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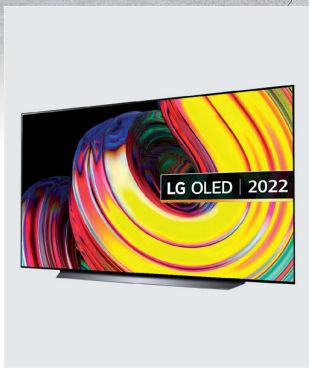
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The Sikh Courier

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Editorial

[A Sikh is one who believes in One God, teachings of the ten Sikh Gurus, Sovereignty of Guru Granth sahib and the importance of Khande the Pahul (Sikh Baptism)].

The Sikhs are followers of Ten Sikh Gurus and have their own Divine Jurisprudence, called Guru Granth Sahib. They believe in the unity of God and are a strict monistic religion.

Since their very origin, both Hindus and Muslims have been claiming that they are a part of them. The fact is that they are neither Hindus nor Muslims. Their social, communal and religious values are different from both of them.

Their history of the past 554 years has proved that they are a distinct religion and a faith and belief of their own.

In one of the judgements of House of Lords, it was said that the Sikhs are a distinct religion and a nation of their own.

Comparing Sikhism with other faiths, including Hinduism and Islam, it can be clearly stated that the Sikh religion is different from other religions and stands on its own values as established by Guru Nanak and his nine successors.

In many court judgments, both in India and abroad it has been well established that Sikhism is a distinct religion with their own holy scripture (Guru Granth Sahib), sanctified place of worship (Harimandir Sahib Amritsar), specified code of conduct (Rehat Maryada), peculiar guidelines of living, special initiation ceremony (Khande di Pahul), and distinct

appearance developed over three centuries as prescribed by Guru Gobind Singh [Wearing of 5 K – uncut hair ਕੇਸ, comb ਕੰਘਾ, underwear ਕੱਛਾ, iron bracelet ਕੜਾ and sword ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨ].

Summary of important points which make Sikhism a distinct religion and different from Hinduism.

Belief in one God

Sikhism believes in one God and is strictly a monistic religion. Hinduism believes in many gods and goddesses.

Idol Worship

Where Sikhs do not believe in idol worship and believe only in the Oneness of God. The Hindus worship idols and believe in the duality of divine. They believe in a hierarchy of deities with Brahman as the foremost all-encompassing, followed by the trinity *Brahma* (creator) *Vishnu* (sustainer) and *Shiva* (destroyer).

Scriptures

The Sikhs' most holy scripture is Guru Granth Sahib and is the central point of their worship.

Hindu scriptures are collectively known as Shastras and are comprised of two types:

- ❖ *Shruti*: (conceptualized) - Vedas and Upanishads.
- ❖ *Smriti* (poetic epics) - Ramayana, and Mahabharata (including Bhagvad Gita).

Basic Beliefs

In Sikhism the essential beliefs are belief in:

- ❖ One God (Absolute authority).
- ❖ Ten Sikh Gurus and their teachings.
- ❖ Sovereignty of Guru Granth Sahib.
- ❖ Belief in the *Khande di pahul*, initiation rites established by Guru Gobind Singh.

Sikhism denounces caste, idolatry, priesthood and rituals. The Sikh beliefs also include Five articles of faith worn by baptised Sikhs:

- ❖ *Kes* - Uncut hair, sign of divinity.
- ❖ *Kanga* - Comb worn in the hair, keeping the hair neat and tidy.
- ❖ *Kara* - Steel bracelet worn on the wrist, a sign of everlasting love for God.
- ❖ *Kirpan* - Ceremonial sword, a symbol of power.
- ❖ *Kachhera* - Undergarment worn for modesty and chastity.

Hinduism tenets including belief in:

- ❖ Caste
- ❖ Idolatry
- ❖ Rites and rituals performed by priests
- ❖ Havan, arti and mantras
- ❖ Philosophies, principles and disciplines stated in Vedas

Daily Puja

In Sikhism, the Individual mode of worship include reading or reciting of *nitnem banis* and reading from Guru Granth Sahib. The collective mode of worship includes listening or reciting *Asa di var* in the early morning hours.

In Hinduism, the individual mode of worships is worship of idols (different deities) including

worship of Sun and Tulsi (a holy plant). There is no regular and uniform collective mode of worship in temples, except evening Arti in many Mandirs.

Priesthood

In Sikhism, there is no compulsion of definite priesthood. Religious ceremonies can be performed by any knowledgeable Sikh.

In Hinduism, idolatry rituals, reciting of mantras and *Puja* rites can only be performed by high caste priests (Brahmins)

Place of worship

The Sikh place of worship is called Gurdwara, where the focal point of worship is Guru Granth Sahib. No images and photos are allowed inside Gurdwaras. Entrants must take off their shoes and cover their heads

The Hindu place of worship is called Mandir, where the focal point of worship is idols of different god and goddesses. Entrants must take off their shoes.

Ceremonies

The Sikh religious ceremonies of marriage, child birth and death are all different from Hinduism. Similarly other social ceremonies of Sikhs are also completely different from Hinduism.

These are, but a few, points of difference between Sikh religion and Hindu religion, which make it different from other world religions. The World Council of Religions recognises Sikhism as a distinct world religion.

GURU NANAK'S UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION

Dr. Baljit Singh Bagga

During my Engineering Science, Technology, Bio-engineering, Management and Metaphysical studies, I came across the words such as energy, matter, entropy, belief, ego, bondage, emancipation, knowing and higher consciousness etc. To comprehend them with Clarity of mind, I became a lifelong student, as I am a Sikh meaning disciple or Shishya in Sanskrit. That became a hobby and led me to delve into continuing further studies and research into the scriptures e.g. ancient Vedas, Prasthanas Traya viz. Upanishads, Brahmasutra & Bhagavad Gita, Nirvana Sutra, Vichar Chandrodaya etc. and finally the Sikh Scripture, holy Shri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) exploring and investigating the “Dynamic Mysticism of Guru Nanak” because the world thinkers and philosophers had started saying that Sikhism is the religion of the New Age. In the words of H.L. Bradshaw, “Sikhism is a universal world faith with a message for all men. Sikhs must cease to think of their faith as just another good religion and must begin to think in terms of Sikhism being the religion for the New Age. It is the summum bonum for the modern man”. Sikhs are a unique spirit-born people believing in the founder Guru Nanak's basic concept of “honest Work, Worship and Charity” sharing & caring, equality & justice and Welfare of all. The Sikh Faith is the 'Universal Religion for the present Space Age.' To understand this phenomena of mysticism in general and Sikh mysticism in particular, an attempt was made in a thesis to resolve the underlying problems on a scientific basis. My exploration into Reality began with

the 4 Mahavakyas (महावाक्यानि) “Great Sayings” taken from Upanishads, of the 4 Vedas, that have profound significance in Hinduism. 4 Mahavakyas are:

1. Tat Tvam Asi (तत्त्वमासि) - Chandogya Upanishad 6.8.7 of the Sama Veda, Also called उपदेश वाक्य. It is about preaching that "You are that (Brahman)".
2. Ayam Atma Brahma (अयं आत्मा ब्रह्म) - Mandukya Upanishad 1.2 of Atharva Veda. Also called अनुसंधान वाक्या. It is about understanding that The self (Atman) is Brahman.
3. Prajñānam Brahma (प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म) - From Aitareya Upanishad 3.3 of Rig Veda, also called लक्षणा वाक्या. It is about Chitta (pure) consciousness of Brahman
4. Aham Brahmasmi (अहं ब्रह्मस्मि) - Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10 Yajur Veda also called अनुभव वाक्या.

It is about realising that I am Brahman. In my Journey of Higher Consciousness, next step was study of Adi Shankracharya's “Atma Shatakam” or (Nirvana Shatakam) to understand the Atma, Brahm, Nirvana and Shivohum (Sachiddanada) etc., and relate it to Guru Nanak's “Sat-Gur-Prasada”, “Jo bole So nihaal – Sat-Sri-Akaal”, “Waheguru ji ka Khalsa – Waheguru ji ki Fateh” and Sikh national anthem, sung with great pride at important Sikh events. The Concept of Nirvana - Nirvana of Buddhist philosophy, is not a mystical future goal but may be defined as a state of enlightenment in which the mind

is free from its habitual conditioning and is no longer concerned with progress in time. The idea was expressed even more explicitly by Christ in the well known saying "The Kingdom of God is at hand". The phrase 'at hand' really has the meaning of within or all around. According to the Sikh belief, Nirvana may be defined as "the highest spiritual state of moral and spiritual perfection, it is not extinction or nothingness of Hinayana Buddhism, it is an Awareness, a positive experience of divine presence, and perfect communion with God". Nirvana in Sikhism, is thus a living experience of the Spirit of God in man. It is the dawn of dynamic peace and light. It is the last fruit and consummation of the highest perfection attainable to man. It is an inner grasp of immortality as opposed to darkness and death, and a personal communion with Truth and Beauty. It may well be called the individual soul's attuning to and later union with the Supreme Being which ultimately puts an end to "Religion of the New Age", by professor H.L. Bradshaw, (American professor, writer and historian). मनोबुद्धियहंकार चित्तानि नाहं, न च श्रो त्रजिह्वे न च ध्राणनेत्रे । न च व्योम भूमिर्न तेजो न वायुः, चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहम् शिवोऽहम् । I am not the sense organs (ears, tongue, nose, eyes and skin). I am not the pancha bhutas (five elements viz., sky or ether, earth, light or fire, the wind and the water). I am "Shiva" (Sat Chit Ananda) beyond all these). अहं निर्वकल्पोनिराकाररूपो, विभुत्वा च सर्वत्र सर्वेन्द्रि याणाम् । न चा सड.त नैव मुवित्तर्नमेयः, चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहम् शिवोऽहम् । (I am all pervasive, and without any form, pervade all senses and world. I have neither attachment to the world, nor to the emancipation (mukti). I am "Shiva" (Sat Chit Ananda) beyond all these). Grant me this boon, Oh God, from thy greatness, May I never refrain from righteous acts, May I fight without fear all foes in life's battle, With Confidence & Courage claiming the victory', May Thy glory be gained in my

mind, And my highest ambition be singing thy praises, When this mortal reaches its limits, May I die fighting with limitless courage' Robert Linssen - Living Zen - Allen & Unwin, London, 1958 Dr Trilochan Singh - Hymns of Guru Teg Bahadur - Songs of Nirvana, DSGMC, Delhi, 1975, the cycle of transmigration, implying thereby the supreme significance to God's Grace in the whole process. It is with His Grace that man can attune his will to the Will of God which ultimately enables him to achieve mukti. (Scientifically for me personally Grace is directly proportional to the Spiritual Effort) Nirvana in Sikhism is not the extinction of the flame called life, but it is a sublime experience, an exaltation of self and perfect communion with God. With this realization, the seeker of Truth not only attains illumination of the highest wisdom but also complete freedom from fear and mundane authority and identity of the self with all human beings. In Sikhism Nirvana is not mere abolition of desire during life and karma after death. It is the Mysticism of Action in which "instead of turning inwards and closing, the soul could open wide its gates to a universal love. "There has to be a mystery. Without mystery, there could be no disclosure, no revelation, and eternal disclosure, or revelation of The Self, through the self, is the natural purpose and expression of the Self Itself." Mysticism is an umbrella term that covers many varieties of religious experience. Sometimes it refers to paranormal experiences and ecstatic states; sometimes it is used to describe religion at its most real, intense and dedicated. The most satisfactory definition is to say that a mystic is a person who seeks union with Ultimate Reality or the Absolute. There are those who believe that this desire unites the disparate religions of the world and that mysticism is that "enduring substance of religion", what Aldous Huxley called the "Perennial Philosophy" which could

