

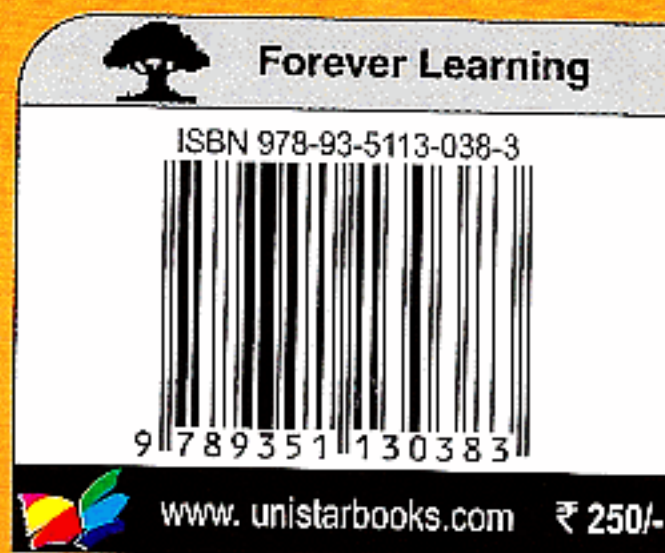
PUNJAB TO PUNJAB



Dharam Singh Goraya



Dharam S. Goraya comes from a middle class peasant family. Born in a small village on the Indo-Pak border named Ransinke-Mira also known as "Haveli". He got his Masters degree in Economics from Punjabi University, Patiala. The problem of prevailing unemployment made him leave India forever. His attachment and love for the land of five rivers, though, kept his spirit high to visit and search for the missing chapters of history. So far, he has written two books; *Dulla Bhatti* and *Buland Haveli*. He also writes Punjabi folk songs and poetry and yearns to see both India and Pakistan having good relations and prospering.



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Dedicated

to

The Land of Five Rivers,

That Once

Had

The Best Fighters of the World.

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Foreword

The interesting aspect of this book is that many Punjabis would find the glimpses of their own life reflected through the many narratives in this book. It is a story of a life that starts its childhood in a border village of East Punjab (Indian Punjab). It then describes different phases of the author's life leading up to university education and his first unsatisfactory job experience. The author then describes his harrowing experience of illegal migration from India to Germany, Canada and finally the United States. It appears that having spent his childhood in a borderland village, the author has imbibed the character peculiar to the people of borderland areas. The people of borderland areas are known to very mobile in their life style, and in their loyalties to the geographical boundaries and conceptions of existing nation states. His several trips from USA to West Punjab (Pakistan Punjab) carry further the story of his mobile life but with a difference- these trips are attempts in the reverse order to relate back to his Punjabi roots and to explore the depths of these Punjabi roots beyond the boundaries of existing nation states. His determination to rediscover the significance of Dulla Bhatti as a Punjabi nationalist fighter who revolted against the Delhi based Mughal ruler Akbar deserves much praise from the viewpoint of constructing a long term view of Punjab nationalism opposed to the centralist power structures based in Delhi. Many individuals born and brought up in East Punjab who have been to West Punjab would find in Dharam Singh Goraya's description of his travel experiences in West Punjab an echo of their own longings for a composite Punjabi culture. This longing is all the more acute among the diasporic Punjabis. Dharam Singh Goraya's journeys and experiences touch all the three Punjabs- the East Punjab, the West Punjab and the diasporic Punjab.

Dharam Singh Goraya offers many opinions on the history and culture of Punjab and concludes with his views on Indian politics and democracy. The point about those opinions is not that they are historically correct or not but rather that they allow us the opportunity to know about the perceptions of an educated Jat Sikh who has been influenced by the teachings of Sikh gurus in early childhood and those of Marxism in his university days.

Dharam Singh Goraya deserves appreciation for having made this effort to write an autobiographical account of some aspects of his life. Despite a self-celebratory stance of all autobiographical accounts, such accounts carry valuable material for constructing history of different peoples and regions. I hope that this effort of Dharam Singh Goraya will encourage many educated Punjabis to write their autobiographical stories. It is not hard to imagine that if hundreds or may be even thousands of such autobiographical stories are brought out, what a rich source of material that would be for constructing a multi-layered social, economic, cultural, ecological and political account of Punjab's past and present.

