

ISSUE II / 2022

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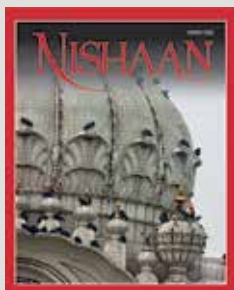
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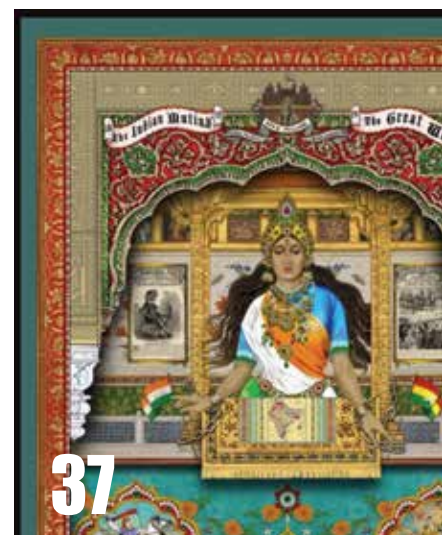
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Nankana Sahib: A Spiritual Travelog

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EDITORIAL

SOMETIMES I WONDER

What exactly is the purpose of writing?

Sometimes, I think the idea is to wrap up an idea in the most impressive and out of the world prose as possible. The idea then jumps from the simplest words to become the most complex structure – in other words a simple word wraps its structure and origin in complex roots and structure. Surely, in there is much magic.

Some readers then delight in the complexity that results. But the question remains, does it clarify the meaning and its usage in any manner? Most likely not. But it decidedly becomes a bar of compliment and acknowledgment of the writer's and reader's skill with words.

And, of course, sharp minds delight in the process.

Keep in mind that every reading of the text conveys different meanings and emphatics. Talented writers and good patient readers will find different, even contradictory assertions. Also forget not that different, sometimes even contradictory meanings will steal their way into the text without much effort.

In matters of religious interpretations such interpretations easily steal in without much effort – often only by their old existence in ideas.

Times takes a rich toll of change in languages over use. But the older the languages, increasing becomes the reverence and homage that a language receives. Please keep this in mind.

Old languages have their magic but no languages remain fixed and absolutely unaltered. That marks human progress.

Languages are rich and deep, yet many of the rules that govern their usage and meaning become complex and changing with time, even though arguing their interpretation.

In life spoken language is most easily influenced, more so by people who travel across distant camps, locations and camp sites. Often the pressures on people that spoken and written languages need to change come from citizens on both spoken and written slanguages of a people.

I.J. Singh

SIKHI, THE BIG BANG, THE BLACK HOLES AND BEYOND PART - 1

Dr. Hardial Singh Dhillon

Until recently, science never conceded to our existence as being creation, it always talked about 'life slowly evolving from the primordial soup of the early atmosphere of the earth'. While Sikhi does not deny the process of evolution, it is respectfully submitted that evolution is not a process of creation; it can only evolve if there is something present in the first place to evolve. With the current technology taking them far beyond their wildest dream in exploring the universe, scientists have now gathered evidence for the 'big bang'. Science predicted that if the Big Bang occurred, there would be Ripples in the early space as it happened. This is exactly what Planck's Telescope has observed. So, our creation is not a myth but reality. Our beginning is a tiny Speck, followed by Ripples and then Inflation (a rapid expansion of space).

According to Prof. Brian Cox, CBE, OBE, FRS, a professor of Particle Physics in the School of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Manchester and The Royal Society Professor for Public Engagement in Science, 'these ripples are the seed of our creation, and we dared to guess that they would exist, and 13.8 billion years after it all began, we observed them from this planet Earth'.

'The Exploring of the Universe, (Ep 5, BBC 2, 1/12/21).

So, our story of creation, as told by science is this:

1. *In the beginning (prior to the advent of the Universe), there was an ocean of energy that drove rapid expansion of space into inflation.*

There were ripples in the ocean, time, space and energy stood still, frozen for eternity; as the ripples ended, the ocean of energy converted into matter by the Big Bang and the patterns of the ripples became imprinted into the universe.

2. *In slightly denser regions, shortly after the Big Bang, Hydrogen (H₂) and Helium (He) gases were formed. The denser regions of gas collapsed to form the first stars and first galaxies.*

3. *9 billion years later a new star formed in the Milky Way Galaxy, our Sun. This star was joined by 8 planets, one of which is our Earth.*

4. *13.8 billion years after the Big Bang, we emerged, blinking into the light.*

With such a large amount of scientific information now available, I shall compare and contrast what Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) has to say about it. In doing so, I shall trace what Science and Sri Guru Granth

Sahib say about the events leading to the Big Bang, and those immediately after the event of the Big Bang, the present-day situation, and how it would all end.

Events prior to the Big Bang

Previously, science never engaged with this question of what was before the Big Bang, because they said that when nothing existed, nothing can be said about it, so the question is futile. Now, they are beginning to ask why do we exist? Why are we humans; why does anything exist? These do not sound like scientific questions; they sound more like questions in philosophy or theology. In fact, these are scientific questions, because they are questions about *Nature*, about the *Universe*, and they need answering. Science says prior to the Big Bang, there was an ocean of energy in the void, which remained inactive for an eternity and then in quick motion, in billion, billion, billion, billionth of a second, it transformed into matter with the Big Bang.

The Guru Granth Sahib talks about an infinite time of darkness prior to creation too, where only the Akal Purakh was in a state of trance, a singularity (ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ - ek - Onkar); devoid of any thoughts of creation (ਅਫਰ - state) for 36 eons (36 jugs). The ripples of energy that science

says existed before Big Bang, which then became converted to mass, would be the dormant thoughts (the spiritual energy) of the Akal Purakh (immediately before the ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ - expanded by a single word/expression), and these then remained as denser regions that gave rise to stars and galaxies (as ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਇ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ - Japji paurhi 16, SGGS 3) that laid the foundation of our beginning, long before our Sun was formed, some 9 billion years later. Religiously, it has to be so, since everything begins and ends in Akal Purakh; the assertion made by science that 'there was an ocean of energy' does not precisely tell us that this potential energy pool that remained in latent state for so long (according to them, almost an eternity), within what was it contained or to what was it attached).

Neither are they clear as to why or what, within the billion, billion, billion, billionth of a second, caused it to be converted to mass (more may come to light in coming years, as James Webb Telescope, the most powerful of all, would reveal). Says SGGS:

ਪਉਤੀ ॥ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪੁ ਉਪਾਇਓਨੁ ਤਦਹੁ ਹੋਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥ ਮਤਾ ਮਸੂਰਤਿ ਆਪਿ ਕਰੇ ਜੋ ਕਰੇ ਸੁ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਤਦਹੁ ਆਕਾਸੁ ਨ ਪਾਤਾਲੁ ਹੈ ਨਾ ਤ੍ਰੈ ਲੋਈ ॥ ਤਦਹੁ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਹੈ ਨਾ ਓਪਤਿ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਜਿਉ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਤਿਵੈ ਕਰੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥1॥ M: 3, SGGS /509

Paurhi II When there was only the immanency of the Lord itself, then there was no other. The Lord discoursed with itself too, whatever it did, prevailed. Then, there was neither any sky nor any nether region, nor the presence of the three worlds.

There was no creation then; only the formless Akal Purakh was all by itself. Whatever pleases the Lord, it

does; except Lord, there is no one else II1II

Did it last almost for an eternity though (as science claims)?

ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ 3 ॥ ਜੁਗ ਛਤੀਹ ਕੀਓ ਗੁਬਾਰਾ ॥ ਤੂ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣਹਿ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰਾ ॥ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਆ ਕੇ ਕਹੈ ਕਿ ਆਖਿ ਵਖਾਣੈ ਤੂ ਆਪੇ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਪਾਇਦਾ ॥ 1 ॥ ਓਅੰਕਾਰਿ ਸਭ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਉਪਾਈ ॥ ਸਭੁ ਖੇਲੁ ਤਮਾਸਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥ ਆਪੇ ਵੇਕ ਕਰੇ ਸਭਿ ਸਾਚਾ ਆਪੇਭੰਨਿਘੜਾਇਦਾ ॥ 2 ॥ ... ॥16॥4॥18॥ M: 3, SGGS/1060

Maru Mahala 3 II O, Creator Lord! (Prior to world-enactment), for infinite time (metaphor: 36 Jugs/ages of darkness-time divisions, according to Hindu mythology), thou created the situation that is beyond the realisation of the beings; (what was that situation) is only known to thee. No one can say anything (about such total darkness), no being can elaborate through narrative; the essence is only known to thee II1II O, brother! The Lord alone created the entire cosmos. O, Lord! (The world enacted by thee) is all thy melodrama, thy glory. O, brother! It is the Lord itself who makes the beings to be of different types; the Lord itself destroys and recreates II2II... II16II4II18II

ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ 1 ॥ ਕੇਤੇ ਜੁਗ ਵਰਤੇ ਗੁਬਾਰੈ ॥ ਤਾਤੀ ਲਾਈ ਅਪਰ ਅਪਾਰੈ ॥ ਧੰਧੁਕਾਰਿ ਨਿਰਾਲਮੁ ਬੈਠਾ ਨਾ ਤਦਿ ਧੰਧੁ ਪਸਾਰਾ ਹੇ ॥ 1 ॥ ਜੁਗ ਛਤੀਹ ਤਿਨੈ ਵਰਤਾਏ ॥ ਜਿਉ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਣਾ ਤਿਵੈ ਚਲਾਏ ॥ ਤਿਸਹਿ ਸਰੀਕੁ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਕੋਈ ਆਪੇ ਅਪਰ ਅਪਾਰਾ ਹੇ ॥ 2 ॥ ... ॥16॥7॥ Maru M: 1, SGGS/1026

Maru Mahala 1 II There were countless ages that passed away in total darkness (i.e for a very long time, before the advent of cosmos, it is impossible to say anything with certainty), then the infinite Lord assumed a state of constant trance, (all within itself). In that total darkness, the Lord was all seated by

itself, non-aligned; then, there was no expansion of creation nor pursuit of maya II1II

The Lord let thirty-six eons (of total darkness to prevail - meaning a countless time span); as it pleased the Lord, so it let it (the deed of darkness) persist. The Lord is all by itself; beyond Lord, there is no other power; it is impossible to know the far side of the Lord, since there is none equal to Lord II2II...II16II7II

Guru Nanak Dev Ji goes even further than that:

ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ 1 ॥ ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ ਧੰਧੁਕਾਰਾ ॥ ਧਰਣਿ ਨ ਗਗਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਅਪਾਰਾ ॥ ਨਾ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ ਨ ਚੰਦੁ ਨ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਸੁੰਨ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਲਗਾਇਦਾ ॥ 1 ॥ ਖਾਣੀ ਨ ਬਾਣੀ ਪਉਣੁ ਨ ਪਾਣੀ ॥ ਓਪਤਿ ਖਪਤਿ ਨ ਆਵਣ ਜਾਣੀ ॥ ਖੰਡ ਪਤਾਲ ਸਪਤ ਨਹੀ ਸਾਗਰ ਨਦੀ ਨ ਨੀਰੁ ਵਹਾਇਦਾ ॥ 2 ॥ ...ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਏਕੋ ਸੋਈ ॥ ਨਾਰਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਜਨਮਾ ਨਾ ਕੇ ਦੁਖੁ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਦਾ ॥ 4 ॥ ... ॥ 16 ॥ 3 ॥ 15 ॥ Maru M: 1, SGGS/1035

Maru Mahala 1 II Before the advent of the enactment of the cosmos, for a very long time, (for which even words like 'billions of years' are inadequate to use), in (such) pitched dark situation, there was no Earth or sky, nor was in motion (then) the divine order of the infinite Lord. There was no day or night then; neither the Moon nor the Sun.

Then it was only the Lord itself, in (assumed state of) constant trance within itself, which was devoid of any thoughts II1II

There was then neither the four (major) sources/mines of creation (i.e the four main sources of creation, namely, the beings created by eggs, placenta, binary fission and seeds) nor the (spoken) languages of the beings. There was neither air nor water; neither creation nor destruction; neither birth nor demise (of the beings).

There were then neither (the existence of) nine continents of the Earth, nor the nether regions; neither the seven seas nor streams with flowing water II2II...

There were then no (signs of the deities like that of) Brahma, Vishnu or Shiv. There was no person visible then, only the Lord, all by itself. There was then no woman, or man; neither any caste nor anyone taking birth in any castes, there was no (existence of any) being to endure any sorrow II4II...II16II3II15II

It is worth noting a couple of things here: prior to creation, the Lord is referred to as ek-unkar (ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ - ਨਿਰਗੁਨ ਅਵਸਥਾ) and afterward, when the Lord is infused with its creation, it is called O-unkar (ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ - ਸਰਗੁਨ ਅਵਸਥਾ).

Secondly, the time period of both 36 eons and that of ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ needs reconciling; they both mean the same thing, that is beyond counts (lit. 'ਅਰਬ' means 1 billion (Guru Ji says ਨਰਬਦ too, which means beyond 1 billion; so, taking them together would mean beyond counts/countless).

Events immediately after the Big Bang

Science says nothing happened for a very long time; this is referred to as 'the cosmic dark ages.' 100 million years later after the universe merged (13.8 billion years ago), the first star was born. As cosmic webs contracted with dark matter, containing only Hydrogen and Helium gravity increased, that gave rise to galaxies and millions of stars. It became so dense, that the temperature increased, giving rise to nuclear fusion reactions, which produced light and the universe was lit for the first time. In the core of stars, formed Hydrogen and Helium, other elements like carbon (C) and other heavy metals were produced.

The first set of stars were huge and their temperature was in excess of 100,000 °C (hence they appeared blue). As gravity increases inside the stars, it pulls protons and neutrons closer releasing more energy. In this way, more elements in the stars are formed, releasing further energy to maintain a precarious equilibrium, but once it reaches 26 protons (P) & 26 neutrons (N), (an Iron (Fe) nucleus), no more energy can be released, and so the star collapses, releasing heavy elements into the universe. The star then implodes becoming a Super-Nova, giving rise to a new family of stars.

The Guru Granth Sahib describes how the Lord revealed itself from latent to the visible state, as

ਕੇਤਤਿਆ ਦਿਨ ਗੁਪਤੁ ਕਹਾਇਆ ॥
ਕੇਤਤਿਆ ਦਿਨ ਸੁੰਨਿ ਸਮਾਇਆ ॥ ਕੇਤਤਿਆ
ਦਿਨ ਹੁੰਦੁਕਾਰਾ ਆਪੇ ਕਰਤਾ ਪਰਗਟਤਾ ॥ 12
॥...॥16॥1॥10॥ Gaurhi, M:5,
GGSJ/1081

...O, brother! (Now, after the establishment of the cosmos) for eons of time, the Lord remained in a latent state, and for eons of time it spent in a state of total inactivity (devoid of any thoughts). For infinite time, it remained in a state that is beyond the realisation of the beings; then it revealed itself (as a firmament of cosmos/world-manifest) II12II...II16II1II10II

Science says that we are the by-product of accidental happenings of small galaxies colliding with our own, with our sun being born many millions of years later. 'You may be small; you are a consequence of grand events,' Prof. B Cox. Pope John Donne wrote once, "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main". Likewise, it may be said that no galaxy is an island; it's a part of a major cosmic melodrama.'

The Hubble Telescope, launched some 40 years ago, has shown us another galaxy, much bigger than ours, called *Andromeda*, heading our way at a speed of 400,000 km/h (it is 2.5 million light years from earth). It will take 4.5 billion years to collide with our galaxy, changing it completely; the Earth will witness this event in the future.

It is important to interpret these events and future events, as the will of the Lord, for nothing happens outside its will. Says SGGs:

ਮਾਰੂ ਮਹਲਾ 1 ॥ ...ਜਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਣਾ ਤਾ ਜਗਤੁ
ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਬਾਤੁ ਕਲਾ ਆਡਾਣੁ ਰਹਾਇਆ
॥ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਉਪਾਏ ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹੁ
ਵਧਾਇਦਾ ॥ 14 ॥ ਵਿਰਲੇ ਕਉ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੁ
ਸੁਣਾਇਆ ॥ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਦੇਖੇ ਹੁਕਮੁ
ਸਬਾਇਆ ॥ ਖੰਡ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਅਰੰਭੇ
ਗੁਪਤਹੁ ਪਰਗਟੀ ਆਇਦਾ ॥ 15 ॥ ਤਾ ਕਾ
ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਈ ॥ ਪੂਰੇ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਸੋਝੀ ਹੋਈ
॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਚਿ ਰਤੇ ਬਿਸਮਾਦੀ ਬਿਸਮ ਭਏ
ਗੁਣ ਗਾਇਦਾ ॥ 16 ॥ 3 ॥ 15 ॥ Maru,
M: 1, SGGs/1036

Maru Mahala 1 II ...When it pleased the Lord, it created the cosmos. The Lord placed everything (in its appropriate place) in this visible expansion of the world, (without any apparent) support. Then the Lord created (instruments of) Brahma, Vishnu and Shiv (the creative, sustaining and destructive forces), and enhanced the enticement of maya (in the world) II14II

The rare individual whom the Guru imparted this knowledge (such being came to realise) that the Lord, having created the world, takes care of it too; everywhere, it's the divine command of the Lord that prevails.

The Lord itself created each and every part(s) of the universe and the nether regions, and itself established the visible manifest from the invisible embodiment II15II

Only through the competent Guru it is realised that no one knows the limits of the Lord's empowerment. O, Nanak! Those beings who remain imbued by the devotion of the Nam of the eternal Lord, they (by witnessing the mysteries of the immense power of the Lord) remain captivated by the same, and sing its virtues II16II3II15II

Are we a part of the universe, as Pope John Donne says SGGS unequivocally asserts this as

ਜੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡਿ ਖੰਡਿ ਸੋ ਜਾਣਹੁ ॥ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬੂਝਹੁ
ਸਬਦਿ ਪਛਾਣਹੁ ॥...॥ 15 ॥ 3 ॥ 20 ॥
Maru M: 1, SGGS/1040.

Does the Guru Granth Sahib state the subsistence of the Nam, prior to the creation of the universe?

ਕਿਰਤਮ ਨਾਮ ਕਥੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਜਿਹਬਾ ॥ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ
ਤੇਰਾ ਪਰਾ ਪੂਰਬਲਾ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਭਗਤ ਪਏ
ਸਰਣਾਈ ਦੇਹੁ ਦਰਸੁ ਮਨਿ ਰੰਗੁ ਲਗਾ ॥ 20
॥ ...॥21 ॥ 2 ॥ 11 ॥ M: 5,
SGGSJ/1083

...O, Lord! The tongue (of us beings) utters such Names of thine which (the beings) have designated (to thee by witnessing thy virtues), but 'Satnam' (the eternal Nam/glory) is thy most original Nam (which signifies thy 'subsistence'; 'the subsistence' which persisted prior to creation of the cosmos as being 'ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ...'). O, Nanak! Say - (O, Lord!) Thy Bhagats remain in thy sanctuary, thou allow them to have thy vision; they remain in a state of blissfulness II20II...II21II2II11II

The energy that science says was present prior to the Big Bang, in Sikhi sphere, it would be 'the will of the Lord, transformed into Nam' that having established is now sustaining everything in the universe. Nam is both personal and impersonal; the only thing that is real, like the Lord, in the world.

Evidence - of Nam being 'personal' & 'impersonal'

ਲਾਜ ਮਰੈ ਜੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਨ ਲੇਵੈ ॥ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਹੁਨੁ ਸੁਖੀ
ਕਿਉ ਸੇਵੈ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਨੁ ਛਾਡਿ ਪਰਮ ਗਤਿ
ਚਾਹੈ ॥ ਮੂਲ ਬਿਨਾ ਸਾਖਾ ਕਤ ਆਹੈ ॥ 1
॥...॥ 4 ॥ 32 ॥ 45 ॥ Bharon M: 5,
SGGS/1148

O, brother! The being who does not engage in remembrance of the Nam of the Lord, such being, with shame, feels hollow within; without remembrance of the Nam of the Lord, the being cannot sleep in peace. (The being who) by abandoning the act of remembrance of Lord's Nam, desires to attain) the highest spiritual state (this longing of such being is futile) is like a tree, without its trunk, that cannot have any branches (on it) II1II...II4II32II45II

ਪਉੜੀ ॥ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਆਪੀਨੈ
ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ ॥ ਦੁਯੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਾਜੀਐ ਕਰਿ
ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੈ ਚਾਉ ॥ M: 1, SGGS/463

The Lord established itself and set the level of its esteem. Then it created the (firmament of) nature and pervaded itself (within) to witness (all) the melodrama (of the cosmos).

Everything is sustained by the Nam of the Lord:

ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਸਗਲੇ ਜੰਤ ॥ ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਖੰਡ
ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ॥ ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ
॥ ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਸੁਨਨ ਗਿਆਨ ਧਿਆਨ ॥
ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਆਗਾਸ ਪਾਤਾਲ ॥ ਨਾਮ ਕੇ
ਧਾਰੇ ਸਗਲ ਆਕਾਰ ॥ ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਪੁਰੀਆ
ਸਭ ਭਵਨ ॥ ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਸੰਗਿ ਉਧਰੇ ਸੁਨਿ ਸ੍ਵਣ
॥ ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਜਿਸੁ ਆਪਨੈ ਨਾਮਿ ਲਾਏ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਚਉਥੇ ਪਦ ਮਹਿ ਸੋ ਜਨੁ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਏ ॥
5 ॥ M: 5, SGGS/284

All the beings, as well as each and every part of the universe, are sustained through Nam. The Nam sustains the *Smritis*, *Vedas* and *Puranas*; the attentiveness and union of conscience with divine knowledge are also supported by

(Lord's) Nam. All the skies and the nether regions, as well as the bodies of all beings, are sustained by the Nam. All the worlds and their clusters (the three *bhavans-pataal-lok*, *maat-lok* and *swarg-lok*, also called *lok* and *perlok*; as well as the 14 worlds) are sustained by the Nam; the beings by uniting with the Lord and by listening to its Nam through their ears, are protected from the vices (of maya). O, Nanak!

The being to whom the Lord mercifully unites with its Nam, such being, by reaching the fourth/spiritual plane (beyond the effect of maya, namely, the *rajo*, *sato* and *tamo*) attains the supreme (spiritual) state II5II

Note here that the word 'Nam', means both 'Akal Purakh' and 'the Nam of the Akal Purakh'; the Nam is the creative, the potent, the most active aspect of the Lord. The fact that each and every one of us 'own' Nam, as well as 'Nam' supporting the stars and galaxies, makes it both personal and impersonal. (We shall see later why Gurbani heavily emphasises on personal spiritual development within us, whereas the emphasis of science is on searching the sky).

Science neither acknowledges the presence of the Akal Purakh in its creation nor 'its Nam'. For them, it is a total game of energy, for their instruments can only measure these things.

In part 2, I shall discuss how science and Guru Granth Sahib go hand in hand about the present state of the universe/s.

Dr Hardial Singh Dhillon Ph.D. © 2022. Honorary Vice-President and a Trustee of Multi-faith Centre of University of Derby, UK hardialsd@yahoo.co.uk



NANKANA SAHIB: A SPIRITUAL TRAVELOG

Dr. Jasbir Singh Sarna

These are the words of daily Sikh prayers: “*Sri Nankana Sahib* and other Gurdwaras from which the Panth has been separated, the gift of open vision and care to the Khalsa Ji.” I thought it would be completed someday. Finally, after reading my name on a list, I felt satisfied and thanked God. I immediately came home, put the necessary clothes in the bag, got ready and left for Amritsar and reached there at half past one in the night and parked

the buses in the premises of Akali Phula Singh’s Gurdwara and started walking towards *Darbar Sahib*. After visiting there, we boarded the buses at 5 o’clock and reached Attari Border on the morning of November 21, 2018. There were endless visitors. They were standing at the gate waiting.

Most of the passengers were elderly male and female, who had been standing for hours, exhausted and fainted, but the Punjab police

personnel did not feel sorry for them. The documents were checked and released one by one at 10 O’clock. The passengers also brought extra clothes, blankets, etc., which caused them trouble. The train arrived from Pakistan and left for Wagah.

The attitude of the Pakistani police and army officers on the other side of the Wagah border was very loving and sincere. Their superiors showered flowers on all



the passengers and presented their faith by putting a flower necklace around our neck. They were asking each other to walk slowly and make a separate queue for the ladies.

The shouts of Jakaras were loud. Once or twice when the slogan '*Raj Karega Khalsa*' was being chanted, I was standing in line and a Pakistani commando was standing nearby. I could see the expression on his face. At last he began to say that fatigue is removed only by shouting

Jakaras. After that the Immigration Department of Pakistan kept our passports and issued us identity cards and forms. There was also a tea langar.

We reached Sri Nankana Sahib by Pakistan Special Train at 3 a.m in the morning. After the train we reached *Nankana Sahib* by bus. *Nankana Sahib* was also visited by thousands of devotees from all over the world. Finally, after many hours, the dust of *Nankana Sahib* (birth place of Guru

Nanak) touched our foreheads. Regarding accommodation, before I started my journey, my dear friend Prof. Kalyan Singh Kalyan, a native of Nankana Sahib and G.C. College, Lahore university teaches Punjabi.

Azar Abbas (Shah Ji) who used to allot rooms allotted a room. While we were bowing at *Nankana Sahib*, I got some Xerox pages of Guru Nanak's journey to the Arab world in Urdu-Arabic. I brought it from where I already knew a little bit. I

thought of translating it into Punjabi and giving it to everyone. After seeing the Darshan, we went to the side of the langar where Sindhi Nanak Naam Leva brothers and Peshawar Sikhs were preparing the Langar. Different types of delicious foods are distributed among the people. Some of my books, which I had brought as a gift to Prof Kalyan Singh Kalyan was given to him. We were sitting in the premises of Gurdwara Sahib when suddenly we met a gentleman from Punjab TV. He was a gentle person associated with the media. He said that he regularly records kirtan in Gurdwara Sahib.

Nankana Sahib, the birthplace, is a small shrine with a marble inscription on it which reads in Gurmukhi Punjabi "Birthplace of Guru Nanak Dev ji". It is surrounded by marble carvings and with Sikh insignia khanda. This service was performed by a Sardar of Rawalpindi in Sammat 1947 (1890 AD). The Jand tree of Shaheed Lachhman Singh is present in the premises of

the Gurdwara. It was here that three Sindhi small Sikh boys requested to be photographed by our group, which I granted. Large posters of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and 2020 Khalistan were visible from afar inside the Gurdwara premises. There is a beautiful gate outside the gurdwara with the inscription Gurdwara Janam Asthan' in English.

On November 22, 2018, we were taken by bus to see Gurdwara Sacha Sauda. It is located in village Chuharkana, district Sheikhpura. According to Bhai Bale's Janam Sakhi, Guru Nanak was given Rs.20 by his father for business purposes.

Guru Sahib was accompanied by Bhai Mardana. Outside Mandi Chuharkana, he saw some saints sitting hungry in the fields. Guru Sahib, seeing the hungry saints, gave them a langar of twenty rupees. When Mehta Kalu Ji found out he got very angry but Guru Ji said that he had come with a real deal. Gurdwara is now the place where the Sadhus

ate *langar*. This three-storied fort-like shrine was built by the royal order of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The shrine has 25 kanals of land. The shrine has been closed since 1947. During the Baisakhi of 1993, it was opened for open viewing to the sangats from all over the country and abroad. The site has been renovated at a cost of millions of rupees in collaboration with the Sangat of England. A new langar hall and sarovar have also been constructed. The *Guru Granth Sahib* is seated here nowadays. *Akhand Path Sahib* begins four times a year. To the right of the sanctum sanctorum is a large forest tree, which is said to have been planted here by Guru Sahib after giving alms, the shade of which is now enjoyed by the devotees. Now the crumbs of the old forest tree have burst, which we have seen for ourselves.

In the evening we reached *Nankana Sahib* by bus. Near *Nankana Sahib*, a few furlongs away, visited *Gurdwara*



Aerial view of the Gurdwara Janam Asthan, Nankana Sahib Complex (Image from internet)

Bal-Lila Sahib. Here the Guru used to gather small children and convey the message of worship of God. It was here that clothes and bread were brought from home to the helpless, meek and poor children. Here at that time Muslim Rai Bular Ji built the first Sarovar of Sikhs *Nanaksar Sarovar* in the memory of Guru Ji, which still reminds us of the brotherhood and coincidence of Muslims and Sikhs. This gurdwara comes up 20-22 steps. Huge domes have been built and the saffron flag is hanging. The construction of this *Gurdwara Sahib* is being done by the UK Committee and *kar sewa* by Guru Ka Bagh, Baba Lakha Singh Ji, Sevak Baba Satnam Singh in collaboration with *Sangats* from Pakistan and around the world.

Gurdwara Sri Patti Sahib is just a few furlongs away. At this holy place, Pandit Gopal Das was a teacher of Guru Nanak Dev ji in his childhood. This is a huge Gurdwara Sahib building with a small main entrance. An inscription reads *Gurdwara Patti Sahib*. At the shrine, Guru Nanak Dev Ji gave spiritual instruction to *Pandit* when Guru was a student in his childhood and composed a hymn called *Patti* in *Raag Asa*. This building is too old. Inside the gurdwara, a young Sindhi brother was reciting the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

Now we were walking towards other gurdwaras when a Muslim brother started talking. We were talking when I saw a Singh walking towards his house, I asked him if it was not Kalyan Singh? I had never met Kalyan Singh but I had seen him in the photo. He immediately nodded and shouted at him then he finished reading. I went to him and called him Guru Fateh, introduced him and he took me in his arms. He insisted that we go home and have breakfast but I apologized that we had breakfast and we were going to

see another gurdwara. Promising to visit the Gurdwara in the evening, we grabbed the Rakshas Auto and walked towards *Gurdwara Tambu Sahib*. Crossing the narrow streets we visited *Gurdwara Tambu Sahib*. This place is touched by the holy feet of *Guru Nanak Sahib*. When Guru Sahib returned after making a real deal, for some time Guru ji rested under the tree, which looked like a tent, and was lying down. From this place Bebe Nanaki and father Mehta Kalu took Guru Sahib home.

