial Nectar of the Naam forever; This is how the Gurmukhs act.

ਵਣਿ ਮਨੈ ਜਿ ਹੋਰੀ ਨਾਲਿ ਲੁਝਣਾ ਜਾਸੀ ਜਨਮੁ ਗਵਾਇ ॥

Those who struggle with something other than their own Mind, shall depart having wasted their lives.

ਮਨਮੁਖੀ ਮਨਹਠਿ ਹਾਰਿਆ ਕੂੜੁ ਕੁਸਤੁ ਕਮਾਇ ॥

The self-willed manmukhs, through stubborn-mindedness And the practice of falsehood, lose the game of life.

ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਮਨੁ ਜਿਣੈ ਹਰਿ ਸੇਤੀ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਇ ॥

Those who conquer their own mind, by Guru's Grace, Lovingly focus their attention on the Lord.

ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਵੈ ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇ ॥੨॥

O Nanak, the Gurmukhs practice Truth, while the self-Willed manmukhs continue coming and going to and from This world in reincarnation. || 2 ||

Guru Sahib states;

ਮਨੁ ਮਾਰੇ ਧਾਤੁ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਇ ॥

When someone kills and subdues his own mind, his Wandering nature is also subdued.

ਬਿਨੁ ਮੁਏ ਕੇਸੇ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇ ॥

Without such a death, how can one find the Lord?

ਮਨੁ ਮਰੇ ਦਾਰੂ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਇ ॥

Only a few know the medicine to kill the mind.

ਮਨੁ ਸਬਦਿ ਮਰੇ ਬੂਝੈ ਜਨੁ ਸੋਇ ॥੧॥

One whose mind dies in the Word of the Shabad, Understands Him. || 1 ||

When we win the mind, then the Gurmukh says;

ਹਉ ਗੋਸਾਈ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਲਵਾਨੜਾ ॥



*Through age after age, I am the
servant of the Merciful Lord.*

ਗੁਰਿ ਕਟੀ ਮਿਹੜੀ ਜੇਵੜੀ ॥

*The Guru has cut away my
bonds.*

**ਹਉ ਬਾਹੁੜਿ ਛਿੰਝ ਨ ਨਚਉ
ਨਾਨਕ ਅਉਸਰੁ ਲਧਾ ਭਾਲਿ ਜੀਉ
॥੨੧॥੨॥੨੯॥**

*I shall not have to dance in the
wrestling arena of life again.*

*Nanak has searched, and
found this opportunity.
||21||2||29||*

To see the Waheguru or to
hear the Waheguru is not the
subject of the five senses, nor
is it of the intellect. If we ask
someone to smell with the
eyes, to see with the tongue,

to speak with the ears, this is obviously not possible?
Every sense has its own function. The eyes cannot see
the impulse of the phone, the ears cannot hear the sound
of information crossing the internet. *Dasam dwar* is not
the subject of the five senses. This is a subject of the inner
being (soul). And for this :

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

*If the individual soul has faith in the Supreme Soul, then it
shall obtain realisation within its own home.*

ਮਨਿ ਜੀਤੇ ਜਗੁ ਜੀਤੁ ॥

Jarnail Singh



Jarnail Singh, the Journalist was born
in Delhi in 1973. After a Master's
degree in Political Science from
PGDAV College, he completed a
diploma in journalism from the
YMCA in 1994. He worked for
15 years in National Media and
covered Parliament, Defence, National Human Rights
commission, various ministries and political parties. He
has written extensively on the Sikh pogrom of 1984 and
its aftermath, including the books "I accuse - Anti Sikh
violence of 1984" published by Penguin, *Sikh Katleam
Da Sach* (Punjabi), and *Kab Kategi chorasi* (Hindi).

Jarnail Singh continues to create awareness on the
massacre of 1984 and its impact. In the last four years,
he has made more than 300 speeches all over the world
and highlighted issues related to Sikhism including
those of identity, principles and challenges. He actively
participated in European Sikh summit at Paris in 2011
concerning turban-wearing rights of Sikhs worldwide.
He was a special invitee to Global Sikh Conferences
organised by United Sikhs and works to spread Sikhi
throughout India.

