

# Khalsa Panth's 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

1699 - 1999

Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji - Founder of Sikhism



Takhat Sri Kesgarh Sahib,  
Anandpur Sahib  
(Birthplace of the Khalsa)



SOUVENIR  
EDITION

ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਪੇ ਗੁਰ ਚੇਲਾ

Hail to Guru Gobind Singh who is both a Guru and a disciple.

Khalsa Tri-Centennial Foundation of Canada

Cover - Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, administered Amrit to the Five Beloved Ones in 1699 at Takhat Sri Kesgarh Sahib, giving birth to the Khalsa Panth. Afterwards, Guru Sahib requested the Five Beloved Ones to initiate him into the Khalsa Panth by administering the Amrit to him as well. Thus, the Guru also becomes the Disciple.



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**Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar**  
#114 to #121 12885 - 85 Avenue, Surrey, B.C. V3W 0K8  
Tel. (604) 594-2573 Fax: (604) 594-2512

**Daily Program**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Time</b>
<b>Morning Program</b>	
Parkash Sri Guru Granth Sahib	3:45
Hukamnama	4:00
Morning Nitnem	4:00-6:00
Asa di Vaar	6:00 - 8:00
Translation of Hukamnama	8:00 - 8:30
Paath Sukhmani Sahib	8:30 -10:00
Kirtan	10:00 - 12:00
<b>Evening Program</b>	
Sodar di Chaunki	5:00 - 5:30
Paath Rehraas Sahib	5:30 - 6:00
Kirtan Diwaan	6:00 - 8:00
Sukhaasan	8:00 - 8:30

Your humble servant  
Manjit Singh Dhami, General Secretary



## Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar Executive Committee for 1998-2000

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Jagtar Singh Sandhu	President
Kuldip Singh Jagpal	Sr. Vice President
Baljit Singh Samra	Vice President
Manjit Singh Dhani	General Secretary
Mohinder Singh Riat	Secretary
Hardev Singh Sahota	Assistant Secretary
Joginder Singh Bhabha	Recording Secretary
Bahadar Singh Sandhu	Treasurer
Mohinder Singh Johal	Sr. Assistant Treasurer
Rajmamt Singh Mann	Assistant Treasurer
Surjit Singh Bagri	Member
Nirbhai Singh Brar	Member
Sadhu Singh Dhaliwal	Member
Balwinder Kaur Bains	Member
Gurbax Kaur Natt	Member

## Khalsa 300 Celebrations Planned Activities

- 1.0 City Of Surrey proclaiming April 1999 as the month of the Khalsa (March/99)
- 2.0 Open House for Community Groups (throughout March/April 1999)
- 3.0 Sikh Symposium on (Sunday 28 March, at Grand Taj, from 10 AM to 6.30 PM)
- 4.0 Open house for Surrey school children (throughout March/April 1999)
- 5.0 Play - Sikh History and Baisakhi Day 1699 (April 1999)
- 6.0 Nagar Kirtan (Saturday 3 April, starting at 10 AM)
- 7.0 Release Khalsa 300 Souvenir (3 April, 1999)
- 8.0 Khalsa 300 Celebrations at Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar (14 April all day)
- 9.0 Establishment of Sikh Resource Centre and Museum in Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar (14 April)
- 10.0 Working to get a wax statue of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Royal London Wax Museum in Victoria
- 11.0 Blood Drive - BC wide (10 April in Surrey, starting at 10 AM)
- 12.0 Free Langar (community kitchen) at Surrey and Vancouver Food Banks (10-11 April from 11 AM onwards)
- 13.0 Two High School scholarships of \$500 each or four of \$ 250 each (1999)
- 14.0 Food Bank donations, canned non perishable foods - BC wide (1-15 April)
- 15.0 Clothing donations for the needy, western clothing only (1-15 April)
- 16.0 Telethon for Hospital equipment (4 & 5 April)
- 17.0 Amrit Sanchar (Sikh initiation ceremony) - BC wide (1-15 April)
- 18.0 Care Packages for the needy (4-15 April)
- 19.0 Rides and amusements at Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar (1-14 April)
- 20.0 Decorative house lighting on all Sikh houses (1-15 April 1999)
- 21.0 Holiday for all Sikh children on 14 April in Surrey Schools to attend Celebrations
- 22.0 Interfaith Conference at Grand Taj on April 7, 1999 from 6 PM to 9.30 PM.
- 23.0 Establishment of Sikh Resource Centre in one of Surrey libraries (Dec. 1999)
- 24.0 Release Documentary on Sikh history and Khalsa 300 Celebrations (Dec. 1999)



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ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥

*"Recognize all human race as one" - Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji***Program****April 3, 1999**

Bhog Sri Akhand Path Sahib	7:30am	ਭੋਗ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠ ਸਾਹਿਬ
Kirtan	7:30am-8:30am	ਕੀਰਤਨ
Nishan Sahib Ceremony	8:30am-9:00am	ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਰਸਮ
Speakers	9:00am-10:30am	ਬੁਲਾਰੇ
Ardas & National Anthem	10:45am	ਅਰਦਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਦੇਹ ਸ਼ਿਵਾ
Start of Nagar Kirtan Parade	11:00am	ਨਗਰ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਅਰੰਭ

**April 14, 1999**

Bhog Sri Akhand Path Sahib	9:00am	ਭੋਗ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠ ਸਾਹਿਬ
Kirtan	9:00am-12midnight	ਕੀਰਤਨ
Speakers	11:30am-12:30am	ਬੁਲਾਰੇ
Fireworks	10:30pm-11:00pm	ਪਟਾਕੇ

## Khalsa 300 Years Celebrations Organizing Committee

Bibi Navpreet Kaur Walia	Bibi Rashpaul Kaur Sall, Port Alberni	Bibi Bhajneek Kaur
Bibi Amarjeet Kaur Dhami, Delta	Bibi Surinder Kaur Bains	S. Randhir Singh Dhaliwal, Surrey
Bibi Sukhvinder Kaur Vinning	Bibi Surinder Kaur Hundal	S. Joginder Singh Gill, Surrey
Bibi Jasveer Kaur Chohan	Bibi Ranjeet Kaur Gill	S. Rupinder Singh Kahlon, Kitimat
S. Ajaib Singh Bagri, Kamloops	S. Tarlochan Singh Bahia	S. Mohinder Singh Jawanda
S. Bahadar Singh Sandhu, Chairman	S. Joga Singh Dhot	S. Sukhwant Singh Takkar
S. Jagtar Singh Sandhu	S. Kundan Singh Sajjan	S. Avtar Singh Sandhar
S. Gurnek Singh Brar	Master Joginder Singh Johal	S. Joginder Singh Gill, Kaunkay
Giani Jagdish Singh	S. Amrit Singh Rai	S. Pritam Singh Bola
S. Manjit Singh Dhami	S. Harkirat Singh, Chardi Kala	S. Bikramjit Singh Sandhar
S. Ripudaman Singh Malik	Principal Amar Singh Dhaliwal	S. Charanjit Singh Sandhu
S. Swarn Singh Malhi	S. Parmjit Singh Randhawa	S. Hardial Singh Johal
S. Satnam Singh Johal	S. Jasjeet Singh Aujala	S. Piara Singh Natt
S. Rajwinder Singh Johal	S. Ajit Singh Badh	S. Hardial Singh Garcha
S. Kuldeep Singh Jagpal	S. Parmjit Singh, Huston	S. Mohan Singh
S. Jarnail Singh Cheema	S. Jaswinder Singh Garcha	Giani Darbara Singh
S. Baljit Singh Samra	S. Harbans Singh Samra	S. Santokh Singh Sidhu
S. Amarjit Singh Kooner	S. Sawarn Singh	Baba Ranjeet Singh
S. Kamaljit Singh Somal	S. Satwinder Singh Heer	S. Jagmohan Singh
S. Balbir Singh Bajwa	S. Sadhu Singh Nijjar	S. Daljit Singh Sandhu
S. Sadhu Singh Dhaliwal	S. Nirbhai Singh Pannu	
S. Sucha Singh Johal	S. Parmjit Singh Burn	
S. Tarsem Singh Gorian, Kelowna	S. Tarlochan Singh Sajjan, Nanaim	
S. Pritam Singh Mander	S. Santokh Singh Gill, Hasda Punjab	
S. Gurpreet Singh Johal	S. Makhan Singh Sandhu	
S. Dalip Singh Mangat	S. Jarnail Singh Dulai, Prince Rupert	
S. Jeet Singh Sidhu	S. Jasveer Singh Banwait	
S. Amarjit Singh Hundal	S. Sukhdev Singh Jatana	
S. Bakhtavar Singh Ratian	S. Karnail Singh	
S. Gurmeet Singh Sekhon	S. Pritam Singh Chohan, Merritt	
S. Harpreet Singh Dhaliwal	S. Sukhdev Singh Dhillon, Apna Sangeet	
S. Gurdial Singh Dhaliwal	S. Kashmir Singh Aujala, Fort St. James	
S. Sarjit Singh Gill	S. Tarsem Singh Dhaliwal	
S. Sarjit Singh Kohli	S. Mastan Singh Dulai	
S. Narinder Singh Gill	S. Gurdavar Singh Sahota	
S. Parmjit Singh Johal	S. Harbans Singh Bassi, Prince George	
S. Rajinder Singh Dhatt	S. Nirmal Singh Vaid, Victoria	
S. Gurnam Singh, Nanaimo	S. Sukhjinder Singh, Nanaimo	
Master Ujagar Singh	S. Gurmeet Singh, Campbell River	
S. Jarnail Singh Gill, Oliver	S. Balwinder Singh Sandhu, Sommerland	
S. Harjeet Singh Sidhu, Oliver	S. Avtar Singh Kelowna	
S. Harpreet Singh, Penticton	S. Charanjit Singh Sandhu, Prince George	
S. Nageena Singh, Williams Lake	S. Rajinder Singh Khangura, Quesnel	
S. Surinder Singh, Merritt	S. Manjit Singh Virk, Terrace	
S. Amarjeet Singh, Duncan	S. Parmjit Singh, Clearwater	
S. Tarlok Singh Gakhal, Vernon		



*Message from the Celebrations Coordinator*

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru ji ki Fateh!



It is a great honour for me to be part of the Tercentenary Celebrations of the Birth of the Khalsa Panth. I extend my heartiest best wishes to the more than 25 million Sikhs around the globe on this momentous milestone in the history of the Sikhs.

In this short Souvenir, we have tried to present information on the significance of the Baisakhi Day of 1699, when the Tenth Master, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, gave the Sikhs their identity and a code of conduct.

The reader will also find a variety of articles covering topics such as the history, arrangement and the text of Sri Guru Granth Sahib; Sikh identity in the contemporary world; Sikhism's service to humanity; and some key events in the 100 years history of the Sikhs in Canada; and many other topics.

We sincerely hope that you will find this Souvenir helpful and informative in understanding the Sikhs and their religious philosophy.

All articles presented in this Souvenir are the opinion of the writers not that of the organizers or Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar.

Depending on the interest shown in this publication, we will make this a regular publication with emphasis on both quality and content.

This Souvenir has been the result of many dedicated individuals without whom this would not have been possible. I sincerely wish to thank everyone who contributed to making this Souvenir a memorable one.

Once again, best wishes for the Khalsa 300 Celebrations.

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru ji ki Fateh!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Sarbjit Singh Bains'.

Sarbjit Singh Bains  
Celebrations Coordinator

*Message from the President  
Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar*

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru ji ki Fateh!



On this momentous occasion of the tercentenary celebrations of the birth of the Khalsa, I and the entire managing committee of Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar, extend our heartfelt greetings to Sikhs around the world. We wish one and all very joyful celebrations.

While we celebrate this joyful occasion, let us all remember the message of the Tenth Master, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, that the Almighty Waheguru (God) is the Creator not only of the human race but the total Creation. All humans are created equal. It is our duty to act according to His will.

Construction of Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar started in July 1997 after purchase of a 20,000 ft<sup>2</sup> space in a building located on 85 Avenue between 128<sup>th</sup> and 132<sup>nd</sup> Streets. With God's speed, the present facilities were completed on 11 January 1998 for opening to the congregation. Gurdwara Sahib also acquired adjacent 10 acres of land for future expansion. An artist's conception of the future Gurdwara Sahib is shown on the back page of this souvenir.

Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar's aim is to provide a place of worship to all Sikhs seeking the path of the Almighty Waheguru. In a short period since its opening, Gurdwara Sahib has sponsored numerous "kirtani jathas" (those who recite religious hymns), "katha vaachaks" (those who provide interpretation of religious writings), "dhadi jathas" (traditional singers), "dharam parcharaks" (religious preachers), administered "amrit" (Sikh initiation ceremony equivalent to baptism) to 1100 Sikhs, and has organized these momentous celebrations, all with the help of the dedicated Sangat.

At the request of the Sangat, we have provided in the Gurdwara Sahib for a Sikh museum, a library of Sikh literature and Punjabi and religious education classes. The daily program of Gurdwara Sahib is included on the inside of the front page.

With continuous support of the Sangat, we are totally committed to providing Sikh religious services that will promote the teachings of the Gurus. We will continue our efforts in promoting the universal message of peace taught by the ten Gurus - Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and Goodwill towards all.

Once again, we wish you the most joyous of celebrations on the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the Khalsa.

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru ji ki Fateh!

Jagtar Singh Sandhu  
President, Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar







*Message from the Chairman  
Khalsa Tri-Centennial Foundation of Canada*

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru ji ki Fateh!

On the occasion of the 300<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of the Khalsa Panth, it is a great honour for me to extend my good wishes to Sikhs around the world.

Undertaking the responsibility of numerous Sikh organizations and Gurdwaras across British Columbia to celebrate the Third Centenary of the Birth of the Khalsa Panth was a great personal honour and responsibility. However, this fulfillment of responsibility would not have been possible for me to complete without the generous support and encouragement of all the Sikh organizations throughout BC, and all over North America, as well as the outpouring support of the Sikh Sangat. It requires hundreds and thousands of volunteers to make events such as this one successful.

I, therefore, take this opportunity to thank every person who contributed to making this hugely significant occasion triumphant.

Once again, I wish you all a very happy 300 years of Khalsa Panth celebrations.

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru ji ki Fateh!

Bahadar Singh Sandhu  
Chairman, Khalsa Tri-Centennial Foundation of Canada

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR  
CITY OF SURREY**

On behalf of the City of Surrey and members of Council I am pleased to bring greetings to the Khalsa Tri-Centennial Foundation of Canada on their celebration of the 300th anniversary of the birth of the Khalsa.

The 300th anniversary of the birth of Khalsa is celebrated by Sikhs around the world, giving them a visible identity and code of conduct. The members of the Khalsa Tri-Centennial Foundation of Canada commemorate this joyous event with traditional festivities which may be appreciated by all members of our community.

Best wishes for this very special occasion!

Sincerely,

D.W. (Doug) McCallum  
Mayor





PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

*I am delighted to extend my warmest greetings to everyone taking part in the Khalsa 300 celebrations.*

*One of the strengths of the Canadian social fabric is the degree to which the many groups which make up our cultural diversity maintain their individual characteristics, while at the same time contributing to a strong and harmonious Canada. Our country has grown and prospered largely due to the fact that it has made welcome men and women from all parts of the world. They have joined together in a common cause -- to make Canada their home -- and it is their skills, hard work and vitality which have created a flourishing and vibrant country.*

*Members of the Canadian Sikh community have contributed to this prosperity, and you can be proud of the role you have played in Canada's history. May you have every success in meeting the challenges of the future.*

OTTAWA  
1999



April 1999

I am pleased to send greetings to everyone celebrating the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Khalsa Panth.

The Sikh community has made significant contributions to the social, cultural, and economic prosperity of our province. Thank you for enriching our lives with your customs and traditions.

On behalf of the government and people of British Columbia, I wish you peace, prosperity, happiness, and a memorable anniversary celebration.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa - Waheguru Ji Ke Fateh.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Glen Clark".

Glen Clark  
Premier





## A MESSAGE FROM THE LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

On behalf of the BC Liberal Caucus, I would like to congratulate Sikhs in British Columbia and around the world for this most special celebration, the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the Khalsa.

Three hundred years ago Guru Gobind Rai and the Panj Pyaras became Singhs and formed the brotherhood of the Khalsa. The taking of Amrit became the symbol of destroying all vices and renewing with the Gurus' teachings. Obliterated were caste-based differences, hierarchical disparities, all gender-related discriminations, and creed-centred differences. In was a new society based on liberalism, humanism, universalism and pluralism.

Even those who have not taken Amrit have so much to celebrate about that special day. The teachings of Guru Gobind Singh Dev Ji are a lesson for everyone to learn and all people to achieve. I am thankful that here in British Columbia there is such a strong Sikh community which has shared with us the words of the Guru and the birth of the Khalsa.

Sincerely,



GORDON CAMPBELL



Minister of Finance

Ministre des Finances

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0G5

JAN 11 1999

I would like to pass along my congratulations to the Sikh community in celebration of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Khalsa. This is a very significant event and I am honoured to have this opportunity to wish you well on this historic occasion. I wish you well in your celebrations.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Paul Martin, P.C., M.P.



Minister  
of National Revenue



Ministre  
du Revenu national



April 1999, Ottawa

On this historic occasion marking the Tricentenary of the Khalsa, I am honoured to convey my heartfelt greetings and good wishes to the Khalsa Tri-Centennial Foundation of Canada.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, established the Khalsa as a new order of society based on peace, love, universality of brotherhood, justice, equality, humility and community service. The teachings of Guru Gobind Singh Ji not only serve as an inspiration to Sikhs but to all humankind.

This historic event in the Sikh religion draws family and friends together in a spirit of goodwill and peace, preserving our community's legacy and the cultural diversity upon which Canada is founded.

Please accept my best wishes for a most meaningful celebration as well as every success in meeting the challenges of the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Harbance Singh Dhaliwal".

The Honourable Harbance Singh Dhaliwal, P.C., M.P.  
*Minister of National Revenue*

## Birth of the Khalsa Panth, Baisakhi of 1699

by Baljinder Singh Sandhu

### BACKGROUND

At the time when inequality, oppression of people beyond endurance, and forceful religious conversions were rampant, foundation for the Sikh religion was laid. Born in 1469, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the first of the ten living Gurus of the Sikhs, challenged the rulers of the day. Guru Nanak Dev Ji preached:

1. Oneness of God (He is neither born nor dies; He has no competitors, adversaries, or partners; he is all pervading).
2. All humans are a creation of the One God and, therefore, all are equal.

From Guru Nanak Dev Ji to Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, the ninth Guru, the fundamental principles of Sikhism were firmly established. These included:

1. A central place of worship, Sri Harimandir Sahib (the Golden Temple) in Amritsar, Punjab;
2. "Guru ka Langar" (sacred community kitchen), where all people, regardless of their faith, color, sex, wealth or origin, are treated equally and with respect;
3. Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the fifth Guru, compiled the writings of all previous Gurus, including his own, into the Holy Scripture of the Sikhs, the Guru Granth Sahib Ji;
4. Equality of male and female;
5. The practice of "miri and piri" (combining of spiritual and secular activities) was started by Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, the sixth Guru, implying the rulers must be morally beyond reproach;
6. Guru Arjan Dev Ji and Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, the ninth Guru, sacrificed their lives so people of all faiths can have freedom of worship of their choice.

### Guru Gobind Rai Ji, the Tenth Guru

Guru Gobind Rai Ji, the tenth and final living Guru, was proclaimed Guru in 1675. At this time, the cruelty of the Mogul ruler, Aurengzeb, was at its pinnacle. He would spare no means to seize total and absolute power of the throne. He imprisoned his father and killed his brothers to clear the way for him to take control.

Young Guru Gobind Rai Ji, growing up under the oppressive regime, mastered martial art while acquiring prolific skills in writing. He challenged Aurengzeb to treat his subjects with human dignity. This led the Guru to numerous military clashes with the Mogul emperor.

Guru Gobind Rai Ji recognized that it was time to complete the message of a universal philosophy of love, brotherhood of mankind and fatherhood of God. Before finalizing the compilation of the writings of the Gurus after Guru Arjan Dev Ji, Guru Gobind Rai Ji felt it was necessary to transform the Sikh people. This transformation would allow them to confront all unjust and immoral acts without fear. It would also distinguish them as the people committed to the worship of God and the brotherhood of mankind.

ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰ  
ਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ  
ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰਗੁ ਮਨੁ  
ਦੀਨੁ ॥੧॥



### BAISAKHI DAY, 1699

On Baisakhi day (first day of the lunar month Baisakh of the Indian calendar which at that time fell on 30 March) in 1699, Guru Gobind Rai Ji summoned the Sikhs across India to assemble in the town of Anandpur Sahib, in Punjab. He reiterated to them the philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and development of that philosophy by the Gurus after him. He recognized the difficulties of the Sikhs in the past 230 years in practicing the message of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. It was now time to make the final leap of commitment in putting the philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev Ji into practice.

With his sword unsheathed and a divine glow in his eyes, he gave a thundering call for a devout Sikh to come forward to offer his head for the sake of *dharma* (righteousness). He was putting to test his followers' readiness for sacrifice of life - a sacrifice of the mundane life to submit into the Life Divine - God. (The Sikhs believe the ultimate goal of a human is to forever merge with God). A complete silence descended on the congregation. After the third call, one Sikh from the congregation stood up and walked to the stage offering his head as a sacrifice to the Guru. The Guru walked the Sikh into the nearby tent he had set up. A thumping sound of the sword was heard in the congregation. The Guru came out of the tent alone with blood dripping from his sword.

Once again, he demanded another sacrifice. The congregation was now terrified at the obvious incident. Another brave Sikh offered his head as a sacrifice to the Guru. The second Sikh was taken to the tent as the first one. The Guru repeated his request five times. Each time, a volunteer came forward for the sacrifice.

After the fifth time, the Guru emerged from the tent along with the five Sikhs clad in new yellow garments and blue turbans, radiating dynamism and determination. The entire congregation was awe struck at this amazing spectacle that took place right before their own eyes. What happened in the tent? No one really knows, except it was obviously beyond the understanding of any mortal!

The following day, the Guru prepared *Amrit* (nectar) - the elixir of courage and compassion. To prepare the Amrit, the Guru added water to a large iron vessel. While stirring with *khanda* (double-edged sword), the Guru recited the Divine Word. While the Amrit was being prepared, Guru's wife, Mata Jito Ji, brought *patasas* (pure sugar crystals) and added to the preparation of the Amrit. The Amrit prepared is also known as *Khande ki Pahul*. The Amrit was then administered to (similar to baptism) the *Panj Pyaras* (the Five Beloved Ones). They, with *Singh* (meaning lion) added to their names, became the first five initiatives of the *Khalsa Panth* (Order of the *Khalsa* - the Pure One).

Guru Gobind Rai Ji then requested the Five Beloved Ones to administer the Amrit to him, after which he became Guru Gobind Singh. The act of the Guru seeking Amrit from his Five Beloved followers, apart from demonstrating democracy in Sikhism, shows that God, the Guru and the follower become one in spirit. The moment of baptismal transformation becomes the moment of transanimation. This was a sacrament of resurrection of spiritual ascent of man.

The partaking of the Amrit awakened the dormant, slumbering spirit of man who rediscovered his divinity, his sovereignty, and his humanity. Realization of the primacy of innate humanity-oneness of all humanity proclaimed by Guru Gobind Singh Ji at the creation of the *Khalsa*, meant obliteration of all caste-based differentiations, all hierarchical disparities, all gender-related discriminations, and all creed-centered differences.

All individuals having taken the Amrit are required to wear the five *kakkars*, the five items with their names starting with the letter "k". These not only mark the visible identity of an *Amritdhari* (baptized) Sikh, but also convey a universal message. The five *kakkars* are:

1. **Kesh** (unshorn hair) - integrity and sacredness of a being.
2. **Kangha** (comb) - stresses the value of cleanliness and purity of personal and social life.
3. **Kara** (steel bracelet) - message of universality that has no beginning or end, represented by the circular shape of the bracelet.
4. **Kashehra** (short drawers) - message of chastity as well as the Sikh rejection of the ascetic tradition of nudity.
5. **Kirpan** (sword) - represents a liberated being, free of injustice.

The creation of the *Khalsa Panth*, or simply the *Khalsa*, 300 years ago set the path for a new civilization based on humanism, liberalism, universalism and pluralism.