bring humanity to one goal of Love. There is also an increasing belief that science and mysticism may be complementary. Mysticism is the essence of religion, an art of union with Reality based on direct experience which is ineffable. It is a Knowing, an inner trans-subjective Certainty which is beyond the field of reason and logic. An intuitive feeling or insight, an immediate Awareness of Timeless, Limitless, Pervasive (vyapak) Ultimate Reality (sachidanand), the Absolute or Totality underlying all life and the universe, resulting in re-awakening of the whole self and personality of the mystic to a supreme blissful fulfilment. To explore the subject of mysticism is an immense proposition. Not only is its literature vast, scholarly and profound, but in constant process of enlargement and elaboration. As for mystic experience, the range of types and interpretations is as wide and varied as Man's individual beliefs. The ultimate exaltation of manifestation of religious experience is mysticism. To understand Mysticism in the East & West, a basic Comparative study of the Higher Religions chart was prepared in order to understand the varieties of Mysticism in the six higher religions of the world based on the most important religious aspect. All the higher religions are moral religions, in the sense that they prescribe a universally valid ethics as the distinctive style of religious life. Sikhism attempts to effect a synthesis of the two streams of religious consciousness. In Sikh religion Dynamism is a metaphysical necessity to explain manifestation as real. When Guru Nanak appeared on the religious scene of India, the interpreters of the scriptures had been expounding mutually opposed doctrines of the identity of the atman and Brahman. On the other side was dualism of the atman and Brahman (Isvara). It was a problem for Guru Nanak to

explain the 'otherness' of the created things. His dynamic metaphysical system encompasses the 'otherness' of the created elements which are negated in the static metaphysical systems of Shankara, Promenades and others. We get a clue from Guru Nanak's verse that he took full cognisance of Indian thought and the prophetic doctrines before making a statement that all the Vedas and the Semitic Books (ketaba) assert that Ultimate Reality is one essence (asalu Iku dhat). It indicates that Guru Nanak had in his mind the perspectives of Indian and the Islamic thought. In Indian theistic and Islamic traditions personal unity either subsumed polytheistic elements or rejected them in favour of non-dual unity of the Real and that "both Aryan and Semitic mind passed through this process to reach the unity of God." According to McLeod The basis of guru Nanak's thought is best understood if approached as the thought of one who was essentially a mystic. The creation does indeed provide a vital revelation of God, but the physical phenomena that imparts this revelation are to be regarded as an expression Simone Weil "Gravity and Grace" French: "La Pesanteur et la grâce" S. Weil a French philosopher, mystic, and political activist. Nona Coxhead, The Relevance of Bliss, p.164, thought from a meditation while writing her this book. Project Gutenberg's Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays, by Bertrand Russell - SGGS, p.5, Japji - Pauri 5, 'patala patal - asalu ik dhat' 10 - Sher Singh, Philosophy of Sikhism, p.131 11 McLeod W.H., Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion,, p.165.

Dr. Baljit Singh Bagga
Panentheistic Journey of Higher Consciousness
(Eur. Ing., 1969 IIT-BHU Mechanical
Engineering)

★ ★ ★



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YOU CANNOT LOCK THE GURU OF THE WORLD IN AMRITSAR

Make Sikh Scripture Available to Everyone

Dr. Harbans Lal, Ph.D., D. Lit (Hons)

There are reports that awful restrictions are being imposed on the transportation of the printed volume of Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) to homes and the gurdwaras in the West. This seems to be counter to the Guru's mission of spreading the sacred word among the seekers everywhere in the world. The Sikh scripture, Sikh history, and Sikh traditions promote the widespread availability of the Sikh scripture.

When we call ourselves Sikh, we claim to possess the inherent privilege of being continuously in touch and communicating with Gurbani. That means making all the tools for creating a connection with the SABD Guru effortless and available to every Sikh. Based on the time of the day and work environment, the physical means of connecting to the SABD or Gurbani may vary. In today's technological environment, printed and electronic media availability are considered most suitable in developed societies. In developing countries, it may be just printed formats or even handwritten texts in pocketbooks while at work and the full volume at home. At the time of Guru Nanak, far spread-out Sikhs kept the Guru-SABD in their hearts, when even the printed format was often unavailable.

I may also say that there is no evidence that our Gurus required any intermediary or clergy to transmit the Guru SABD. Instead, our Gurus did not even permit the clergy class in the Sikh Panth or Gurmukh Panth, as our community was known in those days. Let me illustrate through an example: *Cloud Burst of Gurbani*.

There is a stunning story from the times of Guru Ram Das reported by the Sikh historian Bhai Santokh Singh; once a delegation of Hindu religious scholars under the leadership of Pundit Mohan Lal came to visit Guru Ram Das. The delegation members were well-known Pundits or leaders of Brahmanical tradition. Their mission was to express their concern regarding the language and mode of propagation that the Guru was employing to spread Gurmat messages among people freely.

They forcefully articulated their concern when sitting face to face in Guru's congregation. They attempted to persuade the Guru to use the agency and the language of the religious elite, Sanskrit, and the community of ordained Brahmans to impart Guru Nanak's doctrines. Further, the same elite should be given a charge to propagate the sacred knowledge; the hymns of the Guru should not be distributed unrestricted. They were disappointed when the Guru rejected their suggestion.

Guru Ram Das employed the metaphor of rain to make his point forcefully to the delegation. Bhai Santokh described Guru's response as follows:

ਭੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਕੂਪ ਜਲ ਜੈਸੇ । ਬਰੋਸਾਇ ਕੇ ਕਿਤੀ ਜੈਸੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ
ਬਾਣੀ ਮੇਘ ਸਮਾਨ । ਬਰਸੈ ਚਹੰ ਦਿਸਿ ਬਿਖੈ ਜਗਨ ॥

Divine message, the Guru said, was like water in a well to a thirsty person or to a germinating plant. Divine knowledge in classical languages or the languages of the elite, for example, Sanskrit or

Arabic, is like the taking out the water from the deep wells with a hand-drawn bucket. It takes lot of effort to draw the water out. When drawn out this way, the water may quench the thirst but only of the persons with such resources or the water only for their own crops, who possess the means of drawing water in this manner. No sharing was possible as the quantity thus drawn was sufficient only to satisfy the needs of the holder of the bucket.

In contrast, the Guru's Wisdom, Gurmat, was manifested in Gurbani (repository of Guru's wisdom) in a language and mode which served like a cloudburst. It showered everywhere without restriction. It turned the crops of everyone, in every field, green; it reached mountains and valleys alike, birds and mammals alike, animals and humans alike, the educated and uneducated alike, and poor and rich alike. (See *Santokh Singh, Sri Gur Partap Suraj Granth, Raas 1, Part 46, p. 1518. Reprinted, Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1954.*)

With this answer, Guru Ram Das rejected the institution solely of clergies to impart Guru's teachings. They granted everyone access to the Guru's teachings in whichever way was convenient to the seekers. Everyone, irrespective of age, gender, education, financial position, or even religion, is given free access to the Guru's teachings.

SABD Langar Our SABD Guru asks us to make free availability of Guru SABD as the Gur-SABD-Langar.

The Langar of daily meals takes care of the need of the human body, But what about the need of the human mind or of the Soul which needs different type of food – the food of Guru's teachings?

ਲੰਗਰ ਵਲੈ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦਿ ਹਰਿ ਤੋਟਿ ਨ ਆਵੀ ਖਟੀਐ ॥

SGGS,p 967

Langar chalai gur sabadi hari toti n aavee khateei:

The Langar – the Kitchen of the Guru's Shabad (Sacramental Food of the Gur-Shabad: Naam or Giaan Langar) is opened (for ceaseless or non-stop distribution), and its supplies never run short.

Our Gurus urged us to distribute the SABD and its teachings freely and ceaselessly to all seekers (of Truth) without any discrimination of gender, race, nationality, status (rich, poor, etc.), education, or ethnicity. Our Guru also guaranteed the community that the SABD langar would never run out.

Stern Condemnation of Those Who Restrict Guru

The Guru Granth sternly condemns those who hide their Guru behind walls of any type of restriction. For example, as below, Guru Ram Das condemned those who hide their Guru behind rituals and restraints.

ਜੋ ਗੁਰ ਗੋਪੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਸੁ ਭਲਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਪੰਚਰ ਓਨਿ ਲਾਹਾ

ਮੂਲ ਸਭ ਗਵਾਇਆ ॥ SGGS, p. 304

O chosen people, O self-elect, one who hides Guru from others is not a good person. Such a person will lose every benefit he and others could take from the Guru's teachings.

ਜਿਨ ਗੁਰ ਗੋਪਿਆ ਆਪਣਾ ਸੇ ਲੈਦੇ ਢਹਾ ਫਿਰਾਹੀ ॥

SGGS,p.308

Those who hide the Guru wander around, moaning and groaning.

ਜਿਨਿ ਗੁਰ ਗੋਪਿਆ ਆਪਣਾ ਤਿਸ ਠਠਿਰ ਨ ਠਾਓ ॥ SGGS p 304

Those who hide their Guru shall have no home or place of escape.

Guru Ram Das called those people evillest who hide Guru from others.

ਜਿਨਾ ਗੁਰ ਗੋਪਿਆ ਆਪਣਾ ਤੇ ਨਰ ਬਰਿਆਰੀ ॥

SGGS,p.651

Those who conceal and deny their Guru are the evillest people.

Although our Gurus condemn such behaviours, restrictions or guidelines, our youth, and other members of Sikh congregations in the western world experience untold types of difficulties in obtaining the bound volumes of Gurbani.

Even though everyone with modern technology such as computers and cell phones has total excess to the volumes of SGGS, many members of our congregations wish to have the Guru's total volume at home. That promotes the young children to inculcate faith in their Guru.

Many faithful Sikhs describe awful hurdles when they go to India and their central shrine, Sri Darbar Sahib, to seek a volume of SGGS. No one knows why the imposition of restrictions on the Guru's travel outside the Sri Harmander Sahib precinct on its way to Sikh diasporas abroad.

Those hurdles are often described and published in the Sikh Review journal. I recall articles by Dr. Inderjit Singh, Col. Avtar Singh, and others. Their writings are often followed by letters from readers illustrating the magnitude of anguish that community is forced to exhibit. Clearly, this issue is not the respect that is due the Guru Granth Sahib.

Sardar Phulel Singh, an ex-official of Takht Sri Patna Sahib, used to bring truckloads of SGGS volumes to distribute in North America. His son needed the sacred volume for his new home when he passed away. So, he flew to India to get one from Guru Ram Das printing Press.

However, he had to return empty-handed and grumble over the received reception.

Not only do our institutions in India place restrictions, but those abroad who facilitate access to the SABD Guru are harassed and threatened.

There is no disagreement that utmost respect is appropriate while transporting the Guru Granth volumes. The issue is that the current policy diminishes the ability of the Sikhs, their families, and their friends that live worldwide to develop and strengthen a relationship with the Guru Granth Sahib. Hence, we wish to continue to argue against the practice of restricting open access to the Jagat Guru.

Is there Brahmanism entering our religious practices? Let me illustrate why I am asking this question.

Brahmanism Taboo at the Millennium Celebration in the USA: In the year 2000, religious leaders of most religions of the world, on special invitation, graced the land of the United States to celebrate the Millennium year. I was personally involved with the events held at the United Nations campus in New York and the World Centre for Thanksgiving in Dallas, Texas. Meeting and mingling with world religious leaders gave me, among other things, a real appreciation and understanding of how diverse the celebration of religiosity among the world's religions was.