I am a wrestler; I belong to the Lord of the World.

ਮੇ ਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿ ਉਚ ਦੁਮਾਲੜਾ ॥

I met with the Guru, and I have tied a tall, plumed turban.

ਸਭ ਹੋਈ ਛਿੰਝ ਇਕਠੀਆ ਦਫੁ ਬੇਠਾ ਵੇਖੇ ਆਪਿ ਜੀਉ ॥੧੭॥

*All have gathered to watch the wrestling match, and the
Merciful Lord Himself is seated to behold it. ||17||*

ਵਾਤ ਵਜਨਿ ਟੰਮਕ ਭੇਰੀਆ ॥

The bugles play and the drums beat.

ਮਲ ਲਖੇ ਲੇਦੇ ਫੇਰੀਆ ॥

The wrestlers enter the arena and circle around.

ਨਿਹਤੇ ਪੰਜਿ ਜੁਆਨ ਮੇ ਗੁਰ ਥਾਪੀ ਦਿਤੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਜੀਉ ॥੧੮॥

*I have thrown the five challengers to the ground, and the
Guru has patted me on the back. ||18||*

ਸਭ ਇਕਠੇ ਹੋਇ ਆਇਆ ॥

All have gathered together,

ਘਰਿ ਜਾਸਨਿ ਵਾਟ ਵਟਾਇਆ ॥

But we shall return home by different routes.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਲਾਹਾ ਲੈ ਗਏ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਚਲੇ ਮੂਲੁ ਗਵਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥੧੯॥

*The Gurmukhs reap their profits and leave, while the
Self-willed manmukhs lose their investment and depart.
||19||*

ਤੂੰ ਵਰਨਾ ਚਿਹਨਾ ਬਾਹਰਾ ॥

You are without colour or mark.

ਹਰਿ ਦਿਸਹਿ ਹਾਜਰੁ ਜਾਹਰਾ ॥

The Lord is seen to be manifest and present.

ਸੁਣਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਤੁਝੇ ਧਿਆਇਦੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਭਗਤ ਰਤੇ ਗੁਣਤਾਸੁ ਜੀਉ ॥੨੦॥

*Hearing of Your Glories again and again, Your devotees
meditate on You; they are attuned to You, O'Lord,
Treasure of Excellence. ||20||*

ਮੇ ਜੁਗਿ ਜੁਗਿ ਦਯੇ ਸੇਵੜੀ ॥



Guru is the Shabad, the Word

The clarion call of the Universal Brotherhood of Mankind (raised by Guru Nanak) is verily the quintessence of the vedantic, biblical, koranic and bhakti (sufi) traditions. The successive alchemy of sacrifice for social equality and generation of self-confidence to oppose tyranny over the next two centuries made the Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh transform an oppressed people into fearless saint-warriors on the Baisakhi of 1699.

Three hundred years after that epochal moment in 1999, was launched the *Nishaan* which was backed by the deep sense of faith of like-minded persons, committed to "preserve, project and propagate the uniqueness and glories of the Khalsa Panth." The need had long been felt for a rallying medium for the Sikh community, in all its diaspora, to have appropriate forum in the global arena. An intelligently planned and well-produced illustrated Journal was conceived to be an effective

means of reaching out to the community and beyond the world over, to be an instrument of inspiration and a standard to exclaim the aspirations and achievements of the Sikhs.

Aim of the *Nishaan* quarterly illustrated journal of the Sikhs has been to continually focus on aspects of the community's success, perpetuate traditions and thus reinforce the faith. The journal particularly seeks to inspire those who are wavering in their confidence of belonging to this unique order as also to project aspirations of the community in the new millennium. Essentially, the *Nishaan* is about the philosophy, people, places and events that have shaped the history of the Sikhs and which will continue to guide their destiny.

Now in its fifteenth year, the *Nishaan* has been blessed by the guidance of its founding editors, including Dr Darshan Singh Maini, Bhayee Sikander Singh, Dr Jaswant Singh Neki, Dr IJ Singh and Bhagwant Singh



Dalawari, the continuing theme being to rejoice in the glorious teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib. Some of their collective wisdom is presented in this paper.

