

II / 2006

NISHAAN

NAGAARA

Anand Karaj
The Sikh Wedding
The Martyrdom of Guru Arjan
The Sikh Regiment Foundations
The Kikar Lodge

Contents

Issue II/2006

2 Editorial on Anand Karaj
by Dr. Jaswant Singh Neki



4 The Sikh Wedding and its Import
by Bhayee Sikander Singh

9 Sancity of Anand Karaj
by Jasbir Singh Sethi



10 The Sikh Wedding
by Dr. Gurpreet K. Maini

12 Suhee Mahalla 4
by Dr. Gopal Singh

14 Of Mixed Marriages
by Dr. I.J. Singh

18 The Institution of Marriage
by Surjit Kaur, Ph.d.



19 The Classical Import of Dasam Granth
by Sadhu Singh Deol

25 Of Ajit Garh and Tara Taran
by Dr. Manohar Singh Gill



26 The Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev
by Dr. Ganda Singh



37 Baisakhi: A time to celebrate birth.
by Asit Jolly



39 WSC America Region: marking the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev



42 Camp Gurmat: A Sikh Youth Camp in America

45 Book Review: The World according to Sikhi

48 "Salt of the Earth" Foundations of the Sikh Regiment



56 Triumph of the Turban
by Prabhjot Singh



58 The Kikar Lodge
by Dr. T. Sher Singh

64 Symbolism in Sikh Portraiture
by Laurie Bolger



Cover: The Anand Karaj ceremony at a Gurdwara in New Delhi.

Editorial Director
Dr. Jaswant Singh Neki

Executive Editor
Pushpindar Singh

Editorial Board
Sikandar Singh Bhayee
Dr. Gurpreet Maini
Inni Kaur (New York)
Birinder Singh Malhans
G.P. Singh
Sondeep Shanker
Manjit Singh (Montreal)
Jag Jot Singh (San Francisco)

Editorial Office

D-43, Sujan Singh Park
New Delhi 110 003, India
Tel: (91-11) 24617234
Fax: (91-11) 24628615

e-mail : nishaan@lycos.com
website : www.nishaan.com

Published by

The Nagaara Trust
16-A Palam Marg
Vasant Vihar
New Delhi 110 057, India

Printed by

Aegean Offset
F-17, Mayapuri Phase II
New Delhi 110 064
kwerk@sify.com

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

Anand Karaj From counter-ritual to legislative act

In Sikhism, the householder's way of life has been recognised as socially the most plausible and spiritually the most beneficial approach in life. The emphasis that it has received in the Sikh religion is unmatched by what obtains in most other religious communities.

Right from the times of Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539), the founder of the Sikh faith, Brahmanical rituals have been deprecated as "spiritually purposeless", only serving the exploitative designs of the priestly class. Yet, the ritualistic ceremony connected with Hindu marriage continued to serve even the Sikhs for a long time. This ritual was characterised by chanting of Vedic mantras by the Brahmins while the couple went around the sacrificial fire a specific number of times.

Towards the end of the pontificate of the third Guru, Amar Das (1469-1574), his sublime spiritual composition *Anand* in *Rakali Raga*, became very popular and began to be recited at the close of every congregational session of the Sikhs. It has been common belief among the Sikhs that regular chanting of that holy text generates the experience of celestial bliss—for that is what Anand literally means. It is not improbable that this text would have come to be chanted by Sikhs also as either preamble or prologue affixed to the Vedic marriage ceremony. As a result, the ceremony could have begun to be referred to as the Anand ceremony.

First of all, the text *Lavan* composed by Guru Ram Das (1534-1581) was not composed for the purpose of solemnising a worldly marriage. It metaphorically describes how the soul bride can realise the Divine Groom. The stages of spiritual ascent have been symbolised through the four circumambulations of the marriage ceremony.

The first stage has been described as one of responsible participation in the worldly affairs: shunning evil and observing righteousness, dwelling upon the Lord's Name, adoring the Guru and longing for celestial bliss.

The second stage is characterised by practicing the presence of God, and living in His Holy Fear thereby losing all worldly fears and the filth of ego.

The *Unstruck Melody* then begins to vibrate within.

In the third stage, the mind, filled with Divine Love, discovers the Lord, receives the Word revealed by Him and becomes able to describe the un-describable Lord.

In the fourth stage, one meets the Lord with intuitive ease, remains absorbed in Him day and night, his desire is fulfilled, and he becomes identified with the mellifluous Lord.

The symbol of marriage has been made use of as an appropriate metaphor. This was a composition of spiritual import and so had not been put to mundane use by the early Sikhs. There is evidence that even up to the time of the 6th Guru (1597-1644), the ceremony of Anand Karaj as prevalent today had not come into practice. This is apparent from the following verse of Bhar Gurdas (1551-1636).

The Guru-oriented Sikh resides ever in the house of peace

Even if he has to observe Vedic rituals as aliens practice.
Var 16.7

At that time there weren't available even sufficient number of copies of Guru Granth Sahib around which the couples could physically circumambulate. The *Pothi* had yet not become this Guru Granth.

Anand Karaj ceremony is not even prescribed or described in any of the *Rahitnamas*. Only Daya Singh's *Rahitnama* mentions that a Sikh 'must not marry except through Anand.' However, Anand, here, seems to refer to Guru Amar Das's above-mentioned composition which, by then, had become a part of almost all ceremonial occasions.

Bhai Mani Singh in *Bhagat Ratnavali*, records that in response to a petition 'Wajab-ul-Arz by Sahijdhari Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) gave them the

following instruction relating to how they may get their marriages solemnised.

“You should first recite Anand, then Ardas and after that you may invite the Brahmins to perform the (Vedic) marriage ceremony. You need not have any reservations about it”.

The distinction between Sahijdhari and Amritdhari Sikhs could not have started before the Baisakhi of 1699 AD. So until then, there was no indication that the Anand Karaj ceremony, as practiced now, had come into vogue.

Even during the times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) no specifically distinct Sikh marriage ceremony seems to have come into being. Not a single marriage in Ranjit Singh’s family was held through any such ceremony.

Sir Baba Khem Singh Bedi (1832-1905), the founder of the Singh Sabha at Amritsar, is known to have informed his followers that there was no special matrimonial ceremony prescribed for the Sikhs. They could sing kirtan of holy hymns and follow that with the Vedic ritual to solemnise their marriages.

The Singh Sabha movement of late 19th century, however, created a political climate that stimulated and compelled the Sikhs to forge a distinct cultural identity for themselves. One way to do that was to create counter-rituals to the prevalent Brahmanical rituals. This movement resulted in attempts to replace recitation of Vedic mantras with serviceable Gurbani texts for all ceremonial occasions such as birth, naming, betrothal, marriage and death.

The *lavan* shabads were not the earliest that came to be employed for marriage ceremonies. As noted above, it was Anand, popularly called Anand Sahib that came first to be employed first. Then came the following hymn:

Whatever work you wish to accomplish, make it known to the Lord.

He will, then, resolve your affairs; the True Guru truly guarantees this Truth.

With the Saints, you shall taste the treasured Ambrosial Nectar.

The Merciful Lord destroys fear; preserves and protests His slaves.


Says Nanak, by singing the praises of the Lord, you’ll perceive the Un-perceivable Lord.

It was later, in the year 1808, that the recitation or singing of *lavan* came to be employed as an accompaniment of the four circumambulations performed around the holy Guru Granth Sahib. This practice, as vouched by Dr Man Singh Nirankari, was introduced by Baba Sahib Dayal, founder of the Nirankari sect. Followed up by his successor, Shri Darbara Singh from 1855 on, he started an inspired movement for the popularisation of what came to be called the Anand Karaj ceremony.

This movement, however, encountered much initial opposition from Sikhs and Hindus especially of the Dhan Pothohar region. Prominent opponents were Sir Baba Khem Singh Bedi, Sir Nihal Singh Chhachhi and Divan Taurti Rai. At one stage, the Jathedar of Akal Takht as also the Head Granthi of Harmandir Sahib at Amritsar, declined to permit Anand Karaj to be performed in the compound facing the said Takht.

In spite of early opposition, however, the distinctive Anand Karaj ceremony started gaining ground and quickly became more and more popular. By 1909, its popularity became so obvious and the cry for its recognition so strong, that it almost assumed the status of an edict of the Guru Panth. As a result, the Viceroy’s Imperial Legislative Council had to give it official recognition by legislating. *The Anand Marriage Act*. That is how what started as a counter-ritual became a legislative act.

The purpose of this Act was simply to provide legal recognition to this distinctive marriage-ceremony of the Sikhs. It did not legislate on other aspects relating to marriage, such as registration, divorce etc. In respect of all such supplementary aspects, the Sikhs have been subjugated to the Hindi Marriage Act.

However, need has now been expressed by a section of the Sikhs that the Anand Marriage Act should be updated to incorporate in it legislative concerns about all the supplementary issues relating to marriage. A senior Sikh advocate of the Supreme Court has already voiced this view in the media. However, a convincing case has yet to be built to show how the Hindi Marriage Act fails to serve the needs of the Sikh community about the aforesaid sundry issues connected with marriage. 



ANAND KARAJ

The Sikh Wedding and its Import

Living together of male and female adult individuals is the core of human social existence. The basis of organised society has been the entity of the family, from a couple to a family, to the tribal family, village family, to a nation as to family and then family of nations. On every stage there is a commitment shared, values shared, shared objects of faith and worship of God heads. One may argue that in present societies the priorities of values have changed, instead of sharing values of culture and commonality of religion and Divinity, society subscribes to the commonality of economic interests and "divinity of the dollar" takes priority. In any case, man's development from the days of the lone hunter in the wild to a productive social being affirms that at worst man is a social being.

Every society at various stages of evolution developed its own practices and ceremonies depending upon the level of its socio-economic-religious status. Also, each social organism, heathen or God fearing, had its own objects of worship and practiced ways of life.

A Sikh is enjoined to move and progress towards God head while simultaneously discharging his duties towards his fellow beings. This cannot be achieved by withdrawing from society, by renunciation and least of all, celibacy. When Sikhism was founded some 500 years ago, the prevailing socio-religious orders dictated that no one could attain spiritual heights, enlightenment or redemption (so to say) without giving up his family life and severing himself from society. In contrast, the Sikh Gurus declared a family man, living a productive life in society as nobler and

more righteous. The renunciators who rejected social responsibilities were termed as parasites and burden on the society.

Thus 'Grahasth', or family life is a significant aspect of practices of Sikh way of life and an important one. Marriage of two individuals of opposite sex therefore is a land mark in the progress of both the individuals in their journey of life.

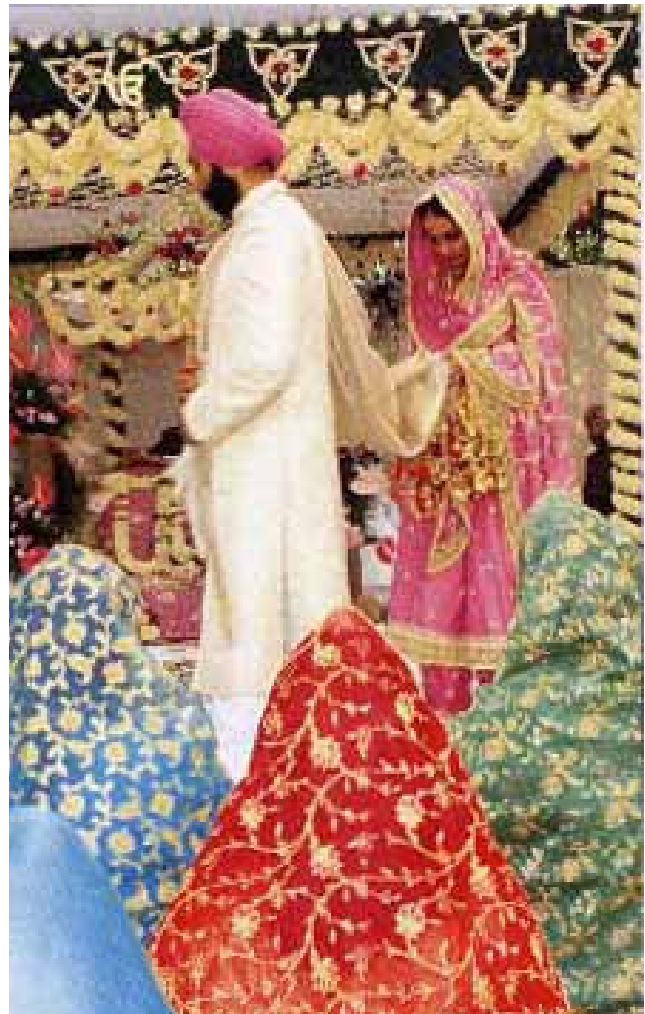
Love of progeny and the urge to bring it up and protect the off spring is a natural instinct in all living beings and humans too. The concept of family is thus rooted in the bonding of the male and the female its intrinsic by product becomes the nucleus of an organized society. From it evolved the institution of marriage – of commitment to a mate, both as nucleus of social order and the basis of procreation in a social order.

Forms of marriage differed from society to society and from time to time. The Hindu law givers, for example, Manu and some Rishis, referred to various types of marriage viz. Brahm, Dev, Arsh Prajapat, Asur, Gandharav, Rakkshas and Paisach. In short almost all and every kind of cohabitation, willing or unwilling were sanctified.

However, Sikhism being a way of life which, not promising bounties of heaven or prospects of hell in after life, emphasises upon redemption in this present existence and creation of heaven on earth and not hereafter. The incidence of entering the threshold of 'Grahasth', the commended way of life, becomes of special importance. Hence the importance of the Sikh wedding ceremony, the Anand Vivah or Anand Karaj.

The ceremony, whereby this step, an important juncture in two person's life is celebrated, is known as 'Anand Karaj'. Literally it means the 'Act Blissful'. But the word 'Anand' means and connotes much more than happiness and joy. It in fact describes a state where bliss follows attainment. It is a state rather than a momentary experience.

The actual Anand Karaj ceremony is simple and straight forward. It is to be conducted in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, our living Shabad Guru, presiding over a congregation or 'sangat' of friends and relatives. It begins with reiterating to the bride and groom, the underlying precepts of Sikh way of life, the importance and responsibilities of the family way of living



(Grahasth) and the essence of Guru Ram Das Sahib's composition of 'lavan' in Raag *Suhee* (page 773 of Sri Granth Sahib). The couple is then reminded of social, legal and religious concepts involved in this way of life and if the two accept the same, then the four shabads are read out and alternately sung while the couple circumambulates the presiding Guru by way of commitment. Finally the prayer, or Ardas is said declaring the two as husband and wife.

As in a Sikh's way of life there are no rituals to be performed as such. The music, the hymns singing and even the symbolic walk around the Holy Book (lavan) are extras – to create the proper atmosphere and frame of mind. The 'lavan', the walk is from our cultural ethos of reaffirming commitment and consecration. Its a vow of acceptance of the way of life and the final *Ardaas*, the prayer which are of essence. The rest is cultural celebration, reiteration and rejoicing.

The meaningfulness of the whole cannot be understated. Sangat is holy congregation which in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib incorporates the presence of Almighty when the "Word" resides in its midst. This 'Word' is embodied in the Book – Guru Granth Sahib. The traditional injunction to the Sikhs states "If you want to see the visage, the physical manifestation of the Almighty then look into the face of congregation (Sangat), and if you want to hear His voice, read aloud the "Word" (Shabad) from the Book." Thus while performing this ceremony one is supposed to be sitting in the consciousness of God's presence in our midst. Thus we invoke Akal Purakh's presence the bride and the bridegroom are so to say in His lap, He who is the Source of all love and affection.

The aim of married life is union, not physical and contractual alone, but an intellectual and spiritual merger. The scripture says:

*"They are not called husband and wife who sit together,
Rather they are true husband and wife who have one
Spirit in two bodies".*

A married life is progression towards this state of existence. Since this relationship has to be primarily based on love in its ultimate experience it has the potential of giving one a glimpse of the experience of the Great Love for the Divine Being. This is the

love that liberates. It is not passive adoration but a dynamic and total commitment. Just as there is no going back from one's commitment to one's Creator, the Great Love, similarly there is no going back from one's commitment to one's love here on earth too. The dedication is complete. This relationship is not a barter of feelings, for barter can only be of material objects. This is a surrender of the self, it is compassionate giving and non-calculative. It is Divine because it raises one above pettiness and bonds of constricting human 'ego'.

This union of souls thus, is a microcosmic representation of the macrocosmic union with the Universal Soul towards which all should be striving. It is in this respect that amongst the Sikhs a married life is given such noble sanctification and importance.

Our conjugal relations are designed not merely to promote worldly comfort or to perpetuate the human race, but to provide the best means of approaching God and cultivate our lives in such manner as to make them most useful and fruitful. Thus marriage becomes not a mere contract to be repudiated at will, but a sacrament, a holy union consecrated in accordance with the Divine Will.

The four main hymns called "lavan" which are sung when the couple goes around the holy Book were written by the fourth Guru to celebrate the



wedding of the Individual Soul with the Great Spouse, the Universal Soul. These are the four stages in the progression of merger of two souls. The four circles that the couple walks are symbolic of going through the four stages are symbolic of commitment and consecration of a life to be lived in union. Since our lives are not to be renunciatory, but participative with the world, society and the nature, we walk anti-clockwise because the universe too revolves in the direction. The concept being of transformation through active participate and dynamic living and not withdrawal from or negation of life.

These hymns describe the stages in the evolution and progress of this life of union. These are 'Fear' (not dread, but fear of the unknown) the Guru calls it the chaste fear (*Nirmal Bhao*), love (*Vairag*) a yearning for someone whom one feels separated from and the final stage of effortless one ness called "Sehaj" a state of effortless co-existence in joy of his presence.

In the Indian social environment pre-martial love is not common, therefore all these stages come after marriage. But in a society where love supposedly precedes marriage, these stages are relevant too. Only the point of social or contractual undertaking called marriage shifts to occur after the second stage. However, the validity of the four phases in the union of two souls is quite pertinent and is universal.

The first step or phase of this union in Sikh ethos is that of 'fear'. Before love is born there is a fear of one another. It is a fear of the unknown. It is not a slavish fear, it is a disciplinary fear. In Gurbani it is likened to the fear of the Lord:

*Those who fear the Lord have nothing to fear,
But those who do not fear Him have much to fear*

This is a kind of fear with which one treads towards another, explores each other mindful of not offending and hurting each other's sensibilities. Love is a delicate and sensitive art. This fabric is to be knit with care, patience, compassion and sympathy. Such moral sensitiveness, this accomodating sympathy, is called *Nirmal Bhao* or the Holy Fear in the scripture.

Out of this (Fear) `grows' `Love'. The word used for it is `Chao'. Again this word too has a much wider connotation – it means enthusiasm, eagerness, tinged with hope and optimistic pleasure. It is not sheer infatuation. Enthusiasm may wear off as it does. The vicissitudes of life may dampen the eagerness and the charm of marriage. It is the ever

renewing Love which is inherent in human nature which survives.

Is not God the oldest being? Yet His lovers say:

My Lord is ever new and fresh.

Thus it is only this kind of Love that lends eternity to the relationship in the face of fading physical glamour, aging youth and transience of the mundane. It is valid for human to human relationship as much as for individual to the universal spirit.

The third stage is of transition from this Love, to a state of complete harmony and oneness of the two spirits. This stage is of pathos, sadness, a yearning for uniting with the separated. It is the eternal yearning of the individual soul for the God-head the universal soul.

The third hymn begins with the line:

*Love comes into the heart which withdraws
Itself from all other affections.*

As mutual Love evolves into a complete fusion of personalities, other affections of friends, parents and soon fade into a secondary position.

This is a separation from the old attachments and complete absorption into the new, prime love. Whereas in the beginning Love is immediate and compelling and can stand no separation, constant association and understanding develop constraint and self control. This is *Vairag*, the penultimate transitional stage to absolute effortless co-existence.

The fourth and the final stage is that of *Sehaj*, a state of complete harmony and oneness, of perfect balance which knows no mistrust. An involuntary faith is developed. This is the stage which transcends causation and here effort is eliminated. The past, present and future of the two merge into one. It is a fusion of identities. This is an eternal state. This is the same state in which a devout finds himself when he experiences the Universal. This is what the scripture calls *Ek Roop Doi Murti* – 'One spirit in two bodies'. In brief this is message to the four 'chhants' in Raag *Suhee* of the Fourth Guru on page 773 of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

The *Anand* marriage is as much temporal as spiritual. Therefore it is a practice of the traditionalists that before the ceremony could be performed, the bride and the groom's consent to some fundamentals is required to be taken.

* While it is for the wife to be content with the lot of her husband, it is obligatory on the part of the husband to provide comfort, protection, honour and respect to his wife.

* Since legally, Anand Karaj is valid for two consenting Sikhs under the Anand marriage Act, the bride and groom are required to confirm that all ceremonies and practices in their married life will be in conformity with the of Sikh Dharam.

* That the two individuals being joined in matrimony will not believe in any divinity other

than One Akalpurakh, the directives of the Ten Guru and the (Word) or Shabad as enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

* Amongst Sikhs husband and wife have an equal status. Traditionally they are referred to as two wheels of the same chariot of life. Family life called *Grahasth* is the most sacred and the highest order. faithfulness and fidelity of husband to wife is deemed as essential as faithfulness and fidelity of wife to husband.

It is only after the couple consent to the above fundamentals of the Sikh way of marriage, is the ceremony of a *lavan* and *Ardaas* is to be conducted.

In which way to walk the `lavan`?

During the Anand Karaj ceremony the groom sits to the right and the bride to the left, facing the Sri Guru Granth sahib while in circumambulating, the couple walk in the clockwise direction around the Holy Book. However many traditionalists and Sikhs of catholic commitments walk in an anti-clockwise direction. The Nihang Sikhs and many other orders who have preserved their ancestral practises, do so till today. On querrying, no specific reasoning is obtainable for those who stress on the clockwise walk.

The author's family follows the anti clockwise prakarma practise and this practice has come down from the times of his respected ancestor Bhai Rup Chand who it is said conducted the Anand Karaj of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib with Mata Jeeto ji at Guru-Ke-Lahore. The reasoning given to the author by his father Bhayee Ardaman Singh and grand father Bhai Arjan Singh of Bagrian is as under: "A Sikh is to live his life in consonance with 'qudrat'. The Brahmand (Universe) moves in an anti clockwise direction. So conduct of the ceremony is accordingly to be in harmony with it; anything offered is thus contradictory to Sikh ethos".

Sikhs being `shastardhari` wear their kirpans on the left. While walking anti clockwise, the kirpan stays to the left and next to the Granth Sahib, and

due respect is given to it. Symbolically, for an armed man the protected one is kept on the left.

The original architectural designs of both Sri Harmandar Sahib and Sri Akal Takhat Sahib had passages leading from the right i.e. anti clockwise only. In Sri Harmandar Sahib as one enters the front portal, the left corner core is blocked out. Only the right one and other two at the back are open. The present flow of sangat to left is forced by brass railings, against the original intent.

It is said that these anti-thetical Brahmanical practice's crept in during the Mahant rule, but were corrected thereafter.

In rural Punjab all activity that involves going around in a short circle, is done anti-clockwise viz: the `rahat`, the wheel well revolves anti-clockwise, the

hand milling stones (*chaki*), the oil expeller and even tops spin anti clockwise. The farmer ploughs his field anti-clockwise So such practices are rooted in our ethnic ethos.

In any case the crucial essence of a Sikh wedding is the Ardaas preceded by reading or reciting of the 'Anand' shahads of the third Guru, Sri Guru Amar Das Sahib.

Bhayee Sikander Singh



Sanctity of Anand Karaj

The Sikh marriage ceremony is Anand Karaj. Karaj means action, activity or ceremony, and Anand is Bliss. For Sikhs the married state is the norm and the ideal; through it, come the best opportunities for serving God's earthly purpose and the well being of humanity, and affords the best means of fulfillment of individuality and the attainment of Bliss.

The phrase "Pursuit of Happiness" is enshrined in the US Constitution. This is one basic American Dream, *The Pursuit of Happiness*. Happiness springs from within and is in 'doing' and not 'having', though generally we have started interpreting it as having- an expensive car, a big house, diamond jewelry, and so on. However, BLISS is still a higher stage, in fact, much higher and the ultimate stage. Bliss is in Union.

Pre-requisite of Union is self-effacement, egolessness. Frankly, the real essence of Sikh marriage ceremony, Anand Karaj is unfolded by reading some contemporary US writers, such as Dr Wayne Dwyer and Dr Covey. Dr. Dwyer has written a letter to a hypothetical reader in the next century. In that letter he asks the reader a question, "Have you been able to realise that we are Spiritual Beings who have come to this earth for physical experience, not that we are physical beings who occasionally get a glimpse of spirituality?" Here Dr Dyer is referring to the basic nature of human beings.

Dr. Covey talks about *Paradigm Shift*. He says the way we look at and perceive our surroundings is based on our previous assumptions and unless those assumptions are changed, we cannot have a different look at our existence and surroundings. This *Paradigm Shift* is heeded and guides the way we look at the world. If I am looking down, I will see the floor, dirt etc. But if I shift my view and turn my head upwards. I will be looking at the beautiful blue sky. By Paradigm Shift our view changes completely.

With these clarifications, when I look at the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib. I am told, "*Mun tu jote sarup hain, aapna mool pachhaan*" (Oh my mind, recognise your basic nature, you are that light which is part of God). i.e. you are "Spiritual Being". Then the Guru says, "*Dekhan aeo Jagat Tamasha*" (I have come to see this physical drama of this world).

We need a paradigm shift and start considering ourselves (and of course, others too) as spiritual beings. This spiritual being is separated from its source (*Atma* from *Parmatma*) which is God. There are strong pangs of this separation and an intense longing for Union with the Source. This Union is Bliss (*Parmanand*).