**Who Are the SIKHS?**  
**By Dr. Harjinder Singh Dilgeer**

The Sikh religion was founded by Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji (1469-1539), the first Guru of the Sikhs, over 500 years ago. He was succeeded by nine other Gurus. The tenth Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, installed Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh holy scripture) as the final Guru of the Sikhs in 1708, never to be succeeded by any mortal. Today it is the fifth largest religion in the world, representing over 25 million Sikhs around the world.

The word "Sikh" is derived from Paali language. It means "student of religion." It is different from the Sanskrit word *Shishya* (a general term for any student). A Sikh is essentially a student of study of religious philosophy.

A Sikh can be recognized from amongst the crowd of hundreds and thousands. He becomes conspicuous because of his turban and beard. An *Amritdhari* (initiated) Sikh has an obligation to keep *Punj Kakar* (five articles of faith): *Kes* (unshorn hair), *Kangha* (specific Sikh comb), *Kachhehra* (Sikh shorts stitched in a specific style), *Karaa* (sacred Sikh bracelets) and *Kirpan* (sacred Sikh sword). Besides these five, *Dastar* (turban) is obligatory for a Sikh. A Sikh must not part with any one of these articles of faith till his death.

Another remarkable distinction of a Sikh is the last part of his/her name. A Sikh must use "Singh" (for males) and "Kaur" (for females) as a suffix. Using family name is not an authentic Sikh practice. Singh literally means lion and Kaur means princess. For some time, the Hindus too have started spelling their name as SINGH instead of the earlier Hindu spelling of SINH; it leads to confusion.

A Sikh is essentially a monotheist. He must have faith in on God only. In Sikhism, God is One, Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient. God is the only Creator, Sustainer and the Destroyer. A Sikh can not have faith in any other living or non-living prophet. According to Sikhism, God never appears in human form. Sikhism rejects the other-worldliness. Heaven and hell exist in this world only. Sikhism rejects the theory of incarnation.

Sikhism is not a religion of escapism. A Sikh can achieve liberation (self-realization) while living as a householder. It is a pragmatic approach - it is a meeting ground of social and spiritual worlds. In Sikhism, the concept of liberation is not "the other-worldliness" and rather liberation in this life. To be a *Sachiaar* (a self-realized person), is the Sikh concept of liberation. (Guru Granth Sahib, p.522). In Sikhism, pilgrimage of the so-called sacred shrines has no place. *Shabad* (Word) is the only sacred shrine and meditation and truthful life are the real pilgrimages.

Who is a Sikh?:-

Any person, irrespective of caste, colour, creed, sex etc., is a Sikh, if he/she:

\*Believes in one God;

\*Has faith in the teachings of the Ten Guru Sahib and Guru Granth Sahib;

\*Performs his family ceremonies in accordance with the authentic Sikh *Rahitmaryada* (Sikh code of conduct) as approved by Akal Takhat Sahib, Amritsar in India;

\*Believes in *Khanday-di-Pahul* (Sikh ceremony of initiation);

\*Does not have faith in any other religion or cult;

\*Uses Singh (for males) and Kaur (for females) as suffix of his/her name



### **Khanday-di-Pahul: the Sikh Initiation**

A Sikh is confirmed as a member of the Order of Khalsa after one has taken *Khanday-di-Pahul* (the Sikh initiation) from the *Punj Piaray* (the Five Beloved Ones). The *Punj Piaray* prepare Amrit (sacred nectar for initiation) with a *Khanda* (double-edged sword). When one takes *Khanday-di-Pahul*, he/she takes a vow to attribute his/her life for the cause of the Sikh *Panth* (the Sikh nation). The *Punj Piaray* inform the initiated person about the Sikh *Rehatmaryada* (code of conduct). Any practicing initiated Sikh (male or female), who has never been guilty of religious irregularities, can become one of the *Punj Piaray*.

Four major Prohibitions to be strictly followed by an *Amritdhari* (initiated) Sikh are:

- Must not cut hair from any part of the body;
- Must not eat Halal (killing the animal by bleeding it to death);
- Must not use tobacco or other drugs in any form;
- Must not commit adultery.

The one who violates any one of these four becomes a *Patit* (apostate). He/she shall have to be re-initiated.

Seven prohibitions for an initiated Sikh include:

- Should not enter into brotherhood with any member of the recalcitrant groups: *Minas*, *Masands*, *Dhirmallias*, *Ramratyas* or those who, having once embraced Sikhism, take to shaving, smoking, or committing infanticide;
- Should not dine in the same dish with a person who is not initiated or is an apostate;
- Should not dye or pick out any white hair;
- Should not receive money in return of a daughter's hand in marriage. It includes dowry as well;
- Should not use any drug or intoxicant;
- Should not perform any ceremony, which violates any of the Sikh principles;
- Should not break any vow taken at the time of *Amrit Sanskaar*;

One who violates any of these seven prohibits becomes a *Tankhahiya* and he/she is liable to disciplinary action.

The Code of Conduct for a Sikh requires that a Sikh should:



- Have faith in Waheguru (One God);
- Believe in "one-ness" of the Ten Nanaks;
- Live life according to the teachings of the Ten Nanaks;
- Take Khanday-di-Pahul (initiation) as early as possible;
- Worship only Shabad (Word);
- Always use Singh suffix with the name of a male and Kaur with the name of a female;
- Acquire maximum knowledge of the Sikh history and the Sikh philosophy;
- Give knowledge of Sikhism to his/her children;
- Perform family ceremonies as per authentic Sikh rites;
- Visit a Gurdwara frequently;
- Earn livelihood by honest means;
- Offer Daswandh (tithe) of his earnings for the promotion of and for the welfare of the Sikh nation;
- Participate in community service;
- Believe in equality (of caste, colour, creed, sex etc.);
- Protect the weak and the oppressed; oppose injustice;
- Obey the Hukamnamas of Akal Takht Sahib;
- Participate in the welfare of the Sikh Motherhood;
- Remain conscious of the perseverance of the Sikh identity;
- Perform family functions as simple as possible;
- Have simple food habits (no alcohol/tobacco/drugs etc.);
- Get up early in the morning and recite Nitnaym (sacred five hymns);
- Purge one's mind of five negative emotions i.e. Kaam (lust), Krodh (anger), Lobh (greed), Moh (attachment) and Hankaar (egotism);
- Regard another man's wife as his sister or mother and the daughter of another as his own daughter
- Be loyal to one's wife and vice versa;
- Always greet another Sikh with the salutation "Waheguruji Ka/Da Khalsa, Waheguruji Ki/Di Fateh".

#### **A Sikh MUST NOT**

- Bow before any one except Guru Granth Sahib;
- A Sikh must respect the faith/religion of the others;
- Worship idols, statues or pictures (even of Guru Sahib) etc.;

- Believe in magic, occult power, superstitions and such like things;
- Seek auspicious moments, eclipses;
- Practice infanticide or Sati (widow burning);
- Observe fast e.g. Karva Chauth, Ramzaan etc. (fasting otherwise or for health reason is not prohibited).
- Believe in wearing of the (so-called) sacred thread and similar rituals;
- Observe Sharadhs (annual rituals for the dead);
- Have socio-religious relations with Radhasoamis, Nirankaris, Nandharis and the other cults or the other groups of the Sadhus (they are considered impostors), etc.;
- Move in public without Dastaar (the Sikh turban). Even while at home, one must cover one's head with a small turban;
- Renounce the world (should lead a family life);
- Use tobacco, drugs, intoxicants etc.;
- Commit adultery;
- Observe Purdah;
- Five "Articles of faith" are a must for an initiated Sikh:-

An initiated Sikh must always have Punj Kakaar (The five "articles of faith." These are called *Kakaar* because these five begin with the Punjabi letter equivalent to "K") on one's person and one can never part with them till one's death. These five articles of faith are:-

**Kes:** *Kes* is an article of faith for a Sikh. Unshorn hair is a must for a Sikh. It is unique in Sikhism and it distinguishes the Sikhs from the rest of the world. A Sikh must not trim hair from any part of his body. Hair is "the seal of a Sikh's faith." Removal of this seal makes one a "*Patit*" (apostate). Such a person can not present oneself as representative of Sikhism. A Sikh must keep one's hair neat and clean. A Sikh must comb his/her hair twice a day. Hair must be covered with a *Dastaar* (the Sikh turban). The females may cover their hair with *Dastar* or *Keski* (literally: a small turban) or a *Dupatta* (a cloth of a size enough to cover hair properly).

**Kangha** (the Sikh comb):- A *Kangha* is a specific comb of the Sikh faith. It is used for combing one's hair. A Sikh must keep his/her hair perfectly clean. It should always be attached to the knot of the hair. A wooden *Kangha* is a universal practice.

**Karaa** (the Sikh bracelet):- Every Sikh must wear a *Karaa* in his right wrist. It should be made of iron or steel. (Usage of a *Karaa* made of gold is not authentic practice in Sikhism). *Karaa* reminds a Sikh to desist from un-Sikh like acts.

**Kachhehra** (the Sikh shorts):- Every Sikh must wear a *Kachhehra*. It is a specific type of shorts designed and stitched in a special manner. It reminds a Sikh of chastity. High moral standards are a must for a Sikh.



**Kirpan** (the Sikh sword):- Every initiated Sikh must wear a *Kirpan* on his person. *Kirpan* is worn in a *Gaatra* (a belt of cloth) hanging from the right side of shoulder to the left side of the waist. The Sikh *Kirpan* reminds a Sikh of his duty to help and defend the weak, the poor and the oppressed. *Kirpan* represents struggle for justice and human rights.

### **The Sikh Culture**

Sikhism is a socio-spiritual religion. It is a dynamic way of life. Cardinal principles of Sikhism present this aspect of Sikhism in succinct form. Some cardinal principles are as follows:-

**Kirat Karna** (Honest earning)- The first and the foremost commitment of a Sikh to his faith is honest earning. A Sikh can not earn his living by cheating, stealing, begging, smuggling, corruption or any other dishonest or unlawful means or by trading in un-Sikh like business (sale of drugs, tobacco products etc.).

**Vand Chhakna** (Sharing with the others):- along with honest earning, it is obligatory for a Sikh to share his earnings and other belongings with others. Every Sikh must contribute one's *Daswandh* (one-tenth) of one's earnings for the welfare of the Sikh *Panth* (the Sikh nation), for the propagation of the Sikh religion, for the welfare of humanity through the Sikh institutions.

**Naam Japna** (Reciting hymns in the praise of Waheguru/Almighty):- In Sikhism, *Naam Simran* (meditation on the name of Waheguru) is obligatory. Besides reciting *Nitnaym*, a Sikh must always remember the Almighty at all time. In Sikhism, *Naam Simran* does not mean mere recitation of religious hymns. A Sikh must understand the substance of the hymns and should try to practice the thought presented in the hymns. Truthful living is a part of *Naam Simran*. Before beginning one's daily routine, before eating, and before retiring into bed, a Sikh must meditate upon the Name of the Almighty and thank Him for blessing the human beings with His Gifts. Besides, during the whole day, while performing one's routine job(s), a Sikh should keep in mind the Name of the Almighty. A Sikh should always remember that the Almighty is observing his every action and he should do nothing against His Laws.

**Defend Human Rights:-** It is sacred duty of a Sikh to defend the poor, the weak and the oppressed. A Sikh must not allow tyranny prevail in any form or at any place. A Sikh should endeavor to defend the human rights of every being to the extent of feasibility. A Sikh should never be a silent spectator to cruelty, injustice, tyranny, terror, inhuman activities, etc.

**Pray for the Whole of the World:-** A Sikh does not seek anything for himself (or even for the Sikh nation) from the Almighty. A Sikh *Ardaas* (prayer) is always cosmic in nature. The last sentence of the Sikh national prayer is: "May Your Grace grant prosperity to the whole of the world."

**Bhana Mannana** (Obey His Will):- A Sikh is not a fatalist but he does not grudge against occurrence of any disturbing event. For a Sikh joy and sorrow are the two dresses, to be changed frequently. A Sikh has to strive for betterment, but in case, a positive change is not possible at the moment, one must accept a situation with a smile.

**All The Blessing Is His Grace:-** A Sikh must always thank the Almighty for all He has blessed human beings with. A Sikh must believe in His Grace and that He grants us every thing as it

pleases Him. He takes care of every human being alike. One cannot get anything in this universe without His Grace. A Sikh must have complete faith in God.

**Chardi Kala:-** A Sikh must always live in *Chardi Kala* (Sikh concept of Euphoria). A Sikh must always see the bright side of life, a better tomorrow. But all this can be achieved through *Naam Simran* which gives a Sikh *Chardi Kala* because it is only His Name which is the "*Chardi Kala*."

## THE INSTITUTIONS OF SIKHISM

### Guru Granth Sahib

Guru Granth Sahib is the Sikh Scripture. The Sikh term *Granth* cannot be replaced by "book". It is sacrilege to call *Granth* a book. Guru Granth Sahib was compiled by the Fifth Nanak in 1604 at Amritsar. The Tenth Nanak granted it the status of the Guru-Eternal in 1708. The first volume named *Adi Granth Sahib* is available at Kartarpur (Jullundur). Guru Granth Sahib has 1430 pages. Most of its 5867 *Saloks* (verses) were written by Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Angad Sahib, Guru Amar Das Sahib, Guru Ram Das Sahib, Guru Arjan Sahib, and Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib. Besides the Sikh Guru Sahibs, Guru Granth Sahib consists of hymns by Bhagat Kabir, Baba Farid, Bhagat Ravidas, Bhagat Namdev, Bhatt poets and several other poets as well. Specific *Rags* (there are 31 *Rags*) have been prescribed for all the verses.



Sikhs worship only *Shabad* (Word). Sikhs don't worship even Guru Granth Sahib. The Sikhs only respect Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Granth Sahib must be installed in every Gurdwara (Sikh place of worship) but Guru Granth Sahib is not an object of reverence as an idol (of a god/goddess for a Hindu) nor it is an ordinary volume of scriptures. The Sikhs revere it as consists of and represents the Word.

### Guru in Sikhism

In Sikhism the term Guru, Satguru or Waheguru is used for the Almighty. Besides Him, it is used for the Ten Nanaks and Guru Granth Sahib. The Ten Nanaks are called Gurus, because the Almighty spoke through them. In Sikhism, Guru Sahib, the persons, are not to be worshipped. Sikh worships only "the Word" i.e. the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib. The Ten Guru Sahibs are to be respected, but, it is only *Shabad* (the Word), the Almighty, who alone is to be worshipped. Secondly, all the Ten Nanaks were one entity. The ten Guru Sahibs were ten separate bodies but one and the same spirit. When one Guru installed his successor he merged his light in the successor. Thus, though the successor was a separate physical existence, the spirit in him was the same (see Bhai Gurdas, Vaar 1, Pauri 45 and the hymns by Bhatt poets).

### Gurdwara - the Sikh Place of Worship

The term "Gurdwara" is a combination of two words: Guru (the Enlightener) and "dwara" (literally meaning door but here it denotes the abode). Hence, Gurdwara is the "abode of the Guru". A Gurdwara is the hub of the Sikh mosaic. A Sikh is supposed to join congregation in the Gurdwara as frequently as possible. Gurdwara is not an ordinary place of worship. It is a center of spiritual, social and educational activities.

Usually there are four parts of the complex of a Gurdwara: the main hall for worship, *Langar* (community kitchen), *Saran/Serai* (inn i.e. residential area) and the school (for teaching of Punjabi language, Gurmukhi script and the knowledge about Sikh religion). All the major or big Gurdwaras have these components. In small Gurdwaras, one or more of these four may not be



available. A *Nagaara* (large drum) should be kept in a Gurdwara and should be sounded at appropriate times.

The central and the pivotal object in a Gurdwara is the Guru Granth Sahib (the Holy scripture). Guru Granth Sahib is wrapped in fine *rumalas* (clothes). There must be a *Chanani* (canopy) over Guru Granth Sahib. A *Chaur* (it is wrong to call it fly-whisker) must be placed near Guru Granth Sahib. Both, the *Chanani* and *Chaur* are symbols of royalty and their presence is not functional. When Guru Granth Sahib is brought inside the hall (or room), all those present must stand up with bowed hands. The burning of incense, the burning of earthen lamps with *Ghee/Ghio* (with a view of holyness of lamps; however, the use of lamps for necessary light is permitted), the ringing of bells and clapping, etc. in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib, are the acts against the Sikh ideology.

**Services at Gurdwara:-** Generally a Gurdwara remains open to every visitor throughout the day. The services begin before sunrise with the opening of Guru Granth Sahib and making an *Ardaas* (prayer). After this, *Hukam* (order from the Holy Scriptures) is read from Guru Granth Sahib. It is followed by *Nitnaym* and *Aasa Di Vaar* (a hymn written by Guru Nanak Sahib) etc. For the rest of the day *Keertan* (singing of hymns) is performed. In a Gurdwara, only hymns from the Guru Granth Sahib or the verses written by Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand Lal can be sung. In some Gurdwaras, there are noon and after-noon sessions too. In these sessions, exposition of Guru Granth Sahib is performed and/or the Sikh history is explained. In the evenings, Guru Granth Sahib is closed (unless continuous uninterrupted recitation of Guru Granth Sahib is going on) after *Rahiraas*, *Keertan* (hymn singing), *Ardaas* and *Sohila* (the hymn to be read just before retiring to bed, i.e. the last sermon). Service(s) of Guru Granth Sahib can be performed by either male or female without discrimination.

No pictures of any sort can be hung in the main congregation hall of a Gurdwara. In the library, corridors, *Langar*-hall, office, etc., the pictures of the Gurdwaras and martyrs can be hung. As there is no real picture of the Guru Sahib, it is blasphemous to hang the pictures of the models. It is against the Sikh ideology to bow before the pictures of these models or even before the pictures of any sort. The Sikhs cannot bow even before the monumental platforms erected in the memory of Guru Sahib or the Sikh martyrs.



**Nishan Sahib:-** On the top of the building and/or in front of a Gurdwara, a *Nishan Sahib* (the Sikh national flag) is erected. Its colour is *Kesari* (saffron) and the colour of the cloth for wrapping the flagpole, a cloth, usually of light blue colour is used. Nowadays, in many Gurdwaras, even the colour of the clothes wrapped on the flagpole of the flag, is saffron. There is no fixed length of the flag but it must be taller than the building. An insignia of *Khanda* is surmounted on the top of the flag. This *Khanda* represents the concept of the unity of *Miri* (temporal) and *Piri* (transcendental) in the Sikh ideology.

**How to attend Gurdwara:-** Before entering the inner premises of a Gurdwara every one has to take off one's shoes (if it is possible feet should be washed). Those who are not wearing *Dastar* (turban), they should cover their heads with some cloth. After washing one's hands, one goes directly to the main hall and bows before Guru Granth Sahib, makes offerings (money, etc. offering of money, however, is not obligatory), makes obeisance before Guru Granth Sahib and then joins the *Sangat* (congregation).

**Protocol:-** Anyone, Sikh or non-Sikh, may visit Gurdwara, attend congregation and dine in *Langar* but proper protocol must be adhered to. One must take off shoes, cover one's head, must not bring tobacco or its products, drugs, alcohol or other intoxicants, etc. (one should not have taken drugs or alcohol at the time of the visit to the Gurdwara).

Un-Sikh ceremonies (e.g. cutting of hair, animal sacrifice, widow burning, fasting, *Rakhri*, *Lohri* etc.) cannot be observed in a Gurdwara. Festivals belonging to other religions cannot be celebrated in a Gurdwara.

In case of the Khalsa Takhats, only *Amritdhari* (initiated Sikhs) can enter the innermost part of the Takhat Sahib.

**Priest in Sikhism:-** There is no priestly class in Sikhism. Any Sikh can perform services in a Gurdwara. Similarly there are no missionaries (as a class) in Sikhism. Partly due to fast life or for convenience and partly because of lack of religious information to an average person, some persons are appointed *Bhai* (literally: brother) or *Granthi* (one who can read Guru Granth Sahib, can interpret it and can sing hymns) but they have no special status like Christian priests or the Muslim *Mullah* or the Hindu *Pujari*. Similarly, there is no class of *SANT* either. In the twentieth century, several such people have emerged who call themselves (or love to be called) "*Sant*" but it is an un-Sikh class. In the Sikh Scriptures, term *Sant* has been used for the Almighty only. In Sikhism there is none between man and the Almighty. This *Sant*-dom is copy of Hinduism and it has harmed the Sikhs a lot.

**Sewa (Service):-** *Sewa* is another cardinal principle of Sikhism. *Sewa* is a unique institution of Sikhism. In Sikhism "*Sewa*" is not ordinary unpaid service. It is voluntary, selfless, and humble, without motive, without hope for reward or compensation. *Sewa* can be done in any form through money, body, mind etc. *Sewa* can be done by cooking food or by washing dishes in *Langar* (the sacred Sikh kitchen); by sweeping and cleaning floors in Gurdwara; by helping the poor and the need in the street; by imparting knowledge; by participating in national struggle; by doing any humanitarian action and so on. It is a part of a Sikh's being to do some *Sewa* as a daily routine. *Sewa* in a Gurdwara is generally believed to be more sacramental.

*Sewa* teaches a Sikh to be humble, tolerant, and generous. It brings an end to ego. It gives a Sikh a feeling of being a useful part of humanity. But, on the other hand, if a Sikh performs *Sewa* just for the show or for hypocrisy, one's *Sewa* is not accepted by *Waheguru* (the Almighty) and rather he/she becomes guilty of the sin (like an impostor). A Sikh, while doing *Sewa* can not distinguish between one and another.

**Langar** (the sacred Sikh kitchen):- *Langar* in Sikhism, has pivotal place. Guru Nanak Sahib started this institution during the last days of his life at Kartarpur. (It was here that Sikhism was well known as an institution). Like *Sewa*, *Langar*, in Sikhism is a unique institution. It is an extension of the Sikh institution of *Vand Chhakana* (sharing with others), *Sewa*, *Sangat* (social cohesion) and social equality. In *Langar* one learns the practice of the lesson of love for community life as well as to eliminate every type of social distinction. (It, however, does not mean that one has to observe elimination of distinction only within the *Langar* hall; one has to adopt it as a principle of one's life). Anyone and everyone can take meals and serve in *Langar*, in any Gurdwara (but one must respect the protocol). *Langar*, though it is free for everyone, is no



“free-kitchen”. It is sacred kitchen blessed by *Waheguru*. Every visitor to a Gurdwara is expected to dine in *Langar*. Distribution of *Langar* must be the same for everyone and any distinction, if made, obliterates the very concept behind it.

**Sangat and Pangat:-** Joining Sangat is a must for a Sikh because Guru manifests in *Sangat*. A Sikh should attentively attend congregation for the fullest possible duration. One must join *langar* in the *langar-hall* to share sacred food. *Langar* is served in *Pangat* (literally row) on the floor in the *langar-hall*. *Pangat* does not simply mean sitting in a row; it means sitting equally at par with each other without any type of distinction. No special meals, seats or sections (in *langar-hall* or any other part of Gurdwara) can be reserved for any one who so ever he/she may be. The concept of *Pangat* (row) is to bring an end to hierarchy of caste, creed, colour, sex, status and all the other differences. Joining the *Sangat* and *Pangat* is very important part of a Sikh's being.

**The Sikh Red-Cross:-** An anecdote from the times of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib explains one aspect of Sikh concept of *Sewa* and humanism. Bhai Ghanaiya Singh, the Commander of the Sikh Red Cross, during the invasion of the Hindu and Mogul forces at Anandpur Sahib, used to help the wounded soldiers, even if they belonged to the army of the invaders. This was the command of the Guru that a Sikh cannot distinguish while helping the needy and the helpless. This happened as remote as in the last decade of the seventeenth century. This was a step further than the modern “International Red-Cross,” which, as a non-aligned body looks after the soldiers/civilians wounded/killed during war or riots or natural calamity. This Sikh Red Cross was not a non-aligned body but it still provided alike facilities to every wounded soldier, without any distinction. The Sikh Red Cross is the prototype of the International Red Cross.