Prof Darshan Singh Maini, in his very first essay for *Nishaan*, 'The Moment of the Khalsa: Vision, Values and World View' elucidated on the veracity and potency of the 'moment' when Sikhism was born. "In the case of Sikhism, we may identify two primal or significant moments - the first when Guru Nanak broke away from the moribund, sacerdotal Hinduism of his day to create a new creed of vision and work, and the second when the wheel of faith came full circle with the formal baptism of the Khalsa by the Last Master" at Anandpur Sahib.

"That moment, then, was the moment of making, of a moment that brought to a heroic conclusion the vast, untapped energies of a people given to a life of labour and endeavour. In other words, all the disparate elements, sects, splinter groups within the Sikh fold were unified into a Commonwealth of the Khalsa".

"At one stroke, all distinctions of caste, birth, colour and degree were abolished. A sword had flashed in the sun, and a community emerged, which was invested with a large humanist dream, given a definitive mandate, and set on the high road of evolution. The subsequent events that shaped the community's Collective Consciousness only authenticated the primal vision, which, coming from Guru Nanak, gathered

energies and fresh dimensions through the successive Gurus, a vision consummated when the Tenth Master closed the chapter of human succession, and made the Adi Granth, compiled earlier by Guru Arjan Dev, the sole authority in matters of doctrines, values, right conduct. The Sikh holy scripture has no parallel in the world so far as its Catholicity and supremacy of song are concerned. It carries not only the bani of the Gurus, but also the compositions of saints and divines owing allegiance to different creeds, languages and cultures. Guru Gobind Singh pronounced the Granth as the Sikhs' guide, mentor and Guru".

The Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh ended the line of living Sikh Gurus by raising the Adi Granth to the status of a Guru to all times. Guru Gobind Singh transmitted Guru Nanak's divine light into the divine Word and declared that after him, the next Guru would be Guru Granth Sahib. He commanded the Sikhs that it was to be revered as the body and spirit of the ten Gurus :

*Agya bhai Akal ki tabhi chalayo Panth.
Sabh Sikhan ko hukam hai Guru manyo Granth.
Guru Granth Ji manyo pargat Guran ki deh.
Jo Prabhu ko milbo chahe khoj shabad mein le.
Raj karega Khalsa aqi rahei na koe,
Khwar hoe sabh milange bache sharan jo hoe.*

Under orders of the Immortal Being, the Panth was created.

All Sikhs are enjoined to accept the Granth as their Guru.

Consider the Guru Granth as an embodiment of the Gurus.

Those who want to meet God, can find Him in its hymns.

The Pure shall rule, and the impure will be no more,

Those separated will unite and all the devotees of the Guru shall be saved. (*Ardas*)

As the Guruship was passed on, Guru Granth Sahib became the embodiment of Divine Light. It should, therefore, be remembered very clearly that bowing before Guru Granth Sahib as Sikhs, is not bowing before a book, but is a bowing before the Divine Light or *Jot* (Guru) which was passed on when the Guruship was conferred upon it. Respect and veneration for Guru Granth does not imply idol worship, but rather respect for a divine message, the ideas and ideals contained in the Sikh scripture. It is the source or a means to the worship of God through His Word, and not an object of worship in itself. Both the Gurus and the Book are accorded the respect because of the bani which they express, the word of divine truth. Bhai Gurdas ji states that "the picture of the Guru is the gurbani" (Bhai Gurdas, Var 24, pauri 11).

Expounding further on the essence of Guru Granth Sahib as the 'institution of succession of Sikh faith and philosophy' and the 'extinction of personality', Guru Nanak's successors propagated submission to the imperatives of the inner self. They affirmed not only the spirit of humility and gratitude, but also the power of the word to become the word, of the message to become the mandate of the vision

to become the incarnate. It was an illumination (*ijyoti*) that proved in action the grand link of God, pontiff and believer, a spiritual bond of Father, messenger and man. It was a divine wheel come full circle!