I laud the enthusiasm of Dharam Singh Goraya and wish him success in his future ventures in the realm of culture and politics.

Pritam Singh
Oxford, March 2013

Preface

Living on the edge of no-man's land makes you feel like living in a land locked situation. You always wonder what you are missing on the other side of the world, when you have so much in common in language, culture, traditions, and life in general.

The old classical writings of Baba Farid, Guru Nanak, Shah Hussain, Waris Shah, Bulle Shah, and many others gave me a strong bondage with my heritage. Right from a very tender age, there was a burning desire to visit Lahore, the city of kings and emperors with so many good, bad and ugly destinies. Kasoor, Lyallpur, Nankana Sahib, Kartarpur, Pindi Bhattian, Emenabad, Hasan-Abdal, Hafizabad, Jhang, Chiniot and Takht-Hazara resonated in my heart.

I made three visits to Punjab (Pakistan) in the years 2006, 2008 and 2011. I wrote some articles on these visits for newspapers, but that was not enough for my friends in West Punjab. Prof Asad Saleem Sheikh from Pindi Bhattian pursued me to pen down my experiences of visits to West Punjab in English. Prof Sheikh is to get these translated in the Persian script, and will be published from Lahore.

I would like to acknowledge my deep personal debt to Prof Asad, Surinder Kochhar (a historian from Amritsar), Malik Tanveer (an advocate), M. Bashir Diwana, and many others for their moral support and guidance. I would also like to thank my daughter Haneet and son Harshdeep Goraya for their dedicated service to help me complete my book.

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CHAPTER 1

History of the Surroundings

Village Ransinke–Mira, situated between Dera Baba Nanak and Kalanaur, has a population of about 350. This is the last village on the India-Pakistan border next to the village of Metla. Both of these villages have land connected to each other. A few residents of Ransinke-Mira have ownership of land in Metla village. We have about 25 acres of land on the borderline. The characteristics of Metla land were very interesting. During the 1950s, most of the border land was covered with dense forests. Some land was levelled but most of it was uneven. The water level was very high. A person could dig the ground up to just 4- 5 feet and get water, the reason being that the Ravi river flowed close by.

There were all types of animals like pigs, bears, peacocks, rabbits, snakes, turtles, tigers, and so on. This was a great hunting den for hunters for a long time. Even today people hunt pigs during the season of sugarcane and maize (*jowar*). This last corner of district Gurdaspur was blessed with well-wooded trees, like *kikar* (*Acacia arabica*), *bohar* (Banian Ficus), *pipal* (*Ficus Religiosa*), *tut* (Mulberry), *amb* (Mango), *phulai* (*Acacia Modesta*), *jaman* (*Trigin Jambolanum*), *simbal* (*Bombax Depaphyllum*) and *ber* (*Zizyphus Jujuba*), not to forget *tahli*, being an agrarian belt. The farmers would use the wood of *kikar*, *tahli*, and *tut* for ploughing the land like Hal Suhaga and Kohlu and cart.

The supply of water was not well organized as it was elsewhere in Punjab. The main source of watering the crops

were the deep wells run by the ox, bullocks, buffalo and very rarely by camels. For drinking and bathing purposes, almost every village had small wells (*khooh*). I saw the canal being dug and water flowing near our village in 1956 when I was a little kid. This was my first childhood wonderment when we jumped into the canal water and somebody dragged me out because I was drowning. Every village had a pond (*chappar*). Some had two, three or four ponds. These were havens for the animals during the hot weather of Punjab from May till September. During the rainy season (*sawan*) in June and July, however, the ponds would fill up to the brim and many times villagers would even drown.