This forest tree is still in the shape of a full tent. Many branches of this forest are still green today. The Gurdwara here is small but huge buildings have been erected in the vicinity. Inside the gurdwara, the *Kirtania Jatha* (Muslims) of

Bhai Mardana ji's lineage were performing melodious *Kirtan*. A large *langar* hall was constructed by the *Kar sewa* Committee Sikh Gurdwara (Pakistan) in March 2009 in collaboration with the UK and the rest of the Sikh community abroad. We went to Bebe Nanaki *langar* hall and ate *langar*.

It was here that Muslim doctors set up a medical camp in which Dr. Sultan Ahmed Abdullah, Retired Head Chest Department, Punjab Medical College, Faizabad under 'Bright Hope Foundation' at Nankana Sahib. 7th Free Medical Camp on 21 to 23 November, 2018 on the eve of the Birthday Ceremony of 'Baba Guru Nanak Jee'. They were also giving checkups and free medicines. Five or six doctors were working here.



Gurdwara Mal ji Sahib (Image from internet)

From here we reached Gurdwara *Guru Hargobind Sahib*. Here the Guru had tied his horse to a forest tree and walked towards the birth place of Guru Nanak. It is called '*Gurdwara Chhevin Patshahi*'. Part of this forest tree is still preserved as a memorial. It is also the fifth *Patshahi Gurdwara*. The Gurdwara was inaugurated on April 16, 2016 by Mohammad Sadiq Al Farooq, Chairman, Evacuee Trust Property Board, Government of Pakistan. It is also the seat of Guru Granth Sahib. The shrine of Guru Hargobind Sahib was commissioned by a Singh on 13 April 1937, inscribed in an inscription:

"Shrine of Maharaja Guru Har Gobind Sahib. Sardar Ishar Singh Sahib, Royal Deputy Magistrate (Nahar), performed the service of this holy shrine in the memory of his father Sardar Ganesha Singh Sahib, the royal money lender Mananwala Bar."

The entire text is written in Urdu. From there we went to see *Gurdwara Mall Ji Sahib*. This is the story of 1483 AD when Guru Nanak Sahib used to graze his buffaloes and cows at this place when he was 14 years old. Once while grazing buffaloes he became absorbed in devotion to God and he fell asleep then he lay down, when the sun changed direction then the sun came on his body. Out of the bushes came a snake and it spread its head and cast a shadow over the mouth of the Nanak. Nawab Rai Bular of Talwandi saw this incident with his own eyes and became a true devotee of Guru Ji. Rai Bular later named 750 acres of land after Guru Nanak. This is why this place is known as *Gurdwara Sri Mall Ji Sahib*. The tree of the place where Guru Ji slept is still safe and even today it seems to be like a snake. People have gone to great lengths to fulfill

their desires. The *Guru Granth Sahib* is seated in this Gurdwara. The Gurdwara has a large white dome and four small domes around it. There are many small mammoths. Then we reached Gurdwara *Sri Kiara Sahib* through the narrow roads. This is the place where Guru Ji's cattle destroyed the crops of the Zamindar and Guru Ji with his spiritual power made the crop green again. The place is huge, with a small gurdwara where the Guru Granth Sahib is seated. On one side of the Gurdwara is a large sarovar. From here we immediately drove to Janam Asthan as '*Nagar Kirtan*' had started. People of all religions were involved. The road was red carpeted. This carpet was also donated by a Muslim hero and from where the *Nagar Kirtan* (famous for this procession in Pakistan) went, the red carpet was spread all the way. Many of the young children were riding on horses, adorned with handkerchiefs. In this *Nagar Kirtan*, Sindhi Veer Parvar was making its presence felt in large numbers. The bus on which the '*Parkash of Guru Granth Sahib*' was adorned was offering a very beautiful view. Drummers were playing drums and flute players were singing Baba Nanak's praises to the tune of their flute. Sindhi brothers and sisters were also performing bhangras. Blue and yellow Khalistan flags were also displayed in the *Nagar Kirtan*. The whole road was beautifully decorated. Along the way, Sindhi families were also distributed pinnis, sweets, etc. On our way back we found an old man aged 90 years and named Iqbal, a resident of Jhelum. He is called the *Bhangra Baba*. He used to perform bhangra in this procession every year and now health does not allow it. However, at our request, it was broken into a stream of tears. He made me happy by reciting many lines of Sufi

Punjabi poetry. Similarly, another elder was also found who recited verses from ancient poetry.

In the evening Prof. Kalyan Singh Kalyan came inside the premises of *Nankana Sahib* and hugged me. There we met the first Sikh Major Harcharan Singh, and the first Sikh doctor, Dr Mimpal Singh. I gave my books as a gift to both of them, who were very happy and felt proud. Sardar Lali, a Sikh TV artist from Pakistan, also met there. There I met Mr. Imran Galani, the Deputy Secretary of Okaf, who is a very cheerful young man. Then I met Babar Jalandhari who is often active on Facebook and is a true son of a Punjabi mother. Even though I recognized it from afar. On a building Dr. Rajwant Singh (USA) was busy making films but he could not be met and left for the USA in the evening. I also met many other personalities.

Kirtan and Fire-like lectures were held in the Diwan of the night. Melodious Kirtan of local Sikh girls had nailed the entire Sangat. Many Sikh veterans from abroad gave speeches full of Sikh pomp and pageantry that mostly came from Canada, U.S.A, UK, and Germany. The central point of their speeches was the achievement of 'Khalistan'. Later, *ragi jathas* from Darbar Sahib performed kirtan of divine hymns. Sindhi families were celebrating Baba Nanak's birthday by lighting candles with great devotion. The *Akhand Path Sahib* concluded at one o'clock in the night. Sindhi brothers distributed pinnis, chocolates, candies etc. to the *sangat* according to their sentiments. Sindhi women memorized *Gurbani* and *Shabad* orally, as they were singing *Shabad* along with *Ragi Singhs*. There were huge fireworks at night.

On the morning of 24th November 2018, after bowing at the place of



Gurdwara Sri Kiara Sahib: According to Janam Sakhi, when Guru Nanak was a young man, he was sent to graze cattle. While resting underneath a shady tree, Guru was immersed in thoughts and the cattle went astray in the fields of a farmer. On having seen this, the farmers were unhappy. The clamouring disturbed the young Nanak, waking him from his trance. Recognizing the the son of the village patwari, they made a complaint to Rai Bular who went with the farmer to see the damage. On getting to the field that had been trampled everyone was surprised to find no damage at all.

A boundary wall and a sarovar has now been built around the whole field. (Image from internet)



Gurdwara Sri Tambu Sahib: According to a Sikh legend, Guru Nanak rested here for a while after returning from Chuharakana. On his journey he fed sum hungry sadhus with some money borrowed from his father.

On heareing this, his father, Mehta Kalu first felt annoyed with his son, and asked him what he did with the money, but when Guru Nanak shared with his father what he had done with the money the village folk were happy and pleaded before Mehta Kalu by saying "Patwari Ji ! lest you chide the boy, let me make it clear to you that the whole city is blessed by his grace and presence". (Image from internet)

birth, I came out and found Veer Vinod from Sakar (Sindh). He took a photo and gave me his card. Through his WhatsApp, I called my son in Jammu. We met a group of Pishawar Sikhs who were happy to take photos with us. In the evening we were proceeding towards Panja Sahib (Hasan Abdal). Hassan Abdal, also known as Baba Wali Kandhari, is a historic town located on the GT Road and Karakoram main Road near NWFP Province. At a height of 714 meters on a hill, there lived a Muslim saint Baba Wali Kandhari. After his death, he was buried near Kandahar.

On November 25, we left for Sri Panja Sahib. For reasons like mountaineering or security, we arrived at night. There, with the grace of 'Shah ji', a room was found, in which two other pilgrims from Jammu made adjustments. No one was allowed to go outside the main gate of Panja Sahib. We stayed here for two or three days. At 2 o'clock in the morning, I took a bath in the

sarovar where there were big fish. There we saw the holy panja of Guru Nanak Patshah, which pleased us. Panja Sahib now falls in Attock district (Campbellpur).

Guru Nanak Sahib stayed during the Western Udasi, on his return from *Makka Madina* and Baghdad. The Guru was accompanied by Bhai Mardana. The Guru resided at the foot of the hill. At that time Wali Kandhari lived on the top of the hill. The Guru was sitting downhillo. According to Janam Sakhis, when Bhai Mardana became thirsty, Guru Ji sent him to Wali Kandhari three times to fetch water. At the end Wali Kandhari said, "The fakir of whom you are a follower cannot give you water". When Guru Sahib lifted a stone with his assa(stick), a spring of water burst under it. Bhai Mardana and others present there drank water and thanked God. The Wali Kandhari's spring dried up and its water flowed into the spring. Wali Kandhari rolled down a heavy stone, then Guru Nanak

stopped the stone with his right hand and Guru Sahib's paw was engraved in the stone. This stone with fingerprints and spring still exists today. Pilgrims are delighted by kissing their paws and drinking water. This place remained like this for a long time. The local devotees continued to bow down. Gradually the *sangat* built a small Gurdwara. During the Khalsa rule, when Peshawar was conquered, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa built a huge and beautiful Gurdwara and *Sarovar*. Maharaja Ranjit Singh visited the shrine several times. *Panja Sahib* has also been associated with Sikh history since then. The shrine is now managed by the Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee.

In the evening, in front of our porch, three or four people were presenting books and taking pictures. When I passed by, I also stopped. There I met Dr. Shahzad Hussain Naqvi, the deputy editor of the Balochistan Express. It was there that I met Chann Ji, a poet from Lucknow who was reciting his Punjabi poems. Dr. Naqvi took the time of the second day and left. The next day they met again and the discussion on scholarship and *Punjabiya* continued. Here I presented him with my English book '*Flora and Fauna in Guru Nanak's Bani*'. They do a lot of work for communal harmony in the area of Panja Sahib. They belong to the Shia sect of Muslims. During the night we were brought to Lahore to return from *Panj Sahib*. In Lahore also a room was found with the grace of 'Shah ji', where there were many families from Jammu and Kashmir. This Gurdwara is near Dehra Sahib, Royal Fort, Lahore. Putting our luggage in the room we bowed at *Gurdwara Dehra Sahib*.

When the Mughal ruler snatched two horses from some Sikhs brought



Founder Editor of Nishaan Magazine Sardar Pushpinder Singh at Panja Sahib (Handprint on the boulder believed to be that of Guru Nanak)

for Guru Hargobind Sahib and kept them in the royal stables here. These two horses were later hauled out of the royal fort by Bhai Bidhi Chand Chinna and presented to Guru Har Gobind Sahib by jumping from the fort wall into the Ravi rivers.

Lahore Fort Museum (New Gallery) which was inaugurated on April 17, 1965 by Dr. S. M. It was opened by Sharif. The Sikh Museum is adorned with many ancient weapons, 18th and 19th century weapons of Sikh soldiers. Such as old bows and arrows, various pistols, shields, war cannons etc. There is also a statue of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's white horse. Jahangir's '*Dalan-e-Sang-e-Surakh*' of 1617-18 AD also remains. The museum also houses portraits of the heads of the Sikh Empire, kings and emperors, portraits of Sikh-British battles, old horse equipment and umbrellas from the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Most of the photographs in it are from the collection of Princess Bamba Jindan.

Inside the fort compound is the *Moti Masjid*, built by Shah Jahan in 1645 AD. This small mosque is made of white marble and shines like pearls in the full moon, hence its name *Moti Masjid*. The arched roofs of the mosque are very beautiful. Nearby is the *Muktab Khana*, a building near the drugstore that served as a gateway to the *Daulatkhana Jahangiri* (palace). Visitors to the palace were monitored from here. It was built in 1617 under the supervision of Mahmud Khan during the reign of Jahangir and is a beautiful hall near the *Jahangir Mahal*. In which a beautiful carved brick and black stone floor has been prepared. There is also a fountain in its center. *Hazuri Bagh* lies between the royal mosque and the royal fort. In the Sikh kingdom, Maharaja Ranjit Singh ruled in 1818 AD. In the center of the garden was a 45.5

× 45.5 feet marble porch. It is a two storey building with a basement underneath. The upper floor was destroyed by lightning in 1932. *Brandari* has been used by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and other rulers. In one of its corners I saw the famous poet *Ulama Mohammad Iqbal Mazar*, which is in *Hazuri Bagh*. This tomb was built in 1951 AD. There was a precious shawl on this tomb in a small room. An inscription had an Arabic verse written on it with a garland of flowers. There were also bouquets of flowers on the tomb along with Urdu inscriptions.

To the east of *Hazuri Bagh* is the *Mughal-era Rusnai Darwaza*. Adjacent to the door is the *Samadh* of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and *Gurdwara Dehra Sahib* built by Guru Hargobind. The royal mosque was also built by the emperor *Aurangzeb* in 1673-74 AD. It was completed in three years under the supervision of *Muzaffar Hussain Sarmad Almaroof Fidai Khan Goga*, Governor Lahore. Its interior and exterior decoration is remarkable. The walls of the mosque are made of small bricks and limestone. Above the domes are red and marble, which were brought from India. This mosque is 567 x 567 feet high. It can hold about 60,000 prayers at a time. The straight door is in the shape of a large doorway which is a masterpiece of workmanship.

The Royal Fort, Lahore, is a monumental monument in which periodic carvings are enshrined in its footsteps. It is mentioned in travelogs and chronicles. It is also mentioned in the attacks on Lahore by *Shahbuddin Gori* (1180-1186 AD). The fort was destroyed by the Mongols in 1241 AD. It was rebuilt by *Sultan Gias-ud-Din* in 1267 AD. *Amir Taimur* continued to build the fort in 1381 AD, *Sultan Mubarak Shah* in 1421 AD and *Sheikh*

Mubarak Ali in 1432 AD. The Mughal emperor *Akbar* built the fort Lahore with solid bricks in 1566 AD and extended it to the river *Ravi* which flowed along the northern wall of the fort till 1849 AD. *Akbari Mahal*, *Dolatkhana Aam*, *Akbari Gate* were built during *Akbar's* time and later Mughal rulers also continued the construction work on this side. Maharaja Ranjit Singh built the northern wall of the fort, *Uthdara*, *Haveli Mai Jindan*, during the Sikh period (1799-1839 AD). In 1849, the fort was captured by the British and the southern walls were erected. Then we went to see the famous *Anar Kali market* in Lahore. Walking in this beautiful market was in full swing. Security was already in place for all due to the passengers. Before going to *Anar Kali Bazaar* we were taken by bus to the Governor Lahore House where an international seminar was being held on which was written '*Baba Nanak's Bani*, a symbol of monotheism and love'. Many speeches were made here including by Governor Lahore and other Sikh leaders. This seminar is conducted every year by *Dayal Singh Research Foundation Lahore*. *Gurdwara Dehra Sahib* was our residence in Lahore. It was here that a Sikh youth of *Nankana Sahib*, named *Azad*, took us on a tour of the gurdwaras around Lahore. He first took us to *Gurdwara Chuna Mandi* in his car. This Gurdwara is two-three kilometers away from *Dehra Sahib*. Putting the car in one place, we passed through the narrow streets. On the right hand side we saw a huge white milk building in the market which is famous as '*Janam Asthan Sri Guru Ramdas Ji Chuna Mandi, Lahore*'. Flower petals are drawn on its front door. Inside, the sanctuary is in the shape of a large hall. Above this Gurdwara there is a large dome and small domes between four smaller domes. The premises of the

Gurdwara are covered with black and white marble. We also ate *langar* in the *langar* hall below. After this we reached *Nakhas Chowk, Lakha Bazaar* where *Bhai Taroo Singh* and *Gurdwara Shaheed Ganj Singhanis* were located. It was here that I saw the lower-floor rooms where these *Singhanis* had been imprisoned, and two millstones still there.

There is also a very large ancient well nearby. *Bhai Taroo Singh* was also martyred here. This *Gurdwara Sahib* has *Parkash Guru Granth Sahib* and also has a *langar* for the *sangat*. The next day we took the bus from *Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib* to *Narowal* district. Along the way came endless villages whose condition seemed to be very poor.

Large fields of midwives and Pakistan's best *basmati* grains are grown in this area. Most of the roads here were unpaved and dust was flying. *Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib* was opened for the visit of *Sikh Sangats*. Strict security arrangements were made because the Prime Minister of Pakistan *Imran Khan* was also here. Exquisite venues were decorated. *Guru Nanak* spent the last two decades of his life with his wife and children at *Kartarpur Sahib*, which later became the main seat of Sikhism. *Bhai Gurdas Ji* also writes: "Then *Baba* came to *Kartarpur, Bhekh Udasi Sagal Utara*".

It was in *Kartarpur Sahib* that *Bhai Lehna* (later *Guru Angad Sahib*) learned from *Guru Nanak Sahib* and *Guru Ji* appointed him as his spiritual follower.

It was here that *Guru Nanak* merged into the divine light on *Assu Vadi 10,1596 Bk (7 September 1539)*. *Kartarpur* has long been absorbed by *Ravi*, but *Sikhs* and devotees of *Guru Sahib* have settled in *Dera*

Baba Nanak, which is on the other side of *Ravi*. A three storied building '*Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib Ravi, Patshahi Pehli*' was constructed later, which is also visible from the India-Pakistan border. Apart from the annual *jagir* adjoining the *gurdwara*, 70 acres of land is available in many villages.

The present *Gurdwara Sahib* was constructed by *Maharaja Bhupinder Singh* of *Patiala* at a cost of Rs. 156006. It is called '*Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib, Narowal*'. The Prime Minister of Pakistan *Imran Khan*, *Navjot Singh Sidhu*, *Bibi Harsimrat Kaur Badal*, *Sr. Gurdeep Singh Puri*, *Sr. Gobind Singh Logonwal* etc. were also present in the large *pandal*.

The foundation stone was laid. We were to return to *Dehra Sahib* in the evening. During late hours, we reached *Eminabad*. In the time of *Guru Nanak* it was called *Sodhpur* or *Siadhpur*.

This place is 13 km away from *Gujranwala* town. *Bhai Lalo*, the chief *Sikh* of *Guru Nanak Sahib*, was a resident of this place. *Guru Ji* and *Bhai Mardana* visited the town several times. The town was attacked by *Babur* in 1521 AD, and among others, *Guru Nanak Sahib* also sent to prison. *Guru Sahib* was given a grain mill in the jail. There is now a beautiful *gurdwara* here.

There is also a huge *sarovar*. During the *Sikh* rule in 1760 AD, *Charhat Singh Shukarchakie* conquered this town and hoisted the saffron flag. Three *gurdwaras* were established in the memory of *Guru Sahib*, namely *Gurdwara Rori Sahib*, *Gurdwara Chakki Sahib* and *Gurdwara Khuhi* *Bhai Lalo*. The *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC)* *Amritsar* managed them from February 28, 1922 to 1947.

Later, the *Pakistan Ekaf Board* and now the *Pakistan Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (PGPC)* were in charge of the building. It has three domes on the main beautiful porch and below the central dome is inscribed '*Gurdwara Rori Sahib*' in beautiful *Gurmukhi* characters. As soon as you enter the main door, it is written '*Roar Di Gur Kiya Vichhai*'.

Bhai Gurdas Ji has also mentioned this in his first entry (24 *Pauri*).

Now only *Baisakhi* is celebrated together. People from *Gujranwala* and surrounding villages flock to this fair.

The building has been repaired and fenced off by spending lakhs of rupees on this *Gurdwara*. From here we reached *Gurdwara Dehra Sahib* directly. On November 30, we took our passports.

There is a huge garden just outside *Dehra Sahib* in which '*Minare-Pakistan*' offers a different view with touches of sky. Older white buggies are also reserved. It was here that we exchanged *Pakistani* rupees for *Indian* rupees. Passing through the *Wagah* border, we reached *Attari* where a lot of luggage was searched and one by one the clothes were taken out of the bag and satisfied with our own customs officials. From there we took buses directly to *Jammu* and reached *Gurdwara Sahib* and thanked *Akal Purakh*.

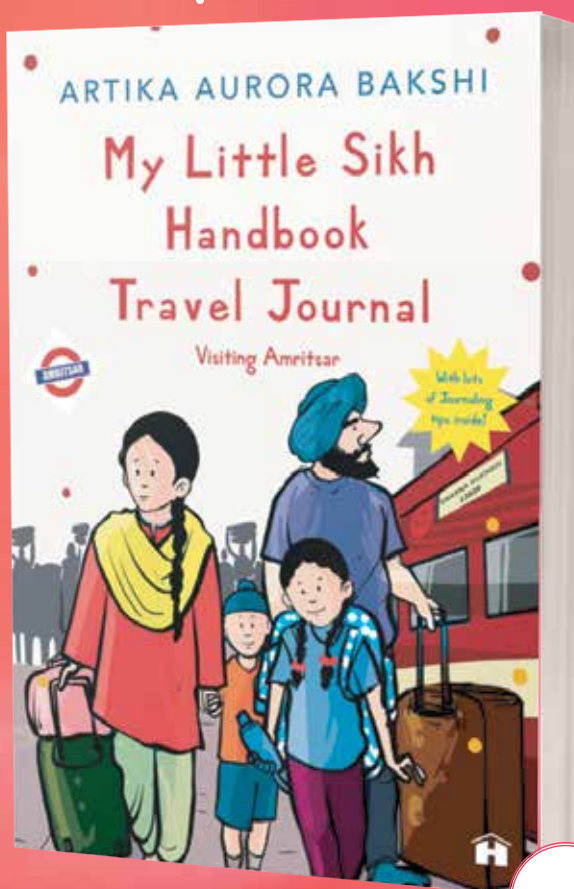
Dr Jasbir Singh Sarna is a voracious writer in Punjabi, English and Urdu. He is a Poet, Scholar, Historian and has written about 52 books. Hailing from Kashmir, he remains founder-editor of the monthly Shamshir-e-Dast Amritsar.

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DOMES OF THE GOLDEN TEMPLE

Text and photographs by : Amardeep Singh

The entire architecture of the Golden Temple (*Harmandir Sahib*), the apex institution of Sikh faith at Amritsar, is an epitome of universal brotherhood.

It's foundation stone was laid by a spiritual leader (Mian Mir, the follower of Islam) of another faith, signifying that spirituality has no boundaries.

It has four gates for entry, signifying that people from all directions and belonging to any faith are welcome.

To enter the premises, one needs to take a flight of steps down, signifying the need to give up one's ego.

The sanctum sanctorum is in the midst of a water-body, serving to remind the need to live an adaptable life as water takes any shape.

The entire architecture is an amalgamation of Hindu and Islamic temple forms, signifying the need to live together.

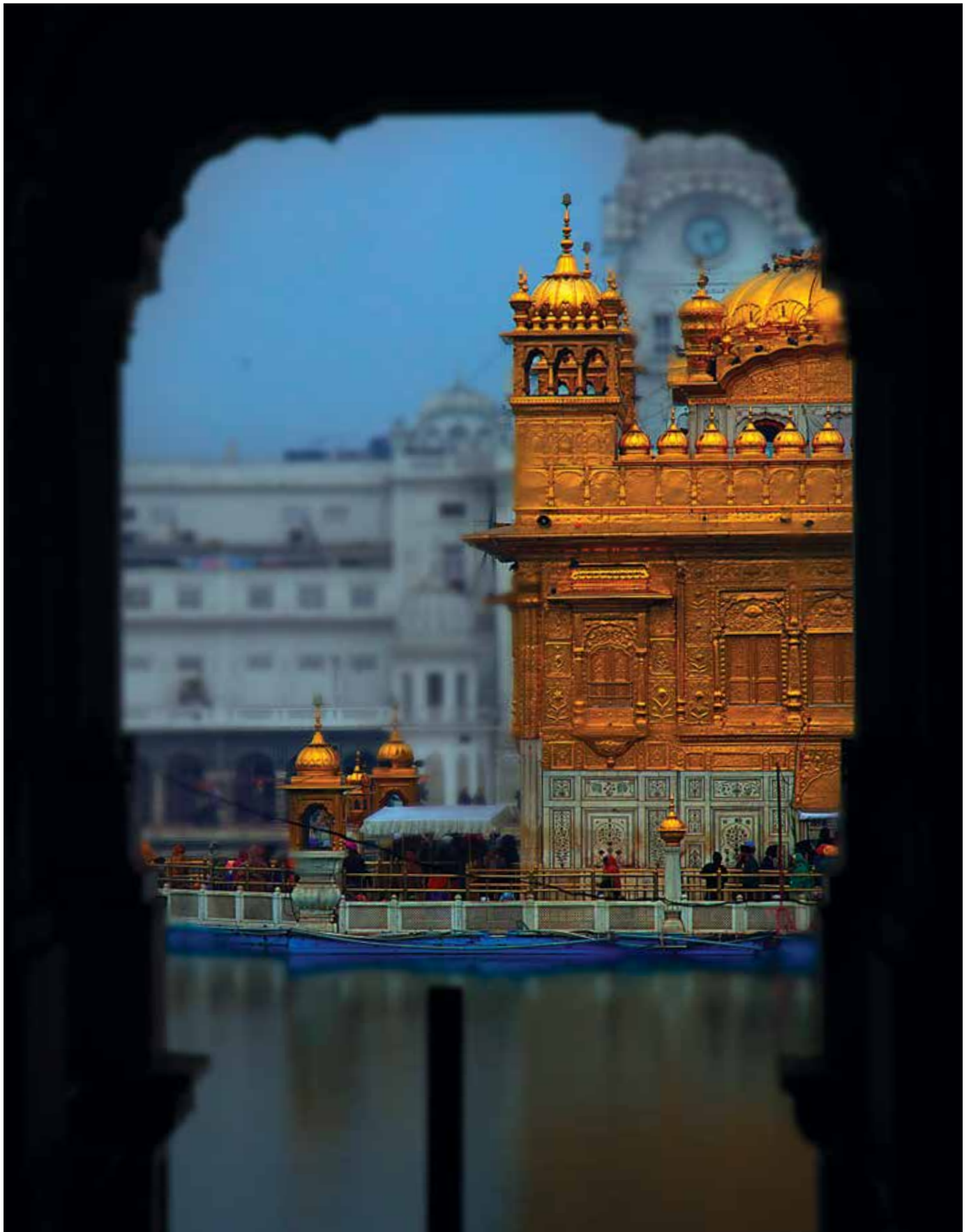
The aerial view of the domes, will reveal the design of a lotus flower. Lotus blooms in a dirty pond, signifying the need to create a unique identity by rising above the day to day worldly issues of life. They present a very harmonious setting.

This series of pictures of the domes of the Golden Temple showcase the blend of Hinduism and Islam. One can see in these side views of the dome, the existence of the lotus leaf shaped designs, converging in the centre. In the words of Mulk Raj Anand, in the "*Homage to Amritsar*", "The Hindu Kalsa, based on mount Kailash, atop this shrine is a fanciful elaboration of the Islamic dome above the Hindu cubist architecture, inspired by the synthetic Sikh faith."

Architecturally, the dome presents neither exclusively, the Hindu form nor the Muslim one. It shows an evolution of its own, called the synthesis of the two styles.

The central dome puts up splendidly sparkling appearance in sunshine. The glittering beauty of the dome has been a subject of absorbing interest for many.

A number of smaller domes drawn in a line decorate the parapet and other areas of the premises.







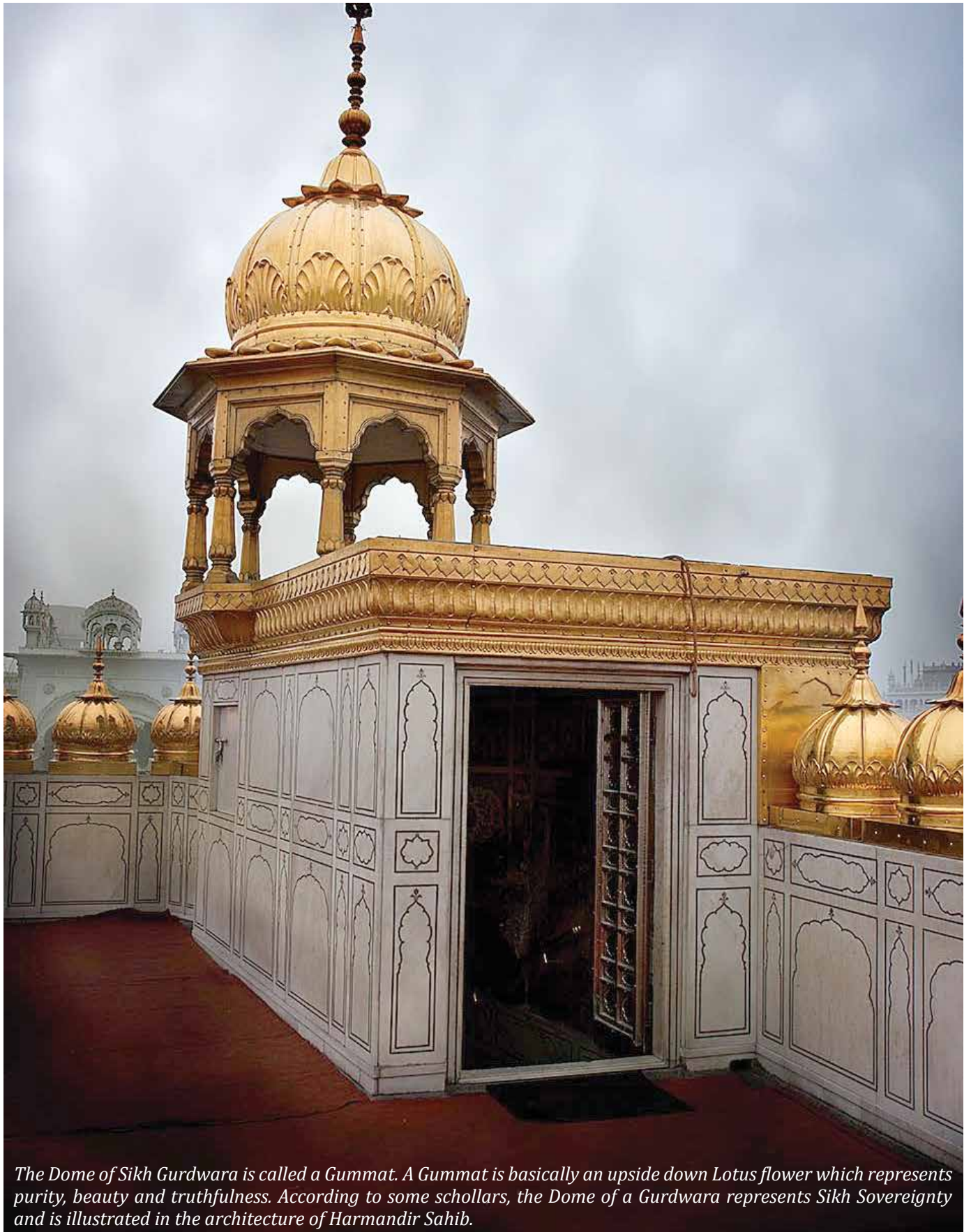
The domes of Harmandir Sahib and its inner walls exhibit fine gold work. The interiors are decorated with magnificent floral motifs and frescoes with verses from the Sikh scriptures engraved in gold lettering on the arches. The architecture of the Harmandir Sahib possesses some rare characteristics which have created an independent Sikh school of architecture in the history of Indian art.