It is important at this stage to aver that the scriptural finality was not to be taken as the truth embalmed in letter only. The word became a divine message, and the vision flesh when there was a complete harmony between the letter and the spirit. Thus, at the very outset, Sikhism was so primed as to frown upon lifeless rigidities and orthodoxies. In fact, a certain kind of mental resilience, or hospitality to other thoughts was built in the very fabric of the bani. A mere worship of the letter produced in the end one-dimensional, closed communities, whereas Sikhism embraced new thoughts without jettisoning its heritage of insights and values. That is why, in a very special sense, Sikhism remains modern in its outlook. The essentially egalitarian world-view of the Gurus, and the essentially democratic character of all Sikh institutions and bodies set it apart from militant or monolithic religious communities.

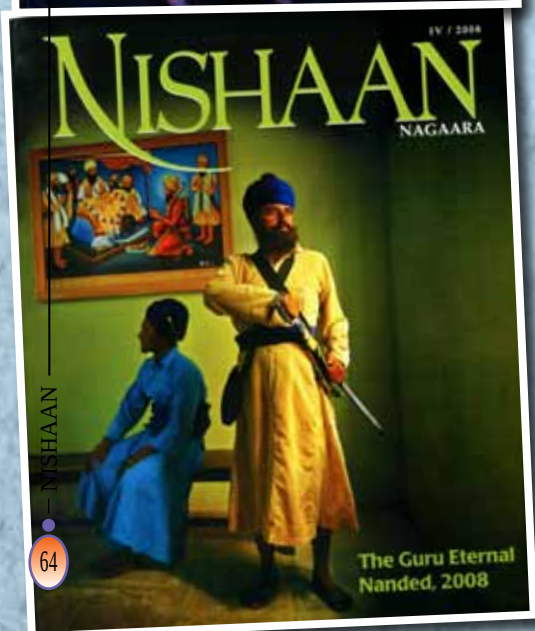
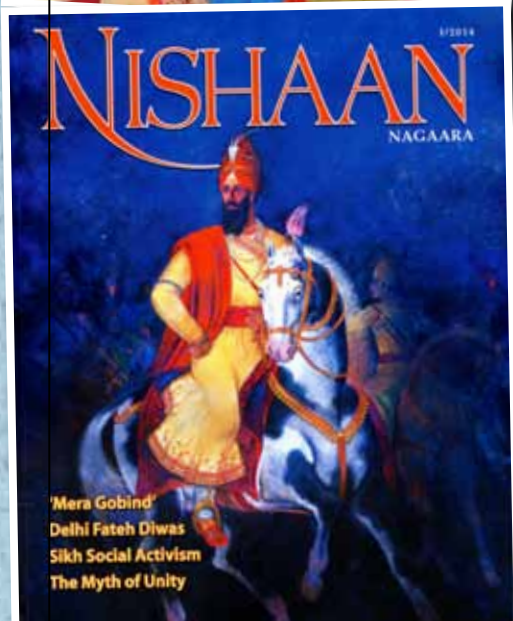
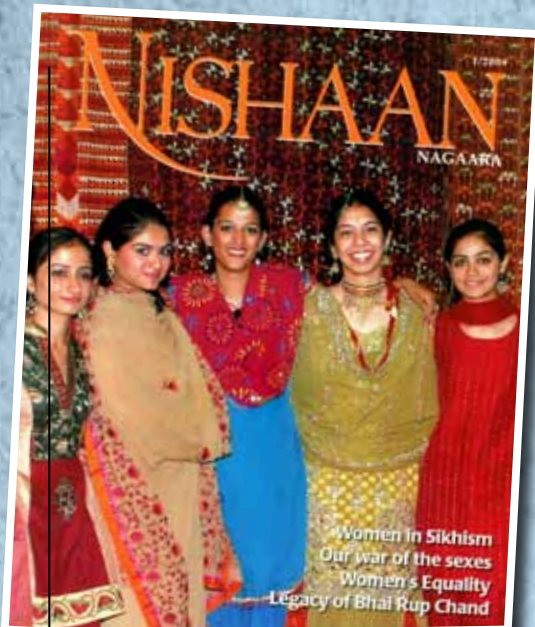
Pertinent to note is the fact that the quantum of literature created by the Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh, both social and spiritual, is almost as expansive as the Guru Granth Sahib. The variety of subjects he chooses is fantastic, from the absolutes of Jaap Sahib and Akal Ustat, to myths of the paths (duly demolished) in Avtaars and sociologically controversial Charitras. His canvas is that of life, as vast and massive as is the universe. There is no subject which he does not address with clinical objectivity.