Sikhism regards married life one's duty because, if approached in the light of teachings of the Gurus, you can experience a miniscule union of two sparks

and it gives you the experience of Bliss. Guru Ji says, "*Dhan pir eh na aakhie behan ekathe hoi, ek jot di murti dhan pir kaya soi.*" Husband and wife are not bodies who just live together, but in reality, they are those who have one soul in two bodies (the union has taken place rendering two sparks to become one though outwardly they may look like two persons). This experience of Bliss then goads you on to *Parmanand*.

Lavans (page 773 of *Guru Granth Sahib* by Guru Ram Das (the fourth of the Sikh Gurus) are recited and sung, and the couple accepts these teachings of the Guru by going around *Guru Granth Sahib* and then bowing before it. *Lavans* indeed give a road map for the journey of life and arriving at its destination – God Realisation.

The first *lavan* stresses on righteousness of conduct and contemplation of the Name of The Lord, following the teaching of the True Guru. One gets imbued with sweetness of His Name thereby Happiness comes effortlessly.

The second *lavan* of the nuptial circumambulation emphasises the realisation that it is the Lord's Grace that dispels all fears and all filth of ego is washed away. The reverent prayers affirm Lord's all pervasiveness within us, without and in the universe.

In the third *lavan* comes longing for the Lord and detachment from the world. Lord is found through exaltation, singing Gurus hymns and in the company of saints. The Holy Name echoes in the heart and love of God is awakened.

Fourth *lavan* is when the mind reaches out to knowledge of the divine and God is innerly grasped, through the Grace of Guru. The sweetness of beloved God pervades body and soul. By exalting the Lord, the Eternal Lord is attained.

Since our life on earth is very much entrenched in physical activities, the Gurus have given the simile of a lotus flower, whose roots are in swamp, but the flower head is above water level blending with the beautiful universe above. Since we do have to exist and interact at existential level, then we do get into dark moments too.

Life is a journey and the husband and wife are two wheels of the vehicle. In the ups and downs of day-to-day life and encounters with roughness of the road, many times the wheels get out of alignment. Remember that the Guru is the best mechanic to realign these, provided we *accept*. His guidance will keep this vehicle in good shape and one will have an enjoyable and enriching experience in this journey of life.

Jasbir Singh Sethi
Houston (USA)

The Sikh Wedding *



The groom, ceremoniously attired, on his horse as the baraat moves towards the bride's place.

Indian weddings never cease to fascinate the West with their riotous splash of colours, vibrant music and tremendous activity, not often in tandem. In this pot pourri lies its inherent charm. Currently, weddings have become mammoth projects involving the expertise of event managers, theme planners, choreographers, disc jockeys and the works. Quite the anti thesis of what the Sikh marriage

ceremony was meant to be or what it involved as in its process of rectification by Guru Amar Das from the quagmire of ritualism existent then.

The downside of most weddings today is the immense sense of competition not only visible in the display of wealth but also in the dowry given, often resulting in unpleasant consequences.

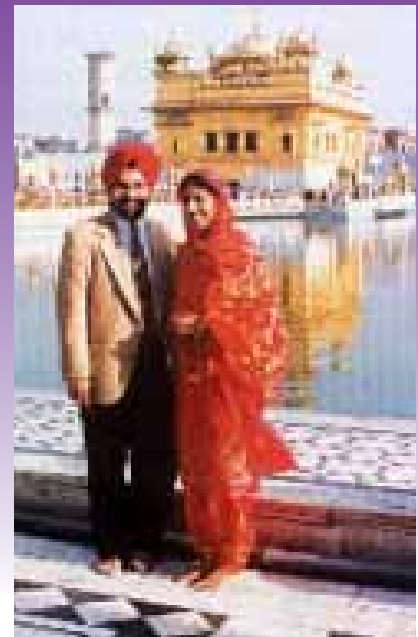


Couples circumambulating around the Granth Sahib.

However, the symbolic ceremony itself is short, meaningful, heart rendering and pithy. At the core of the Sikh wedding ceremony is the Anand Karaj, which sets the tone for a beautiful morning as well as anticipates and inculcates in its invocation a format for the life ahead for the couple. The *Raagis* chant the four *lavaans* mellifluously with the couple circumambulating around the Guru Granth Sahib, till the ceremony concludes "*Vya hua mere, babla (oh my father, I am married)* and flowers are showered on the couple, the concluding '*bani*' is '*anand*'. Hence this form of marriage came to be popularly called *Anand Karaj* which means an act of joy or bliss. The ceremony has both literal and symbolic meaning. Literally, it is a union of two individuals who after marriage share the one light, illuminating two bodies.

The well written text has been provided by Dr. Mohinder Singh and the brilliant photography is by Sondeep Shankar.

Several Sikh scholars trace the origin of the Anand Karaj ceremony to the days of the third Guru, Amar Das. According to information supplied by the Imperial Legislative Council of India in 1909, the fourth Guru Ram Das devised a distinct marriage ceremony for the tradition, when a Sikh named Randhawa petitioned Guru Amar Das to the effect that the village priest had refused to solemnise his daughter's marriage because he and his family members had embraced Sikhism. Thereupon the Guru asked Ram Das, his son-in-law and successor,



Newly married couples pay obeisance at the Darbar Sahib, Amritsar

to solemnise the marriage of Randhawa's daughter according to Sikh rituals. It was for this purpose that the fourth Guru composed the hymns called *Lavan*, which were subsequently included in Guru Granth Sahib by the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev.

This book beautifully illustrates as well as elucidates the entire process of the Sikh wedding, which begins with the *roka* or engagement, the *sangeet*, the *barat*, the Anand Karaj and the *doli*. The picturisation is so well done that all the ceremonies come alive and so do the characters partaking in the wedding.

The book has the translation of the *lavan* at the end and the grand finale is the glossary for the terms imbued. An excellent guide for those embarking on the path of performing a Sikh wedding and a must read for all those who were wedded by this ceremony, so as to comprehend the priceless vows that they value together.

Reviewed by
Dr. Gurpreet K. Maini

* The Sikh Wedding

Text by Dr. Mohinder Singh,
Institute of Punjab Studies, UBS Publications,
Pages 94, Photographs by Sandeep Shanker

Text of Iavan in Raag Suhee, Mahalla 4 from the Guru Granth Sahib

Har pahilaree laav parvirtee karam driraa-i-aa baliraam jeeo. Baanee brahmaa ved dharam drirho paap tajaa-i-aa baliraam jeeo. Dharam drirho harinaam dhiaavho simrit naam driraa-i-aa. Satguru guru pooraa aaraadhho sabh kilvikh paap gavaa-i-aa. Sahaj anand hoaa wadbhaagee man bar bar meethaa laa-i-aa. Jan kahai Nanak laav pahlee aarambh kaaj rachaa-i-aa. (1)

Har doojaree laav satguru purakh milaa-i-aa baliraam jeeo. Nirbhao bhai man hoe haomai mail gavaa-i-aa baliraam jeeo. Nirmal bhao paa-i-aa har gun gaa-i-aa bar vekhai raam hadoore. Har aatamraam pasaariaa suaamee sarab rahiaa bharpooore. Antar baahar harprabh eko mil har jan mangal gaae. Jan Nanak doojee laav chalaee anhad sabad vajaan. (2)

Har teejaree laav man chaaoo bha-i-aa bairaageeaa baliraam jeeo. Sant janaa har mel har paa-i-aa wadbhaageeaa baliraam jeeo. Nirmal har paa-i-aa har gun gaa-i-aa mukh bolee har baanee. Sant janaa wadhbhaagee paa-i-aa har katheeai akath kahaanee. Hirdai har har har dhun upjee har japeeai mastak bhaag jeeo. Jan Nanak bole teejee laavai har upjai man biraag jeeo. (3)

Har chaotharee laav man sahaj bha-i-aa har paa-i-aa baliram jeeo. Gurmukh miliaa subhaae har man tan meethaa laa-i-aa baliraam jeeo. Har meethaa laa-i-aa mere prabh bhaa-i-aa andin har liv laae. Man chindiaa phal paa-i-aa suaamee harinaam waje waadhaae. Hariprabh thaakur kaaj rachaa-i-aa dhan hirdai naam wigaasee. Jan Nanak bole chaothee laavai har paa-i-aa prabh avinaasee. (4)

In the first Round, the Lord instructs thee to revolve back to the world,

And to look upon the Guru's Word as the Veda, to practise Righteousness, and so to dispel thy Sins.

Practise thou Righteousness and Dwell upon the Lord's Name-the Smiritis too inculcate but the Lord's Name

And Dwell upon thy Perfect Guru that all thy Sins are Eradicated.

Thy Fortune will smile, and the Bliss of Poise wilt thou gather, and the Lord will seem Pleasing to thee.

Sayeth Nanak : "In the first Round, the Lord Himself initiates His Marriage with thee". (1)



From an illustrated folio: bridegroom on horse.



The bride being taken in a palki.

In the second Round, thy Lord Unites thee
with thy True Guru, the Cosmic Being,
And, thou becomest Fear-free, save for the
Lord's Fear in thy Mind, and thou art rid of the
Dirt of I-amness.

Thy Fear, now, is of thy Immaculate Lord,
and, Singing the Lord's Praise, thou See-est His
Presence.

And thou See-est the All-pervading, All-filling
Lord.

Thy only Lord is both within and without;
Meeting with the Saints, Sing thou the Song of
Joy

Sayeth Nanak : "In the second Round, the
unstruck metody of the word ringeth in thy
mind". (2)

In the third round, the joy of detachment
wells up in thy mind.

Meeting with the Saints, thou Meetest thy
Lord and Fortune smiles on thee.

Thou Attainest thy Immaculate God and
singest His Praise and thou utterest the Lord's
Word with thy tongue.

Thou Attainest to the Lord, O Sainly being,
and utterest the Truth that is unutterable.

In thy mind ringeth the music of the Lord, and
thou contempest Him, for thy Lot now shines
forth.

Sayeth Nanak : "In the third Round, Divine
Detachedness wells up in thy Mind". (3)

In the fourth Round, thy mind is held in
ipoise, for thou hast attained to thy Lord.

All-too-spontaneously hath thy Lord met thee,
by the Guru's grace, and thy God seemeth sweet
to thee.

Seemeth sweet to thee thy God, who loveth
thee, and thou art ever attuned to Him.

And thou attainest thy heart's desire, thy
Lord, thy God ; and the glory of the Lord's name
ringeth in thy Mind.

Thy Master hath brought about thy Wedding
with Him and thy heart, O Bride, is in Bloom,
being Illumined by the Name.

Sayeth Nanak : "In the fourth Round, thou
Attainest to thy Eternal Lord". {4}

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, English translation by
Dr. Gopal Singh, Vol III, p.736)

ਸੁਹੀ ਮਹਲ ੪ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਪਹਿਲੜੀ ਲਾਵ⁹²
ਪਰਵਿਰਤੀ⁹³ ਕਰਮ⁹⁴
ਦਿੜਾਇਆ⁹⁵ ਬਲਿਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਥਾਣੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਵੇਦੁ
ਪਰਮੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਹੁ ਪਾਪ
ਤਜਾਇਆ ਬਲਿਰਾਮ
ਜੀਉ ॥

ਥਾਣੀ ਬ੍ਰੜਹੁ ਪਾਪ
ਤਜਾਇਆ ਬਲਿਰਾਮ
ਜੀਉ ॥

ਧਰਮੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਹੁ ਹਰਿਨਾਮੁ
ਧਆਵਹੁ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ
ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਇਆ ॥

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਪੂਰਾ
ਆਰਧਹੁ ਸਭਿ ਕਿਲ-
ਵਿਖ ਪਾਪ ਗਵਾਇਆ ॥

ਸਹਜ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਹੋਆ
ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਮਨਿ ਹਰਿ
ਹਰਿ ਮੀਠਾ ਲਾਇਆ ॥

ਜਨੁ ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਲਵ
ਪਹਿਲੀ ਆਰੰਭੁ ਕਾਜੁ
ਰਚਾਇਆ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਦੂਜੜੀ ਲਾਵ
ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਮਿਲਾ-
ਇਆ ਬਲਿਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਨਿਰਭਉ ਭੈ ਮਨੁ ਹੋਇ
ਹਉਮੈ ਮੈਲੁ ਗਵਾਇਆ
ਬਲਿਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਭਉ ਪਾਇਆ
ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਇਆ
ਹਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਰਾਮ ਹਦੂਰੇ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਆਤਮ ਰਾਮੁ
ਪਸਾਰਿਆ ਸੁਆਮੀਸਰਬ
ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰੇ ॥

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਥਾਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ
ਏਕੇ ਮਿਲਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਨ
ਮੰਗਲ ਗਾਏ ॥

ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੂਜੀ ਲਾਵ
ਚਲਾਈ ਅਨਹਦ ਸਥਦ
ਵਜਾਏ ॥੨॥

ਹਰਿ ਤੀਜੜੀ ਲਾਵ ਮਨਿ
ਚਾਉ ਭਇਆ ਬੈਰਾਗਆ
ਬਲਿਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਸੰਤ ਜਨਾ ਹਰਿ ਮੇਲੁ
ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਵਡ-
ਭਾਗੀਆ ਬਲਿਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ
ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਇਆ
ਮੁਖਿ ਬੋਲੀ ਹਰਿ ਥਾਣੀ ॥

ਸੰਤ ਜਨਾ ਵਡਭਾਗੀ
ਪਾਇਆ ਹਰਿ ਕਥੀਐ
ਅਕਥ ਕਹਾਣੀ ॥

ਹਿਰਦੈ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ
ਧੁਨਿ ਉਪਜੀ ਹਰਿ ਜਪੀਐ
ਮਸਤਕਿ ਭਾਗੁ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਬੋਲੇ ਤੀਜੀ
ਲਾਵੈ ਹਰਿ ਉਪਜੈ ਮਨਿ
ਬੈਰਾਗੁ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਚਉਬੜੀ ਲਾਵ ਮਨਿ
ਸਹਜੁ ਭਇਆ ਹਰਿ
ਪਾਇਆ ਬਲਿਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਮਨ ਚਿੰਦਿਆ ਫਲੁ
ਪਾਇਆ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਹਰਿ
ਨਮਿ ਵਜੀ ਵਾਧਾਈ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਠਕੁਰਿ ਕਾਜੁ
ਰਚਾਇਆ ਧਨ ਹਿਰਦੈ
ਲਮਿ ਵਿਗਾਸੀ ॥

ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਬੋਲੇ ਚਉਬੀ
ਲਾਵੈ ਹਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ
ਅਵਿਨਾਸੀ ॥੪॥੨॥

Of Mixed Marriages: Thats the way it is!

Some years ago, a novel caught the public eye. "Looking for Mr. Goodbar", not a very pleasant story, as it fearlessly delved into mating instincts, the human neurotic impulses and psychological insecurities.

Years, or perhaps generations, ago one never heard of such things. Certainly these matters were hardly ever discussed between parents and children. When children came of age, it was a parental obligation to look for and find that special someone for their offspring.

Even without the benefits of genetic counselling, most societies knew not to seek mates in close familial proximity. Intertwined bloodlines increase the chances of birth defects and retardation; hybridisation is the key to vigour. Even now, except for Muslims and the remnants of European royalty, most cultures frown on marriages between first cousins. So people looked for a mate from another community, if perhaps only a few towns and villages away.

Parental responsibility was primarily driven by the need to match the educational and socio-economic levels of the two families. The most erotic human organ remains the mind and it is impossible to discover, much less celebrate, physical compatibility where the minds are always at loggerheads. Yes, those who are absolutely unlike each other, attract, but unlike magnetic poles, they often do not stay attracted for very long. The parents performed this crucial screening, thus protecting the vulnerability of their daughters. Men were the hunters and men and women lived effectively segregated lives. Women needed protection too, because they were the mothers and the perpetuation of a people depended upon women, even if they were treated as "chattel".

Stability

Society developed elaborate rules and rituals for the mating process and sanctified it by religious imprimatur. Marriages, it was decreed, 'were made in heaven' and were holy, not merely legally binding socio-economic contracts recognised and enforced by society between a man, woman and children, if any. What created this male-female bonding and society was more than just a piece of parchment. A stable family was, and remains, the building block of society.

But these 'heavenly unions' have an earthly existence. Necessarily, most people married within traveling distances of where they born and raised—and died. Apron strings of extended families propped

up institution of the family and kept it intact. It was in the interest of society to do so. Break up of families created a heavy burden of unclaimed and helpless children, dangerously bloody vendettas with their roots in familial property and footloose single people in the throes of their raging hormones. Now computers attempt to perform this vitally critical function of winnowing wheat from chaff in the multitudes of eligible young people.

Perhaps the first human institution and the first religion itself was marriage and people have married for myriad reasons. Some marry to forge alliances – local to international – others marry to continue the family and dynasty, acquire children, land, property or power. Some even marry for love but that is nineteenth century literature. I don't mean to provide a history of marriage; that is a task best left to social scientists, historians and cultural anthropologists.

Culture

Let's fast forward to times where reality has changed. Human societies are no longer as insular as they once were. Education is no longer a luxury limited only to an exclusive minority. Travel is not the exception but staying within a singular society throughout the entire lifespan, is. The body can move, so can the brain, but not the heart quite so easily. So even when we move to the further ends of the earth, we remain attached by our heartstrings to the little corners of our cultural enclaves. Are these the ghettos of the mind that continue to define us and govern us? I leave this question for another time.

Now that our world has shrunk to a global village, distance and language may not be quite the problems that they once were. But even now, people tend to marry their own kind. And this is not entirely surprising, nor is it undesirable. Even in the best of circumstances, marriage is a carpshoot. But raising children and rearing a family becomes somewhat easier when there is some commonality of language, culture, tradition and expectations. These factors are discounted only in marriages based strictly on notions of romantic love and passion. But passion is, by definition, spasmodic and episodic, not a continuous existence but temporary intensity (or insanity!). Romeo and Juliet, Heer-Ranjha, Sohni-Mahiwal make moving sagas that are soul wrenching, but they slink away from encountering the reality of the routine and grind of day-to-day living. Marriages may be made in heaven but they have to be lived here on earth.

Restraints

For romantic love to flourish it requires that young people are thrown together and discover what chemistry can develop between them. Unfortunately, this happens not when their intellects are yet fully functional, or even somewhat in control of their young bodies and the ways of flesh are all too predictable, almost incendiary. Sparks ignite between young people quickly and can consume them incredibly fast. Eastern cultures still try to curb this by early marriages with the emphasis on mergers of families (and properties) and selection of mates by parents. Western societies too controlled this by chaperoned exposure, group activities and by bundling.

When educational and career opportunities were limited and early marriages were the norm, parents could select mates for their children. Also, joint and extended families lived together in inter-generational existence. But the world has changed. People used to marry in their teens, but it is now progressively later. Young people now need to explore the self, the world and their compatibility before they pledge their troth.

Hopping Dates

The game of dating also requires that both players be at their most charming and magnetic best, as well as at their peak physical attractiveness. The results are pretty but not always lasting. Just look at the divorce rate in advanced societies, which approaches or even surpasses fifty percent. Sooner or later one discovers that the other is not so attractive early in the morning, doesn't always smell heavenly and may actually be a bit of a hedgehog at times.

In traditional societies there was an unwritten code on the division of labour. Generally, wives tended to the house and children, while men – hunters and gatherers - 'brought home the bacon'. Now that both partners are equally educated, with earning potentials that are almost evenly matched, how is labour at home and with children to be shared? Even living together before making it legally official is not much help. Yet the siren song of romantic love cannot be ignored. In traditional societies the divorce rate may be lower but not because the partners are any happier, just that options are not fully available within their cultural constraints.

Quest for a China Doll

One needs only a quick look at how traditional Indian society is trying to come to grips with the reality of a fast moving world to recognise some of the absurdities that we follow most faithfully. Look at the ethnic Indian press. There are myriad weeklies. Their biggest earner of advertising revenue

remains the personal column: advertisements for marriage partners, rarely placed by the principals themselves, but most often by their parents or other relatives.

In their advertisements, what kind of a person do they seek and what code words do they use to signal their needs or highlight their qualifications? Almost always, the blurb begins with family connections and values and continues with adjectives that communicate marriage ability. The code words for a prospective bride here include: *very fair*, *highly attractive*, and even *homely*. I suspect the advertisers really mean *homey*, or in tune with home values, not 'homely' which means plain or not smashingly unattractive. I am sure the latter is not their intent from the number of times I have seen "homely" juxtaposed with "beautiful" in the ads.

The next sentences usually talks of a well-settled family and its presumed status and mention of close relatives who are settled abroad or are professionally educated. I suppose these code words indicate financial standing and ability to meet demands of dowry and quality of life. The young woman's academic qualifications may be mentioned but merely in passing. I wonder if it is a China doll that I am reading about.

For young men looking for brides, qualifications may be mentioned but more important seem to be a word or two on his affluence – and that he is running his own business or something along similar lines, and of course how respectable is the family.

A Method in Madness

Sikhs tend to add some additional twist to this madness. The first sentence often specifies whether the young man is *keshadhari* or not; the *non-keshadhari* person often identified as 'clean-shaven'. I don't know how clean is the person, so the term 'clean-shaven' seems odd to me. And sometimes the ad specifies a modern Sikh or clean-shaven Gur Sikh young man; that to me is an oxymoron and a contradiction in terms. It is like describing someone as a "God-fearing atheist."

Better than fifty percent of the ads by Sikhs start by specifying the caste or at least whether the person is a Jat or not and that really confuses me. (Some ads contain unusual acronyms like JSM or JSF for Jat Sikh male or female, which are like Greek to the uninitiated.) If I were to claim from a public pulpit that Sikhs believe in caste, I would be vilified and abused by most Sikhs, if not banished from the community. But if I say that Sikh teaching is against caste, while Sikh practice in marriage is rarely devoid of caste, it should make one wonder about our hypocrisy, schizoid nature or sanity.

I also see many marriages between Sikhs and non-Sikhs. It is inevitable, of course. People will tend to be attracted to others in their work place and educational or social environment and they will make their own choices. Yet such options are not without their problems. The movie "Bend it like Beckham" highlighted most effectively, even if pleasantly, some of our contradictions in this matter.

Sikhism is relatively young and until recently, a very small minority of Sikhs ventured outside of familial influence or the Punjabi cultural ambit. Other religions have had a larger and longer perspective on such matters. And they have reacted with a variety of regulations and directives that, I think, have primarily served to muddy the waters.

I once tried to get a handle on how we (Punjabi Sikhs) might view prospective mates via an informal survey, or you could call it a single question that offered multiple choices for an answer. How would you respond, if I asked, if your daughter or son wanted to marry: (A) a practicing *keshadhari* Sikh, (B) a non-practicing *keshadhari* Sikh – one who looked like a Sikh but had little feeling for his religion or its lifestyle, (C) a "clean-shaven" Sikh, (D) a non-Sikh Punjabi Hindu, (E) a non-Sikh Punjabi who is not a Hindu, but could be a Muslim or a Christian, (F) A Indian Sikh but not a Punjabi, (G) A non-Sikh Indian but who is not a Punjabi, but could be a Gujarati or Tamil, etc, (H) A white European or American of any of the persuasions mentioned above, including being a practicing Sikh, and finally (I) A black of any of the above choices, including being an excellent Sikh' And don't forget to expand the questionnaire by adding to the cauldron the choices of caste or being a Jat or non-Jat.

I would ask my readers to explore such questions honestly and in privacy. It might even lead to some self-discoveries. You might notice that our choices are often visceral, not logical or rational. And then we use whatever intellect God has given us to justify the choices that we have made.

Hodge-Podge

For some people the "clean-shaven" visage may outrank the *keshadhari*, though they would proudly flaunt their Sikh credentials and antecedents. Often the culturally acceptable choice might prevail over the religious. Think for a moment of choosing between a practicing Sikh who is Black and a Punjabi Hindu. Think that at the bottom of the preference might be the Black, the non-Punjabi Muslim or someone from a 'low caste' in the Indian system of reckoning. The White Christian, even though he may be nearer trash,

might surprisingly outshine many others because history has associated him with the ruling elite. The Punjabi Hindu, even if a rabid anti Sikh, would likely outscore many others because of his cultural, historical ties to Punjabi culture and Sikhs. Also in all this equation never underestimate the power of money and worldly success!

Although I have listed many possible combinations, we usually think of interfaith marriages as those between two people who are adherents of different religions. It is when this happens that we get most exercised and it is for such a possibility that most religions have evolved elaborate rules.

For example, in Reform Judaism the child of a Jewish mother is, by definition, a Jew; fatherhood does not count. I suppose it is because motherhood is a matter of fact, while fatherhood remains one of faith. But Orthodox and Conservative Jews are not quite so charitable and the question of a mixed marriage would not even be entertained. Nor would Islam allow any accommodation. Sometimes societal law might take a position that may or may not be based in religious teaching. Malaysia, which is a Muslim state, requires a non-Muslim to convert to Islam before marrying a local Muslim man or woman.

In Roman Catholic belief at one time it was required that the non-Catholic partner convert before marriage in a Church. Now all that is required is that he or she should agree to raise any children in the Catholic faith, but a Roman Catholic priest would never participate in a ceremony that also includes rituals of the non-Catholic partner. Christianity, however, has over 250 sects and denominations. It is not difficult to find the gamut of extreme belief and practice from some who are most intolerant of non-Christians and automatically consign them to hell, to those who would willingly participate in double nuptials of two very different religions and contradictory belief systems.

There is one thing that Roman Catholics do that I like, and that Sikhs do not do. It is a minimally required conversation and explanation of Roman Catholic belief and position on parenting that occurs before marriage. Such counselling may seem superfluous in the modern world that we live in. But it is necessary for it serves to inform the couple of the requirements of the faith, so that they can see a little bit beyond the blinders of romantic love. In my experience Hindus and their priests seem to have the least objection to participating in two very different nuptials, just minutes apart.

Parenthetically I may add that I know of only one young granthi who requires that a couple spend some

time in discussion of the meaning of a Sikh marriage. He is also deeply uneasy about performing interfaith marriages. Most granthis haven't even thought about the issues. I have discussed the magic, mystery and meaning of the Sikh wedding earlier in an essay and will not do so here.