Almost 95 per cent of the houses were *kutchra* (mud), which required regular repairs. Every house had a kitchen (*rasoi*). For cooking purposes (*chula* and *chauka*), the animal residue (*ghuha*) along with tree limbs or marchantia were used. There was no electricity. *Deeva* (a small clay pot with sesame seed oil and a cotton string) was the common practice for the household light. Later on, lanterns, burned with kerosene oil, were used. The main food was wheat and maize roti, rice (basmati), *dal*, *saag*, yogurt, and milk. Cows and buffalos were commonly used for milking milching purposes. The cropping pattern was also very primitive. Wheat, *bajra*, maize, sugarcane, *dal* (*cholle*, *mah*, *masar*, etc) were the normal produce. For home use, oil, *sarson*, *tara-mera*, *til* and *aalisi* were largely available. During the winter season, *aalisi* was a great diet for the elders, since it was rich and balanced food.

The neighboring villages of Ransinke-Mira had the same life style with little variation. Yes, schools were rare. We had our elementary education in the primary school of Shahpur Goraya, about 3 miles from our village. The next level of higher education was at Dera Baba Nanak, which was about 5 miles

from the village. We walked to and from school for eight years. We always carried *paranths* and pickle (*achar*) for lunch. During the '50s, boys outnumbered girls in schools. The education standard was good though, with very strict discipline.

People were still poor even though they owned land for farming. For various reasons, they had to borrow money from the money lenders (*sahukar*) at a high rate of interest. Banking facilities were not for everyone. During the 1970s, the mode of production changed drastically because of the so-called 'green revolution'.

One particular incident is still vivid in my memory. "Oh, Kartar Singh, come here, we've got something for you." A cooperative society inspector along with a plain-clothed police party was at Metla. I was also there along with four farm workers working in the fields. My father, a God-fearing man, was arrested right there while he was sweating with hard work and trying to make India rich with foodgrains. I approached the inspector and said, "Inspector sahib, what did my father do wrong?"

"*Chup oh kaka* (shut up kid), otherwise you will be taken to Batala."

I realized that I was helpless; we were all sitting under the tree at Bhagtana-Tullian Gurdwara. I challenged the inspector that either you leave my father alone, or you will pay for your behavior. Having said that, I ran to my village, which was half a mile from the gurdwara. The next day, we brought our father back from Batala. I never saw that inspector again in my life. He was badly cursed by his own actions.

My village was not developed in any way. Even Kartarpur Sahib was clearly visible during the fall season just 3 miles to the west, but Nanak's blessings were far away. Everyone was working hard but still something was missing. What was that?

The basic human needs were not properly addressed by the political system. Every village was going through the same trouble.

During the '50s and '60s, education for women was hard to get. In our family, thanks to my elder brother, Nirmal Singh Azad, who was the guiding light not only for the village but for the entire surrounding area, things were different.

It was well known in the area that Haveli (another name for our village) had a new star, and Nirmal proved it beyond doubt. In peasant families, it was common to get all the boys involved in farming but in Haveli, that is Ransinke-Mira, there was a new tradition. They were working hard and also encouraging their kids to go to school. In school, college and university, Nirmal surpassed all boundaries and got a degree in Economics from Punjab University, Chandigarh with outstanding performance. My younger sister, Devinder, never went to school till the age of 16 when she appeared for the exam for the 10th class, and passed it with distinction. This all happened due to the encouragement of her elder brother Nirmal Azad. Then she did her Masters in Punjabi and M.Phil. She got her first book of Punjabi poetry, *Kache Kothe Di Chhatt*, published in January 2013.

The families of lamberdars of Ransinke-Mira were a great encouragement for other children in the village to get an education. Sardar Sant Singh, the father of Sardar Kartar Singh, was the one who took many children to school where Sardar Sohan Singh was the headmaster of Shahpur Goraya Primary School. I still remember when my elder brother Kulwant Singh stopped going to school in the second class. It was a hot summer day and we all were sitting under the *jamun* tree which was full of fruits. Headmaster Sohan Singh came to Haveli on a bicycle and asked my father: "Why didn't kaka Kulwant come to school?"

“Sardar Sohan Singh *ji*, we are all telling him to go to school but he keeps saying that he wants to work in the fields,” my father replied.

“Lamberdar*ji*, he is very intelligent (*laik*) in his studies and he should come to school.”

However, Kulwant was in no mood of going to school. My father said, “If you do not go to school, what are you going to do? I want you to do something so people in the area know who you are or do something like Dulla Bhatti did!” This was a common saying in Majha area of Punjab, when the parents called their son Dulla Sher, that is Dulla Bhatti, a lion.