Above all, Sri Guru Granth Sahib is a remarkable storehouse of

spiritual knowledge and teachings which does not preach any rites or rituals but stresses meditation on the Name of God; salvation can be obtained by means of regular, persistent and disciplined meditation. Most of the hymns are addressed to God and often describe the devotee's condition: his aspirations and yearning, his agony in separation and his longing to be with the Lord. There are no mythological narratives, although God is described in anthropomorphic terms and the Gurus are not afraid to use the imagery of family relationships to describe the union of God and man.

The subject of Guru Granth Sahib is truth: how to become a 'person of truth', that is, an ideal person or gurmukh. As Guru Nanak states in the Mool Mantar, God is the Ultimate Truth and one has to cultivate those qualities which are associated with Him. Through its teachings, the Granth enables humans to lead a purposeful and rewarding life while being members of a society. It seeks universal peace and the good of all mankind. There is not a word in the Guru Granth Sahib that might be derogatory to any other belief or religion. The Guru Granth Sahib also stresses the democratic way of life and equality of all people. It teaches that we are karam yogis, that is we reap what we sow. The emphasis is on moral actions, noble living and working for the welfare of all people.

One of the obviously most distinctive features of the Guru Granth Sahib is that it is the first religious book which contains myriad writings of those belonging to different communities, castes, and diverse regions and faiths across the length and breadth of the country. It incorporates and sanctifies the writings of holy men of different faith. Therefore,



the language of the Granth is a mixture of several languages of India, yet it is written exclusively in Gurmukhi script. Guru Arjan Dev ji, unlike many other religious leaders, did not believe that there is one particular sacred language in the sense that man can pray to God only in that language.

The Granth Sahib contains 937 hymns of 36 Hindu saints, Muslim sufis and bards. The hymns of these holy men cover a period of six centuries (from the 12th to the 17th century). In all gurdwaras and many Sikh homes, the Granth is read every day. No Sikh ceremony is regarded as complete unless it is performed in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib. On a daily basis, Sikhs receive a hukam or divine order in the form of a hymn from the Guru Granth Sahib, either in a Gurdwara or at home. The hukam is the first hymn of the holy book from the left hand page when it is opened at random. Similarly, at the end of a service, after the ardas, the Adi Granth is opened at will and a portion read. Many Sikhs do this daily, regarding the verses as words from God which they will find helpful during the day. This is called vak lao, taking advice.

On special occasions, the Granth Sahib is recited non-stop from cover to cover by a string of readers. This continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib is known as an akhand path. It is regarded as the highest and the noblest ceremony in the Sikh religion, and can be performed on any important occasion; it requires nearly 48 hours for completion.

I now quote from a piece 'Celebrating the Tri-Centennial: Guru Granth Sahib (1708-2008) - my roadmap to self-realisation' penned by Bhagwant Singh Dalawari for the Nishaan in 2008. He states, "Ever

since I was graced to understand the magnificent teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib, I have often wondered whether we have really imbibed them or even tried to imbibe them. My belief is that Guru Gobind Singh's injunction for our perpetual allegiance to our perpetual Guru, Guru Granth Sahib. The holy scripture is indeed our perpetual Guru and we are required to show extreme reverence, utmost humility and respectful presence. What has diverted our attitudes is the fact that our Guru is neither the holy Book nor its external regalia which, of course, give the scripture exalted royalty but our real Guru is the Shabad, the Word, the message command as set out in various hymns of Guru Granth Sahib. Because of this hiatus between our external devotion and internal alienation, we have failed to reach the heights of gurmukh as envisaged and remain embedded into Karam-Kandi bhakti which Guru specifically eliminated by drawing us to the all-pervading naam and stating 'Shabad Guru Surat Dhun Chela'.

"Guru Granth Sahib is not just the clearest and effective guide for the Sikhs but for all mankind. In fact every word that I ponder over, every hymn that I sing, every concept that I learn from our Guru represents the authenticity of Guru's love and grace. Let me share with Nishaan readers five distinct messages that reach my heart:

Not only is every word true and every command everlasting but devotees can experience the truth in their own lives.