The combination of several dozens of large, medium and miniature domes of gilded copper create a unique and dazzling effect, enhanced by the reflection in the water below.



From the architectural point of view, this dome represents neither the Hindu form nor the Mughal. It displays an evolution and synthesis of both.



The Dome of Sikh Gurdwara is called a Gummat. A Gummat is basically an upside down Lotus flower which represents purity, beauty and truthfulness. According to some scholars, the Dome of a Gurdwara represents Sikh Sovereignty and is illustrated in the architecture of Harmandir Sahib.





Amardeep Singh, a resident of Singapore was educated at The Doon School (Dehradun, India), Manipal Institute of Technology (India) and pursued Masters in Business Administration at the University of Chicago, USA. He worked in the Financial Services sector for 25 years and was the Head of the Asia Pacific Region at American Express for Revenue Management. He has authored two books, 'Lost Heritage, The Sikh Legacy in Pakistan' and 'The Quest Continues: Lost Heritage, The Sikh Legacy in Pakistan'. He has also produced and directed the 24-episode docuseries, 'Allegory, A Tapestry of Guru Nanak's Travels'.

BHAGAT BANI IN THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB (PART - 2)

Prithipal Singh

The contributions of 9 Bhagats have been discussed in the first part of this article in The Nishaan I/2022. In this second part, the contributions of the remaining 6 Bhagats are being provided.

10. Bhagat Beni Ji

Not much is known of Beni Ji. Some scholars have suggested that Bhagat Ji may have been a contemporary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. He was probably from Northern India in the mid 15th to mid 16th century. Bhat Kal (in Savayia M., Ang 1390) records Bhagat Beni as a “Master of Yoga and meditation”.

ਭਗਤੁ ਬੇਣਿ ਗੁਣ ਰਵੈ ਸਹਜਿ ਆਤਮ ਰੰਗੁ ਮਾਣੈ ॥
ਜੋਗ ਧਿਆਨਿ ਗੁਰ ਗਿਆਨਿ ਬਿਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ॥

The devotee Baynee sings His Praises; He intuitively enjoys the ecstasy of the soul. He is the Master of Yoga and meditation, and the spiritual wisdom of the Guru; He knows none other except God.

Besides the above reference, 3 Shabads of Bhagat Beni Ji (Srirag, Ramkali & Prabhati) are included in the Guru Granth Sahib.

ਸ੍ਰੀਰਾਗ ਬਾਣੀ ਭਗਤ ਬੇਣੀ ਜੀਉ ਕੀ ॥ (Sriraag Ang 93)
ਰੇ ਨਰ ਗਰਭ ਕੁੰਡਲ ਜਬ ਆਛਤ ਉਰਧ ਧਿਆਨ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਗਾ ॥
ਮਿਰਤਕ ਪਿੰਡਿ ਪਦ ਮਦ ਨਾ ਅਹਿਨਿਸਿ ਏਕੁ ਅਗਿਆਨ ਸੁ ਨਾਗਾ ॥
ਤੇ ਦਿਨ ਸੰਮਲੁ ਕਸਟ ਮਹਾ ਦੁਖ ਅਬ ਚਿਤੁ ਅਧਿਕ ਪਸਾਰਿਆ ॥
ਗਰਭ ਛੋਡਿ ਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਮੰਡਲ ਆਇਆ ਤਉ ਨਰਹਰਿ ਮਨਹੁ ਬਿਸਾਰਿਆ ॥੧॥
ਫਿਰਿ ਪਛਤਾਵਹਿਗਾ ਮੂੜਿਆ ਤੂੰ ਕਵਨ ਕੁਮਤਿ ਭ੍ਰਮਿ ਲਾਗਾ ॥
ਚੇਤਿ ਰਾਮੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਜਮ ਪੁਰਿ ਜਾਹਿਗਾ ਜਨੁ ਬਿਚਰੈ ਅਨਰਾਧਾ ॥੧॥
ਰਹਾਉ ॥

.....

ਨਿਕੁਟੀ ਦੇਹ ਦੇਖਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਉਪਜੈ ਮਾਨ ਕਰਤ ਨਹੀ ਬੂਝੈ ॥
ਲਾਲਚੁ ਕਰੈ ਜੀਵਨ ਪਦ ਕਾਰਨ ਲੋਚਨ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਸੂਝੈ ॥

ਬਾਕਾ ਤੇਜੁ ਉਡਿਆ ਮਨੁ ਪੰਖੀ ਘਰਿ ਆਂਗਨਿ ਨ ਸੁਖਾਈ ॥
ਬੇਣੀ ਕਰੈ ਸੁਨਹੁ ਰੇ ਭਗਤਹੁ ਮਰਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕਿਨਿ ਪਾਈ ॥੫॥

O man, when you were coiled in the cradle of the womb, upside-down, you were absorbed in meditation.

You took no pride in your perishable body; night and day were all the same to you-you lived unknowing, in the silence of the void.

Remember the terrible pain and suffering of those days, now that you have spread out the net of your consciousness far and wide.

Leaving the womb, you entered this mortal world; you have forgotten the Lord from your mind. ||1||

Later, you will regret and repent-you fool! Why are you engrossed in evil-mindedness and skepticism?

Think of the Lord, or else you shall be led to the City of Death. Why are you wandering around, out of control? ||1||Pause||

.....

Gazing upon the tiny bodies of your children, love has welled up within your heart; you are proud of them, but you do not understand.

You long for the dignity of a long life, but your eyes can no longer see anything.

Your light has gone out, and the bird of your mind has flown away; you are no longer welcome in your own home and courtyard.

Says Baynee, listen, O devotee: who has ever attained liberation after such a death? ||5||

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਬੇਣੀ ਜੀਉ ਕੀ (Ang 974)
ਇਤਾ ਪਿੰਗੁਲਾ ਅਉਰ ਸੁਖਮਨਾ ਤੀਨਿ ਬਸਹਿ ਇਕ ਠਾਈ ॥
ਬੇਣੀ ਸੰਗਮੁ ਤਹ ਪਿਰਾਗੁ ਮਨੁ ਮਜਨੁ ਕਰੇ ਤਿਥਾਈ ॥੧॥

ਸੰਤਹੁ ਤਹਾ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਰਾਮੁ ਹੈ ॥
ਗੁਰ ਗਮਿ ਚੀਨੈ ਬਿਰਲਾ ਕੋਇ ॥
ਤਹਾ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਰਮਈਆ ਹੋਇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

.....

ਮਸਤਕਿ ਪਦਮੁ ਦੁਆਲੈ ਮਣੀ ॥
ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਧਣੀ ॥
ਪੰਚ ਸਬਦ ਨਿਰਮਾਇਲ ਬਾਜੇ ॥
ਢੁਲਕੇ ਚਵਰ ਸੰਖ ਘਨ ਗਾਜੇ ॥
ਦਲਿ ਮਲਿ ਦੈਤਹੁ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ॥
ਬੇਣੀ ਜਾਚੈ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਮੁ ॥੯॥੧॥

The energy channels of the Ida, Pingala and Shushmanaa:
these three dwell in one place.

This is the true place of confluence of the three sacred
rivers:

this is where my mind takes its cleansing bath. ||1||

O Saints, the Immaculate Lord dwells there;

How rare are those who go to the Guru, and understand
this.

The all-pervading immaculate Lord is there. ||1||Pause||

.....

The lotus is at the forehead, and the jewels surround it.
Within it is the Immaculate Lord, the Master of the three
worlds.

The Panch Shabad, the five primal sounds, resound and
vibrate their in their purity.

The chauris - the fly brushes wave, and the conch shells
blare like thunder.

The Gurmukh tramples the demons underfoot with his
spiritual wisdom.

Baynee longs for Your Name, Lord. ||9||1||

ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤੀ ਭਗਤ ਬੇਣੀ ਜੀ ਕੀ (Raag Prabhati, Ang 1351)

ਤਨਿ ਚੰਦਨੁ ਮਸਤਕਿ ਪਾਤੀ ॥
ਰਿਦ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਕਰ ਤਲ ਕਾਤੀ ॥
ਠਗ ਦਿਸਟਿ ਬਗਾ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਗਾ ॥
ਦੇਖਿ ਬੈਸਨੋ ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਮੁਖ ਭਾਗਾ ॥੧॥
ਕਲਿ ਭਗਵਤ ਬੰਦ ਚਿਰਾਮੰ ॥
ਕੂਰ ਦਿਸਟਿ ਰਤਾ ਨਿਸਿ ਬਾਦੰ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

.....

ਜਿਨਿ ਆਤਮ ਤਤੁ ਨ ਚੀਨਿਆ ॥
ਸਭ ਫੋਕਟ ਧਰਮ ਅਬੀਨਿਆ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਬੇਣੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥

ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਬਾਣ ਨ ਪਾਵੈ ॥੫॥੧॥

You rub your body with sandalwood oil, and place basil
leaves on your forehead.

But you hold a knife in the hand of your heart.

You look like a thug; pretending to meditate, you pose
like a crane.

You try to look like a Vaishnaav, but the breath of life
escapes through your mouth. ||1||

You pray for hours to God the Beautiful.

But your gaze is evil, and your nights are wasted in
conflict. ||1||Pause||

.....

Whoever does not realize the essence of the soul

All his religious actions are hollow and false.

Says Baynee, as Gurmukh, meditate.

Without the True Guru, you shall not find the Way.
||5||1||

11. Bhagat Trilochan Ji - 13th century, Hindu,
Vaisya, Maharashtra Bhagat Trilochan Ji was a devotee
belonging to the Vaisya caste in Maharashtra. He
was a contemporary of Bhagat Namdev Ji. There are
4 Shabads (2 each in Raaga Gujri and Dhanasari) of
Bhagat Trilochan Ji in the Guru Granth Sahib. In his
compositions, Trilochan condemns superficial rituals
and lays stress on the holiness of the heart.

ਗੁਜਰੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਤ੍ਰਿਲੋਚਨ ਜੀਉ ਕੇ ਪਦੇ ਘਰੁ ੧

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

ਅੰਤਰੁ ਮਲਿ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਨਹੀ ਕੀਨਾ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਭੇਖ ਉਦਾਸੀ ॥

ਹਿਰਦੈ ਕਮਲੁ ਘਟਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਨ ਚੀਨਾ ਕਾਹੇ ਭਇਆ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ॥੧॥

ਭਰਮੇ ਭੂਲੀ ਰੇ ਜੈ ਚੰਦਾ ॥

ਨਹੀ ਨਹੀ ਚੀਨਿਆ

ਪਰਮਾਨੰਦਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ (Ang 525 - 526)

You have not cleansed the filth from within yourself,
although outwardly, you wear the dress of a renunciate.

In the heart-lotus of your self, you have not recognized
God - why have you become a Sannyasee? ||1||

Deluded by doubt, O Jai Chand,

You have not realized the Lord, the embodiment of
supreme bliss. ||1||Pause||

And

ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਨਾਰਾਇਣੁ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਐਸੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਜੇ ਮਰੈ ॥

ਬਦਤਿ ਤਿਲੋਚਨੁ ਤੇ ਨਰ ਮੁਕਤਾ ਪੀਤੰਬਰੁ ਵਾ ਕੇ ਰਿਦੈ ਬਸੈ ॥੫॥੨॥

(Ang 526)

At the very last moment, one who thinks of the Lord, and dies in such thoughts,

Says Trilochan, that man shall be liberated; the Lord shall abide in his heart. ||5||2||

ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਭਗਤਾਂ ਕੀ ਤਿਲੋਚਨ (Ang 695)

ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ਨਿੰਦਸਿ ਕਾਇ ਭੂਲੀ ਗਵਾਰੀ ॥

ਦੁਕ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸੁਕ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਥਾਰੋ ਕਰਮੁ ਰੀ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Why do you slander the Lord? You are ignorant and deluded.

Pain and pleasure are the result of your own actions. ||1||Pause||

ਪੂਰਬਲੋ ਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਕਰਮੁ ਨ ਮਿਟੈ ਰੀ ਘਰ ਗੇਹਣਿ ਤਾ ਚੇ

ਮੇਹਿ ਜਾਪੀਅਲੇ ਰਾਮ ਚੇ ਨਾਮੰ ॥

ਬਦਤਿ ਤਿਲੋਚਨ ਰਾਮ ਜੀ ॥੬॥੧॥

The karma of past actions cannot be erased, O wife of my house; this is why I chant the Name of the Lord.

So prays Trilochan, Dear Lord. ||6||1||

12. Bhagat Ravidas Ji – 14th century

Bhagat Ravidas was born into a “chamar” family in Varanasi. It is believed that when the child was only five days old, the mystic poet Ramanand visited the family and blessed the child. When Ravidas grew up, his father wanted him to join the family trade but he was imbued in celestial and humane values.

Bhagat Ji was totally devoted to the love of God. On an occasion, when his father gave him some money for business purposes, Ravidas spent the amount on the welfare of saintly and needy people. As a result of this, he had to leave his father's house. Bhagat Ji then set up home in a make-shift hut and also started mending shoes for his livelihood. His devotion to The Almighty was ingrained in his mind in spite of belonging to a “low caste in the social set up” of the time. He brings this fact in his Shabads by referring to himself as a “Chamar”.

Ravidas Ji also set up a small temple and installed an idol made out of leather. His devotion attracted many people. He is venerated (as Guru Ravidas) in several parts of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and even Punjab. His followers are referred to as “Ramdasias”. They have their own places of worship not only in India but also abroad.

There are 40 Shabads (in 16 Raagas) of Bhagat Ji in The Guru Granth Sahib.

ਜਾਤੀ ਓਛਾ ਪਾਤੀ ਓਛਾ ਓਛਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥

ਰਾਜਾ ਰਾਮ ਕੀ ਸੇਵ ਨ ਕੀਨੀ ਕਹਿ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਚਮਾਰਾ ॥੩॥੩॥

My social status is low, my ancestry is low, and my birth is low as well.

I have not performed the service of the Lord, the Lord, says Ravi Daas the cobbler. ||3||3|| Ang 486.”

The most widely known Shabad is the second stanza of the daily evening “Artee”

Raag Dhanaasaree, Bhagat Ravi Daas (SGGS :694)

“ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰੇ ਆਰਤੀ ਮਜਨੁ ਮੁਰਾਰੇ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨੁ ਝੂਠੇ ਸਗਲ ਪਾਸਾਰੇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰੇ ਆਸਨੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰੇ ਉਰਸਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਕੇਸਰੇ ਲੇ ਛਿਟਕਾਰੇ ॥

ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਅੰਭੁਲਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰੇ ਚੰਦਨੇ ਘਸਿ ਜਪੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਲੇ ਤੁਝਹਿ ਕਉ ਚਾਰੇ ॥੧॥ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਦੀਵਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰੇ ਬਾਤੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰੇ ਤੇਲੁ ਲੇ ਮਾਹਿ ਪਸਾਰੇ ॥

ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰੇ ਕੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਲਗਾਈ ਭਇਓ ਉਜਿਆਰੇ ਭਵਨ ਸਗਲਾਰੇ ॥੨॥

ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰੇ ਤਾਗਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਫੂਲ ਮਾਲਾ ਭਾਰ ਅਠਾਰਹ ਸਗਲ ਜੁਠਾਰੇ ॥

ਤੇਰੇ ਕੀਆ ਤੁਝਹਿ ਕਿਆ ਅਰਪਉ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਤੁਹੀ ਚਵਰ ਢੋਲਾਰੇ ॥੩॥

ਦਸ ਅਠਾ ਅਠਸਠੇ ਚਾਰੇ ਖਾਣੀ ਇਹੈ ਵਰਤਣਿ ਹੈ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਸਾਰੇ ॥

ਕਹੈ ਰਵਿਦਾਸੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰੇ ਆਰਤੀ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੈ ਹਰਿ ਭੋਗ ਤੁਹਾਰੇ ॥੪॥੩॥”

Your Name, Lord, is my adoration and cleansing bath.

Without the Name of the Lord, all ostentatious displays are useless.

Your Name is my prayer mat, and your Name is the stone to grind sandalwood.

Your Name is the saffron which I take and sprinkle in offering to you.

Your Name is the water and your name is the sandalwood.

The chanting of your Name is the grinding of the sandalwood.

I take it and offer it all this to you. Your Name is the lamp and your Name is the wick. Your Name is the oil I pour into it. Your Name is the light applied to this lamp, which enlightens and illuminates the entire world.

Your Name is the thread, and Your Name is the garland of flowers. The eighteen loads of vegetation are all impure to offer to you. Why should I offer to You, that which You Yourself created? Your Name is the fan, which I wave over you.

The whole world is engrossed in the eighteen Purannas, the sixty eight sacred shrines of pilgrimage, and the four sources of creation. Says Ravi Daas, Your Name is my Aartee, my lamp-lit worship service. The True Name, Sat Naam, is the food which I offer to you.

13. Bhagat Namdev Ji – Maharashtra, 13th century

Bhagat Namdev Ji was a Maharashtrian who spent many years in Punjab. Some historians suggest that Bhagat Ji was a “chipa” (calico printer), while others believe that

he was a tailor. In many of his Shabads, Bhagat Namdev Ji describes his own life. Bhagat Namdev Ji emphasized the importance of living the life of a householder (grist jeevan). Bhagat Ji, therefore refers to different aspects of his life for attaining The Blessings of The Almighty

There are 61 Shabads of Bhagat Ji in The Guru Granth Sahib. Only a few of these Shabads may be presented here. Many of these compositions are in the Marathi language.

Aasaa Baanee Sree Naamdhaeo Jee Kee (Ang 485)

“ਰਾਂਗਨਿ ਰਾਂਗਉ ਸੀਵਨਿ ਸੀਵਉ ॥
ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨੁ ਘਰੀਅ ਨ ਜੀਵਉ ॥੨॥

I dye myself in the color of the Lord, and sew what has to be sewn.

Without the Lord's Name, I cannot live, even for a moment. ||2||

In the following Shabad in Raag Tilang, Namdev Ji emphasizes the importance of belief in The Almighty for Blessings.

Thilang Baane Bhagathaa Kee Naamdhaev Jee (Ang 727)

ਮੈ ਅੰਧੁਲੇ ਕੀ ਟੇਕ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਖੁੰਦਕਾਰਾ ॥
“ਮੈ ਗਰੀਬ ਮੈ ਮਸਕੀਨ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੈ ਅਧਾਰਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

I am blind; Your Name, O Creator Lord, is my only anchor and support.

I am poor, and I am meek. Your Name is my only support. ||1||Pause||

“Baanee Naamadhaeo Jeeo Kee Raamakalee Ghar 1 || (Ang 972)

ਮਨੁ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮਾ ਬੇਧੀਅਲੇ ॥
ਜੈਸੇ ਕਨਿਕ ਕਲਾ ਚਿਤੁ ਮਾਂਡੀਅਲੇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

My mind has been focused on the Name of the Lord, Like the goldsmith, whose attention is held by his work. ||1||Pause||

In this Shabad (Raag Ramkali), Bhagat Ji explains how one should remember The Almighty. He compares the importance given to his work by a goldsmith to ensure that the precious metal is not lost, to the manner in which one should always remember The Almighty (do Simran) while performing daily tasks. Bhagat Ji also gives other comparisons in the Shabad.

14. Sheikh Farid Ji – Multan Punjab, 12th Century Muslim Preacher and Mystic

Named Farid-ud-Din Masaoud by his parents, Sheikh Farid was reverently referred to as “Baba Sheikh Farid.

He was initiated into a religious mould by his mother. She was instrumental in his daily prayer routine. When he asked what reward he would get for offering prayers, she replied that he would get sugar. She would place sugar under his prayer mat and after the prayer she would give it to him. On one occasion, she was away from home and had not put any sugar, but young Farid offered prayers for a much longer time and found a correspondingly greater amount of sugar. He partook some of it and shared the rest with his friends.

This was believed to be “a miracle” and the mother gave him the title of “Shakar Ganj” (treasury of sugar).

Sheikh Farid Ji's Bani emphasizes the “love of God” and compassion.

Four Shabads (2 in Raag Asa and 2 in Raag Suhi) and 130 saloks of Baba Sheikh Farid Ji are enshrined in the Guru Granth Sahib.

ਆਸਾ ਸੇਖ ਫਰੀਦ ਜੀਉ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ (Ang 488)
ਦਿਲਹੁ ਮੁਹਬਤਿ ਜਿੰਨੁ ਸੇਈ ਸਚਿਆ ॥
ਜਿਨ੍ਹ ਮਨਿ ਹੋਰੁ ਮੁਖਿ ਹੋਰੁ ਸਿ ਕਾਂਢੇ ਕਚਿਆ ॥੧॥
ਰਤੇ ਇਸਕ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਰੰਗਿ ਦੀਦਾਰ ਕੇ ॥
ਵਿਸਰਿਆ ਜਿਨ੍ਹ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇ ਭੁਇ ਭਾਰੁ ਥੀਏ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

.....

ਤੇਰੀ ਪਨਹ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਤੂ ਬਖਸੰਦਗੀ ॥
ਸੇਖ ਫਰੀਦੈ ਖੈਰੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਬੰਦਗੀ ॥੪॥੧॥

They alone are true, whose love for God is deep and heart-felt.

Those who have one thing in their heart, and something else in their mouth, are judged to be false. ||1||

Those who are imbued with love for the Lord, are delighted by His Vision.

Those who forget the Naam, the Name of the Lord, are a burden on the earth. ||1||Pause||

.....

I seek Your Protection - You are the Forgiving Lord. Please, bless Shaykh Fareed with the bounty of Your meditative worship. ||4||1||

ਰਾਗੁ ਸੂਹੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸੇਖ ਫਰੀਦ ਜੀ ਕੀ ॥ (Ang 794)
ਤੈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੀ ਮੈ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਜਾਨੀ ॥
ਜੋਬਨੁ ਖੋਇ ਪਾਛੈ ਪਛੁਤਾਨੀ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਕਾਲੀ ਕੋਇਲ ਤੂ ਕਿਤ ਗੁਨ ਕਾਲੀ ॥
ਅਪਨੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਕੇ ਹਉ ਬਿਰਹੈ ਜਾਲੀ ॥

O my Lord and Master, I do not know Your excellence and worth.

Having wasted my youth, now I come to regret and repent. ||1||Pause||

O black bird, what qualities have made you black?

"I have been burnt by separation from my Beloved."

ਸਲੋਕ ਸੇਖ ਫਰੀਦ ਕੇ (Ang 1378 - 1379)

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਰੋਟੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਕਾਠ ਕੀ ਲਾਵਣੁ ਮੇਰੀ ਭੁਖ ॥

ਜਿਨਾ ਖਾਧੀ ਚੋਪੜੀ ਘਣੇ ਸਹਨਿਗੇ ਦੁਖ ॥੨੮॥

Fareed, my bread is made of wood, and hunger is my appetizer.

Those who eat buttered bread, will suffer in terrible pain. ||28||

ਰੁਖੀ ਸੁਖੀ ਖਾਇ ਕੈ ਠੰਢਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਪੀਉ ॥

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਦੇਖਿ ਪਰਾਈ ਚੋਪੜੀ ਨਾ ਤਰਸਾਏ ਜੀਉ ॥੨੯॥

Eat dry bread, and drink cold water.

Fareed, if you see someone else's buttered bread, do not envy him for it. ||29||

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਚਿੰਤ ਖਟੋਲਾ ਵਾਣੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਬਿਰਹਿ ਵਿਛਾਵਣ ਲੇਫੁ ॥

ਏਹੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਜੀਵਣਾ ਤੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਚੇ ਵੇਖੁ ॥੩੫॥

Fareed, anxiety is my bed, pain is my mattress, and the pain of separation is my blanket and quilt.

Behold, this is my life, O my True Lord and Master. ||35||

15. Bhagat Kabir Ji

Bhagat Kabir Ji was brought up by Muslim parents in Varanasi. He was greatly influenced by his teacher, the Hindu Bhakti leader Ramanand. Bhagat Ji was a strict monotheist and played the role of a teacher and social reformer. Kabir Ji did not believe in rituals practiced by the Hindu priests and the Muslim Mullahs, as also the existing social caste system.

He was a weaver by profession. His mother would complain to her neighbours that Kabir is always remembering Ram. His followers are called "Kabirpanthi's" and they have respect for Kabir Ji as their Guru.

Sikhs follow the teachings of Bhagat Kabir as enshrined in the Guru Granth Sahib. All Sikhs have been ordained to follow the teachings of The Guru Granth Sahib.

Amongst the Bhagats, Kabir Ji has the maximum number of Shabads in the Guru Granth Sahib (532 in 16 Raagas).

ਆਸਾ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀਉ ਕੇ ਪੰਚਪਦੇ ੯ ਦੁਤਕੇ ੫ (Ang 479)

ਪਾਤੀ ਤੋਰੈ ਮਾਲਿਨੀ ਪਾਤੀ ਪਾਤੀ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਜਿਸੁ ਪਾਹਨ ਕਉ ਪਾਤੀ ਤੋਰੈ ਸੋ ਪਾਹਨ ਨਿਰਜੀਉ ॥੧॥

ਭੂਲੀ ਮਾਲਨੀ ਹੈ ਏਉ ॥

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਜਾਗਤਾ ਹੈ ਏਉ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

.....

ਮਾਲਿਨਿ ਭੂਲੀ ਜਗੁ ਭੁਲਾਨਾ ਹਮ ਭੁਲਾਨੇ ਨਾਹਿ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਹਮ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਖੇ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਇ ॥੫॥੧॥੧੪॥

You tear off the leaves, O gardener, but in each and every leaf, there is life.

That stone idol, for which you tear off those leaves - that stone idol is lifeless. ||1||

In this, you are mistaken, O gardener.

The True Guru is the Living Lord. ||1||Pause||

.....

The gardener is mistaken, and the world is mistaken, but I am not mistaken.

Says Kabeer, the Lord preserves me; the Lord, my King, has showered His Blessings upon me. ||5||1||14||

Raamakalee Kabeer Jeeou (Ang 969)

ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀਉ (Ang 969)

ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰੇ ਮੇਰੁ ਪਰਬਤੁ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਓਟ ਗਹੀ ਮੈ ਤੇਰੀ ॥

ਨਾ ਤੁਮ ਡੋਲਹੁ ਨਾ ਹਮ ਗਿਰਤੇ ਰਖਿ ਲੀਨੀ ਹਰਿ ਮੇਰੀ ॥੧॥

ਅਬ ਤਬ ਜਬ ਕਬ ਤੁਹੀ ਤੁਹੀ ॥

ਹਮ ਤੁਅ ਪਰਸਾਦਿ ਸੁਖੀ ਸਦ ਹੀ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

.....

ਅਬ ਤਉ ਜਾਇ ਚਢੇ ਸਿੰਘਾਸਨਿ ਮਿਲੇ ਹੈ ਸਾਰਿੰਗਪਾਨੀ ॥

ਰਾਮ ਕਬੀਰਾ ਏਕ ਭਏ ਹੈ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਸਕੈ ਪਛਾਨੀ ॥੬॥੩॥

You are my Sumayr Mountain, O my Lord and Master; I have grasped Your Support.

You do not shake, and I do not fall. You have preserved my honor. ||1||

Now and then, here and there, You, only You.

By Your Grace, I am forever in peace. ||1||Pause||

.....

Now, I have mounted to the throne of the Lord; I have met the Lord, the Sustainer of the World.

The Lord and Kabeer have become one. No one can tell them apart. ||6||3||

Salok Bhagat Kabeer Jeeou Kae (Ang 1365)

ਕਬੀਰ ਜਿਸੁ ਮਰਨੇ ਤੇ ਜਗੁ ਡਰੈ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨਿ ਆਨੰਦੁ ॥

ਮਰਨੇ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਪਾਈਐ ਪੂਰਨੁ ਪਰਮਾਨੰਦੁ ॥੨੨॥

Kabeer, the world is afraid of death - that death fills my mind with bliss.

It is only by death that perfect, supreme bliss is obtained. ||22||

The Table below provides a summary of the contributions of the Bhagats in the Guru Granth Sahib.

Sl. No.	Contributor	No. of Compositions	Raagas
1.	Bhagat Surdas Ji	One line along with the hymn of Guru Arjan Dev Ji	01, Sarang
2.	Bhagat Pipa Ji	01 Shabad	01, Dhanasri
3.	Bhagat Sain Ji	01 Shabad	01, Dhanasri
4.	Bhagat Sadhna Ji	01 Shabad	01, Bilaval
5.	Bhagat Parmanand Ji	01 Shabad	01, Sarang
6.	Bhagat Bhikhan Ji	01 Shabad	01, Sorath
7.	Bhagat Ramanand Ji	01 Shabad	01, Basant
8.	Bhagat Jai Dev Ji	02 Shabads	02, Gujri and Maru
9.	Bhagat Dhanna Ji	03 Shabads and a reference by Guru Arjan Dev Ji	02, Asa and Dhanasri
10.	Bhagat Beni Ji	03, Srirag,	03, Ramkali & Prabhati
11.	Bhagat Trilochan Ji	04 Shabads	02, Gujri and Dhanasri
12.	Bhagat Ravi Das Ji	40 Shabads	16
13.	Bhagat Nam Dev Ji	61 Shabads	18

Prithipal Singh had the honour of teaching for 40 years in the University of Delhi and constituent colleges. He has been published in many Sikh journals and magazines on various topics in Sikh Religion and History.



Numero Uno (NU), one of India's first indigenously manufactured denim brands, was incorporated in 1987. Over the years, Numero Uno has transformed into a dynamic and preferred brand for the youth. Today, it has the privilege of being one of the few power brands that fuses international trends, innovative fabrics, washes, treatments and competitive pricing. Under the leadership of its CMD Mr. Narinder Singh Dhingra, the brand, over the years has managed to build a strong brand in an industry otherwise difficult to penetrate, and has created a special place for itself among all the global denim brands as well as Indian brands.