Moral Code

Since Sikhs have very little of the codified requirements that most people are aware of, I have seen some pretty comical situations in mixed marriages. In my understanding, the Sikh Code of Conduct recommends that Sikh parents marry their daughter to a Sikh. This was written for the Sikh society of Punjab. You cannot always hold the parents responsible for what their children might do. Also, this clause is silent about its equal applicability to boys of Sikhs. It says nothing about the need for educating a couple about the rudiments of Sikhism, nor does it speak of human values and the rearing of a family in a house of mixed faith. This text I believe needs reinterpretation.

The Sikh wedding ceremony (*Anand Karaj*) has historically evolved such that no explanation of it is ever rendered to the couple before or at the time of marriage. Often the couple understands no Punjabi and the hymns as well as the discourse by the officiant become unintelligible to the couple. It becomes a meaningless festival for the two families as well as the bride and groom, and great fun is had by all. Does it have any legal meaning? Only rarely. Because in the Diaspora a great majority of granthis who perform Sikh weddings are not licensed to do so and a civil marriage also becomes necessary.

An extreme example of this occurred not so long ago when a starlet of the Indian screen married another well-known actor. Neither was a Sikh but they preferred a Sikh wedding because they thought it would be great fun. They were able to find a Sikh granthi who obliged and I am sure the fun was memorable. In this case clearly there was no spiritual meaning to the function for either partner because neither was a Sikh. But if a marriage is to be one in which "two bodies come together to create a union of souls" as Guru Granth recommends, then it has to be more than a spectacular bash.

If people opt for a religious ceremony, and keep in mind that the legal requirement can be satisfied at City Hall without any religious element, then it must be that religious sanctity and the power of prayer is not entirely meaningless to the main actors in it. It clearly follows then that, in an interfaith wedding, when children arrive, considerable disagreement and tension would automatically surface.

Confused Offspring

How do you raise children and what values do you teach them? Just imagine the piquancy of the situation where one parent believes in shaving the head and the other believes in unshorn hair; where one practices obeisance to idols while the other absolutely rejects the practice, where one believes in the Divine ordination of caste and the other's is ideologically against it. What are the poor children to learn and how?

One could claim that all that we wish to teach our children is virtue and good citizenship – human values. But even these values are not taught without institutions and rituals, so which ones do you teach, and how do you convey them, particularly if they are in conflict and so are the methods by which they are taught.

Rationality Vs. Romance

In an interfaith marriage the question of family identity is unavoidable as well as how to transmit values and traditions to your children. Instead of a misguided attempt to repeat vows two or three different ways in different houses of worship, would it not be better to require that a couple make one single choice? Such a choice does not imply a value judgment on the two traditions. The process of deciding brings to the fore any strong feelings that might have been suppressed in the gush of romance. It will put the couple on a better footing for the future. And if they opt to go with a Sikh ceremony, do require that they both spend some time in counseling and exploration of Sikh teaching and tradition so that they are comfortable with their choice. If, on the other hand, they choose a non-Sikh ceremony, be not angry with them but accept that reality. I suppose a dual identity is not entirely impossible, but it is not easy.

If people marry when they are professionally and personally secure, they are likely to have definite ideas about whom they wish to spend their lives with, and what kind of life do they envision. They will probably not be easily swayed by the opinions of their parents. On the other hand, if they marry as soon as they are reproductively mature, they are not equipped to make their way in life, nor do they have any idea of what life is about. They often have unrealistic notions of getting hitched and disappearing into the setting sun, to live happily ever after, as in B grade movies from Hollywood and Bollywood. They might think life is just one grand party, but hope dies early to be replaced by disappointment and a hardness of the heart.

And that's the way it is!

*Dr. I.J.Singh
New York*

The Institution of Marriage: Rights & Duties in Sikhism

In February 2006, I had the opportunity to participate in a conference on "marriage in Sikhism", organised jointly by Guru Nanak Foundation of America and the Kaur Foundation both located in Maryland. Conference was held at Hotel Columbia Sheraton.

Over a hundred participants, Sikh youth and their parents awaited the illustrious speakers, including Dr.I.J.Singh of New York, Ms.Jessie Kaur of San Jose, California, and Harinder Singh of San Antonio, Texas. Dr.Kamaljit Kaur Sethi was the moderator, who kept the speakers in check about time, and skillfully summarised their presentations, embellishing them with her own comments and interpretations. After the plenary session the participants went into breakout sessions. The youth discussed their issues separately in group discussions led by trained facilitators who recorded the proceedings to be presented in a joint session at the end of the day. Likewise the parents were led to a separate room to discuss their issues in a special session. In the plenary session, Dr.I.J.Singh was the first speaker, and he set the tone of the conference on a personal note. He came to the U.S. in 1960's as a student, and met a Caucasian lady in one of his classes whom he later married. That marriage, he said, did not last for very long. After that break-up he spent several years as a single man, and met women from different cultures and back-grounds, some equated `being modern as being clean-shaven, finally he met a Sikh lady from India, whom he is married to for the past 15 years.

The audience was mesmerised by his wit and dry sense of humour. He started his presentation with a statement `marriages may be made in heaven, but they have to be lived on earth. He also challenged the parents to answer a multiple choice question-` if your son or daughter came home asking to marry one of the following: a Hindu, Caucasian or an African-American Sikh, a Muslim, whom would you prefer. `There are no right or wrong answers`, he said, but parents should start thinking where on the spectrum they would fall. He raised some hard questions by analysing some matrimonial ads from a newspaper. He concluded that the `Sikh marriage is a responsibility, because it is performed in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib`.

Ms. Jessie Kaur from California talked about the practical aspects of staying married together and related several incidents where things could have gone wrong but did not because of her firm grounding in Sikhism.

Then came the scholarly young man from Texas, Harinder Singh who interpreted Sikh marriage as an institution for personal growth in the Sikh way of life. He believes very strongly that faith is more important than race in determining the success or failure of a marriage. He also quoted a Jewish

study that concluded that inter-racial marriages have a better chance of survival than interfaith marriages. Conflict of values can play havoc with a marriage after the initial honeymoon is over. He concluded, `when two Sikhs get married in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib, they are not just making a commitment to each other but they are making a pledge to their Guru and to the Divine Presence.

Discussions in the break out sessions were held in confidential environment with the help of trained facilitators. The results were educative, instructive, and in many ways very positive. To substantiate that let me quote the results of a similar conference organised by the Centre for Multicultural Human Services in Falls Church, almost ten years ago. At that time the parent's concern was that their young children did not respect their heritage and that they showed no respect to their parents who had struggled so hard in this country so that their children could get an education and a life full of opportunities in this country.

The teen-agers, however, had a different concern, and that was their parent's lack of trust in their young offspring's integrity and judgment as to what they would do when it came to their relationships with others, male or female. And that parents were watchful, they listened to their sons; especially their daughter's telephone conversations, when there was a male voice on the other side! In this conference, while the youth has the same gripe about parents treating them with distrust as they did a decade ago, the good news is that the parents appear to have realised their folly of putting too many restrictions on their young off-spring, who still try to abide by their values, and retain their Sikh identity, while they excel in their academic and vocational pursuits, find themselves restricted in terms of opportunities to meet their likely mates.

In this conference, the parent's major concern was to create a platform for Sikh youth to meet and mingle with, their likely mates in a socially acceptable environment. To the best of my knowledge the only community that has taken this question seriously and has created an infrastructure to deal with it is the Gurdwara in Hounslow, in England. where the parents come to register their off springs of marriageable ages to seek a possible match) in a respected and respectable environment. I happened to have met the person in-charge of this marriage bureau during my interviews for my book `Amongst the Sikh's written in 2003. The president of this Gurdwara keeps a vast database of Sikh youth of marriageable age and suggests matches to parents of eligible youth who apply for their service. This Gurdwara has served hundreds of such families in identifying suitable mates for their marriageable youth.

All in all, it was an informative thought provoking and much needed conference.

Surjit Kaur, Ph.d.

The Classical Import of Dasam Granth



From an illustrated folio of Dasam Granth.

The **Dasam Granth** needs to be approached with reverence. Most scholars recognize it as an anthology of epic spiritual poetry, but some entertain conjecture about its historicity and authorship. This is mainly because of the perceived dissonance between the austere and intensely monotheist message of *Jaap*

Sahib, Akal Ustat and *Swayye*, on the one hand, and the ornate, 'amoral' recitals under (for example) *Charitropakhyan*, Or between the puritanical '*Tetees Swayye*' and the Pauranic mythologies pertaining to Rama and Krishna. The analysis that follows should be approached with piety and sober contemplation.

The Dasam Granth is the distilled essence of the devotional, spiritual and secular literature of the Indian sub-continent. It brings out the profound knowledge of Guru Gobind Singh and his court poets in the best poetic form of the period. It is a great and a unique treasure for the students of literature, religion, culture and history of medieval India. Just as Bhai Gurdas's *Vars* are a key to unlock the meaning of Gurbani compiled in the *Adi Granth*, the *Dasam Granth* serves as a monumental reference book for understanding mythological and classical allusions found in *Guru Granth Sahib*. Thus, it has a very important place in Sikh theology and literature.

In this monumental work of Guru Gobind Singh and his court poets, all the traditions and currents of literature are represented. It covers a wide range of human knowledge including astrology, human psychology, geography, weapons of war, music, raags, musical instruments and presentation of word pictures. It has carved a niche for itself in the history of Braj and Punjabi literatures. The intrinsic literary value of the *Dasam Granth* is in its lyricism, portrait painting and the heroic verse charged with sentiments of valour and martial music.

The writings of Marks and Engels brought about a new consciousness and awakening in the large mass of humanity in the 20th century. A similar purpose was served by the poetry of the *Dasam Granth*. When it was set to music and recited by the Bhattas and Dhaddis of *Guru Darbar*, it fired the hearts of common men and instilled in them valour and zeal befitting great warriors. These men, once rated as dregs of humanity, shook the mighty Mughal Empire. Thus, *Guru Sahib* through the poetry of the *Dassam Granth* awoke the dormant heroic spirit in his followers, infused them with new life, strengthened their character and elevated their spirit. His Lord, in his own words is:

ਗ਼ਾਨੀਮੁਲ ਖਿਰਾਜ ਹੈ ॥ ਗ਼ਾਰੀਬੁਲ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਹੈ ॥
ਹਰੀਫਲ ਸਿਕੰਨ ਹੈ ॥ ਹਿਰਾਮੁਲ ਫਿਕੰਨ ॥

ਜਪ ਸਾਹਿਬ

*Subduer of enemies; Protector of the poor;
Destroyer of the non-believers;
Vanquisher of fear Thou art*

These very strains run throughout the *Dasam Granth*.

Up to the Tenth *Guru Sahib's* times, Indian scriptures portrayed God as an Omnipotent and Benevolent being but the social and political set up of

Guru Sahib's times demanded a lot of change in the thinking of the people. The *Guru* felt the pulse of the people and need of the hour and he portrayed God as the destroyer of the wicked and saviour of the good. (Good in action)

ਗ਼ਾਨੀਮੁਲ ਸਿਕਸਤੈ ॥ ਗ਼ਾਰੀਬੁਲ ਪਰਸਤੈ ॥

ਜਪ ਸਾਹਿਬ

Subduer of enemies; Protector of the poor;

In order to invoke his concept of God of all religions, he borrowed from the rich vocabulary of Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit and many other Indian languages. Thus, his poetry is an ideal blend of *Bhakti* and *Shakti*, which not only conveys an idea but also paints a picture and plays a tune.

Some of the major compositions are:

Jaap Sahib

Jaap Sahib is required to be recited every day by the Sikhs. God as described in *Jaap Sahib* is Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. God manifests Himself in countless ways.

ਕਿ ਰਾਜਕ ਰਹੀਮ ਹੈ ॥ ਕਿ ਕਰਮੰ ਕਰੀਮ ਹੈ ॥

ਕਿ ਸਰਬੰ ਕਲੀ ਹੈ ॥ ਕਿ ਸਰਬੰ ਦਲੀ ਹੈ ॥ ਜਪਸਾਹਿਬ

Provider and Compassionate; Gracious Benevolent; Omniscient is He. Annihilator of all is He.

He is Light, Love, Good, Beauty, Truth and Energy. He is glory of the Kings and support to the lowly. He is the enemy of evil doers and destroyer of the tyrannical.

ਪਰਮਰੂਪ ਪੁਨੀਤ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਪੁਰਖ ਅਪਾਰ ॥

ਸਰਵ ਬਿਸ੍ਵ ਰਚਿਓ ਸੁਖੰਭਵ ਗੜਨ ਭੰਜਨ ਹਾਰ ॥

Supreme Being, Immaculate One, (You are) the absolute and infinite Being. (Thou have) created the entire world out of Thyself, and Thou are the preserver as well as the destroyer ॥

ਦੁਕਾਲੰ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਸੀ ਦਿਆਲੰ ਸਰੂਪੇ ॥

ਸਦਾ ਅੰਗ ਸੰਗੇ ਅਭੰਗੰ ਬਿਭੂਤੇ ॥

Destroyer of the pain of the birth and death, Embodiment of Compassion; Ever on man's side, Unending are His gifts ॥

Jaap Sahib is the sublimest hymn in praise of God and it has become a treatise of all the religions.

Akal Ustat

From the literary and philosophical point of views, *Akal Ustat* is a very important creation of *Guru Gobind Singh*. It reveals his deep vision of the eternal glory of God. God, religion and rituals, the world and *Chandi* form the main themes of this long devotional

poem. It is a mixture of ecclesiastical satires, scattered here and there in gems of pure poetry.

For example, God is:

ਜੇਥਨ ਕੇ ਜਾਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਾਲ ਹੂ ਕੇ ਕਾਲ ਹੈ ॥
ਕਿ ਸਤ੍ਨ ਸੁਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਿਤ੍ਨ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਨ ਹੈ ॥

You are youth-incarnate, greater than even the 'kal' (death), the destroyer of foes and protection of friends.

ਜਲੇ ਹਰੇ ॥ ਬਲੇ ਹਰੀ ॥ ਉਰੇ ਹਰੀ ॥ ਬਨੇ ਹਰੀ ॥

God dwells (everywhere) in the water, on the earth, in every being's heart, and amidst objects of nature.

ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਕੋਊ ਰਾਫਿਜੀ ਇਮਾਸ ਸਾਫੀ
ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਥੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਚਾਨਥੋ ॥

Some call themselves Hindu, some Turk (Muslim), some Hafzi and others Imamsafi. But the entire human kind should be recognized as one.

ਏਕ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਕੈ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਏਕ
ਏਕ ਹੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਥੈ ਏਕੈ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਾਨਥੋ ॥

To serve only One God is our duty. He alone is the Guru of all. All mankind be taken as one manifestation of His light ॥

ਦੀਨਿਨ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਲ ਕਰੈ ਨਿਤ ਸੰਤ ਉਬਾਰਿ ਗਨੀਮਨ ਗਾਰੈ ॥
Protects He ever the hapless, uplifts the saintly, sinks the wicked.

ਜੁਧ ਕੇ ਜਿਤਯਾ ਅਉ ਬਿਰੁਧ ਕੇ ਮਿਟਯਾ ।
ਮਹਾਂ ਬੁਧਿ ਕੇ ਦਿਵਯਾ ਮਹਾ ਮਾਨੁ ਹੂੰ ਕੇ ਮਾਨ ਹੈਂ ।
ਗਿਆਨ ਹੂੰ ਕੇ ਗਿਆਤਾ ਮਹਾ ਬੁਧਿਤਾ ਦੇਵ ॥
ਕਾਲ ਹੂੰ ਕੇ ਕਾਲ ਮਹਾ ਕਾਲ ਹੂੰ ਕੇ ਕਾਲ ਹੈ ॥੨੪੩॥

Sri Mukh Vaak Swaiyae

God, religious practices and an admonition against worldly attachment are the main themes of the Swaiyas. The first Swaiya describes the mental make up of a Khalsa and the last Swaiya stresses upon the remembrance of God. The poet points out that God cannot be identified with Ram, Krishna, Shiv, Brhma and Vishnu. He further emphasizes that the study of Vedas and going on pilgrimages were of little use. But the purest is the:

ਜਾਗਤ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਧੈ ਨਿਸਥਾਸੁਰ ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਮਨਿ ਨੈਕ ਨ ਆਨੈ ॥
ਪੁਰਨ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਗੈ ਤਥ ਘਟ ਮੈ ਤਥ ਖਾਲਸ ਤਾਹਿ ਨਖਾਲਸ ਜਾਨੈ ॥
One who meditates day and night on the ever radiant light and who gives not a moments thought to none but one God. Who has full love and faith in God, puts no trust in fasting, Worshipping graves, crematoriems and monastries even by Mistake and when His full light Shines in his heart, Then alone deem him as the undiluted form of Khalsa.

Shabad Hazare

These Shabads are musical compositions in different raags, and lay stress on good actions and denounce Yog, ritualism, idol workship and incarnations. The most touching hymn in them is:

ਮਿਤ੍ਰ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਹਾਲੁ ਮੁਰੀਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਕਹਿਣਾ ॥
ਸੁਰਾਹੀ ਤੁਧੁ ਬਿਨ ਰੋਗੁ ਰਜਾਇਆਂ ਦਾ ਓਢਣ ਨਾਗ ਨਿਵਾਸ
ਦਾ ਰਹਣਾ ॥

ਸੁਲ ਖੰਜਰ ਪਿਆਲ ਬਿੰਗ ਕਸਾਇਆ ਦਾ ਸਹਣਾ
ਯਾਰਫੇ ਦਾ ਸਾਨੂ ਸਥਰ ਚੰਗਾ ਭੱਠ ਖੋੜਿਆ ਦਾ ਰਹਣਾ ॥

Tell the Beloved Friend (God) the plight of us, the Disciples.

"Without You, it is a torment to wear quilts (in winter) and living in imposing mansion is like dwelling with snakes."

The flask of wine is like a (honed) spike, the goblet is like a dagger and (your seperation) is akin to enduring the thrust of a butcher's knife.

The bare floor of our Beloved Friend is acceptable to me. Living in mansions is like living in a furnace.

This shahad is said to have been composed after the martyrdom of Bhai Mahan Singh, the four Sahibzadas, Mata Gujri and many other Singhs. It strikes a most poignant note of humanism.

Khalsa Mehma

This describes importance that the great Guru gave to the Khalsa. He ascribes all his achievements to the Khalsa. He states that he is great because of the Khalsa. In fact, people are made aware of the newly created brotherhood of Khalsa. The Guru was conscious of the vitality of the Khalsa and had faith in the collective wisdom of the Khalsa. The poem expresses Guru Sahib's love for the down-trodden people and pride in his Sikhs.

ਜੁੱਧ ਜਿਤੇ ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਇਨਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁ
ਦਾਨ ਕਰੇ ।
ਅਘ ਅਉਘ ਟਰੈ ਇਨਕ ਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੀ
ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਫੁਨ ਧਾਮ ਭਰੇ ।
ਇਨ ਹੀ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁਬਿਦਿਆ ਲਈ ਇਨਕ ਹੀ ਕੀ
ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਸਭ ਸਤ੍ਰ ਮਰੇ ।
ਇਨਹੀ ਕੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕੇ ਸਜੇ ਹਮ ਹੈ ਨਹੀ ਮੇਸੇ ਗਰੀਬ ਕਰੋਰ ਪਰੇ ॥੨॥

My victories in battle have been through their favour, through their favour I have already made gifts, through their favour I have acquired knowledge, through their kindness all my enemies have been killed, through their favour I am exalted; otherwise there are millions of ordinary men like myself".

This is perhaps the earliest statement of a proletarian and democratic society in history of mankind.

Bachitra Natak

It is a story of Guru Sahib's mission of life and the battles that he fought against his enemies. It relates the main events of his life upto the advent of Bahadur Shah in the Punjab. It is full of **vir** and **raudra ras**. It follows the Puranic tradition of legend and history, and describes the battles fought by the Guru and delineates beautifully the mission with which he had come into this world.

ਹਮ ਇਹ ਕਾਜ ਜਗਤ ਮੇ ਆਏ। ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਗੁਰਦੇਵਿ ਪਠਾਏ।
ਜਹਾ ਤਹਾ ਤੁਮ ਧਰਮ ਬਿਥਾਰੇ। ਦੁਸਨ ਦੇਖਯਨਿ ਪਕਰ ਪਛਾਰੇ ॥੪੨॥
ਯਾਹੀ ਕਾਜ ਧਰਾ ਹਮ ਜਨਮੈ। ਸਮਝ ਲੇਹ ਸਾਧੂ ਸਭ ਮਨਮੈ।
ਧਰਮ ਚਲਾਵਨ ਸੰਤ ਉਥਾਰਨ। ਦੁਸਟ ਸਭਨ ਕੋ ਮੁਲ ਉਪਾਰਿਨ ॥੪੩॥

The objective of my coming to this world is 'dharma' and the Lord has sent me for this purpose. Spread dharam everywhere and throw down the knaves.

For this purpose I have taken birth-understand you saints well. I am born to spread dharma, emancipate 'the good' and wipe out the whole lot of the wicked.

Only a soldier poet could compose such heroic verse charged with action and thrill. The soldiers of faith were inspired and relived ancient scenes in the sandy dunes of Bhatinda. Chandi Charitar, Chauvis Avtar and Brahma Rudra Avtar form a part of Bachitra Natak. It not only describes the life history of the Guru in brief but also describes the great heroes who appeared on the stage of the world from time to time. Satguru's mission was to awaken the slumbering countrymen, to get rid of the tyranny of the oppressor in this come the Mughal rule and to bring dignity to the oppressed mankind.

ਇਹ ਕਾਰਨਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁਮੈਡਿ ਪਠਾਏ। ਤਬ ਮੈ ਜਗਤਿ ਜਨਮੁ ਧਰਿ ਆਇਓ।
ਜਿਮ ਤਿਨ ਕਹੀ ਇਨੈ ਤਿਮੈ ਕਹਿ ਹੋ। ਅਉਰਿ ਕਿਸੁ ਤ ਥੈਰ ਨ ਗਹਿ ਹੋ ॥
There for the Lord sent me and taking birth I came to this world. What He said to me I will say the same and I shall have no enmity towards anyone.

ਮੈ ਅਪਨਾ ਸੁਤ ਤੋਹਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ। ਪੰਥੁ ਪ੍ਰਚੁਰ ਕਰਬੇ ਕਹ ਸਾਜਾ।
ਜਾਹਿ ਤਹਾ ਤੈ ਧਰਮੁ ਚਲਾਇ। ਕਬੁਧਿ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਲੋਕ ਹਟਾਇ ॥
I have established you as My son and have created you to spread dharma. Go from this place to that one, move the cycle of dharma and stop people from committing ill deeds.

Thus through his heroic verse and battles he projected God as a destroyer of the wicked and the evil minded. The Akal Purakh of Bachitar Natak was capable of destroying Mehkhasur, Shumbh,

Nishumbh and other demons of mythology in no time. People could be inspired only by such a God in order to fight against the mighty Mughals. For himself, he considered himself to be a servant of God's will.

ਜੋ ਹਮ ਕੇ ਧਰਮੇਸੁਰ ਉਚਰਿ ਹੈ। ਤੇ ਸਭ ਨਰਕਿ ਕੁੰਡ ਮਹਿ ਪਰਿ ਹੈ।
ਮੈ ਕੇ ਦਾਸੁ ਤਵਨ ਕਾ ਜਾਨੋ। ਯਾ ਮੈਂ ਭੇਦੁ ਨ ਰੰਚ ਪਛਾਨੋ ॥

Those who would call me God they will fall into the deep pit of hell. Know me as His servant and nothing other than it is true.

Chandi Charitar (I&II)

This is a unique composition and is devoted to the heroic achievements of Chandi. This was written with the sole purpose of instilling bravery into the hearts of the people: It induced in them the battle scenes and the sagging hearts of the people could feel the very presence of Ran Chandi dancing in their hearts. Thus, they could put an end to the political and religious tyranny of the Mughals. Its verses are charged with valour and martial music keeping in view the urges of the age.

ਦੇਹ ਸਿਵਾ ਬਰੁ ਮੇਹਿ ਇਹੈ ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮਨ ਤੇ ਕਥੁੰ ਨ ਟਰੋਂ।
ਨ ਡਰੋਂ ਅਰਿ ਸੋ ਜਬ ਜਾਇ ਲਰੋ ਨਿਸਚੈ ਕਰਿ ਅਪੁਨੀ ਜੀਤ ਕਰੋ।
ਅਰੁ ਸਿਖਰੋਂ ਆਪਨੇ ਹੀ ਮਨ ਕੇ ਇਹ ਲਾਲਚ ਹਉ ਗੁਨ ਤਉ ਉਚਰੋ ॥
ਜਬ ਆਵ ਕੀ ਅਉਧ ਨਿਦਾਨ ਬਣੈ ਅਤਿ ਹੀ ਰਨ ਮੈ ਤਬ ਜੂਝ ਮਰੋ ॥

O all-powerful Real One! Shower this blessing on me: Never should I hesitate doing good deeds. I should have no fear as I enter the battlefield to fight the enemy : I should be determined to win. With a view to teaching myself, I should ever continue to eulogise You. When my end approaches, I should die fighting (in the cause of Dharma) in the field of battle.

Vaar Durgaki

It is also known as Var Sri Bhagaunti Ji ki. The first 'pauri' of this composition is the opening invocation of the Ardaas the everyday prayer of the Sikhs.

ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮ ਭਗਉਤੀ ਸਿਮਰਕੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਈ ਧਿਆਇ।
First and foremost I remember Bhagauti, and then set my mind on Guru Nanak.

Its beautiful epithets inspire the troops to fight in war and gain victory. Composed in Punjabi this is among the best Vaars in Punjabi literature. Soldiers used to recite it in the old days and the Nihang Singhs are very fond of reciting it till today.