### THE SIKH FESTIVALS

The Sikhs observe the days of the birth/martyrdom of Guru Sahib, and some other Sikh national days, in the Gurdwaras. There is no such thing as festivals in Sikhism. On the days of important events, the Sikhs congregate in Gurdwaras, recite *Keertan* (sing hymns) and recite prayers. Lecturers review history related with the event. In some big cities processions are organized in the streets. The Sikhs, in large numbers, with Guru Granth Sahib amidst, march through the streets chanting hymns. The most notable days observed by the Sikhs worldwide are: Guru Nanak Sahib's birthday (October 20), Guru Arjan Sahib's martyrdom (May 30), Guru Gobind Singh Sahib's birthday (December 18), Khalsa revelation day (April 14), *Ghalughara* day (June 4), Martyr's day (October 31) and a few more.

### THE SIKH CEREMONIES

**Child Birth:-** There is no recognized Sikh ceremony related to the birth of a child. However, there is a tradition that the Sikhs recite “*Ardas*” (prayer) after the birth of a child in order to thank *Waheguru* (the Almighty) for having blessed them with a child. The child is brought to the Gurdwara for his first prayers. The parents of the child try to bring the child to a Gurdwara as early as possible (depending upon the health, weather the other circumstances). There is however no limit of time.

**Naming of a child:-** The first proper ceremony, the family of a new born takes opportunity of, is the naming of the child. The parents of the child visit Gurdwara, offer *Karah Parshad* (blessed food) and recite *Ardaas*. Then the *Granthi* reads “*Hukam*” (holy sermon) from Guru Granth Sahib. The name of the child is selected such as to begin with a letter selected from the letters of

the first word of the *Hukam*. Sikhs may select a name for the child beforehand and then recite a prayer before Guru Granth Sahib to seek blessing/approval of the Guru. Suffix "Singh" (for males) and "Kaur" (for females) is a must for a Sikh.

**Marriage:-** The Sikh marriage ceremony is known as "*Aanand Karaj*."

The Sikh marriage ceremony is very simple. The bride and the bridegroom, along with parents, form a congregation, in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib and recite prayer. After prayers, the *Granthi* (or anyone whosoever performs the ceremony of marriage) addresses the bride and the bridegroom and explains to them the duties of Sikh married life. Then the "*Laavan*" (marriage hymns from Guru Granth Sahib [these hymns do not refer to the marriage of a male with a female but refer to man's union with the Almighty]) are read. With the end of the reading of each "*laav*" the couple begins nuptial circling around Guru Granth Sahib. Reading of the four *Laavan*, followed by *Ardaas*, completes the ceremony. After this, Anand Sahib (a hymn) is read and they pray is again recited. This completes the *Aanand Karaj* ceremony.

**Divorce** is against the Sikh ideology. If one understands the meaning of the Sikh philosophy of marriage, then there cannot be any divorce. In Sikhism, marriage is a union of two souls who strive unitedly to fulfill their goal of life. Similarly, abortion too is against Sikh ideology. Sikhism promotes family planning through self-control but killing of a child in a womb is against the Sikh ethics.

**Death:-** In Sikhism death is not a matter of sorrow. It is *Bhana of Waheguru* (the Will of the Almighty). In Sikhism, there is no sanctity of the body after death. As per tradition after death of a Sikh, his/her body is washed and properly dressed. *Dastaar* (the Sikh turban) is must for a Sikh male even after death. (In western countries washing of the body is done in funeral homes). After this, *Ardaas* is offered and the body is taken to crematorium. After setting funeral pyre to the body *Ardaas* is recited again. After a couple of days, the ashes are collected and submersed in some river or some flowing water. No river or spot is sacred in Sikhism. In foreign countries, the Sikhs carry the ashes of their relatives to the Punjab to submerge them in some river. When ashes are submersed *Ardaas* is recited again. After a few days a congregation is held. The friends and relatives recite the final prayers, completing ceremonies relating to the death of a human being. It is not in consonance with the Sikh philosophy to observe annual rituals for the deceased.

According to the Sikh faith all the bodies, regardless of the age of the deceased, are to be cremated.

It is forbidden to erect monuments over the remains of the dead.



## THE SIKH FORM

### SIKH IDENTITY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

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The present Sikh form is the result of an evolutionary process beginning with the founder of Sikhism, Sri Guru Nanak Dev, and culminating in definitive delineation with detailed specifications by the Tenth Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh. The form was evolved through a series of exercises and tests, while always keeping in view its practicality. The Tenth Guru defined the process through which the form should be attained and retained. This paper will reflect some aspects of the Sikh form, specially, from dogmatic and pragmatic approaches.

Sikhism was designed to be a way of life and a universal brotherhood or sisterhood. There was a strong emphasis by the great Sikh Gurus that a religion should be easy to practice without any intermediary between man and God, and that it should not be guided by stringent and narrow-minded rules and rituals. However, there are no compromises on the basic form of a Sikh, although we shall raise some questions in this direction as well in this paper.

The basic premise in this presentation is that Sikhism is not a convenience, but a conviction. We cannot be casual or approximate Sikhs. Either we are or we are not. We have to be Sikhs with chastity, commitment, and conviction. It is not a game that can be played half or part of the way. There is nothing like orthodox or modernized Sikhs either by style or tradition - unlike orthodox or other Jews). A Sikh is a Sikh, is a Sikh, is a Sikh. For the topic under review, there are the necessary and sufficient condition(s). The necessary condition for Sikhism is the form, *Sabat Soorat Distar Sira*. The sufficiency condition(s) would obviously require many more humanistic, ethical, spiritual and societal aspects.

The Sikh population, particularly the youth, are confused about the form, and the value system, and how they are supposed to maintain and/or develop and reinforce them. They have the built-in trepidation of their lonesomeness in this mission. Their fear is somewhat justified as they may not be able to withstand the outside pressures alone. The Sikh population is so scant and sparsely distributed that the Sikh youth, more often than not, feel utterly insecure and unprotected. This constant emotional and oppressive fear can inhibit their physical and intellectual development and growth.

When they are able to get some moral support from their peers, mostly Sikhs, then they have to face conflicting situation(s) around themselves in their home(s) or family circles. My parents have cut or trimmed their hair, why can't I? My father or mother does not perform his/her religious chores regularly, do I have to? How rigidly has the prescribed form been followed and adhered to? Can I believe in the first nine Gurus, who may not have been so explicit about the form as the Tenth Guru, and still be a good Sikh? They also complain that while their parents and community leaders insist on their preserving the proper form, they themselves usually fail to provide good examples, or they are not able to put forth cogent and convincing reasons and answers.

It is the responsibility of the community leaders to inculcate the desire in the youth to adopt and stick to the Sikh form, to know more about their religion, assist them at home and outside to understand the significance of the "true" form, present them with solid examples of proof from our own lives and precepts, encourage and include them and their activities in the community programmes. They should be made an integral and active part in religious congregations. The significance of the five k's in our daily lives, basis and their contributions to the fulfilment of our religious goals have to be clearly delineated. Many of us take shelter under the guise of clichés such as: "the Sikh form is too cumbersome, it is too time consuming, and too elaborate. It, therefore, needs modification and simplification." These are, obviously, frivolous excuses that can turn our youngsters off, and create more confusion than provide explanation.

During the past 18 years, over 1,000 Sikh children have gone through the Youth Camps held by the Sikh Youth Forum and the Washington Sikh Centre. (Incidentally, there are several other youth camps organized by other volunteer groups as well.) The curriculum in these camps, besides instructions in Gurmukhi, speaking of Punjabi, *Shabad Kirtan*, Current Sikh Issues, Social Issues in the Western Society, and physical and recreational activities, also included emphasis on Sikh Values, Sikh History and the Sikh Form. Some of the excerpts from the reports prepared by these children are summarized below:

"Sikh children living in the Western civilization have problems just as any child from any other country would have in India. They experience the difference in how they look from the rest of the children. Long hair for the Sikhs is a symbol of spiritual strength. Having long hair especially for the boys has its inconveniences. They are likely to get teased and stared at."

"Many parents do not take time to help educate their children about the Sikh Form. As they get older, the children become aware of the demands of the society. They are faced with serious choices - whom they shall marry and what will they do in the future. Religion and the Sikh Form in the life of a Sikh is conspicuous."

"It is important for the Sikh children to understand Sikh religion, because when people of other religions ask questions about Sikhism, they should be able to answer them with confidence. People will then become aware of Sikhism and will want to know more about it. Discipline is a necessary part of a Sikh child's life. They grow up to become more aware of the distinct differences from other communities in the way they live. Most Sikh boys keep their hair in *joorha* (knot) covered with a turban. If Sikh children are to have self-confidence and pride in being what they are, it will not be enough for them to keep their hair long and learn shabads (religious hymns). They need to understand the spirit of the Sikh religion, especially those aspects of the Guru's teachings that are most important to take on the problems of living in a complex society."

"The attitudes of American Sikh children are changing with the times. They are growing up in a very different environment from their parents. Sikh children take pride in being themselves. We realize that we have a distinctive appearance, and in defending ourselves from insensitive teasers, we gain strength. If a group of children starts pulling on a Sikh boy's *patka* (light headcover), and telling him that he looks like a girl, the boy should tell them: 'Don't touch my hair. I am a Sikh, and I am supposed to grow long hair. Just leave me alone.' Having to deal with a situation like this, although unpleasant, builds character and lights your inner fire."



"Another positive aspect of being a Sikh is that we are raised with a strong moral background. We possess a definite sense of right and wrong. This helps us withstand the overwhelming peer pressure that we are exposed to every day. Staying close to God enables our life to have meaning and help us avoid giving in to harmful demands such as drugs and alcohol."

"The boys are teased about their *joorha*, and the girls might be given trouble if they do not shave their legs. Everyone at some point probably wished that they were more like the American kids. Although this country is diverse, the Sikh youth experience a tremendous amount of pressure to conform. Any deviation from the rest of the group can result in malicious criticism. It is hard to be strong when you are constantly teased. Explaining yourself and your religion sometimes does not help, and therefore, you have to endure it as best as you can. Often, there is no remedy in the case of a totally one-sided people, who refuse to accept anything out of the ordinary. We stand out, but at the same time, we should be proud to be different."

Sikh children are also in conflict with their parents and the society. First, in regard to the society, Sikh children have a difficult time adjusting to the carefree ways of the Americans. They try to fit in here while still retaining the customs of their parents. Secondly, Sikh parents were obviously raised in a very different culture from that of America, and old traditions are still in practice. The parents are trying to impress these values on their children, and sometimes, this conflicts with the changing rules of the American society.

Sikh parents are very strict on the subject of dating. Americans usually are allowed to start dating at an early age. One possible reason for this is that Sikh parents are overly protective and are more concerned about their teenage children. The parents should trust their children enough to know that they act according to how they have been brought up.

The Sikhs are a truly unique group of people. In America, they are forced to endure senseless, sometimes vicious teasing. In the end, the pride and strength of the Sikh children will prevail.

When many of us landed in this foreign land a few decades ago, it was disheartening to discover that the intense influence of the Western society was overtaking some of the weak-minded compatriots. They were losing their form. This was happening in the U.S., Canada, U.K. and other Western countries. The irony of the situation was that what was happening in the foreign lands could, perhaps, be explained by the overwhelming pressures of distractions abroad, but what could not be explained was that the same phenomenon was being repeated even in India and Punjab as well for no obvious outside influences. It is understood that some youngsters have organized gangs to put pressure on individuals to cut their hair, even in Amritsar. This has become a crisis of shape and form. The Westerners keep asking questions with far-reaching implications: Who you people are? Why do you look so different? What are the purposes of wearing the 5 K's? Why do some of you have one form with beard and hair and others a different one? The explanations given to such questions have been sometime satisfactory, and on other occasions, not as convincing. This became and is currently an identity crisis for Sikhism, a crisis of shape, form and conviction. Shape and form are absolutely necessary, but not sufficient to be a good Sikh; the latter involves a deep sense of faith and conviction. Once the faith and conviction of a Sikh is strengthened, then their plunging into such dire and dastardly actions as cutting or shaving of *kesas* (hair) on frivolous grounds can, perhaps, be prevented. Parents who themselves are cutting their own hair are being instrumental for not attempting to prevent the same tragedy for their children, and are doing a great



disservice to themselves, to their children, and above all to the proliferation of Sikhism. They will be held accountable for precipitating and polarizing the crisis.

Divisions within the community, for political reasons, both at home and abroad are not helping to alleviate this critical impasse. The psyche of the community being in such disarray is adding incalculable frustration among the Sikh youth. It is further exacerbated when the Sikh youth are themselves struggling to sort out numerous conflicts, confusions and contradictions in their everyday lives, whether it be at home, at school, in college, or in their professional careers. Unfortunately, the community has failed to provide them with an integrated wholesome approach for addressing their concerns. Endeavours like the youth camps, Sunday schools, seminars, symposiums and conferences, which involve a tremendous amount of work and effort and financial, physical and emotional dedication and commitment, are all commendable. These attempts, however, have been made to address these issues, only on a piecemeal basis, hence their low degree of effectiveness. In spite of limited success of these efforts, we should not be disappointed, nor is there any reason to become complacent. They provide forums for teaching and informing the Sikh youth of the Sikh tradition, values and the significance of the form.

Sikh institutions abroad have failed to allocate adequate importance to the Sikh form. In addition, fissiparous activities of different factions of the Sikh political and religious leadership have not only failed to provide proper direction, but have further accentuated and frustrated the persona of the Sikh youth. Therefore, failures, if any, on the part of the Sikh youth to adhere to the true form and to make their mark in the Sikh community development is not due to their apathy to the cause. It is because of the fact that the older generation has been derelict in projecting a role model image, whether it be in the standards in our daily lives, in the religious convictions, or even in the management of Sikh institutions, where constant infighting and mud-slinging is rampant. There is no shame in depleting the community's scarce resources in legal fees in civil and criminal courts instead of them being directed towards some meaningful projects. Some of the officers of the management boards of Sikh institutions do not even look like Sikhs. But, because of political manoeuvres, they are able to muster adequate support to come up to the top even if they lack the proper form. It may not be this political clout that is offensive and discouraging to the Sikh youth, but it is the utter lack of demonstration and fulfilment of Sikh principles by such politician-officers that irks and frustrates the younger generation. Condoning non-Sikh-like activities in our institutions, on the one hand, and asking the Sikh youngsters to perpetuate Sikh principles, on the other, is nothing short of "hypocrisy on a grand scale."

The form of grown-up Sikh children is causing problems in areas of admission to academic institutions of higher education and in seeking professional careers. These problems may grow as our numbers increase. Our youngsters are bright and enterprising. They do and will get entry-level jobs, but their progression in the business and commercial world will pose problems because of the oft-repeated excuse of our specially different appearance. On our own, we should encourage Sikh children to go to the best educational institutions in this country. They should become extremely competitive and prove to be several percentage points superior to their other American counterparts. This will be one less excuse by the prospective recruiters and employers. We, as a community, should establish an educational fund to provide support and opportunity for these youngsters to seek prestigious slots. We should also organise support group for the young professionals who can represent their genuine concerns of discrimination and deprivation of opportunity.



One of the serious lacunae in the institutional framework of the Sikhs is the inadequate role played by the Sikh preachers. They should be the stalwarts for propagating the true Sikh form; words uttered by the from the gurdwara pulpits carry a lot more weight than otherwise. It is not entirely their fault that a true message is not being delivered. All of them have not been trained properly, nor happen to have the zeal and dedication required for missionary work. Local *granthis*, supplemented by visiting *ragi jathas* from India and Punjab, have serious shortcomings in their presentations and approach. They are, in most part, traditional and stereotype. They lack knowledge of history to portray the form in its proper perspective. Their interpretation of *Gurbani* (the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib), at times, is incorrect. They have no realization of the Western environment through which the Sikh community in general and the Sikh youth in particular have to go in their daily living. These preachers, with their traditional approach, do have some influence on the older generation, but they do not seem to reach out to the Sikh youth and fail to influence their thinking process.

Sikhism prescribes 5 k's as an integral part of the form. All of them are symbols, but also have practical, social and spiritual significance. *Kara* (a steel bangle), a sign of strength and a reminder not to indulge in any kind of evil deeds; *kangha* (a comb), to keep the hair clean and tidy; *kachhera* (short breeches), a comfortable and practical wear; a *kirpan* (a short sword), to protect the weak and helpless, and for self-defence, and above all *kesas*, (unshorn hair), a distinctive symbol of trust and strength that facilitates the approach for help and assistance by the needy in hours of panic and turmoil.

The maintenance of form and symbols is essential not only for the sake of uniformity, but also for sustaining enthusiasm for an organisation. Such symbols should be a living index of the ideal, arousing deep intimations of the personality that created them. The symbols make the ideal more real and meaningful to the follower. The Sikh symbols were intended to create a spirit of distinctness, and not arrogance, and to represent a tested people. They were meant to serve as aids to the corporate life of the community. Perhaps, it may be possible for a person to devote himself to God without adopting any outer form or symbols, but if he wants to work in an organisation, he/she must keep up with the disciplinary form of the group. Just as we may have a good fighter without military drill and uniform, but that does not minimize the need of a regular army. In the same manner, the Sikhs of Sri Guru Gobind Singh should stick to the uniform and the symbols ordained by him. They will find them a great aid in the solidarity of the Khalsa family.

The form has kept the Sikhs united. It has maintained their ideals unsullied in great crises. Many Sikhs faced death, but refused to shave off their hair, the *kesas*, which is the most important of the five symbols. The maintenance of unshorn hair is in keeping with the idea of living according to the will of the Lord. The *kesas* are the link with the Guru power. Along with the maintenance of the five symbols, an exemplary life, the *Rahit* (code of conduct), is equally essential. Abstinence from tobacco, narcotics, alcohol and adultery are parts of the discipline of the Sikhs. Undoubtedly, the code of conduct is a difficult one. The Tenth Guru valued the form of the Khalsa, and said that so long as the Khalsa maintained the symbols, e.g., the form, it will march to glory. When it shows indifference towards them, its lustre will tarnish and fade away.

*Kesas* symbolize Sikhism. Long uncut hair is not just a tradition, but the primary basis on which Sikhism was established. It was for the perpetuation of unshorn hair and beard that thousands and thousands of our ancestors sacrificed their lives at the hands of the then rulers to defy forced conversion. All of them, for their heroic convictions, are remembered in the daily prayers of Sikhs.



There are five basic requirements for Sikhism. *Kesas* are one of them. The answer(s) to those who contend that they were willing to adopt all other K's except the *kesas* is that there is no partial or approximate Sikh. No partial fulfilment. It has to be a package deal. Either we are in or we are out. Getting 60%, which are considered pass marks, or even 80%, a grade of B, are not enough. In daily Sikh prayers, it is repeatedly mentioned:

- a) that we should be bestowed with "*Sabat Soorat*", a complete form;
- b) that we be blessed to complete the journey on this earth with all our hair intact; and
- c) that we remember all those who sacrificed their lives to maintain this complete form.

Do's in Sikhism: Maintain unshorn hair, a steel bangle, a sword, short breeches and a comb. Don'ts in Sikhism: Cut your hair, smoke tobacco, take drugs or alcoholic beverages and commit adultery. Unshorn hair is so important that it is the only one that is common and underlined in both Do's and Don'ts.

In spite of the great problem posed by everyday increasing trend of apostasy amongst the Sikh community of losing the form, not much serious effort has been made by the Sikh institutions, including gurdwaras, to find the causes of this serious defection, and to devise suitable remedial measures. The lag between what is and what ought to be in religious convictions of our young men and women have increased to such a degree and with such a speed that the gap appears to be alarmingly widening. It is incumbent on the community leaders to determine if it is the homes (parents), schools (teachers), gurdwaras (priests and missionaries), certain social impacts or combinations thereof that are driving a wedge in our community.

Religion indicates a search within for better life, while the present trend is outward directed. Value system seems to have undergone a metamorphic change in favour of materialistic goals. Materialistic success has become an end in itself. Tremendous emphasis is placed on "Almighty dollar" rather than on *ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ*. Parents and community leaders have not done their jobs rightly to educate the members of the community. The result has been that those with shallow roots or weak faith got easily uprooted. No wonder, the raw youth, the illiterate, and the so-called fashion-ridden people fall an easy prey to the renunciation of the faith, sacrificing the form.

The tempo of distractions is increasing, and the effort to impart the desired education is certainly not keeping up with the gravity of the situation. We have conspicuously shied away to discuss the subject of *kesas* in our congregations, meetings, or seminars. If the subject does come up at all, the emphasis is on "cult" aspect of it, and not the "why" of it. Whatever literature is available on the subject is not of much value, particularly to the wavering section of our youth. This is one area that deserves immediate research effort and attention.

*Kesas* have been regarded as a symbol of saintliness and Dharma since ancient times. The Biblical story of Samson Agonistes shows that hair were a source of strength and vitality. (The author's two-year old grandson says, "Keeping a *joorha* on the head builds character and courage.") Guru Nanak Dev started the practice of keeping hair unshorn. His son, Baba Sri Chand, the founder of the *Udasi* movement, also ordered his disciples to maintain long unshorn hair. The Tenth Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh, on March 30, 1699, the day of *amrit* ceremony, wrote in *Hukamnamah*: "*Tusaan Khande da Amrit Panjan ton laina, Kesh rakhne, Eh Asadi mohar hai*". A Sikh becomes an apostate, *patit*, if he shaves or trims his hair.



In spite of the above, one oft-repeated question by a minority of the Sikh community is: What is the use of the Sikh form, specially the kesas? This question needs to be answered from the spiritual point of view rather than a commercial point of view. We must avoid erroneous, emotional and fundamental representation. There is, obviously, no special use of kesas in the commercial market, where commodities are bought and sold. Kesas might not have special sanctity in certain job markets. However, kesas, most assuredly, have spiritual values, and the spiritual values cannot be weighed or rated on the scales of dollars and cents. What is the value of the cross to a Roman Catholic? The cross is a faith and becomes sacred because of its relationship to God. Kesas, on the other hand, stand on a different, but even higher pedestal. They are sacred to Sikhs not only because they are related to their true Masters, but also because they are a part of a standing order of the Tenth Master for initiation. This is a command for all times and should not be questioned. No one can and should say "why" or "wherefore" to something that comes as a command from the true Master, and is a part of the faith, much less have the audacity to sit on judgement on it. What can be more preposterous than an effort of the "finite" to criticize or question the "infinite". Bhai Nand Lal Goya gives the significance of one hair of the Tenth Guru when he wrote:

ਦੀਨ ਦੇਨਯਾ ਦਰ ਕਮੰਦੇ ਆਂ ਪਰੀ ਰੁਖਸਾਰੇ ਮਾ।

ਹਰ ਦੋ ਆਲਮ ਕੀਮਤੇ ਯਕ ਤਾਰ ਮੁਏ ਯਾਰ ਮਾ।

One hair of my beloved enlightener is more precious to me than (the glories of) both the worlds put together.

Waheguru is remembered by His attributes, and one of the attributes is that He is with kesas. As such, He is known as *Keswa* (One with hair), along with many other names. The First Guru, Sri Guru Nanak Dev, writes in Wadhans Chhant:

ਤੇਰੇ ਬੰਕੇ ਲੋਇਣ ਦੰਤ ਰੀਸਾਲਾ, ਸੁਹਣੇ ਨਕ ਜਿਨ ਲੰਮੜੇ ਵਾਲਾ॥

O Lord ! You have charming eyes, sweet teeth, beautiful nose, and long hair.

Just as every soldier carries an identification card to represent his membership of the group connoting a certain ideology, and also wears certain symbol(s), similarly, the form of a Sikh, "*Sabat Soorat Dastar Sira*", beard and hair with a turban are the embodiment of the personality of the Tenth Master, Sri Guru Gobind Singh. The form of a Sikh deserves commendation and reverence. Just as a police or an army officer commands respect only through his uniform (without the uniform, he is an ordinary person without authority of any kind and nobody will extend to him the respect and privileges due to an officer), similar is the condition of the proper form of a Sikh. Every regime has its official coin which bears the official seal without which it is just a piece of metal, and has no special value. A seal represents and ensures the face value and makes it acceptable. Sometimes, a coin, in spite of a seal, will be declared fake or fictitious, and will not be acceptable on the ground that it lacks the intrinsic worth and the backing of the authority. To be acceptable, therefore, a coin must have the seal, the face value, and also an intrinsic worth. Similarly, a Sikh must have a *bana*, the form, the face value, and also be proficient in the understanding of *Gurbani*. The form, the *bana*, is an outer make up, and *bani* provides the support for the soul. Those with the form of a Sikh, but devoid of *sikhi jeevan* or practice are hypocrites, and those who believe in and practice *bani*, but do not have the proper form, do not have the official seal, and are, therefore, incomplete *Gursikhs*.