One observation is relevant to this essay: Some denominations of Hinduism sent lower-level leadership, and others completely shunned travel to participate in UNO-sponsored international gatherings. We were told that their top religious leadership was forbidden to cross waters over the continents. On further exploration, I found that traveling overseas was prohibited in those sects on religious grounds.

There is a belief in Hindu mythology that crossing over an ocean is a religious sacrilege punishable with wrath from fierce demons and monsters. Manu Smriti and the Baudhayana Dharma Sutra advised against sea travels with severe penalties and penances.

Some who have recently incurred religious wrath for crossing the seas are notables like Tagore, Gandhi, Vivekananda, and Ramanujan, though they totally disregarded any religious judgment against them.

Further, in the 17th and 18th centuries, the English suffered in their attempts to get Hindu labor across to Africa and West Indies due to this reason. The crossing of the seas was termed a crossing over the dark waters or *Kaalaa Paani*. The British finally took large vessels full of water from the river Ganges on board to keep these men contented.

A Brahmin explained the taboo to me as follows:

This is because one cannot perform his daily ‘pujas’, the three-time ‘sandyavandans’. After all, the sun and moon were “in the wrong place at the wrong time.” Moreover, if one goes out, he will have to compromise on those religious practices, ‘touch’ many unclean people and eat food prepared by “*mlecchas* (non-Aryan or non-Vedic followers).”

Another reason given was that India was a “Punyabhoomi (Holy land)” and the rest of the world was “karmabhoomi (Land of duty).” Furthermore, such a departure from this land entailed the end of the reincarnation cycle. The traveller was cut off from the regenerating waters of the Ganges (thus the English solution of carrying Ganges water on ships).

Vishnu Narayanan Namboothiri, a noted poet who served as a priest at the **Sreevallabha Temple**, was not allowed to enter the temple after

he returned from an overseas trip to **London**. The temple authorities, led by the chief priest, asked him to go a thorough cleansing, penance, and *punaravrodha* (reinstallation) before he would be allowed in the temple again. Namboothiri was asked to purify himself by reciting the **Gayatri Mantra** 1008 times.

It is heartening that as Hindus became more educated, they began to reform. Nowadays, most educated Hindus reject the above-described restrictions on overseas travel, considering it a taboo of the past and an outdated belief. However, there are many sects still hanging on to this taboo. It may be that some of our Sikh clergy want us to join those sects.

Actually, this is what Hindus would say of their religion – that Hinduism is not monolithic, centralized, or uniform and that it has evolved over the centuries and continues to change.

So, we are wondering if the above-described Hindu taboo has started seeping into our customs to freshly invent restrictions on travels of our eternal Guru.

Hearing all the above descriptions of Brahmanwad should be foreign to us at first and then very disturbing. We are relieved to realize that our Guru’s teachings, Gurmat, liberated us from such shackles- that **we would never be restricted to the Hindu way**. We envision our scholars, clergy, and Gurus traveling with the Guru all over the world to spread the message of universality and love.

Further, our SABD Guru had guaranteed us its presence wherever a Sikh would reside. We must trust the prediction of the scholars of Guru Arjan’s court.

Bhai Gurdas described the whole schema of Guru Arjan in creating the volume of SGGS in Vaar 1, Pauri 27, as below.

ਘਰ ਘਰ ਅੰਦਰ ਧਰਮਸਾਲ ਹੋਵੈ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਸਦਾ ਵਿਸੋਆ ॥

ਭਾਬੇ ਤਾਰੇ ਚਾਰ ਚਕ ਨੌ ਖੰਡ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮੀ ਸਚਾ ਢੋਆ ॥ Bhai
Gurdas Var 1, Pauri 27

Inside every home is a treasury of dharma (Guru's teachings) where kirtan continually plays. Baba liberated the four directions and the nine realms (with the highest Truth of SABD).

Brahmanwad Not Anticipated Among Sikhs

Little did we know that our expectations of the Guru's presence traveling worldwide would be sabotaged by our own Sikh clergy in our own lifetime and that the Brahmanwad, as described above in the case of Hinduism, would seize us Sikhs, too. And, to our dismay, this is happening when even the orthodox Hindu organizations are seriously considering backing away from this outdated custom and thinking.

For your reference, we are using Brahmanism or Brahmanwad as a generic term, meaning the clergy-imposed religiosity experienced virtually in every religion. So, the Brahman as a generic term includes pundits, bhaees, mullahs, rabbis, and others who claim a special authority over the management of their religions. Unfortunately, Brahmanwad engulfs every religion sometime after the Founder leaves for a heavenly abode, but it is highly disturbing to see its practice in modern times.

Now, I want to briefly tell you what really happened to an active member of a Canadian Sikh congregation or what transpired during my visit to India. You may find that the story is only a repetition of the similar experiences many others have undergone in a similar quest. So, we leave out the specific details but gladly share them with those who may need them for illustration.

In this case (the name is held to protect the individual), our priestly heads of important religious organizations in Punjab and Delhi took our friend seeking the volume of SGGS around the bushes for several days until the seeker lost patience and gave up. The clergy's demands included hiring five initiated Sikhs to ceremonially carry the Guru in especially prepared automobiles. During the traveling in an airplane, special seats must be bought for the party holding the Granth in the aircraft involving no stay in any hotel on the way. When direct demands of the clergy became awkward, the seeker was distracted with one excuse or the other to their utter disappointment and exhaustion.

The seekers are told in so many ways that the SABD Guru could not fly overseas with any individual. This disappoints countless visitors from abroad who go to India with a deep desire to procure the Guru Granth volume so that they may install the Guru in their homes for daily obeisance, recitation, and *vichaar* of Guru's hymns.

The current restrictions rule out entirely any access to SGGS volume for Sikhs living outside India, be it Europe, the UK, North America, Africa, the Middle East, or Southeast Asia. Even within India, it will be costly to have five Singhs travel in a specially prepared van to deliver the volume of the Granth, say, in Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, or Bangalore by road.

It is not the purpose of this article to criticize any person or organization but rather to blame the system that our clergy has instituted to invoke restrictions. They make it difficult, if not impossible, for any wisdom seeker to take home a copy of our sacred scripture, particularly when flying overseas.

This very fanaticism resulted in removing the copies of the Guru Granth from Indian

Embassies and university libraries in North America. All this has been done in the name of “Satkar (reverence) for SGGS.”

According to reports from seekers of the Guru Granth, there appears to be a well-thought-out sinister move underway. Or else, why would Sikhs living outside Punjab, particularly outside India, be denied the opportunity to have SGGS at their residence – the opportunity to be able to recite SGGS themselves (do Sehaj Path), to initiate the children to the Guru, and to take into their heart the divine wisdom contained therein (GuruMat).

Was Restricting Guru Ever a Tradition?

On the contrary, the compiler and composer of SGGS, Guru Arjun, himself advised that the Guru’s Word or composition may abide with every Soul everywhere.

ਘੁਰ ਕਾ ਬਚਨ ਬਸੈ ਜੀਅ ਨਾਲੇ ॥ SGGS, p 679

The Guru’s Word (verses in the Guru Granth) may abide with my heart.

Did Sikh Clergy always restrict their Guru?

Of course, not! The Guru Granth volume was first installed as Pothi Sahib in 1604 and canonized as SGGS in 1708. Since then, the sacred volumes have been transported by whatever means available to the various parts of the Indian subcontinent.

It is not even a couple of decades ago that the restriction on the Guru’s travel was heard. The SABD Guru was transported and distributed freely among the Sikh congregations and the homes of individual wisdom seekers.

We should refresh our memory of the days when the sacred volume of SGGS was carried in a leather holder slung from the saddle of a horse during the 18th century. Col. Avtar Singh

and I are well past our seventh decade and have seen SGGS volume packed in a suitcase being transported on a Tonga (horse buggy), bus, train, or horseback during our lifetimes all in the lap of the faithful.

Bhai Kahn Singh gave a copy of the Guru Granth to late Mr. Max MaCauliffe, asking him to pack it in his suitcase and take it to the UK for his use. MaCauliffe’s servant, who travelled with him and packaged his luggage, was his Muslim servant, well-known to Bhai Kahn Singh. He is the one who carried the suitcase carrying the volume of SGGS.

No one ever reported any sacrilege being committed anywhere in those days. One is at a loss as to why the *Satkar* (reverence) is being made an issue now.

Gurmat and Sikhism Entering the World without Borders with SGGS’s Unrestricted Access

Let us illustrate the case history of Christian minister Rev. Dr. H. L. Bradshaw of Oklahoma City. He developed a fascination with Sikhism through some Sikh students he met at the University of Oklahoma. He began to write articles on Sikhism that were published in Sikh media, including the Sikh Review. He then made a pilgrimage to Amritsar, where SGPC felicitated him and gave him books on Sikhism to take back. He was also given a copy of the Guru Granth to carry in his suitcase to establish a Sikh congregation in Oklahoma, which he did.

Soon after his Amritsar visit and the publicity of starting a Sikh congregation, I heard from Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra, President of SGPC, asking me to visit Dr. Bradshaw to help him where needed. If my memory is correct, I drove to Dr. Bradshaw in 1959 and spent a night at his home.

I found that Dr. Bradshaw could not establish a Sikh congregation, so he asked me to take his copy of the Guru Granth Sahib back with me. He could not read Punjabi, and the students who

had kindled the spark of Sikhism in him had already left the town.

Thus, I transported the sacred volume to Chicago in my car. We had formed a Sikh Study Circle there to meet weekly and held sangat in the Guru's presence. I reported this to SGPC, which felt relief that the SGGS volume was taken back safely and would be available to American congregations.

How I Became Instrumental in Making the Guru Accessible in the USA

In due time, Sikh students studying in universities all over the Midwest USA found out that I was honoured with a copy of the Guru Granth for the benefit of various Sikh congregations. They began to ask me to lend them the SABD Guru for their Sikh functions.

I traveled with the Guru to Madison, Milwaukee, several nearby towns in Indiana, Illinois, and a couple of times to Ohio where late Dr. Kharag Singh of Sikh Research Institute, Dr. Gurbaksh Singh of Punjab Agriculture University, and their colleagues were studying at Ohio University. They invited me with my Guru for Sikh celebrations. They were very appreciative and supportive of the Guru's visits to various campuses.

A few years later, around 1975, the late Sardar Phulel Singh of Takht Sri Patna Sahib moved to Toronto. One of his missions, he told me, was to provide the Guru wherever requested. I recall taking the volumes of the Guru Granth from him to deliver to various sangats in different towns of North America. All were feeling very blessed by the availability of the Guru in the foreign lands. They were all very thankful for this service undertaken by Sirdar Phulel Singh. Sirdar Sahib told me that he imported container loads of the sacred volumes of SGGS for distribution in North America.

Sikhism was coming to the age of its being without borders, with SGGS freely available.

Is it not a pity that now the son of the same Sardar Phulel Singh was denied the Guru Granth from India?

Conclusion

There are reports of unprecedented restrictions imposed on the transportation of SGGS Volume from Amritsar or Delhi, where alone it is available. These restrictions are going to cause damage to the practice of Sikhi in the long run. The effect is already being felt by the Sikhs living across the oceans. We call upon the Sikh Nation to find a solution.

The priestly class dare not say that an average Sikh cannot read Sri Guru Granth Sahib himself/herself, but these restrictions will take us to that end when only the Brahman Sikh could read the scripture and interpret it. These results will be unsavoury to Sikhi, Sikhism, and Sikh Nation.

Guru never restricted Guru's movements, particularly across oceans, as the restriction exists only among the religions under Brahmanical management.

Surprisingly, the restrictions being imposed are under the garb of promoting reverence to the Guru. However, any search in the Guru's hymns or writings of Bhai Gurdas will readily reveal that the reverence consists of reading and understanding the sacred hymns with devotion. Any mode of reverence that restricts access to the Guru will only be a practice of Brahmanical religiosity. It will do serious harm to the future of global Sikhi.