Gian Parbodh

In the first part of this treatise God has been described as all powerful, invisible and omnipresent. In the second part there is a dialogue between Atma and Parmatma, the individual and the universal soul. The poet does not take much interest in the Puranic legends but his main concern is to establish new value system, to take interest in fighting a Dharam Yudh and to lead a righteous life.

ਨਮੋ ਲੋਕ ਲੋਕੇਸੁਰੀ ਲੋਕ ਨਾਥ । ਸਦੈਵ ਸਦਾ ਸਰਬ ਸਾਥੀ ਅਨਾਥੇ ।
ਨਮੋ ਏਕ ਰੂਪ ਅਨੇਕ ਸਰੂਪੇ । ਸਦਾ ਸਰਬ ਸਾਥੀ ਸਦਾ ਸਰਬ ਭੂਪੇ ॥

Salutation to the God and Master of all worlds; ever companion of all the hapless art Thou; salutation to the One who manifests in many as well; Master and King of all art Thou.

Chaubis Avtar

It forms a very important part of The Dasam Granth. The 24 incarnations of Vishnu have been portrayed in it, stating:

ਜਬ ਜਬ ਹੋਤ ਅਰਿਸਿਟ ਆਪਾਰਾ
ਤਬ ਤਬ ਦੇਹ ਧਰਤ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ ਬਿਸੁਦ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ

Whenever a whole avalanche of miseries and sufferings rolls down on the human creation.

the Avtaar incirnates himself into one or the other forms (animal, human or supernatural) (Bishan Avtar)

The main objective of the writer was to prepare the newly created society for Dharam Yudh. In fact, this part has been written in the common language of the people in order to make them aware of the heroic legends of the past. Ritualism has been denounced. It reveals the tenth Guru's conception of God. He did not accept the Puranic concept of Avatar. He thought that Avatars were only elevated souls blended with Akal Purakh.

In this composition he describes the charming personality of Lord Ram and Lord Krishna and elaborates upon their heroic deeds which did rouse the great mass of Punjabis as they tried to put an end to the political and religious oppressions. Chaubis Avatar is imbued with martial spirit.

ਮਹਾਂ ਕਾਲ ਰਖਵਾਰ ਹਮਾਰੇ । ਮਹਾਂ ਲੋਹ ਮੈਂ ਕਿੰਕਰ ਬਾਰੇ ।

Mahakal (God) is our protector. O Mahalok (God)! I am your lowliest slave.

Guru Sahib emphasised the element of heroism in these legends without lending any spiritual status to its characters.

ਜੇ ਚਉਬੀਸ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਕਹਾਏ । ਤਿਨ ਭੀ ਤੁਮ
ਪ੍ਰਭ ਤਨਕ ਨ ਪਾਏ ।

The so-called twenty four incarnations, O Lord, could not attain even an iota of You.

The description of the heroic deeds of mythological heroes and others gives a vivid picture of the battlefields of the gone by ages.

ਧੰਨ ਜੀਓ ਤਿਹ ਕੇ ਜਗ ਮੈਂ ਮੁਖਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਚਿੱਤ ਮੈਂ ਜੁਧੁ ਬਿਚਾਰੈ ॥
ਦੇਹ ਅਨਿਤ ਨ ਨਿੱਤ ਰਹੈ ਜਸੁ ਨਾਵ ਚੜੈ ਭਵਸਾਗਰ ਤਾਰੈ ॥
(ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨਾਵਤਾਰ)

Blessed be the person who lives a life of right activity and scribe, With name of God on his lips. Life is transient, meritorious living leads you beyond the reals of doubts. Make thy body a home for Constance enlightened by intelligence

And, who with scythe of knowledge destroys ignorance falsehood root and branch.

Sastar Nam Mala

It is a sort of catalogue of weapons. For sustaining the heroic atmosphere, to make aware the newly created Sikh society about the weapons, the Guru composed Sastar Nam Mala- a rosary of weapon names.

Dashmesh considered arrow, sword, spear etc as the symbol of God because they are the main tools of strength in the Dharam Yudh, he percured.

ਖਗ ਖੰਡ ਥਿਹੰਡੀ ਖਲਦਲ ਖੰਡੀ ਅਤਿ ਰਣ ਮੰਡੀ ਥਰਥੰਡੀ ।
ਭੁਜ ਦੰਡ ਅਖੰਡੀ ਤੇਜ ਪ੍ਰਚੰਡੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਅਮੰਡੀ ਭਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਭੰਡੀ ।
ਸੁਖ ਸੰਤਾ ਕਰਣੀ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਦਰਣੀ ਕਿਲਥਿਖ ਹਰਣੀ ਅਸ ਸਰਣੀ ।
ਜੈ ਜੈ ਜਗ ਕਾਰਣ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟ ਉਥਾਰਣ ਮਮ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਰਣ ਜੈ ਤੇਗੰ ॥੨॥

This sword the grand slayer, the decimeter of the scoundrals, and powerful force of the art of war. It is the uninterrupted effulgence of the arms; its flame is tremendous and its glory is like sun. This sword is pleasure giver to the saints, crusher of the ill will and eschewer of the force and nurturing passion and desires. I hail the power in the form of sword and I seek its shelter which is the basic cause of this creation ॥

All the weapons were put in a mythological context. The Sikhs accepted this and were inspired to do deeds of valour in the fight against tyranny.

Pakhayan Charitra

Humour and romance, next to religion, were always welcomed by the Punjabi mind. They helped them to escape from the sordid realities of the political suppressions, religious tyranny, despotism of

the rulers and the ever-haunting shadows of foreign invasions. It is a collection of 404 romantic tales on the Viles of women. The moral of all the talks is to warn the readers and to raise their ethical and moral standard. It is an encyclopaedia of tales and immortal romances of Punjab are also there. At the end of the last tale there is the prayer to God known as *Benti Chaupai*, a prescribed daily recitation of the Sikhs.

ਹਮਰੀ ਕਰੋ ਹਾਥ ਦੇ ਰਛਾ । ਪੂਰਨ ਹੋਇ ਚਿੱਤ ਕੀ ਏਛਾ ॥

*O Lord protect me with thy hand
May my hearts wishes be fulfilled.*

The chief merit of these tales is suggestiveness. They warn the unwary against the enticements of the women. This was the main purpose of providing such literature, the study of which would make the newly created Sikh society aware of the social, religious and ideal love which are beneficial to life. (It is the most controversial part of the Dasam Granth and there are conflicting views on its authorship).

Zafarnamah

Literally meaning an Epistle of Victory. It is a letter of protest written by Guru Sahib to Emperor Aurangzeb in response to his hostility and betrayal.

This first part of it is a prayer to God and the author seeks His blessings to resolve all his problems.

ਕਮਾਲਿ ਕਰਾਮਾਤ ਕਾਯਮ ਕਰੀਮ ।
ਰਜਾ ਬਖਸ਼ੈ ਰਾਜਿਕ ਰਿਹਾਕੇ ਰਹੀਮ ॥

*God is the master of miracles eternal and benervolent
He bestows resignation to His will, provides sustenance
delivers from bondage and is full of benevolence.*

The second part is addressed to the Emperor. The Guru condemned the Emperor for breach of faith. The purpose of writing Zafarnamah was to bring home to him his cruelty and deception. Lastly the Guru asserts his right to take to arms:

ਚੂਕਾਰ ਅਜ ਹਮਰ ਹੀਲਤੋ ਦਰ ਗੁਜਸਤ ॥
ਹਲਾਲ ਅਸਤੁ ਬੁਰਦਨ ਬ ਸਮਸ਼ੋਰ ਦਸਤ ॥

*When an affair outstrips all machinations; It is
legitiamate to lift the sword by the hilt.*

Hikayats

The introductory verses are in a very exalted tone.

ਖੁਦਾਵੰਦ ਦਾਨਸ਼ ਦਿਹੋ ਦਾਦਗਾਰ ॥
ਰਜਾ ਬਖਸ਼ ਰੋਜ਼ੀ ਦਿਹ ਹਰ ਹੁਨਰ ॥
ਅਮਾ ਬਖਸ਼ ਬਖਸ਼ਿੰਦ ਓ ਦਿਸਤਗੀਰ ॥
ਕੁਸ਼ਾਯਸ਼ ਕੁੰਨੇ ਰਹਿ ਨੁਮਾਯਸ਼ ਪਜ਼ੀਰ ॥

These are Persian tales, these written in praise of God almighty. The last verse of each tale seeks blessings from the Almighty. The aim of the tales is to bring in new consciousness of the Divine in the newly created Khalsa.

Thus, all the merits of such good poetry in the Dasam Granth give it a unique position as a work of great poetical value in Hindi and Punjabi literatures. Therefore, it can be justifiably concluded that the Dasam Granth is the greatest glories of Indian literature. Further, it is a great step towards rescuing of the old Indian thought and culture from becoming dead. So far, Sanskrit, a preserve of the elite, was used to convey the literary thought and culture. For the first time in the history of Punjab, literature for the common man was produced in their mother tongue i.e. Punjabi.

Marx talked of capitalist exploitation of the society in the 19th century and Lenin talked of Imperialism in the 20th. The theories of Marx and Lenin exercised a very powerful influence upon the social movements which spread in the ranks of educated people no less than in those of the working classes all over the world. Guru Sahib felt like Rousseau, one hundred years earlier, that it was the common people who make a human race. Moreover, he enunciated the principle of liberty, equality and fraternity which formed the bed rock of French Revolution. Guru Sahib was a pioneer of social reconstruction but with a humanized and dynamic view of society. He brought about a social revolution without coercion. The broad outlines of Guru Sahib's social philosophy can be perused in the Dassam Granth.

The aim of Guru Sahib was to develop a good moral character which would pave the way for spiritual progress. All Sikh Gurus laid the foundation of society's progress not on miracles or mysteries but on the divinity of human beings. With the help of the Dasam Granth Guru Ji revived and breathed valour into the veins of an old dying nation. Heroic literature was made the means to this noble end and his exalted mission of ending slavery of his countrymen was also fulfilled to a great extent. Guru Ji always invoked the blessing of God to take up the cause of oppressed humanity.

The Dasam Granth is everlasting tribute to the versatile genius of Guru Gobind Singh.

Sadhu Singh Deol

Of Ajit Garh and Tarn Taran

When the Punjab was again divided in 1966, I was the DC at Ambala. I proposed the creation of Ropar district in a new Punjab. This was accepted. A decade later, Chief Minister Zail Singh changed the name to Roop Nagar. But I could not see the rationale.

Mohali township was started by Lakshman Singh Gill. Gyani Ji was persuaded to change its name to Sahib Zada Ajit Singh Nagar to commemorate Guru Gobind Singh's eldest warrior son. The name was too long and never used. It is always written as "SAS Nagar (Mohali)."

I suggested that Mohali's name should be Ajit Garh which blends beautifully with Gobindgarh and Chandigarh. It is short and pithy. I pointed out that the billion-dollar publicity cricket brings, sadly goes to Mohali but Ajit Singh is forgotten. Gyani Ji offered to write in favour of my suggestion.

Over the years, I wrote repeatedly to succeeding Chief Ministers of the Punjab, including my friend the current one. Nothing happened. Now a new district has been created. I would once again suggest to the Government and people of Punjab consider my idea and perpetuate Sahib Zada's memory.

Now about Tarn Taran. In the choice and shape of the new districts, something interesting has happened. After Pratap Singh Kairon passed away in 1965, political power has remained south of the Sutlej, irrespective of the party in command. Many new districts have been created all in one region. We have Faridkot, Muktsar, Mansa, Fatehgarh, Nawanshahr, SAS Nagar and may be some more to come. The size and boundaries defy understanding and logic. Some districts have a population of only a few lakhs.

However, Amritsar district with a 30 lakh or more population, continues to remain unchanged. In 1987, I suggested to Governor Ray the creation of Muktsar and Tarn Taran as new districts, to meet Sikh sentiments and for better management. This did not happen. Later Muktsar emerged, but Tarn Taran remains ignored [Till now, read on:Ed].

Tarn Taran has a central place in the Sikh Faith. Guru Arjan Dev compiled the Grant Sahib here. Can we imagine a Golden Temple without the Granth Sahib? Give Tarn Taran its due and declare it a district with sub-divisions at Patti and Goindwal. It will have a balance of population, reduce the pressure on the DC of Amritsar and enhance the development of this neglected border area.

When I was Development Commissioner, Punjab, I started a new Mandi Board scheme of Vikas Bhavans in all sub-divisions of the State. The first one, a four-story office block, was built in the Tarn Taran Mandi. I visualised it as the future Tarn Taran DC's office. It still awaits its first occupant.

*Dr. Manohar Singh Gill
Former Chief Election Commission of India*

Tarn Taran has been declared a district on the occasion of Guru Arjan Dev's 400th Year of martyrdom.

Tarn Taran as the 19th district

The Punjab Chief Minister, Capt. Amarinder Singh has taken the final decision to elevate Tarn Taran as a district to mark the 400th martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev. Meanwhile, the state government has decided in principle to set up a third Regional Centre of Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU) at a cost of Rs 5 crore here. The state government would earmark 25 acres for the Regional Centre of GNDU in the proposed Guru Arjan Dev Nagar on the Amritsar-Tarn Taran road.

An assurance in this regard was given to S. Harwinder Singh Sarna, President, Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee by the Chief Minister. Sarna said Capt. Amarinder Singh had assured him that the state government would ensure overall development of the historic city, founded by Guru Arjan Dev in 1596.

The name Tarn Taran originally referred to the sarovar, the name given by Guru Arjan Dev. It literally means "the boat that takes one across" (the ocean of existence). *Tarana* in Sanskrit is a raft or a boat.

The decision to set up the Regional Centre of GNDU at Tarn Taran was taken on the suggestion of Dr. S.P. Singh, Vice Chancellor, GNDU, who suggested that the proposed Regional Centre should come as an extension centre of the proposed *Institute on Guru Granth Sahib*, announced by the Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, to mark the 400th anniversary of compilation of Guru Granth Sahib.

The proposed centre would focus on research on the life and teaching of Guru Arjan Dev and compilation of Guru Granth Sahib. S.P. Singh confirmed that the Chief Minister had agreed to set up the Regional Centre of the GNDU to coincide with the elevation of Tarn Taran as district headquarters in June.

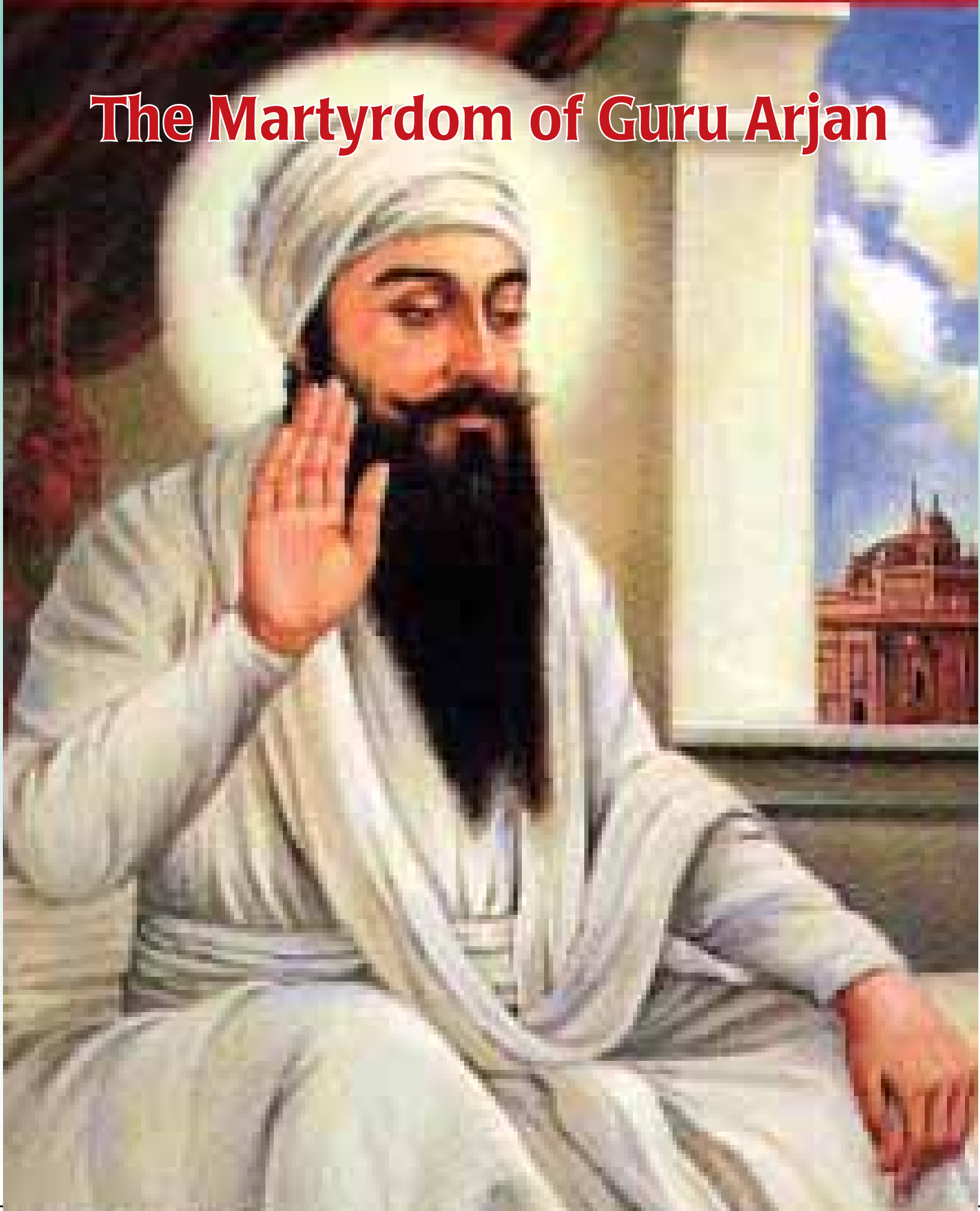
Dr S.P. Singh further elaborated that the proposed regional centre would provide job oriented courses including the B.Tech (Computer), B.Tech (Electronic), five year MBA/MCA, apart from courses like tailoring and carpentering.


He said the proposed Regional Centre would virtually be a university minus the examinations whose administrative branch would continue to be at Amritsar.

The DSGMC President later held a meeting with various social and religious organisations to chalk out programmes regarding nagar kirtan from New Delhi to Lahore via Tarn Taran as regular feature.

Meanwhile, Baba Jagatar Singh Kar Sewa Wale has started the facelifting of Tarn Taran gates being constructed on all sides of the Holy City.

The Martyrdom of Guru Arjan



 Emperor Jahangir himself, under whose orders Guru Arjan was arrested and executed in 1606, should be, historically speaking, taken as the best and the most reliable authority on martyrdom of the Guru. He was the chief prosecuting authority to exhibit the criminal charge against him as well as the final judge in the case to pass the sentence of death upon him. And fortunately, for history, we have both, the Emperor's charges and his sentence, available to us in his own words as recorded in his autobiography, the *Tuzuk-l-Jahangiri*. The *Tuzuk* has been translated into English and Urdu and is readily available to the scholars of history.

According to Jahangir:

“There lived at Goindwal on the bank of the river Biah (Beas) a Hindu named Arjan in the garb of a Pir and Shaikh, so much so that he had by his ways and means captivated the hearts of many simple-minded Hindus, nay, even of foolish and stupid Muslims and he had noised himself about as a religious and wordly leader. They called him Guru, and from all directions, fools and fool-worshippers were attracted towards him and expressed full faith in him. For three or four generations they had kept this shop warm. For a long time the thought had been presenting itself to me that either I should put an end to this false traffic or he should be brought into the fold of Islam.

At last during the days when Khusrau passed along this road, this insignificant fellow made up his mind to see him and conveyed pre-conceived things to him and made on his forehead a fingermark in saffron which in Hindu terminology is called *qashqa* (*teeka*) and is considered propitious. When this came to the ears of Our Majesty, and I fully knew his heresies, I ordered that he should be brought into my presence and, having handed over his houses, dwelling places and confiscated his property, I ordered that he should be put to death with tortures.”

In his above statement, the Emperor has levelled two charges against Guru Arjan:

* The popularity of the religious teachings and of the ways of life of the Guru amongst the Hindus and Muslims who looked upon him as a religious leader.

This had so upset and irritated Jahangir as to use very undignified language for the Guru and his followers, whom he calls “simpletons, fools and stupid”.

* The visit of the Guru to the rebel prince Khusrau whom he is said to have blessed with a saffron mark on his forehead.

The first charge may be accepted as correct. It is an undeniable historical fact that Guru Arjan was the acknowledged religious head of a new social order in the country aiming at a unified, classless and casteless society recognising no distinction between man and man – sons of the same father who is God – and between the high and the low or the rich and the poor. He was the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, the fourth in succession to Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, which welcomed to its proselytising creed men and women without any distinction of race and religion. It knew no geographical and political barriers in accepting people into its embrace. To it all mankind was one and there were no chosen people and no discarded heathens or infidels.

All this was not considered to be in accordance with the accepted creed of the then rulers of the country who happened to be Muslims by faith, with Jahangir as then the Emperor of India.

It is true, as history records it, that Emperor Jahangir was hardly a puritan representative of the Islamic faith. Far from it. At times leaning towards Christianity, at others towards Hinduism, he was a man of confused religious views with no fixed moral scruples, a debauchee, always soaked in wine. Some time before his accession to the Mughal throne, he had perforce or of political necessity, to assume character of defender of the Muslim faith and play the role of a puritan. This was in keeping with his promise to an influential section of fantastical Muslims, the *naqshbandi* revivalists, headed in the Punjab by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi Mujaddid-iAlfi-sani, a disciple of Khwaja Baqi Billa, to whose devoted advocate Shaikh Farid Bukhari, later titled Nawab Murtza Khan, he owed his throne and the suppression of his heretic son Khusrau's rebellion which threatened to deprive him of his crown and kingdom.

For some time, various puritan Muslims had been feeling disturbed and agitated over the religious policies of Emperor Akbar whose toleration and liberality towards non-Sunni Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Sikhs (and the introduction of Divine Monetheism, the *Din-l-llahi*) were interpreted as anti-Muslim and derogatory to Islam. Of all the Muslim divines of

the period the Mujaddid was the bitterest against the non-Muslims for whose public humiliation and wholesale destruction, he incited the leading Muslims in authority. According to calculated plans, the revivalists approached the chief pillars of the Mughal empire to support the successor of Emperor Akbar on condition that there was complete change in the imperial policy towards the non-Muslims and that the Islamic laws would be rigidly upheld and applied according to the Mujaddid's interpretation. Sheikh Farid Bukhari was one of the staunchest advocates of the revivalist movement and was a confidant and supporter of the claims of the heir-apparent Prince Salim (later, Jahangir) to the Imperial throne.

In his impatience to be crowned, Prince Salim was suspected in 1591 of having caused poison to be administered to his father. "It is impossible to say," writes Vincent Smith, in his *Akbar the Great Mughal*, p.301, "whether or not the suspicion was then justified, but it is certain that in 1600, Salim had become utterly weary of waiting for the long deferred and ardently desired succession. The prince, who was then thirty one years of age, felt aggrieved because of the reign of his father had already lasted more than forty years and Akbar's constitution seemed to postpone indefinitely the close of his life. Salim, therefore, following many evil precedents in Asiatic history resolved to anticipate the course of nature and occupy the imperial throne by force, whatever might be the consequences to his father."

He burst out into open rebellion against Emperor Akbar, assumed the royal title in 1601 and had Shaikh Abdul Fazl, the dearest friend and the supporter of His Majesty, murdered in August 1602. A reconciliation was, however, effected through the paternal magnanimity of the Emperor who publicly recognised Prince Salim as his heir to the throne. Rumours and reports, however, continued to be circulated that, in reality, Akbar approved the nomination of his grandson Khusrau as his heir to the throne and desired to be succeeded by him rather by his rebellious and intemperate son.

This set in motion intrigues and counter-intrigues with frantic efforts for winning support for the contesting parties, Prince Salim and his son Khusrau. The proposal of the Khan-i-Azam Aziz Koka and Raja Man Singh to exclude Prince Salim as unworthy in favour of his son was stoutly

400 Years after the martyrdom

Guru Arjan Dev's martyrdom occurred four hundred years ago on 30 May, 1606 after imprisonment and extreme torture.

Guru Arjan, the fifth Nanak, was a sensitive poet, musician, philosopher, builder of cities and the first martyr of the faith founded by Guru Nanak. He embodied love, humility and service.

His most valuable achievement was compilation of the *Adi Granth*, containing nearly 6,000 hymns of 36 saint-poets from different parts of India.

Emperor Jahangir was alarmed at the growing influence of Guru Arjan. He wrote in his *Tuzuk* (autobiography): "So many of the simpleminded Hindus, nay, many foolish Muslims too, had been fascinated by the Guru's way and teaching. For many years the thought had been presenting itself to my mind that either I should put an end to this false traffic, or that he be brought into the fold of Islam."

When Jahangir's son Khusrau rebelled against his father, he met Guru Arjan at Goindwal, sought his blessing and partook of *langar*. After suppressing Khusrau's rebellion, Jahangir wreaked vengeance on those he suspected of having helped his son. Guru Arjan was heavily fined. Refusing to pay, he was then arrested. Jahangir wrote: "I fully knew of his heresies and I ordered that he should be brought into my presence, that his property be confiscated and that he should be put to death with torture."

Guru Arjan was taken to Lahore and seated on red-hot iron plates. Burning sand was poured on him and he was dipped in boiling water. Sufi saint Mian Mir, who had laid the cornerstone of the Golden Temple, tried to intercede on his behalf. But the Guru forbade him. In his agony the Guru would utter;

Tera kya mitha lage, Naam padarth nanak
(Whatever you ordain appears sweet. I beg for the gift of the Name).