The Guru governs all aspects of man's life, both spiritual and temporal and the follower of Guru's commands can never go wrong. Indeed, the devotee is required to live spiritually even when engaged in the mundane affairs of life.

Grant me this boon
O God, from Thy Greatness

May I never refrain

From righteous acts

May I fight without fear

All fees in life's battle
With confident courage

Claiming the victory

(May my highest ambition be

Singing Thy praises

And may Thy Glory be

Engrained in my mind!

When this mortal life

Reaches its limits,

May I die fighting

With limitless courage!

Guru Gobind Singh Ji

Behai subh karman

te kaptran na taran

Humility and self annihilation is the core point. The easiest way to enter the ashram of the Guru's feet is to become a non-entity, in Guru's words: jeevatian mar rahiye.

The devotee is required to have full faith in the Guru's Word, the efficacy of Guru's protection and Guru's power of guiding force."

"And, if a devotee responds to the guidance of the Guru, there is a clear roadmap for him and her to reach the loving embrace of the Creator. When I listen to *amrit vela kirtan* from Harmandir Sahib every morning and concentrate on the messages being disseminated, I am always enthralled and feel that when Guru's guidance is so simple and clear, why do we get into cumbersome discussions, useless debates, unproductive commentaries on the externals?"

Worship Satguru as God Himself and serve him day in and day out. Recognise your Satguru by looking at him with your own eyes. When you recite the name of the Lord according to the Guru's commands, you can get whatever you wish. Remember, you can think of so many possibilities but what will happen is what is destined to happen. Everyone wishes well for himself, but the Lord does what has never crossed our minds. Concentrate on the Lord's name 24 hours and live in accordance with Guru's commands. My Lord, my thoughts or wisdom is under your control; we are mere instruments on which you play. My Lord, you are the do'er of everything and I speak what you dictate me to speak. ('Harjan Dekhau Satgur Naini' of Guru Ramdas on p. 800 of Guru Granth Sahib).

The cardinal principles of our philosophy, that is the Sikh philosophy, are the complete universality of

spirituality, complete equality of man and love of all mankind. I call any shabad of Guru Granth Sahib a roadmap to embrace of the Lord and will be clear from the analysis of Guru Ram Dass's above shabad:

"Worship of God or devotion to Lord is available to everyone. The Guru is an extraordinary divine messenger and it is not given to us to question his command. Guru Granth as the Lord's word. We are fortunate in having the Shabad Guru in Guru Granth Sahib which eliminates the slavery of a devotee to a self-proclaimed Baba of a Dera. The seva, day and night, of Guru Granth Sahib means the remembrance of the Lord in every breath and living the message in day-to-day life."

"What a wonderful concept, looking at the Guru, with our own eyes! Unfortunately, we have been thinking that the darshan of Guru Granth Sahib as a Holy Scripture conveys this meaning. No, what the Guru intends to tell us that within our hearts we should have the innermost understanding of the Word by remembering Him in accordance with Guru's commands."

The Guru assures us that we will have whatever we wish. The wonder of our shabad Guru is that on the one hand, he makes it clear that we cannot see the Lord with our worldly eyes because he has no form (roop no rekha na ran kichch), on the other he calls upon us to look at him. In my view, it would mean attachment to Guru's Word in word and deed, which will result in Guru's darshan within. Savour this: Gurka shabad lagoon man meetha, parbrahman ta te mohe deetha — when you begin to relish the sweetness of Gurshabad, you can have feeling of having seen the Lord.

S Pushpinder Singh



S Pushpinder Singh is Executive Editor of the *Nishaan*, 'Illustrated Journal of the Sikhs' published from New Delhi, launched in April 1999 at the Tercentenary of birth of the Khalsa.

Coming from a Gursikh family of Amritsar-Lahore, he grew up in a Services environment, studied at The Doon School at Dehra Dun and later the Punjab University, Chandigarh. He joined the Engineering Division of a multi-national company in Bombay, later becoming Chief Executive of a leading German aerospace company in 1978 which he headed in India for 24 years.