In conclusion, let us quote our Guru directly on the issue under discussion.

ਭਾਈ ਰੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬੁਝੈ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਬਿਨ ਬੁਝੈ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਵਣੇ
ਜਨਮ ਪਦਾਰਥ ਖੋਇ ॥ ॥SGGS, p.33.

O, Siblings of Destiny, there are only a few wisdom-oriented ones who would cognize and comprehend the Guru Granth verse; any ritual

or deed done devoid of understanding the sacred hymns will waste any precious opportunity of one's life.

ਸੇ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਜੋ ਸਬਦ ਨ ਪਛਾਨਹਿ ॥ SGGS, p. 1054

They are turned to their own intellect away from Guru, who does not comprehend the message of Guru SABD.

The real Satkar of SGGS lies in reading, reciting, and singing the sacred hymns yourself, *vicharna*, understanding them, contemplating on them, believing in their guidance, and then sincerely living your life as per Guru's instructions. In our humble opinion, the awful disrespect for SGGS is to ignore reading it or hire others to recite on your behalf when you are not even present.

More recently, some Sikh congregations in the USA established the Sikh Education Foundation to facilitate the availability of the SGGS *saroop*

(volume) to the needy in North America. The volunteers of this organization make available the SGGS volumes free of charge to every qualified desiring Sikh or the Gurdwara institution, etc. Our religious leaders were expected to be thankful to this organization. Instead, the religious leadership is looking for every means to punish them and thus stop them from making the SABD Guru available in Europe and North America.

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*Wishing all the best
for
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and
its mission*

JASSA SINGH RAMGARHIA - A GREAT WARRIOR

Colonel Dr. Dalvinder Singh Grewal



Background of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia (1723-1803)

Jassa Singh's grandfather was Sardar Hardas Singh who was in the service of Sri Guru Gobind Singh and took amrit from Dashmesh ji. He got martyred in 1716 AD while fighting under Banda Singh's command. His father was Giani Bhagwan Singh who was martyred in 1739 AD while fighting with Afghans. Giani Bhagwan Singh had five sons: Jai Singh, Jassa Singh, Khushal Singh, Mali Singh, Tara Singh.

Jassa Singh was born on 15 May 1723 AD in Ichhogil. Due to the bravery of Giani Bhagwan Singh, the Lahore Durbar gave five villages of Valla, Verka, Sultanwind, Tung and Chabha to the five sons of Giani Bhagwan Singh in Jagir. Out of these Jassa Singh got Valla.

Jassa Singh was appointed Risaldar by Zakaria Khan Governor of Lahore where he remained in service till 1746. After the death of Zakaria Khan, he joined the Sikhs in the Misl

(a recorded group of Sikhs in the register of Akal Takhat) of Khushal Singh/Nand Singh and then became the leader of this Misl.

When the allegation of killing of his daughter was made, the panth threw him out of the Sikh fold. He went to Adina Beg for service. Adina Beg knew his background and capabilities and gave him a lucrative post of Tehsildar. When the fort of Ram Rauni of Sikhs was surrounded by Adina Beg's forces Jassa Singh was given the command to fight the Sikhs in Ram Rauni fort. When about 300 of the 500 Sikhs were killed, the Sikhs from within made a strong appeal to Jassa Singh Ramgarhia to stand with his Sikh brethren and save the situation. Jassa Singh made a condition that he be taken back in the fold of Panth and he will surely help them. The Sikhs agreed to this demand and Jassa Singh managed their escape through backdoor. This way, the Sikhs were saved from annihilation and Jassa Singh joined back into the Sikh fold. He left Adina Beg and took control of Ramrauni Fort and repaired it. It was renamed as Ramgarh Fort. The Ramgarhia name became popular for Jassa Singh and his Misl due to his command of Ramgarh Fort.

Misls and their areas of control

There were 12 misls. The largest Misl was Bhangi Misl which had an income of one crore rupees and had 12,000 horsemen. At the second place was Ramgarhia Misl with an income of 4-8 lakhs. It had 360 forts and many kings and nawabs were under his command and control. Among others, Kanhia Misl had 8000 warriors; Ahluwalia

Misl ruled Kapurthala state, Phulkian Misls ruled Phulkian princely states which were later protected by the British after their agreement with Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Shukarchakia Misl ruled the Punjab from Sulej to Peshawar under

Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Many misls also came under him, including 12,000 warriors of the Kroria Misl, 7,500 warriors of the Dalewalia Misl, 12,000 warriors of the Nishanawalia Misl, Shaheedan Misl and Nakai Misl having 2000 horsemen each and then the Faizalpurian Misl which too had an equal number of soldiers.

The first major task of the Misls was to seize the booty from the raiding Abdel and to free 17000 Hindu girls from him and to send them back to their homes. In 1756 Abdali along with his son Timur at the invitation of Mir Mannu's wife Mughalani Begum plundered Lahore, Sirhind, Delhi, Mathura, Vrindavan and Agra where he took the daughters of the late Muhammad Shah and Alamgir II from the towns of Delhi, Mathura Vrindavan and Agra and also 17,000 girls and women were enslaved and taken to be sold as slaves. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia along with other Sikh Misls defeated first Adina Beg's 20,000 cavalry forces at Hoshiarpur. The Sikhs then pursued the retreating Durrani forces, defeated them and managed to rescue 17,000 captured girls and women captured and sent each of them to their homes in Mathura, Vrindavan, Agra and Delhi. This release took place 15 km away from Wazirabad in Gujarat district in Pakistan now. Many Sikhs gave their lives in the ensuing battle saving the girl and the booty. Later



Freeing 17000 Hindu girls from the possession of Abdali and bringing

Shahidi Gurdwara Fatehsar was constructed to commemorate the martyrdom of these Sikhs and a function was held every year to commemorate the martyrdom of the Sikhs and the release of women. However, after the partition of 1947, this event is no longer being held.

Them from house to house



ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਫਤੇਸਰ ਜੀ, ਗੁਜਰਾਤ-6 ਅਪ੍ਰੈਲ 1932
(ਇਸ ਜਗ੍ਹਾ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਨੇ ਸਤਾਰਾਂ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਲੜਕੀ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਦੀ ਤੁਰਕਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਛੁਡਾਈ ਸੀ)

Gurdwara Fatehsar commemorates martyrdom of Sikhs who laid their lives saving the Hindu girls from Abdali

Ghalughara and Defeating Abdali in Kasur

Abdali was very angry with the Sikhs for rescuing the girls and looting his plundered wealth. He wanted to finish the Sikhs. In 1763, Abdali martyred 20,000-30,000 Sikhs in Kup Rahida Ghalughara (holocaust) and demolished Sri Darbar Sahib Amritsar. Soon after, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Hari Singh Bhangi and other chieftains besieged and defeated Abdali in Kasur; after a month long siege. Following this, the Sikhs besieged and looted Sirhind and killed Nawab Zain Khan. Ramgarhia Misl actively participated in all these campaigns.

To teach the Sikhs a lesson, the Mughal emperor sent Qutab Khan with an army of 20,000. The Sikhs defeated and killed Qutab Khan and looted the Mughal camp, out of which 150 horses and

an elephant were also captured by the Ramgarh Misl.

Increasing the area of Ramgarhia Misl

After defeating Abdali and royal forces, the influence of the misls increased. Thereafter, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia also started winning and extended his area to include the territories of the parganas of Dinanagar, Batala, Kalnaur, Mastiwal, Dasuha, Meghowal, Sri Hargobindpur (capital), Qadian, Ghuman, Shahpur Kandhi, Talwara, Lakhpur, Sanguwal, Sharif Chak, Mattewal (Jalandhar district), Urmur Tanda, Sarinh, Miani, Begowal, Garhdiwala, Zahura and Phagwara. The revenue from these territories amounted of 5 to 10 lakhs.



Apart from this Jassa Singh Ramgarhia used to collect revenue from Kangra, Noorpur, Mandi, Chamba, Datarpur, Jaswal, Anarpur, Dipalpur, Haripur states which gave revenue of about 3 lakhs.

Jassa Singh deployed his brother Mali Singh with 4000 horsemen at Harnala on the bank of Ravi River and made him in charge of area of Batala. The other three brothers too, were given separate *jagirs* in different areas.



The rivalry between the Ahluwalia and Ramgarhia Misls

Since the boundaries of Ahluwalia and Ramgarhia Misls were connected, sometimes there was conflict between them. Due to this there were tension between the two Misls.



Argument between Ahluwalia and Ramgarhia and battle for the throne of Delhi

When 60,000-70,000 Sikhs of all missals stormed Delhi, the emperor vacated the throne on which Jassa Singh Ahluwalia sat, which Ramgarhia did not relish. He tied this 6 feet 3 inches long, 4 feet 6 inches wide and 9 inches thick stone throne to the back of an elephant and took to Sri Amritsar and placed it in front Ramgarhia Bunga where Sri Guru Granth Sahib was installed on it.

Capture of Ahluwalia by Ramgarhia brothers

When Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was passing through Gurdaspur, Ramgarhia brothers Khushal Singh, Mali Singh and Tara Singh captured him. Although Jassa Singh Ramgarhia left Jassa Singh Ahluwalia with honour and gifts, Ahluwalia did not forget the insult and took an oath that he would not remove the turban from his head until he captured the entire Ramgarhia area. He surrounded Jassa Singh's territory along with other missals. He was joined by Bhangi Ganda Singh and Jhanda Singh, Kanhia Jai Singh and Haqiqat Singh, Charhat Singh Shukarchakia, Nahar Singh Chamariwala and other chieftains and besieged Ramgarhia area from all sides. After four months of siege, Tara Singh was killed and Khushal Singh was wounded. Only four thousand of the 10,000 army remained, so Jassa Singh Ramgarhia left his area and crossed the Sutlej and went to Mathura, Agra area with his Sikhs.

Five years in Delhi and Rajputana areas

In Delhi he looted and burnt the Mughal Mohalla and took 4 cannons from the Red Fort. After this, he defeated the Nawabs of Panipat, Karnal and Meerut and started collecting 10,000 rupees

every year from them. He also received favours and large gifts from the kings of Bharatpur, Dholpur and Jaipur. Out of these the Gupti (sword in a stick) is preserved by the family, on which the name of Maharaja Jassa Singh Ahluwalia is engraved in golden letters.



Areas around Delhi that Jassa Singh Ramgarhia controlled include Hisar, Hansi, Sambhal, Chandausi, Kashganj, Khurja, Sikandra, Meerut, Delhi, Panipat and Karnal. Tributes were also paid to him by Bharatpur, Dholpur and Jaipur states.

Freeing of two daughters of a Brahmin

One day a Brahmin complained to him that the Nawab of Hisar had taken away his two daughters. Jassa Singh was always against terror and oppression and helped the victims. He attacked and strangled the Nawab to death and released the two girls and handed over both the daughters to the Brahmin. Some Brahmins objected to accepting the girls expected to have been defiled by a Muslim however Jassa Singh gathered all the Brahmins and fed them all from the hands of those girls. Thus the girls were accepted in the community.



Sadat Ali Khan, the son of the Nawab of Hisar, paid Rs. 50,000 for maintaining of Nawabship. Rs. 50,000 rupees were also got as tribute from the Hisar residents.

Flag of Khalsa furlled around Delhi

Jassa Singh continued to brighten the glory of the Khalsa waving the flag of the Khalsa for five years in the areas of present-day Haryana, western UP, Delhi and Rajputana.