The Guru was then taken to the River Ravi. Immersion in the river's cold water was more than his blistered body could bear. Deep in meditation, the Guru serenely passed away.

Dr. Maheep Singh

opposed by a number of nobles. This afforded a very favourable opportunity to the adherents of the puritan revivalists to exact from Prince Salim, as a price for their support to his claims to the imperial throne, two solemn oaths binding him in the first place to defend the Islamic religion against non-Muslim heathenism, and in the second place to wreak no vengeance upon those who had at any time in the past espoused the cause of Khusrau. Salim gladly accepted both the conditions and took the required oaths. This was a great achievement of the Mujaddidities who, in spite of all his un-Islamic conduct in the past, acclaimed Prince Salim as Badshah-i-Islam after his father's death. To quote the Mujaddid himself as he wrote to Shaikh Bukhari:

“Today when news of death of the denier of superiority of Islam and of joyful accession of the King of Islam was heard by people, the followers of Islam considered it obligatory on their part to extend their support to the king and to work and guide propagation of the holy law of Islam and for the reinforcement of the Religion.

Shaikh Farid Bkhari had also secured the active co-operation of the Sayyids of Barha who were well known for their religious zeal and martial valour. The combination of the Barha fraternity with Shaikh Farid greatly strengthened the side of Prince Salim whose solemn oaths to act as the defender of the creed of Islam also won over to his side many another half-hearted and vacillating noble. This made him invincible against his son's party which after the death of Akbar on 17 October, 1605, and the accession of Salim as the new Emperor Jahangir, a week later on the 24th, was left with no adherents. With a clear stroke of statesmanship, the new Emperor effected reconciliation with Raja Man Singh and dismissed him in all honour to his Government in Bengal. Khusrau also was received with warmest affection with a grant of a lakh of rupees for the renovation of a mansion allotted to him for residence in the fort of Agra.

But the ambitious and impatient spirit of Khusrau felt restless in a sort of semi-confinement in the Agra fort and, to try his luck once again, he escaped on 6 April, 1606 and hurried towards the Punjab evidently in the hope of gaining adherents in the north-west and leading a successful rebellion against his father. Thither he was closely pursued by Shaikh Farid Bukhari, followed at a short distance by the Emperor himself. The Shaikh followed the

same route as was followed by Khusrau, crossing the river Beas at Goindwal, and inflicted a crushing defeat on the rebel prince near Bharowal. In his flight towards Kabul, Khusrau was captured on 27 April, while trying to cross the river Chenab, and was brought to Lahore, handcuffed and enchained, to be ordered into confinement by Emperor Jahangir on the first of May.

For over a week, 28 April to 7 May, the Emperor stayed on in the garden of Kamran outside the town of Lahore waiting for the auspicious hour to enter the fort (on Muharram 9 that is, 7 May, 1606).

The Emperor was now at perfect ease to attend to other official business of the empire including the dispatch of reinforcements to Shah Beg Khan, Governor of Qandahar, against the threatened attack by Hussian Khan of Herat. He rewarded a number of his nobles for their meritorious services and granted to them high ranks and cash awards. Pleased with the prediction of Shaikh Hussain Jami, he ordered the sum of twenty lakh dams, equivalent to thirty-fourty thousand rupees, to be paid to him for his maintenance and of his 'khanqah' and the 'darveshes' living there. On the 22nd of Muharram, 20 May, he raised the *mansab* of Abdullah Khan and granted an advance of two lakhs of rupees for the Alidis. Rupees six thousand were this day paid to Qasim Beg Khan, son-in-law of Badshah Beg Khan and three thousand to Sayyid Bahadur Khan. The Emperor also now decided to stay on at Lahore to ward off the danger to Qandahar and to pay a visit to Kabul. He had also in the meantime called from Agra his son Parwez and also his own mother and the ladies of his harem.

On or about the 23rd of May, a report was poured into the ears of Emperor Jahangir that during the short halt of Khusrau at Goindwal, on the right bank of river Beas, the Sikh Guru Arjan had gone to see the prince and conveyed to him some preconceived things and had also blessed him with a saffron mark on his forehead. Hearing this, the Emperor ordered the Guru to be brought into his presence, confiscated his property and sentenced him to a torturous death: *Yasa-o-Siyasat*.

This was a month after the Guru was alleged to have blessed the prince and some twenty-seven days after the Emperor himself had crossed the Beas at that very place. This makes the entire thing a puzzle and throws very serious doubt on authenticity of the report. The fact that for twenty-seven days, from 26

April, when the emperor appears to have crossed the Beas at Goindwal and was encamped at Jhabal (transliterated as Jaipal by later copyists) to 22 May, mentioned above, there is no reference whatsoever in the *Tuzuk* in any way involving Guru Arjan in the affairs of Prince Khusrau or of any of his accomplices. If the Guru had met and blessed Khusrau at Goindwal, it would certainly have been reported to the Emperor on the spot or in its immediate neighbourhood where it could have been easily verified and authenticated by eye-witnesses: the Guru would then have been arrested and carried as a prisoner with him to Lahore. But, in fact, nothing came to the ears of His Majesty for as long as a month.

Now about the details of the report as recorded by Jahangir in the *Tuzuk*, The Guru was not a politician to be in any way interested in the rebellion of Prince Khusrau against his father Jahangir who had been on the throne hardly for six months, nor had the Prince met the Guru after the accession of his father to prompt the Guru to have any preconceived ideas to be conveyed to him.

As for the *qashqa* or *teeka*, mark of saffron by the Guru on the forehead of the Prince, it is, on the face of it, a pure and simple concoction of some conspirator's fertile imagination to exploit the Emperor's emotions against the Guru. Never in the whole history of the Sikh Gurus, there has been any occasion for any Guru to anoint anyone. Sikh or a non-Sikh, with a *teeka*. Even the succeeding Guru was not *teeka* d by any Guru himself. The *teeka* or *tilak* ceremony of the succeeding Guru was always performed by a leading Sikh. In the case of Guru Angad to Guru Hargobind including Guru Arjan himself, the ceremony was performed by Bhai Buddha, a venerable old Sikh coming from the days of Guru Nanak. And the same practice was followed up to the time of Guru Gobind Singh, tenth and the last Guru.

Guru Arjan was the successor of Guru Nanak and head of the Sikh religion. He would not have departed from and gone against the accepted practice of the religion. The great Emperor Akbar had met the third Guru Amar Das and had, in recognition of his spiritual position, bestowed upon his daughter the piece of land where the city of Amritsar was later founded by Guru Ram Das. The Emperor had met Guru Arjan himself also and had, evidently on his suggestion, remitted 12% of the excessive revenue of the Punjab as demanded by changed circumstances. The Gurus had then, in both

cases, valid reasons to thank and bless the Emperor, but at no time was a saffron *tilak* mark made on his forehead by any of them as a mark of his blessings or gratitude.

According to the Mehma Parkash of Sarup Das Bhalla of Goindwal, the Guru took pity upon the Prince in misery and provided him with food, evidently, from the Guru's *langar*, or free kitchen, open to all wayfarers. He makes no mention of any *teeka* or any financial help.

Thus the allegation of political complicity and of blessings that the rebellious Prince Khusrau leveled against Guru Arjan falls flat as being historically unsound and may be summarily dismissed as unacceptable by objective students of history. It had evidently been cooked up by dishonest persons, with or without a casual or meaningful hint falling from the Emperor's lips about his attitude towards Guru Arjan, to add fuel to the fire of the Emperor's wrath against the Guru or to provide His Majesty with an opportunity to take his long looked for action against the person whose religious preachings and increasing influence incensed his mind. And, according to his own statement, Jahangir was looking for an opportunity either to put an end to Guru Arjun's preachings or an opportunity to convert him to Islam. He, therefore, made no enquiry into the genuineness of any charges leveled against the Guru. In fact, he did not feel the necessity of it. He himself became a prosecution, witness as well saying, I fully knew his heresies '*butlan-i-o ra ba wajah I akmal midanisram*' (Tuzuk)'.¹

Immediately after the allegations against the Guru came to his ears, Jahangir ordered the Guru's arrest and confiscation of his property and passed the sentence of torturous death against him. This leaves no doubt whatever that it was the Guru's religious preachings, the so-called heresies or *butlan*, as the Emperor calls them, that were wholly responsible for the Emperor's sentence against him. The political allegations were only used as a handy pretext and recorded as a camouflaging justification for his drastic action against a popular religious leader, either to satisfy his own guilty conscience or to throw his future non-Muslim critics off the track of truth. As for

¹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਤਾਰਨ ਪਰ ਗਏ । ਕੇਤਕ ਦਿਨ ਤਹਾਂ ਚੀਤਤ ਭਏ ।
ਤਹਾ ਭਾਗਾ ਆਇਆ ਇਕ ਸੁਹਜਾਦਾ । ਕੁਛ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਬਿਥਾਦਾ ।
ਦੂਹਾ ਆਣਾ ਡੇਰਾ ਤਿਨ ਲੀਨਾ । ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਮੇ ਭੇਟਾ ਤਿਨ ਕੀਨਾ ।
ਮੇ ਬਠਾ ਦੁਖੀ ਤਾ ਪਰ ਭਈ ਆਫਤ । ਦੇਖ ਦਿਆਲ ਗੁਰ ਕਰੀ ਜ਼ਿਆਫਤ ।

the Muslims, he knew that the vocal puritan section of them would feel pleased with his action as it was in keeping with his promise to set out as a defender of the Islamic faith.

There is yet another point of dispute. The Emperor's account in the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* would make us believe that Guru Arjan was living at Goindwal when Prince Khusrau and the Emperor crossed the river Beas at that ferry point and it was from there that the Guru was arrested and taken to Lahore. Macauliffe's *Sikh Religion*, evidently based on Sarup Das Bhalla's *Mehma Parkash* and Santokh Singh's *Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, however, records that the Guru was then at Tarn Taran and that Khusrau had met him there. Beni Prasad in his *History of Jahangir*, also confirms this.

Once the Emperor had issued the orders of torturous death against the Guru, he took no notice of details and left it in the hands of Shaikh Farid Bukhari, his favourite general and the chief person responsible for the suppression of his son's rebellion. The Shaikh was honoured with the title of Murtza Khan and the village of Bharowal, where Khusrau was defeated by him was granted to him in a Jagir.

It was during the captivity of Guru Arjan at Lahore (24-30 May) that according to Jesuit records, "Certain gentiles (heathens or Hindus) interceded on behalf of their holy man and in the end he was allowed to purchase his freedom for a hundred thousand crusaders (about two lakhs of rupees) for which a wealthy gentile became his surety....but neither the Guru nor those about him could meet the demands of his tormentor; at last the poor man did overcome by the miseries heaped upon him". The wealthy gentile, referred to above, was presumably Chandu Shah of the Sikh tradition.

The author of the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* says that "when His Majesty the late Nur-ud-din Muhammad Jahangir, after the arrest of Khusrau, arrested and fined Guru Arjan Mal for the reason that he had prayed for the welfare of prince Khusrau the late Emperor's son who had rebelled against his father, they demanded an enormous sum from him (Guru Arjan). The Guru was unable to pay. Having imprisoned him they kept him in the sandy desert of Lahore. From the heat of the sun, the severity of the summer and the tortures of the bailiffs, he gave his life."

Both the above authorities make a mention of fine levied against the Guru. But their information,

apparently, is based on hearsay or what was circulated by the official sources or interested parties to absolve the reigning Emperor of wanton tyranny in the eyes of the public. The Emperor in his sentence makes no mention of the fine whatever. And in the face of his clear sentence of a torturous death, it is extremely difficult to give credence to any story of the fine and of its non-payment being the main cause of the Guru's persecution. Could any one dare disobey the order of an autocrat despot whose word was the law? At best Chandu Shah may be said to have offered to stand a surety for the Guru if the Emperor agreed to commute the death sentence into that of a heavy fine. But as this could not come about or the Guru refused to accept it, the imperial bailiffs proceeded with execution of the original orders of *Yasa* and *Siyasat* to torture him to death, seating him in a cauldron of boiling water and pouring burning sand on his naked body. The most painful torture that could be inflicted on a blistered body was to immerse it in cold water. And that is what they did. The river Ravi was then flowing nearby and they put him there, which brought an end to his life. His physical frame succumbed to the final torture and Guru Arjan became the first martyr at the altar of his faith.

The fiction that the Guru was subjected to all sorts of inhuman tortures by Chandu Shah so as to wreak his vengeance upon the Guru for his having refused his daughter's hand for his (Guru's) son Hargobind or to coerce him to accept it even at that stage, is, nothing but baseless invention of the fanciful mind of some poet. It cannot be easily accepted that Emperor Jahangir or Murtza Khan Shaikh Farid Bukhari, "the defenders of the Islamic faith", handed over Guru Arjan, accused of religious heresies and treasonable complicity in a rebellion against the Emperor, to a Hindu Kafir in the face of the Emperor's clear orders to put him to a torturous death, '*Yasa-a-siyasat*'.

It may also be mentioned that the name of Chandu Shah is not to be found in the *Tuzuk* or any other contemporary or semi-contemporary works on the reign of Jahangir. To write, therefore, that "at time Chandu Shah was the Emperor's Diwan or Financial Minister (*Macauliffe, Sikh Religion, Forsters Travels, Cunningham, History of the Sikhs*) is not historically acceptable.

The last phase of the Guru's death is described by Macauliffe, on the basis of Bhai Santokh Singh's *Gur-*

partap Suraj Granth that after five days of suffering the Guru, when threatened to be sewed up alive in the fresh hide of a cow, "asked permission to bathe in the Ravi. Thither he went full of blisters and had his final bath never to return alive". This would virtually amount to calculated suicide committed to escape such torture.

The fact, however, is that the Guru was taken to the river Ravi under armed escort to meet the final torture to his blistered body through immersion in cold water of the river. For this we have the evidence of two early historians of the Sikhs, Rattan Singh in the *Prachin Panth Parkash* and Sohan Lal Suri in the *Umdat-ulTawarikh*.

Referring to the tyranny of the Mughal Empire against the Sikhs, Rattan Singh poses a question, the first line of which is very significant indeed:-

Kia Gur Arjan daryai no boryo
ਕਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਅਰਜਨ ਦਰਿਆਇ ਨ ਬੋਰਯੋ

Was not Guru Arjan thrown into the river?
(Prachin Panth Parkash, 534, line 17-8)

This clearly reveals that till middle of the nineteenth century, when Rattan Singh completed his work it was a matter of common knowledge and belief among the Sikhs that Guru Arjan was finally thrown into the river Ravi at Lahore. This is confirmed by Sohan Lal Suri, a contemporary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, in his *Umdat-ul-Tawarikh*, the first volume of which, wherein we find the reference to Guru Arjan's martyrdom, is based on the material left by his father and grandfather, Ganpat Rai and Hakumat Rai.

Bad az zahur ba'ze muqaddamat-i-na-mutayam zat-i-buri ra dar bahr-i-Rai andakhtand.

Having subjected him to a number of tortures, they threw the saint (Guru Arjan) into the river Ravi.

Kesar Singh in his *Bansavali Nama* (completed in 1769 A.D.) also supports his statement saying: ਜੇ ਬੱਯੇ ਜੀ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਨਦੀ ਭੁਝਾਏ ।

'Tied up he was thrown into the river' (Charan V, 141).

Evidence of these independent authorities is conclusive enough to demolish any fictional theory that the Guru went to the river for a bath on his own accord. With his body full of blisters and extremely weakened by the tortures, this is unthinkable.

We are left with the conclusion that Guru Arjan was subjected to extreme tortures in the execution

Transforming the Sikh psyche

The fifth Sikh Guru, Arjan Dev (1563-1606), compiled the *Guru Granth Sahib*, holy book of the Sikhs, which contains hymns of great saints, irrespective of the religions they belonged to. The task took many years and, when completed, shared spiritual shelf space with the Vedas, the Koran and the Bible. Guru Arjan was a lyricist with divine grace and his short hymns in simple language touch one's heart. *Sukhmani* (psalm of peace) remains the masterpiece, captivating the reciter and listener together.

In addition to his hymns, this connoisseur of music also composed them using various ragas. The Vani of *Granth Sahib* is a poetry of devotion, moral rather than cerebral, lyrical without prescribing any social code. The universality of his message can be gauged from one such hymn: *Tati wao na lagie, par brahm sharnai, chowgird hamere Ram ka dukh lage na bhai. Satgur pura bhetia jin banat banai. Ram nam aukhadia, eka liv lie* (I have taken shelter under the transcendent Lord, blasts of heat touch me not).

Also as the first Sikh martyr, Guru Arjan will be remembered for his Great Sacrifice. The Moghul emperor, Jehangir, was uncomfortable with the Guru's religious popularity and the message of secularism being propagated by him. When told that he had given refuge to prince Khusro, who had revolted, Jehangir summoned the Guru and charged him with conspiracy and treason. Post-trial, he was sentenced to death by "*siyasat and yasa*" (death by torture without bloodshed) and made to sit on a hot iron plate kept on a burning furnace. That he died because of his faith in and propagation of plurality of religious thought makes his sacrifice particularly relevant today as we celebrate the 400th anniversary of his martyrdom.

Guru Arjan Dev transformed the Sikh psyche, which took to the postulates of *Miri* and *Piri*, meaning religion and politics is the ad-mixture of future polity. This change was addressed to the reconstruction and reengineering of Indian society in general and consolidation of Sikh people in particular, and paved the way towards creation of the Khalsa in 1699.

Harcharan Singh

of Emperor Jahangir's orders to put him to death according to '*yasa and siyosat*' and that, finally, his blistered body was immersed, if, actually not thrown in the cold water of river Ravi, which brought an end to his life.

Bhai Gurdas, a contemporary and a close relative, an uncle of the Guru from the mother's side, has referred in his *Varan* to the Guru's last moments as being most peaceful. The night before his death was very painful, he says, but the Guru endured all this with smiling face, in perfect calmness and with resignation to His Divine Will, with the Master's words upon his lips and preaching the Lords message to those around him.

While the world was plunged into sorrow and grief over the death of Guru Arjan, who was not only the leader of Sikh religion, holding a position "equivalent to that of Pope amongst the Christians," to use the words of the Rev. Fr. Fernao Guerreiro, but was also a great saint and scholar who had given the world a universal scripture of the highest order.

Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi Mujaddid Alf-i-Sani, the leader of the Muslim Naqshbandi revivalists in the Punjab, felt jubilant over it. According to him it was a matter of great satisfaction that an acknowledged leader of the non-Muslim infidels, in an area of his own influence, had been finally removed from the scene of his activities. And he expressed his exultancy to no less a person than Nawab Murtza Khan Shaikh Farid Bukhari, the favourite confidant and chief adviser of Emperor Jahangir in winning over leading Muslim nobles to take his side in the contest for the throne by exacting from him (the Emperor) the promise on oath that in case of his success he would act as defender of the Islamic faith which, according to Jahangir himself, was in danger at the hands of Guru Arjan. Murtza Khan, as we have already mentioned, was a devoted disciple of the great Mujaddid and it was through him that the revivalists worked upon the mind of Emperor Jahangir to reverse the policy of religious tolerance towards the non-Muslims followed by his letter in *Maktubat-in-Imam Rabbani Hazrat Mujaddid-Alf-i-Sani*, which translated into English, would read as:

'The execution of the accursed Kafir of Goindwal at this time is a very good achievement indeed and has become the cause of a great defeat of the hateful Hindus. With whatever intention they are killed and with whatever objective they are destroyed, it is a

meritorious act for the Muslims. Before this Kafir was killed, I had seen in a dream that the Emperor of the day had destroyed the crown of the head of *Shirk* or infidelity. It is true that this infidel was the chief of the infidels and a leader of the kafirs. The object of levying *Jeziya* on them is to humiliate and insult the Kafirs, and *jehad* against them and hostility towards them are the necessities of the Muhammadan faith'.

The Mujaddid uses still stronger language against the non-Muslims in his letter wherein he urges upon Shaikh Farid Murtza Khan to humiliate and insult the Kafirs in every possible way, to keep them at a distance like dogs and "to destroy them wholesale, if possible".

All this summarises the attitude of the leader of the Muslim Revivalist movement in the Punjab, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi Mujaddid-i-Alf-i-Sani, towards the Sikh Guru Arjan who, according to him, was the Chief of the infidels - '*Rais-i-ahl-i-shik*'- and a leader of the kafirs - '*Imam-i-ahl-kufr*'-whose humiliation and destruction he repeatedly urged upon his devoted follower Shaikh Farid Murtza Khan as necessities of the Muhammadan faith- '*Jehad bil-kufr wa ghilzt har ishan az zarulyat-i-din ast*'.

It was under the influence and advice of this Shaikh Farid Murtza Khan, the devoted follower and the advocate of the fanatical and the intolerant revivalist, the Mujaddid of Sirhind, that Emperor Jahangir had pledged to act as the defender of Islam against religious activities of the non-Muslims of the country. It was during the first year of his reign and of his solemn promise that he had to issue his command in the case of Guru Arjan. This was practically the first test case for him to prove his bonafides. It was dangerous for him then not to act in accordance with the wishes of the revivalists whose chief advocate was his own chief supporter and adviser. To him, therefore, Guru Arjan was handed over by the Emperor for execution according to his ancestral Mongol law of '*Yasa and Siyosat*', and upon him he bestowed the confiscated property of the Guru.

This also lends considerable support to the probability that, disappointed at the sluggishness of the Emperor to take any action of his own accord, for practically a month after his crossing the River Beas at Goindwal, against the leader of the Sikh centre of non-Muslim preachings at Goindwal, Tarn Taran,

Amritsar and other places in the heart of the Punjab, the complaint against the Guru might as well have been made, directly or indirectly, by some agent of the Mujaddid or of Shaikh Farid Bukhari. This was to implicate the Guru in the rebellion of Khusrau to secure from the Emperor orders for his arrest and execution soon after the execution of Hussain Beg Badakhshi, Abdur Rahim and the other accomplices of Prince Khusrau.

As noted, Shaikh Farid Murtza Khan was a willing agent and a voluntary exponent of the revivalists, as also loyal adherent of the Emperor. And both at this time stood for humiliation of the non-Muslims – the revivalists from religious conviction and the Emperor from political expediency. The Shaikh, therefore, naturally wanted to obey the royal orders regarding Guru Arjan both in letter and spirit. One cannot, under the circumstances, be easily persuaded to believe that he would hand over Guru Arjan to a Kafir, as Chandu Shah was according to the revivalists, giving him an option to commute the Emperor's sentence of death against him or to release him on the acceptance of certain conditions to suit the personal demands of the kafir himself. It is apparent, therefore, that much of the Chandu-story was given currency in those very days to shift the responsibility of the tortures inflicted on the Guru from the Mughal officials to the Kafirs.

Any reasons of the Mujaddid being particularly inimical towards Guru Arjan are not far to seek. The Mujaddid was a zealous preacher of puritanic Islam and felt called upon to see the supremacy and to superiority of the Islamic faith of the holy prophet of Mecca established in the Mughal Empire, of which the rulers were Muslims. But he could not see his dream materialise in the face of the vast population professing non-Muslim faiths. In the Punjab, the non-Muslims were either the declared followers of the Sikh faith or were being increasingly attracted towards it through the life and preachings of Guru Arjan, as the author of the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* also records:

“In short, during the time of each Mahal or Guru, the Sikhs increased in number till in the reign of Guru Arjun Mall they became numerous, and there were not many cities in the inhabited countries where some Sikhs were not to be found. In the time of

Mahals before the fifth Guru, no offerings were collected from the Sikhs. Whatever was presented by the Sikhs themselves was accepted. During his time, Arjun Mall deputed one person to the Sikhs of every city so that he may collect tribute and offerings from them (This deputy or agent was called the Masand).

“People began to become Sikhs of the Guru through the medium of masands. The chief masands, through whom large numbers became Sikhs of the Guru, appointed deputies on their own behalf so that in every place and mahal, people having become associates of the masands became Sikhs of the Guru”.

And, according to Emperor Jahangir, Guru Arjan “had by his ways and means captivated the hearts of many simple minded Hindus, nay, even of foolish Muslims, and he had noised himself about as a religious and worldly leader. They called him Guru and from all directions fools and fool-worshippers were attracted towards him, and expressed full faith in him.”

Emperor Akbar had made grants of land to the Guru's house during the time of Guru Amar Das, and had admired the Sikh teachings as contained in the Sikh scriptures and had accepted Guru Arjan's recommendations on behalf of the distressful people for the reduction of land revenue up to 10 or 12 per cent. The ever-increasing followers of the Sikh faith from among the Hindus and Muslims and the Guru's popularity among the people at large were, evidently, narrowing the field from where the Mujaddid himself had to raise his crop of converts. This was a positive danger to his Islamisation plans and he could, naturally, not tolerate the person who was responsible for it. To Shaikh Ahmad, the invitation extended by Guru Arjan to the Sufi Saint Hazrat Mian Mir to lay the foundation stone at Amritsar of the holiest of the holy temples of the Sikhs, whom he looked upon as Kafirs, must have come as a great shock and added to his irritation against the Guru as well as the venerable saint of Lahore.

He evidently had collected such instances of the all-embracing catholicity and exceptional broadmindedness of Guru Arjan and his increasing popularity among the Muslims, both of the ruling and saintly classes, when he wrote to Shaikh Farid Murtaza Khan his letters and condemned as “un-

Islamic any goodwill towards the religion of the non-Muslims or inclination to show any regard or favour to them in any way whatsoever." To live a life with the philosophy of 'peace-with-all' was highly repugnant to the Mujaddid and it was he who may have been mainly responsible for the introduction of communal virus into the body politic of the country during his time (1563 to 1624), with occasional eruptions till the middle of the eighteenth century. And he was not the person to have missed the favourable opportunity that presented itself to him under the circumstances changed with the death of Akbar and the accession of Jahangir. He availed himself of it to ruin Guru Arjan directly or indirectly either through Shaikh Farid Murtza Khan or through some other agency. No one else in the country was as interested in the removal of Guru Arjan from the field of his religious preachings as the Mujaddid was, and no one else had then as much influence in the imperial court as he had, through Shaikh Farid, to carry out his wishes. And when Guru Arjun was executed, he gloated over it as '*bistar khub wazia*' an "excellent event, a very great achievement".