Numero Uno's current offerings include denims, trousers, shirts, t-shirts, jackets, knitwear & active wear for both men and women along with accessories like belts, wallets, socks, deodorants, caps and footwear. With a major contribution in sales, denim is NU's core category. With more than 34 years in denim making, NU has created a legacy of sorts in the craft of denim designing & production.

The brand is positioned as The Real Denim. The positioning emphasises the rich legacy & continuous premium quality denim promise. It targets young, aspirational, fashion conscious and upwardly mobile consumers, in the age bracket of 16 to 30, who are self assured with access to technology and propensity to spend on lifestyle.

The brand has its headquarters at Gurugram, Haryana and an expansive yet environment friendly manufacturing facility at Selaqui near Dehradun. It has an extensive distribution network with 260+ exclusive stores, 87 LFS counters and presence in over 800 MBO retail outlets pan-India. In addition to these, the brand is also doing great on e-commerce platforms including its own e-store www.numeroonejeanswear.com. It has plans to strengthen their current presence & explore new territories. The brand is always working hard to improve the overall shopping experience at all the stores & spaces its present at.

NUMERO UNO
THE REAL DENIM

Splurging in Inter-war Punjab: Leisure in the Tense Twenties & Trying Thirties

Harleen Singh Sandhu

The beginning of the 1920s in Punjab was a time of shocking revelations. The reports coming out from the Amritsar Congress Session held in December 1919 reignited the memories of death and doom of April 1919, when Amritsar saw a massacre of its residents at Jallianwala Bagh. The shockwaves were felt in Lahore, Gujranwala, Sialkot and as far as Multan and Delhi, where draconian curfew and strict censorship laws were imposed by the British. The decade characterized in the West as the Roaring Twenties began in Punjab with the heartrending and grievous wailing of her people.

The times had started to change. The loyalism that reverberated in the hearts of Punjabis in the trying years of the First World War had faded in the face of General Dyer's bullets. Those who had toured the cities and towns of Punjab to collect War Funds and Subscriptions were now openly spreading what the British called, "sedition". The new decade of the 1920s meant coarse cotton called "*khadee*" was being adopted by a newer generation of

politically active men and women, as piles of "foreign" clothes were discarded and burnt. Women who had once barely seen the light of the world outside their *purdah* were readily discarding the veil and joining the freedom struggle. Even if they were not actively involved in the freedom struggle, they were simply discarding it because everyone around them was doing so. The world had just exploded with things which were seen as eccentricities only a decade ago. The motor car was everywhere.

Lahore and Amritsar were buzzing with cinemas premiering American silent films. The shortage of British films during the War meant more American films reached the Indian audience making Charlie Chaplin a household name. Then, there was a sudden rise in literacy. Colleges and schools began opening up month after month throughout Punjab. The success of the first batch of Punjabi female graduates during the War had given much more confidence to the parents to educate their daughters, and added another qualification to be sought in an

ideal bride suitable for educated Punjabi men. It was not just Punjab, however. The War at Flanders and Mesopotamia had changed the entire world order forever. The world of large brimmed hats and tightly-corseted voluminous gowns, sprinkled with Victorian morals and etiquette had been lost somewhere in the trenches of the First World War. The civil and romantic music of Chopin and Tchaikovsky were taken over by the American wave of "Jazz".

The Indian elite, who, until then, had adorned themselves in the old world charm of loosely fitted *chogas* and excessive jewelry, began hoarding up on the tailor cut suits in the Indo-European sartorial styles. Women also got rid of their immense irregular robes and preferred the dress of the modern Indian women popularized in the silent films of Bombay and Calcutta. Unlike the roaring twenties of the west, it was a quiet cultural revolution in India. Two worlds were breathing side by side, though both were heading towards a brand new future with infinite possibilities. The nationalists on one side were



Lahore Gardens - Lawrence & Montgomery Halls (Courtesy- British Library)

raising their voice for indigenous production. The cloth made in the country, the salt derived from its rivers, the sweets, books, furniture and ink - everything made with country-made ingredients gave impetus to the rise of "*Swadeshi*" enterprises. The anglicized lot, usually the younger generation in Punjab's many prestigious colleges, loved to indulge in the changing global trends. They were wearing imported patterns, drinking London-made tea blends and savoring American products. The Indian businessman had so much to gain in both the areas, and there was a huge market for both the groups. Lahore, the capital of Punjab, was a divided city in the British Raj. The "native city", as the walled city was called in the years before the

First World War, was congested but full of life. There were ancient markets in winding lanes populated by people of similar professions. The *Suha Bazar*, for example, was the hub of jewellers, while *Gawalmandi* just outside the walls of the city was a market for cows and milk. A settlement just outside the eastern part of the walled city called *Anarkali* was established by the British as a cantonment in the 1850s, but was soon abandoned due to health concerns. In the following decades, *Anarkali* evolved as a glamorous market that reached its zenith during the inter-war years. The other part of Lahore, called the "Civil Station" was a planned European settlement. Wide tree-lined boulevards named after the various British administrators who

ruled Punjab were laid in the Civil Station. The main street that cut through the Civil Station was named "The Mall" after the road that led Londoners to Buckingham Palace. The Mall was soon occupied by white Anglo-Indian bungalows and iconic sandstone landmarks like the Chiefs Court, Lahore Museum, Lawrence Hall, Nedou's Hotel and the General Post Office. Businesses catering to the Europeans also blossomed in the Civil Station. There was Bevan's who was a piano maker, Max Minck who made fashionable pocket watches, E. Plomer who was selling European drugs and the German Nedou's who provided first-class European accommodation and tea in their hotel. The rise of the Anglicized brand-conscious Indian post the First World War and an

equal rise of the nationalist Indian meant these Victorian businesses were slowly challenged by a newer breed of competitors.

Brand consciousness spiked with the rise of literacy amongst “natives” and also impacted how businesses advertised their products. For example, Sialkot was known for its superior market of sporting equipment with multiple industries producing sports goods such as cricket bats and tennis rackets. However, it was owning a product manufactured by the “Uberoi’s” of Sialkot that made a consumer feel glamorous and part of the smart set. Official and royal warrants and patronage had a huge role to play into this. Just as in the other parts of the British Empire, a royal seal or warrant made the brand exclusive and usually made the consumer trust the product deemed fit for the king.

Then there were other products, which in spite of lacking a Royal Warrant, had become a household name amongst Punjabis only because of their usage in exclusive quarters, like that of the military. After the end of the First World War, *Punjabis* returning to their homeland brought with them an appetite for malted milk powder that they had become accustomed to while fighting in the French trenches. This malted milk powder was manufactured by Horlicks and was increasingly adopted by the newer *Punjabi* middle classes in the inter-war period. Provincial dailies from Lahore like *The Tribune* and the Civil and Military Gazette carried attractive advertisements of Horlicks and played a huge role in the popularization of the drink in Punjab.

In November 1896, Calcutta’s leading departmental store called the Whiteaway, Laidlaw & Company opened their Lahore branch at The Mall. Being the first of its kind in

the city, the departmental store for the first time sold a variety of items catering to Europeans in a multi-storied building. This trend was replicated over the next few decades in the whole province with many European establishments cropping up in the Civil Station. The 1920s also brought a new wave of Indian-owned departmental stores, but catering towards the newly educated and moneyed “natives”. *Janki Dass and Company* sold a variety of items from western crockery to Indian sarees in his establishment near the medieval *Nila Gumbad* of Lahore. Then there was *Kirpa Ram Brothers* whose catalog ranged from rubber rain boots to silverplate tea sets. *Lilaram’s* opened a fashionable emporium specializing in silks, sarees, brocades and tailored coats fit for the “new” Indian women. In the *Anarkali bazaar*, jewelers like *Girdharilal and Sons* were innovating bold and modern Art deco pieces in place of the old school “*jarau*” jewelry.

For the nationalists, large establishments like the “*Gandhi Khaddar Bhandar*” in *Anarkali* promised their patrons country-made fabrics. Then, there were mixed businesses that also carried country-made products for their “*Swadeshi*” clientele like a German-style fountain pen made in Kathiawar or a French-style teapot made in Kashmir by local artisans.

European businesses in inter-war Lahore also became conscious of the rising number of their potential “native” customers. Smiths and Campbell chemists on the Mall, for example, were advertising “Elizabeth Arden’s face powder” to Indian women in the mid 1930s. The glamourization of smoking by the “modern woman” was also reflected in a 1936 toothpaste advertisement printed in the *Tribune* newspaper. The slogan ran, “*I smoke a lot but my teeth are always clean because I use*

Pearlodent toothpaste”. Then there were veiled advertisements selling “birth control tonics” to Indian women who were increasingly thinking of taking agency over their lives.

The rise of the “egalitarian” leisurely hours truly began in Punjab from the 1920s. Just as in the West, where marvels of Victorian technology and education gave rise to more leisure hours for the middle classes, increasing literacy and a rise of an urban *Punjabi* middle class brought the ideas of leisure down from a wealthy Aitchisonian aristocrat to the common post office clerk. Gone were the days when only the upper classes were indulging in *shikar*, *neza-bazi* and horse-riding. Films, club tennis and hobby clubs became the new respite of the college-going generation.

In March 1931 as Lahore was buzzing with nationalist activities following the execution of Bhagat Singh, India released its first “talkie” film. The city had over two dozen cinema halls, but only a handful had any systems that could run sound films. American films had been all the rage especially after their introduction in the days of the First World War when the production of British films decreased. However, with the coming of sound, a large market for Indian films boomed in the country.

Film centres like Calcutta and Bombay began churning out more films in *Hindustani* so as to cater to the audience who could understand the lingua franca. Every linguistic group wanted a film in their tongue. By the mid 1930s, the proportion of Indian films significantly rose from its pre-talkie ratio. By 1938, a Punjabi talkie called “*Sheila*” also hit the screens in Punjab. Some of the well known cinemas in the inter-war years were the *Excelsior*, *Naulakha* and *Jubilee* in Lahore and *Imperial*, *Amrit* and *Pearl* Talkies in

Amritsar.

With the coming of sound, the appetite for music also increased. While the Indian filmmakers still stuck to the traditional *Hindustani* music while composing film songs, the young Indian listener in the age of radio had developed a versatile ear. One music trend that would shake the Indian music scene in the inter-war years was Jazz.

Jazz became popular in India as soon as it reached the country in the 1920s. Calcutta and Bombay already had a huge audience that appreciated the genre. Unlike the pioneering Jazz performers who were mostly African Americans, the practitioners of Jazz in British India were mainly Goans and Anglo-Indians, who travelled around the country popularizing this style. On December 22, 1933, Lahore hosted the Indian Empire Exhibition and surprised the attendants with a refreshing Jazz performance by a band called “Dr Jazz and his Jazz Babies”. They were followed by a ballet performance by Marlene Starr who was hailed as an “International Popular Danseuse”.

The days of anti-naught agitation of the Punjab Purity Association in the 19th century, it seemed, were over. Cabaret dancing was everywhere.

More than being accepted by the Punjabis, it became an important feature in many social and official events in Punjab. Newer posh restaurants like Metro, Stiffles and Lorang which were catering to a newer class of educated Indian elite increasingly hired Goans to sing Jazz and Anglo-Indians to perform dances. Food taboos, which were a feature in the previous generation, were scrapped by many youngsters who willingly shared the table with people of different castes and creeds and partook food made by cooks of different communities. The rise of the restaurant age in

inter-war Punjab ensured a sense of egalitarianism, at least amongst the urban elite. Then there were places like Standard and *Kailash* in *Anarkali*, away from the Civil Station, where young college graduates with tight pockets ate on egalitarian principles unknown to their parents’ generation.

The menus also diversified. Where the previous generation of middle class *Hindu* was content with “*bedana*” (*boondi*) and *jalebis*, the modern Hindu graduate of Government College Lahore in the 1930s was treating himself with puff pastries and cakes made in the native restaurants like “*Kailash*”. Then there were extravagant dishes, aside from the dry *Punjabi kebabs*, ranging from the rich Rogan Josh to a bland but flavorsome sausage roll: all pointing towards the changing palettes. Branded fizzy drinks also began to form an important part of the restaurant culture competing with the ubiquitous *lassi* of the old city.

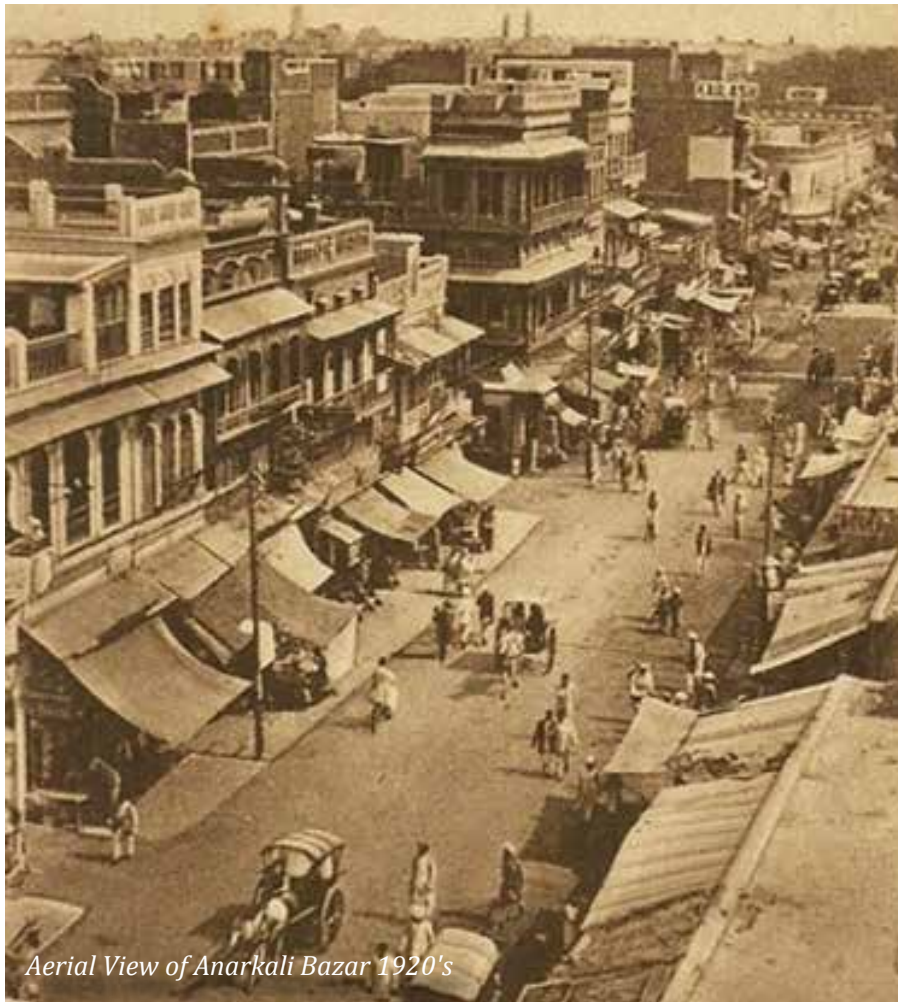
The British in India made themselves several “*gymkhana*” clubs across the length and breadth of the country where they could spend some time in leisure. These clubs were known to be exclusive where only a handful were allowed to access. Europeans stationed or domiciled in India would have to prove their rank in order to be permitted to become a member. For Indians, these clubs were even more closed. Until at least the end of the First World War, Indians were invisible in the British social clubs in India. The argument made by the British regime in denying qualified Indians membership of the club was the fact that they were without the company of their wives, who the British emphasized were locked away in their zenanas.

In reality, this was an excuse to hide the colonial anxiety of ‘native men’ socializing with European

women in these mixed spaces, thus threatening the racial structure of the society. Though things changed in the inter-war period as more educated women began leaving the purdah and participated in society events, the British clubs in India still remained racially exclusive in spite of the small number of Indian members. Hence, in 1901, the elite members of the native society of Lahore formed the Punjab Association Club to “promote and foster friendly intercourse between Europeans and educated Indians, and also among Indians themselves belonging to various communities”.

However it wasn’t until the 1920s that a much freer club called the Cosmopolitan Club of Lahore was established on the grounds of the whites-only Lahore Gymkhana Club. The brown sahibs aped their masters and so a new decade meant they copied the brand new sport the “*Pukka Sahib*” was playing in the nearby Gymkhana – Tennis became the talk of the town with various sets being played daily between the *Punjabi* members of the Cosmopolitan Club. In the 1930s, this launched the careers of tennis stars like S.L.R. Sawhny, Mohammed Sleem and Narindra Nath. Even women like Mrs U. Lal popularized the sport amongst her fellow ladies, who just a decade earlier had been secluded in *purdah*.

Art was another leisurely “sport” middle class *Punjabis* attempted in the inter-war years. After the success of cinema halls, the Great Eastern Movietone Ltd. company was launched at Lahore in 1935 with a capital of Rs. 25 lakh invested by some of the well-known members of the Lahore society. Already in 1928, the future Bollywood director AR Kardar had starred in a Lahore-made silent film called “*Daughters of Today*”, with limited success. On the fine arts front, the Punjab Fine Art Society was organizing exhibitions



Aerial View of Anarkali Bazar 1920's

artistic pieces of Punjabis who had picked the paint brush. Artists like Sobha Singh and Allah Bux were causing a sensation just before the Frieda Kahlo of India, Amrita Shergill, was ready to debut in the Lahore society.

The brief honeymoon met an abrupt end. Hitler's army invaded Poland in 1939 and Britain declared war on Germany. India found herself at war with the same opponent barely twenty years after the end of the Great War. The romantic inter-war period of cultural and artistic blossoming was marred by the realities of War and the launch of a political agitation that would

Punjab in 1947. Notwithstanding the political and communal tensions and with thousands of *Punjabis* shipped out to fight the second Great War, Punjab retained some of its inter-war charm. The restaurants were still playing jazz, though not as vibrantly with the food rations causing newer challenges. The cinema continued to be a popular pastime although a ten minute "War Newsreel" now preceded and succeeded the film. Lahore's new studio was causing a mini cultural revolution in the rest of India. *Pancholi Pictures* broke all previous records after producing an all-India hit "*Khazanchi*" in 1941,

popularized the dholki in music and showed the world how glamorous *shalwar-kameez* wearing "heroines" could be. What it did the best was to remove the pall of gloom in a society engaged in combat and put Punjab on the map as the film-making center of North India.

In one of the final spectacles of a fading age, in March 1942, the Metro Restaurant on the Mall organized a cocktail dance and cabaret show. Pepita, India's leading "crooner" sang his heart out amidst a crowd of "*brown sahibs*" and their sari clad wives with painted lips, some of whom occasionally smoked and drank mocktails "like a flapper". Larissa and Luba, two charming Russian artists, performed cabaret dancing in their black feathered hats and flowing gatsby dresses as the aroma of the exotic Chinese and English food prepared by chefs brought from Calcutta filled the room. The sight of colorful desserts, the *chocolates, pastries, patties, and bread* were the work of a Swiss trained confectioner who was there to impress them one last night. While the party was supposed to end at midnight, it continued long past. One last *hurrah* before it all ended in the flames of Partition.

Harleen is the founder of the 'Lost Heer Project', a social history project that focuses on women's experiences in colonial Punjab. He graduated from the University of Windsor in 2018, and has been collecting and archiving memories of Punjab's colonial history, and interviewing Partition witnesses since 2014. He can be reached on Instagram at @thesingingsingh.

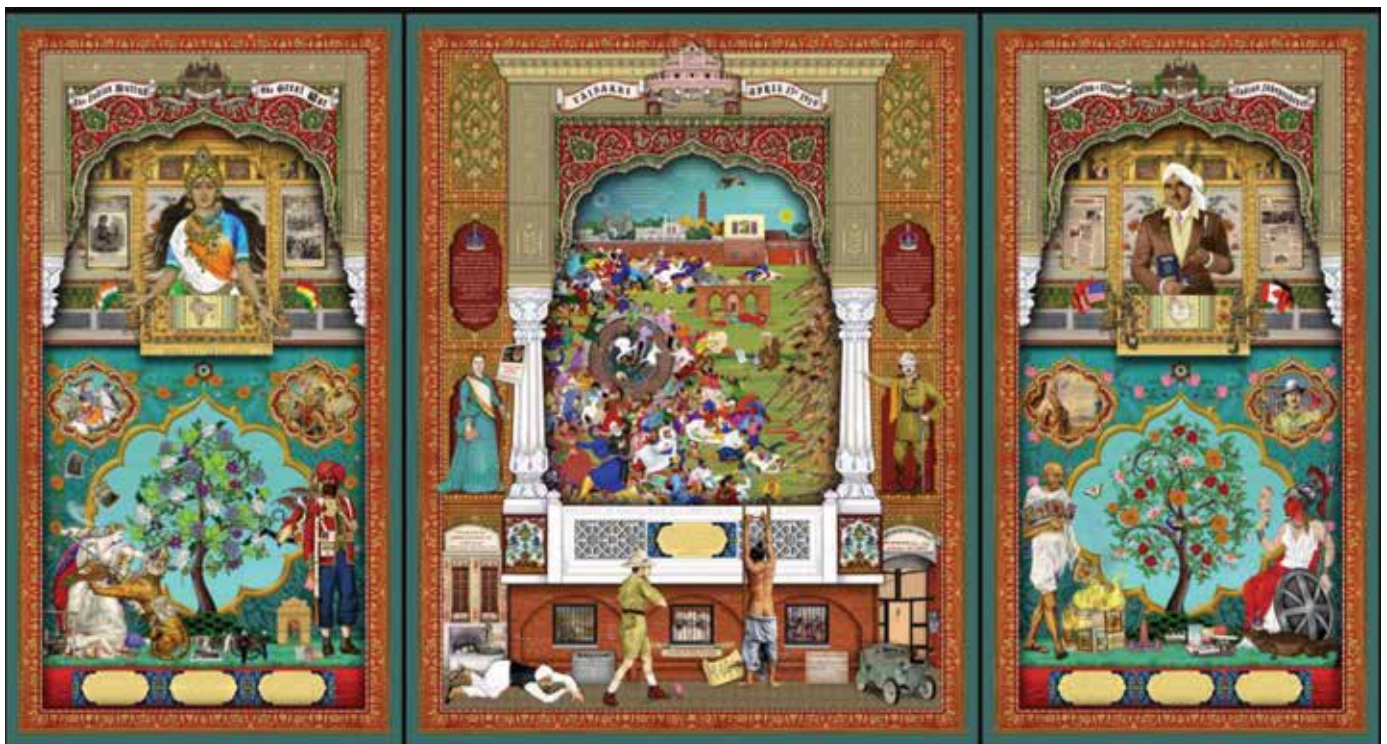
A PAINTING SPEAKS A THOUSAND WORDS

THE SINGH TWINS & THEIR ART

Interview by : Artika Aurora Bakshi

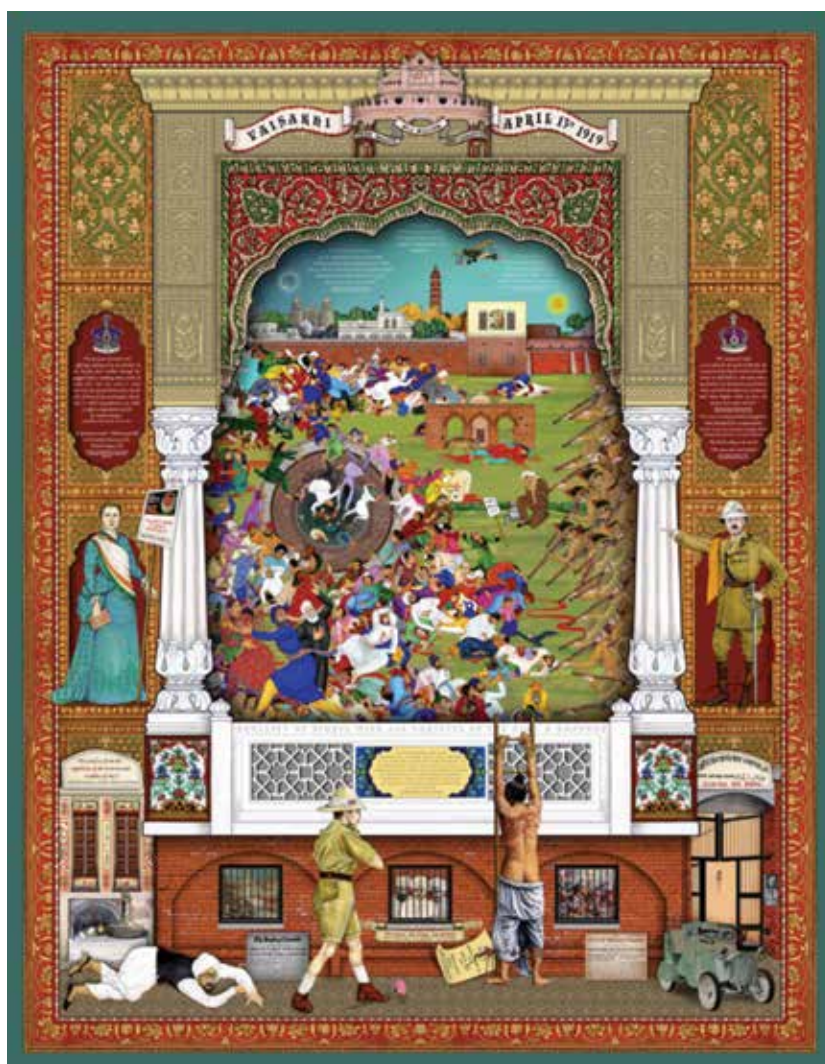
Their art speaks of their beliefs, their choices, and the balance they have created, merging Eastern and Western aesthetics, while sticking to their roots. Meet The Singh Twins, as they talk about their famous **Jallianwala Bagh: Repression and Retribution** triptych from their **Slaves of Fashion** exhibition, in an exclusive interview for *Nishaan*.

"This piece was initially created for the 100th anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. The reason we chose this particular incident for our work was because it was one of the most talked about episodes of colonial violence in India."



Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, Jallianwala also spelled Jallianwala, also called Massacre of Amritsar, incident on April 13, 1919, in which British troops [under Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer] fired on a large crowd of unarmed Indians in an open space known as the Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar in the Punjab region (now in Punjab state) of India, killing several hundred people and wounding many hundreds more. It marked a turning point in India's modern history, in that it left a permanent scar on Indo-British relations and was the prelude to Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi's full commitment to the cause of Indian nationalism and independence from Britain.(source: www.brittanica.com).

"One of the artworks in our Slaves of Fashion exhibition is a large scale triptych, a work in three panels, which tells three different but interconnected parts of the Jallianwala Bagh story. The middle panel focuses on the massacre itself. It depicts the gathering of people in the Bagh or park area and some of the Bagh's key historical landmarks, including a drinking well. There are accounts of how many people tried to get away from the firing by actually jumping into this well. To the right of the well, Reginald Dyer is shown commanding his troops to open fire on the crowd. Other details around the central scene point to the fact that people had gathered in the park to protest certain racist rules known as the Rowlatt Acts, which were imposed by the British. It also depicts some other atrocities which were committed against Indians under British Rule at that time and in the aftermath of the massacre. Martial law had been enforced in Punjab. People weren't allowed to meet in the streets. They could be arrested and imprisoned without trial at any time. Fans were confiscated and electricity and water was cut off. This triptych commemorates an event which may have happened more than a hundred years ago, but which is still very much in the public mind, particularly in India. Many people down the generations haven't found closure and are still seeking a formal apology. We wanted to highlight this, and add our voices and expressions alongside the other commemorative events that were taking place in the UK, India, and elsewhere during 2019. It was our way of telling this largely hidden story to those within the South Asian community who didn't know anything about it. But it was also aimed at educating the wider British community. Because the massacre is as much a part of their history, as it is ours."





“The left panel shows the historical context of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. It highlights important episodes in Indo-British history that underpinned India’s dissatisfaction with British rule and led to growing expressions of civil protest and unrest. For example, the oppression of Indians and the exploitation of India’s resources over centuries is represented in the top of the composition by a symbolic figure of Mother India in shackles. Another detail represents the First Indian Rebellion, which for a long time was known in the western history books as the Indian Mutiny. You can see an image of Britannia slaying a Bengal tiger. This symbolises Britain’s quashing of the rebellion. The rebellion happened in 1857, many years before the 1919 massacre, but it was ingrained in the British psyche because it resulted in an atrocity known as the Cawnpore massacre - when European women and children at a British East India Company garrison in India were slaughtered. The incident shocked the British public and shook the establishment. Around the artwork we have included historical quotes that suggest how the rebellion was seen as a real threat to British power in India and how Dyer (in his own mind) acted out of a sense of duty to protect the Raj from a second ‘mutiny’. This historical context doesn’t in any way justify Dyer’s actions but it perhaps helps us to understand why he used such excessive means of violence and punishment against innocent civilians”.

The right side panel of the artwork explores the legacy of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. One of the main outcomes was that it provided a turning point in India's struggle for freedom from British Rule. Up until that time, some of the politicians in India were quite sympathetic towards the British. Many Indians saw freedom, not so much as being a complete break away from the British but as having some degree of autonomy under the British Raj. But when the massacre took place, people realised that the British could not be trusted and that the only way forward was a complete separation. The Quit India movement took shape thereafter, galvanising the communities within India, giving them a common goal. Leading figures of India's freedom struggle are shown in the artwork along a tree blooming with flowers representing the three main religious communities who united in that cause. Jallianwala exposed the ugly side of the Empire. This is symbolised by the figure to the right of the tree, showing Britannia removing her beautiful mask (denoting her self-image as the benevolent Empire) to reveal the Devil's face.

Another key legacy of Jallianwala is represented in the upper section of this same panel by the figure of Udham Singh Shaheed whom the British hanged after he avenged the blood of his countrymen by assassinating Michael O'Dwyer who was Lieutenant Governor of Punjab at the time of the massacre. Details from Udham Singh's story are told through the newspapers depicted either side of him. He is shown with a halo and a noose - represented as he is regarded in India, as a national hero and martyr. The artwork reveals how Michael O'Dwyer not only fully condoned Dyer's actions but traveled the length and breadth of Britain boasting about how the 'rebellion' as he called it, was put down.

It also reveals how, in contrast, Reginald Dyer eventually came to question his own actions and showed some remorse on his deathbed - reportedly stating, 'So many people who knew the condition



of Amritsar say I did right... but so many others say, I did wrong. I only want to die and know from my maker whether I did right or wrong."