The celebration of fairs and festivals in any community is a reflection of the past. The colorful dresses in different designs and shades, the songs with the beats of the drums, the wood fire with glowing flames of various colors, the competition of singing between the boys and girls, the bhangra and dances at time of Vaisakhi (usually on April 13th of every year). This was a very important festival of Punjab having its history attached to birth of the Khalsa when the 10th Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh *Ji*, baptized the Panj Piaras (the five beloved ones) from different parts of India who came from different walks of life and so-called “low caste” and untouchables as described in the Hindu philosophy. Guru Gobind Singh *Ji* gave them equal status, abolishing the inequalities among the lower and upper castes. The Vaisakhi mela of Amritsar is the most popular festival in Punjab next to Diwali, which is usually celebrated in the month of October (Katak) every year. The bhangra of Vaisakhi and the fireworks of Diwali have its charms and excitement. It was the day when the sixth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Hargobind *Ji*, got 52 rajas of Bahidhar’s freed from the Agra prison during the reign of the Mughal king of Delhi Durbar, Jahangir (Salim), son of

King Akbar. On the arrival of the sixth Guru of the Sikhs, the people of Punjab welcomed him with passion and excitement and hence, the fireworks every year.

Lohri festival falls in the middle of January (which is the last day of Poh month). A famous saying in the Majha region "*Poh ridhi te Magh khadi*" means that people in the villages cook rice pudding with sugarcane juice all night long and eat the next day, which is the beginning of the month of Magh. Lohri also has a great importance in Punjabi culture. The boys and girls on the day of this festival go house to house. They sing songs like;

Boys sing

*"Sundar mandarin tera kaun wichara, Dulla Bhatti wala
Dulle teeh wihahi, bojhe shakar pai
Bojhay maar pataka, kurhi da sahlo pata
Kuri da jeeway chacha, sahlo kaun samaite
Chache chori katti zameendar lutti
Nambardar sadaye gin gin polay laye
Ik pola rah gaya
Sapai phar kay lay gaya"*

Girls sing

*"De maye Lohri
Vera chara ghor
Ghor char ki teer chalia
Teer vaja titar nu
Titar karda chauu chauu
Titara teri mai ve
Ande liawe kan ve
Roti khave kanak de
Vahuti liawe shanak de"*

Back in the old days, Lohri was also the time that signaled the weather changing to spring from winter. There are other festivals like Tayaan, Rakhi, Holi, Urs, Ashtami and Dussehra. Almost all the villages of Punjab, numbering 12,772, have their own festivals one way or the other. In other words, Punjab and, I would say, all of India is a land of festivals and holidays. Imagine, in Punjab, out of 365 days you almost have 180 holidays with your earned leave, Saturday and Sundays.

During my childhood back in the 1950s, the pace of life was very slow. There was only one bus service from Gurdaspur to Dera Baba Nanak and Amritsar. The main means of transportation were a *tanga* (a big two-wheel cart pulled by the horse). Since there were no metalled roads, *tangas* were very effective in the country side. Almost every village had a carpenter and shopkeeper selling the daily needs for the household. For example, kerosene oil, mustard oil, raw sugar, wheat and maize flour (*atta*), tea, salt, pepper and other products. Most of the time, daily needed products were exchanged with wheat and other farm-grown produce.

Not every village had a wheat flour mill (called *kharash* in Punjab, it had two heavy concrete wheels, weighing about 100 kg at least). The operating system was just like a big water well run by the bullocks. Almost every village had the *kohlu* to grind mustard (*sarson*), sesame seed (*til*), and flax seed (*aalsi*). In the area around the river Ravi, anything grown in the field or jungle was made use of by people. For example, saccharum sara (*munj*) served multiplicity of purposes: cords and ropes, drying sheets for grains, flooring and roofing pieces. The Dib, which grows everywhere, was good for *safs* or coarse kind of matting. The *kana* reed yields another useful fiber. The old saying, “where there is a will, there is a way” was purposively followed.