There is a growing confusion and concern among the Sikh community about the distinction, justification, and significance in the use and adoption of different classification groups, such as the *kesadharis*, non-



*kesadharis*, and the *amritdharis*. Do they mean one and the same phenomenon? Do they represent the same faith? Are there disparities in these classifications in regard to the depths of conviction and belief in the tenets of Sikhism as propounded by the Ten Gurus and embodied in Sri Guru Granth Sahib? Can the *sahijdhari* and non-*kesadhari* Sikhs perform and offer sacrificial services and acts to save the honour of the Sikhs and Sikhism? Some of these and other similar questions have raised controversies, sometimes so strong that the Sikh community finds itself clearly divided. The question does arise: Who truly does and can represent the Sikhs and the Sikh interests? To answer the last question, we need to define the following terms:

1. *Sahijdhari*: Someone born in a non-Sikh family, but believing in the Sikh faith.
2. *Kesadhari*: Who has unshorn beard and hair, (the necessary requirement).
3. *Amritdhari*: Initiate as per Gurmat Maryada, (the sufficiency requirement).
4. Non-*kesadhari*: Born in a Sikh family, but has cut his hair/beard or both. The term "*sahijdhari*" was coined for those who would like to adopt Sikhism with "*sehaj*", slowly; that is, to progress gradually towards *kesadhari*. One can be *sahijdhari* Sikh having been born in a non-Sikh family, but believing in Sikh principles. This is the first and basic stage. He/she becomes a full Sikh in stage 2, i.e., when he/she becomes *kesadhari*. Is a *sahijdhari* Sikh as good a Sikh as *kesadhari* Sikh? Is the goodness of Sikhism confined to *kesas* alone? Practising Sikhism as per the "*Rahit*" is the highest stage of Sikhism. The Tenth Guru wrote:

ਰਹਿਣੀ ਰਹੈ ਸੋਈ ਸਿਖ ਮੇਰਾ॥ ਓਹੁ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਕਾ ਚੇਰਾ॥  
ਰਹਿਤ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਨਹਿ ਸਿਖ ਕਹਾਵੇ॥ ਰਹਿਤ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਦਰ ਚੋਟਾਂ ਖਾਵੇ॥

*Amritdhari*, undoubtedly, is the only kind that is entitled to be included in the elite class.

Every faith or religion has certain basic codes. Those codes, some times, are matters of faith and cannot be fully explained or justified. Those who follow those codes to the letter and spirit, are the true followers. Those who do not, are not. Whether those individuals can remain a part of the faith-professing community is a matter of "value judgement", and they will have to live by their own conscience. As per the Sikh *Rahit*, they will be called apostate, *patit*.

*Sehajdhari* Sikhs without a proper form of a Sikh are, perhaps, excusable, but are acceptable as Sikhs. But the "casual" Sikhs who have committed an act of defiling their hair and form makes them apostate. When, with the grace and inspiration of the *Satguru*, they return to their original form and shape, they should not be put on a pedestal, and adorned with top-notch visible positions in the community simply because they have readopted their original form. They should be allowed and encouraged to start only from a scratch after atonement, and to make their way up the ladder in Sikhism. In several practical instances, we have praised such persons unduly, simply because they have again grown their beard and hair, etc. This is where they should have been to begin with. By so doing, we are being grossly unfair to those who have kept the "*Sabat Soorat*" against all types of odds.

In some situations, there may be genuine problems of livelihood where some persons, to their chagrin, have to shave off. The community feels sorry for them. They need to be provided moral, financial, and physical support. Those who cut their own or their children's hair on frivolous grounds, and consider themselves to be "modern" or "Westernized" Sikhs, should lose the sympathy of the community. There should be a counselling service to assist these groups to avoid falling into this ditch. If we let them drift, and once they have gone too far, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile. Those who trim are



# SIKH GENERALS



## **BANDA SINGH BAHADAR (1670-1716)**

Baba Banda Singh Bahadur was Madho Das Bairagi before taking Amrit (Baptism) from Guru Gobind Singh Ji. He always considered himself to be a humble devotee of the Guru. After conquest of Sirhind, he abolished jagirdari (feudalism) from Panjab. He made Mukhlisgarh his capital and issued currency in the name of Gurus. For the official seal, Banda Singh Bahadur used the motto "Deg Teg Fateh" (Service to Humanity; Irradication of Injustice).



# SIKH HUMANITARIANS

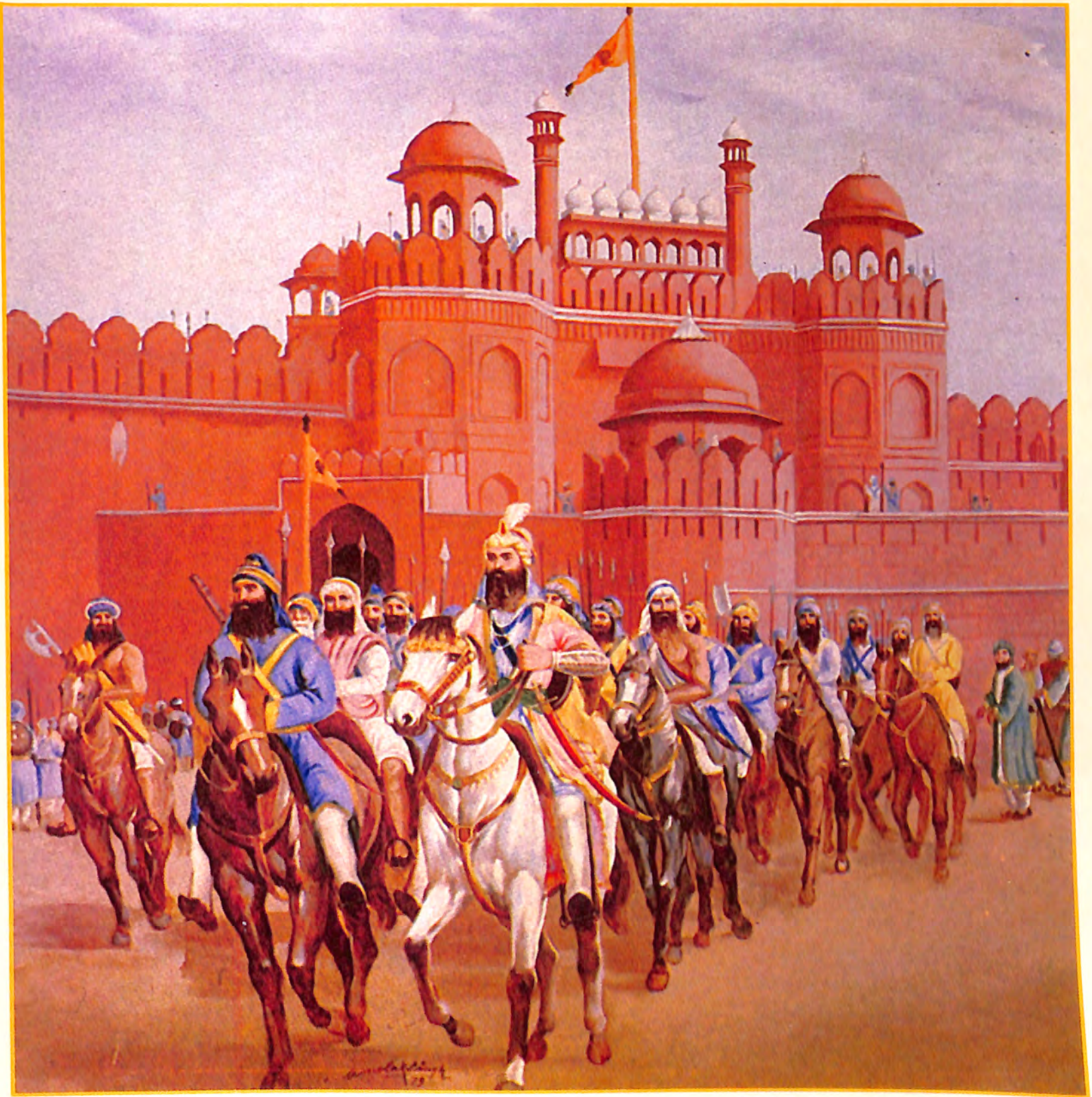


## BHAI KANAHYIA - A SYMBOL OF HUMANITY

Guru Ji made it essential for every Sikh to contribute one tenth of one's income (Daswandh) and use it for the welfare of the needy and sick. During the battle of Anandpur Sahib, Bhai Kanahya a humble Sikh served water and gave first aid to the Sikhs and the enemy alike. When someone complained of Bhai Kanahya's giving first aid to the enemy, he replied "he saw no enemy, just a human being who was in need of his service". Guru ji praised his humanitarian action. This was well before the establishment of the Red Cross.



# KHALSA FLAG

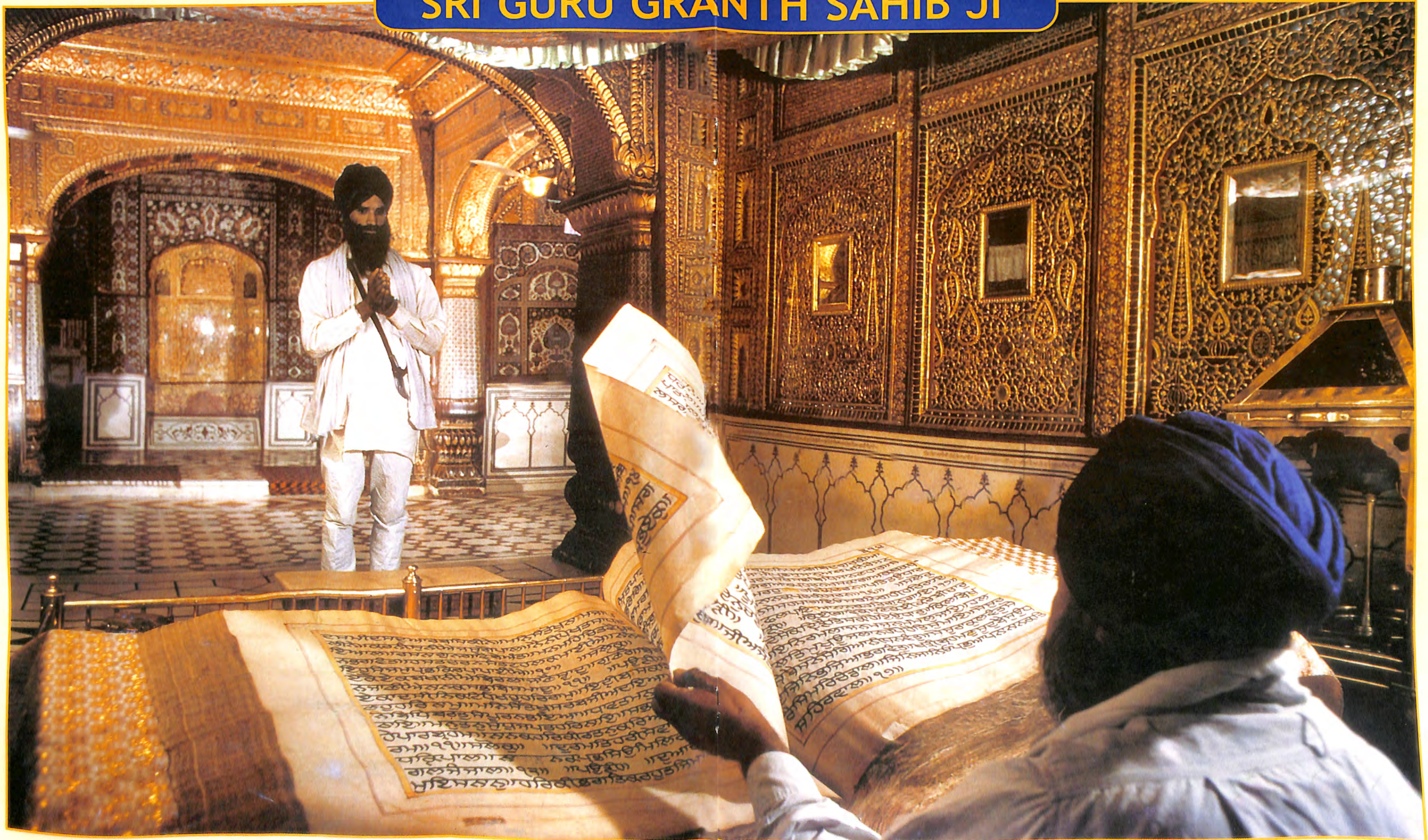


## **KESRI (SAFFRON) KHALSA FLAG ON THE RED FORT, DELHI (MARCH 11, 1781)**

Between 1765-1781, the Sikhs conquered Delhi fifteen times. In 1781, Sardar Baghel Singh hoisted the Khalsa Flag on the Red Fort and Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia graced the throne of Delhi.



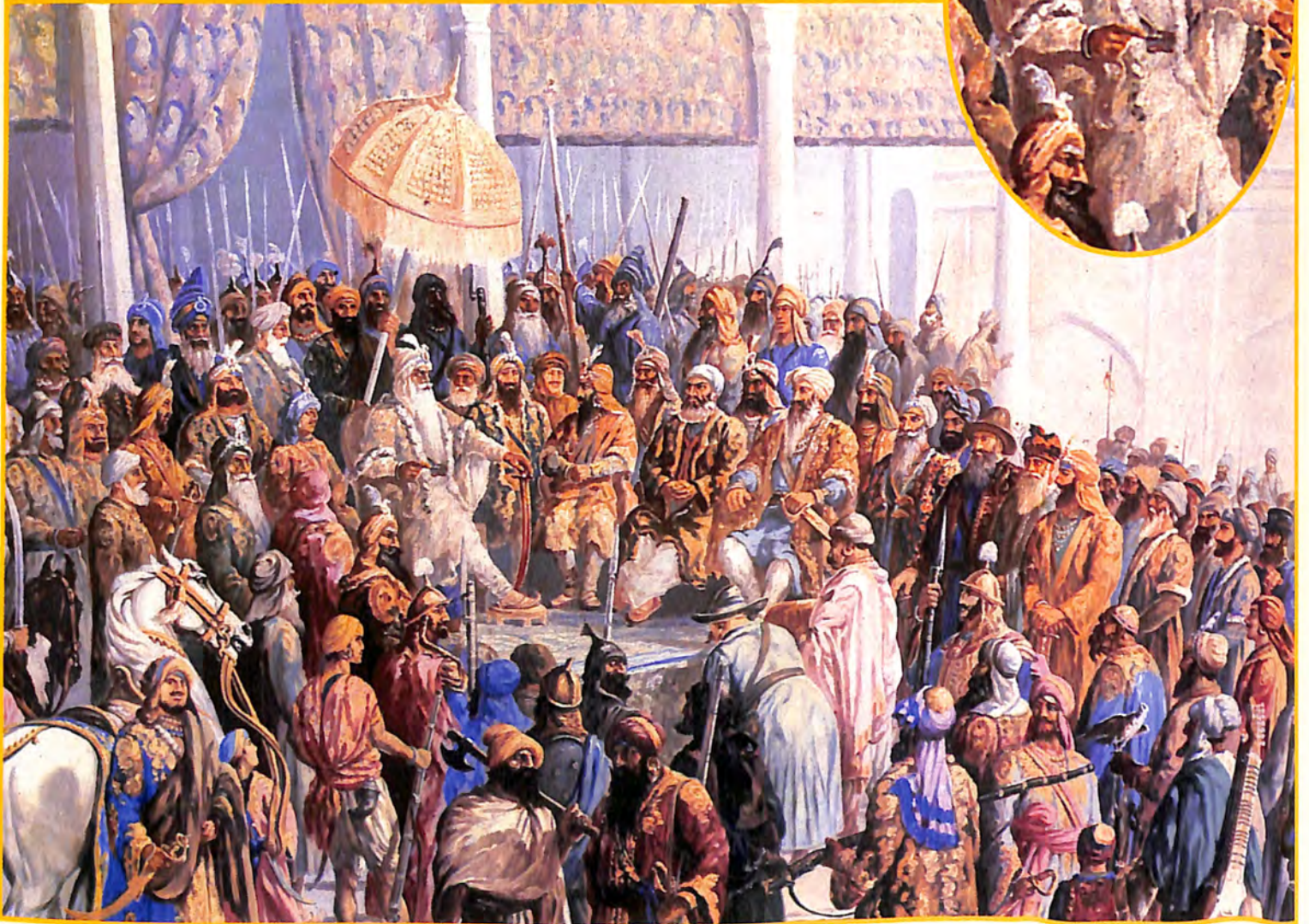
# SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI



**A SIKH PRAYING IN FRONT OF SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI** A Granthi reads from the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (Sikh Holy Scriptures) in the Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple, Amritsar).



# SIKH EMPIRE



## MAHARAJA (EMPEROR) RANJIT SINGH - THE LION OF PANJAB

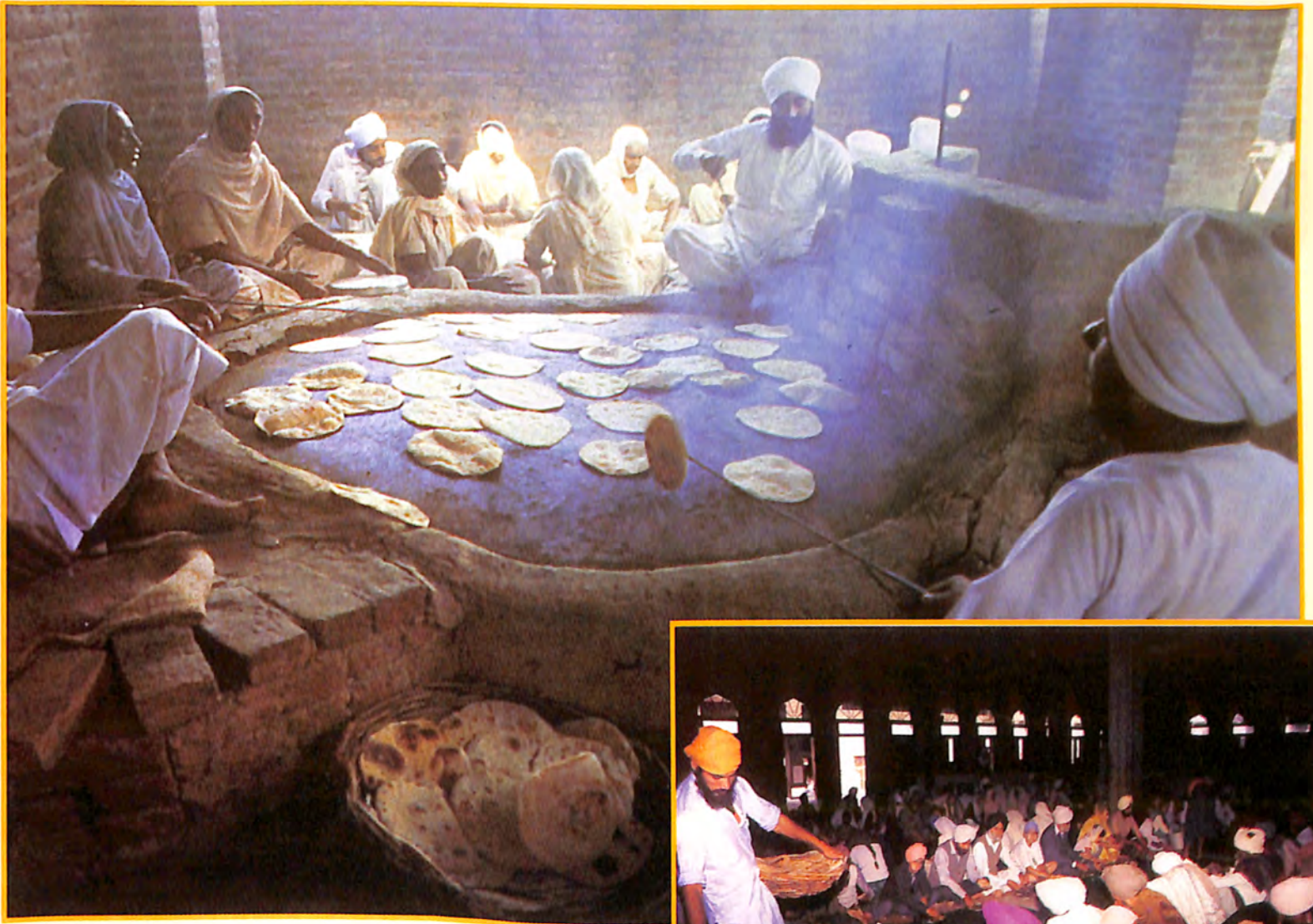
The Sikh Empire extended from Afghanistan to Delhi and Kashmir in the North. This portrait highlights the glory of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court. Under his rule no one was given the death penalty and all religions were treated equally. He ruled this vast territory for half a century. The famous Kohi-noor diamond graced his collection of treasure.



COIN OF THE TIME OF MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH



# LANGAR - COMMUNITY KITCHEN



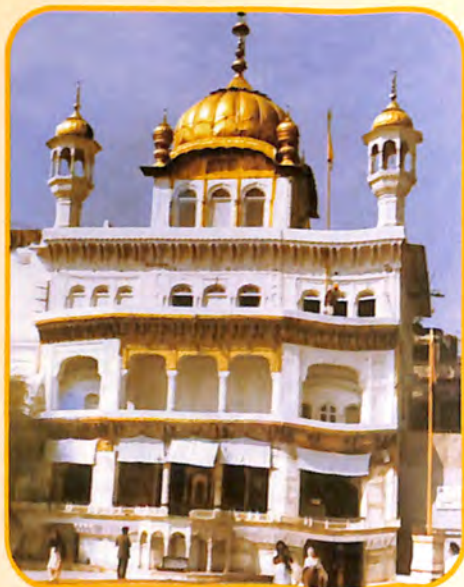
## SERVING OF LANGAR AT THE GURDWARAS

"Guru ka Langar" is a continuation of the religious services and therefore different than eating food at home. It is meant for people, Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike, irrespective of their personal wealth or community status signifying a Sikh principle of sharing with all human beings. So that everyone is treated equally, a belief of the Sikhs, Langar is served without any discrimination or obligation to anyone. No person receives specially prepared food compared to another. Langar is served sitting cross-legged on the floor which promotes equality and humility.



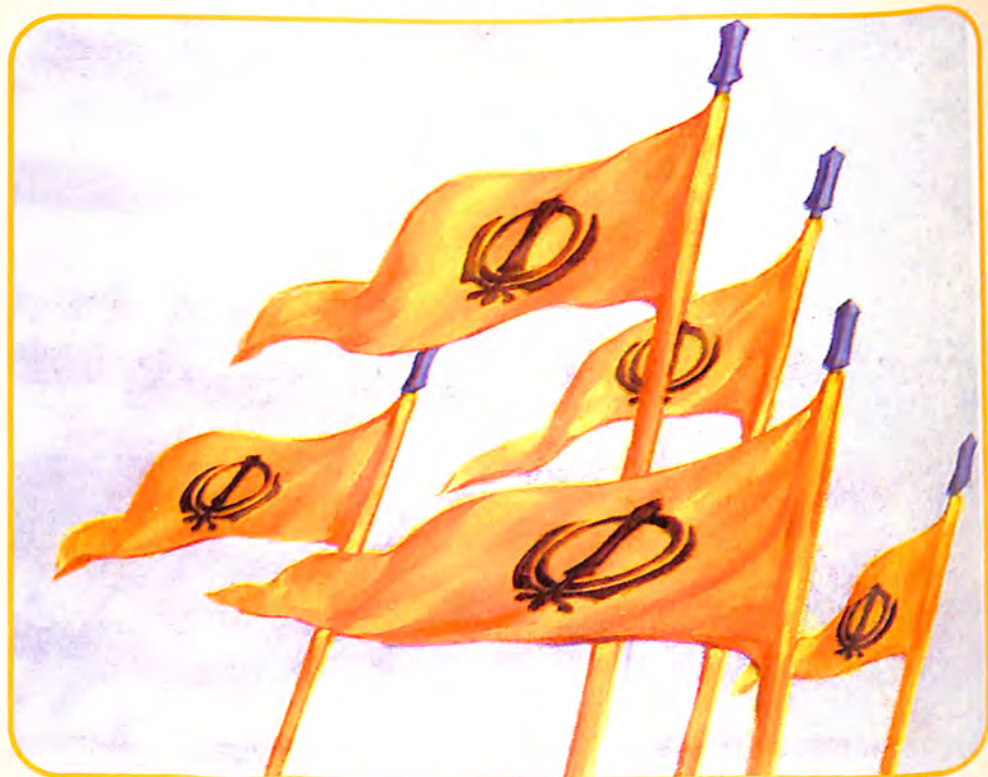
# CELEBRATING 300 YEARS

WAHEGURU JI KA KHALSA WAHEGURU JI KI FATEH  
THE KHALSA BELONGS TO GOD, AND VICTORY BELONGS TO GOD.