"Jallianawala happened right after World War I, and one of the gripes amongst the Indians at that time was that their efforts were not recognised. Thousands of them had fought and died by Britain's side for a war which had nothing to do with them, in the hope that for their sacrifices and loyalty, they would be given some autonomy. The introduction of the Rowlatt Acts was contrary to what Indians had hoped for. This is symbolically represented in the central panel by the British soldier who is seen whipping a Sikh youth whilst trampling on a carnation. This imagery is based on an actual press photograph from 1919 which records how during the period of civil unrest and martial law which was imposed in Punjab after Jallianwala, young men were indiscriminately flogged. The symbolism of the carnation is that it represents the love of the mother. It was a tradition during World War I and II, for women to wear a carnation, and to show their gratitude to soldiers who passed through their villages by handing them a flower. The soldier is shown symbolically crushing that gratitude underfoot".

"The artwork also includes imagery that points to the universal relevance of the story of Jallianwala. In the central panel for instance, we have depicted three prison windows. Behind one of these we show a scene of the Manchester Peterloo Massacre of 1819. Behind another, is a scene of the Boston Massacre of 1770: incidents in recorded history where civilian protests were subjected to state aggression. Like Jallianwala they demonstrate the heavy-handed power that was meted out during colonial times, on people across the globe, from all backgrounds.

They show how rulers didn't think twice about putting down anything they feared as a threat to them. Referencing these incidents within the artwork was our way of making a statement about the idea of and right to peaceful protest, as something that needs to be remembered, asserted and preserved".

A Little More About the Artists

Looking at the artwork as a whole, one is awe-struck by the story it tells, spanning centuries of



The Singh Twins are contemporary British artists with an international reputation whose contribution to art has been formally recognised through, amongst other things, the awarding of an MBE, three honorary Doctorates and by The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Women in World History. Their award-winning work which largely explores hidden colonial histories and challenges Eurocentric perceptions of heritage and identity has been cited by eminent historian and TV presenter Sir Simon Schama as representing the (artistic face of modern Britain), and can be found in public and private collections worldwide. As pioneers of a modern development

colonial rule, having an effect on people even today. The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and the British Raj continue to be a subject of debate. Artistically linking this event with the Peterloo Massacre and the Boston Massacre, brings forth the brutality of colonialism. The quality of the artwork and the complexities of the stories is breathtaking. Its historic artworks such as this, that take the viewer deep into the story, enunciate more than what's written in books.

of the Indian miniature tradition of painting, their art has been acknowledged as constituting a unique genre in British art. Major exhibitions include solo shows at London's National Portrait Gallery, Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art, National Museums Scotland, National Museums Liverpool and Delhi's National Gallery of Modern Art. In 2016 The Twins were invited to exhibit one of their public commissions (for the collections of Museum of London) as part of Tate Britain's touring exhibition Artist & Empire, and in 2018, they were commissioned by Royal Collections Trust to create a new work for the Splendours of the Subcontinent; at The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace

which is now on show as part of their Slaves of Fashion series.

Over the years they have received wide media attention, most recently featuring as guest artists on Channel 4's Graysons Art Club and on BBC Hardtalk. The Twins are currently working on a major public commission for Manchester Museum due to launch in 2023 and a coffee table book to accompany the touring exhibition of 'Slaves of Fashion'. Another coffee table book titled Jewels of Sikh Wisdom: A Journey of Discovery for which they have created over 100 artworks, has just been launched in the UK.

How would you define yourself and your art?

We are The Singh Twins and we would call our art "Past- Modern", as opposed to Post-Modern which is a well-known genre in History. Through this description of our art we challenge the notion that the past is of no relevance to us today, particularly within the arts. This goes back to our time as students and the prejudice we faced from art tutors at university towards the kind of work we were trying to develop at that time. We have always been interested in Indian miniature paintings, Renaissance art, and other older styles of art. We were told by our tutors that there was no place for these past traditions in contemporary art expression and that Indian art was backward and outdated. They kept pushing us to look at contemporary western artwork and the Modern Art Movement.

It was quite hypocritical because they didn't really acknowledge how artists who came to be known as the 'fathers of western modern art', looked towards non-European traditional art forms, like Tahitian, Japanese and Persian, for their

inspiration. Our tutors' attitude resonated with what we had experience generally as young Asians growing up in a British society that derided traditional Indian culture and expected us to conform to western ways of thinking, dressing, and socialising. It seems that in order to be seen as progressive, educated and modern, you are expected to wear western clothes and live a western lifestyle. Whereas, we have never subscribed to that.

We have always believed in the continuing value of past heritage and traditional cultures within modern life. So, stylistically, although the language of our art is rooted in older artforms from across the globe, we explore contemporary issues that affect everyone in the here and now. Our idea is to not separate the past from the present, hence the word, "Past-Modern". Our work also breaks stereotype perceptions of the eastern culture as backward, whilst the west is seen as progressive. Through our Slaves of Fashion exhibition, we try to challenge this "west is best" mindset which stems back to colonial times. We also explore how racist colonial attitudes still persist today.

How do you approach each work, in terms of ideas, and who takes on what?

Our art process is completely collaborative from the very start. We are lucky that we have a common goal, and share identical political and social outlooks. We have the same interests, and like exploring the same things. We decide jointly on a general theme and independently research specific areas within that. As with our Slaves of Fashion series, we then discuss our findings and make a shortlist of everything we want to include in the work. When it comes to physical

creation of the artwork, we divide the number of pieces between us or work in a rota on a single piece but there is always continued input from both sides in terms of exchanging ideas. We rely on each other if we get stuck on something, or if we are having difficulty with getting a figure right, or choosing which colours to use. Since every stage is a collaboration and we always see the work as a joint creation and represent ourselves as one artist.

How do your cultural, political, social, and religious views influence your art?

We see ourselves as social and political commentators. Not everything in our work represents our personal point of view, but our themes always focus on something that is of interest to us, often drawing on our own experiences and observations of the world. We analyse and document what's happening around us. Sometimes this is in response to current debates or to opinions within society which we want to redress. But we have also been influenced by our Sikh traditions and values, especially when it comes to speaking out about and defending things that we strongly feel about. In our family, debate and discussion has always been encouraged. Whenever we have been knocked down in the past, the family has always been there and told us to get up and fight for what we believe in. We've spoken previously about our tutor's negative attitudes towards the art we wanted to do. We actually ended up having to challenge our university to get our degrees reinstated after one of the art examiners refused to mark our finals dissertations in art because he hadn't liked what we had written about the significant impact of traditional non - European art on

western art history. We were defending our corner as artists. Life has thrown us these challenges, and it's our Punjabi spirit and Sikh values which have helped us to get through.

That spirit and values also shows in our artwork. One of the later additions to our Slaves of Fashion exhibition relates to the murder of George Floyd. We were angered by the discrimination that people face in the world today, and this piece was our way of speaking up against it.

The work exposes the ingrained racism in America which goes back to the colonial period and the transatlantic slave trade. It didn't just reflect our own anger, but also responses within the media too.

The composition was sparked off by some quotes we read from Hollywood actors, like George Clooney, who were very vocal about the killing of George Floyd and Donald Trump's reaction to it.

This happened during the Covid pandemic and our piece references how Clooney described racism in America today as their pandemic. The work also features a quote by Taylor Swift which criticised Trump's white supremacist attitude.

It shows Donald Trump depicted as a demon personifying institutional racism. Above his head are his campaign slogan "Make America Great Again", flanked by two guns representing the Imperial attitude violent gun culture of America. This piece is about a contemporary event but it connects to the core themes of our Slaves of Fashion series because further details around the artwork show how modern day racism is connected to colonialism and how colonial history remains relevant today.

When dealing with mainstream issues, we very often highlight the

Sikh community and their place in global history.

Within the Slaves of Fashion exhibition, there are several works which reference the Sikh context. There is a piece that looks at the history of paisley shawls from Kashmir, which under the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, were exported to Europe and Russia. It includes a portrait of Ranjit Singh and a reference to St. Petersburg, which was the main centre for exports from his kingdom of Punjab.

There is another work, called, Phulkari: Craft & Conflict, which explores the history of Punjab's phulkari textiles. It features a portrait of the artist Amrita Sher-Gil because she painted scenes of rural Punjab, showing women wearing phulkaris.

As someone who was initially influenced by western art but then adopted traditional Indian art as her inspiration, she also reflects another theme of the artwork - that of traditional arts and craft revival. During Victorian times, the increased demand in western markets for cheaper, mass-produced imitations of phulkaris, caused the craftsmanship to deteriorate. The artwork represents both this and how some prominent British people of the time (even Queen Victoria) spoke out against this decline and tried to promote the value of and revive traditional Indian crafts.

Another detail in the artwork depicts the Lahore Fort with a stream of blood flowing from it into a landscape inscribed with the word 'Pakistan'. This symbolises how the conflict and upheaval of Partition in 1947 resulted in the decline of phulkari making in Punjab as a domestic craft.

Another artwork in the Slaves of Fashion series focuses on the history of cotton. It's titled, Cotton: Threads of Change and centers on a portrait

of Princess Sophia Duleep Singh, the daughter of Maharaja Duleep Singh who was the last Sikh ruler of the kingdom of Punjab established by Ranjit Singh. There are many reasons we chose her, one of them being that her grandfather on her mother's side was a cotton merchant with connections to Liverpool and Manchester, which were global centers of cotton textile production during colonial times. She was also a leading member of the suffragette movement in UK which fought for workers' rights, particularly, people those employed in the cotton mills. In addition, given that she came to be born in Britain due to the annexation of her father's kingdom by the British in 1849, Sophia represents another core theme of the artwork, namely, displacement and dispossession. The British coveted her ancestral homeland of Punjab for its resources - one of them being cotton.

About the Exhibition

The Singh Twins: Slaves of Fashion exhibition explores how the history of trade in Indian textiles is a global story of Empire, conflict, enslavement and luxury lifestyle which has contemporary relevance - connecting to the politics of trade, ethical consumerism, the environment and racism and slavery in the world today.

The exhibition is divided between two venues: Jallianwala: Retribution and Repression and an associated artist film about the artwork is currently on display in the UK at Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery and East Gallery as part of the Twins' solo exhibition, titled The Singh Twins: Slaves of Fashion. The exhibition runs until 22nd January 2023. Find out more about the exhibition by visiting the link below. <https://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/norwich-castle/whats-on/exhibitions/slaves-of-fashion>.

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GOLDEN TEMPLE, MARBLE FORUM

FORM & MEANING IN SACRED ARCHITECTURE

Henry J. Walker

I am going to compare Sikh and ancient Roman architecture, specifically the Golden Temple of Ranjit Singh in Amritsar with the Marble Forum of Augustus in Rome. This might sound a little strange at first; these two buildings are separated by almost 2,000 years and 4,000 miles. But I am not trying to claim that there is any connection or influence between the two. On the

contrary, I have deliberately chosen two unrelated traditions. We shall be able to realize how distinctive Sikh architecture is, by comparing it with the architecture from another tradition. One is the experiment; the other is the control, and if the results are to have any value, the experiment and the control must be independent. What I want to show is how two great rulers with

similar aims come up with quite different architectural results; and I want to show that this difference is not merely one of fashion or style, but one that is deeply rooted in the fundamental beliefs of their people.

Among Roman historians, the first century BCE is often called the Fall of the Republic, but it would probably be more accurate to call it the Rise of the Generals. These

generals acted like dictators, and some of them were officially made dictators by the Roman Senate; but as we shall see shortly, these unruly men actually built some remarkable temples throughout Italy. This exciting and dangerous period of Roman history came to an end when Augustus became the first Roman Emperor. He reunited the entire empire under his personal control and won the approval of the Roman gods by renovating old temples and building new ones. His masterpiece was the Temple of Mars in the Forum of Augustus.

When we turn to the Punjab of the eighteenth century, we find ourselves in much the same atmosphere; the age of the Sikh Confederacy, a union of 12 Sikh states (*misls*), is very similar to that of the generals in Rome. It was only by breaking their power that Ranjit Singh could unite the entire Punjab and make himself the first Maharaja of the Sikh empire. Like the Emperor Augustus he was a pious man and built and renovated many temples throughout his land. His master-piece was the Golden Temple, because it was he who changed it from an attractive temple to a golden one.

If we pause to look at the masterpieces of these two emperors, we shall see some interesting similarities in their general design. In each case we have a large temple complex built in the middle of a busy city. The sacred space is walled off from the city, and this creates an area of unusual calm in the midst of all the hustle and bustle of city life. In each case the sacred space consists of a large square, surrounded by a portico, with the temple in the middle. Once we start to look more closely, however, we see that the two temples are completely different.



Forum of Augustus, 42 BCE, Rome (image from internet)



Temple architecture by ancient Romans (image from internet)



Interior of the Golden Temple with details of different decorations and artwork (Image by: Khanuja Family Collection)

This difference in their architecture is a direct reflection of the difference between the religious beliefs of the two cultures. The ancient Roman religion was a very earthy and practical one. It had almost no mystical element whatsoever. The Romans were impressed, not by the goodness or truth of the gods, but by their power.

The main aim of the Romans in their religious practice was, therefore, not to become one with these gods, but rather to keep their distance from the gods and make sure that the gods were never annoyed with them.

Their religion was a set of rules for bargaining with very dangerous and powerful partners. So, the temples they built were magnificent; they emanated power, but they were no more mysterious than the palace of a great king or emperor. There was nothing that would launch the soul towards the gods. The Sikh faith, on the other hand, worships a Creator God who is infinite and mysterious, yet as close as our own heart. Where the power of the Roman gods is separate, authoritarian and devoid of love, the power of the Sikh God is gentle and ubiquitous. Its very essence is love, it is within all and it radiates from all. The aim of Sikhism is the return of the soul to that Beloved Divinity who is everywhere and yet infinitely and mysteriously beyond us. The temples of the Sikhs express this sense of the divine presence. They are designed to sweep us up in a sensory whirl and carry us toward the Giver and Lover of all.

Simple Individual Temples

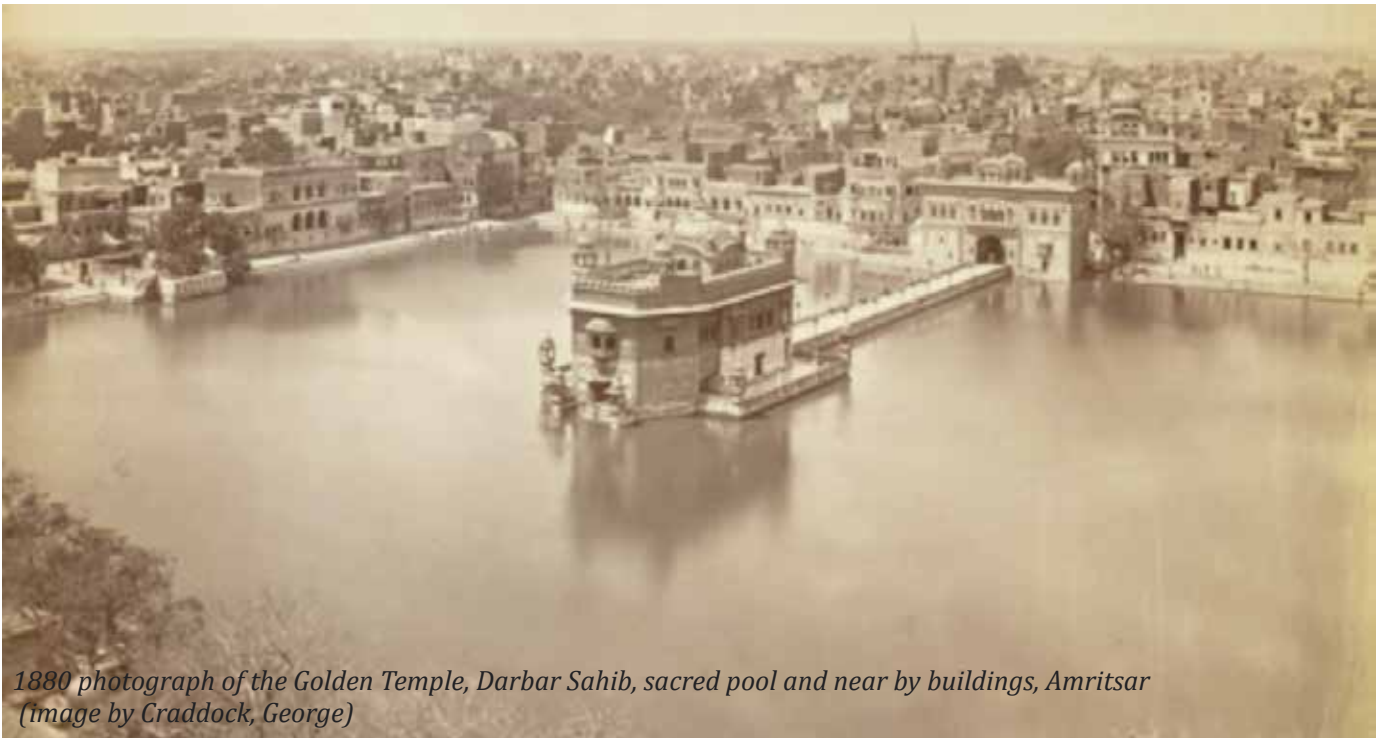
We can see how these religious differences show themselves even if we go right back to the very beginnings of the temple architecture of the Sikhs and the

ancient Romans. They both start off at the same point with very simple adobe huts, which have no particular architectural merit, though they do indicate that we are dealing with the center of a sacred area. But once we leave this early starting point, we find that their vreligious architecture develops along paths that are as divergent as their beliefs.

Going back to the first real temples of the Romans, our earliest example is a model of a temple from the sixth century BCE, before Rome had gained its independence and become a Republic. Already we can see the hall-marks of the Roman temple. It is raised up on a pedestal, it has a deep porch and there are steps leading up to the temple. Later the Romans started to copy the Greeks, and they produced more sophisticated temples. The two examples illustrated here date from about 100 BCE. The first is a plan of temple from the south of Italy; the second is a photograph of a temple from the city of Rome. They are somewhat better-looking than the first one we saw, but the basic design is the same. These temples tell you what to do. You do not walk around them; you stand right in front, because otherwise you will be faced with a blank wall. The temple directs your attention up the stairs, through the front door, all the way to the statue which stands at the end of the temple. This is just what we would expect from the Roman elite. They were excellent engineers and lawyers, who made straight roads and clear laws. They always had a fair idea of where they stood and where they should be going. Their temples tell you where to focus your attention just like a sign-post or a law might do. When we compare these Roman temples with the earliest Sikh temples, the

contrast is striking. Even the shape is different. Whereas the Roman temple is rectangular with the entrance at one of the shorter ends, and thus draws you on to the focal point at the other short end, Sikh temples are nearly always square, though some are octagonal. They are invariably at ground level and easily approachable. And they frequently have four doors so that they can be entered from any side. The focus is, therefore, on the center. Here the Sacred Book lies. True worship consists in acknowledging it as the center of your life, and in the Sikh temple there is always a path which you can walk around as you contemplate the Supreme Being represented by the Book in the center.

The temples illustrated here are very early ones, and they date from the time of the Sikh Confederacy. They are *Guru ka Lahore* and *Hol Garh Sahib*, both of which are in Anandpur Sahib. Each one consists of a simple square room, and nothing more. To walk round in comfort, you must actually step outside and perform your circumambulation on the path that surrounds the building. In *Hol Garh Sahib* the path is raised for this purpose. A third example of such early temples is the *Hari Mandir Sahib* in Karatpur; it has the same design except for the addition of a little kiosk on the roof. We can also notice something important about the decoration of Sikh temples which is already apparent in these examples. The Roman temple emphasized the massive nature of its walls through elaborate sculptural decoration on its pediment, and gave import to the transition from the outside world to the sacred space by placing a large stairway and a deep porch with several rows of columns before the doorway.



*1880 photograph of the Golden Temple, Darbar Sahib, sacred pool and near by buildings, Amritsar
(image by Craddock, George)*

The Sikh temple, on the other hand, usually has a very simple entrance; you walk right in without any fuss. And, the mass of the walls is always played down. The stone or brick is concealed behind a layer of smooth plaster which gives it an air of lightness. This effect is increased by the delicate pilasters and blind archways that decorate its surface. The general impression is of icing on a cake rather than of a mighty structural element bearing up the awful weight of the roof.

But in a Sikh temple we don't feel the need for a heavy wall, because the roof itself seems to be very light. Even in these simple early temples, we can see how this is achieved, especially in the Gurudwara at Kiratpur. The roof is separated from the rest of the building by large but almost razor-thin eaves. This creates the impression that the walls do not have to hold the roof up, since they are cut off from it, and also that the roof itself must be very light, if it can lie on such a delicate and flimsy element. This effect is

further enhanced when the temple is topped by a dome. Logically, such a dome adds to the weight of the roof; but its psychological effect is quite different. The dome seems to be expanding outwards and floating upwards like a balloon, but we shall see this effect more clearly when we return to some other Sikh temples later on; because now I want to turn, once again, to the Roman side of things.

Elaborate Temple Complexes

We have seen what a normal and very simple Roman and Sikh temple looks like; but as time went on, people wanted to place their temples in an elaborate setting, to make their temple part of a large impressive complex. This is of course a later development, and in Rome it starts in the era of the generals. My first Roman example dates from around 100 BCE. It is the



Patalpuri Gurdwara at Kiratpur (Image from internet)



(Image by: Amardeep Singh)

Temple of Fortuna Primigenia in the modern Italian city of Palestrina. The temple complex consists of terraces upon terraces climbing up the hill, and they finally lead up to a tiny circular temple of Fortune. There is something almost cute about the way in which all these elaborate stairways and plazas and porticos end with this petite little gem. My second example is the Temple of Hercules Victor at Tivoli, which was built around 50 BCE. As in Palestrina, we start at ground level, but then we have just one a terrace on the hill the hill. The

Temple of Hercules is at the centre of the terrace, and the terrace itself is surrounded by a portico on all three sides. Both of these temple complexes, Fortuna at Palestrina and Hercules at Tivoli, were built on hills in the countryside, and they were designed accordingly. They both used the steep approach up the hill as a way of drawing attention to the temple placed at the highest point. When Augustus builds his new forum in the center of Rome, he will have to focus attention on the temple in a different way. The viewers will have to be drawn

inwards rather than upwards towards the temple.

When we look at more elaborate Sikh temples, we find that the architects had to integrate four elements which had become fundamental to Sikh sacred architecture: the enclosure, its gateway, the temple itself and the pool. An early and attractive example, which probably dates from the time of the Sikh Confederacy, is the *Ram Sar Gurudwara* at Amritsar. The temple itself is two stories high; and although it is a relatively simple building, it anticipates some of the

features of the great temples built or renovated by Ranjit Singh. The bottom part of the lower floor is covered with marble slabs; and these are decorated very delicately in low relief designs, in a way that makes the walls seem light and almost paper-like. The dome crowning the temple is a simple version of the magnificent lotus-domes that seem to have been a favorite design of Ranjit Singh. The enclosure around the temple consists of a wall facing the outside world with rooms on three of its inner sides facing the courtyard. On the fourth, eastern side of the enclosure is a great gateway. Outside the enclosure to the south is the pool which is linked by a doorway to the rooms on that side.

The pool is surrounded by a brightly decorated pathway. The end result is quite pleasing, but it seems a little odd that the gateway lies in one direction (east) and the pool in another (south), and that the enclosure surrounds the temple alone, cutting the pool off from the rest of the complex. Later builders will find more satisfactory answers to the architectural problem of integrating these different elements of a Gurudwara.

The first temple we shall look at which attracted the attention of Ranjit Singh is the Darbar Sahib at Dehra Baba Nanak. The general layout is more or less the same as at the Ram Sar Temple, but the roof and dome of this Gurudwara are quite extraordinary.

They are actually taller than the building itself, and Ranjit Singh expressed his admiration for it by gilding the enormous dome. The elaborateness of this golden superstructure forms a striking contrast with the Spartan simplicity of the plain white building below.

The peaceful dome with its enormous lotus leaves is separated from the roof by three rows of smaller decoration whose unending repetition creates a very rapid rhythm.

The row of the onion-shaped domes between the rows of miniature lotus leaves is dizzying as it races round the bottom of the dome. Imitation is said to be the highest form of flattery; and if Ranjit Singh showed his respect for this temple by gilding it, he honored it even more by copying its design exactly when he came to building his own Gurudwara of Angitha Sahib at the village of Khadoor Sahib. The splendid archway, added later, unfortunately detracts from the impact of the temple which originally was identical to the one at Dehra Baba Nanak. The temple is surrounded by an enclosure with rooms on all sides, but the most striking feature of the entire complex is the great gateway that leads into it. This handsome structure with its cusped archway and balcony windows looks forward to the gateways and temples of Tarn Taran and the Golden Temple itself.

The culmination of these experiments towards a more perfect union of the major elements in a Sikh temple complex is the great Darbar Sahib at Tarn Taran. It is hard to imagine that this was once no more than a hut beside a pool, until the present temple was built in 1775 and later renovated by Ranjit Singh. Here the temple and pool form an integrated unit, and the entire complex (rather than just the temple itself) is enclosed by the sanctuary wall. In its design the temple is remarkably similar to the Golden Temple. The walls are cased in marble slabs with the light designs in panels that are typical of Sikh architecture. The upper

floor is gilded and is adorned with windows framed by cusped arches in the center of each side, with a balcony-window to the left and right of this central feature. Finally, in the center of the flat roof, we have a small square chamber topped by a flat gilded dome, which is practically identical to the dome of the Golden Temple. Even the interior design is similar with a central hall surrounded by rooms that form galleries, which on the upper floor look down over the great hall below. The great archway is impressive, though it does not quite match the gateways of Gurudwara Angitha Sahib or the Golden Temple, either in its original form (which we see here) or in its renovated form. The Darbar Sahib at Tarn Taran is, however, a great work; and the Golden Temple will simply bring its features to perfection.

We have followed the development of the simple individual temple and the elaborate temple complex in the Roman and Punjabi traditions, but now we shall turn to the masterpieces themselves. Augustus boasted that he had received a city of brick and given back a city of marble. Ranjit Singh could likewise have claimed that he found a temple of stone and turned it into a Golden Temple.

The Augustan Masterpiece

The Forum of Augustus was a remarkable achievement of Roman architecture in that the entire sacred space was a single architectural unit, not a temple standing in a square. It was small in comparison with the huge Golden Temple complex; the entire Forum was only 118 x 215 meters, which is about the size of the sacred pool at Amritsar, while the open square in front of the Roman temple was only 50 x 70 meters.

The area was bounded by massive walls that ranged from 22 to 30 meters in height. This is extremely high in relation to the space they enclosed. From the outside it would have been quite dull — all that you would have seen was a huge stone wall! Inside, as we can see even in the model, this dominance of the vertical plane created the effect of a huge room with an open space in the middle, rather than an open square with buildings around it. We are beginning to see here the emphasis on interior space, rather than outer shape, which became all-important in Roman architecture of the first century CE. What mattered was the feeling of space that you would get once you walked into it. You instantly felt that you were in a special place, that you had left the busy city behind. The space created was rather like that of a huge exhibition room in a modern museum. And to a large extent, that is what the Forum of Augustus was, a national museum or hall of fame. The colonnades invited you to walk along inside them and to peer into the two great semi-circular rooms that stood to the right and left of the temple entrance. These rooms and the walls of the colonnade were lined with the statues of great Roman generals and politicians, and a plaque under each statue listed his achievements. In short, this Roman Forum was not just a setting for the temple; it was a national monument of which the temple was just one part though it was, of course, the most important part of the entire complex.

The two colonnades directed your attention towards the temple. The sun rose up behind it in the morning, and its facade received the rays of the setting sun. The temple was dedicated to the war-god Mars;

it was the Temple of Mars Ultor, Mars the Avenger. Augustus was thanking this god for helping him to punish his enemies — both national, during the civil wars, and international, in his wars to expand the Roman Empire. Inside the temple were souvenirs from various Roman battles; and at the very end of the temple, the focal point of the entire Forum was the great superhuman statue of Mars himself.

We might expect that a temple should be a purely religious building, but there is something very political and almost secular about the Temple of Mars the Avenger. We could, perhaps, best sum up the effect of the entire complex by saying that it is a monument to power, but the division between imperial power and divine power is deliberately left quite vague. As you looked along the rows of columns that led to the temple, and as you looked up the steps that raised it high above you, you were dwarfed by the effect. You were being put in your place, and that place was a rather low one. The religious feeling inspired was one of power and majesty. It may have impressed you, but it would not uplift you.

Nothing could be farther from the “fearful mystery” of the Holy that we find in most modern religions. This element of the Sublime, which is missing in the religion of the ancient Romans, is precisely the message of the Golden Temple. The message is revealed in the layout of the entire sacred space, in the temple itself and in the detail of its decoration.