Prayers in trouble and God's grace

There were also difficulties. In Sirsa, when he did not have money to pay the salaries of his army, he sincerely prayed to God Almighty. On that day, water carrier's bucket fell into the well, for which the man had to be lowered into the well to get it out. The man lowered into the well saw four boxes of gold muhrs boxes in the well and informed Jassa Singh. He got these gold muhrs who distributed all these to the army as salary.



Return to Punjab

In 1783 A.D., Shukrachakia and Kanhia misl were at loggerheads. Since Kanhia Misl was strong, Maha Singh looked for a strong partner. He did not find a brave and capable general like Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, hence he invited him to Punjab for help. The visionary Jassa Singh understood the motive replied to Maha Singh, "If Jai Singh Kanhia bows down, he will offer his daughter for marriage with Ranjit Singh. He will give back the Kangra Fort to Raja Sansar Chand. Thus you will all become good friends again. By joining again, you all will become my opponents again. Therefore, it is futile for me to get involved in your fight". On this reply, Maha Singh, Raja Sansar Chand and other hill kings together, sent a message again, "If you will help us against Jai Singh Kanhia, we will never break our friendship with you".

Retaking Batala

Jassa Singh found the reply of Maha Singh and his companions to be constructive and left for Punjab with his army. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Maha Singh and Pahari Rajas suddenly surrounded Kanhia's garrison and sent a message to Jai Singh to surrender and to vacate the area of Ramgarhia Misl. When Jai Singh said no, the forces of Maha Singh, Jassa Singh and their companions wreaked havoc in the area of Kanhia Misl.



Jai Singh sent 8000 troops under his son Gurbakhsh Singh to stop Jassa Singh, Maha Singh and his companions but Gurbakhsh Singh was killed by Jassa Singh's arrow. Jai Singh bowed to Jassa Singh. Jassa Singh shared grief at the death of Gurbakhsh Singh. He then left to attack Riarki.

Jai Singh Opposes again

Soon the cat was out of bag. As Jassa Singh Ramgarhia had presumed earlier and had written to Maha Singh, Jai Singh betrothed his grand daughter to Ranjit Singh. He along with Maha Singh, Sansar Chand and other hill kings, besieged Batala. However, after 20 days the siege had to be lifted.

When Jai Singh died, his Rani Sada Kaur took over the command of the Kanhia Misl. She along with her son-in-law Ranjit Singh, Fateh Singh of the Ahluwalia Misl and others besieged Jassa Singh Ramgarhia at Miani on the banks of the Beas. As there was a natural flood in Beas in which Kanhia Dera was washed away, Sada Kaur and Maharaja Ranjit Singh vacated the siege and returned to Gujranwala. This however, left a grump in Jassa Singh Ramgarhia against Ranjit Singh as well.

Opposition to Ranjit Singh

Seeing the rise of Ranjit Singh in the year 1800, the Sardars together besieged Ranjit Singh in Lahore. Bhangi, Ramgarhia and other misl sardars met to control Ranjit Singh's depredations. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia having become old, the mantle fell to his son Jodh Singh Ramgarhia who too joined other Sardars in this campaign. However, after the death of one of the misl leader Sardar Gulab Singh, the siege was lifted. Soon after, in 1803, Jassa Singh also breathed his last due to high fever. Thus ended the life of a great warrior. The command of the Misl fell into the hands of his son Jodh Singh.

Some special events

After murdering the King of Delhi, Alam Khan, Bhambu Khan the brother of Ghulam Khan sought refuge from Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. He was not only given refuge and security but also a Jagir in Majha.

When Laik Singh escaped from the prison of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and came to the shelter of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, he fought with Maharaja Ranjit Singh for four months for his protection.

Brief Comparative of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia

Two great leaders of Misl period were Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. Ahluwalia being a close confidant of Kapur Singh, and received his seat by Kaur Singh, had a special status among Sikhs due to his legacy, while Ramgarhia had earned his reputation due to his strength and bravery. When all the misls had to take decisions together, guidance of both of these were accepted. The bravery of both of them is unparalleled. Ahluwalia remained limited to Punjab, while Ramgarhia had spread outside Punjab as well to the states of Himachal, Haryana, UP, Rajasthan and Delhi spreading the Khalsa supremacy in North India. He was generous as well. Once the Emperor of Dehi sent him valuables with the Khilat. He kept only the weapon but distributed the rest of the costly gifts among his Sikhs.

The Merits of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia

Jassa Singh was a brave, generous at heart, far-sighted, wise, intelligent, master in swordsmanship, resolute leader, sympathetic to the poor, helping the poor victims of oppression and punishing the oppressors. During the Misl

period, the Sikhs remained dominant in the hill states North East Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Western UP and Eastern Rajputana because of him. It is apparent that if Ranjit Singh became Maharaja and Phulkia states ruled for a long time, invisible hand of of Jassa Singh Ramgarhia was behind these.

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★★★

RAM RAI SON OF GURU HAR RAI

Dr. Harman Kaur Sandhu

Aurangzeb came to power in a very vicious way. He put his father Shah Jehan under house arrest, and killed his all brothers.

It was Aurangzeb's psyche that through power, mental operation and political strategy even Allah could be conquered.

At this point, he thought of converting Sikh Guru Harrai and his followers to Islam and tactfully sent a pacifying letter inviting him to Delhi

When Aurangzeb's conciliatory Farman reached the Guru, he called a meeting of senior Sikhs for consultation. Ram Rai, Guru's eldest son was also called for consultations.

At the end of the consultative meeting, it was unanimously agreed to send Ram Rai, aged only 15 yrs, to represent the Guru in the Delhi court. A group of Sikhs headed by Masand Gurbux Singh was asked to go with him.

Basic Facts

Place of birth: Kiratpur

Date and year of birth: 11 March 1646.
(10 yrs. And 3 months older than Guru Har Krishan)

Parents: Guru Harrai and Mata Krishan Kaur
(also called Mata Sulakhni)

Date of death: 4th September 1687.

Place of death: Dehra Dun

Siblings: Younger brother - Har Krishan
(Guru)

Wife: Punjab Kaur

Ram Rai was strictly instructed by his father, Guru Harrai:

- a. Not to show any miracles to please the emperor.
- b. Not to compromise with any hymn from the Adi Granth, if quoted by the Muslim clergy, effecting their faith, directly or indirectly.
- c. Not to down grade the Sikh values to impress Aurangzeb.

It is an irony of fate that Ram Rai failed to carry out the instructions given by his father. On the contrary, he showed miracles to countermand Muslim clergy; changed one word of Guru Nanak's bani reading 'Musalman to Baiman' to please the emperor. The hymn reads:

ਮਃ ੧ ॥

ਮਿਟੀ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਕੀ ਪੇੜੈ ਪਈ ਘੁਮ੍ਰਿਆਰ ॥

The clay of the Muslim's grave becomes clay for the potter's wheel.

He changed it to read:

ਮਿਟੀ ਬੇਇਮਾਨ ਕੀ ਪੇੜੈ ਪਈ ਘੁਮ੍ਰਿਆਰ ॥

The clay of the dishonest's grave becomes clay for the potter's wheel.

He also showed many tricks and indulged in many debates which lowered the Sikh values in relation to Islam.

When this heart-breaking news reached Guru Harrai, he showed deep remorse and to discipline Ram Rai for his blasphemous acts, he disowned him and asked him not to show his face to the Guru.

Disheartened for this severe punishment, Ram Rai went straight to Aurangzeb and asked for help. Aurangzeb thought it to be a golden opportunity to break the father-son relationship permanently and thus adversely affecting the Sikh psyche. He consoled Ram Rai and gave him both financial and political help. He transferred large plots of land in Dehra Dun in Ram Rai's name and also gave large funds to build his residential quarters and a place of worship.

Ram Rai left Delhi and established a missionary centre in Dehra Dun. Though he preached the gospel of Sikh Gurus, had a copy of Adi Granth in his centre where kirtan was recited, but majority of Sikhs rejected him. His followers then called themselves as Ram Raias and formed a dissident sect of the Udasi Sikhs.

With the passage of time Ram Rai became very rich and had lot of wealth in his missionary funds, this made many of his masands his enemies. They threatened to kill him if they were not given a fair part of that wealth.

For seeking protection, he sought Mughal help which he did not get. Guru Gobind Singh, at that time was residing in Paonta Sahib (1685-1688), which is about 30 miles from Dehra Dun. Ram Rai wrote an emotional letter to the Guru and sought a meeting with him. The meeting took place on the banks of Yamuna River between Paonta Sahib and Dehradun. Guru Gobind Singh promised to give Ram Rai help as and

when needed. Ram Rai went back and briefed his wife Punjab Kaur about Guru Ji's help. Masands' when heard about the meeting, changed their tactics and waited for the right time.

In September 1687, a group of Masands led by Gurbakhsh Singh made a secret plan to overthrow Ram Rai from his seat of authority and take all his properties and missionary work in their own hands. They also had a plan to kill him.

Earlier, throughout Ram Rai's stay in Dehra Dun, Gurbux Singh and his group of Masands had kept Ram Rai away from his association with Kiratpur and Sikh Gurus: Guru Harkrishen and Guru Tegh Bahadur.

One day, they found the right opportunity, to execute their nasty plan, when on the day, Ram Rai was in Samadhi (trance). They poured kerosene oil on his body and burnt him alive, and then forcefully cremated him against the will of his wife, Punjab Kaur. Later they also took possession of his property and funds. Ram Rai died on 4 September 1687.



Distance between Dehra Dun and Paonta Sahib is about 30 miles

Punjab Kaur sent a SOS message to Guru Gobind Singh, conveying the news of the horrific killing of her husband and forcefully taking over centre's funds by Gurbux Singh and his gang. She requested for Guru's advice and assistance. Guru Gobind Singh immediately sent her a note of advice through an emissary and left for Dehradun.

Following Guru Gobind Singh's advice, Punjab Kaur invited all masands for a feast pretending that She was about to officially announce the successor of Ram Rai. She then sent the information of feast's timing and venue to Guru Gobind Singh.

Guru Gobind Singh reached the venue when the feast was at its high point. The miscreant masands were rounded up by Guru Gobind Singh's army personnel and brought before him. Punjab Kaur then pointed out those masands who were responsible for Ram Rai's death and for other wrongs done during previous years. The Guru then punished them according to the degree of their crimes. The killers were thrown in the cauldrons of hot oil. Gurbaksh Singh,

however escaped and took refuge in Lahore with the Mughal help.

Punjab Kaur, later developed good relationship with Mata Sundri (1685-1747) and Mata Sahib Kaur (1699-1745). She died in 1740.

Punjab Kaur's relationship with Guru Gobind Singh and Mata Sundri and Mata Sahib Kaur.

Ram Rai is nephew of Guru Gobind Singh (grandson of Guru Tegh Bahadur's elder brother Baba Gurditta).