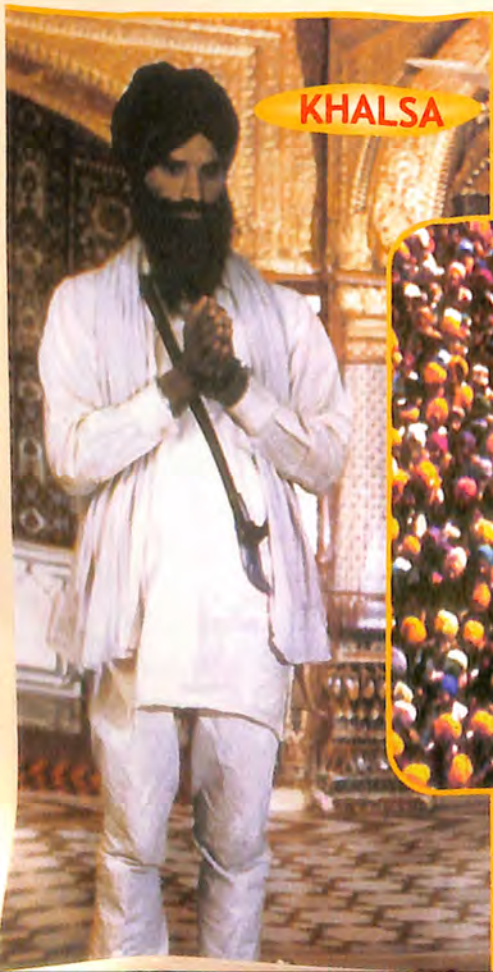
## SRI AKAL TAKHAT SAHIB

Sri Akal Takhat Sahib is the highest spiritual and temporal authority of the SIKH religion.



## JHULTE NISHAN RAHEN PANTH MAHARAJ KE

May the flags of the Khalsa fly forever and ever.



SIKHS AROUND THE WORLD CELEBRATING  
THE 300 YEARS OF THE BIRTH OF THE KHALSA



“approximate” Sikhs, and they should accept this fact. They should work towards the maintenance of a complete form.

These are internal family-like problems of the Sikhs. They should not be allowed to be exploited by our friends and adversaries. In places of public contact and exposure, it should, however, be made mandatory that the person(s) who are delegated to represent Sikhs and the Sikh viewpoint, must be persons with “*Sabat Soorat Dastar Sira*”; otherwise we will be creating a disastrous confusion in the minds of the non-Sikhs, and many Sikhs as well, about the Sikh value system and the Sikh tradition. Getting divided on this issue will be fatally harmful for the Sikh community. The problem, however, must be recognized, and a joint and unified well-counselled front by all is of utmost essence at this juncture.

For the growing Sikh youth, and, perhaps, for their parents as well, we must organise more support groups, camps, and educational seminars by providing them with an atmosphere where they should be helped to build their confidence in themselves. It is heartening to notice that Sikh children, by and large, are deeply interested to learn, adopt, and practice the true Sikh form and Sikh principles in their lives. We should nab this golden opportunity to convey to them the essentials of Sikhism, thereby fulfilling parental and communal obligations. We must do some soul searching. Our actions today are models for tomorrow’s generation. If we want to pick up only those portions of the Sikh principles that are convenient it can hardly inculcate ‘faith’ and ‘conviction’ in the youth. Religion and religious faith are not casual subjects. They must be taken with the seriousness and sincerity they deserve.

There are numerous references in the history about the form of a Sikh. Every Sikh is enjoined upon to preserve uncut hair. With the removal of his hair, a Sikh becomes an apostate, and is no longer recognized as a Sikh. This is borne out by the commands of the Guru in his *Hukamnamah* or letters on the Rules of Sikh conduct. In other historical records compiled from the beginning of the eighteenth century, *Sri Guru Shobha* of poet Sainapat, who was not only a courtier of the Tenth Guru, but was also an eye-witness to most of the events of the Guru’s life, issued clear injunctions to the Sikhs, “not to shave their hair or beard under any circumstances, not even when their parents had died (as was the custom among the Hindus then)”. George Forester, a well-known traveller from East India to England, passed through Punjab in 1783 and wrote in his *Early European Account of the Sikhs*, p. 79.: “They, the Sikhs permit the growth of their hair and the beard”. Major James Brown in the Introduction, p. xi, to his *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs*, 1787, wrote: “When a Sikh is admitted into the fraternity, he wears a steel ring around one of his wrists, lets his hair and beard grow to full length...”; Lt. Col. Malcolm in the *Sketch of the Sikhs*, 1812, p. 148, wrote: “The disciples of Guru Gobind Singh were required to allow their hair grow”; and 3.D. Cunningham in his *History of the Sikhs*, 1849, pp. 76-78, wrote: “They should have one form of initiation, their locks should remain unshorn.” From the references cited above, and many more like that of McLeod, Sir John Gordon, M.A. Macauliffe, G.C. Narang, C.H. Payne, R.E. Perry, G.B. Scott, and Frederick Pincott that have not been cited, it is abundantly clear that the Sikh form with *kesas* is an integral part of the *RahitNamas* of Khalsa Brotherhood. The Tenth Guru, while turning lambs into lions, enjoined upon them to wear long uncut hair giving the Khalsa such a unique and distinctive appearance that stands out in multitudes of crowds. He, like his predecessors, kept his hair long which was the substantiation of the concept of the saint-soldier. Therefore, the form of the Sikhs with *kesas* is the *sine quo non* for all Sikhs. A Sikh must (1) be born to Guru Gobind Singh, (2) look like Guru Gobind Singh, and (3) always look towards Guru Gobind Singh.



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## SIKHISM: IN THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY

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The history of human civilization took a new turn when Sikh Gurus appeared on the scene of medieval India. The Sikh Movement served as a lighthouse for the people in the society. The Sikh faith does not indulge in any formal unnecessary rituals but wants its adherents to lead a life which should not come in conflict with anybody, rather it should help others in the solution of their worldly and spiritual problems. It is really a great revolution in religion that the remarkable utterances and sayings on universal love and harmony of all Hindus, Muslims or so called untouchable saints are incorporated in the Holy Guru Granth Sahib with the same honor and dignity with which those of the Sikh Gurus are included. Sikhism is the latest religion as compared to all the major religions in the world. It came into being in the last decade of the 15th century when the people of the Punjab became followers of Guru Nanak (1469-1539) the founder of Sikh faith. It is also a religion with modern, progressive and scientific outlook, it has rejected ritualism, orthodoxy, feudalism and formalism. Sikhism is an independent separate religion. It has its own Scriptures, institutions and symbols. Sikhism believes in none other than the One Supreme Being who is Self Existent, Formless, Absolute, Universal and Eternal God, is the creator and destroyer, the cause of causes and free from fear, enmity and hate. God, according to Sikhism is not an abstract idea or just a moral force but a personal being capable of being loved and honored and yet diffused all over the creation. The purpose of the present paper is to highlight the great traditions of Sikh Gurus and Sikhism. It is a humble effort to briefly acquaint ourselves with the great rich heritage and culture of Sikhs. The paper is divided into two sections. Part one is devoted to the systematic discussion of the services of Sikh Gurus towards the humanity and part two deals with the basic thoughts and principles as envisaged in the Sikh religion.

### SECTION I

In this part of the paper as said above, the systematic account of the great thoughts and values as established by Sikh Gurus has been taken up. We start with the first Guru, Guru Nanak, about who it is said that

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿਆ, ਮਿਟੀ ਧੁੰਧੁ ਜਗਿ ਚਾਨਣ ਹੋਆ॥  
ਜਿਉ ਕਰਿ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਨਿਕਲਿਆ ਤਾਰੇ ਛਪਿ ਅੰਧੇਰ ਪਲੋਆ॥

With the appearance of Guru Nanak the age of darkness ended just as darkness vanishes with the appearance of Sun which means that the age of darkness was enlightened by 'Guru Nanak' the 'sun'. (Bhai Gurdas Var). Guru Nanak, five centuries ago preached that the whole world is to be treated as one vast multi-cultural society. Mutual regard and respect among all the people were the foundation of the true religion. He said in Jap Ji:

ਆਈ ਪੋਖੀ ਸਗਲ ਜਮਾਤੀ ਮਨਿ ਜੀਤੈ ਜਗੁ ਜਤਿ॥

Let all mankind be Thy sect, Conquering thus thyself, mayst thou be Lord of the World. The person who accepts all human as one sect (loves them as equals) is a holy person of the highest kind, one who conquers his mind and does not hate anyone wins world with love. Guru Nanak stated that the right to life, the right to equality, and the right to worship 'Him' are God given gifts to every person.





No religion or political authority can take them away, one may praise God by any name one wants to. Rev. H. L. Bradshaw of the U.S.A., after thoroughly studying the philosophy of Sikhism observed: "Sikhism is a universal world faith, a message for all men. This is amply illustrated in the writings of the Gurus. Sikhs must cease to think of their faith, as just another good religion and must begin to think in terms of the Sikhism being the religion for this New Age. The religion preached by Guru Nanak is the faith of the new age. The other religions contain truth, but Sikhism contains the fullness of the truth".

Guru Nanak asserted that the right to live, equality of all mankind and the right to worship God in one's own way are the gifts bestowed upon every one by God Himself. The very first revelation that Guru Nanak Sahib Ji received from the Almighty was "There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim". It signifies that God revealed to Guru Ji, the fact that man should not discriminate between man and man on the basis of religion, caste or creed or the place of birth. The entire universe is one, which implies that the entire creation is the family of God. Guru Ji put forward three basic principles for life. Kirat karo, Naam japo and Wand chhako i.e. (i) Earn your honest livelihood by hard work (ii) Remember the name of God (iii) Share a part of your earnings with others, who are less privileged. He advised people of different faiths to become true, honest and sincere followers of their own respective faiths. He went to the religious centres of different religions like Banaras, Jagannath Puri, Mecca and so many other places and made them realize the true path and purpose of life. Guru Nanak championed the cause of an egalitarian society. He severely denounced the caste oppression and economic exploitation as prevalent in the feudal society. Guru Ji preferred to dine with Bhai Lalo carpenter who was living upon his honest earnings and outright rejected to feast with Malik Bhago, a rich and dishonest man. Guru Nanak Sahib Ji also combined music for the spiritual upliftment of the soul. After putting forward the concept of universal brotherhood based upon equality of mankind, he forbade all conversions. He thus gave a practical demonstration of the equality of all castes. Guru Nanak bluntly told Malik Bhago that being dishonest was equal to taking human blood rather than food.

ਹਕ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸ ਸੁਅਰ ਉਸ ਗਾਇ॥

Guru Nanak took a long and arduous journey to visit the Sidhs in the Himalayas. The Sidhs were surprised to see the Guru, a family man there in the snow covered mountains. "How goes the world?" was the question asked by the Sidhs. To this the Guru Ji replied that they had discarded the world, who would protect the people from evil "The hordes of Mughal saniks who came from Kabul". The Guru asked them "when you beg for food and other items from the common people, how can you say that you are superior or nearer to God, than family men"

ਫਿਰ ਪੁਛਣਿ ਸਿਧ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਮਾਤ ਲੋਕ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਆ ਵਰਤਾਰ?  
ਸਿਧ ਛਪਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਪਰਬਤੀ ਕਉਣ ਜਗਤ ਕਉ ਪਾਰ ਉਤਾਰਾ॥

The Guru said, "The people are wondering who will protect them from evil. All the Sidhs who obtained donations from them in return for promises and religious guidance, have run away to the snowy hills". Afterwards, all the people claimed Nanak as their own. He was 'pir' (a religious leader) for the 'Muslims' and great 'Guru' for the 'Hindus' and the so called low castes. Guru Nanak thus established the bonds of human brotherhood. Guru Angad Sahib, second Nanak, carried on the preachings of Sikh principles through the practice of 'Sangat' and 'Pangat' at Khaddur Sahib. Guru Amar Das Ji, third Nanak, "established a new centre Goindwal Sahib and to further strengthen



the human bonds, Guru Ji constructed a 'Baoli' an open well with steps leading to the water. He welcomed every one, the Muslim, the Hindus and the so called untouchables, to take water from the Baoli so that the artificial barriers of sect and caste among the people could be destroyed. To amalgamate the so called untouchables with the rest of the population, the third Nanak made Pangat a pre-condition for Sangat. The Guru Ji established additional preaching centres (called manjis) to propagate his message of universal brotherhood across religion division. A Muslim Allah Yar Khan was in charge of the one of the Manjis. Women were also particularly assigned for this honourable post. Thus, he mitigated the discrimination against women too. The fourth Master, Guru Ram Das Ji was the founder of the Amritsar city. Guru invited the people from different professions in the city and taught them to live peacefully from spiritual and social point of view. Guru Ji also encouraged to break the barriers between professions and so called castes. He got constructed a big tank (Sarovar) at Amritsar, where the Hindus, Muslims, Brahmins and the so called low castes could take bath together side by side with each other and this could wash away all types of discrimination and untouchability. Therefore, he can truly be regarded as a modern architect of human civilization based upon equality and fraternity. Guru Arjan Sahib, the fifth Nanak continued this work and the foundation stone of the Harimandar Sahib was laid in 1589 by Mian Mir, a Muslim Saint. It was nothing less than a miracle in those days. The Muslim laying the foundation of a temple as the Muslims then were known destroying and demolishing the temple. When the work neared completion there was a great famine in the region. Smallpox struck the public simultaneously. The money received from the disciples for the construction work was diverted to help the immediate needs of sick and the needy and the orphaned. Guru Ji himself toured the affected areas. He lived with the people encouraging them and helping them in their hour of suffering. Compilation of Guru Granth Sahib included the bani of Sheikh Farid Ji, a Muslim, Kabir Ji, Ravidas Ji, Namdev Ji Sadna Ji, all known as a so called untouchable low castes along with Ramanand Ji a Brahmin and along that of the Gurus, created an apostle for universal brotherhood along with prescribing the cultural heritage of India in terms of different ragas and the tunes of folk songs. The town of Taran Taran, about fifteen miles to the South of Amritsar, was also built by the Guru Ji. A huge pool and a gurdwara were also constructed there. He established an orphanage and a leper's home with the gurdwara to help the poor and the sick. Guru Ji established big hospitals and dispensaries with free medicine and kitchen (Guru ka Langar). Guru Hargobind, the sixth Nanak, wore two swords, one symbolizing Piri and the other symbolizing Miri; 'Miri and Piri' respectively represent divinity and worldly leadership. 'Miri' refers to social and political life while 'Piri' refers to religious beliefs. According to Guru Nanak's philosophy the two have a symbolic relationship and must move hand in hand to serve society effectively. Religion provides the motivation for serving people while providing protection to the innocent, particularly against political subjugation, created a healthy social order. In other words, the common objective of the two institutions is providing service and justice to the people. These two privileges are considered their birth right. It was also a signal to the rulers that the Guru would defend religious and human rights, if needs be even with the sword. In 1609, sixth Guru Ji laid the foundation of Shri Akal Takhat which was seen as a seat to oversee the political welfare of the downtrodden. Guru Har Rai Ji, the seventh Nanak, carried on the preaching of the faith in the new region (Kiratpur Sahib). People from as far as Assam and Bangla Desh in the east and Afghanistan in the west visited him to seek spiritual guidance. He established a dispensary of rare medicine which were provided to the sick and sufferers.

Sri Guru Hari Krishan the eighth Guru, served the humanity by helping and looking after the people suffering from smallpox and other epidemics particularly at Delhi. Guru Teg Bahadur, the ninth



Guru, laid his life for the suffering of Hindu community at the hands of Muslim ruler Aurangzeb. Some of the Sikhs and associates of Guru Sahib were also tortured and killed in many inhumane ways because they refused to accept Islam as their religion. Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth 'Master' declared when all peaceful methods failed to change the mind of the wicked tyrant, it is justified to pick up the sword to save the innocent's honor. To counter the armed repression of the Sikh movement by the Muslim emperor, Sikhs were given training in self protection. In 1699, the Guru Ji called a special gathering of the 'Sikhs' on Baisakhi Day and demanded a head to protect righteousness. He made his demand five times and five Sikhs one by one came forward to offer their heads to Guru Ji. They were given *Amrit* (baptized) from the same bowl symbolizing that they had become equal to each other. They were honorably addressed as Panj Pyaras (Five Beloved Ones). The Guru then requested these five Pyaras to give Amrit to him to finish the gap between the Guru and Sikhs.

## SECTION II

When the Guru initiated the Sikhs into the Khalsa combining the spirit of a Saint and a soldier he gave them the title of the Sant Sipahi. While fighting tyranny to protect the motto, a code of conduct consisting of five '*Kakars*' was also made essential for the Sikhs which includes among other things an honest living, sharing with others, working and wishing well for humanity and maintaining moral behavior. Guru Ji made it essential for every Sikh to contribute one tenth of one's income (Daswandh) and use it for the welfare of needy and sick humanity. Bhai Kanihya, a humble Sikh, used to serve water and give first aid even to the enemy camps along with the Sikhs during the battle of Anandpur Sahib. This was much before the establishment of the Red Cross and was therefore a forerunner thereof. The Guru is not 'God' but he is as perfect as God. The 'Guru' is to connect man with man and then with 'God'. God speaks to the humanity through the Guru and enlightens the seeker of truth through him. The choosing of a successor by Guru Nanak in his life time is viewed by Mr. Earnest Trumpp as a most vital step in the development of unifying personality and in spite of changes in succession, was held to be one and the same as his predecessors. The successors of Guru Nanak are believed to have been one with him, having the same light and the same spirit. They all subscribed their name as 'Nanak' to their writings. Before his demise, Guru Gobind Singh declared that the 'Guru Granth Sahib' and the 'Panth' (the Sikh assembly) is invested with the Guruship. He personified himself in the Granth and panth. So the Sikhs worship 'Shabad' and the 'Guru' who is ever living. In Sikhism all the sacraments of birth initiation into the faith, marriage, death, of launching upon and conclusion of all ventures are to be performed simply through recitation of 'Gurbani'. Sikhism upholds the dignity of man and labor. Honest labour and social service is recommended as an inseparable part of everyone's life style in Sikhism. It is not a faith to be practiced in temples or seclusions but in daily life. The Gurus accepted all the prevailing names of God, such as Allah, Ram, Gobind, Bhagwan, Rahim and Karim as equally valid and all of the were used in hymns for addressing God. All languages such as Arabic, Persian, Punjabi, Hindi, Sanskrit and local dialects were equally acceptable for singing God's praises and were included in the Granth Sahib. It was basically a language of love. It does not visualize the religion in isolation from worldly pursuit. As compared to others, Sikhism does not promise the divine reward to its followers in the form of paradise, etc. He does not denounce non-Sikhs as Kafirs' such slogans are to be condemned and eliminated. Guru Arjan Sahib the 'fifth guru' called upon Sai Mian Mir, Muslim saint to lay the foundation stone of the Harimandir. The principle of universal brotherhood and friendliness and love of mankind is repeatedly mentioned in 'Guru Granth'. All Sikh places of



worship are required to make arrangements for free boarding and lodging for all the pilgrims who care to avail these facilities without any consideration of religion, caste, color, country, creed, sex or status. All the places of worship have free and unrestricted access to all human beings to the House of God.

The moral character of the Sikhs in war as well as in peace was praised highly by even the Muslim historians. Qazi Nur Mohammed, a Muslim writer in 'Jung Nama' writes *"In no case could they slay a coward nor would they put an obstacle in the way of fugitive. They do not plunder the wealth and ornaments of a woman. There is no adultery among these people. Whether a woman is young or old they call her 'Sister' or 'Mother'. They do not make friends with adulterers"*.

Sikhism treats men and women as equals. No area of religion is closed to women. Sikhism was the first religion through the world to preach the equality of sexes. Guru Nanak felt for the suffering of women. Guru Amar Das Ji, the third Master was the first reformer who condemned the practice of Sat, female infanticide and prostitution. Widow remarriage was allowed at the same time. The congregational worship (Sangat) and mass dinner (Pangat) are unique Sikh institutions preaching universal brotherhood. In community kitchen (Guru ka langar) all dine sitting in one and the same row and take same food and ultimately wash dishes together. Historical Gurdwaras have common bathing tanks where all are welcome to have a dip without any distinction. Thus, common mess, common bath, common prayer (Sarbat Da Bhalla), a common Holy Granth, and a belief in one God of all to pay homage are the great traditions showing a deep rooted faith in brotherhood of mankind.

According to the Sikh Gurus, the Creator manifests himself in all his creatures. Therefore, the creator can be served best by serving the humanity and the humanity can be served best by the cultivation of virtues and renunciation of evil. Guru says:

ਸਚਉ ਉਚੈ ਸਭ ਕਉ ਉਪਰ ਸਚਿ ਆਚਾਰ  
Truth is higher than everything  
But higher still is truthful living.

All the essentials of a modern democracy like equality, liberty and fraternity are cardinal principles which are included in Sikhism but the democracy recommended by Sikhism require the representatives of the people to be pure-hearted, truthful, sacrificing and of higher spiritual attainments. The constitution of 'Panj Piaras' gave rise to collective leadership as opposed to individual dictatorship. Moreover, Sikhism does not view religion in isolation from the worldly pursuits and therefore does not visualize any possibility of the state becoming independent of the church. There is mutual necessity of state and church for each other as insured in the concept of Miri and Piri and symbolized in having Akal Takhat facing Harimander on the same premises. The religion i.e. truth and morality must prevail over the temporal affairs but it should be clearly understood that blending of religion and politics in Sikh faith implies that parties should be guided and led by the basic principles of religion, rather than being guided by sectarian considerations. The impact of the entire Sangat represents the leadership called the 'Khalsa'

ਗਰ ਸੰਗਤ ਕੀਨੀ ਖਾਲਸਾ - ਮਨਮਖੀ ਦੁਹੇਲਾ

This is what is meant by Raj Karega Khalsa, Aki Rahe na Koi



I want to conclude the above thoughts and discussion not in my own words but want to quote great philosophers and writers of the time. In this regard, firstly I want to mention, Arnold Toynbee, a historian who has done much work on comparative cultures, writes: *"Mankind religious future may be obscure; yet one thing can be foreseen. The living higher religions are going to influence each other more than ever before, in the days of increasing communications between all the parts of the world and branches of human race. In this coming religious debate, the Sikh religion and its scriptures, the Guru Granth, will have something special of value to say to the rest of the world"*.

(Foreword to the Sacred Writings of Sikhs by UNESCO)

Further, in his book "The Sikh Religion" Macauliffe Writes:

*"Unlike the scriptures of other creeds, they do not contain love stories or accounts of wars waged for selfish considerations. They contain sublime truths, the study of which cannot but elevate the reader spiritually, morally and socially."*

Macauliffe deems it necessary to draw the readers' attentions to one significant feature of Sikhism which distinguishes it and separates it from other philosophical and religious systems of thought.

*"The Sikh religion differs as regards the authenticity of its dogmas from most of other great theological systems. Many of the great teachers, the world has known, have not left a line of their own composition and we only know what they taught through tradition or second-hand information"*.

At the last, I would like to say that I am very small and 'Gurbani' and 'Guru Mahima' is very great. I surely could not have done justice to the subject. Therefore, please forgive me for my shortcoming and let us all pray to God, to give strength and wisdom to all of us to go into the depth of Guru ki Bani and lead our lives accordingly.