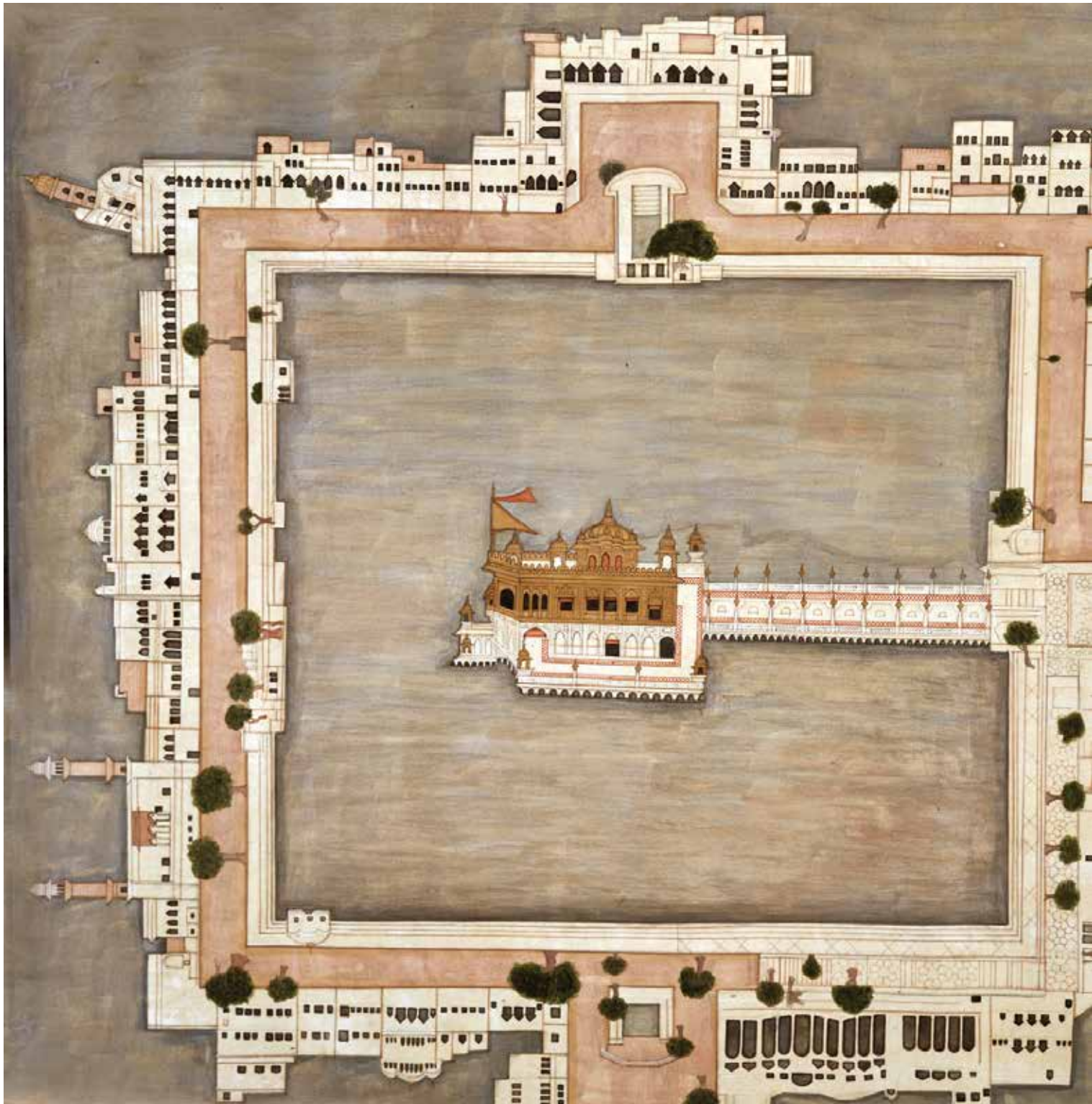
The Sikh Masterpiece

The center of the sacred space is clearly the Golden Temple, and everything else radiates from it. The temple, the pool and the path for circumambulation are

perfectly integrated here through the ingenious device of placing the temple in the middle of the pool. In the nineteenth century, the complex was still open to the outside world, so it must have appeared to blend into it and spread all the way to the horizon. Nowadays, of course, a colonnade has been added on all sides, but this does not distract from the impression of a vast open space. In contrast to the high enclosing stone walls of the Roman Forum with their evocation of authoritarian power, we have a vast light-reflecting pool (147 x 153 meters) with its evocation of openness and infinity. The effect is enhanced by the path around the pool which is so wide that it makes the worshippers seem tiny.

They are little humans in the face of the Infinite. The geometric designs on the marble pavement create a quick rhythm which invites the visitor to walk around. The colonnade, the pool and the path all revolve around the temple, as if they themselves were performing a great circumambulation in its honor. The centrality of the temple is emphasized by the four doors which open out in all directions. The focal point is, of course, the great Book, the Guru Granth Sahib, in the central hall with its gallery of rooms looking down on the Book. The whole arrangement looks like a model of the planets going around the sun. Each part of the sacred space follows its orbit at a fixed point from the Holy Book which lies at the center of this solar system.

Everything about the Golden Temple reveals the presence of a Reality that lies beyond mere appearances. It does not seek to impress the senses like the temples of the ancient Romans; instead, it overwhelms them. It exhorts the mind to go

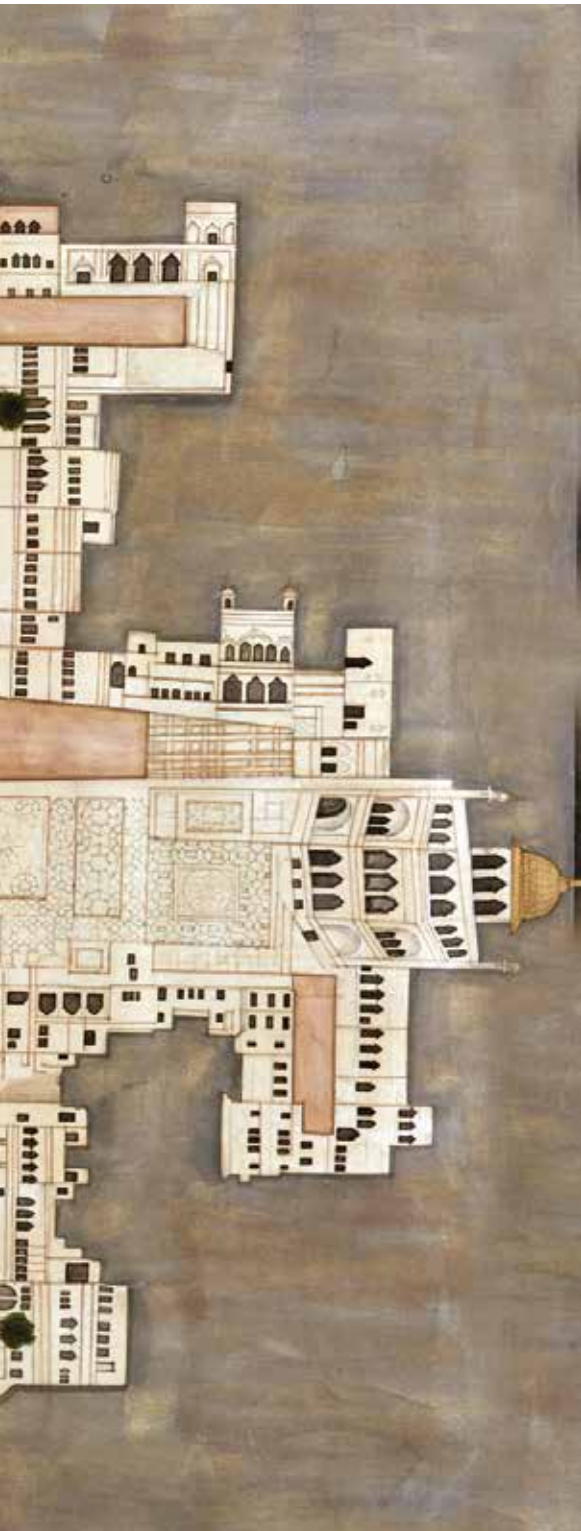


beyond the world of the senses. We are struck not by its masses and its surfaces, but rather by its quiet open spaces. The shining and intricate surface of gold on the temple's upper storey creates the impression

of an elegant jewelry box floating on the water and rising into the air. It is hard to realize that we are actually looking at a mass-bearing structure, that the white marble walls are working hard to bear the

weight of the roof above. They seem weightless; it is their delicately carved, abstract decoration that attracts our attention.

The edge of the roof is decorated with no less than fifty-eight little



(Left) An architectural Sketch of the Golden Temple, Amritsar (Artist unknown c.early 1900s 21 x 26.5 in Gouache on paper, mounted on linen). (Image by: Khanuja Family Collection)

golden onion-shaped domes, which bewilder the senses as they run around the roof. The four domed kiosks at the corners of the roof are matched by the great flat dome that crowns the entire building. This dome is adorned with a gigantic lotus-leaf motif, and the little spheres that run around it are actually lotuses as well.

The room just below the dome lies right above the central hall and the Book, so the dome makes the presence of the Book visible even from the outside. When we go inside the temple, we find the same transcendence of concrete realities. The different surfaces of the gold, the mosaics that cover the white marble, make us realize that we are in a world of reflected light and abstract patterns, where nothing has any solidity.

The dazzling designs on the walls make us unsure what is near and what is distant, what is real and what is a mirrored illusion. The attention cannot be focused on such surfaces. The senses are over-whelmed by the barrage of impressions.

The mind turns towards the calm center of the whole, towards the vast space of the central hall which represents the Infinite, the Being that somehow brings together and explains all these conflicting impressions that bombard our senses. For me, one of the most beautiful photographs of the temple is of a child in one of the galleries on the upper floor. What is he looking

at? He is not really looking at the pattern on the floor, because it offers nothing to focus on, but rather on the Infinity that its confusing repetition suggests. But, would it not be better to say that he is not really looking at all? He is contemplating. His experience is precisely that which the Golden Temple was designed to produce.

The surfaces of the temple deliberately distract the senses so as to direct the mind. The delicate work of the goldsmith, the mirrors on the walls, arches behind arches behind arches, the bewildering pattern on the floor ensure that we do not know where we are.

We are in a strange world of deceptive receding surfaces where we cannot trust our eyes, where everything we can see is vague and unclear, where the one thing that we cannot see is the only thing that is real. But when we find ourselves recording such impressions, are we talking now about the architectural ornament of a building, or are we talking about life itself?

I thought if I could show you two very different types of architecture, I might be able to establish that they were somehow related to the lives that their builders lived. But now that I have come to the end of my chapter, I am beginning to suspect that this most ancient and useful of all the arts is indeed the very image of our inner lives.

Harry Walker is from Athlone in Ireland. He received degrees in Classics from Trinity College, Dublin, and Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. He is a Senior Lecturer in Classics at Bates College in Lewiston, ME. He has published books on Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit topics.

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OPERATION BLUESTAR LET'S NOT FORGET!

Text by : Amardeep Singh

Photographs by : Sondeep Shankar

That alone is a temple, where He can be known. Through contemplation in human body, one understands His omnipresence. Don't look for him outside, He dwells within the Heart. The ego-willed cannot appreciate this fact, in mere worldly pursuits he wastes his life. He pervades everywhere, discover Him through reflection.

– Guru Nanak (Page 953, Adi Granth)



First photos of the damaged Akal Takht building after Operation Blue Star.

When an institution exists for its value then its bricks are not cemented in mortar but in the belief of its ideals.

In the name of Operation Bluestar, from 3 – 8 June 1984, the Indian army, under orders of Indira Gandhi, besieged the Golden Temple at Amritsar. For the first time in the history of India, the army was tasked to attack its own civilians, on a day when thousands of devotees thronged to the temple to celebrate Guru Arjan Dev's (5th Guru of the Sikhs) martyrdom day. The reason for attack was to remove Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his 150 followers who had taken shelter in the complex.

The background leading to this event is too complicated to cover in full as it runs from the time of partition of India in 1947, culminating into a political debacle of 1984. The basic issues spanned across:

- Linguistic division of Indian state territories
- River water policy across the Indian states
- Reduction of Punjabi's in Defense force
- Restriction of Government industrial investments in Punjab

Indian politics thrives on divisional themes. Imposition of national emergency by Indira Gandhi from the years 1975–1977 in order to retain her power at the centre of Indian politics became the catalyst to her communal based politics that emerged when she regained central power in 1980. In emergency period, Punjab was the only state in India to have openly opposed the national emergency rule imposed by Indira Gandhi, resulting in



A general view of Harmandir Sahib.

Militants sitting atop the Akal Takht building overlooking Harmandir Sahib on the eve of Operation Blue Star, June 03, 1984.



citizens courting peaceful arrest to demand national freedom under the democratic constitution of India.

It is estimated that more than 140,000 people in Punjab offered themselves to be jailed. When she regained central power in 1980, it was her target to leverage communal based policies to break the Punjabi opposition that had voiced so openly against her emergency rule.

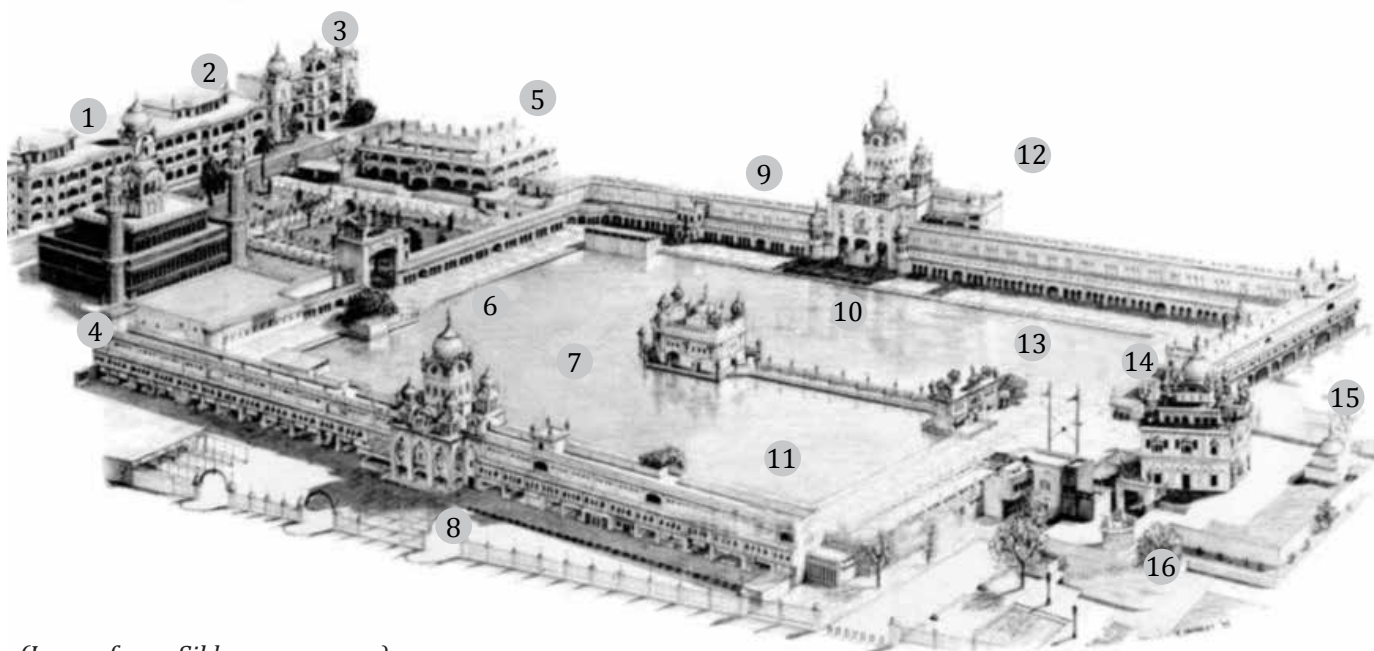
It was in 1981 and the people of Punjab, having sensed that Indira Gandhi, who now had majority power at the centre, will again violate human rights as was done in the 1977 emergency, voiced the implementation of "Anandpur Sahib resolution" as the fundamental basis to govern India. This resolution basically demanded that central government should be only responsible for areas like defense, communication, transportation, etc and leave the rest for the Indian regional states to manage for themselves. It is the governance model used by United States of America.

To break the voice in Punjab politics, that continued to be a strong force against Indira Gandhi's governance style, she started implementing the divide and rule, religion based politics. The period thereafter witnessed the downward spiral in Punjab, resulting in the dark phase of the 1980s that my generation witnessed.

It is in this period that Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale emerged on the centre stage of Punjab.

The sequence of events moved rapidly out of control. By end 1983, Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale had moved himself inside the surrounding guest house area of the Golden Temple. Under the national law, when a civilian has to be arrested, it is the police and not the army that has to conduct the job. It is interesting to note that earlier he was once arrested by the police but released in less than 24 hours. So it is worth pondering why Indira chose not to use the civilian defense force but ordered the army to conduct the operation at Golden Temple on a day

1. *Guru Arjan Niwas Hostel*
2. *Guru Ram Das Sarai Hostel*
3. *Teja Singh Samundri Hall*
4. *Langar Dining Hall*
5. *Manji Sahib Diwan Hall*
6. *Dukh Bhanjani Ber Tree and At Sath Tirath Shrine*
7. *Central Sikh Museum*
8. *Main North Entrance Hall*
9. *Baba Deep Singh Memorial*
10. *Darbar Sahib*
11. *Ber Baba Buddha Tree*
12. *Sikh Reference Library*
13. *Darshani Deori Treasury*
14. *Miri-Piri Nishaan Sahib Flagposts*
15. *Akal Takht*
16. *Thara Sahib Shrine*



(Image from: Sikhmuseum.com)

when innocent pilgrims would be thronging the complex. Her orders to use full military force to finish everyone inside the complex was essentially driven by her divisional political agenda as it's through this action she would be able to further strengthen her position across India.

The destruction of Golden Temple compound was beyond comprehension. Tanks bombarded the Akal Takth. Over 8,000 people (Citizens of Democracy estimate the number at 8,000 but the Government records are at 493) are estimated to have been killed in the attack on Golden Temple, majority being innocent pilgrims. In my visit to Golden Temple in the following months, I saw the structure of Akal Takth in rubble. The central Golden Temple building had bullet marks all around it. Many years later, in the year 2000, the Defense Minister of India, George Fernandez acknowledged that the Indian Army in the 1984 operation had removed rare historical manuscripts and artefact, which no one knows where they have disappeared. In the events following the June 1984 attack on Golden Temple complex, two Sikh bodyguards of Indira Gandhi, assassinated her on 31st October, 1984. Within hours, emergency was imposed in Punjab so that no backlash happens in the state but interestingly across the rest of India, the new leadership of Indira Gandhi's Congress party executed a pogrom (planned attack against the Sikh community), killing more than 8,000 Sikhs across the country, of which 3,000 were killed in broad daylight in Delhi.

An average Indian lacks the ability to see through divisional politics and Indira succeeded well in her game to divide and rule. If Punjab

problem really existed as was blown out of proportion by Indira Gandhi's divisional political aims, then it is worth asking, where is the problem today? It goes to show the self-centered sinister plan of the Indian leadership in this phase of dark history.

An average Indian lacks the ability to see through divisional politics and Indira succeeded well in her game to divide and rule.

What Indira Gandhi may not have known is that Golden Temple, has been a centre stage for the Sikh community. It has been attacked many times before and every time the community has responded against the brutal use of force but it has also been forgiving to move on very quickly. Between 1737 and 1767, Golden Temple was attacked six times by non-Indian origin people, essentially the Mughal and Afghan forces. However, in 1984 it was the Indian Army that attacked it's own citizens under the myopic divisive leadership of Indira Gandhi.

Three decades have passed and the Sikhs have moved on just like they moved on earlier in the history. However it is unfortunate that there has been no closure to the events. The missing artefacts and manuscripts have not been returned. The organizers of the

1984 anti-Sikh pogrom conducted across India, after Indira Gandhi's death, remain free. Justice has been denied to the citizens of India.

On the third decade of this tragic event, I share a few pictures of the Golden Temple and it's complex that I made during my visit in 2010. In ending, I would like to reflect on the above verse by Guru Nanak (page 953 of Adi Granth) where he reminds us that the true temple is our human body, where "He" has to be found. Golden Temple is however the external manifestation of the intrinsic belief system of the Sikhs.

So deep is the Sikh psyche associated with this institution that post the attack on the complex, when Indira Gandhi got the Akal Takth rebuilt by the Government money, the Sikhs made it a point to not accept her gesture. At the first opportunity, they raised it to the ground and rebuilt it from the community money.


May the future generations continue to reflect and talk about history as means of increasing love across communities and build on the ideals of value.

Amardeep Singh, a resident of Singapore was educated at The Doon School (Dehradun, India), Manipal Institute of Technology (India) and pursued Masters in Business Administration at the University of Chicago, USA. He worked in the Financial Services sector for 25 years and was the Head of the Asia Pacific Region at American Express for Revenue Management. He has authored two books, 'Lost Heritage, The Sikh Legacy in Pakistan' and 'The Quest Continues: Lost Heritage, The Sikh Legacy in Pakistan'. He has also produced and directed the 24-episode docuseries, 'Allegory, A Tapestry of Guru Nanak's Travels'.

REST IN PEACE

A Poem by:

Dr. Ishmeet Kaur Chaudhry



When someone dies, they say
"Rest in peace"
But if the brutal hands of politics
Burns your men and children
Rape your women
Rip naked your daughters
Kill you with burning tyres and arson powder
Humiliate you
Mock at your identity
Make fun of your hair
Handcuff you with your kara
Tie the string of your kachairah to your neck
and hang you till death on the tree
burn your kanga with your burning body
stab you with your own kirpan
blame you for the crime you haven't committed
followed by decades
and decades
and decades
and more years of injustice
how do you rest in peace?
Alive or dead?

Dr. Ishmeet Kaur Chaudhry is an educationist, author, and poet teaches at the Centre for English Studies at Central University of Gujarat. She was recognised as an Inspired Teacher for The President of India's In-residence Program at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi in June 2015.

THE PUNJAB CHIEFS THE LOST GLORY OF THE PUNJAB ARISTOCRACY IN INDIA & PAKISTAN

Bobby Singh Bansal

The *Punjab Chiefs: The Lost Glory of the Punjab Aristocracy in India & Pakistan* is an extensive insight into the aristocratic world of the Muslim, Hindu and Sikh courtiers that once served the opulent court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the early 19th century. The book explores the history of such personalities that formerly served the mighty Lahore durbar especially the less known offspring of the great Maharaja, such as Prince Kashmira Singh, Prince Peshaura Singh and to a degree the descendants of Maharaja Sher Singh who were exiled from Punjab to other Indian provinces by the British authorities after the annexation of the Punjab kingdom in 1849. Not much was known about the descendants of the powerful nobles of the Lahore durbar such as Raja Dhyani Singh, the powerful wazir of Punjab, who became one of the most powerful courtiers in the Punjab kingdom, along with his two siblings Rajas Suchet Singh and Gulab Singh, the latter becoming the future overlord of Kashmir. Then there was Raja Lal Singh, a complete unknown, whose alleged intimate

association with Rani Jinda excelled his position at the Lahore court from a mere revenue collector to acquiring the status of wazir in 1845. Others included in the book are Diwan Mulraj of Multan fame, Diwan Ayudhia Prasad who accompanied the young exiled prince Duleep Singh to Mussoorie in 1852 and Shamir Singh Thethar, the fearless general who was responsible for rebuilding the Gobindgarh fort in Amritsar on behalf of the Maharaja in 1805. The content list includes the Attariwalas, Majithias, Nakais, Kanhaiyas, Ramgharias and many others from the landed gentry whose ancestors proudly served the Sikh and later the British empire in the 19th century.

The original version of the *Punjab Chiefs* by Sir Lepel Griffin was first published in 1865 and was updated a number of times in 1890, 1910 and lastly in 1940. In those previous volumes, numerous families were covered from Peshawar to Multan and in this updated version families from the regions of Haryana, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Lahore have now been included.



The author spent over five years researching for material and information, making numerous trips to India and Pakistan acquiring the biographies of the noble families of undivided Punjab.



The unique part of his field-work was that the author personally tracked them down at their ancestral mansions and forts, which were centuries old, such rare moments the author will cherish in years to come. The author was privileged to be in their presence, with whom they shared invaluable stories of their forefathers, that had been passed down by generations that provided a rare glimpse into their lives sharing vintage illustrations from the family albums that were centuries old. The research was hectic and tedious, sometimes the author nearly gave up, as some families were not so forthcoming with providing essential material on their forefathers but with perseverance and a positive approach, the mission was completed in late 2019.

In this 550-page state-of-the-art book, the first portion delves into the lineage of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's own family, which is integral to the book's inception and later focuses on his descendants and powerful courtiers. However, since the partition of 1947, many elite families had migrated east to newly independent India abandoning their prized relics, ancestral estates including rare historical books and archives. This further created a vacuum of eighty years since the last edition, whereby nothing of historical importance had been documented since 1940. Therefore, it was crucial that this gap in history was filled with relevant details which also brings alive notable families from the cis-Sutlej states of Malaudh, Bagrian, Maler Kotla, Kalsia, Bhadaur, Shahabad, Retgarh and even Rai Bahadur Narain Singh who had tirelessly transformed Delhi in the 1930's.

The Punjab Chiefs is a fully illustrated publication that includes

over 100 unseen pictures which till now had been unpublished, complete with individual pedigree tables and includes a rare photograph of Mai Chand Kaur, the eldest daughter of General Hari Singh Nalwa, who married Sardar Lehna Singh Garjakh of Gujranwala, whose forefathers had served under Nalwa in numerous military campaigns for Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

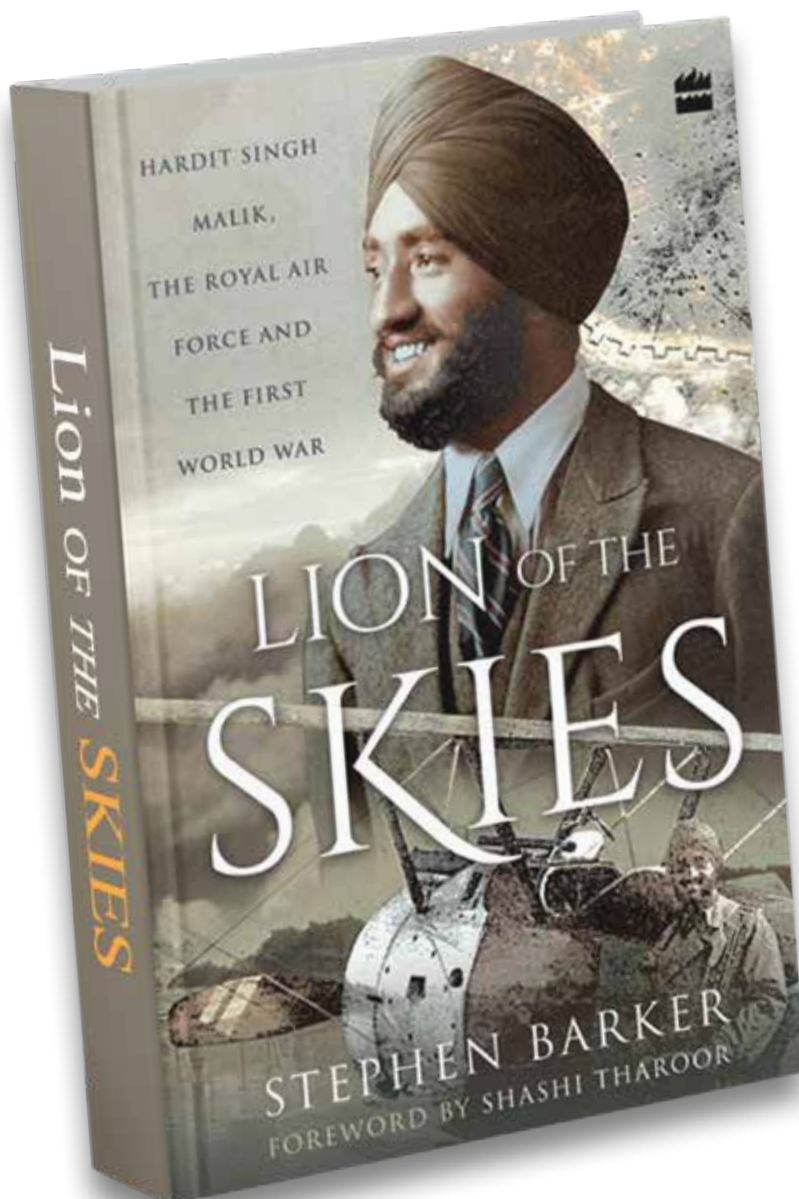
This book is not only informative and inspirational, it will attract the general reader not just academically as a reference book, but it will become a treasure trove for all history enthusiasts wishing to indulge in capturing the lost glory of the Punjab aristocracy. The book has been published by Himalayan Books (New Delhi) in collaboration with SK Foundation UK and is available thru Amazon.in and at all reputable book stores in northern India.

The author is now working on the second volume, which will include over twenty new families, especially the hill rajas and is planned for release in early 2024. Previous books by the author Bobby Singh Bansal include *The Lion's Firanghis – Europeans at the Court of Lahore* (2010), *Remnants of the Sikh Empire* (2016), *Sikhs of the Caribbean* (2019) and *The Sun Rises in the East* (2021).

Bobby Singh Bansal is an award winning author, historian and documentary filmmaker based in London. A passionate advocate of promoting Sikh heritage and culture on a global scale. He is recognised with the conservation and restoration of numerous historical monuments especially in Pakistan. He is married to an artist and has two sons.

BOOK REVIEW: LION OF THE SKIES

Reviewed By : Bhupinder Singh



When I first read news about the book on Hardit Singh Malik by Stephen Barker, my first thoughts were – well this would not have happened in those days of first world war, for a Britisher, to write about a subject from the colony. The world has changed in last century, but still for Barker to venture a book on Hardit, after the protagonist had published his own autobiography, only a decade earlier, makes it an even more challenging task. Barker has answered the question in his Introduction by saying that it was *“to explore further small details described by Hardit”*.

This was the time when the new flying machines were going to be a part of war efforts for the first time. As these flying birds were still in their infancy, their designs were far from refined, materials used to make them were commonly available materials in those days as wood, canvas, with braces, and wires for reinforcement. The pilots wore leather helmets, big goggles for wind protection as the wind shields were open. The pilots essentially came from upper class Europeans. Hardit was a pioneer in that sense gaining entrance to an exclusive club and work *“to the challenges of being an Indian serving amongst Europeans”*. The first Chapter titled Rawalpindi starts with the birth

of Hardit in the small hours of 23 November 1894. In Hardit's home emphasis was placed on religious devotion and prayer. He arrived in England from Rawalpindi, India in 1909 where he met his older brother Teja Singh, who was studying civil engineering. He passed the entrance examination to Clifton College and enrolled there for Spring term in April 1910. Later he moved to Oxford in 1912 and graduated from there. Then he moved on to London to study law. During that period the First World War broke out, like all young men of that time including Hardit wanted to enlist. Coming from a Sikh family with strong martial traditions his yearning was palpable to be *"tested in the forge of modern warfare"*. He had written in his letter to his family; *"Besides, we Sikhs have a great fighting tradition, and we should not make too much fuss about death."*

As luck would have it, Britishers were not keen to allow "aliens" like himself to be admitted to their forces as officers, even when qualified he was thwarted in his first attempt. The only entry open for him was to be inducted as mere "other ranks" which would entail him working as support member, truly demeaning.