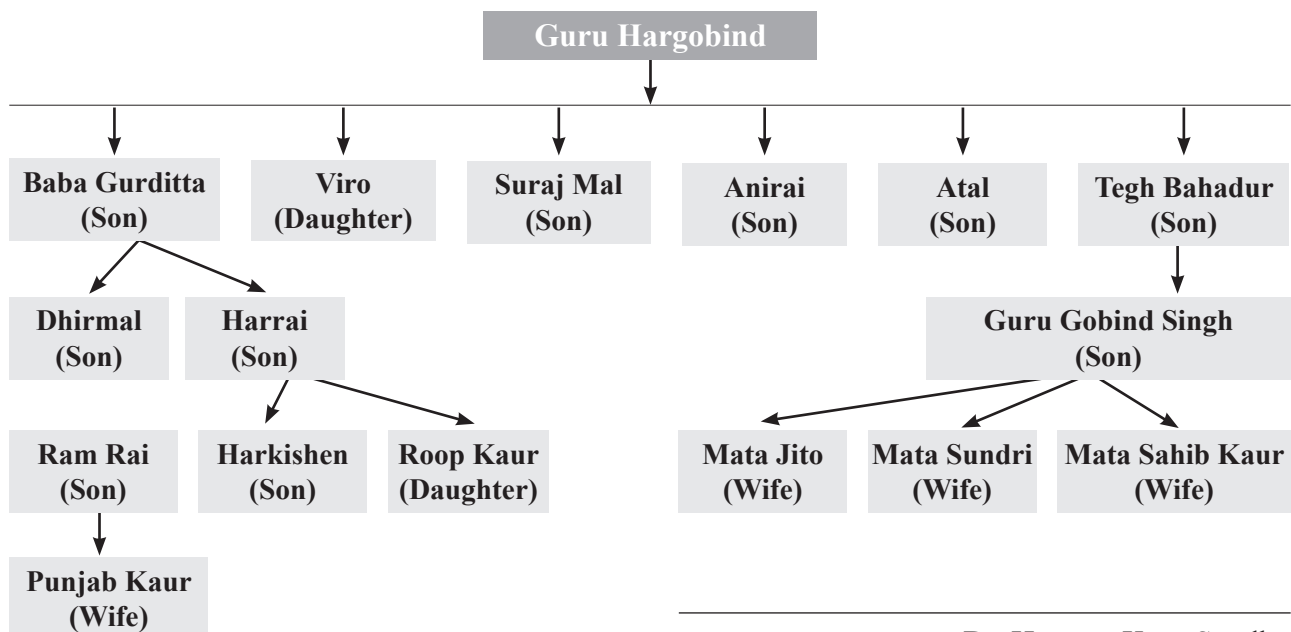
Guru Gobind Singh is son of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Ram Rai's father Guru Harrai and Guru Gobind Singh are first cousins (Cousin Brothers).

Thus Guru Gobind Singh was uncle (Chacha of Ram Rai).

Thus Punjab Kaur was daughter-in-law of Guru Gobind Singh.

Thus relationship of Punjab Kaur and Mata Sundri was of: daughter-in-law and mother-in-law.



Dr. Harman Kaur Sandhu

RANI SAHIB KAUR

A PRINCESS OF THE KINGDOM OF PATIALA

Dr. Paramjit Kaur Virdee

Rani Sahib Kaur was a princess of the Kingdom of Patiala. When she was two years old, her brother was born. He was named Sahib Singh, and together, they were the prince and the princess of their father's kingdom. The famous Sidhu Barad family of Phool Bansi.

In 1782 Raja Amar Singh died. After his death, his son Sahib Singh ascended the throne. He was born in 1773. His mother was Rani Raj Kaur. Rani Sahib Kaur was his elder sister born in 1771. She was very beautiful and well-versed in Punjabi. Giani Atma Singh in his book titled 'Rani Sahib Kaur' writes Sahib Kaur started learning horse riding at Patiala and after marriage and she became an expert. Unlike the other women in the 18th Century, she used to help her husband and was not confined only to the four walls of the house. She like her father Raja Amar Singh was a great warrior.

Raja Amar Singh got Sahib Kaur and Sahib Singh baptised at Lehal by Sardar Baghel Singh. This was where Lehal, Gurdwara Dukh Nivaran Sahib¹ has been built. In 1777, Rani Sahib Kaur was married to Jaimal Singh son of Sardar Haqiqat Singh, of Fatehgarh of Kanhaiya Misl. At that time Jaimal Singh was only eleven-year-old. Her marriage was attended by about twenty thousand guests. According to Twarikh-i-Patiala by Muhammad Hasan. Approximately seven lakhs in rupees were spent on this wedding. She had a happy married life.

After the death of Diwan Nanu Mal, the Mayor of Samana, Allahi Baksh was misguiding Raja

Sahib Singh. "The King had lost his influence and prestige and there was no one who could restore law and order. Party politics was at its height. The Ranis were no more an exception to this. The Sikhs and Muslims were not on good terms. Mir Allahi Baksh was also corrupt and had vested interests, but the administration deteriorated. The Sikhs formed a party of their own. The situation was getting worse day by day."² Dyal Singh Arora and Sukha Singh were fed up with this state of affairs and they beheaded Allahi Baksh in the Durbar. Sardar Baldev Singh was appointed as Wazir and Raja Dayal as Diwan. But Raja Sahib Singh was always suspicious about the fact that a conspiracy may be hatched against him in order to dethrone him.³

The condition of Patiala was very bad and the treasury was empty. Confusion and anarchy prevailed. Marathas were also having an eye on Patiala. So, it was faced with both internal and external problems. Raja Sahib Singh himself was incompetent as a ruler. What was needed was a competent person who could save the state and solve the problems and defeat the enemies. He had no other alternative and invited his sister Rani Sahib Kaur from Fatehgarh.

Rani Sahib Kaur was shocked to know about the condition of Patiala and narrated the same to her husband and decided to leave for Patiala. Rani Sahib Kaur reached Patiala with a small army and trustworthy Sardar Tara Singh.⁴ Raja Sahib Singh gave her the department of Wizarat. She agreed to accept the new assignment on the

condition that Raja Sahib will not interfere in her work. She readily accepted the responsibility. Rani Sahib Kaur took up the department of Wizarat in 1793.

After assuming the charge of Patiala, Rani Sahib Kaur held a common Durbar, where she acquainted people with the deplorable condition of Patiala State and asked people to cooperate with her. "Tera ghar mear asse," for this she asked people to sacrifice their life. She had decided to reorganise the army so that internal rebellions and external dangers could be checked. She made an appeal to the people to unite for the cause of their land, Rani Sahib Kaur declared, "With your help and the blessings of Waheguru, I will try my level best to achieve my goal."

Rani Sahib Kaur kept a strict vigil over the officers and went to the extent of replacing incompetent officers with competent ones. Diwan Singh was not discharging his duties and was becoming more interested in party politics. Therefore, he was removed from the post and Gurdyal Singh was appointed as Diwan with a result the administration began to run very smoothly. Rani Sahib Kaur decided to stay at Patiala and after some time she was informed that her husband Jaimal Singh was imprisoned by his cousin brother Fateh Singh. Rani Sahib Kaur decided to leave for Fatehgarh along with a well-equipped army. She defeated Fateh Singh and was successful in releasing her husband from imprisonment. After making the necessary arrangements she again returned to Patiala.

The petty rajas of the area had accepted their sovereignty. Jind and Kaithal, were big states. Their wazirs sent messages to Patiala about the Marathas. Rani Sahib Kaur called a meeting

with the Rajas of Jind, Nabha and Kaithal. She held discussions with the Rajas, Sardars, Jaidar and Commander in Chief of the Army. Rani Sahib Kaur decided to fight with the Marathas instead of cowardly accepting their sovereignty. The Marathas then attacked Patiala. Patiala itself had an army of about eight thousand. Leaving Raja Sahib Singh at Patiala Rani Sahib Kaur left with the army to give a crushing defeat to them. She was accompanied by Sardar Bahera Singh Thanedar, Jodh Singh, Kalsia, Deep Singh, Bir Singh Bhadodia and Tara Singh Gaba. At Mardanpur, a few miles away from Ambala both the armies were facing each other. In comparison to Rani Sahib Kaur, the Marathas had a large army. They attacked the army of Patiala. A fierce battle was fought. The army of Patiala fought with all vigour and vitality. On seeing this Anta Rao also boosted the morale of his soldiers. Marathas again attacked for the second time. It seemed the army of Patiala could not bear this attack and was becoming helpless, against the mighty Army.

Parkash writes

Raje Sarkar us jang vitch khai mar hoke lachar tiyar bhagane ko thai hai

Like a brave commander, Rani got down from the elephant dressed in a male attire wielding a sword, sat on a horse and attacked the Marathas. She challenged them:

Bibiji mardana bhes pah ghore pe sawar hoi khanch talwar oh talkare hai

She Addressed Her Soldiers Like A Brave Lioness.

Jeho kaha borj laj dardia dirakho aaj, Singh nam sadwahe hot kiyo siyare hai,

*Meto eha laragi na pacheh payo tharngi
mar armaragi na kara pran payare hai,*

*Baihen tumare raje bhare ko meh ehe ieddi,
Chod mohe dadi kad jeho kaha vare hai⁵*

*It seemed as if Rani Sahib Kaur had infused
life in the soldiers and boosted their morale.*

A Maratha soldier known as Ranjit Rao had challenged Rani Sahib Kaur and the battle started again. Rani Sahib Kaur had attacked him and he ultimately died. As night was approaching and the two armies went to their respective camps. Rani Sahib Kaur had a meeting with the council known as the 'Jang Council' to discuss the strategy of war. The council decided that Rani Sahib Kaur should leave the war here and return to Patiala. But she flatly refused and said, "This is impossible. The enemy could easily enter Patiala". Rani Sahib Kaur giving instructions to her soldiers said, "The enemy is tired and sleeping instead of dying while fighting. Let us do it just now. Do not take rest, get ready for attack. We could emerge victorious in the warfighting diplomatically and carefully. Attack the army at night and definitely we will win it." At last, the council agreed with the proposal of Rani Sahib Kaur.

The Marathas were attacked and the Sikh army won the battle. The Maratha army had to bear heavy losses. The Sikh army got a huge amount of gold and silver as the Marathas fled. Raja Kirat Prakash of Nahan, a Rajput Raja had died and was succeeded by Raja Karam Prakash. His courtiers had revolted against him. Thereupon he had appealed to Patiala for help. Rani Sahib Kaur immediately left for Nahan to teach a lesson to rebellious men like Sardar Chen Singh, Mochi Ram Mehta, Pahad Singh and Balaki Das Bakshi. There

prevailed lawlessness in Nahan. Rani Sahib Kaur stayed there for about four months and successfully reorganised the administrative machinery. Raja of Nahan was grateful to Raja Sahib Singh. He presented him with a robe of honour (Khilat) and a female elephant (Hathni) to Rani Sahib Kaur.

In 1796, Rani Sahib Kaur was informed that at Haridwar in the so-called Mela of Kumbh, Gossains had attacked Udasi saints Santokh Ram and Pritam Ram when they were taking out the procession. Many people were killed. Gossain had not even spared the Sikhs and even destroyed canopies put up by the Sikhs. They had thrown away the Nishan Sahib and had shown disrespect to Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The Udasi saints wanted to take out the procession but Bairagis and Gossain had attacked them. Rani Sahib Kaur was at Bhakhod, she rushed with an army to Haridwar. The Gossain refused to compromise on the issue of taking procession and decided to fight. In the fight about four hundred Gossain were killed and the rest fled. Rani Sahib Kaur allowed the Udasi saints to take out the procession and returned to Patiala.⁶

Differences with Raja Sahib Singh and Rani Sahib Kaur with her ability, farsightedness, fearlessness and bravery had not only solved the internal problems but also contributed to the extension of the empire by capturing the neighbouring states. But she was deeply hurt by the fact that some of the officers of Raja Sahib Singh were not happy with her success. Raja Sahib Singh's wife Rani Aus Kaur, who had given birth to the successor of Patiala, Raja Karam Singh created fear in the mind of Raja Sahib Singh about the growing power of his sister Rani Sahib Kaur. Rani Aus Kaur wanted the powers given to

her by Rani Sahib Kaur. She was cleverer and more intelligent than Raja Sahib Singh. As a result, Raja Sahib Singh became Rani Sahib Kaur's enemy. He had totally ignored the services of Rani Sahib Kaur. Besides this, there were two other factors responsible because of this Raja Sahib Singh losing his faith in Rani Sahib Kaur. First and foremost was that when George Tomson attacked Jind, Rani Sahib Kaur went against the wishes of Raja Sahib Singh and decided to help Jind. Secondly, Rani had signed an agreement on behalf of Raja Sahib Singh with Tomson. He had even imprisoned Rani Sahib Kaur at that time. But when Tomson had threatened that he would declare war she was released. So, all these developments added fuel to the already growing difference between Raja Sahib Singh and Rani Sahib Kaur.