*"Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa.  
Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh"*

This article is courtesy of Sikh Courier, International



# GURU GRANTH SAHIB

## THE HISTORY, ARRANGEMENTS AND THE TEXT

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### SECTION I



#### 1.1 The Authorship

The manuscript of the Sikh Gurus' hymns contained in Guru Granth were handed down by Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Angad: by Guru Angad to Guru Amardas and by Guru Amardas to Guru Ramdas. Guru Amardas compiled the first granth (book) of the hymns. After the death of Guru Ramdas, the granth fell into the hands of Baba Mohan, the son of Guru Amardas. Guru Arjan got it from him after a lot of persuasion and inducement. Guru Arjan Dev compiled the first edition of the Granth, as we know it today. He started the preparation of the Granth in August 1601 and completed it in August 1604. The scribe of the Granth was Bhai Gurdas, an uncle of Guru Arjan. The place of compilation of the Granth is Ramsar (Amritsar). Guru Gobind Singh compiled the second edition of the Granth in 1706 at Dam Dama Sahib. The scribe was Bhai Mani Singh, a classmate of Guru Gobind Singh.

#### 1.2 The Guruship

Guru Gobind Singh bestowed upon the Granth the Guruship at Nanded in 1708. Munshi Sant Singh, author of the Sikh history, composed the most popular verse in 1865 which a Sikh recites daily after his prayer.

"All community should recognise Guru Granth as the Guru.  
All obey the commandments contained therein.  
Recognise the Granth as the visible body of the Guru.  
The Sikh who wishes to meet me should find me there."

#### 1.3 The History

The first (original) book signed and sealed by Guru Arjan was installed in the Harmandir (now known as Golden Temple) on Diwali, 30th August 1604. Bhai Budha, a devout Sikh who lived during the life of Guru Nanak to Guru Hargobind, was appointed the first high priest of the temple. The copy of the Granth remained in the possession of the Sikhs until 1644 when it was stolen from the house of Guru Hargobind by his grandson Dhirmal. In about 1674 it was recovered by force from his possession by the Sikhs, but on the specific instructions of Guru Tegh Bahadur it was returned to him. No historical account of this volume is found for the next 175 years. In 1849, following the annexation of Punjab by the British the copy was found by the British in the custody of the Lahore court. A battle to get it back was fought between Sodhi Sadhu Singh, a descendant of Dhirmal and the Sikh Organisations. In 1850 by the orders of the court the copy with its golden stand was restored to Sodhi Sadhu Singh, later got a copy made of this Granth and presented it to Queen Victoria. This copy can be viewed at the India Office Library, London. The original manuscript is still in the possession of Sodhis and is kept in a private house in Kartarpur. A copy of the (original) granth was also made by Bhai Banno, a devout Sikh of Guru Arjan Dev's times, in 1604. He got the granth copied on way to Lahore for binding purposes. A few Shabads (hymns) which Guru Arjan had struck out from the original manuscript were left in this copy by Bhai Banno. Guru Arjan declared this copy to be a KHARI-BIR (a forbidden copy). This copy at present is with the descendants of Bhai Banno in the village Mangat, district Gurjrat Pakistan. The second



(original) granth signed by Guru Gobind Singh was taken to Kabul by Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1762. Four copies of this granth were made by Baba Deep Singh. Later many more hand written copies were prepared. Some of these copies can be found in Harimandir Sahib, Akal Takhat Sahib, Patna Sahib, Hazur Sahib, Bangladesh Sikh temple at Decca and other Sikh temples. The granth was a subject matter of great concern to both Hindus and Muslims. Repeatedly, complaints were filed in the Mughal courts to ban its publication and use. In 1605, Emperor Akbar summoned a copy of the granth for investigation while he was camping at Batala. He examined the granth very thoroughly and rather read it for its divinity. He summoned and punished those who had maliciously complained to him and made an offering of 51 gold coins as a token of respect to the granth. In the times of Emperor Aurangzeb another complaint against the publication of the Granth was filed by the enemies of the house of Guru Nanak. This time Guru Har Rai sent his older son Ram Rai to defend the case. Ram Rai was taken over by the splendour and exuberance of the Mughal court and dared to change certain words recorded in the Granth. By this blasphemous act, he might have pleased the Mughal rulers but he had the anguish of his father who ordered him not to return to Guru's house and never to see him again.

The other attacks on the sanctity of the Granth and its language were made by the Arya Samaj leader Swami Dayanand and later by the break away Nirankari leader Baba Gurbachan Singh.

#### **1.4.1 Names of the languages used in the Granth**

Arabic, Sanskrit, Persian, Punjabi, Hindi, Sindhi, Lehndi, Dakhni, Bengali and Marathi.

#### **1.4.2. Examples of the languages used and the contributors:**

Punjabi - The Sikh Gurus, Sheikh Farid and others

Sanskrit - Guru Nanak, Guru Arjan and others

Sindhi - Guru Arjan

Western Punjabi/Lehndi - Guru Arjan

Influence of Arabic and Persian - Namdev

Gujrati and Marathi—Namdev, Trilochan

Eastern Hindi - Bards

Western Hindi—Kabir

Eastern Apabhramsa—Jaidev

#### **1.5.1 Theme and the Subject-Matter:**

The main theme of Guru Granth Sahib is:

- a. Search of God
- b. Means to communicate with God
- c. Methods to realise God
- d. Religious commandments
- e. Rules of morality
- f. The Sikh theology

Guru Granth Sahib is a literary classic and a spiritual treasure. The Granth contains the eternal Truth, proclaims God and shows the way of His realisation. It lays down moral and ethical rules for the development of the soul and religious commandments for the progress of morality and attainment of salvation.



### 1.5.2. The Metres and the types of compositions:

All hymns contained in Guru Granth Sahib are classified in different Ragas except the first hymn 'JAP JI, and SWAYYAS AND SLOAKS' at the end. The composition of the hymns in Guru Granth Sahib can be classified as:

a. **Shabads** (religious sayings) of different number of verses and their count in Guru Granth Sahib is as follows:

- 2 verses—(dupadas), 608
- 3 verses—(tripade), 73
- 4 verses—(chaupadas), 1255
- 5 verses - (panchpadas), 80
- 6 verses—(chhepadas), 11 verses
- 8 verses—(Ashtpadian), 311
- 16 verses—(sohilas), 62

b. **Pauris** - Literally there is no difference between a shabad and a pauri. The practical difference is that a pauri carries its idea further. In Punjabi language a pauri means a ladder. The word pauri is used in the Granth Sahib to define different parts of a 'VAR' - a heroic ballad e.g. Var Ramkali of the third Guru or a long verse e.g. Jap Ji of Guru Nanak. The pauri is a long verse and may or may not have uniformity i.e. they may differ in metre and in number.

c. **Vars (ballads)** - Var means a long poem in which the praises of a hero are sung. The religious vars included in Guru Granth Sahib contain a sloak, a small verse complete in itself which is mostly subjective, before each pauri in order to clarify the idea contained in the pauri. The pauris of a var are by the same writer but it is not necessary for the sloaks. If the name/number of the composer is not given before the sloaks then the composer is the same as that of the var otherwise the name or number of the composer is given.

There are 22 vars in Guru Granth Sahib written as follows:

- Guru Nanak—3
- Guru Amardas—4
- Guru Ramdas - 8
- Guru Arjan - 6
- Satta and Balwand (Bards) - 1 (This var has no sloaks in it)

d. **Chhants** - means verses of praise. Majority of the chhants in Guru Granth Sahib contain one or more stanzas. A stanza of a chhant contains four to six verses. There are some chhants which are preceded by sloaks like pauris in vars.

e. **Swayas** - It is a particular stanza form. In Guru Granth Sahib are the Bards/Bhats who composed swayas to praise the Sikh Gurus used many other metres under the heading swayas. They also used different arrangements of long and short syllables at the end of the verses or within the verses. There are 122 swayas composed by the bhats in praise of the Gurus included in Guru Granth Sahib.



**f. Patti, Bawan-akhri, Dukhni Onkar**

Patti is a long verse in which each letter of an alphabet is represented by a stanza. Guru Nanak has used Punjabi alphabet while Guru Amardas has used some other alphabet of the period. Two more similar verses have been named as Bawanakhri, meaning fifty-two letters. Guru Nanak's Bawan-akhri has 52 letters whereas Kabir's Bawan-akhri has only 36 letters. Onkar also means the beginning of an alphabet and dakhni means 'of the south'. Thus a southern alphabet is used in this verse. It is composed by Guru Nanak and has 54 letters in it.

**g. Pehre, Bara Mah, Thhitti and Rutti.** These are the long verses in which stanzas are composed on the names of the four parts of the day, seven days of the week, twelve months of the year, fifteen lunar dates and six seasons.

**h. Gatha and Phune.** These are special type of sloaks. In Gatha like Sahaskriti sloaks couplets do not rhyme. Phune means repetition. In phunhay word 'Harihan' is repeated in the fourth verse of each stanza

**i. Chaubole** — Chaubole actually means a popular song. In Guru Granth Sahib it means an utterance of four persons, four bhats - Samoan, Moos, Jam and Patting.

**1.6 The headings at the beginning of the hymns to show the identity of the author**

**1.6.1. The hymns of the Sikh Gurus:**

All hymns written by the Sikh Gurus end with the name 'Nanak'. Guru Arjan gave a heading consisting of a word 'Mehla' meaning the body and a number 1-5 spoken as first, second and so on representing the Gurus in the successive order i.e. 1 is Guru Nanak 2 Guru Angad 3 is Guru Amardas 4 is Guru Ramdas and 5 is Guru Arjan. Guru Gobind Singh when he added the hymns of Guru Tegh Bahadur gave the number as 9. Thus heading 'Mehla 1' means hymns are composed by Guru Nanak; 'Mehla 2' means hymns are composed by Guru Angad; 'Mehla 3' means hymns are composed by Guru Amardas and so on. Japji Sahib, the first hymn has no such heading, but it is widely believed that the Japji was composed by Guru Nanak. At the end of the Granth the Swayas of Guru Arjan has a heading 'Swaya uttered in person Mehla 5' which is different from other headings used (see pages 1385-87 of Guru Granth Sahib).

**1.6.2. Hymns of the saints:**

Most of the hymns composed by the saints have their name with the name of the raag and the tune (ghar) with it.

**1.6.3. Hymns of the bards:**

The heading of these hymns depict the name of the Guru in whose praise the hymns have been written. The name of the bhats comes at the end of the hymn. For example, the headings are 'swayas about Mehla 1', about 'Mehla 2', about 'Mehla 3', about 'Mehla 4' and about 'Mehla 5'.

**1.6.4. Raagmala:**

The last composition in the Granth is known as 'Raagmala'. Like Japji Sahib in the beginning of the Granth this composition has no heading to show the name of its author.

**1.7 The Arrangements of the Hymns Given in Guru Granth Sahib**

The order of the poetry listed in Guru Granth Sahib is as follows:



### **I - Japji Sahib (pp 1-8)**

It is a long poem consisting of:

a preamble - the Mool Mantar (the basic doctrine) - one verse.

2 Sloaks - one in the beginning just after the preamble - one verse.

one at the end - one stanza of six verses, and 38 Pauris.

Japji is one of the most important BANI (composition) listed in Guru Granth Sahib. Every Sikh recites this Bani early in the morning. The main theme of this Bani is:

- a. How the distance between God and Man can be eliminated.
- b. What is 'Hukam' (God's Order)?
- c. What are the ways to understand and execute God's Orders.
- d. What are the different divisions of life? How can a person enter the kingdom of God?

### **II. Rehears (pp. 8-12)**

It consists of 9 Shabads 4 composed by Guru Nanak, 3 composed by Guru Ramdas and 2 composed by Guru Arjan. This Bani is recited by every Sikh in the evening.

### **III. Sohila (pp. 12-13)**

This Bani consists of 5 Shabads; 3 composed by Guru Nanak, 1 composed by Guru Ramdas and 1 composed by Guru Arjan. This is Sikh's bedtime prayer.

This Bani is also recited at the time of the cremation of a Sikh.

### **IV. Bani recorded in 31 different Ragas (musical metres) (pp 14-1352).**

The breakdown of the raagas and the shabads is as follows:

- a. Raag Sri Kaag pp 14-93, the total number of compositions in this raag are 200.
- b. Raag Majh pp 94-150, the total number of compositions are 119, there is no composition of Bhagats (saints) in this raag.
- c. Raag Gauri (pp 151-346), the total number of compositions are 393.
- d. Raag Asa pp 347-488, the total number of compositions are 365.
- e. Raag Gujri pp 489-526, the total number of compositions are 67.
- f. Raag Devgandhari pp 527-536, the total number of compositions in this raag are 47. There is no composition of Bhagats in this raag.
- g. Raag Bihagra pp 537-556, the total number of compositions in this raag are 18 and there is no Bhagat Bani in this raag.
- h. Raag Vadhans pp 557-595, There is no composition of Bhagats in this raag.
- i. Raag Sorath pp 595-600, the total number of compositions in this raag are 34.
- j. Raag Dhanasri pp 600-695, the total number of compositions in this are 115.
- k. Raag Jaitsri pp 695-710, the total number of compositions are 32.
- l. Raag Todi pp 711-719, there are 35 compositions of this raag in Guru Granth Sahib.
- m. Raag Bairari pp 719-720, there are 7 compositions in this raag and there is no Bhagat Bani in this raag.
- n. Raag Tilang pp 721-727, there are 20 compositions in this raag.
- o. Raag Suhi pp 728-795, there are 41 compositions in this raag.
- p. Raag Bilawal pp 795-858, there are 190 compositions in this raag.
- q. Raag Gaund pp 859-876, there are 49 compositions in this raag.
- r. Raag Ramkali pp 876-975, there are 135 compositions in this raag.



- s. Raag Nat Narain pp 975-984, there are 25 compositions in this raag.
- t. Raag Mali Gaura pp 984-988, there are 17 compositions in this raag
- u. Raag Maru pp 989-1106, there are 160 compositions in this raag
- v. Raag Tukhari pp 1107- 1117, there are 11 compositions in this raag. The Bhagats have no compositions in this raag.
- w. Raag Kedara pp 1118-1124, there are 25 compositions in this raag
- x. Raag Bhairau pp 1125-1167, there are 132 compositions in this raag
- y. Raag Basant pp 1168-1196, there are 87 compositions in this raag
- z. Raag Sarang pp 1197-1254, there are 177 compositions in this raag
- aa. Raag Malaar pp 1254-1294, there are 76 compositions in this raag
- bb. Raag Kanra pp 1294-1318, there are 71 compositions in this raag
- cc. Raag Kalyan pp 1319-1327, there are 23 compositions in this raag and no Bhagat Bani.
- dd. Raag Prabhati pp 1327-1351, there are 67 compositions in this raag
- ee. Raag Jaijivanti pp 1352-1353, there are 4 compositions of Guru Tegh Bahadur in this raag

#### V. Sloaks

The arrangement of sloaks is as follows:

**Sloak Sahaskriti** pp 1353-1360, 71 Sloak - 4 of Guru Nanak and 67 of Guru Arjan; pp 1360-1361, 24 stanzas of Guru Arjan (Gatha).

**Phuna** pp 1361-1363, 23 stanzas of Guru Arjan;

**Chaubolay** pp 1363-1364, 11 stanzas of Guru Arjan

**Sloak of Bhagat Kabir** 1364-1377, 243 sloaks

**Sloak of Farid** 1377-1384, 130 sloaks

#### VI. Swayas of Guru Arjan

Swayas of Guru Arjan pp 1385-1389, 20 swayas

**VII. Swayas** written by 17 Bhats as panegyrics on the first to fifth Guru in serial order pp 1389-1410.

The composition of the swayas is as follows:

Bhat Kal 49, Kalsahar 4, Tal 1, Japal 4, Jal 1, Kirat 8, Sal 3, Bhal 1, Nal 6, Bhikha 2, Jalan 1, Das 14, Gavand 5, Sewak 7, Mathura 10, Bal 5 and Harbans 2

There are 10 Swayas in the praise of Guru Nanak, 10 in praise of Guru Angad, 22 in praise of Guru Amardas, 60 in praise of Guru Ramdas and 21 in praise of Guru Arjan.

#### VIII. Sloaks in excess of Vars

The Sloaks written by the Gurus were included in the Vars by Guru Arjan. The Sloaks which were in excess of such inclusion are given on pp 1410-1429.

The total of these sloaks is 152; 33 of Guru Nanak, 67 of Guru Amardas, 30 of Guru Ramdas and 22 of Guru Arjan.

#### IX. Sloaks of Guru Tegh Bahadur

The Sloaks of Guru Tegh Bahadur are on pp 1426-1429 and are 57 in number. These sloaks are always read aloud at the end of a Path reading of Guru Granth Sahib and the congregation is invited to read it along with the Pathi (priest).

#### X. Mundavni

Mundavni or the seal is on page 1429 and consists of two sloaks of Guru Arjan.



## **XI. Raagmala**

The last composition in the Guru Granth is Raag mala. The Sikh scholars differ in their opinion about its inclusion in the Granth. The traditional school thinks it to be a part of the Granth and asserts that it is an index of the raags used in the Granth. This argument can be challenged on the grounds that a number of raags mentioned in Raagmala are not in the Granth and a number of raags used in Granth Sahib are not in the Raagmala. Another argument of the traditional school is that it is a part of the original copy and is written in the same ink and with the same pen as was used for the other parts of the Granth. This plea also does not carry any weight as in those days all the scribes used almost the same ink and the same type of pen. As the writing of the Gurumukhi characters was also the same so it becomes rather difficult to identify the handwriting. It is said by the modern scholars that it was Bhai Banno who might have been instrumental in its inclusion in the Granth as he had the possession of the original copy of the Granth when he took it to Lahore for binding. The question why Guru Arjan did not strike it off after receiving the Granth back from Bhai Banno is unanswered. The only place where Raagmala is not read at the end of a Path is probably Akal Takhat Sahib at Amritsar. Raagmala comes after Mundavni - the SEAL. This also puts doubts on its inclusion as nothing should come after the SEAL, which means the end. In absence of any final decision by the Sikh scholars the Raagmala is included in every copy of the Granth.

### **1.8 The Numerals in Guru Granth Sahib**

When Guru Arjan started the great task of compiling the Granth, he invented a security system of numbers to avoid any later interpolations or inclusion of any spurious or unauthorised verses into the Granth Sahib. As said before, the Granth has been divided into three parts

Part I comprising Japji, Rehras and Sohila

Part II comprising all musical raagas and

Part III miscellaneous hymns

The numbers security system works as follows:

#### **PART I**

- a. The sloaks are numbered individually.
- b. The pauris are numbered progressively.
- c. All pauris are treated as separate stanzas and the verses constituting these are not separately numbered.
- d. The verses of a shabad are separately and progressively numbered.
- e. Rahaus are independently numbered and are not counted towards the total shabads or stanzas..

#### **ILLUSTRATION:**

Japji - Sloak in the beginning is numbered 1 so is the sloak at the end., Pauris have been numbered progressively, though no number is given to the total verses in a pauri.

Rehras - it has two sections viz SODAR and SOPURKH.

Sodar consists of five hymns. The first hymn is the 27<sup>th</sup> pauri of Japji with a little variation, it has number 1 at its end and the verses have not been numbered. The second hymn is a shabad of Guru Nanak. Here each verse of the shabad is progressively numbered and at the end of shabad, the number reads as follows:

4/2





The first number of every numeration always tells the total verses in the shabad just ended and the second number denotes the total shabads in that section or raag. At the end of the fifth shabad of the SODAR section we have:

4/5

Where 4 denotes the number of verses in the shabad just ended and 5 denotes the total number of shabads in this section. Again in SOPURKH section there are 4 shabads. At the end of the first shabad the numbers are:

5/1

Number 5 is the total number of verses in the shabad ended and number 1 is the end of first shabad. At the end of the section of four shabads the number is:

2/4

Number 2 means the number of verses in the present shabad and number 4 is the cumulative total of four shabads in this section.

Sohila - This composition consists of 5 shabads, the number at the end of the section is:

4/5

Where 4 is the number of verses in the shabad Raag Gauri Poorbi/Mohalla 5 and number 5 is the cumulative total of the shabads in this section

## Part II The Raags

This part of the Granth has 1339 pages out of a total pages of 1430. The rules of enumeration are the same though one is to know and understand the division of the part in appropriate sections. The main sections of this part are Raags, and within Raags Shabads (and within Shabads - Ghars), Ashtpadi, Chhands, Vars etc.

## ILLUSTRATION;

Section-Siri Raag

Page 25/26 look at the end of shabads of Mehla 1, the number is:

4/33

Where 4 is the number of verses in the shabad just ended and 33 is the cumulative number of shabads in this raag by Guru Nanak - Mehla 1.

Guru Nanak's shabads in this section are followed by the shabads of Guru Amardas. At the end of first shabad the numbers are:

4/1/34

4 means the number of verses in this shabad.

1 means the number of shabad of the present writer (third Guru).

At the end of the shabads at page 52 of the Granth, in Siri Raag the number is: 4/30/100. Where 4 means the verses in the shabad just ended, 30 means the number of shabad by the present writer (Guru Arjan); 100 means the total number of shabads in this raag by all composers.

Sub Section of Siri Raag

The shabads in Siri Raag are followed by Ashtpadis. The numbering will start from one for every sub-section. For example at the end of the first Ashtpadi in Siri Raag the number is:

7/1

Where 7 means the number of verses in this Ashtpadi and 1 means the first Ashtpadi; at the end of all the Ashtpadis in Siri Raag the number is:

8/2/27



Where 8 is the number of verses in the Ashtpadi, 2 is the number of Ashtpadis by the present writer and 27 is the number of Ashtpadis in this sub-section.

#### **Other Sub Sections of Siri Raag**

The other subsections of Siri Raag are Pehre, Chhants etc. The rules of enumeration there are the same as for subsection of Ashtpadis.

#### **Var of Siri Raag—Mehla 4 (written by the Fourth Guru)**

The first var of Siri Raag is at page 83. The var starts with two sloaks of Guru Amardas though the Var is composed by Guru Ramdas. The sloaks are numbered 1 and 2. The sloaks are followed by pauris and then sloaks and so on. The sloaks interwoven in the vars are numbered independently whereas the pauris are numbered progressively. At the end of the var the number is 21/1  
21 means the number of pauris in the var.

1 means the number of Vars by the present writer (Guru Ramdas).

#### **The Shabads of the Bhagats in Siri Raag**

The shabads of Bhagats are totalled individually and the shabads etc. of one Bhagat are not added with the shabads of the other Bhagats to produce a cumulative total. See pages 92-93 of Guru Granth Sahib.

The above rule of enumeration applies throughout PART II of the Granth:

### **PART III**

The rules of numbers explained in Part II and Part I apply to Part III as well.

#### **EXCEPTIONS**

See pages 762-63 where long poems named Kuchaji, Suchaji and Gunwanti are listed. Here the stanzas are not numbered. At pages 1429-1430 in Raagmala the verses are not progressively numbered. At the end of Swayas of the Bhats the number is 2-21-9-11-10-10-22-60-143. This can be read as:  
2 swayas of the last Bhat Harbans, 21 Swayas in the praise of Guru Arjan, 9 Swayas by Guru Arjan (page 1387). 11 Swayas written by Guru Arjan (page 1387-89) 10 Swayas in the praise of Guru Nanak, 10 Swayas in the praise of Guru Angad; 22 Swayas in the praise of Guru Amardas, 60 Swayas in the praise of Guru Ramdas; 143 the grand total of the above.

#### **NOTES**

1. Though there is no mention of Panj-Tuke (five verse Padas) in the Granth Sahib, however, they do form main part of Guru Arjan Dev's composition 'Sukhmani Sahib' in which every Pada of Ashtpadi consists of ten short verses.
2. In Raag Tilang (pp 721-728) Padas of 5, 6 and 7 verses are found.
3. On pages 81-83 there is a hymn called 'Vanjara' which is a type of metaphor.

## **SECTION II**

### **1.9 Types of Hymns**

The composition in Guru Granth Sahib can be classified as follows:

#### **1.9.1. Shabads**

These are general purpose odes complete in them selves. They consist of different number of stanzas.

Most of the shabads are of 2 padas, 4 padas, 5 padas, 6 padas, 8 padas and 16 padas. A pada consists of different numbers of verses (tukas). The padas in the Granth are of one tuk, two tukas, three tukas and four tukas. A tuka is two lines of short metre rhyming together.

Though there is no mention of five tukas, however they do form main part of Guru Arjan's composition 'Sukhmani Sahib' in which every pada of Ashtpadi consists of ten short verses. In Raag Tilang (pp 721-728) padas of 5, 6 and 7 verses are found.