In the light of contemporary historical evidence from direct and original sources mentioned earlier, there is the irresistible conclusion that Guru Arjan was arrested and executed for his religious preachings under the orders of Emperor Jahangir issued during the first year of his reign when, of political necessity, he had to humour the revivalist Muhammadans, to act as defender of the Islamic faith. The case of Guru Arjan happened to be the first important one reported to him for his decision, a test case to prove the bonafides of his promise to act as defender of Islam and a saviour of the Muslims from the influences of non-Muslims. Jahangir, therefore, ordered Guru Arjan to be put to death, and in justification thereof he accused him of captivating the hearts of many Hindus and Muslims who 'called him Guru and expressed full faith in him.'

It may also be stated that this phase of fanaticism in the life of Jahangir at the beginning of his reign did not demonstrate itself against Guru Arjan alone. In fact, it began with the conversion of a young Hindu who had for certain reasons been previously circumcised. Referring to this, Jahangir one evening said "that once he had been circumcised he was no longer a gentile and that he ought to

take another law." And, when he became a Muslim, he "was paraded through the city on an elephant with great state and amid much rejoicing to the great contentment of the Moors (Muslims) and the mortification of the gentiles."

The change in attitude of Jahangir was more marked towards Christians than others. The Jesuit Fathers had looked upon him almost as a Christian and 'believed that his accession would lead many to embrace the Christian faith.' But these hopes', according to Father Xavier's letter of 25 September 1606, to the Provincial of Goa (Relations of father Fernao Guerreiro, Jahangir and the Jesuits) were disappointed, for he had sworn an oath to the Moors (Muslims) to uphold the law of Mafamede (Muhammad), and being anxious at the commencement of his reign to secure their goodwill, he gave orders for the cleaning of mosques, restored the fasts (Ramazan) in the royal palace and the Prayers of the Moors. Of the Fathers he took no more notice than if he had never seen them before.'

The story of how two young Armenian Christian children, aged 14 and 10 years, were ordered by Jahangir to be flogged in his own presence with a whip used for scourging criminals, to coerce them to repeat the Kalima as a confession of the acceptance of the faith of Islam, how cruelly Jahangir 'ordered them to be held hand and foot and despite their protestations and cries, had them circumcised then and there, in his own presence and how mercilessly the bleeding children were whipped again and again, under his orders and in his very presence, to make them repeat the words of the Kalima after their forcible circumcision, is painful and heart-rending.

These instances have been quoted as an illustration of the temporary change in the religious attitude and policy of Jahangir at the beginning of his reign and of the inhuman cruelty to which he could then sink at the instigation of the orthodox Mullahs. The sentence of a torturous death passed against Guru Arjan in the first year of his reign was, therefore, in keeping with his then changed religious policy and mental attitude which wild cruelty was not a thing unknown.

How the 'fine' theory came to be introduced into the story of Guru Arjun's martyrdom may also be explained here. Such clues to the explanation is

provided by Emperor Jahangir's *Tuzuk* itself. After having recorded his account of the causes that led to his orders for the execution of the Guru he proceeds to narrate other events. The next event recorded by him is about two other persons Raju and Amba who under the protection of Khwaja-sera Daulat Khan terrorised the people during the insurrection of Prince Khusrau in the neighbourhood of Lahore. To quote the Emperor himself:

Two other persons named Raju and Amba had under the protection of Khwaja-sera Daulat Khan committed oppression and tyrannies over the people during the few days when Khusrau was moving towards Lahore. I ordered that Raju be hanged and Amba, who was known to be a rich man, be fined. One lakh and fifteen thousand rupees were received from him. About this amount I ordered that it might be spent on gun-powder and for charitable purposes.

Both the order of the Emperor, the first one about Guru Arjan and the second one about Raju and Amba, whom he called two other persons – '*do kas digar*' – had evidently been issued and implemented almost at the same time, or without much difference in time, and they are recorded in his *Tuzuk* one after the other in chronological order. Beyond this, as the words '*do kas digar*' clearly suggest, the two events and orders had no historical relationship. There is nothing on record to show that Raju and Amba were in any way connected with Guru Arjan. No history of the Sikhs makes any mention of them in any connection whatsoever. Nor had Daulat Khan Khwaja-sera, their patron and protector, anything to do with Guru Arjun or his followers. Simply because Raju was hanged and Amba was heavily fined in those very days when Guru Arjan was done to death, people in the streets of Lahore, either in ignorance of through some willful circulation, connected the two events together and bracketed the '*fine*', actually levied upon Amba, along with the order of death passed against Guru Arjun. And this wrongful came to be widely circulated in ordinary way and as well reached the ears of unsuspecting scholars who took it at face value and accepted it as true. Not only the mid-seventeenth century author of the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* believed this but the Sikh writer of the *Mehma Prakash* in the second half of the eighteenth century also partially accepted it.

According to the *Mehma Prakash*, the imposition of fine was originally suggested by Chandu

Shah, a Khatri of Lahore. He had been a servant, a '*chaakar*', of the Emperor and he made this suggestion to him when he reported to His Majesty the '*news*' of Guru Arjan having entertained the rebellious prince for a night at Tarn Taran and helping him with some money (*khazana*). He is said to have told the Emperor that Guru Arjan was being called Jag Guru, a world teacher, and that he had himself addressed (by his disciples) as Sacha Padshah, the True King, that he received plenty of money (as offerings) and that he was very proud of his riches (*bahul Kazana tin ka awai..bada garur maya ka wa ka*).² Having thus excited the Emperor, for reasons unknown. Chandu suggested to him to impose upon the Guru fine of two lakhs of rupees. But when the Imperial ahdi sent out to bring the Guru to Lahore came and reported to the Emperor the arrival of Guru Arjan there, the Emperor "remained silent and said nothing good or bad."³

Then follows more or less the usual story resulting in the Guru's death and his body being thrown into the river.

It may be mentioned that beyond the suggestion of Chandu at the earliest stage of the report, before the arrest of the Guru and the dispatch of the royal order for the purpose, there is no mention, even in the *Mehma Prakash*, of the Emperor having issued any order for the levy of a fine upon the Guru.

Thus, as a result of confusion of circumstances and events connected with the Emperor's orders for the execution of Guru Arjan, and of Raju and for the fine imposed on Amba almost at the same time, did the '*fine*' theory come to be introduced into martyrdom of the Guru.

Guru Arjan being the most prominent and important of all those against whom Emperor Jahangir's orders of execution and persecution were then issued, heavy punishment was ordered to be inflicted on the victims of royal wrath and these came to be associated with the name of Guru Arjan and recorded by later writers, thus unwittingly doing news incalculable harm to the interest of history.

Dr. Ganda Singh

² ਬਹੁਤ ਖਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਆਵੈ ਬਡ ਗਰੂਰ ਮਾਯਾ ਕਾ ਵਾ ਕੇ ।

³ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਜੀ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਸੇ ਆਏ । ਜਾਏ ਅਹਿਦੀ ਨੇ ਅਰਜ਼ ਕਰਾਏ ।

ਮੁਨ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਚੁਪ ਹੋ ਰਹਾ । ਭਲੀ । ਭਲੀ ਖੁਰੀ ਕੁਛ ਸੁਨਾ ਨ ਕਹਾ ।10।



BAISAKHI

A time to celebrate birth, new beginnings

The 14th of April is celebrated with great joy and colour across the Punjab and by Punjabis all over the world as the festival of Baisakhi which rejoices birth and new beginnings in an astounding number of ways.

This day signals commencement of the harvesting season. After months of toiling hard and carefully tending their winter wheat crop all the way to its amazingly golden hue, farmers can literally sit back and enjoy the heady prospects of prosperity. Right across the hinterland, ripe grain-laden wheat fields are suddenly filled with vibrant colours and smiling faces. In Punjab, particularly in its villages, Baisakhi, quite like Diwali, Christmas or Id, means new clothes for the whole family, a multitude of *melas* all over the countryside and the now so familiar beating of *dhols*. Uncomplicated and straightforward, young men and boys quite naturally break into a simple but lusty dance that traditionally draws its throbbing beat and movements from sowing, harvesting, winnowing and gathering of the wheat.

While the farmer is overjoyed with yet another bumper harvest, the small town *arthiya* or commission agent also joins in the celebration equally thrilled at the prospect of his own godowns overflowing with grain. The fact that it is also time for the farmer to pay back loans taken through the sowing and tending of the crop comes as another happy bonus. And back in Amritsar's famous Hall Bazar, the Adalat Bazaar in princely Patiala, or any other town or city, Baisakhi evokes similar feelings of unbounded joy. Filled with the kind of confidence that only comes from pockets filled with currency notes, groups of farmers will trundle around to clothing and jewellery shops and make purchases that would give the average, Mercedes-driving CEO a definite inferiority complex!

Across the Punjab, obvious ecstasy of the promise of prosperity from the bumper harvest becomes multiplied manifold with the epoch-marking religious significance that Baisakhi took 307 years ago. In 1699, the tenth Sikh Master, Guru Gobind Singh, who is emotionally revered by all Punjabis, established the order of the Khalsa, giving the Sikhs their familiar



At the doorstep of Keshgarh Sahib, in Anandpur, birthplace of the Khalsa.

and distinct identity. Standing before a massive congregation of his followers in what is now the historic township of Anandpur Sahib, Guru Gobind Rai first baptised five of his followers with *amrit* (nectar) and in turn from them to be known as “Guru Gobind Singh”. Also to discontinuing the tradition of the gurus, he gave the community their sacred scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, which is revered as the living Guru.

The festival is celebrated both at Anandpur Sahib, with special baptism ceremonies and Talwandi Sabo in south-western Punjab, where Guru Gobind Singh spent nine months in completing the recompilation of the Granth Sahib. Teas of thousands of devotees head for these shrines on Baisakhi to celebrate the day with prayer, a holy dip in the *sarovar* (holy pond) and finally on to the colourful mela set up specially for the occasion. Every road leading to the shrine at Talwandi Sabo is full with langars (free community kitchens) to feed the multitude of pilgrims going either way. Generous village folk chip in with all they can. The women cook hot meals while the men and children enthusiastically flag down every passing vehicle literally imploring every traveler to partake food.

Over the years, while the generous and bountiful traditions of Baisakhi have flourished, Sikhs, particularly those part of the diaspora, have begun also using the occasion for religious revival and re-establishing distinction of the faith.

Baisakhi is now also celebrated as “World Turban Day” with fervent calls from as far away as Surrey

(Canada), Birmingham (UK) and New York City asking all men born Sikh to wear their traditional turbans on the day. Initiated in the wake of the post-9/11 attacks on Sikhs in the USA, the effort is to bring possibly disillusioned youth back into the fold by inculcating in them a sense of community pride.

*Asit Jolly
(The Tribune)*



Karah Prasad offered by a village sewadar.

World Sikh Council-America Region



Sikh youth group leads in kirtan at the conference (Photo courtesy of WSC-AR).

Conference marking the Life and Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Sahib ji

The World Sikh Council – America Region (WAC-AR) commemorated the 400th anniversary of the martyrdom of Sri Guru Arjan Sahib by sponsoring an international conference “Guru Arjan Sahib Ji’s Life, Martyrdom, and Gifts to Humanity”, during July 28-29, 2006 at San Jose State University, California. More than a hundred Sikhs from across the world attended the conference.

An International Sikh Youth Symposium and Seminar was arranged during August 4–6 2006, by the Sikh Youth Federation in collaboration with WSC-AR at Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara Sahib at Renton, Washington.

On Friday, 28 July afternoon at San Jose State University’s Music Hall, two documentary presentations (Anniversary Celebrations at Lahore, Pakistan and Kristallnacht of Sikhs) were screened followed by *Kirtan* offered by Sikh youth groups from local Gurdwaras. Dr. Inderjit Kaur of the Sikh Music Heritage Institute presented a brief commentary on the musical styles included in Guru Granth Sahib. Professor Dalbir Singh and Bhai Manmohan Singh also participated in the *kirtan*.

Formal dedication of the conference was on the morning of Saturday, July 29. The inaugural session included welcoming remarks by Dean Karl Toepfer of



Conference speakers and organising committee take a tour of the Guru Nanak (Sahib) Study Alcove at the Dr.Martin Luther King Jr. Library at San Jose State University.

the College of Humanities and Arts, Dean Ruth Kifer of the Martin Luther King Library and Domnique van Hooff, Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages at San Jose State University.

Dr Manohar Singh, Chairperson of WSC-AR, inaugurated the conference by calling upon the Sikh community in the United States to “rededicate ourselves to the ideals that the Sikh Gurus laid out in Guru Granth Sahib and lived in their own lifetimes”.

The opening session in the morning “Life and Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Sahib” included the highlight presentations by Dr.Harnam Singh Shan, Dr.Jaswant Singh Neki, Dr.Nirivkar Singh, Dr.Hakam Singh and Dr.Inderjit Kaur. After lunch, four sessions were held. The first afternoon session “Harmandar Sahib” had presentations by Hardip Singh Pannu, Balvinder Singh and Dr.Tarunjit Singh. The second afternoon session titled “Aad Granth and Sri Guru Granth Sahib included presentations by Dr.Mohinder Kaur Gill, Dr.Jasmit Singh Kocchar, Dr.Kulbir Singh Thind and Dr.Hardev Singh Virk. The third session in the afternoon, “Guru Arjan Sahib’s Message”, consisted of presentations by Dr.Inder M.Singh, Dr.Nirmal Singh, Dr.R.K.Janmeja Singh and Ekongar

Kaur Khalsa. The last session of the conference was on “Interfaith Harmony and Understanding”. Dr.Tarunjit Singh presented a paper on interfaith dialogue in the US and role of the WSC-AR. The conference concluded with valedictory remarks by Dr.Inder M.Singh and a motion of thanks moved by Dr.Harnam Singh Shan.

Guru Arjan Sahib was the fifth Guru in succession starting with Guru Nanak Sahib, founder of the Sikh



Dr.Manohar Singh, Chairperson of WSC-AR, delivers the opening remarks at the Conference.



Distinguished conference attendees included (left to right) : Dr.Ranbir Singh Sandhu (former Secretary General ofWSC-AR), Balvinder Singh (Reader, Guru Ramdas School of Planning at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar), Dr.Harnam Singh Shan (eminent Sikh historian from India), Dr.Manohar Singh (Chairperson ofWSC-AR), Dr.Mohinder Kaul Gill (Chicago) and Dr.Sukhmandar Singh (Professor at Santa Clara University)

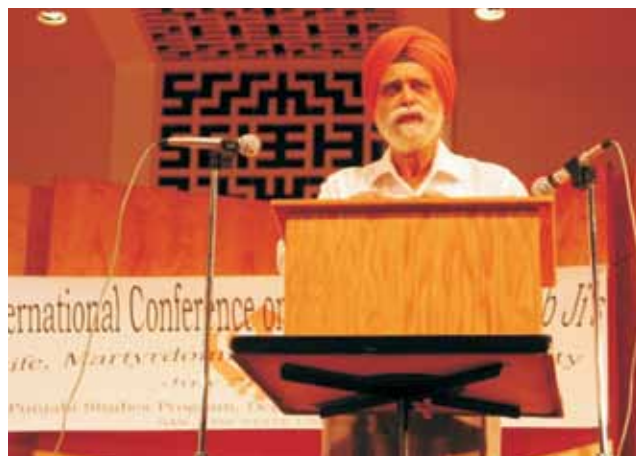
Faith. Each of the Gurus took the name Nanak in their compositions. The compositions are distinguished by use of the word *Mahla* or the "Body." Thus, Guru Arjan Sahib's compositions are designated as "by the Fifth Body". This emphasises that even though the ten Gurus were ten different beings, they embodied the same divine light as Guru Nanak Sahib.

Guru Arjan Sahib came to this world in 1563 C.E. as the youngest of three sons of the fourth guru, Guru Ram Dass. In 1581 C.E., before his light merged with the Divine Light, Guru Ram Dass designated Guru Arjan Sahib as his successor Guru. During his stewardship of the faith, Guru Arjan Sahib continued his predecessor's work of spreading the message of faith, hope, prayer, love and the unity of all faiths. He continued the tradition of service to all people regardless of their socio-economic status or religious beliefs. During his reign, the city of Amritsar grew significantly and Harmandir Sahib was completed. He also founded the cities of Hargobindpur, Kartarpur and Tarn Taran in the Punjab. Thriving communities developed at each of these cities.

Perhaps the most significant gift that Guru Arjan Sahib gave humankind was his compilation of the



Dr.Harnam Singh Shan, former Guru Nanak Chair at the Punjab University at Chandigarh, presenting inaugural paper at the conference "The Concept & Tradition of Martyrdom in Context of the Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Sahib"



Dr.Jaswant Singh Neki, the eminent Sikh scholar, presenting his paper on "Faces of Martyrdom in Sikh History".

Divine Word brought by him and the preceding Gurus into a single volume. He also included selections from the works of several Muslim and Hindu saints (including Kabir and Sheikh Farid) that concurred with his divine message. This volume was known as the *Aad Granth*. Later, the "Word" brought by the ninth Guru was added. The completed volume was invested with the status of Eternal Guru by the Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib in 1708 C.E. and forever referred to as Guru Granth Sahib.

Guru Arjan Sahib the Fifth Sikh Guru, was tortured to death on 16 June, 1606 at Lahore in the Punjab and his body was thrown in the river Ravi. A messenger of God's love for all people was executed because of his stature and following. Sikhs observe the anniversary of Guru Sahib's martyrdom with congregational prayers, processions of worshippers singing prayers and the serving of refreshments.

CAMP GURMAT



A Sikh Youth Camp in America

Camper at the location in 2005.

“Is online chatting safe? How does one handle bullying and teasing in school? How does one relate to cultural trends among youth and Sikhi in present day America?” These will be some of the questions which will be explored in addition to various post – 9/11 issues by 125 Sikh youth from all over America who are gathering for a week-long camp in Maryland just outside Washington DC from 6 to 12 August 2006. Half of the campers are females.

Titled as “Camp Gurmat”, this annual camp is held every year in the suburbs in Maryland at a facility in natural settings and is conducted by Guru Gobind Singh Foundation (GGSF) and the National Sikh Centre.

“I look forward to this camp throughout the year”, said Bikram Singh, a 12 year old from Herbert Hoover Middle School in Maryland. Youth ranging from 7 to 17 years will be coming from Michigan, California, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Texas and the Washington area to join this camp.

“This is truly an exhilarating experience for all of us, camper and counsellor alike. It gives us the sense of belonging which is not always there through the year in our respective cities,” said Harjus Singh, 18-year old camp counsellor who presents his thoughts through conscience “hip-hop” and is always very popular among the campers. He was recently admitted to an advanced research project in Nano sciences at the University of Cincinnati.

All the counsellors are second-generation Sikhs in America and who have themselves faced many of problems while growing up here and now want to give a helping hand to their fellow Sikh youngsters.

Highlighted topics of this year’s camp include the benefits and dangers of using online chatting applications, gender equality, social issues, how they are portrayed both in American and Punjabi media, how to diffuse situations involving bullying or teasing, and how Sikh youth can be more proactive in the American society. This camp will also have many young Sikh professionals as guest speakers.



Enthusiastic participants at the camp in 2005 with counsellor Nitasha Kaur from Chicago.

Sartaj Singh, the Head Counsellor at the camp and chief architect of the camp design, said "At the end of each camp, it is very clear that the children are excited for the following year's camp. Since the camp blends the concepts of Sikhism's spiritual teachings, issues that Sikh children face in their daily lives, and in a "kid friendly" and "fun" environment, it is no surprise that the Sikh youth of America return to their homes reinvigorated to continue to be model citizens for both their faith and nation."



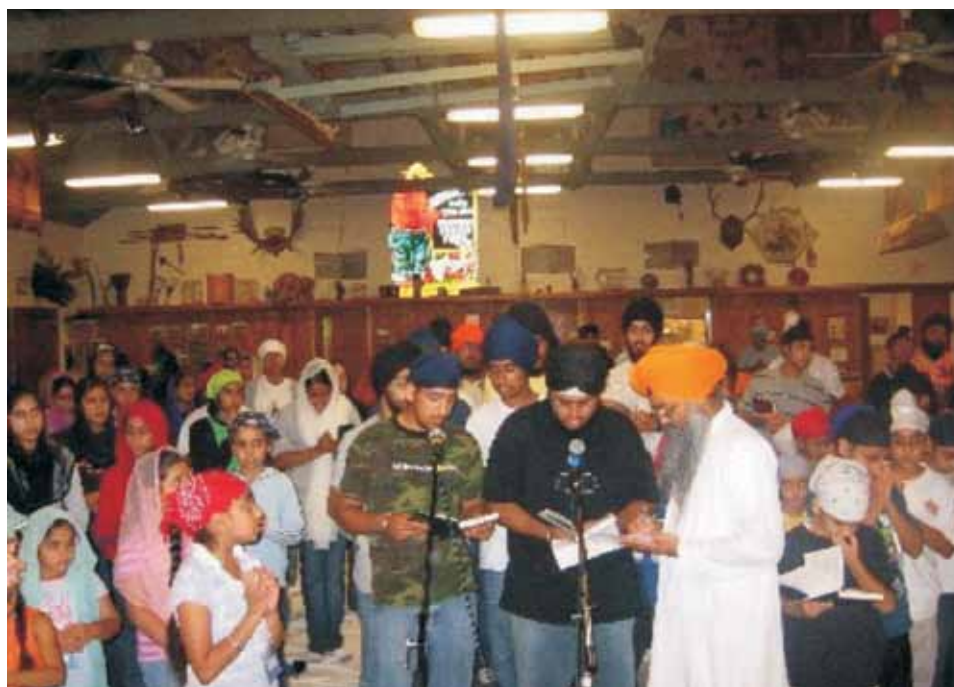
Sikh boys with counsellor Japkeerat Singh from New York.

Sartaj Singh is active on socio-political issues at the Sikh Council on Religion and Education (SCORE) and who has also immersed himself in movie making and runs his own website (www.restoringthepride.com)

Dr. Rajwant Singh, one of the founding organisers and Education Director of the camp and himself a practicing dentist, said "It offers children a positive prospective of living in America while still maintaining the culture and traditions of Sikhism." This will provide them to have an experience of being

together with fellow Sikh youth at Camp Gurmat. He is the Chairman of SCORE. Dalpreet Singh Saluja, a Sikh youth and attorney, will come to camp to speak to the kids on how to grow up in this country and maintain identity with pride. In addition, Preetmohan Singh, National Policy Director of the Interfaith Alliance, based in Washington, will also be coming to speak on how to overcome bullying and teasing.

According to Bhai Gurdarshan Singh, Granthi of the GGSF and who organises the spiritual side, the Camp in 2006 will focus on Guru



Sikh youth being given lessons in Ardaas during "Camp Gurmat."



Bringing the holy Guru Granth Sahib to the Camp.

Arjan Dev ji and on his life, message and sacrifice. The children will be taught eight *shabads* which are written by Guru Arjan and which contain a pertinent message for the youth. Bhai Gurdarshan Singh is well versed in English which enables him to interact with the kids. He plays in the sports tournament at the camp which is also plus for the kids to relate to him. Tabla maestro Rajinder Pal Singh creates much attraction for children to learn the tabla at the camp.

Appreciating work of the organising team at the camp, Amrit Kaur, Secretary of Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, said "Every year, the developers spend an enormous amount of time researching the current year's issues that Sikh children face growing up in America. From there, well crafted discussions are created so that children feel at ease to discuss potential problems or questions that they have, many of which may not be addressed at home with such ease."



Camp class being conducted by Dr. Rajwant Singh, Gagan Kaur and Raju Kaur from Houston



Reading and learning from the Guru Granth sahib.

Harjot Singh, who teaches the *gatka*, the Sikh martial art at the camp every year along with experts like Jaswant Singh Bal of California, is overjoyed to have another teacher Chattar Singh from the West Coast, considered one of the best in this art, to join the camp this year. On Thursday night all the campers engage in sparring matches to display their skills in this form of martial arts. "The idea is to have the campers feel the energy of the mind and body." said Harjot Singh. This year will also be an opportunity for many female camp veterans like Harman Kaur and Dilpreet Kaur to become counsellors and to create connection with other female campers.

Hargurpreet Singh, the Main Camp organiser, states "Every year it gives me a joy to witness this powerful spirit among the young Sikhs. It is truly a spiritual uplifting experience for me." Hargurpreet Singh is an electrical engineer at a senior position with the State of Maryland. He added, "Every year we receive about 150 applications but unfortunately owing to space shortage we have to disappoint many. This experience of participating in the youth camp in totality is invigorating for the body, mind and soul."

For more details, contact

Guru Gobind Singh Foundation

13814 Travilah Road
Rockville, Maryland 20850
301 309 9528

Website: www.ggsfusa.com

Book Review

The World According To Sikhi

by Dr. I. J. Singh

The *World According to Sikhi*, a collection of twenty-five essays, marks the latest milestone on the journey that Dr. I. J. Singh began in his immensely popular earlier three works including *The Sikh Way: A Pilgrim's Progress*.*

Unlike its three predecessors. *The World According to Sikhi* is not a catechism about who Sikhs are and what they believe or practice. Instead, Sikhi is revealed as a vibrant path with multifaceted meaning and universal, timeless relevance. This book covers the gamut of Sikh experience -- from identity in the diaspora and how foundations of the faith continue to influence its followers today, to the ethical framework that Sikhi provides for a useful and productive life.

Throughout the book runs the thread common to the personal journey of every serious spiritual seeker. The word "Sikh" implies being a continual student, and the essays mark the signposts along the way. It is a seemingly inverse path, progressing from being a Sikh simply by accident of birth, to becoming a Sikh. A committed practitioner of Sikhi strives to penetrate the meanings of the eternal teachings of the faith and formulate a personal response that incorporates them into all aspects of everyday life. These essays are a cogent roadmap of the process whereby the journey becomes the destination, that is, as in all spiritual quests, uniquely one's own.