Raja Sahib Singh was selfish, ungrateful, weak and incompetent as a ruler. He lacked farsightedness. He had ascended the throne at the age of seven therefore he needed the help of others for the smooth running of administration. In the beginning, the affairs of the state were looked after by his paternal aunt, Rajinder Kaur and then by his sister Sahib Kaur. Raja Sahib Singh called his sister from Fatehgarh when party politics, lawlessness, oppression and anarchy were at their height. She was successful in restoring law and order in the state. But it is quite shocking that her services to Patiala were ignored and her real brother had levelled charges against her which are as follows:

- i. The female elephant (Hathni) presented by Raja Karam Prakash Kahan was converted by Rani Sahib Kaur as her property. It was a sort of military help from him.

- ii. Without taking permission from Raja Sahib Singh, Rani Sahib Kaur had built a fort in her jagir known as Bharea.
- iii. The name of the village Bharea was changed to Ubhewal.
- iv. Rani Sahib Kaur was not happy when a son was born to Raja Sahib Singh.
- v. Raja Sahib Singh was fully convinced that she had started behaving as a sovereign ruler and even wanted to establish her independent rule.

These charges levelled by Raja Sahib Singh against Rani Sahib Kaur were all baseless. From Kahan Durbar a 'Khilat' was presented to Raja Sahib Singh and 'Hathni' to Rani. The fort built by Rani Sahib Kaur at Bharea was meant for the defence of Patiala. In no way it bears testimony to the fact that she wanted to establish her independent rule. Rani Sahib Kaur was deeply hurt. She had to face many problems to restore peace and prosperity in Patiala. Not only this she had herself waged wars on the battlefield for the sake of her brother.

The services and sacrifices made by the brave and saintly sister were ignored. Rani Sahib Kaur felt that it was not wise for her to return to Fatehgarh to her in-laws' house because it would prove the charges levelled against her are true. Secondly, her self-respect did not permit her to leave Patiala, she stayed in Jind and even tried to pacify Raja Sahib Singh but of no use. Her enemies were still active, and they tried to convince Raja Sahib Singh that she wanted to grab powers from him. Raja Sahib Singh ordered her to leave the fort of Bharea and go to Fatehgarh. She did not care for this but suddenly Raja Sahib Singh attacked the fort. She too was forced to take up arms. In this

war between brother and sister, many soldiers of Raja Sahib Singh's army were killed. War continued, and Lala Singh and Jodh Singh the well-wisher of the two houses persuaded Raja Sahib Singh to stop it as it is improper. Even if you emerge victorious it will bring a bad name to you. Similarly, they requested Rani Sahib Kaur to make a compromise and go to Patiala. Both brother and sister left for Patiala along with the army. Rani Sahib Kaur fearlessly followed her brother but when they reached Bhawangarh, she was imprisoned. Rani Sahib Kaur was intelligent and left the fort in the guise of a musahab and reached the fort of Bharea.

Rani Sahib Kaur stayed at Ubhewal⁷ during the last days of her life. She was deeply moved by

the recent developments. Rani Sahib Kaur died in 1799 in Patiala.⁸

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A VIEW OF VASAIKHI

Dr. Sukhbir Singh Kapoor

It was 30th March 1699 the first day of the month of Vaisakh when Guru Gobind Singh made the unusual call inviting volunteers who could give their lives for their faith and were ever ready to fight against injustice. This was, in fact, the conception of Khalsa.

The Khalsa was founded as a Divine Force for protecting the innocent against injustice, inequality and religious persecution. Its establishment marked the beginning of a new era in the Sikh history. The Khalsa was given a unique type of baptism and a strict code of conduct, and was ordered to observe these rules all times to come, until eternity.

As the story goes, the first five volunteers who came forward, were baptised by Guru himself, were dressed in yellow and blue apparels and were decorated with the weapons of the day. Collectively they were called Panj Piyare [Five beloved ones]

The oaths taken by them, as a part of baptism included:

Belief in one God, Purity of life, spirit of sacrifice, welfare of mankind, courage, bravery, belief in Gurbani, belief in freedom, and belief in democratic set up.

It is recorded that on that day about 80,000 devotees were later, baptised and thus the Khalsa Brotherhood was born. They were called by the Guru as soldiers in the army of the Almighty – ‘Akalpurkh di fauj’

The history is evident that the Khalsa, from the very first day of its inception, until today, has stood for its basic principles, i.e., the protection of

human rights and standing firm against injustice and oppression. Bravery and fearlessness are their inherent qualities.

The Amrit (Nectar, holy water for baptism) prepared by Guru Gobind Singh, on that day, called Khande di pahul, had miraculous powers and had made ordinary Punjabi folk into a courageous and daring soldier. The legacy has been going on since then. Even today, Khalsa is the backbone of Indian Army, and has produced top Army Generals, who have protected Indian borders against all enemy attacks, and have proved the saying of Guru Gobind Singh, ‘sava lakh se ek larau, tabie Gobind Singh nam kahaun.’ [meaning: When my one Sikh will face, bravely, a thousand enemies, only then I will call myself Gobind Singh]. The battles of Saragarhi, Chamkaur, Mukatsar, and victory in the wars with neighbouring countries are all evidence of the truthfulness of this edict.

Guru Gobind Singh called Khalsa a ‘Saint Soldier’. Where, as a soldier the Khalsa has proved to be a fearless warrior, as a saint, Khalsa has proved to be a pious, honest and hardworking citizen. It has helped in uplifting the down trodden and has turned the soil of Punjab into Gold. Their hard and honest labour has made Punjab as the granary for 1.4 billion Indians. At least one son of every Sikh farmer is a soldier in the Indian army, a practical example of being a Saint and a Soldier.

Outside India, the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh has kept its name high and tall. In hard work, honesty, loyalty and sincerity it is ranked top in almost every country in the world.

When Guru Gobind Singh, came on the Indian stage. The India was being ruled by Mughals, and Aurangzeb, the most ruthless and merciless of all Mughal Emperors was on the throne. He had vowed to convert all India into an Islamic State.

It needed great sacrifices to stop this injustice of Aurangzeb. The rise of Sikhism was the biggest challenge to Aurangzeb. Guru Gobind Singh's father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, gave his life to stop this unstoppable flood of forced conversion of Hindus. Later, Guru Gobind Singh's mother, Mata Gujri and his all children (four sons) also laid down their lives to keep alight the light of courage, promise and hope of the Khalsa.

Syed Abdullah Shah Qadri famously known as Bulleh Shah, a Muslim poet of Mughal era, wrote in one of his poems (a kafi):

And showcased in his own way the power of Guru Gobind Singh and how he had influenced the society and had turned sparrows into hawks and lambs into lions.

Naa Kaho Kab Ki Naa Kaho Tab Ki
Baat Kaho Main Ab Ki
Agar Na Hote Guru Gobind Singh
To Sunnat Hoti Sab Ki.

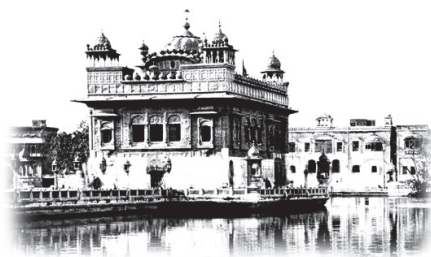
*[Don't ask when, Don't ask where
I am saying this to you now,
If Guru Gobind Singh was not there
then sunnat (circumcision) would have
happened to everyone.]*

Dr. Sukhbir Singh Kapoor
Vice Chancellor, World Sikh University London

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WHY THE SIKH RELIGION REMAINED UNKNOWN FOR A VERY LONG TIME

Bhupinder Rai

After the annulment of the organization of *masands* (agents) for corruption and oppression by Guru Gobind Singh and during the troubled years of the eighteenth century, when Sikhs suffered severe persecution; they were either busy fighting the Mughals and Pathans or on the run. Throughout the course of this period, the Sikhs were gentlemen at large, because they were being hunted and a price lay on their heads. They had no time to manage their affairs. The Udasi sadhus took charge of their places of worship and the preaching of Guru Nanak's word. The job of *granthi* (scripture reader) in those turbulent times was a hazardous one, and many important shrines were entrusted to members of the Udasi order, who did not fully subscribe to the Khalsa creed; they were as much Hindu as they were Sikh and being usually clean-shaven could disclaim their association with Sikhism when their lives were in danger. During this dark period the Udasi and Nirmala monks came to the rescue of Sikhs. They zealously took care of their Gurdwaras and protected their manuscripts, scriptures, annals, treatises and other written work.

Impelled by circumstances, traditionally, the Sikhs had known no occupation but war and agriculture. Majority of them were more or less illiterate; their *granthis* (scripture readers) could read the Guru Granth but beyond that their knowledge was subjective and limited. Some of the Sikhs could verbally recite prayers which they had committed to memory by rote however, they could not explain them and knew only what had been passed on to them

by tradition, legend or word of mouth. Though the Gurus wrote and preached in the language of the people (Old Punjabi); yet, over the years the vernacular was altering and diversifying more and more from the general language of the Granth Sahib. New words were taking the place of old ones. Then, there were the fifteen Hindu and Muslim *bhagats* or saints whose hymns (*Bhagat Bani*) are incorporated in the Granth. These saints or holy men represented a cross section of the caste hierarchy as well as social strata and geographical distribution and their hymns are in their own languages. These hymns comprise about one-sixth of the total contents of the Guru Granth.

The Udasis and Nirmalas saints had their own concepts and were preaching the teaching of Baba Nanak in their own ways which were at times, places, and in some ways contrary to the message of the Guru. The Udasis laid stress on celibacy, asceticism and worship of idols which have no place in the Sikh religion. The Nirmala saints, on the other hand were inclined towards Hindu classical philosophy especially Vedanta. The Nirmalas believe in the ten Sikh Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib; generally, they do not take the Khalsa baptism, don ochre clothes and mostly practice celibacy. They translated all sacred Hindu texts and other classics and wrote a vast number of books in various languages (Sanskrit, *Braj*, Hindi and Punjabi). However, even these learned monks did not write a lexicon for the Guru Granth Sahib or any other literature explaining the meaning of words and language of the contents of the Holy Granth.

Following the sixth Battle of Anandpur in the winter of 1705, most of the literature created by Guru Gobind Singh and his poets was lost in River Sarsa during the exodus from Anandpur. After this, also, there is no doubt that a great destruction of Sikh manuscripts took place during the persecution of the Sikh faith by the Muhammadan authorities. Sikh works or treatises preserved in shrines became special objects of attack. Their existence was known and could not be denied by the Sikh priests, and systematic raids were organized to take possession of them. It was only copies preserved by private individuals, living at a distance from the scenes of persecution, which had any chance of escape from the fury of the Muslim.

Throughout Sikh rule, the Khalsa wore their hair and beards unshorn and paid obeisance to the Guru Granth. For the rest they observed all social evils (child marriage, *sati*, female infanticide etc.) and customs and practices, including those strictly forbidden by their Gurus like rituals, caste system, blind faith, superstition, sacrifices etc. If the Sikhs had but possessed such a very elementary knowledge of their religion as to know that their actions were reprobated not only by all their holy Gurus but also by probity and propriety. The Sikh Renaissance in the form of Singh Sabha and Gurdwara Reform Movement in 1920s was a period of mass awakening for the Sikhs. It was the Singh Sabha that brought in education and made the Sikhs aware of their religion and rights. They were the first to protest against the prevention of Sikhs of untouchable castes from entering gurdwaras and idol worship in bigger gurdwaras.