### **1.9.2. Pauri:**

The dictionary meaning of a pauri is a rung of a ladder or steps. In Gurbani it refers to those hymns which carry forward ideas from one stanza to another stanza.

### **IMPORTANT HYMNS COMPOSED IN PAURIS**

1. Japji - 38 Pauris
2. Anand Sahib - 40 Pauris
3. All Vars eg -  
Asa Di Var - 24 Pauris  
Var Sri Raag—22 Pauris
4. Sukhmani Sahib

### **Metres and length of Pauris**

Pauris differ in metre and in number of verses.

### **Spelling of the word Pauri and Suffixes**

The word pauri has been spelt pavri and pauri, see pages 139, 142, 143, 250, 251, 253, 255, 259, 1097 some pauris have number 5 with it see pages 315, 316 meaning that the pauri has been composed by Guru Arjan.

### **The name 'Nanak' at the end of a Pauri**

Some pauris do have the name 'Nanak' at the end; others do not have it; see pauris 10 & 11 of Japji, see also page 83 line 5 and pages 91, 138, 139, 142.

### **1.9.3 Sloaks:**

It is a short hymn like a couplet. It is mostly subjective and is complete in itself. Though the sloaks of Guru Tegh Bahadur, Kabir, Farid, Daphne, Phuney, Chaubole, Gatha and many other writers by the Gurus are in the form of couplets, but a number of them eg Sloak Sahaskriti (imitation Sanskrit), and a significant number used in the vars are not in the form of couplets. There are examples that the sloaks consist of between 2 to 26 verses (pages 1289-1290).

### **Structure and importance**

All Gurus whose Bani is recorded in Guru Granth Sahib have composed sloaks. Rather Guru Angad has composed only sloaks and no other form of bani.

### **Place in Guru Granth Sahib**

A. Sloaks have been attached with all Vars; there are examples of 1 to 3 sloaks preceding a var. In Jatsiri di Var there are two sloaks of Guru Arjan before every pauri — (see pages 705-711) and in Maru di Var there are three sloaks of Guru Arjan before every pauri (see pages 109-1102). If the sloaks included in var are of the composer of the var then, normally his name/number has not been mentioned. (see pages



705-711), at other places it has been mentioned, (see pages 1094-1102). If the sloaks included in a var are of another Guru then the number has been mentioned, (see pages 463-475). Sometimes the word sloak has also been omitted, (see pages 1094-1102).

**B.** Sloaks have also been added with long hymns like Japji, Sukhmani and also with Chhants, see pages 454-459)

**C.** Remaining sloaks have been collected and given together at the end of Guru Granth Sahib (see pages 1353-1384, 1410-1428).

#### **Various headings**

**A.** Various labels have been used for the sloaks eg. sloak mehla (page 83) sloak (page 705) mehla 5/2 (page 83) Asa mehla 5 sloak (page 454).

**B.** Other headings under which sloaks are found are: Dakhna (sloaks written in dakhni i.e. Sindhi) Gatha, Phunhe and Chaubole.

#### **1.9.4 Var:**

The word var means ballad i.e. a heroic poem. Whereas the ordinary var has the battlefield as the background, the vars in Guru Granth Sahib have spiritual battlefield where good and evil are fighting each other to win.

#### **Structure**

All vars have been composed in pauris. Guru Arjan has put sloaks along with pauris in every var. The sloaks included in the vars are not necessarily by the same author.

#### **Tune**

There are 22 vars in the Granth, some of which have been written on the tunes of the earlier vars, (see pages 462). It is said that the tunes of some of the vars were selected by Guru Hargobind.

#### **1.9.5. Chhants**

In Guru Granth Sahib most of the chhants are of 4 PADAS, each pada containing between four to six verses, though majority of them have six verses. Some chhants are also preceded by sloaks (pages 454-459)

#### **1.9.6. Swayays**

Swayays are quatrains. They are all collected and given at the end of Guru Granth Sahib. (pages 1385 1409) 20 swayays have been composed by Guru Arjan and 123 have been composed by the court poets in praise of the Gurus.

### **SECTION III**

#### **1.10 The Collection and Collation of Gurubani**

1. There is enough evidence in the Sikh history that Bhagat Bani was collected by the Gurus during the period of their pontificate.
2. Many verses composed by the Gurus are either clarification of a similar verse of a Bhagat or are an answer to the questions raised by the Bhagats in their compositions.



**Examples:**

- a. see page 1383 of Guru Granth Sahib sloaks of Farid (104-111). The sloaks of Farid have sloaks of Guru Amardas and Guru Arjan mixed with them for clarification.
  - b. see page 1384, Sloak of Farid (112) 113 is composed by Guru Nanak (see page 83).
  - c. see pages 981, 1106 (Raag Maru) Shabad of Guru Nanak and a similar Shabad of Bhagat Jaidev.
  - d. (Raag Sorath) Shabad of Guru Nanak and a Shabad of Bhagat Namdev.
  - e. (Raag Asa) Shabad of Guru Nanak and Shabad of Kabir.
  - f. see also Sloaks and Shabads of Kabir and Guru Amardas.
  - g. there are many more examples of such similarities
3. The Bani was recorded in books from the time of Guru Nanak and it passed on from one Guru to the other Guru.
  4. During the times of Guru Amardas all the Bani collected so far was recorded in two Pothis (Books). These Pothis have the Bani of Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amardas, Kabir, Namdev, Jaidev, Ravidas, Trilochan and Sain.
  5. The Bani of other Bhagats was collected by Guru Arjan and the above Pothis were recovered from Baba Mohan (son of Guru Amardas), by Guru Arjan himself.

**1. The Authors and the Arrangement of their Bani**

The authors of Guru Granth Sahib can be divided into following categories:

**(i) Gurus**

**Guru Nanak** - Composed Bani in 19 Raags viz Sri, Majh Gauri, Asa. Gujri, Wadhans, Sorath, Dhanasri, Tilang, Suhi, Bilawal, Ramkali, Tukhari, Bhairav, Basant, Sarang, Malaar and Prabhati.

The total number of compositions are 974.

**Guru Angad** - Composed only 62 sloaks which have been incorporated in vars.

**Guru Amardas** - Composed Bani in 17 Raags, all the Raags used by Guru Nanak except Tilang and Tukhari. Total Number of compositions are 907.

**Guru Ramdas** - Composed Bani in 29 Raags, all the Raags used in Guru Granth Sahib (see page 111.7 except Raag Kedara and Jai Jai Vanti. Total number of compositions are 679.

**Guru Arjan** - Composed Bani in 30 Raags, all the Raags used in Guru Granth Sahib except Raag Jai Jai Vanti. Total compositions are 2218.

**Guru Hargobind** - It is said that he added tunes to 9 vars out of a total of 22 vars. These vars are: Majh Di Var, Gauri Di Var Asa Di Var, Wadhans Di Var Gujri Di Var, Ramkali Di Var, Sarang Di Var; Malaar Di Var and Kanra Di Var.

**Guru Tegh Bahadur** - Composed Bani in 15 Raags which are: Gauri, Asa, Gujri, Bihagra, Sorath, Jaitsri, Dhanasri, Todi, Tilang. Bilawal, Ramkali Maru Basant, Sarang and Jai Jai Vanti The Raag Jai Jai Vanti has been used only by Guru Tegh Bahadur. Total number of compositions are 115.

**Guru Gobind Singh** - It is said that there is one Sloak (page 1429 Sloak number 54) composed by Guru Gobind Singh.

**(ii) The relatives of the Sikh Gurus**

**Baba Sundar** - Sundar was the great grandson of Guru Amardas. There is one hymn of six verses in Raag Ramkali composed by Baba Sundar (page 923). It is said that this hymn was composed by Baba Sundar at the death of Guru Amardas.



**(iii) The Musicians/Bards of the Sikh Gurus**

Mardana - He was companion and musician of Guru Nanak. There are 3 sloaks of Mardana in Bihagra Di Var (page 553).

Sata & Balwand - They were bards in the court of Guru Angad. Once in their ego they thought that the glory of Guru's house was due to their singing. They resigned and did not come to the Guru. After a few days they realized their folly and came back to the Guru for forgiveness. They were duly forgiven. The Sikhs prescribed a punishment which they happily accepted. Their faces were blackened and they rode on a donkey and travelled from Lahore to Amritsar.

There is a Var in praise of the Guru in Guru Granth Sahib, in Raag Rmkali (page 966).

**(iv) The Bhagats**

1. Sheikh Farid - Composed hymns in Raagas Asa and Suhi. Total compositions are 134.
2. Jai Dev - Composed hymns in Raags Gujri and Maru. Total compositions are 2.
3. Kabir - Composed Bani in 17 Raags viz Sri, Gauri, Asa, Gujri, Sorath, Dhanasri, Tilang, Suhi, Bilawal, Gauri, Ramkali, Maru, Kedara, Bharav, Basant, Sarang and Malar, Kanra, Prabhati, Total compositions are 541.
4. Namday - Composed Bani in 18 Raagas viz Gauri, Asa, Gujri, Sorath, Dhanasri, Todi, Tilang, Bilawal, Gaura, Ramkali, Mali-Gaura, Maru, Bhairav, Basant Sarang, Malar, Kanra, Prabhati, total compositions are 60.
5. Ravidas - Composed Bani in 16 Raagas viz Sri, Gauri, Asa, Gujri, Sorath, Dhanasri, Jaisri, Suhi, Gaur, Bilawal, Ramkali, Maru, kedara, Bharav, Basant and Malaar. Total compositions are 41.
6. Beni - Composed Bani in Raagas Sri, Ramkali and Prabhati. Total compositions are 3.
7. Trilochan - Composed Bani in Raags Sri, Gujri and Dhanasri. Total compositions are 4.
8. Ramanand - Composed one hymn in Raag Basant.
9. Dhanna - Composed four hymns in Raags Asa and Dhanasri.
10. Bhikhan - Composed two hymns in Raag Sorath.
11. Sadhna - Composed one hymn Raag Bilawal.
12. Pipa - Composed one hymn in Raag Dhananasri.
13. Sain - Composed one hymn in Raag Dhanansri.
14. Parmanand - Composed one hymn in Raag Sarang.
15. Surdas - Composed one verse in Raag Sarang.

**(v) The court (House of the Gurus) poets:**

Their number differs from author to author. One school of historians counts them as 17 whereas the other school counts them as 11. They have composed Swayas in the praise of the first five Gurus. These Swayas have been recorded on pages 1389-1409 and are 123 in number.

**1.12 The Beginning Verse/Hymns of The Raags/Chapters**

All sections/chapters in Guru Granth Sahib start with a specific verse/hymn popularly known as 'Mangal'. These verses/hymns are as follows.

1. Ik Onkar Satguru Prasad - used 419 times.
2. Ik Onkar Satnam Guruprasad - used 2 times.
3. Ik Onkar Satnam Kartapurkh Guruprasad - 9 times.
4. Ik Onkar Satnam Kartapurkh Nirbhau Nirvair, Akal Murat, Ajoonee, Saibhang Gurprasad - used 33 times.

### 1.13 The Arrangement of 'Tunes' in the Music of Guru Granth Sahib

The indication of the main Sur (tune) in the music arrangement in Guru Granth Sahib is named as 'Ghar' (House). There is a reference of 1 to 17 'Ghars' in Guru Granth Sahib. If there is no reference of the word 'Ghar', then that hymn should be sung in its pure form.

### 1.14 The Use of Word 'Rahao' in Guru Granth Sahib

1. The word 'Rahao' is related to the Raag of the composition. The 'Rahao' refers to the 'Sthae' in a Raag.
2. It also underlines the basic idea in a hymn.
3. Where there are two 'Rahaos' in a hymn, the first poses a question and the second gives an answer.
4. Where there are three 'Rahaos' in a hymn, the first would be an inspiration, the second would refer to constraints and the third would be an advice. (see pages 154-155).
5. Where there are six 'Rahaos' in a hymn, it refers to the individual 'Sthae', in the Raag. (see pages 81-82).
6. In Ramkali Di Var Mehla 3 the word 'Rahao' has been used so that the line should be sung again and again.
7. The Bani which has not been written in Raags has no 'Rahao' in it.

### 1.15 The Arrangement of the Bani Recorded after the Raags:

The Bani recorded after the Raags which finish at page 1353 is as follows:

Sloak Shahskriti Mehla 1 (page 1353), Sloak Shahskriti Mehla 5 (pages 1353-1360), Gatha Mehla 5 (1360-1361), Puhney Mehla 5 (1361-1363), Chaubolay Mehla 5 (1361-1364), Sloak Kabir (1364-1377), Sloak Farid (1377-1385), Swaya Mehla 5 (1385-1389), Bhatt Swayas (1389-1410), Sloak varan de vadeek (1410-1426), Sloak Mehla 9 (1426-1429), Mundavni (1429), Raag-Mala (1429-1430)

## SUMMARY TABLE

### Guru Granth Sahib - The Spritual Guru of the Sikhs.

1539	Death of Guru Nanak Dev. The first Pothi of hymns handed by Guru Nanak to Guru Angad.
1552	Death of Guru Angad. The Pothi of hymns (first pothi plus the hymns of Guru Angad) handed by Guru Angad to Guru Amardas.
1574	Death of Guru Amardas. The updated Pothi of hymns handed by Guru Amardas to Guru Ramdas.
1581	Death of Guru Ramdas. The updated Pothi (including hymns of Guru Nanak Dev, Guru Angad, Guru Amardas and Guru Ramdas and some bhagats) was taken over by Baba Mohan, son of Guru Amardas.
1601	Guru Arjan Dev started the compilation of Granth Sahib.
1602	Pothi, now known as Mohan Pothi, recovered by Guru Arjan from Baba Mohan.
1604	Completion of Granth Sahib and installation of the Granth at Harimandir. Guru Arjan called the Granth as Pothi Sahib. The scribe of the Granth was Bhai Gurdas, a maternal uncle to Guru Arjan.
1605	Emperor Akbar paid homage to the Granth at Batala. He also offered 51 gold mohars as the offering.



- 1604-1635 Granth Sahib remained at Amritsar.
- 1635 Granth Sahib moved to Kiratpur Sahib by Guru Hargobind.
- 1644 Original Bir (copy) stolen by Dhirmal, a grandson of Guru Hargobind from Guru's palace.
- 1661 Emperor Aurangzeb summoned Guru Har Rai to Delhi to defend some of the hymns of Granth Sahib
- 1661 Guru Har Rai sent his older son Ramrai to Aurangzeb. Ramrai dared to change a hymn of the Granth. Guru Har Rai disowned Ramrai. Death of Gur Har Rai.
- 1674 Original Bir recovered by the Sikhs from Dhirmal, but returned to him again by the orders of Guru Tegh Bahadur.
- 1706 Second version of the Granth compiled by Guru Gobind Singh at Damdama Sahib. The scribe was Bhai Mani Singh.
- 1706 4 copies of the Granth made by Baba Deep Singh.
- 1708 Granth Sahib was declared as the spiritual Guru of the Sikhs, by Guru Gobind Singh, at Nanded.
- 1762 Original Bir (second version) taken by Ahmed Shah Abdali to Kabul.
- 1849 Original Bir (first version) discovered by the British at the Lahore Court with its golden stand.
- 1849-1850 Court case for the possession of the original Bir.
- 1850 Court gave its custody to the descendants of Dhirmal.
- 1850 A copy of the Granth presented to Queen Victoria by the Sodhis (Dhirmal clan).
- 1900-1990 Attack on Guru Granth Sahib by the leaders of Arya Samaj and the Nirankaris.

This article is a courtesy of The Sikh Courier, International

## **SIKHS IN CANADA TEN SIGNIFICANT EVENTS**

Kanwal Inder Singh Neel

### **INTRODUCTION**

Sikhs have been in Canada for about a hundred years. They live and work in every major city and most small towns, and participate fully in all aspects of Canadian life. Yet, little is known about them or their glorious history in the shaping of Canada. I have chosen ten significant events that have had major impact on the Sikh community and the community at large in Canada.

### **FIRST SIKH SETTLERS**

After the Diamond Jubilee celebration of Queen Victoria in London, England a Sikh Lancers and Infantry Regiment passed through Canada on their way to India. They were impressed with Canada's landscape and opportunities. Hence, after their arrival in Punjab they encouraged other Sikhs to migrate to this new and adventurous land. The first wave of Sikh immigrants did not arrive, until 1904. These pioneer Sikhs undertook many hardships, they did labouring jobs on railway construction, in the lumber mills, forestry, mining, and fisheries. They were paid less than the white men, had poor housing and health care, and constantly faced racial discrimination and segregation.

In 1908, a delegation was sent to British Honduras (Belize) to see the viability of deporting all the "Hindoos" there in order to "keep Canada white." Two local Sikhs Nagar Singh and Sham Singh accompanied J.B. Harkin and William Hopkinson on this fact-finding mission. The country was infested with mosquitoes, and a number of diseases were widespread. No fresh water was available, and the living conditions were very poor. On return, Nagar Singh and Sham Singh were offered a bribe of \$3,000 to encourage the Sikhs to emigrate to British Honduras. Fortunately, these honest Sikhs told the true story of the unsuitable conditions, and the local Sikh community rejected the proposal and declared their intention to stay in Canada.

### **GURDWARAS (SIKH TEMPLES)**

A Gurdwara is not only a place of worship, but also a part of the social, economic, and political activity of the community. The first Gurdwara was built by the Khalsa Diwan Society at West Second Avenue in Vancouver. The foundation stone was laid in October 1907, and the temple was completed in the following year. In 1915, Khalsa Diwan Society was registered with its Bylaws. By 1912 there were Gurdwaras in Victoria, Abbotsford, and New Westminster. Mayo lumber company built a Sikh temple near Duncan in 1918. This community was named Paldi after its original village in Punjab. In the early days when the Sikh community was small, special religious celebrations were held in one location, for example Baisakhi celebrations were held in Victoria, Vancouver hosted Guru Gobind Singh Ji's birthday, and Guru Nanak Dev Ji's birthday was celebrated in Abbotsford. Nowadays most Gurdwaras celebrate all Gurburbs and other occasions. Some Gurdwaras have daily congregations while others have weekly. In Canada, today there are over a hundred Gurdwaras, about half of which are in British Columbia. Each time a new Gurdwara opens, it is usually preceded with a procession and other festivities.

### **NAGAR KIRTAN (RELIGIOUS PARADE)**

The first religious parade for the Sikhs in Canada was on January 19, 1908. Bands playing, flags fluttering, Ragis singing, a horse drawn carriage carrying Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji marked the opening of the Sikh temple on Second Avenue in Vancouver. In 1969, on the 500th birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Khalsa Diwan Society moved its Gurdwara premises to the present location at 8000 Ross Street. This



move was also made in a huge procession. In 1979 on the quincentenary of Guru Amar Das Ji, a big parade was held in Vancouver. Following that year Khalsa Diwan Society in Vancouver has an annual Baisakhi parade, which has a participation of anywhere from fifty to a hundred thousand people. This annual event goes through Punjabi market and a number of Sikhs distribute free drinks and food to all the participants. In 1995 the BC Government also officially recognized this event and published a brochure. This year also marked the 400th anniversary of Guru Hargobind Ji and a parade was held in Surrey.

### KOMAGATA MARU INCIDENT



The 1914 incident of the (*Komagata Maru* *Guru Nanak Jahaz* ship is one of the most tragic and shameful events in Canadian history. Bhai Gurdit Singh had chartered a Japanese freighter (*Komagata Maru*) to fulfill the Canadian Government requirement of a "continuous voyage" and "\$200 per head". On May 23, 1914 the ship arrived in Vancouver. Obsessed with racial bigotry, determined to keep Canada all white, the government flouted every norm of social justice and kept the shipload of 376 Indian immigrants from landing. These Sikhs, though they were British subjects, were denied entry into Canada. For two full months, the ship stood in Burrard Inlet, its passengers suffering from hunger, thirst and humiliation. On the morning of July 23, Komagata Maru was finally pushed out of the Canadian waters with the powerful guns of the Canadian Naval vessel H.M.C.S. Rainbow pointing at it. It was later commented to Prime Minister Laurier that "By strange irony, this nucleus of the Canadian Navy was first used to prevent British subjects from landing on British soil."

Seventy-five years later this reprehensible incident was officially recognized and commemorated by all levels of the Government. Proclamations were declared and then in 1990 a plaque was erected at Portal Park, which overlooks Burrard Inlet. The plaque reads:

On May 23, 1914, 376 British Subjects (12 Hindus, 24 Muslims and 340 Sikhs) of Indian origin arrived in Vancouver Harbour aboard the Komagata Maru, seeking to enter Canada. 353 of the passengers were denied entry and forced to depart on July 23, 1914. This plaque commemorates the 75th anniversary of this unfortunate incident of racial discrimination and reminds Canadians of our commitment to open society in which mutual respect and understanding are honoured, differences are respected, and traditions are cherished.

### BHAI MEWA SINGH

Over a number of years an immigration officer William Hopkinson spied on the Sikh community. He used unscrupulous and corrupt means to divide the Sikh community. Three months after the Komagata Maru incident sailed away on October 21, 1914, Mewa Singh shot Hopkinson in the Vancouver courthouse. He was sentenced to be hanged. The last statement of this Canadian Sikh martyr exemplifies his cause:

"My religion does not teach me to bear enmity with anybody, no matter what class, creed or order he belongs to, nor had I any enmity with Hopkinson. I heard that he was oppressing my poor people very much. On finding this to be a fact, I being a staunch Sikh, could no longer bear to see the wrong done both to my innocent countrymen and the Dominion of Canada. This is what led me to take Hopkinson's life and sacrifice my own life. And I, performing the duty of a true Sikh and remembering the name of God, will proceed towards the scaffold with the same amount of pleasure as a hungry babe goes towards his mother. I am sure God will take me into his blissful arms...."

Mewa Singh was hanged on the cold drizzling morning of January 11, 1915. Hundreds of Sikhs gathered outside the prison at New Westminster, and his body was taken in a procession and cremated with great



honour and respect bestowed to a great martyr. Sikhs in Canada still remember this noble Sikh by having annual Mewa Singh Martyr Day.

### **EDUCATION (SIKH RELIGION AND PUNJABI LANGUAGE)**

Sikhs in Canada have found it a challenge to have their future generations preserve their cultural, linguistic and religious heritage. Sant (Professor) Teja Singh, an educated Sikh scholar who was studying at Harvard University was called by the Sikhs of Vancouver in 1908. His teachings brought many Sikhs to observe the Sikh principles. Many other societies and individuals, other than the Gurdwaras have over the years held Sikh conferences, work shops, camps to propagate the religion. In addition, the Sikh Chair was established at the University of British Columbia in 1983. Khalsa School, a full time private school was established in Vancouver in 1986. This school teaches the provincially prescribed curriculum but also teaches religious studies and Punjabi language classes. In 1996, British Columbia schools commenced offering Punjabi language in its regular curriculum from grades five to twelve. These courses are offered in any community or school which has an interested student population wanting to learn the language.

### **DESECRATION OF GOLDEN TEMPLE (JUNE 1984)**

June 3, 1984 was the day Operation Bluestar military attack on the Golden Temple (Sri Darbar Sahib), in Amritsar, India occurred. The attack on Sri Akal Takhat, the highest seat of authority for the Sikhs had blazing effect on the Sikhs of the world including Canada. A protest denouncing this massacre was held in downtown Vancouver near the Indian High Commission office on June 24, 1984. The military attack followed by the carnage against innocent Sikhs across India in November that year have been the catalyst for a grassroots call for a separate Sikh nation 'Khalistan'. A number of Sikhs in Canada have become baptized to express their self-determination and fight for injustices in Canada and around the world.

### **ENTREPRENEURS AND BUSINESSES**

Sant (Professor) Teja Singh established the Guru Nanak Mining and Trust Company to organize the economic welfare of the Sikh community in 1909. A large piece of land was purchased in West Vancouver under the name of the trust, but was resold in difficult times. Over the years there have been many business entrepreneurs. Mayo Singh established his own Mayo Lumber Company in Paldi in 1918. Other Sikhs have established businesses in transportation, forestry, farming, technologies, etc. Vancouver and Surrey have established their own Punjabi markets, these markets serve the Sikh community as a mini shopping plaza. In July 1993, Vancouver Punjabi Market at Main and 49<sup>th</sup> Street were officially recognized with bilingual signs in English and Punjabi. Over 75 million dollars is annually generated in the market. Khalsa Credit Union was registered on February 19, 1986 as a religious bond financial institution to provide financial services to the Sikh community. Today there are numerous branches with assets of over fifty million dollars.