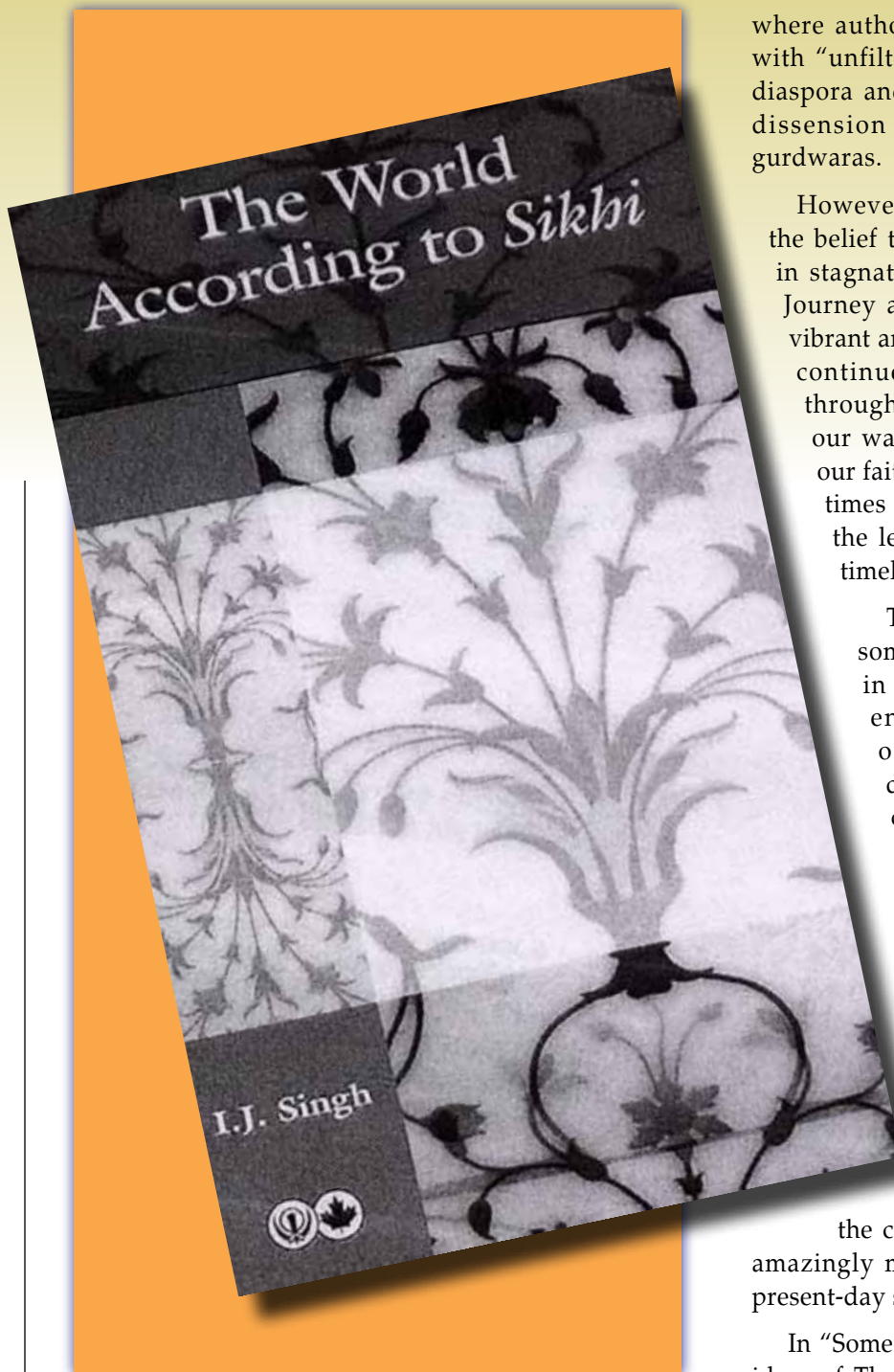
The World According to Sikhi invites the reader to share in joyous celebration of the inner life of the mind. The first essay "Guru Granth: Major Currents in the Sikh Scripture," explores the heightened concept of the "Word". Guru Granth the eternal living Guru of the Sikhs, provides not only of the written or provides "Word" but also of the unspoken word, "anhad". To which "the inner self vibrates and resonates such that the mind becomes part of divine connectivity". The "Word" becomes God only when a Sikh reads and adopts it, such that the universal and timeless values of Guru Granth provide an ethical compass for an examined life, one of introspection and self-awareness.

Because Guru Granth must be discussed and debated to remain vibrant and alive, Sikhs need to cultivate the habit of *vicchar*, or critical thinking and thoughtful analysis. Several of what are, in my admittedly-biased opinion as a librarian, Dr. Singh's most satisfying essays, such as "The Shelf Life of a Book" and "Get Me Out of the Well," bemoan the lack of meaningful books in Sikh homes and gurdwaras.

He chides Sikhs for being resistant to "books that are the repository of the Gurus' ideas and teachings" and for not developing a love of reading that would allow them to fully discover the Guru in the Word, or Shabad, of Guru Granth.

A Sikh's life, however, is certainly not only of solitary introspection. Sikhi clearly recognises the need for a community, or *sangat*, of stimulating minds on the spiritual journey of self-exploration. As I.J. Singh reminds us in "The Company to Keep," *sangat* can become the beginning of both "a personal transformation and a communal conversation." In a *sangat* united in common purpose and prayer, a Sikh may truly commune with the Divine. It took over two hundred years for this concept of a spiritually awakened, egalitarian community to fully evolve. In "The Nature of Dialogue," I.J. Singh discusses how the progressive teaching style of Guru Nanak - dialogue, discussion and debate - led to the development of *sangat*, which matured into the concept of self-governance when Guru Gobind Singh instituted the Khalsa in 1699. After initiating his first five followers, and himself accepting initiation from their hands, there was "no distinction between the Master and the Sikh."

But while embracing the egalitarian message of Sikhi, Sikhs also "kept close to their hearts their timeless feudal roots." How does the music of the universal message that is Sikhi play in the multi-cultural setting of the diaspora? What should Sikhs who live far from their traditional homeland make of their Punjab-based institutions? I.J. Singh explores the changing nature of these institutions, points a finger directly at the "feudal Indian society



where authority flows from the top down," along with "unfiltered transfer" of its values to the Sikh diaspora and exposes the "virtual state of internal dissension and civil war" that exists in most gurdwaras.

However, he optimistically dissuades us from the belief that Sikhi is becoming hopelessly mired in stagnation and decay. As he explains in "The Journey and the Destination," Sikhi can remain vibrant and relevant if its traditions and teachings continue to provide "a framework of ethics through which we can measure and negotiate our way through life." We need to reinterpret our faith "in the language and the context of the times in which we live," he argues, such that the legacy of the Gurus remains eternal and timeless.

The application of eternal Sikh values to some of today's dilemmas are highlighted in a series of timely essays towards the end of this book. "The Many Ways of Mating" and "Same-Sex Unions" discuss how traditional Indian society comes to grips with modern love, both heterosexual and homosexual and how the Sikh humanitarian perspective can be a useful tool for exploring the controversial issue of gay and lesbian marriage.

"Tracking Evolution and Intelligent Design," acknowledges how *vicchar*, an integral component of being a Sikh, can illuminate this complex matter in the light of Sikh teachings. Guru Nanak's views of the creation of the universe are shown to be amazingly modern and totally in consonance with present-day scientific theories.

In "Some Wars are Just," I.J. Singh starts with the ideas of Thomas Aquinas that have shaped western thinking on what constitutes "just war", and explores the Sikh perspective on how to distinguish revenge from justice, while tempering an uncompromising sense of justice with mercy.

Sikhs must remain armed, or *shastardhari*, intellectually, morally and spiritually, as well as physically, if they are to fight not only when war is inevitable, but every day on "the battlefield of the mind."

**Published by
The Centennial Foundation,
Ontario, Canada, 2006
ISBN 1-894232-11-9
xvi + 170 pages \$15.95**

I.J. Singh returns to this inner world in his last essay, "Festina Lente," which discusses the idea of *sehaj*, a centered mind that is so fundamental to Sikh thinking. "Hasten slowly," the title of this essay counsels us. Approaching life with equipoise and a sense of humility elevates our productivity, replacing our obsessive concerns with an awareness of the Infinite within us. This lesson is the last, but certainly not the least, of the timeless concepts of the Sikh Path that *The World According to Sikhi* illuminates for the spiritual seeker who journeys through its pages.

There are, admittedly, a few bumps along the journey that prevent it from being one of unmitigated bliss. While this book is of undeniable interest and appeal to a wide audience of all religious persuasions, some topics may require more explanation for a non-Sikh.

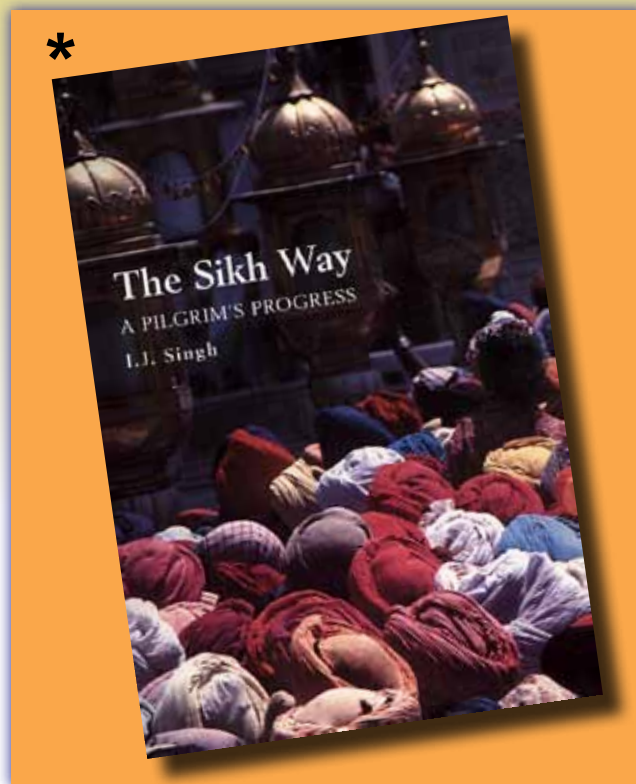
An innovative feature of all the essays in this book is that each ends with a powerfully impressive last sentence or two. These phrases reminded me of the *rahaio* line that focuses on the main idea of a *shabad*. They might have been even more effective had each been connected to a central citation of Gurbani tied to the theme of the essay.

Several essays refer to the growing presence of non-Punjabi Sikhs; unfortunately, these mentions are far too few and scattered and need to be pulled together in a cohesive way. I would urge I.J. Singh, who speaks so cogently about Sikh life in the diaspora throughout the book, to produce some essays spotlighting these "forgotten" Sikhs.

Topics such as sexism and casteism that, contrary to the teachings of the Gurus, continue to infest Sikh cultural practices, deserve more in-depth coverage. I would like to see I.J. Singh focus on these significant realities of Sikh life in essays that might spur readers to much-needed remedial action.

These caveats aside, this book is an extraordinary collection of writings. In his Preface, I.J. Singh tells us, "Essentially, we experience the world outside in terms of the universe within ourselves ... to see and nurture this connection between the universe within and the world outside remains to me the key to understanding Sikhi. How to explore it, how best to describe the process is the very ambitious goal of these essays." In my opinion, Dr. Singh has admirably achieved his objective.

As in his three previous works, which have all enjoyed enormous, well-deserved success, every one



of the essays that form this latest book are immensely insightful and engaging, done in an articulate and accessible style that is full of trenchant commentary and a genuinely delightful brand of dry, subtle wit.

His writings strike the perfect balance between presenting material that anyone, regardless of background, can readily identify with and making one's mind stretch effortlessly, to accommodate new ideas and ways of thinking.

One gentle word of warning is in order, however. These essays are easy to read, and often quite amusing. Yet they are anything but superficial, and taking them lightly will only shortchange the reader. Their multiple layers of meaning are like a Matryoshka, the Russian wooden doll with numerous nested components hidden within it.

Dr. I.J. Singh's latest book warmly welcomes you like a treasured friend, and also extends to you an irresistible invitation to return again and again. Indeed, *The World According to Sikhi* deserves prolonged and repeated reflection, real *vicchar*. But isn't that exactly what Sikhi is truly all about!

Reviewed by **Laune Bolger**
Conservation Librarian,
University Club Library, New York, NY
E-mail: lbolger@nyc.rr.com

Salt of the Earth

Extracts from “Infinite Courage”
Illustrated History of The Sikh Regiment



The fighting prowess and incredible élan of the Khalsa warriors had made their erstwhile English opponents determined to conciliate and enlist them into their own Armies. In this pictures, taken in the 1890s is the XV (Loodhianah) Sikh Regiment on parade in the Punjab.



The fighting prowess and incredible élan of the Khalsa warriors had both sobered the English and also made them determined to conciliate and enlist them into their own Armies. It was after the severe battles of Moodkie and Ferozeshah that the Governor General of India Sir Henry Hardinge issued a proclamation inviting the Sikhs to enlist in the Hon'ble East India Company even as the Resident of Lahore, Henry Lawrence offered them "honourable subsistence".

With the Lahore Durbar forced to cede the cis-Jullundur area, which is the Doab lying between the Rivers Beas and Sutlej, the British sought to provide some of the disbanded soldiers of the Khalsa Army re-enlistment into their chosen profession of arms by volunteering for service in the two, initially irregular, Regiments being formed.

So were established by General orders issued at Simla on 30 July 1846 the Regiments of Ferozepore for service with the Bengal Army of the East India Company and the Regiment of Ludhiana on 1 August 1846, principally recruited from the Malwa and Majha areas. Both Regiments came into existence on 1 August 1846.

The first British Officer with the Sikhs was Ensign J.Brasyer, seconded to Sir Henry Lawrence to assist in fostering friendship with the Sikh soldiery and to encourage recruitment. He was a veteran of the First Afghan War and, later the First Anglo-Sikh War, then promoted to commissioned rank for gallantry and distinguished service, speaking chaste Punjabi and having a good way with the men. Touring villages south of the Sutlej, he both encouraged and harangued men into enlisting, bringing an initial four hundred of them to Ferozepore by July 1846 where was raised the XIV Regiment, which expanded to 800 men within a month. Captain G.Tebbs became the first Commandant, eventually having four British officers, a Regimental Sergeant Major and Quartermaster Sergeant, 20 Sikh officers (later VCOs) and 1140 other ranks. The uniform was similar to regular units of the Bengal Army, being red tunics with yellow facings but the regulation caps were resented and were eventually to give way to the traditional turban.

The XV (Loodhianah) Sikhs were also raised from the Malwa and Majha area, their first Commandant being Major P. Gordon, again with the same complement of British officers, VCOs and

other ranks, organised into ten companies under two wings and analogous to Bengal Infantry Regiments. However, their pagris had between nine and ten seams, supermounted with a large quoit.

As if to consummate this relationship quickly, Lord Gough presented the King's Colours to the XIV Sikhs on 24 December 1846, with which the Regiment then marched to Ambala to receive smooth bore percussion muskets in January 1847. They then moved to Agra the next year, thence to Meerut and in the beginning of 1855, to Mirzapur and Patna for internal security duties where their presence had a salutary effect. The XV Sikhs too were away from the Punjab when the Second Anglo-Sikh War was fought in January 1849.

A third battalion of Sikhs was raised in January 1856, the 45th, by Capt. Thomas Rattray in Lahore and they were originally known as the Bengal Military Police battalion, organised into a troop of 500 cavalry and ten infantry companies, its class composition consisting largely of Sikhs but also a proportion of Punjabi Mussalmans (PMs) and Dogras. The non-Sikh element was gradually eased out by 1885 when, like the XIV and XV, they became pure Sikh units. Ever to be known as the *Rattrays*, the 45th marched across country for service in the Santhal Parganas in September 1856. The Sikhs were ever "True to salt" or *Namak Halali*, as eating the salt given is indescribably characteristic of Indian soldiering, a value considered even beyond one's life.

The events of 1857 have been described variously, depending on which view is taken. To the English, it was a clear mutiny by some elements of the Bengal Army, but to latter day historians, this is being re-written as the first war of independence. Historically, the fact is that the Mughals at their twilight of power sought to take advantage of the Meerut happenings but also because inept British administration had reduced the discipline and efficiency of many units of the three Presidency Armies of the East India Company which were, in fact mercenary, only being officered by foreigners.

By late 1856, many of the Bengal Native Infantry sepoy were getting downright insubordinate and there was "an increased presence of unpleasant feeling". The Bengal Presidency stretched right across northern India from Peshawar to Calcutta, the capital and headquarters of the British Administration. Majority of the Bengal Army remained stationed

in north and north-western India, especially in the Punjab which had only recently been annexed and thus there was lingering resentment if not actual animosity.

On 7 May 1857, Lt Brasyer was "desired" to take the Regiment of Ferozepore from Mirzapore by forced marches to Allahabad where the 6th N.I. had mutinied. The mutineers were quickly disarmed and imprisoned, the strong fortress thereafter besieged and defended by the XIV, its valuable stores and war munitions thus safeguarded. As Colonel J. Brasyer (promoted for his gallantry) later wrote, "My faithful Seikhs, on whom so much depended, were craving to be led against the enemy outside, or anywhere". He instead temporised with them, asking them to "discard the cap and heavy clothing, adopt your national dress and show how Seikhs can fight, save their Fort and all within it". This pleased the men immensely and hereafter the Ferozepore Sikhs wore red turbans and their own design of blouses and trousers and led by Brasyer, similarly attired, fought it out for the rest of the year.

"Brasyer's Sikhs" played a prominent part in operations, winning further distinctions, attacking positions at the point of the bayonet and under General Havelock, entering Cawnpore in mid-July, before setting off for the relief of Lucknow, forty-five miles away. There was pitched fighting under the blazing sun, hottest season of the year, against disciplined troops far exceeding them in number. Battle after battle was won in desperate fighting, and they went on with unflinching resolution till Lucknow was reached. The 78th Highlanders and XIV Ferozepore Sikhs were heavily engaged at Charbagh and then in flanking advance, darted forward towards the Residency. There was desperate gallantry exemplified by Sepoy Nihal Singh carrying the mortally wounded General Neill to the rear under heavy fire. The Highlanders and Sikhs eventually reached the Bailey Guard Gate of the Residency to the deafening cheers of the garrison within.

The *Relief and Defence of Lucknow* is commemorated on the statue in Trafalgar Square, "The Regiment of Brasyer's Sikhs" mentioned on this monument in the heart of London.

The defence of Lucknow for rest of the year kept the Sikhs in continuous action and an offensive on 22 December 1857 when the XIV and 78th dashed against a strong enemy position held by 30,000 men and 6

heavy guns which “excited much admiration”, as did the remarkable capture of Kaiserbagh under terrible fire. Major Brayser was seriously wounded in these operations but refused to relinquish command of his Sikhs and had to be carried on a stretcher at the head of his beloved XIV for several days.

General Havelock later promoted each man of the XIV Ferozepore Sikhs to a grade higher in rank and all the Subedars were granted the 1st Class Indian Order of Merit. Operations finally came to an end in June 1859 and the XIV marched back to Ferozepore, their home station, “with drums and pipes playing and colours all tattered and torn after an arduous campaign of two years and four months and 13 years of faithful Service”. As a special mark of distinction for its outstanding conduct, the Governor General issued orders that the Regiment of Ferozepore were permitted to wear red *safas* forever. Brayser, who had started as a lieutenant, ended up as Lieutenant Colonel and was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath.

When the Mutiny broke out, the XV Sikhs were located in Varanasi. The unit provided a large number

of patrols and posts in the city and saved many lives. It was owing to the battalion’s steadfastness that the treasury was prevented from falling into hands of the mutineers. During one of the actions, Sergeant-Lt.Maj. Peter Gill was awarded a Victoria Cross for saving the life of an officer, Also promoted as an ensign for saving the life of his commanding officer; Sep.Chur Singh was promoted to Jemadar but was himself wounded and became an invalid. In addition, Indian officers and men were promoted ‘in recognition of their meritorious service’.

The Rattrays appeared to be ideally located and organisaionally suited to undertaking counter-mutiny tasks. By virtue of their mobility, they were constantly presenting themselves at difficult situations. Their contributions were, however, principally two: the defence of a large number of British civilians at Arrah against a five day siege by mutinous NIs at Danapore from 27 July through 2 August.They then moved with the columns of Col. Neill and Gen.Havelock to Lucknow, Kanpur, Gaya, and twenty other places. Two British officers Capt.Daunt and Lieut.Baker were awarded Victoria Crosses.



Ensign (later Colonel) J. Brayser.



Captain G. Tebbs.

Defence of Arrah

Arrah town is on the Ganges, surrounded by jungle and on the route from Calcutta to Allahabad. Common means of transport in the mid-nineteenth century were bullock carts, horse-drawn tongas, boats and steamers even while a railway track was being laid. Mr Richard Vicars Boyle was the resident railway engineer, whose home "Boyle's House" and the nearby 2-storied Arrah House which housed the Billiard's Room, was to become the scene of an epic defence between 27 July and 3 August 1857, whose inmates, some 25 Europeans were defended by 52 all ranks of XLV "Rattray's Sikh" Police battalion under Jemadar Hukum Singh, against some 8000 mutineers and rebels.

Matters had been getting ominous towards the end of May 1857, with the Bengal Army restive and news of the mutiny in Meerut spreading. The Army Cantonment in nearby Danapur remained paralysed when the three BNI Regiments ransacked the town, burnt down railway stocks and advanced towards Arrah in late July. They attacked the local jail and many armed bands of a local feudal chief then joined the mutineers with guns, swords and spears, crossed the river which was in spate, attacked the treasury and advanced towards Boyle's Estate, concentrating on high ground some 600 yards from the Arrah House.

Their arrogant attitude was checked by the redoubtable Jemadar Hukum Singh, a burly Sikh, immensely strong and a veteran of the Anglo-Sikh Wars. The



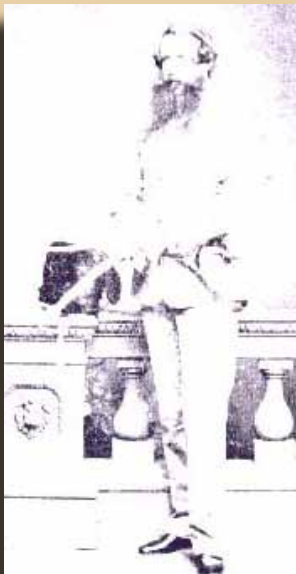
Artist's depiction of Arrah House, with soldiers of Rattray's Sikhs on guard outside.

BNI advance came to an immediate halt by accurate fire from the cool Sikh contingent. Arrah House had been fortified with ash bricks and sand bags, with water and food stored (including a stock of port and sherry) offers of rewards to the Sikhs were scornfully answered by *jai karas* and volleys of fire. The Europeans were panic-stricken but the cheerful "*Koi Parwah Nahin*" of Jem. Hukum Singh and his soldiers who were true to their salt, bolstered everyone's morale.

The Defence of Arrah marked a turning point in the Mutiny of 1857, "saving Bihar" and endowing the Battle Honour "Defence of Arrah" on the Rattray's Sikhs. Jemadar Hukum Singh was given an immediate promotion to Subedar and all his men awarded with 17 months additional pay for their fantastic "service and fidelity".

After the traumatic events of 1857, the Bengal Presidency Army was re-constituted, but was first reduced to a shadow of its past strength while others suffered minimally. Apart from the Governor General's Bodyguard, regular cavalry regiments were disbanded, the irregular cavalry reduced from eighteen regiments to eight. Of the 62 battalions that mutinied, only 12 were retained. However, of the 'local' battalions, of which the three Sikh units were part, most were retained.

Within the very first few years of its foundation, the Sikh Regiment was to be at forefront of the Imperial



Captain Thomas Rattray.

wars stretching from the frontiers on the north-west with Afghanistan to China in the far east. Detachments joined the expeditionary forces to East Africa, Nyasaland, Egypt and Sudan. This suited the psyche of the Sikhs who considered war much as an adventurous sport, while it posed a continuous challenge to prove themselves as the best warriors in the world.

In 1860, while the 45 Sikh pioneered a column to the Garo Hills, XV Sikh were on their way to China. Ideally suited to undertake mobile operations, the Rattrays were, at about this time, dispatched to the Kuki Hills to suppress a rebellion similar to that they had quelled in the Santhal Praganas in 1856, its record of good work also taking it to the mountains of Sikkim in 1861.

XV Sikh left for China in 1860 and did yeoman service in Kowloon and Shanghai, defending the city against the Tsaping rebels in the Boxer War, the services of the unit recognised finally when it was awarded the battle honour 'China, 1860-62'.

The Mutiny had caused panic in the East India Company. The British now placed their reliance on the Punjabis, particularly the Sikhs for service in the Indian Army. By 1887, fresh raisings were ordered and two more Regiments, the XXXVI and XXXVth Sikhs raised.

XXXVI Sikh was raised by Lt.Colonel J Cook at Jullundur on 23 March 1887 with eight companies of Jat Sikhs besides 225 men from other regiments. Although the class composition of the battalion was by and large Sikhs, some Punjabi Mussalmans (PMs) were, nonetheless, incorporated, including some tribesmen from the NWFP and Muslims from the Punjab.