With doors closed and his yearning strong to join the war, Hardit in the summer of 1916, got a chance to go near the battlefields in France as a driver of an ambulance for the Croix Rouge Francoise. His job assignment entailed picking the wounded from the battlefields, and ferrying nurses to and from the hospitals. Here in Cognac, he was first smitten by the idea of becoming a fighter pilot. He was particularly inspired by the great French hero and fighter pilot, Georges Guynemer who was his



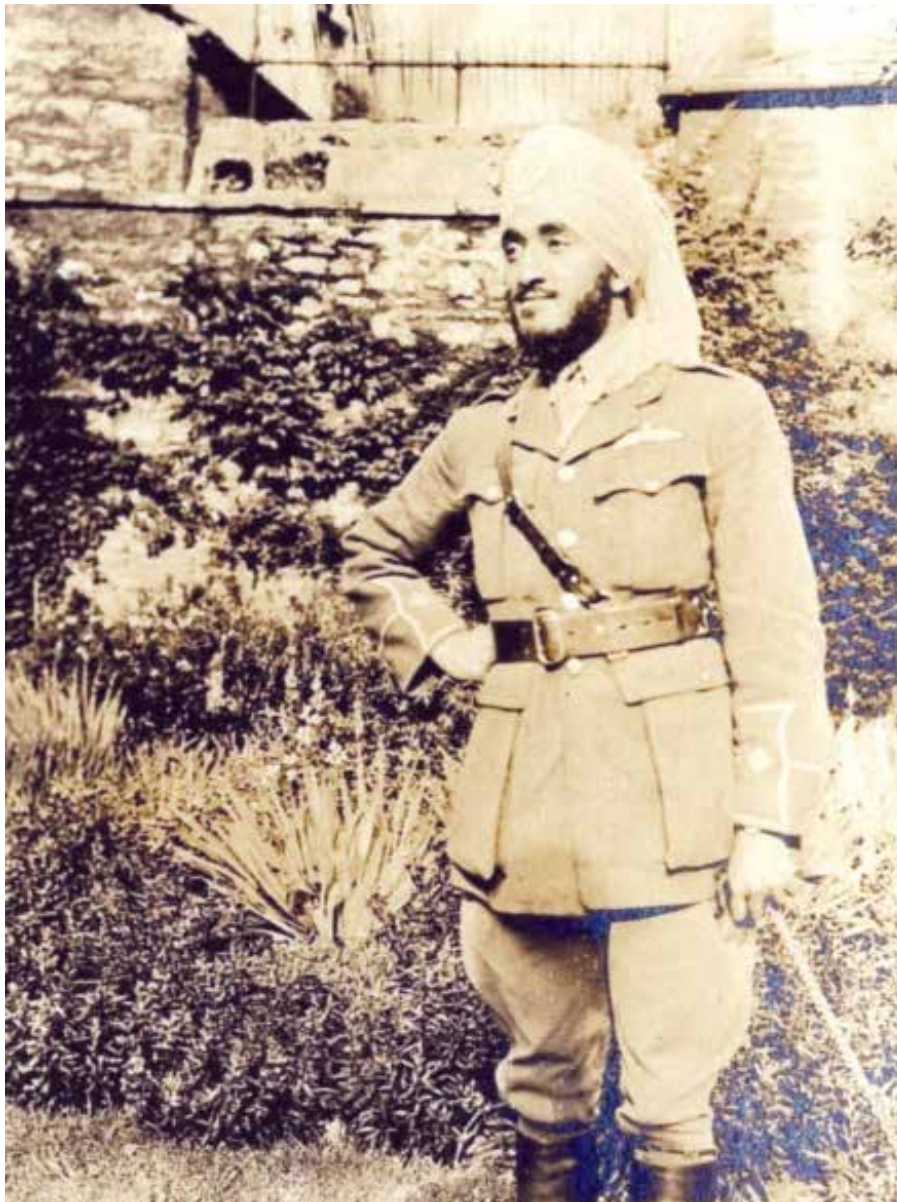
country's second highest scoring fighter ace with 53 victories. He made enquiries for enlisting in French Air Force.

By the end of 1916, as a result drastic need of recruits there was a change in the policy, and a small number of Indian military pilots did take part in the air war as officers of the RFC (Royal Flying Corps) and later the RAF (Royal Air Force). Hardit with a recommendation from the Dean Urquhart at Oxford to a former head of RFC was finally able to enroll as an officer in RFC on 28 March 1917.

The racial discrimination still prevailed, as he was given a position of Honorary 2nd Lieutenant, without pay, nor authority to command over British personnel. He was trained as a pilot in Aldershot, Hampshire. As an observant Sikh, he wore a turban instead of a helmet, and later wore a specially designed flying helmet that fitted over his turban. As a result of his unusual helmet, he was nicknamed the "Flying Hobgoblin".

Hardit was with 28 Squadron of RFC, flying single-seat biplane fighter aircraft called Sopwith Camel that was introduced on the Western Front in 1917. Hardit's first flight over the German lines in action occurred on 18 October. *"The aim of this combined sortie with 32 Squadron was to patrol the front lines, with the Camels protecting the slow and clumsy R.E.8 planes carrying out their primary role of spotting for the artillery on the ground, in preparation for the next major assault in the salient. Between 1000 and 1100 hours that morning, Hardit fired off several long-range bursts at enemy aircraft to no avail, knowing that the only way to make a kill was to get up close, yet coming into contact with the enemy for the first time relieved the tension somewhat."*

Next day, 19 October they were up in the air again, despite very poor visibility. *"The aim of the operation was to make a combined attack against the important German aerodrome at Rumbeke, close to Roulers. Rumbeke was the home of Jasta 2, the German squadron named after its now posthumous commander Oswald Boelcke."* Hardit's task with 28 Squadron was to sweep around as far to the east as possible and surprise those Germans sent up to engage the bombers. There were over fifty aircraft on the mission, looking for Germans. Soon they engaged a small party of Germans, taking them by surprise. There were bullets flying in all directions. Shooting ensued which created quite a confusion as the planes from opposite sides got mixed up. Hardit was on the tail of an enemy, who instead of turning back to engage kept on diving.



"He must have been as frightened as I was! I must have started shooting from too great a distance, for at first nothing seemed to happen. But suddenly I hit him and first his plane started to smoke, and then went down spinning in flames..... As Hardit followed down his falling victim, he could see the black smoke issuing from the burning buildings in the distance, but he had other more pressing considerations to attend to. He had dropped too low and needed to climb quickly if he wasn't to share the same fate. There was nothing

more vulnerable than a machine close to the ground from an attack from above and his Camel was also isolated. Fortunately, Barker had spotted his predicament and brought C Flight down to his aid. The six of them climbed back to a safer altitude and headed for Droghda."

"On the way back, he encountered some desultory antiaircraft fire from the German positions below. He thought nothing of this until he began his landing procedure at 1235 hours, an hour and twenty-five minutes after taking off."

As he dived straight to ground his plane broke into three pieces. Strapped to the seat he was unable to get out, engine fitters helped him out. Nevertheless, having recovered his composure, Hardit joined the others in the officers' mess, where there was an air of celebration. Everyone had returned from the mission unscathed and the wiser for the experience, and the squadron's contribution was judged to be a great success by the high command.

His marriage took place on 13 April 1919 in Rawalpindi. He returned back to England on ship Dufferin with his bride. RFC was now part of RAF and he officially left it on 16 August 1919. They returned back to India at the end of 1921.

The last Chapter in the book is Conclusion which does not cover the later part of his life of being Independent India's first high commissioner to Canada in 1949. He was also Indian ambassador to France to use his goodwill among the French, earned during the World War 1 by working for their red cross and retired after it in 1956. A legendary hero in his own right, Sardar Hardit Singh Malik lived and died with the two German bullets that had wounded him, still in his legs.

Bhupinder Singh is a Houston-based businessman, an engineer by profession. He hails from Myanmar, was educated in India, and started his career there. He has a keen interest on Sikh history, motivation and spirituality. He is author of 7 books and has co-authored one. His articles have been featured in print media and web portals.

AMRITSAR: HARIMANDAR, RAMDASPUR, DARBAR OR GOLDEN?

Harinder Singh

Amritsar, Ramdaspur, Harimandar, and Darbar—what are these terms referring to? Are they merely historical spaces? Do we have contemporary or near-contemporary accounts of the terms or of their development? Are there any citations in the Guru Granth Sahib?

There is a general consensus that Guru Amardas Sahib acquired the land, Guru Ramdas Sahib started the construction, and Guru Arjan Sahib inaugurated and developed the now popularly termed “Golden Temple” complex and the city of Amritsar. That means it is during the Guruship reign of three Sovereigns, Guru Nanaks

III-V (1552-1606). There are variations on the narrative, but most cite these eighteenth and nineteenth-century texts:

- Sohan Kavi, Gurbilas Patshahi 6, 1718
- Kesar Singh Chibbar, Bansavlinama Dasan Patshahian Ka, 1769
- Sarup Das Bhalla, Mahima Prakash, 1773
- Saundha, Ustat Sri Amritsar Ji ki, 1797
- Mahakavi, Santokh Singh, Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth, 1840
- Giani Gian Singh, Panth Parkash, 1874
- Giani Gian Singh, Tavarikh Guru Khalsa, 1892



(Image by: Amardeep Singh)

Most likely, Chak (township) was established between 1564 and 1572. It came to be known as Chak Guru, Guru ka Chak, Chak Guru Ramdas, or Ramdaspora. Where the Guru resided was known as Guru ke Mahal. Baba Buddha (1506-1631) was in charge of operations and finances. The first digging was of a pool, later named Santokhsar (Content-Pool). Before it was completed, digging of the second pool was started, named Ramsar or Ammrīt-sar (Immortal-Pool). Township development continued simultaneously. *Guru ka Bazar*, as well as Chaunk Passian markets, were established. The Guru Sahibs envisioned and led; hired laborers and volunteers performed the physical and creative labor in love.

Dr. Manadajit Kaur, in *The Golden Temple: Past and Present*, examines the evidence presented by many sources and concludes:

Whether the land was granted by Emperor Akbar or it was acquired by the Guru before the grant was actually obtained or, still, was purchased by the Guru from the zamindars of Tung at the instance of Emperor Akbar, or, alternatively, was presented by the residents of Sultanwind out of reverence for the Guru – are versions, each one of which is based on tradition, there being no contemporary or near-contemporary record or document bearing testimony to them. Whatever the source of the manner of acquisition, it is certain that the selection of the site was planned and not accidental; it was the choice of the Gurus themselves. It was clear that the land of the Harimandir was revenue-free. The land settlement records of Amritsar made by the British rulers in 1865 note ‘the land of Darbar Sahib of Guru Ram Das as revenue-free grant.’ Even the original name of the city, Chak Guru or Guru Ka Chak, bears testimony to



Golden Temple with entrance to the causeway to the right. Photographer unknown. c. late 19th century, 10.5 x 14.5 in Albumen print (Image by: Khanuja Family Collection)

the nature of the land as revenue-free. The conclusion, therefore, cannot escape that the Chak had, at some time, obtained exemption from the payment of land revenue from Emperor Akbar whose policy of granting *waqf* (religious properties) even to the people of non-Muslim faiths, is well-known.

Ammritsar (ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ)

Ammrit (popularly Amrit) is a Sanskrit word; it means immortality. In Indic traditions, Ammrīt (also *amrat*, *amai*, and *ami*) also refers to nectar, the drink of gods. In Sikhi, it is invoked for many elements that help a mortal connect with Immortal: composition (*bani*), moment (*vela*), identity (*nam*), word (*sabad*), and so on. The initiation ceremony to enter the Khalsa order is also called the Ammrīt ceremony; one aspect of the initiation is to drink “nectar” prepared by stirring Khanda (double-edged sword) in water with *patase* (hardened syrup sweets) while compositions (*banis*) are being recited.

To better understand the context of Ammrīt, let’s delve into Guru Granth Sahib’s *Sabad*-expanse!

In rag (melodic mode) Maru in Guru Granth Sahib (1011-12), Guru Nanak Sahib reveals:

Guru (Wisdom) is the ocean, the Ammrīt-sar,

from which one receives whatever fruit-fulfillment one wishes;

that one abides the substance of immortal Nam (Identification) in the heart and the mind.

Serving the Guru (Wisdom) always brings comfort to whoever follows the Hukam (Command).

In rag Majh in Guru Granth Sahib (113), Guru Amardas Sahib reveals:

I adore, revere, adore, the one who connects the consciousness with the Guru’s (Wisdom) feet (humbly).

Eternal Guru (Wisdom) is the eternal Ammrīt-sar, the mind which bathes (learns) in it removes the filth. Reflect.

In rag Maru in Guru Granth Sahib (1045), Guru Amardas Sahib reveals:

That servant is perfect who dies (ego-free) with Sabad (Word),

The Eternal Guru (Wisdom) warrior speaks and voices.

Within the body is the eternal Ammrít-sar from which the mind lovingly and naturally drinks.

In Salok Varam te Vadhik, in Guru Granth Sahib (1412), Guru Amardas Sahib reveals:

Lahore city is Ammrít-sar, the house of Praise. Guru Sahib, in the previous salok (poetic genre) couplet, proclaims that even “the city of Lahore which is full of poison and havoc all the time” can become Ammrítsar or a fellowship of immortality, life-giving nectar for solace if the people of this city live in the 1’s Glory.

In Sirirag in Guru Granth Sahib (40), Guru Ramdas Sahib reveals:

Eternal Guru (Wisdom), the Being-like, is the Ammrítsar; those who come and bathe in it (learn from it) are fortunate.

Their filth from many lives is removed when the filth-free Nam (Identification) is affirmed.

Nanak: Votaries achieve a sublime state by connecting with the Eternal Guru (Wisdom).

In rag Gauri in Guru Granth Sahib (234), Guru Ramdas Sahib reveals:

O camel-like (wandering) mind, my breath (life), you need to remove the filth, the pretense, and the doubt.

Guru (Wisdom) has filled Ammrítsar, join companionship to remove the filth.

Guru Sahib invokes camels (karhale); they are the ships of the

desert. Camels transport material for merchants. Metaphorically, a wandering mind is like a camel.

In rag Gujri in Guru Granth Sahib (492), Guru Ramdas Sahib reveals:

Truth-speaking Eternal Guru (Wisdom) is the Ammrít-sar, bathing in it (learning from it), the crow (vice-indulgent) becomes the swan (Nam-filled).

Nanak: those washing their filth with Guru’s (Wisdom) way, they are blessed, so blessed, great, and greatly fortunate.

In rag Gauri in Guru Granth Sahib (250), Guru Arjan Sahib reveals:

The Divine Guru is the pilgrimage and the Ammrít-sarovar; the bathing is in the Guru’s infinite knowledge. The Divine Guru is like the Creator, banisher of all sins (crimes), the Divine Guru transforms fallen to auspicious.

In Savayye Mahle Chautha ke in Guru Granth Sahib (1396), Bhat Kal reveals:

[Guru Ramdas Sahib is] the Ammrít-sarovar, always full, springs of immortal-state nectar are flowing from it.

Those truth-exemplars drink (savor) and bathe (learn) their minds in it

who first did service.

So, it is very clear that Ammrít-sar or Ammrít-sarovar (sar and sarvor are word variations) literally is Immortality-Pool, contextually is Immortal-Fellowship.

Harimandar (ਹਰਮੰਦਰ)

Harimandar is a compound noun. Hari in Sanskrit means “to shine, to flourish, green.” In Vedic texts, Hari is Supreme Absolute. In Hinduism, Hari also refers to the popular god Vishnu. In Guru Granth Sahib, Hari

is used for green, everyone, and most importantly for our context, for *Ik Oankar*. Given the etymology and Sikh context, preference is given to 1-Light to keep it clear and precise. Mandar is derived from a Sanskrit *Mandir*, which means “house, temple, palace, habitation, any waiting or abiding-place.” In Hinduism, Mandar mostly refers to temples where gods or goddesses are worshiped. In Guru Granth Sahib, Mandar is used for a house, temple, and most importantly, for our context, for *IkOankar*’s Mansion. Hence Harimandar is 1-Light’s Mansion!

To better understand the context of Harimandar, let’s again delve into Guru Granth Sahib’s Sabad-expanse!

In rag Prabhati in Guru Granth Sahib (1346), Guru Amardas Sahib reveals that with *bibhas*, something that illuminates and shines and is to be sung at the day-break of dawn.

Prabhati, Third Embodiment, Bibhas :

1 Force Eternal Wisdom’s Grace With Guru’s (Wisdom) grace, you see the Harimandar within you.

Harimandar is to be searched in Sabad (Word); take care of 1-Light’s Nam (Identification) [within you]. 1.

O my mind, the color comes with Sabad’s (Word) dye.

Eternal devotion [builds] eternal Harimandar [within], that’s where eternal splendor reveals. 1. Reflect.

This body is Harimandar; this [mystery] is revealed with the jewel of knowledge.

Self-oriented do not know the essence, [think] Harimandar cannot be within the human. 2. Harimandar [within this body] is created by the revered 1-Light,

keeps it beautiful with Hukam (Command).

As writ is written by the Source [in each body-Harimandar], that is lived; none can be its eraser. 3.

[As one] recognizes Sabad (Word), obtains comfort, and loves eternal Nam (Identification).

Harimandar [the human body becomes] beautiful with Sabad (Word),

the Infinite's golden fort.

4. This world is Harimandar, [but there is] utter darkness-ignorance without the Guru (Wisdom).

Worshiping other love, [they're] self-oriented, blind-ignorant, and foolish. 5.

Where the account is asked for, there the body-physical or the caste-status does not go.

Those imbued with the Eternal are freed, [those in] other love are pained. 6.

The treasure of Nam (Identification) is in Harimandar; the foolish and the ignorant do not understand it.

[Those who] recognize it with Guru's (Wisdom) grace, keep 1-Light enshrined in the hearts. 7.

Those who are imbued with color-love of Sabad (Word) learn Guru's (Wisdom) bani (utterance) from the Guru (Wisdom).

Those votaries are filth-free, vice-free, and holy who remain in 1-Light's Nam (Identification). 8.

Harimandar is 1-Light's shop, [1-Light] keeps it beautiful with the Sabad-Word.

In that [shop], the trade is of

one Nam (Identification), Guru-oriented (Wisdom-oriented) buy [it to become] beautiful. 9.

In Harimandar [human body] is the iron-like mind

enticed by other love.

[The mind] becomes golden meeting (touched) Guru (Wisdom) [Paras or philosophers' stone],

its value cannot be said. 10.

In Harimandar [the human body] lives 1-Light,

that [1] is in everyone incessantly.

Nanak: Deal by becoming Guru-oriented (Wisdom-oriented), that [Nam] is the eternal trade.

11. 1.

Guru Sahib takes us through a journey of the Harimandar. It is about the Harimandar in both personal space and public space. One makes Harimandar with 1's connection; the Guru Sahibs make Harimandar in the world to demonstrate Harimandar has open access to all. And both can become "golden," but only with the Guru-Wisdom. Sri Harimandar Sahib also refers to the historical gurdwaras (a Sikh place of learning) in Amritsar, Kiratpur, and Patna cities.

Ramdaspur (ਰਾਮਦਾਸਪੁਰ)

Ramdaspur is a compound noun. Ram is a Sanskrit word that means "pleasing, delightful, charming, beautiful, or lovely." In Hinduism, Ram is also the name of Vishnu's sixth and seventh incarnations, namely: Parush-Ram and Ram-Chandar. In Guru Granth Sahib, Ram is used for Ram-Chandar, and, most notably for our context, for IkOankar. Given the etymology and Sikh context, preference is being given to 1-Charmer to keep it clear and precise. Das is also a Sanskrit word that means "servant, slave,

devotee, enemy, or barbaric." In Hinduism, Das also refers to a slave or devotee or a particular god or goddess. In Guru Granth Sahib, Das is used for servants, slaves, enemies, and most importantly for our context, for IkOankar's devotees. Given the etymology and Sikh context, preference is being given to the votary to keep it clear and precise. So, Ramdas in Guru Granth Sahib refers to 1-Charmer's votary, Guru Ramdas Sahib, Bhat Das, and a Hindu of *bairagi sadhus*. Pur means ville or city.

To better understand the context of Ramdas, let's again delve into Guru Granth Sahib's Sabad-expanse!

Phunhe is a Panjabi poetry genre where a word repeats again, *phun*. In this *Phunhe*, *Harihan* repeats in most of the twenty-three stanzas. *Harihan* was also the name of Guru Arjan Sahib's sister-in-law. In *Phunhe* in Guru Granth Sahib (1361), Guru Arjan Sahib reveals:

[I have] seen all places, none is like you!

1-Being, Creator built you; that's why you are so beautiful.

O Ramdaspur (1-Charmer's Votaries ville or fellowship),

[your] population is dense, infinite, and incomparable!

Nanak: O 1-Light, sins (crimes) leave by bathing (learning) in Ramdas pool (fellowship).

In rag Sorathi in Guru Granth Sahib (625), Guru Arjan Sahib reveals Ramdas sarovar: Bathing (learning) in Ramdas (1-Charmer's votaries) pool (fellowship), all sins (crimes) committed are erased (their influence is removed).

[They] become filth-free by bathing (learning),

the perfect Guru (Wisdom) grants this gift.

In rag Bilaval in Guru Granth Sahib (817), Guru Arjan Sahib reveals:

The Divine is the Protector and the Infinite; that One's service makes one filth-free.

The great Guru (Wisdom) established 1-Charmer's Raj (rule) in Ramdaspur. Reflect.

Is it the pool (sar or sarovar) in the city (pur) of 1-Charmer constructed by the fourth Nanak, Guru Ramdas Sahib, or is it referring to the fellowship of 1-Charmer's votaries (Ramdas)?

To better understand who Ramdas is, let's delve into Guru Granth Sahib's Sabad-expanse again!

In rag Gauri in Guru Granth Sahib (274), Guru Arjan Sahib reveals who Ramdas is:

In whose mind is the residence of the Supreme Being the identity of that one is truly Ramdas.

That one begins to see 1-Charmer in all beings; that one finds the 1 as devoted to the votary of votaries.

The one who always knows 1-Light to be nearer than the nearest, that votary is accepted in the Court.

Own-Self bestows grace on Own-Self's votary; that votary receives all insights.

[That votary is] with all, [that votary's] being is detached; Nanak: this is the way of the Ramdas.

In rag Sorathi in Guru Granth Sahib (612), Guru Arjan Sahib reveals:

Hey, [I do] not know [how to] remember Hari (1-Light).

Hey, I utter Hari Hari (1-Light, 1-Light) Guru Guru (Wisdom, Wisdom).

Revered Hari (1-Light), I am identified as Ramdas. Reflect.

In rag Sorathi in Guru Granth Sahib (623), Guru Arjan Sahib reveals:

O Truth-Exemplars, Ramdas's (1-Charmer's votaries') pool (fellowship) is beautiful.

Whoever bathes (learns), ferries across the lineage (fame for the family), and frees the being. Reflect.

Here are two references where Ramdas refers to the Hindu order of bairagi sadhus, who are temple dancers.

In rag Gond in Guru Granth Sahib (867), Guru Arjan Sahib reveals:

The Smritis, the Shastras, the Vedas, and the Puranas (Hindu texts) elaborate on the Supreme Being.

[So do] the Yogis, the celibates, Vishnu worshippers, and ramdas (temple dancers);

no one can measure (ascertain) the imperishable Being.

In rag Maru in Guru Granth Sahib (1002), Guru Arjan Sahib reveals:

Tie anklet-bells to become ramdas (temple-dancers), making effort for their bread.

Do fasts, rituals, and six rites to display outward garbs. Mouths sing songs, sounds, and rags (musical measure), minds do not sing Hari Hari (1-Light, 1-Light).

Guru Ramdas Sahib, the fourth Nanak, is referenced many times in Guru Granth Sahib:

- ***In rag Ramkali, Baba Sundar, 3 times***
- ***In rag Ramkali, Satta and Balvand, 1 time***
- ***In Savayye by Bhats, Bhats Kal, Nal, Gayandh, Mathura, Bal, Sal, and Harbans 45 times***

Sabad-Wisdom takes us through a journey of the Ramdas, Ramdas-sar, and Ramdas-pur. Ramdas is about becoming 1-Charmer's votaries, and they bathe-learn in the pool-fellowship.



Entrance to the causeway leading to Darbar Sahib, the sanctum sanctorum of the Golden Temple complex (Samuel Bourne, c.1863-64, 9 x 11.2 in Albumen print. (Image by: Khanuja Family Collection)

Darbar (ਦਰਬਾਰ)

Darbar is a Farsi (Persian) language word; it means the court of the ruler. In South Asia, it was also referred to as the council or the meeting hall of the Mir (political head). When rag Darbar from Carnatic classical music was imported into Hindustani classical music by Mian Tansen in Emperor Akbar's darbar (1556-1605), it became known as Darbari (Kanara).

The Kingdom of Panjab (1789-1849) under Maharaja Ranjit Singh was called the Lahaur (or Lahore) Darbar. In South Asian religious traditions, Darbar is also the court or the meeting place of the Pir (spiritual head). In a few cases, the Pir's Darbar also became a pinnacle of power center due to land holdings, cash flow, and the followers.

Darbar in Guru Granth Sahib is revealed by Guru Nanaks I, II, III, IV, and V and Bhagats Kabir and Pharid (or Farid). In all cases, Darbar invoked the Court, implying the 1's Court. In Ramkali ki Var in Guru Granth Sahib (964), Guru Arjan Sahib reveals:

Your (1's) court is great; Your throne is eternal.

[You are] the Emperor above the kings, unshakable, [with royal] fly-whisk and canopy.

Among Sikhs, Darbar has been used for the Guru Granth Sahib, the Gurduara, the hall where the Guru Sahib is enthroned as well as for the Harimandar Sahib in Ammritsar. Interestingly, the hall is also called the divan (or diwan), another Farsi word that refers to the governing body, official, or building. In addition to the connotation mentioned above adapted into Sikhi, while invoking the Guru Sahibs, the traditions of Kavi darbar and Dhadi darbar are also known to focus on poetry and ballads, respectively.

Bhai Gurdas in Pauri 47 of Var 1 clearly establishes that Guru Ramdas Sahib was already holding a darbar in the pool even if it was not fully adorned; the Guru was distributing Nam from the divan:

Now Sodhi seated as the Sovereign, and is known as the Eternal Guru-Wisdom Ramdas. In Ammritsar, the complete pool was dug, and the light was lit.

Dr. Madanjit Kaur in *The Golden Temple: Its Past and Present* contextualizes:

It appears from the history of Amritsar that the nature of relationship between the Sikhs and the Mughal state directly or indirectly affected the status of Amritsar (the Temple land) with regard to the revenue tax from time to time. Probably, when the relations were cordial, the tax was exempted, and when they became strained, the concession was withdrawn. But the subject needs a thorough investigation before reaching a definite conclusion. After the establishment of the Sikh rule, the misls renewed the muafi (exemption) which was continued by Maharaja Ranjit Singh after his conquest of Amritsar in AD 1805. The same policy was followed by the British.

In Sikhi, Darbar integrated both the "shrine" and the "state"; the Guru Sahib's Nam and Raj notions fueled the spiritual and the political symbiotically.

Current Scenario

Guru Sahib's shared wisdom transcends eras and ecologies. That Sabad-borne Wisdom was fused into institution building. The "metaphysical" gave shape to "physical," where the aspiration

remains to concretize a dimension or element of what's abstract.

The precept of Ammritsar is of Immortality-Pool; it is now thriving as the pool and city in the Panjab where the Ramdas' 1-Chamer's votaries gather. The real question is: are the seekers drinking its life-giving elixir and learning to form the authentic fellowship?

The precept of Harimandar is of 1-Light's Mansion; it is now the place where the world bows in reverence. The real question is: are the seekers building eternal Harimandar within via Sabad, revealing the 1-Light's Mansion via eternal devotion?

For the seekers, Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike, the Amritsar, the Harimandar, the Ramdaspur, and the Darbar with the prefix "Sri" and suffix "Sahib" are synonymous; they invoke unparalleled emotions.

This is the Sikh Center where the Guru Granth-Panth manifests its sovereignty. This is where the right to "bathe at revered Ammritsar ji" (sri ammritsar ji de isnan) must be understood for all times immemorial: Sikhs long to bathe, learn, assemble, deliberate, any and all matters, from political to spiritual.

Beware! The state, and its supported religious zealots, forced narratives to debase Sikhi and dismantle Sikh historical spaces are always politically motivated.

The Mughal Empire, the Afghan invaders, the British Raj, and the Indian state all undermined or attacked the Sikh institutions. Sikhs must also be complex-free in using the original or adapted verbiage; the people are free to choose their vocabulary in line with Sikh traditions.

What matters most is the lived experiences of Sikhs. Thirty million Sikhs, and many more who identify



(Image by: Amardeep Singh)

with the Guru globally, feel this is their Guru's place where the culture of Nam embraces them.

The foundation day celebrations of the city of Amritsar are on 13 Asar or Har month of Nanakshahi calendar; (Har is mid-June to mid-July). The commemorative date will remain fluid for it is caught between the current nexus of "state" and "shrine" control. Still, Sikh

organizations must re-look at how they commemorate "Sri Amritsar Jiu" beyond public relations campaigns. The Sikhs must reflect on both the original ideas and original institutions to integrate state-shrine for personal and panthak (collective) development.

May we nurture the value system and the sovereignty borne out of our Sri Amritsar Sahib, our Sri

Harimandar Sahib, our Ramdaspur Sahib, and our Sri Darbar Sahib!

Harinder Singh is a thinker, author, & educator. He is the co-founder of the Sikh Research Institute. His current focus is on critical thinking in Sikh institutions & availing the wisdom of Guru Granth Sahib to a global audience. He tweets at @1Force.

HONOURING THE MEMORY OF CHHOTE SAHIBZADE

Pritam Singh

At the end of month of December every year, the global Sikh community honours the memory of the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh, affectionately called Chhote Sahibzade, who were martyred at a very young age. The younger, Fateh Singh, born on 25 February 1699, was not even seven when he was martyred on 12 December 1705 along with his elder brother Zorawar Singh, born on 17 November 1696, who had just turned nine. As childhood in all cultures is associated with innocence and purity, the story of children as young as the two Sahibzadas being subjected to brutal torture leading to death is one of the most painful memories in Sikh history.