### **POLITICS**

Though the Sikhs in Canada thought that they were allowed to vote, this was soon changed in 1907, when the government passed a bill disenfranchising all natives of India not born of Anglo-Saxon parents. Hence, Sikhs could not vote, run for public office, serve on juries, or vote for school trustees. Sikhs did not get the full right to vote until 1947. Slowly the Sikhs have evolved with their role in the Canadian political process. They have been actively participating at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels. On March 10, 1988 the Canadian Parliament devoted a whole day to debate the issue of the Sikh's rights and the issue of Khalistan. Three Sikhs were elected to the British Columbia legislature in 1991. Manmohan (Moe) Sihota, and Ujjal Dosanjh have held various cabinet posts, and the other MLA is Harbhajan (Harry) Lalli.



In 1993 Gurbax Singh Malhi and Harbans (Herb) Dhaliwal were elected to the Canadian Parliament in Ottawa.

### DISCRIMINATION

Racism and injustices have been a fact for the Sikhs since their arrival almost a century ago. Strong Anti-Asiatic feelings existed in 1907 to keep Canada "a white man's country". Over the years there have been numerous incidents of overt racism and discrimination. There are two events that deserve special mention. The first one is the struggle to have a baptized Sikh serve in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). On March 15, 1990 the Solicitor General of Canada announced that the RCMP dress code would be amended to have a turbaned Sikh join the force. Constable Baltej Singh Dhillon had the honour of becoming the first *Amritdhari* (baptized) Sikh to join the RCMP. There were a number of legal recourses taken to ban the turban from the RCMP, eventually this whole affair was put to a halt in June 1995 when the Federal Court of Appeal upheld RCMP policy on their new dress code.

Another regretful incident occurred on November 11, 1993, when five Sikh veterans were invited to participate in a Remembrance Day parade, but were denied entry to the Royal Canadian Legion in Newton, BC because of the rule banning all forms of headgear. The reason the legion gave for this rule was to show respect for the dead and the Queen. Ironically, during the commonwealth Games in Victoria in 1994, the Queen met these decorated Sikh war veterans. This chapter of discrimination is still open as the National Legion upheld the "no headgear" rule across the country in May 1994.

On a higher note in 1982 Honourable Wally Oppal was appointed a Supreme Court Judge. In 1992 Justice Wally Oppal was appointed commissioner of the Royal Inquiry into policing in BC

### CONCLUSION

Today we are a strong, proud, visible, and a viable Sikh community due to the hard work and determination of our pioneers. Though Canada has become more tolerant and accepting over the last century, some of us still face prejudice and hostility due to ignorance. Let us exercise the rights we have gained, the right to become Canadian citizens, the right to vote and elect Sikh MP's, the right to learn Punjabi within the public school system, or the right to serve Canada in its armed, police or security forces wearing a turban. To attain these rights our pioneers had to pay a high price; it is now our responsibility as Sikhs to honour their sacrifices. Practice your religion sincerely, this will be a binding force for you, your character and also your family. Seek the opportunities and see the future generations prosper to the next millennium.

### SIKHS IN CANADA:

- 1897 Sikh Lancers and Infantry Regiment visited Vancouver after celebrating Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in London, England.
- 1899 Arrival of some Sikhs in Vancouver and Victoria from Hong Kong.
- 1904 The arrival of the first wave of Sikh immigrants. The census listed 258 Sikhs.
- 1904 Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji was first brought to Canada by Bhai Arjan Singh. The scriptures were located at a house in Port Moody.
- 1905 For the next three years, 5000 Sikhs came to Canada.
- 1906 A house was rented in Vancouver to start a Gurdwara. A resolution was adopted on July 22 to start the establishment of Khalsa Diwan Society.
- 1907 Sikhs were denied the right to vote when the government of BC passed a bill to disenfranchise all natives of India not born of Anglo-Saxon parents.

- 1907 Foundation stone of the Gurdwara for Khalsa Diwan Society was laid (l at 1866 West Second Avenue, Vancouver.
- 1907 A contingent of 901 Sikhs arrived on the Canadian Pacific steamer Monteagle in Vancouver on September 12.
- 1907 Race riots were held in Vancouver in which the Orientals and Sikhs were targeted.
- 1908 On January 8, Order-in-Council designed to stop all immigration from India with the "continuous journey" clause and "possession of \$200" was passed.
- 1908 January 19, the first Sikh parade (Nagar Kirtan) took place to celebrate the opening of the Gurdwara on Second Avenue in Vancouver. The first Granthi was Bhai Balwant Singh. The first president was Bhai Sewa Singh.
- 1908 Scheme to deport all the Sikhs from Canada to British Honduras (Belize).
- 1908 Arrival of Sant (Professor) Teja Singh in Vancouver on October 17.
- 1908 First Amrit ceremony in Canada took place in Vancouver.
- 1909 On February 13, the congregation at the Gurdwara rejected the British Honduras proposal.
- 1909 Establishment of Guru Nanak Mining and Trust Company, and plans to buy 440 acres of land in West Vancouver
- 1909 Khalsa Diwan Society was registered on March 13.
- 1911 The census for that year listed 2342 Sikhs, less than half of that in 1908. Only three were women.
- 1912 Gurdwaras were built in Victoria, Fraser Mills, and Abbotsford .
- 1912 Hardial Singh Atwal was the first Sikh born in Canada on August 28.
- 1913 Establishment of The Ghadar Party in North America. The "Chadar" newspaper was published the same year.
- 1914 April 4, the Komagata Maru (Guru Nanak Jahaz) departed Hong Kong for Vancouver to challenge the "continuous journey" clause.
- 1914 May 23, arrival of the Komagata Maru with 376 passengers, mostly Sikhs, under the leadership of Bhai Gurdit Singh in Vancouver.
- 1914 July 23, the Komagata Maru was escorted out of Vancouver under the guard of the Canadian Navy.
- 1914 Bhai Mewa Singh shot William Hopkinson at the Vancouver Courthouse on October 21., to stop the injustices done to the Sikh community.
- 1915 Bhai Mewa Singh was hanged on January 11 in New Westminster. He was given a ceremonial funeral and proclaimed as a Canadian Sikh Martyr.
- 1915 Khalsa Diwan Society was incorporated under the BC Societies Act on February 23.
- 1918 Sikh population in British Columbia dropped to as low as 700.
- 1918 Mayo Lumber Company built a Sikh temple near Duncan, BC at Paldi. This town was named after the village in India.
- 1919 Immigration restrictions on bringing wives and children under eighteen years old from India were lifted.
- 1920 Sikh women and children started arriving from India.
- 1924 On July 13, the Sikh community sent a Jatha (a group of 10 martyrs) to protest the interference of Gurdwara management by the British Government in India.
- 1925 Khalsa Diwan Society had autonomous branches at Vancouver, Abbotsford, New Westminster, Golden, Duncan, Coombs, and Ocean Falls.
- 1925 January 2, the Sikh community sent a Jatha (a group of 39 Sikh martyrs) for the Jaito Morcha.
- 1929 Khalsa Diwan Society invited Charles Andrew, a friend of Mahatma Gandhi; and Sir Rabindranath Tagore, Nobel laureate, to see first hand the unfair treatment of the Sikhs.



- 1933 Vancouver Sikhs formed the India Grass Hockey Club. Annual sports in memory of Babar Akali Martyrs were organized.
- 1935 September 7 the opening of the Hillcrest Sikh Temple (4 miles from Duncan). A parade was held to celebrate the opening.
- 1943 Organized labour helped the Sikhs with the "fair pay to the Sikhs" campaign.
- 1944 Survey of the Sikhs in Canada showed that there were 1756; 98% of them lived in British Columbia .
- 1947 Sikhs were granted franchise to vote and become Canadian citizens.
- 1949 Prime Minister Nehru visited the Vancouver Sikh temple with his daughter Indira Gandhi.
- 1950 East Indian Canadian Welfare Association was formed .
- 1950 Narjan Grewall was the first Sikh elected to a city council in Mission, BC
- 1951 There were 2148 Sikhs in Canada.
- 1952 Akali Singh Sikh Temple was formed after the conflict of religious practices.
- 1957 Quotas from India increased to 300 per year.
- 1962 Quota system was dropped in favour of non-discriminatory immigration laws.
- 1965 First Gurdwara in the province of Ontario.
- 1967 New immigration regulation based on point system was introduced.
- 1969 March 30, foundation stone for the Khalsa Diwan Society Gurdwara at 8000 Ross Street was laid.
- 1969 Khalsa Diwan Society celebrated the quincenary birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji at its new Gurdwara at 8000 Ross Street on November 23.
- 1970 April 25, Khalsa Diwan Society officially opened its new Gurdwara at 8000 Ross Street, following a Nagar Kirtan from 1866 Second Avenue.
- 1970 Commencement of Ladies Sat-Sang and Saturday evening Kirtan Diwan at Khalsa Diwan Society.
- 1970 Punjabi classes started at the Gurdwara at 8000 Ross Street in July.
- 1972 Punjabi classes started in the evening at David Thompson Secondary School in September.
- 1974 Celebration of centenary of the Singh Sabha Movement, with a tour of Sikh dignitaries around British Columbia.
- 1974 The tradition to enter a Sikh temple with a head covering (which had been neglected for a few years) was revived by a special resolution.
- 1975 "Sikh Samachar" a newspaper, was published by the BC Sikh societies.
- 1975 Commemoration of the Tercentenary of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji.
- 1975 First Ragi Jatha (Bhai Bakhshish Singh Ji) that came from Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC)
- 1978 The executive committee of the Khalsa Diwan Society, Vancouver was elected for the first time by a ballot voting system.
- 1979 The 500<sup>th</sup> birthday of Guru Amar Das Ji. Since that year, an annual Vaisakhi Parade (Nagar Kirtan) held in Vancouver
- 1979 October 2, Khalsa Diwan Society purchased an adjoining building named "Guru Amar Das Niwas." This building has a school, daycare, museum, Gurdwara and guest rooms.
- 1980 Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada was the first Sikh organization registered nationally.
- 1980 January 6, broadcast started of the Sikh religious program "Gurmat Sandesh."
- 1982 Khalsa Diwan Society purchased 28 acres in Richmond, BC to build a sports complex.
- 1982 Two Jathas from Canada went to India to participate in the "Dharam Yudh Morcha,"
- 1982 Honorable Wally Oppal was appointed a Supreme Court judge. He later conducted the Royal Inquiry to Policing in British Columbia.
- 1983 The Sikh Chair was established at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.



- 1984 A Sikh Chair was established at the University of Toronto in Toronto.
- 1984 June 3, Operation Bluestar military attack on the Golden Temple (Sri Darbar Sahib), in Amritsar, India occurred. Thousands of innocent Sikhs were killed.
- 1984 A protest denouncing the Golden Temple massacre was attended by 15,000 Sikhs in downtown Vancouver near the India High Commission office on June 10.
- 1986 Metro Toronto Police permitted Sikhs to wear their turbans while on duty with the force.
- 1986 Khalsa School, a full time private school was established in Vancouver. This school teaches the provincial prescribed curriculum, and also teaches Sikh religion and Punjabi language classes.
- 1986 Khalsa Credit Union was registered on February 19, to provide financial services to the Sikh community. Today there are four branches with assets of over ninety million dollars.
- 1986 First Sikh elected to any provincial legislature in Canada was Manmohan (Moe) Sihota from Esquimalt, British Columbia.
- 1987 A steamer named Amelie with 174 refugees, mostly Sikhs landed in Nova Scotia.
- 1987 Protest by 3000 Sikhs against Human Rights Violation during Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit at the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference in Vancouver on October
- 1988 February 25, Canadian Prime Minister Joe Clark asked premiers to boycott activities of three Sikh organizations.
- 1988 March 10, the Canadian Parliament devoted a whole day to debate the issue of the Sikh's rights and the issue of Khalistan.
- 1988 Dr. Gulzar Singh Cheema was elected as an MLA to the Manitoba legislature.
- 1989 July 23 marked the 75th anniversary of the Komagata Maru Incident. Sikh societies across Canada commemorated this reprehensible incident.
- 1990 A plaque commemorating the Komagata Maru Incident was unveiled at Portal Park in Vancouver on May 23 jointly by the municipal, provincial, and federal governments.
- 1990 March 15, the solicitor General of Canada announced that the RCMP dress code would be amended to have a turbaned Sikh join the force. Constable Baltej Singh Dhillon had the honour of becoming the first baptized Sikh to join the RCMP.
- 1991 Three Sikhs were elected to the British Columbia legislature. Manmohan (Moe) Sihota, and Ujjal Dosanjh have held various cabinet posts, and the other MLA is Harbhajan (Harry) Lalli.
- 1992 Khalsa school opened its new facility with a Gurdwara in Surrey, BC
- 1992 Formation of the Ontario Gurdwara Management Board.
- 1993 Gurbax Singh Malhi and Harbans (Herb) Dhaliwal were the first Sikhs elected to the Canadian Parliament in Ottawa.
- 1993 In July, Vancouver Punjabi Market at Main and 49<sup>th</sup> Street was officially recognized with bilingual signs in English and Punjabi.
- 1993 A 24-hour radio program featuring Sikh religion and Gurbani Kirtan started to transmit from Vancouver. It broadcasts across Canada and America Via satellite.
- 1993 Five Sikh veterans were invited to participate in a Remembrance Day parade on November 11, but were denied entry to the Royal Canadian Legion in Newton, BC
- 1994 Akhand Path and Vaisakhi Day celebrations were held at the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa.
- 1994 The foundation stone for the Sikh Resource Center was laid by the Akal Takhat Jathedar on July 24.
- 1994 Senior Center for the Sikhs was opened on November 29, in Surrey, BC
- 1995 The BC Government officially recognized the Vaisakhi Parade and published a brochure.
- 1996 February 15, the Supreme Court of Canada reaffirmed a Sikh officers right to wear a turban.



- 1996 Since September, British Columbia schools are offering Punjabi language in its regular curriculum from grades five to twelve
- 1996 There were over a hundred Gurdwaras across Canada. Fifty of them were in British Columbia.
- 1996 Projected opening of the Sikh Resource Center in Vancouver to celebrate the centennial of the Sikhs in Canada.
- 1997 January 11 was the sad day when the sanctity of Guru Nanak Temple in Surrey was desecrated with the intervention of the riot police to resolve the dispute over the serving of Guru Ka Langar (community kitchen).
- 1997 Foundation stone for Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar was laid in Surrey, BC by Sant Baba Mann Singh Ji on April 30.
- 1997 In October, Canadian Sikhs celebrated their centennial in Vancouver along with the proclamation titled "Coming of the Sikh Pioneers to Canada" issued by the Government of British Columbia, Cities of Vancouver, New Westminster, Surrey, Richmond, Abbotsford, Delta, Coquitlam, Langley, Pitt Meadows.
- 1998 Opening of Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar by Sant Baba Thakur Singh Ji on January 11.
- 1998 Five high priests from the Akal Takhat in India issued the Hukamnama (Sikh religious edict) on the issue of eating *Guru Ka Langar* (community kitchen) on April 20.
- 1998 May 29 was the implementation day of the *Hukamnama* (Sikh religious edict) on the issue of eating *Guru Ka Langar* (community kitchen) issued by the five high priests from the Akal Takhat in India.
- 1999 Year long celebrations on the tercentenary of the Khalsa at various locations.

## TERCENTENARY OF THE KHALSA

by Principal Amar Singh  
Khalsa School, Vancouver

All over the world the Sikhs have started making preparations for the celebrations of the Tercentenary of the Khalsa. Three hundred years ago Guru Gobind Singh Ji initiated a unique man with distinctive appearance on the Vaisakhi day of 1699. He administered Amrit, the Elixir of life, to the Five Beloved Ones and then knelt in front of them and requested them to administer the same Amrit to him in order to enable him to join the fold of the Khalsa. For this reason Bhaii Gurdas Ji wrote "Wonderful, Wonderful is Guru Gobind Singh, the Master and Disciple". Hence our celebrations can only become meaningful if everyone of us takes Amrit. This was how the great Guru founded this day of Vaisakhi.

He gave us the jewel of Truth to assimilate in our lives and become a lovely garden of Truth that sends waves of the fragrance of truth across the universe as life is universal and Guru Ji's messages are universal in nature. Guru Nanak Dev Ji initiated the life of Truth which was saturated by Guru Gobind Singh Ji with Amrit. Masculine life was given the appellation of Singh and the feminine life was given the cognition of Kaur. All this sprouted from the fountain of Truth.

Immaculate life is another sprout of the garden of Truth that sows the seeds of inspiration in life. This spirit enlivened life and gave it the courage to wrench the sword of justice and righteousness. This sword of justice sent sparkles of light that pierced through the darkness and gloom that had engulfed life for centuries. The oppressed, persecuted and tyrannised life are a light of hope in the sword that was plated with courage and valour. With the spirit of Amrit and the sword of justice in its hand, life became chivalrous, heroic and dauntless.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji said with determination that he would embolden the sparrows of love to destroy the eagles of hatred in order to revive the dying soul of life. He would enlighten the garden of life and destroy the blindness and darkness that had sapped life of its beauty. He would light the ever-lit Torch that will go on lighting the lamps of life in the universal garden of life. Immaculated life would enlighten all the dark corners of life with wisdom and valour. Life would learn to live with honour, respect and reverence. And this was done with the efficacy of Amrit on the Vaisakhi day of 1699.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji raised the Khalsa on this auspicious day which the world can never forget. Universal boundaries were drawn for humanity to flourish and stretch. Man made ridges were destroyed and the soul of humanity was recognized. The low castes were elevated and given an equal place in the garden of humanity. Conch-shells were blown and heavenly music was heard. It sent waves of human equality and ecstasy far and wide throughout the world. For the first time in world history man was recognized on equal status at all levels. The Divine Khalsa was founded on this historical day. Guru Gobind Singh Ji gave us a description of Khalsa in Thirty-Three Swaiyyas.

He whose mind dwells, night and day, on the Ever-effulgent Light and who gives not a moment's thought to ought but the One,  
Who wears Perfect Love, with Faith, and  
believes not even mistakenly in fasting, tombs,  
crematoriums and hermitages,  
Nor in pilgrimages, nor customary charities,  
nor a set code of self-discipline,





And when God's Light illumines perfectly his heart,  
then is he known a Khalsa, purest of the pure!

It was this Divine Khalsa that was born on this historical day of 1699. He was eternally isolated from the fires of desire that destroy the beauty of life. He had his head on his palm to protect the weak and helpless brethren. He had vowed to live a life of luminous self-renunciation by bathing in the pool of nectar that exists within his body. Th Khalsa had vowed to be cut piece by piece, but not to desert the battlefield of religion. He had abandoned the hope of life and accepted death to living an ignominious life. He had also shed his ego and become the dust of the feet of all. The Tenth Master had planted the seedling of spiritual and immaculate life with his own hands and watched it grow and bloom before his eyes.

## **FREQUENTLY USED SIKH INTERNET WEBSITES**

Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar: <http://www.dasmeshdarbar.com/>

Sikh Information: <http://www.Sikhs.org>.

Holy Scripture and music: <http://www.gurbani.org>.

Information on Sikhism: <http://www.sikhnet.com/>

Akal Takht Support Committee: <http://www.jps.net/nihang/index.html>

KhalsaNet Home Page: <http://www.scit.wlv.ac.uk/~cm6453/coen.html>

Sikh Rehit Maryada: <http://www.rpi.edu/~kochhj/reht/>

We are Not Symbols: <http://roscoe.bu.edu/~rajwi/sikhism/not-symb.htm>

Nishkam Sikh Welfare Council: <http://www.rip.edu/~anandh/NISHKAAM/>

Nahal Global Trading Co.: <http://www.maboli.com/nahal/>

Human Rights violations in India: <http://www.khalistan-affairs.org/>

SMART: <http://www.sikhmedia.org/>

Punjab politics: <http://www.burningpunjab.com>

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- 16 Life of Banda Singh Bahadur. Author: Ganda Singh.
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### **Video Documentaries**

#### **Disappearances in Punjab**

A 25-minute documentary film, in English, on the legacy of human rights violations in Punjab committed by India's security forces, and its role in sustaining the Sikh separatist unrest in the state. It was completed in December 1995, and is available on VHS (PAL or NTSC), it was authored by Ram Narayan Kumar, author and human rights worker & Lorenz Skerjanz, student of Ethnology at the University of Vienna.

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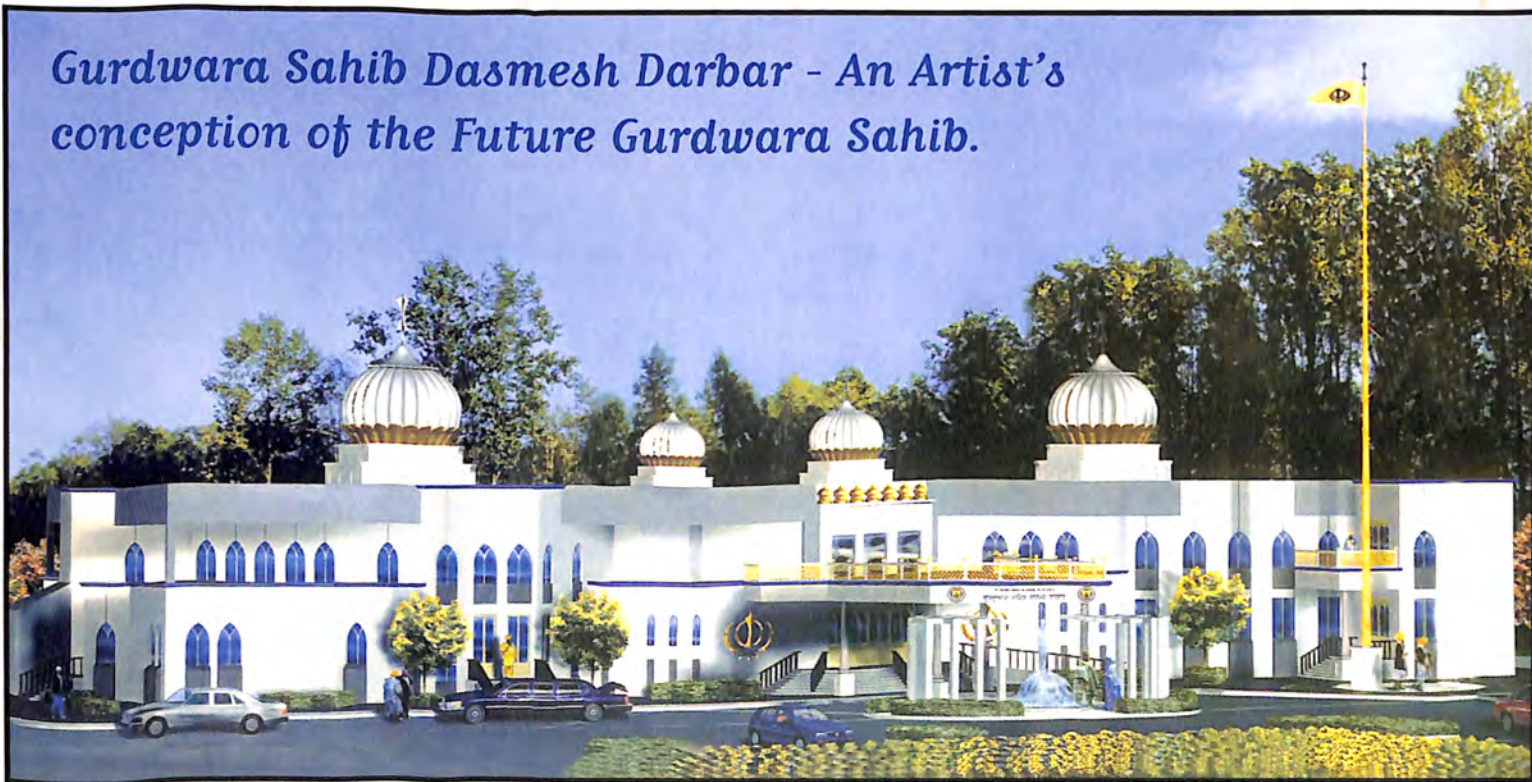
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