A German, Dr Ernest Trumpp (13 March 1828 - 05 April 1885), an eminent linguist was tasked by the India office of the British government to work in Punjab to translate the Sikh scriptures and historic literature into English. Trumpp enthusiastically started studying and translating

the text in 1870. After eight years of study and research of the Sikh scriptures, he translated into English portions of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib in his controversial book titled 'The Adi Granth' (first published in 1877). Dr Ernest Trumpp was by no means a trustworthy translator. His approach was prejudiced and his conclusions were not only offensive, they were insulting as well. He lacked a scientific-analytical method in his approach. Trumpp though a linguist was limited in his knowledge of sub-continent languages to a few that he had studied, while the language in which the Granth was composed is generally called Old Punjabi and also uses multiple languages of the South East Asia region. What irked, irritated and angered Trumpp was:

- ❖ The Sikh Holy Granth is an eclectic (deriving ideas or style from a wide range of sources), non-esoteric (not intended for or understood by only a small number of people with a specialized knowledge) and non-denominational (not relating to a particular religious group or sect) text. In other words it has the unique concept of universality and is a cosmic composition.
- ❖ The languages in which the holy writings of most religions are enshrined, though all difficult, are for the most part homogeneous, and after preliminary study with tutors can generally be mastered by the aid of grammars and dictionaries; but not so the mediaeval Indian dialects (mediaeval Prakrit, Hindi, Marathi, Old Punjabi, Multani, Persian, and several local dialects. In several hymns Sanskrit and Arabic vocabularies are freely drawn upon) in which the sacred writings of Sikh Gurus and Saints were composed.
- ❖ A man who is a good Sanskrit scholar will not know Persian and Arabic, and he who knows Persian and Arabic will not know words of Sanskrit derivation. A man who

- knows Hindi will not know Marathi; a man who knows Marathi will not know Punjabi and Multani and so on.
- ❖ There were no grammars, dictionaries or explanatory notes of the Granth Sahib available during the time of Ernest Trumpp (some have since been published).
 - ❖ When the dictionaries were published, each lexicographer (writer of a dictionary) had adopted a system of his own which made it difficult to find the word required, and even when found the interpretation is not always very satisfactory.
 - ❖ Of the few *gyanis* or professional interpreters of the Guru Granth Sahib few or none is capable of giving a correct interpretation and an interpretation in English becomes all the more difficult for them.
 - ❖ Moreover, there are words in the Sikh sacred writings which are peculiar to them, and cannot be traced to any known language. As of these one must accept the traditional interpretations.
 - ❖ Then, there were wide lingual, cultural, social and political gaps between the native and the white man which made it difficult to understand each other.
 - ❖ For these reasons the Granth Sahib thus becomes probably the most difficult work, sacred or profane (not holy or religious), that exists, and hence the general ignorance of its contents.
 - ❖ Because of these difficulties it is necessary for any foreign translator of the Sikh Holy Scriptures to reside for long years in India, and work with the assistance of the *gyanis* or professional interpreters of the Sikh canonical writings.

Besides these hurdles the Sikhs had their own hang ups and inhibitions as well. They were as follows:

- ❖ Time was when it was not allowed to print the sacred book of the Sikhs.
- ❖ As ancient prejudice gave way, it was printed in parts which it was forbidden to unite in one volume lest it, as the embodiment, not only of the wisdom of the Gurus, but of the Gurus themselves, might be desecrated.
- ❖ This preconceived notion has also vanished, and now the book is openly exposed for sale. But amongst the Sikhs of the old school, there was a prejudice against translating the sacred volume.
- ❖ These Sikhs who held the above mentioned bias forgot the injunction of Guru Arjan to translate it into Indian and foreign languages so that it might spread over the whole world as oil spreads over water. With the passage of time this prejudice has also past.
- ❖ The extant perception and understanding is that Guru Granth Sahib is the means and not the object of worship. The main appeal of the Granth as a scripture is its non-esoteric character and its utter simplicity. The Sikhs are to seek guidance from the Guru Granth. It was a lengthy journey and took a very long time for all this to happen.

The wrong done by Ernest Trumpp was set right by a wonderful man named **Max Arthur Macauliffe**. After leaving a lucrative job, toiling for over twenty (20) years and spending a large sum of money from his pocket (besides the donations by Sikh chiefs and institutions. He refused the money promised by the government), Max Arthur Macauliffe wrote the book '*The Sikh Religion*' in six volumes.

When Max Arthur Macauliffe's scholarly work was ready to go to the press, the most insurmountable hurdle against the publication

of this translated version of the sacred Sikh text came from the orthodox and backward mindset of the Sikh masses. They believed that printing the book in a single volume would amount to an act of sacrilege. Macauliffe requested Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha to intercede on his behalf; the eminent Sikh scholar was well-versed with the traditional Sikh mentality in such sensitive matters and realized the futility of making such an effort. He advised Macauliffe to get his book published in six volumes instead of one with a biography of each contributing Guru and saint followed by their sacred verses. Finding no alternative, he (Macauliffe) agreed to the suggestion, revised his manuscript and got it published from England under the title 'The Sikh Religion'. All this cost him more years of mental and physical toil involving research and written work.

This book is popular to this day and is being printed and exported to western countries for large Sikh populations there. Macauliffe introduced *Sikhi* to the English speaking west. He had been influenced by Sikhism before undertaking this venture and had become a Sikh. He was perhaps the first white man to convert to Sikhism and was derided by his British employers for having "turned a Sikh." His personal assistant remarked in his memoirs that on his death bed, Macauliffe could be heard reciting the Sikh morning prayer, *Japji Sahib*, ten minutes before he died.

The Sikh religion remained unrevealed to the Sikhs themselves and the world at large for a long time and there was little intimate knowledge of the Sikh faith even to professional scholars. This ignorance was the result of difficulty of the Indian dialects in which the Sikh sacred writings are contained and the orthodox and retrograde mindset of the Sikhs. Another reason was that Sikhism is against conversion and does not favour proselytizing or vigorous conversion

campaigns which are an infringement on human rights, hence it made little difference to them, whether their religion was known to the outside world or not. What the Sikhs perhaps did not understand was that by making their faith known, it would kindle interest in Sikhism and enhance their image. The Sikhs have no priests in their gurdwaras (temples) and the person that you see there is the *Granthi* or scripture reader. The *Granthi* could read the Guru Granth, alright, but had limited know-how when it came to translating the contents. The *Gianis* or scholars in Sikh theology were little better.

It was only with the coming of the Singh Sabha Movement in the 1920s of the last century that education amongst Sikhs got a big boost. This movement gave a large thrust to bring about erudition amongst Sikh masses; a lot of stress was laid on literacy and many scholarly, literary and academic works were produced. Each and every word and sentence of the Guru Granth was discussed, evaluated, and analyzed thread-bear. It led to a number of grammars, dictionaries and explanatory notes and interpretations of the Granth Sahib being written. A considerable quantity still continues to be composed (what is required is to standardize these and bring them on a common platform).

In the 1960s and 70s of the last century Sikh students in America and Europe were asked about their religion, but they couldn't reveal much and referred them to the SGPC. There is a sea change today, a plethora of books and other literature on Sikh faith, history and culture is being produced in many countries. In present times, there is no dearth of literary work on Sikhism and it is readily available to the scholar for research, world-wide. People at large have a general idea of what *Sikhi* is all about.

Bhupinder Rai

MYTHOLOGICAL REFERENCES IN RAGA 5 – RAGA GUJRI

Dr. Jaya Patil

The name "Gujari" probably refers to the state of Gujarat. This raga was in existence at the time of Raja Man Singh of Gwahor (1486-1517) who lived at a time of high musical achievement and referred to this raga in his writings about music. Gujari is rarely used as a concert raga today and little is known about its form. In modern times it has been supplanted by Gujari-Todi. In the Ragmaala, Gujari is listed as a ragini of Raga Dipak Today Gujari-Todi belongs to the Todi thala. Gujari Todi may be performed during any season of the year and is assigned to the early morning hours. It produces a mood of thoughtfulness that reaches deep into the heart. Texts set to this raga strip away all subterfuge and make man see himself as he is and search within for the truth. While not one of the most frequently used ragas, Gujari was the setting for compositions by Guru Nanak, Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, and Guru Arjan.

Aroh: Sa Re Ga M'a Dha Ni Sa

Avroh: Sa Ni Dha M'a Ga Re, Ga Re Sa

Pakar: Sa Dha, Ma, Dha Ni Sa, Ni Dha Ga, Re, Ga Re Sa

Savar: Re Ga Dha

Vadi: Dha

Samvadi: Re

Ansa (Raga Gujri, Var Mehla 3, pauri 19, page 516)

ਪਚੁੜੀ ॥ ਅੰਸਾ ਅਚੁਤਾਰੁ ਰੁਪਾਇਏਨੁ ਭਾਉ ਦੂਜਾ ਕੀਆ ॥

ਪਉੜੀ ॥ ਅੰਸਾ ਅਉਤਾਰੁ ਉਪਾਇਏਨੁ ਭਾਉ ਦੂਜਾ ਕੀਆ ॥

PAURI: God created ansa incarnations, but they indulged in the love of duality.

The *ansa avatars* were created for only a specific job i.e., the killing of named tyrants for the sake of spreading righteousness. The qualities of an incarnation used to determine his status in mutual comparison. For example a perfect incarnation (Rama) was to have sixteen qualities while an *ansa avatar* was to have only a few qualities. Examples of *ansa avatars* are Mach (a fish), Kach (a tortoise), Varaka (a boar) and Narsingh (half lion half human).

According to the Hindu belief there is a pool of nectar in every human body which can be reached through the tenth door (daswa dwar — the door of mind) (the other nine doors are: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, two outlets of secretion and one mouth).

When with the force of meditation and yoga, the nectar drops down through the tenth door on the sensitive ground of mind and makes the recipient immortal.

Kapria (Gujri Trilochan, shabad 1, page 526)

॥ काङि कसंडलु कापङीआ रे अठसठि काङि फिराही ॥ बदति त्रिलोचनु सुनु रे प्राणी कण बिनु गाहु कि पाही
॥ ४ ॥ १ ॥

॥ काङि कसंडलु कापङीआ रे अठसठि काङि फिराही ॥ बडति त्रिलोचनु सुनु रे प्राणी कण बिनु गाहु कि पाही ॥
४ ॥ १ ॥

Why bother to carry the water-pot, O blue-robed yogi? Why bother to visit the sixty-eight holy places of pilgrimage? Listen, O! mortal, how will you separate husk from grain if you have not grown any crop || 4 || 1||

Kapria is a name of a group of sadhus who are followers of Shiva. They normally wear blue or black clothes. Their main pilgrimage place is Kedamath.

Mireg Trishna (Devghandhar Mehla 9, Shabad 2, page 536)

॥ म्रिग त्रिसना जिउ जग रचना यह देखहु रिदै बिचारि ॥ कहु नानक भजु राम नाम नित जा ते होत उधार
॥ २ ॥ २ ॥

॥ म्रिग त्रिसना जिउ जग रचना यह देखहु रिदै बिचारि ॥ कहु नानक भजु राम नाम नित जा ते होत उधार
॥ २ ॥ २ ॥

The created world is like an illusion, a mirage — see this, and reflect upon it in your mind. Vibrate forever the name of Waheguru, which shall deliver you. II 2 II 2 II

In deserts when rays of sun touch sand, then it gives a false impression of being a pool of water. Deers run towards this but find nothing except sand. This is called *mireg trishna*.

Dr. Jaya Patil

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