When we reflect on the martyrdom of the two Sahibzadas, several aspects of human history and human character come to mind. First let us look at some aspects of human history. Throughout history, there has been a struggle between on one hand those who are in power and use that power to commit atrocities on those whom they consider as their opponents, and on the other, those who stand for the dignity of human freedom and are willing even to give their life for their faith and beliefs. In some accounts, this is described as the perpetual conflict between evil and good. In this case, Wazir Khan, the faujdar (Governor)



Haveli Todar Mal, Fatehgarh Sahib district, Punjab, India

of Sirhind, represented evil and the two Sahibzadas represented good. Those who are in a position of power are often only able to recognise the exercise of their power by inflicting pain on those they consider as a threat – real, potential or imaginary – to their power. In some cases, the powerful are so deranged by their power that they turn sadistic – they enjoy inflicting pain on others. There are several accounts of prisoners or persons in police or army custody who are no threat to their captors, but who are subjected to inhuman torture by prison officers or police or army personnel for sheer sadistic pleasure. Those who are in power feel momentarily victorious, but in the long run humanity recognises those who withstand torture for their beliefs and relegates the torturers to the dustbin of history. Who now remembers Wazir Khan or the Qazi who was at first reluctant to pronounce a guilty verdict on the Sahibzadas because, according to his understanding of Islamic law the boys were not guilty of any crime, but then succumbed to pressure from Wazir Khan and ordered the execution of the Sahibzadas by walling them up alive? We do not know if there are any descendants of Wazir Khan or the Qazi, but if there were, they would be ashamed of their association with them. On the contrary, the Sahibzadas are remembered with love, admiration, reverence and inspiration by millions, and they will continue to be remembered this way. A broad lesson of history is that evil may win momentarily but good will triumph in the end.

Let us now look at several aspects of the human character. Let us first reflect on the conduct of the Sahibzadas who, even at that young age, scaled the heights of wisdom, bravery, steadfastness and unshakeable faith. They were obviously conscious of the great



Bhora Sahib, the sanctum remembering the spot where two sons of Guru Gobind Singh were buried alive.

tradition set by their grandfather Guru Tegh Bahadur, who had given his life to defend the religious human rights of his ideological opponents, the Kashmiri Brahmins. It is not difficult to imagine that they were educated about their family history and the high traditions of their faith by their grandmother, Mata Gujari, who would have taught them about the absolute necessity of remaining firm in their belief, and that remaining true to one's faith, even if it meant giving one's life, was better than abandoning faith for mere physical survival. They were

young in age but mature in their understanding of their historic role. This also tells us that although there are physical and biological limits associated with age, these limits are flexible. Someone can be young but also incredibly wise and brave, while another person can be mature in age but infantile in behaviour and character.

One can imagine the immeasurable pain felt by Guru Gobind Singh when he heard the news about the two Sahibzadas being tortured to death. And it is here that Guru Gobind Singh rises to those heights of character



Backview of the entrance gateway to the Fatehgarh Sahib Gurdwaras complex, Punjab

rarely ever witnessed in human history. There was not a single instance in his life where he either retaliated himself by harming an uninvolved Muslim civilian or hinted about the need to retaliate in this way to any of his followers. There must have been an explosion of anger amongst his followers against Wazir Khan, but the high moral values the Guru had inculcated among his Sikhs acted as a powerful constraint against any unethical retaliatory behaviour against the family or relatives of Wazir Khan. Wazir Khan himself was punished but on a battlefield. When Banda Bahadur led the attack on Sirhind in 1710, one of his commanders, also named Fateh Singh, killed Wazir Khan in one of the battles.

Along with Wazir Khan and the Qazi, the most shameful conduct in this gruesome tragedy belonged to Diwan Sucha Nand, a Hindu Brahmin.

Sucha Nand was a minister in the court of Wazir Khan. To show his utmost loyalty to Wazir Khan, Diwan Sucha Nand convinced Wazir Khan, when he hesitated to punishing the Sahibzadas, that he should show no mercy to the children of Guru Gobind Singh. He argued with Khan that if the Sahibzadas were left free, they would grow up to become powerful opponents of the Mughal regime.

Even in the most hateful regimes, there are individuals who respond to the voice of their conscience. One such individual was Sher Mohammad Khan, the Nawab of Malerkotla, who protested the death sentence pronounced on the young Sahibzadas in spite of the fact that his brother had been killed by Guru Gobind Singh's forces. He argued that his brother had died in a battlefield but that the young Sahibzadas were totally innocent. That one brave act of kindness by the

Nawab of Malerkotla has earned him a high place in history, and it is good that the Sikh community has never forgotten his humane intervention.

Then there is the despicable character of Gangu Brahmin who had served the Guru's family for decades and who, at a crucial moment when Mata Gujri and the Sahibzadas took refuge in his house at his own request, then betrayed them to the local police leading to their arrest. His character shows how greed can lead human beings to the act of betrayal.

In contrast with Gangu Brahmin's act of betrayal was the act of deep loyalty of Baba Moti Ram Mehra, who displayed an exemplary character. He arranged to serve milk to Mata Gujari and the Sahibzadas in the Thanda Burj (Cold Fort) where they were imprisoned. When Wazir Khan discovered this, he ordered his arrest along with that of his mother, wife and very young son.

Moti Ram Mehra defended his action as morally correct, for which he along with whole family was tortured to death. Similarly praiseworthy was Diwan Todar Mal, who bought the land on which to cremate the bodies of Mata Gujari and the Sahibzadas with gold coins. There are two beautiful gurdwaras in the memory of Baba Moti Ram Mehra and Diwan Todar Mal in the town of Fatehgarh Sahib where the two Sahibzadas were martyred. In our memory and historical texts, Wazir Khan, the Qazi, Diwan Sucha Nand and Gangu Brahmin are treated with contempt while we honour the young Sahibzadas and also the Nawab of Malerkotla, Baba Moti Ram Mehra and Diwan Todar Mal.

(The writer is Professor Emeritus of Economics, Oxford Brookes University), UK

MEET AANCHAL MALHOTRA

NO MAN'S LAND

Excerpted with permission from Aanchal Malhotra's In The Language of Remembering, first published by Harper Collins India.

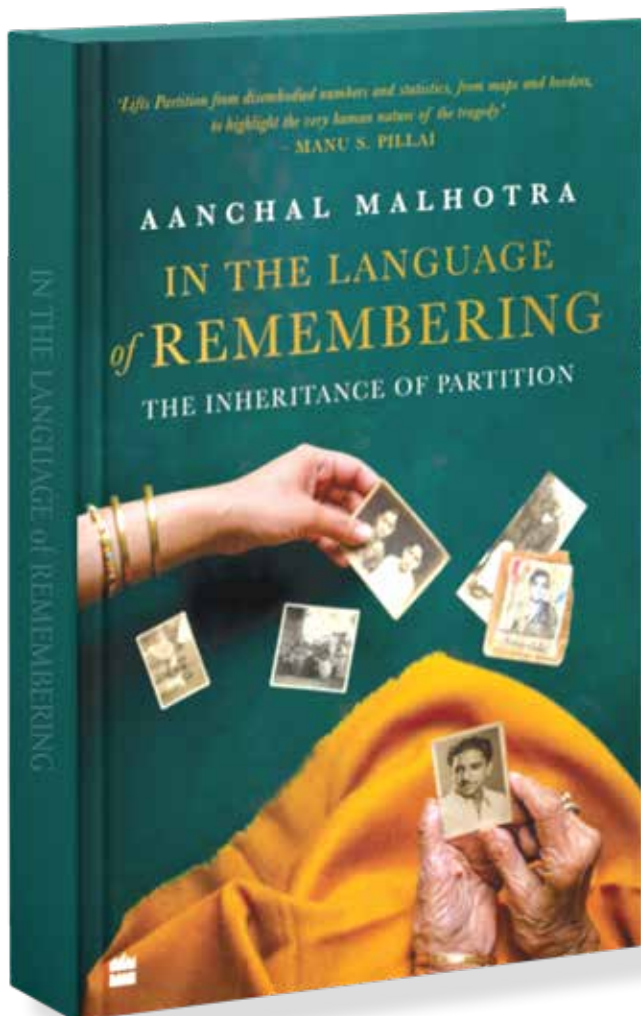
IN LATE 2017, I attended a lecture at the United Service Institution in Delhi, on the role of the Jullundur Brigade in the Great War, for a novel I was plotting at the time. As people found their seats, a distinguished-looking Sikh gentleman with a neat

white beard, a forest green turban and a red pocket-square began to introduce the speakers. He was Pushpinder Singh Chopra, a military historian who wrote extensively on the Indian Air Force and the history of aviation in India, and the editor

of two magazines, Nishaan and Vayu. After the hour-long lecture, speakers and attendees gathered in the outdoor courtyard for tea, and I realized – much to my surprise – that not only was I decades younger than everyone else but I was also the only woman. Needless to say, others noticed this as well. It was then that Mr Chopra walked up to me and with a smile asked what my interest in the Great War was. 'Nothing,' I told him meekly, 'nothing more than curiosity yet, anyway.' The plot of my novel had not even fully come together, and it seemed futile to present a vague elevator pitch, so, instead, I said, 'I mostly write on

Partition, actually.' At this, he smiled, told me that he was born in Murree and was five years old in 1947, and then proceeded to narrate the story of the establishment of the most infamous border post between India and Pakistan. But before I relay the story that was told to me, I want to lay emphasis on the terminology that will guide us through this chapter. A border is a line that divides two countries. A borderland is the territory near the border. And, finally, no man's land is the area between the borders of two countries which is not controlled by either side.

The Attari-Wagah border has come to represent an iconic and emotionally charged physical space for both Indians and Pakistanis. Thousands of spectators visit it each day to witness the dramatic, synchronized goose-stepping of troops to the backdrop of the flag-lowering ceremony at sunset, which first began in 1959. Today, both sides have large iron gates that are opened each morning and closed each evening, but it was only as recently as 1986 that solid barbed wire fences were first erected. In fact, on 17 August 1947, when the Radcliffe Line was announced, there was no border here. Major General Mohinder Singh Chopra, then a brigadier, and father of Pushpinder Singh Chopra, was tasked with setting up this post – demarcating



the once-undivided territory into a border, a borderland and no man's land. 'Two months after Partition, my father was sent to Amritsar to take control of the brigade that would patrol along the Grand Trunk Road. But first he had to establish the border, because until then *koi border hi nahi siga*,' Mr Chopra says, bewildered. 'The line had been drawn on paper but there was no demarcation of where it was on the land.' 'I don't understand,' I say, equally bewildered. 'Were there no coordinates, or...' 'On paper, it simply ran through open fields and villages. There was no river or hill or any feature that was assigned to this side or that. But traumatized refugees continued to migrate east- and westwards, so it became imperative to define the border – where India ended and Pakistan began.' Brigadier Chopra's appointment was no random choice, for he was born in Amritsar in 1907 and 'the army believed he would be particularly sensitive to the situation there'.

He was also a highly decorated officer who had graduated from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 1928, served in the Persia and Iraq Force and in Burma during the Second World War, and in July 1947 had overseen the security during the referendum in Sylhet, which eventually became a part of East Pakistan. Mr Chopra describes how, on 8 October 1947, his father took over the 123 Brigade of what was called the EP (East Punjab) area. Incidentally, his counterpart in Lahore was Brigadier Nazir Ahmad, who had served with him before Partition in the 13th Royal Frontier Force Rifles of the British Indian Army.

'Two months ago, they had been part of not just the same army but also the same regiment, and now here they were, citizens of two countries at war with one another.' He pauses for a moment. 'So, he proposed that

they meet on the Grand Trunk Road, the only road which passed between the two countries.

They fixed a point between Wagah in Pakistan and Attari in India, where the border would fall. On 11 October, they traced that border in chalk, *chune naal lakeer kaati*.' His hands draw an invisible border.

'Then, taking two whitewashed drums, they wrote "INDIA" on one and "PAKISTAN" on the other, and that became the new international border.' 'What did it look like at that time?' I ask. He chuckles, 'That was it.' In his journal inherited by his son, Major General Chopra details the sparse set-up: Some tents were pitched on either side, two sentry boxes painted in the national colours of each country, and a swing gate to regulate the refugee traffic was erected. Two flag masts were also put up on either side and a brass plate commemorating the historic event was installed.

A few years have passed since Mr Chopra narrated this story to me, but sometimes I think about how odd it would have been for the two officers – friends, no less – to begin the process of demarcation. I do not know what this would have looked like, but I imagine them standing across from one another on a barren land, every man's land, their fists full of powdered chalk, and laying down a line where there was none before. Did a line in chalk reverberate – feel as pronounced, hold the heaviness of its history – the way today's border does? By the end of the process, I imagine they must have retreated from that freshly drawn line until they were both standing on two sides of a border, in no man's land. (excerpt ends.)

Aanchal Malhotra, Interviewed by Artika Aurora Bakshi.

Aanchal's second book, as well-researched as her first one, is about remembering. Families share

memories, even if they have not experienced them at the same time. These memories shape them and play a pivotal role in their interpersonal relationships.

Displacement, fear, and loss, are never experienced alone. They are always accompanied or followed by compassion, love, and hope.

The stories are old, but they have been carried forward by families, delicately handled, with reverence and respect. It's intriguing how Aanchal handles a topic, which, even after decades, manages to evoke powerful opinions. One also wonders how a writer can collect so much emotion, and deal with it personally. This book is special as it documents a story shared by Pushpinder Singh Chopra, the founder of Nishaan.

'It was in 2017, at a lecture at the USI, about World War I, when I met Mr. Pushpinder Chopra. I was the only woman there, and the only one under 60. He came up to me and asked what brought me to the lecture, and I told him that I was doing my research for a book. When I told him that I write about the Partition, there was a smile on his face. He went on to tell me the story of the border post that was set up by his father in 1947. This story is part of *In the Language of Remembering*,' reminisces Aanchal.

Here's Aanchal Malhotra, talking about her passion, her writing and the remnants of the memories that have stayed with her...

What feelings did the word 'Partition' evoke before you started work on Remnants of a Separation?

Maybe, because I am not born in a border city, and because my grandparents didn't indulge in stories of that period, the word did not evoke an feeling in my childhood. They had talked about the villages they had left behind, the things that they had left behind,

but they never fixated on the word batwara, taksim, partition, itself. Even when I learnt it in school, I don't think it was taught to us in a way, where we felt compelled to go home and question our families. It was taught with so much distance, as if it couldn't possibly have any impact on my present. It's strange that I had never thought about it, but then became obsessed with it through objects, wondering what does one carry when one has to leave their home. I encountered two objects in my maternal family's home, and the question kept coming back to me, making me wonder how people would have handled it at that time. If we try to understand the Partition through popular media, we only understand one facet of it, which is the violence. But the history of Partition has to encompass more, because it ruptured human relationships. There is an entire spectrum of emotion that would have been felt, ranging from violence to sadness.

Was it after you encountered the two objects, that you chose the Partition as your thesis topic, the same ending up as your first book?

I was studying in Montreal, and wondering what my thesis topic should be. When I came back to India on a short sabbatical, I happened to see the two objects that I have spoken about earlier. That is when I decided to make this my thesis topic. Not only did I want to know what happened, I also wanted to see the objects that people carried with them. People did find it a bit strange that I was going into their houses and looking at their books, shawls, pens, toys, etc., that they may have brought. I don't think there was any other way to do it. To ask the question directly felt very intrusive. And in the beginning, I didn't know enough about it to ask the right kind of questions. The objects were like catalysts. It started with my

maternal grandparents. The minute you start doing something that involves collective memory, one person leads you to the next. After each interaction, I was referred forward to the next, who too had been through the Partition. Every person I interviewed was connected with me through someone I had interviewed earlier, or discussed the idea with. I relied a lot on word of mouth. And then when I visited Pakistan, it was a different kind of experience looking for people there.

Did you face resistance from people when you brought up this topic? Were there people who were outrightly not interested?

The people I interacted with knew why I was approaching them, and they had agreed to the interview, which meant that they were somewhat prepared for what I was going to ask. But what's interesting is that even if you agree to a conversation like that, people might not have the vocabulary to form a story at the beginning. So the more you speak to someone, the more you allow them to descend into their memory, and you form that vocabulary with them, whether it's the vocabulary of loss, or longing, or anger, or othering. They learn to speak about something, especially if they don't talk about it frequently, or haven't spoken about it for a while. Sometimes, it did feel like they were rediscovering their younger selves. It was a discovery for me, and it seemed that there was curiosity on both ends. The times when I faced resistance was when someone said, 'ab bas, bohat ho gaya'. Maybe when we had been speaking for a long time, or when we got to an event of real violence, and they didn't want to speak anymore. Sometimes when people talk about the violence, they can still see it in their mind. I noticed that when there would be a slight shift in their bodily movement, and the way their voice would change. At the point, I wouldn't push.

Sometimes people actually said that they didn't want to say anything more. In those times, you can allow your imagination to fill the blanks.

History is water under the bridge. How did you feel about reviving it, and documenting it?

It felt like a resuscitation, not revival. It was work, to exhume, to extract, and I felt completely unprepared for most things I heard. I was 23, and even though the project had begun with curiosity, I had to emotionally equip myself for what I was hearing. And unfortunately, most people who do this work, learn it on the job. There is no manual on how to take care of other people's sadness. You learn it on the job, and it makes you far more empathetic, because you have to take care of what people are saying. I felt this innate responsibility to do justice to these stories, because I was felt that maybe they were being said for the first time.

I would always record the interviews, transcribe, translate, and then share them with the interviewee, so as to make sure that I haven't misunderstood or misheard something. It has been a collaborative effort, always. There were also instances when the stories that I heard, were different from my own viewpoint, like those from Pakistan, where I heard about violent acts that were done to some of the people there. Even if it wasn't my version of history, I felt responsible to tell it exactly how it was told to me. I feel that this approach helped to make the book unbiased.

What toll did all this take on your life? How did you deal with so much emotional content?

I don't think I actually dealt with it. It was very mechanical at some point. You realise that some of these people are at the tail end of their lives, and you are recording something that is precious. You are not sure whether

they will be there to see the book when it releases. I was doing these interviews, documenting each memory, without realising what it was doing to me. The realisation has come in hindsight, when you see how changed a person you are, from when you first began.

It becomes hard to make interpersonal relationships. It was hard for me to have regular conversations with people from my age-group, because I was so used to such intense conversations, and small talk felt frivolous. I think I was being very unfair to myself because everyone deserves to be young. It did have a psychological impact on me, especially since you become the repository of hundreds of survivor stories. I remember how each and every story was told to me. The relationship that I share with each is very sacred, and it affected me in a very deep way. I have learnt to distance myself to some extent, take a pause after writing. But if I were to do it all over again, I would not change anything.

During the writing of *In The Language of Remembering*, since you are dealing with the second and the third generation, was it easier?

One would think it would be easier taking to the generations that had not experienced the Partition, but to the contrary, it's far more difficult. The survivors have a distinct understanding of the past being the past. But for the later generations, the lines between the past and the present are blurred. Some of them could feel the pain of their parents or grandparents in the present, making it a lot harder. I saw myself in so many people's stories, often wishing that we didn't feel this genealogical imprint of trauma.

It was very hard to write this book, because the parallels between the past and present were so clear; that we have not learnt from the past. We have repeated acts of violence,

acts of othering, and all sorts of communal misbehaviour. There are still people who are fighting for freedom, and for equality. In having these testimonies written down, it feels like we have collectively recorded that the Partition is not yet an event of the past. And it's quite complicated, because when you see the book together, you get a sense of how crippling, entangled, the subcontinents shared history is.

Though the politics of it may be complex, the feelings – of curiosity, of humanity – on both sides of the border are simple, often striving to know what lays beyond. I want people to read this book to understand that those on the other side of the border are more similar to us than different.

This was one of the reasons why the stories are not arranged as per geography or religion. The work on generational memory had never really been done before. No importance was given to descendants' testimonies. Many people thought that the Partition ends with the generation that witnessed it. But if I am of the third generation, and I am invested in it, it already shows how important it is for the later generations.

I think it was very important for someone to listen to younger people with seriousness. Remembering is not only for the generation of survivors. It is for us too, to be spoken about in a new ways.

Lessons from History?

I believe that the people's stories make one understand how the past can impact the present, and shape the future. Through these stories, not only does one see what mark the Partition left on people, but also how emotionally entrenched the present generation is. The human stories are very different from the political narrative and fictionalised accounts, and hopefully more people will understand them. With

the generation of survivors who I interviewed, there were very few who felt angry. They may have blamed the political scenario at that time, but they rarely blamed the people, unless they had personally been subjected to violence. There was a feeling of sorrow, for not being able to see their homes again, but no hate, or othering. Sometimes their memories come across in a very nuanced way, like what they wore on a certain day, what they ate with their friends, the roads they travelled on.

These stories are stories of shared history and shared culture, of oneness and kinship, because after all, they document people and their emotions.

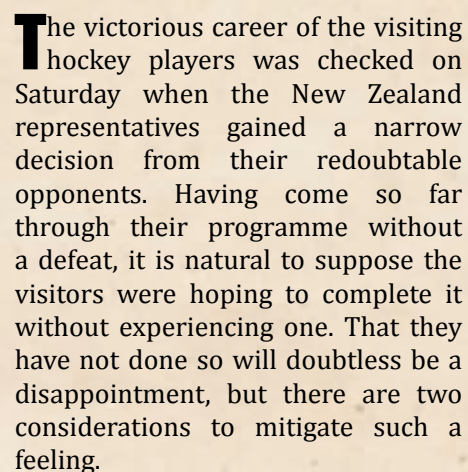


Aanchal Malhotra is an oral historian and writer from New Delhi, India. She is the co-founder of the Museum of Material Memory, and writes extensively on the 1947 Partition and its related topics. Her first book, published in South Asia as *Remnants of a Separation* and internationally as *Remnants of Partition*, was shortlisted for the Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar, British Academy's Nayef Al-Rodhan Prize for Global Cultural Understanding, Hindu Lit for Life Non Fiction Prize, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize and the Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize. *In the Language of Remembering* is her second book.

The Book of Everlasting Things, a historical fiction novel, is Aanchal's third book, and releases in December 2022.



The Indian Hockey team after a practice session



Invitation: The First Hockey Test Match Indian Army vs New Zealand

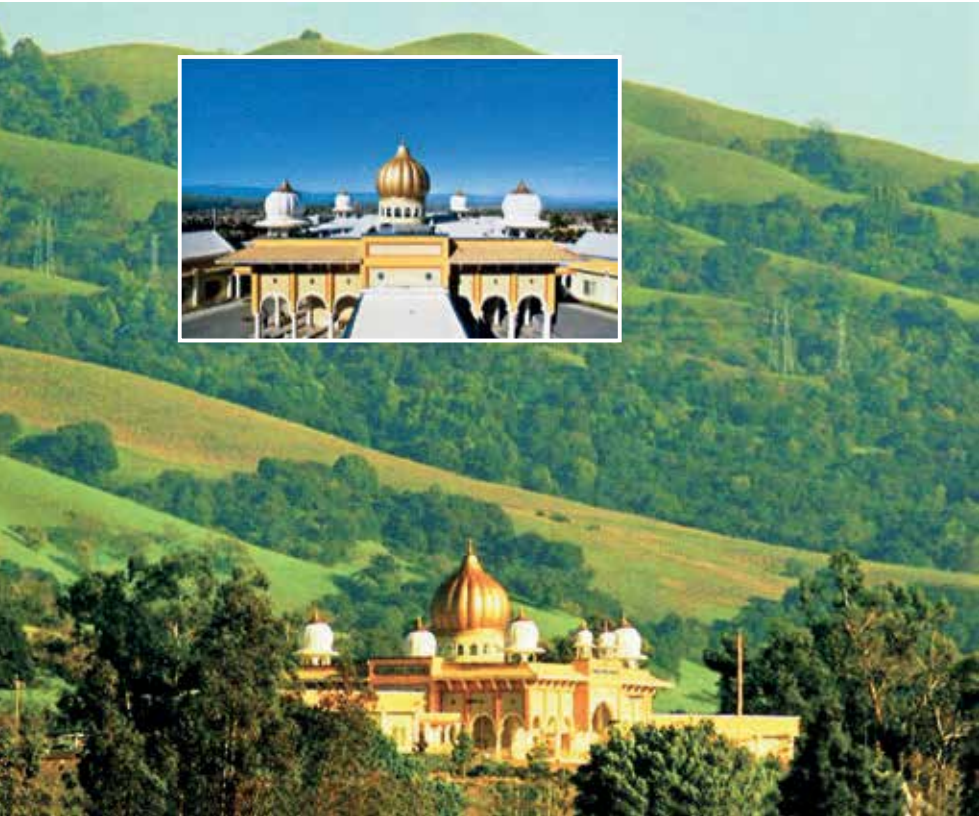
satisfaction to New Zealand enthusiasts, but should be recognised with some degree of pleasure by the Indian visitors. It is evident their hosts have learned by the experience of meeting them. The same polished, finished stick-work was not displayed by the whiners as by the losers.

It may have been noted as an ideal, but time has not allowed of its acquirement yet. On the other hand, the New Zealanders have obviously learned to modify their own tactics to deal with the opposition they have had to face. They realised that the only way to meet such an attack as that of the visitors was by attacking and keeping up the pressure to the utmost extent possible.

This course followed gave them the lead, and they then managed to keep it. Saturday's victory was the reward of determined aggressiveness, backed in great measure by a superior turn of speed. The defensive qualities of the New Zealand rearguard, especially the goalkeeper, should not be overlooked; but, allowing it full value, it was still the spirit of attack which brought victory. It will be doubly interesting to see whether similar tactics will be adopted next Saturday and, if so, whether they will bring a like reward.

Menu		Guest Honours	
	Spanish Ollie Salted Almonds		"The Town of Lough" THE GARDEN "Our Game" H. S. J. Goudreau, Esq. Responser—Captain D. T. Green, M.C.
Soup	Pure of Tomato		Wong—D. Baker, Esq.
Fish	Fillet of Sole Magenau Sauce		"The New Zealand Hockey Association" Captain D. T. Green, M.C. Responser—W. H. Davis, Esq.
Entrée	Large Cakes and Green Peas		Wong—J. Moore, Esq.
Joint	Roast Sirloin of Beef Roast Chicken and Lemon Sauce Roast Pork, Smothering and Apple Sauce		"The New Zealand Team" H. Rogers, Esq. Responser—K. Parry, Esq. E. Watts, Esq.
Vegetables	Boiled and Tinned Potatoes Cauliflower Mashed Potatoes		Responser—A. Day, Esq.
Desserts	Sweetened Custard Pudding Almond Torte Fruit Tarts and Cream Pine Apples and Jelly		"The Affiliated Hockey Association" S. G. Milford, Esq. Responser—The Representatives of Affiliated Associations
Savoury	Sardines on Anchovy Toast Black Coffee		Wong—D. Baker, Esq. and J. Moore, Esq. Responser—Rae Hobbs, Esq.





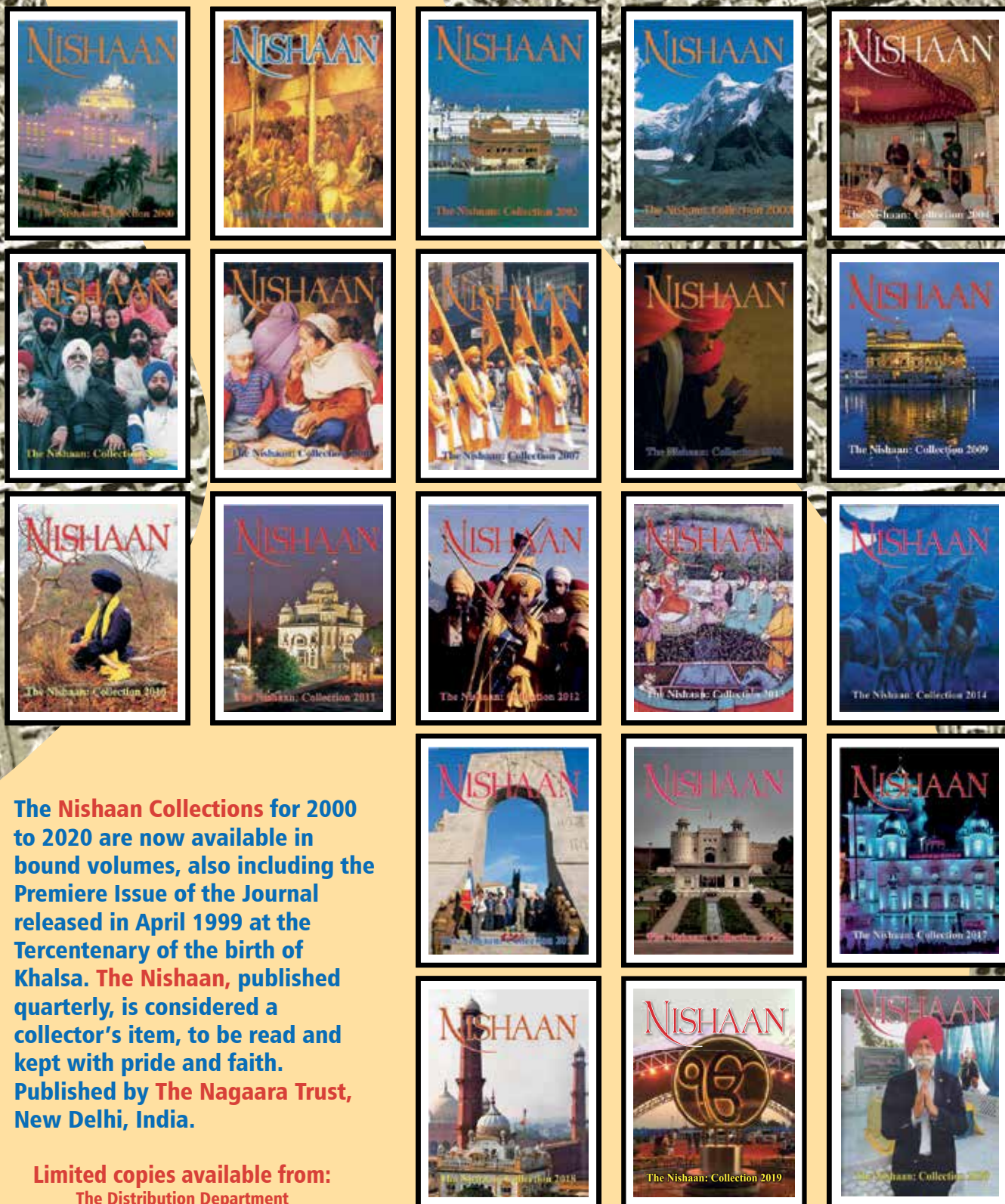
The Eighth Annual Conference on Sri Guru Granth Sahib, organised by the Chardi Kalaa Foundation, the San Jose Gurdwara Sahib and SikhNet was held on 7 September 2019 at San Jose in California, USA. One of the largest and arguably most beautiful gurdwaras in North America, the Gurdwara Sahib at San Jose was founded in San Jose, California, USA in 1985 by members of the then-rapidly growing Sikh community in the Santa Clara Valley.



CHARDI KALAA
FOUNDATION



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