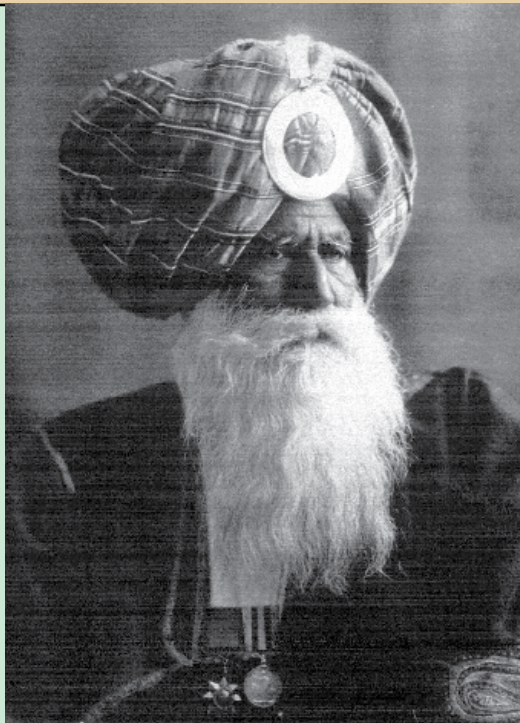
Till 1891 the Regiment remained on training in the vicinity of Jullundur and was then transferred to Delhi, arriving there on 10 March 1887. Very shortly thereafter, owing to outbreak of hostilities at Manipur, the unit was dispatched to eastern India, returning to Delhi only in November 1891. On 5 November 1894, the battalion moved by rail and route marches via Ludhiana and Mian Mir to Bannu in the north west frontier, remaining there from 9 December 1894 to April 1895, whence it moved to Peshawar.

The XXXVI Sikhs were raised by Lt.Colonel D.W.Inglish on 29 April 1887. The battalion was moved to Suakin in Egypt in May 1896, and returned from there in December the same year. By July 1897 it joined the Malakand Relief Force where its action at Chakdara cost 59 casualties including 20 killed and three IOMs were awarded.

Remarkable history was created here by XXXVI Sikh then part of the 3rd Brigade. The formation had been ordered to advance seven miles from Nawagai to destroy four villages that had resisted the earlier advance. Two columns were ordered to march off at midnight without reconnaissance. As expected, they soon ran into problems and were forced to withdraw the next morning in broad day light pursued by the tribals. At this critical juncture the Sikhs played a decisive role, as reported later by then Lt.Winston Churchill : "Sikhs had been covering the flank of the other column while themselves withdrawing down a spur out of the supporting distance of the main column and found themselves at bay with howling mobs of the tribesmen no more than 30 yards away. Two officers had been killed and it was clear that victory would fall to the side that did something first. It was a supreme



Men of the 45th Sikhs (Rattray's).



Subedar Major Bahadur Mial Singh of the 45th Sikhs in 1880, aged 80. The 45th Sikhs were known as Rattray's Sikhs, after Captain (later Colonel) T. Rattray. Rattray had a novel method of finding recruits. He would go among the village, offering to wrestle with all and sundry, only stipulating that the competitors then enlisted. Since wrestling was a favourite sport of the Sikhs, he had no trouble filling ranks of his Regiment.

moment, the Sikhs charged with the bayonet, the tribesmen turned and began to flee”.

The XXXVI Sikhs performed wonders again in the Tirah Campaign. Under command of Sir William Lockhart, the campaign had been undertaken to punish the Afridis and Orakzais, the advance bitterly challenged by the tribals, but the Sikhs along with Gordon's Infantry forced the tribals to withdraw, thus giving the campaign an impetus.

In 1900-2 the XXXVI fought actions against Mahsud Waziris and suffered light casualties. While the other battalions moved to the theatre of the First World War, this battalion remained on the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and the only notable action fought was in the Third Afghan War 1919.

By 1856, when 45 Rattrays Sikh were raised, the three battalions of the Regiment, as was the custom then, began to be known as the *First Sikh Brigade*. The subsequent addition of 35th Sikh and 36th Sikh in 1887 and 47th Sikh in 1901 added sufficient numbers for it to be called the *Second Sikh Brigade*. These two 'brigades' had, in effect, no official linkage nor any operational similarity, save the link of camaraderie until 1922 when they became the 11th Sikh Regiment.

Last of the original Sikh Regiments to be raised were the XLVII (47th) Sikhs. The general order dated 12 October, 1900 issued by the Government of India notified the raising of a new battalion of the "Native Army" to be designated as "The 47th (Sikh) Regiment of Bengal Infantry". It was also sanctioned that the new raising would be linked with 35th and 36th (Sikh) Regiments of the Bengal Infantry. The uniform of the new battalion too would be the same as that of 35th and 36th Sikhs.

The battalion was to be raised at Sialkot and be armed with Lee-Metford Rifles. The "native officers" and non commissioned officers required for the 47th Sikhs as also 100 trained soldiers, were to be supplied by the 35th and 36th Sikhs and by certain Punjab Regiments having Sikh companies.

The 47th (Sikh) Regiment of Bengal Infantry was thus raised at Sialkot on 21 January 1901, the first Commanding Officer of the Battalion being Lieutenant Colonel Percy Gerald Walker from the 20th Punjab Infantry. Amongst other officers who joined the battalion on raising included Lieutenant



XIV Sikhs on manoeuvres near Panipat, 9 January 1886.

SR Davidson, from the Bhopal Infantry, as Fourth Double Company Commander. In 1921, he was destined to become the first Colonel of the Sikh Regiment.

Subedar Waryam Singh from (The Queen's Own) Corps of Guides, became the Subedar Major of the battalion when he joined the new raising. Jemadar Thakur Singh, whose grandfather had fought alongside Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the Sikh Kingdom of the 1830s, was the first Native Officer to be directly commissioned as Jemadar when the battalion was raised.

The first Regimental Crest was designed and approved on 19 February 1901, the design incorporating the Sikh Lion within a Sikh Quoit, surmounted by an Imperial Crown. However, in October 1901, it was changed and then consisted of the Imperial Crown atop a plain Sikh Quoit, inside which was the lion and under which was a scroll with XLVII SIKHS inscribed.

During their stay at Sialkot after raising, the battalion recruited its soldiers to complete the required strength but were still short of about 100 men after completion of one year of its raising when they were on their way overseas to China.

More extracts from the forthcoming book in future issues of the Nishaan.



The original British Officers of the 47th Sikhs, April 1901.



The first batch of Indian Officers of the 47th Sikhs in March 1901.



47th Sikhs on parade at Sialkot, 12 March 1903.



Triumph of the Turban

“I want to bring back the Ashes. Just like you!” blazed the headline of an advertisement in all major English dailies of Australia during the last Commonwealth Games, which concluded in Melbourne on 26 March.

The advertisement, which indicates a turn round in the policy of the developed or western world towards immigrants, especially those from developing nations like India, is basically designed to attract investors from all over the globe to Victoria.

“Victorians come from all over the world. Some of us have been here for generations. Others have just arrived. We work. We celebrate. We want a future for our kind. And we never forget our friends. We want to feel safe in our own homes. This is our home. This is where we live. Just like you,” continued the advertisement.

And a couple of days later, when North Queensland, another province of Australia, was devastated by cyclone “Harry”, *The Australian*, another major English daily of Melbourne, splashed an eight-column picture of a Sikh couple standing besides their wrecked home.

Until a few years ago, not many Sikhs, especially with turbans, figured in mainstream media of the western world. One, however, remembers a full page advertisement inserted by a major Swiss Bank not only in the *International Herald Tribune* but also in *Newsweek* and *Time* magazines of Jogeshwar Singh, a 1976-batch IAS officer of Himachal Pradesh, who

had joined the bank as head of the Human Resource Development section. Jogeshwar Singh has since moved to another bank in Switzerland.

In fact, the increasing visage of turbans worldwide is also reflected in the overwhelming response to the Sikh Turban Day, which has been celebrated on Baisakhi for the last three years.

“We start by first reaching out to neighbourhoods through the door-to-door turban distribution campaign, followed by ‘turban clinics’ organised worldwide a few weeks before Baisakhi with the help of international, regional and local Sikh organisations. And now Sikh Turban Day is the largest single-day turban awareness campaign in the world.

“Sikhs of all ages greet friends at home and work, pray at gurdwaras and, more importantly, youngsters wear their colourful turbans, helping them to open a dialogue and express their feelings. Our campaign reaches all across the world and this is a good start for a long-term mission. The need for such an exercise is paramount to achieving an increased level of turban adoption amongst Sikhs, especially the younger generation besides creating awareness and education amongst their neighbouring communities in the western world,” says Hardeep Singh Aulakh of the Sikh Children Fourm (SCF) in Fremont, USA. The SCF is one of main organisers of the event.

The SCF started holding these functions in 2002 to open a dialogue with non-Sikh communities about the significance of the turban for the Sikh identity and its

value in their culture and religion. It was important as many Sikhs became targets of hate crimes as they were mistaken for Muslims.

In Canada, there now are two turbaned Sikhs—Gurbax Singh Malhi and Navdeep Singh Bains – who are members of the House of Commons.

“It is unusual to find pictures of turbaned Sikhs splashed so prominently in Australian newspapers.” remarked Amrit Singh Grewal, a former Indian basketball player now settled in Australia.

“Things have changed dramatically, more so after Dr. Manmohan Singh became the Prime Minister of India. Now the western world has started recognising Sikhs and, hence, this prominence”.

For many overseas Sikhs, especially those wearing turbans, a shift in the attitude of people as well as the western media is a positive development after the French government persisted with the implementation of its controversial ban on headgear, including turbans or patkas, in its schools.

“A supportive media was of great help in persuading the French government to not extend the legislation any further,” says Devinder Singh Benepal,



An Australian Sikh father and his son playing cricket in their garden.

another Australian Sikh now settled in Sydney.

Many others pointed out that it was perhaps for the first time that a turbaned Sikh, Ram Singh Nayar, was a part of the Canadian contingent in the last Commonwealth Games. Besides India, Kenya and Malaysia were the other countries in Melbourne which included turbaned Sikhs in their contingents.

Though many Sikhs have represented Canada and the UK in Olympic Games and Commonwealth Games, but none wore a turban before.

Early this year, Monty Panesar of England became the first Sikh sporting a turban to play for any cricket Test playing nation other than India.

The increased acceptability of Sikhs in all walks of life was also apparent as the Organising Committee of the Melbourne Commonwealth Games invited the Dhol Foundation of Punjab and Dya Singh, a Malaysian Sikh now settled in Melbourne, to perform at the cultural festival held during the Games.

Dya Singh, who invariably sports a white turban, and his troupe were invited for concerts both in Melbourne and Sydney. Members of his troupe include a Nepalese and a few white Australians besides his two daughters.

“We are supportive of the demands of Sikhs that the ban on turban should go from schools of France,” said Neena Gill, a Ludhiana-born Member of the European Parliament. Gill, who led a delegation of European Parliamentarians to India recently, suggested that “pressure has to be applied from all sides to revoke this ban”.

A few other members of the European Parliament delegation argued that Sikhs in France were a minute minority and could not be and should not be compared with the strong Muslim community of that country.

“For the Sikhs, the turban is not only a religious symbol but also a cultural and identity issue,” added Gill.

Of late, even in the US, where many cases of hate crime against Sikhs were reported immediately after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, several States have accepted the turban as an integral part of the religious wear of the Sikhs.

*Prabhjot Singh
(From The Tribune)*

[Re-printed as requested by Tahira Kaur]

The Kikar Lodge

In The Vaisakhi Heartland

I am no ascetic. I like my creature comforts, especially when I'm away from home. For one reason only: when I have them, I'm not distracted and can concentrate on what I really want to do.

I was in the Punjab recently after an absence of more than three decades from India. So little time and so much to do, so much to see. But, from the very outset, there were two "must dos" on my itinerary. The Darbar Sahib in Amrisar was the primary draw to the land of my birth, where I wanted to spend quite some time. I felt I needed a lifetime of healing to do. Where else could one go for spiritual balm; a recharge of the batteries; a refill all the way to the top, with high octane...

And then, there was Anandpur Sahib, the second "must-do". The mere sight of the dramatic hill-top where Guru Gobind Singh electrified an entire nation back to life three centuries ago, is ever my source of inspiration and motivation. The very thought of

standing within the ramparts of Keshgarh Sahib and experiencing the history sprawling around for miles, is enough to instantly pull me out of any lethargy. But to actually stand there, in the shadow of the very hills where the Tenth Master gave birth to a new *Chandi* and sang the magnificent epic to it is, well, the ultimate....

But planning the itinerary became a challenge, not because Anandpur is five hours from Lutyens' New Delhi, or because it is a couple of hours from Le Corbusier's Chandigarh, but because crowds had already started to pour into the city in anticipation of that great annual fair, *Hola Mohalla*. Would it be possible to get any quiet time anywhere? And although crowds add to the whole ambience of a mela, would there be relief from it during the day? Or the night? Or should I just go for the day, and flee to nearby Chandigarh by the evening? I confess I am addicted to my bundle of creature comforts. None of the options were appealing.



The "bridge of boats" over the river Sutlej leading to The Kikar Lodge.

Imagine my delight then, when I discovered *The Kikar Lodge*, a "Nature Retreat", a mere half-an-hour from Anandpur. Off the beaten track, tucked away out-of-sight, almost, in the Shivalik foothills. A property sprawling over 1800 acres or so and constituting what is described as the country's first private forest reserve adjacent to the Ropar Wetlands, the famous wildlife sanctuary which is widely deemed a paradise by anglers and birdwatchers alike.

The very name of the resort evokes a deep emotional response within me. The Kikar, a tree indigenous to this very area was given a voice by the great bard Vir Singh:

Out of the dust with a heavenward thrust

I rise and rise and turn my eyes

Thirstily to the Lord of the skies....

(translated by Harindaranath Chatopadyaya)

I make a bee-line for the Kikar Lodge.

Getting to Ropar is easy: the highway is as good as any, though filing up quickly with truck and tractor-loads of throngs making their way to the mela. I take

the cut-off for Nurpur Bedi, drive over a pontoon bridge ("bridge of boats over the Sutlej") and hit a wonderfully narrow and bumpy road which promises to take me through to the village of Kangar.

My blossoms opened, my boughs unfurled

Nor village, nor city, nor palace nor hut do I need in this world

From which I silently stand aloof....



Creature comforts close to the birthplace of the Khalsa.

This is a land where history is entrenched in every inch of the soil. Guru Gobind Singh and the nascent Khalsa fought many a battle here against the Mughal armies, as also the local Hill Rajas who had joined hands with them to help eradicate the new Faith. Our car bumps through the village of Basali, the site of a battle with Wazir Khan of Sirhind in the very first year (1700) after the Great Gathering of Vaisakhi. Within the forest reserve, we approach a small gurdwara. Touched by its serenity, I ask about its history: it is where the Guru rested between battles, in communion with the creator.

*The Lord, He granteth me ample love,
Affording me rain-showers enough,
Makes gold sunshine and blue air for me.
I stand alone in myself and dumb,
Dumb and solitary and vast:
Ascetic of grey centuries past
And of grey centuries to come!*

The countryside around me I can see from this hill-top, is marked with shiny-white marbled domes of gurdwaras that celebrate each and every verse and

chapter in history of the Faith. But I like this old, non-descript building and pray that busy-bodies, the well-meaning "Agents of Progress", will leave this place alone. It is wonderful without fixing of marble or a dome piercing the skies. It doesn't need a makeover. Please.

We bounce by a string of kinnow orchards. And right by a phalanx of Holsteins ruminating, I'm sure, on how and why the likes of me manage to find our way here to intrude in their tranquility.

The driver muses loudly: "Why don't they fix the bloody road?"

I, also loudly, pray that they never "fix" it. I recognise it as the "Road of Forgetfulness", on the sides of which you scatter and leave all wordly baggage behind.

And then, suddenly around a corner, a large wrap-around structure and a bevy of thatched roofs emerge from the bushes. We have arrived.

We are greeted by the owner, gentleman farmer and Innkeeper Amarindar Singh as we come to a stop in the parking area. We walk up the incline and



Safaris in the grasslands to spot a variety of fauna and hundreds of bird species.



Time stands still at the oasis that is The Kikar Lodge.

find ourselves in a lush enclave punctuated by a dozen cottages overlooking two large swimming pools, paths meandering through flower-beds and fountains, and an amphitheatre in centre of it all. We are closely enveloped by green hills, cutting us off visually from the outside world.

It's an oasis. And within it, each cottage - private and detached - too is an oasis.

It has all the creature comforts I need, and more. It reminds me of my favourite resorts: Chiangmai in Northern Thailand, Sayan and Jimbaran in Bali. Every little detail has been taken care of: everything is impeccably clean (in India!) and unbelievably comfortable. The washroom, the bed, the temperature, the space, the colours and the light. The outdoors do come in, but they somehow don't intrude.

And it is so peacefully quiet. This is where, I expect, one will be able to hear the earth as it spins on its axis, at night when all have gone to sleep...

Not that there isn't enough to do if you want to do something.

It's a perfect base-camp for visits to Anandpur Sahib and the gurdwaras galore in the region: Sirhind, Chamkaur Sahib, numerous Sikh Forts and more.

The Lodge has carefully marked hiking trails on its property. You can take a guide and go animal tracking. Take a horse, camel or mule for a ride through the forest. Or venture off-road on a Quad or an All-terrain. Night safaris are popular for those who want to spot a variety of deer species in their natural habitat. And fox and wild boar. And more than a hundred species of birds unique to the region.

Or go for a walk through the fruit orchards, farms and dairies which supply the produce used for the gourmet meals - cuisines from around the world, as well as from the Punjab and other regions of India. Or take a tour of the rose plantations which supply extracts to the cosmetic industry around the world. All of these managed by Amarindar and his lovely wife Sunint, both of whom constitute an infectious bundle of energy.

And then. And then, there is the spa. The Lodge is partnered with the *Kairali group* which is widely for its therapeutic and ayurvedic treatments. I tried a head massage - and was out like a light for hours!

And now, since I left, I am told they've added something completely new on the property: a dozen tents. But they are no ordinary tents, believe me.

Having lived in Canada for 35 years, I have learned to enjoy the outdoors. But, not having been brought up here during my formative years, I've yet to learn to function well in the outdoors.

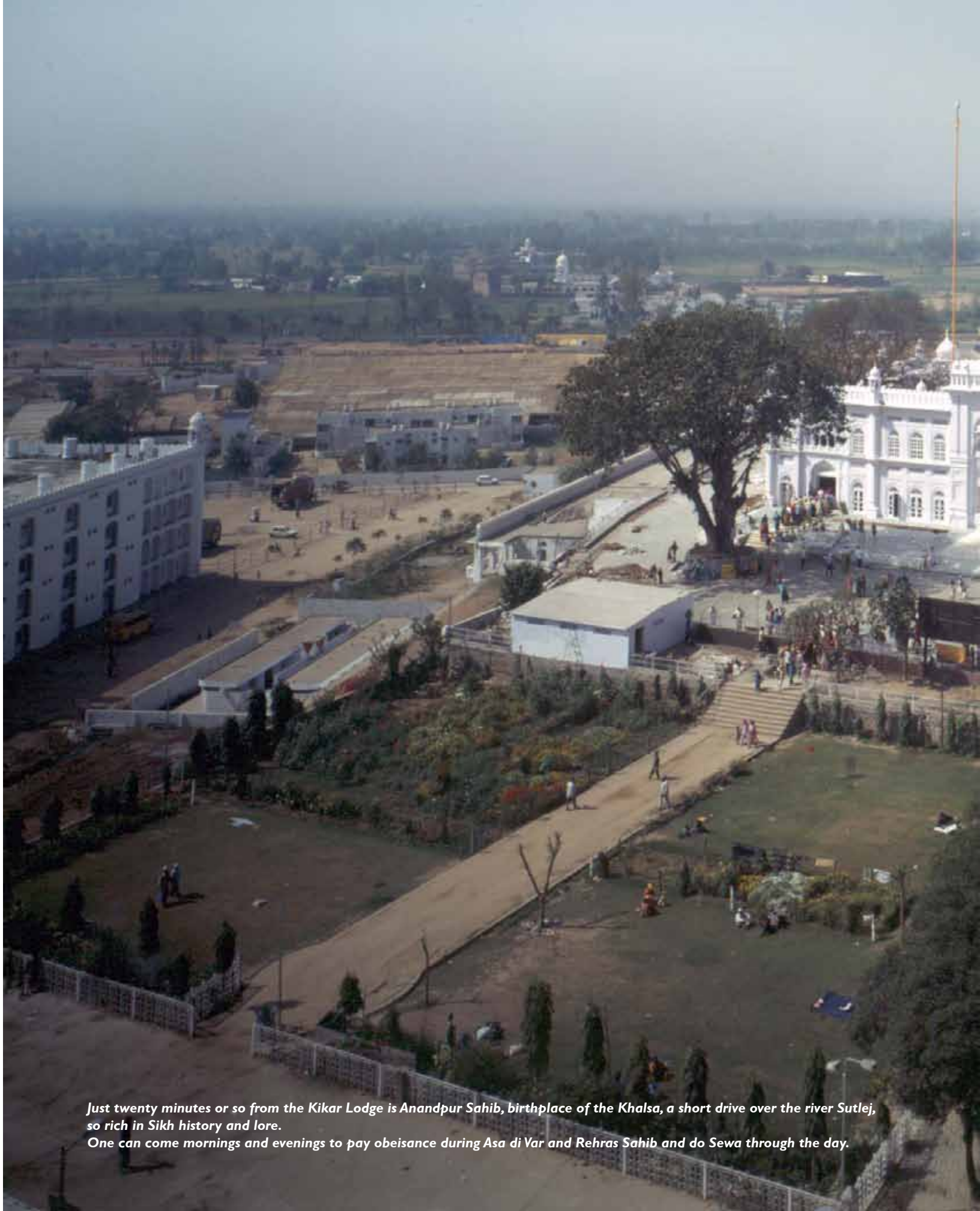
The Kikar Lodge has an answer to my predicament. It now has tents same as the cottages, but on a neighbouring hill-side: private, detached, etc, etc. But they are on solid floors, fully furnished, air conditioned and heated, and attached to each is a proper bathroom, shower and all.

Well, what more could one ask of life?

One thing only. Surely Amarindar Singh can clone the Kikar Lodge for Amritsar as well, couldn't he? I'm keeping my fingers crossed.

*Dr.T.Sher Singh
Visiting from Canada*

The hills are alive..... looking at history from The Kikar Lodge environsAnandpur Sahib and further away, Naina Devi, which can be seen from Gurdwara 'Jhirri Sahib' located at the site of battle of Bassali and situated on the property.



Just twenty minutes or so from the Kikar Lodge is Anandpur Sahib, birthplace of the Khalsa, a short drive over the river Sutlej, so rich in Sikh history and lore. One can come mornings and evenings to pay obeisance during Asa di Var and Rehras Sahib and do Sewa through the day.



"SYMBOLISM IN SIKH PORTRAITURE"

Fakir Syed Aijazuddin is an art historian from Pakistan who specialises in the art and culture of 19 century Punjab, with a focus on the period of the Sikh Raj. He is Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Lahore Museum, the author of 14 books, including several definitive studies on Sikh portraiture, being the descendant of a family that has maintained a close relationship with the Sikh community spanning over three centuries.

His lecture, accompanied throughout by magnificent onscreen illustrations, was given in conjunction with the upcoming exhibition, "I Know No Stranger. Early Sikh Art and Devotion." Scheduled to open at the Rubin Museum in New York on 17 September 2006, it is supported by a generous grant from *The Sikh Art Film Foundation* and *The Sikh Foundation* of Palo Alto, California.

Fakir Aijazuddin began his presentation by characterising Sikh portraiture as "a fusion of belief and symbolic representation, unclouded by dogma," as well as distinct in form, colour and symbolism. He then highlighted what he considers to be four of its major components: the centrality of the message of Sikhism, this art form's role as a historical chronicle, the royal patronage it enjoyed and the importance of *Punjabiyaat*.

As in the *janamsakhis*, piety and reverence were paramount features of this genre, which became a testament to the young religion's growing community of followers. Interfaith unity, especially between Sikhism and Islam, was also evident, primarily in representations of Guru Nanak, frequently shown with his Muslim companion, Mardana. One imaginative painting even depicted the Guru wearing a truly unique garment, emblazoned with calligraphic verses from both the Japji and the Quran. While Sikhism's founder was most often portrayed as the epitome of sublime wisdom and regal spirituality, the Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh, was usually seen as the dynamic person of action.

From the 1790s onward, Sikh portraiture served to chronicle the developing image of Sikhs in the minds of people who lived far away from Punjab. While formal, seated portraits of royal personages, such as Maharaja Ranjit Singh, were favourite subjects of European artists, lively scenes of domestic

activity that included women and children were also frequently depicted.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's son, Maharaja Sher Singh, as well as Gulab Singh Dogra, ruler of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, were noted by Fakir Aijazuddin, as being great court patrons of Sikh portrait artists.

During the period from 1849 to 1947, when the Punjab was ruled by the British East India Company and then the British government, *Punjabiyaat* began to play a leading role. This burgeoning importance of Punjabi social and cultural identity emerged in the growing number of paintings of Sikhs that were created by Sikh artists expressly for a Sikh audience. Events in the lives of the Gurus, like an illustrated *janamsakhi*, were a common theme. A leading exponent of this genre was Sobha Singh, who often painted what Fakir Aijazuddin characterised as "ideals of ideals," or "outward signs of inner grace," such as Guru Tegh Bahadur shown deep in meditation, or Guru Gobind Singh portrayed as a regal warrior. The ten revered preceptors of Sikhism were not the only subjects of these paintings, however. Punjabi folk scenes of village life, and characters from well-known legends, such as the romantic tale of Sohni Mahiwal, were also popular motifs.

This fascinating presentation ended with a question-and-answer session, which discussed topics ranging from the universality of Sikh art to today's exponents of this genre, such as the well known Arpana Caur.

Brief comments by Inni Kaur of the Sikh Art & Film Foundation and the *Nishaan* journal concluded this event. She gave well-deserved praise to not only Fakir Aijazuddin, but also to the Chief Curator and Deputy Director of the Rubin Museum of Art, Dr. Caron Smith and her staff.

Dr. Smith will be curating the upcoming exhibition at the Rubin Museum along with Dr. B.N. Goswamy, Professor Emeritus, Punjab University.

Laurie Bolger
Conservation Librarian,
University Club Library,
New York