He is now engaged in historical research and has published several books. Aerospace may be his profession, but Sikhism is his passion, exemplified by his devotion to the Nishaan Journal and regular participation in seminars and conferences organised by the Nagaara Trust.

In July 2014 he was invited to be part of the Centre for Guru Granth Sahib Studies at Rakabganj Sahib in New Delhi, chaired by the venerable Dr Jaswant Singh Neki, a most notable Sikh personality and well known to the sangat in San Jose, where the conference is taking place.



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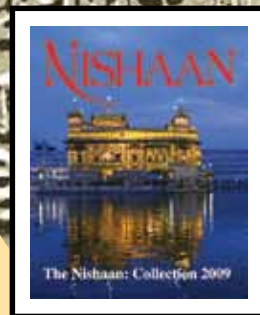
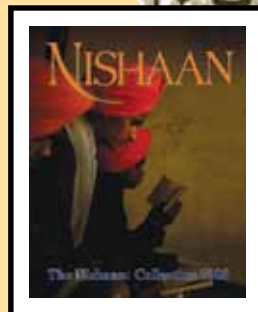
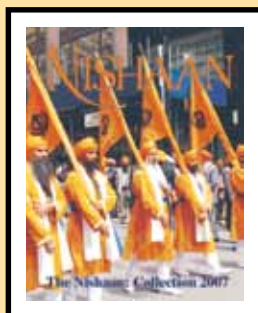
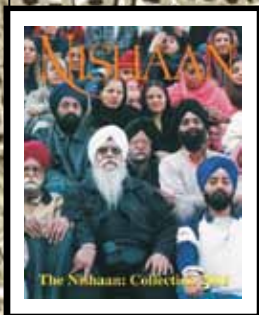
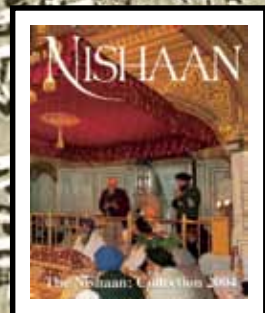
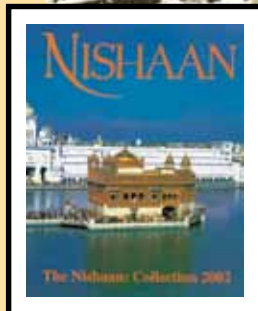
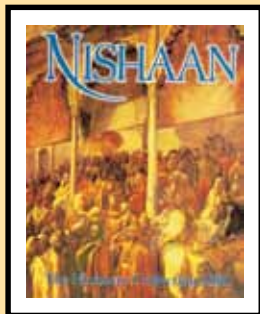
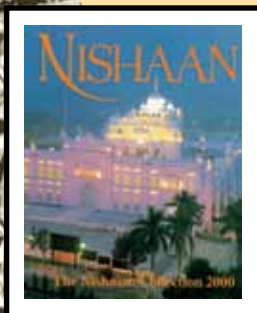


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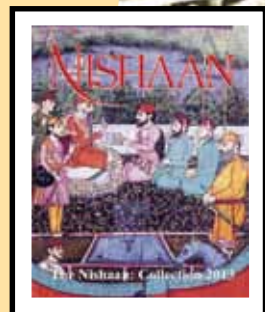
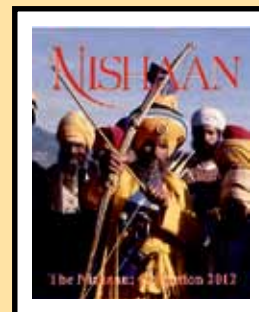
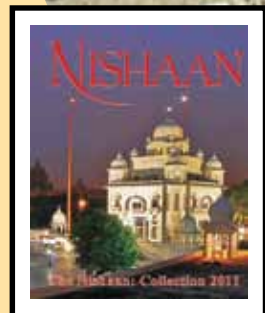
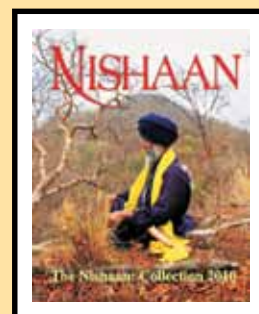
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