Both the towns of Dera Baba Nanak and Kalanaur had their own importance in history. Let us start with Kalanaur, which is 5 miles east of my village. Sayed Muhammad Latif attributes its founding to the Nor tribe of Rajputs, who are believed to have emigrated from the Deccan into Punjab in the early times. The temple of Kaleshwar Shivji, which stands on the old citadel close to the Kiran (Sakki), makes it clear that this place had some importance in the early Hindu times. The most noteworthy event in the history of the district of Gurdaspur was the enthronement of Akbar on February 15th, 1556 at the age of 13. At the sudden death of Emperor Humayun, Prince Akbar was at Kalanaur with his guardian and commander of the army, Bahram Khan. As soon as they received the news of the death of the Emperor, Bahram Khan organized the ceremony for Akbar's enthronement. The place where this ceremony took place still exists in the east of Kalanaur, a masonry platform with a quadrangular cistern in the center. During the time of Akbar, Kalanaur attained its greatest splendor. A town of mango gardens with four large wells, each 50 feet in diameter, it is also known as a city of underground tunnels.

Another important event happened in this town during the time of Banda Singh Bahadur. In February 1715, Banda Singh Bahadur had his forces gather near Jammu and came down to Kalanaur, which was a beautiful vacation resort for the Mughal emperors. His forces confronted with Mughal commander Sohrab Khan, who lost the battle and left Kalanaur for the Sikhs to plunder. There is a beautiful gurudwara after the name of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur on the hilltop in Kalanaur.

The third event concerning this town was with the chief of the Kanya Misl, named Jai Singh of Mouza Kanha, 15 miles east of Lahore. Kalanaur was part of Kanya estate, also granted

in *jagir* to Raja Dina Nath in 1847 and resumed on his death in April 1857 as a *jagir* to Prince Kharak Singh, the son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Going 5 miles to the west of Ransinke-Mira, is a small town founded by Guru Nanak Dev *Ji*, the first guru of the Sikhs, who was born in 1469 at a village named Talwandi in Lahore district. The most travelled person on foot from north to south and east to far west, up to Mecca and Medina, to Baghdad, he finally settled down in the densely-forested area known as Dera Baba Nanak near the banks of river Ravi. The majority of the inhabitants are Bedis. They are ancestors of Guru Nanak Dev *Ji*. There was a Jat farmer, Ditta Randhawa, with whom Baba Nanak would exchange his philosophy about the reality of life and God. People would come and join them, listen to their conversation and eat food sitting together on the ground without any hesitation.

During the years of 1744 to 1754, the descendants of Baba Nanak purchased the land and laid the foundation of the town Dera Nanak. Diwan Nanak Baksh, Wazir to the Nawab of Hyderabad, offered a sum of Rs 50,000 for the Darbar Sahib building. Then Raja Chando Lal contributed a large sum of money for its construction. In 1825, Maharaja Ranjit Singh offered a handsome contribution for the completion of the work and it was completed in 1827. Just across the Ravi, Baba Nanak settled down at Kartarpur, a town founded by him, and lived there for more than 15 years, doing farming and sharing his thoughts with the visitors. Guru Nanak lived a long and productive life and died at the age of 70. A beautiful gurdwara was built there and lies on the west side of the Ravi in Pakistan.

A festival is held every year in Dera Baba Nanak in the month of March, called Mela of Chola Sahib in memory of a precious relic in the shape of a robe once worn by Baba Nanak.

People from all over Punjab march on foot to pay their respect at Gurdwara Chola Sahib.

Both the towns of Kalanaur and Dera Baba Nanak were at the same distance from my village, but we were dealing more with Dera Baba Nanak. The reason being that our area fell under the police station of Dera Baba Nanak. Secondly, the daily routine of life was more connected to the town as far as the Sabzi Mandi, shopping for clothing, *atta chakki*, *kohlu*, and weavers were concerned. Most importantly, there was a very old higher secondary school which we hardly liked anyway. The most exciting time to visit the city was during Vaisakhi and Mela of Chola Sahib. I still remember one interesting incident. While I was appearing in the higher secondary part-one examination, I had my final Mathematics examination the following day and Chola Sahib Mela had just ended a few days ago. During this festival, I happened to buy a book of *Heer-Waris Shah*. Just by opening the book and reading a few lines of it, I could not take my eyes away from it. I ended up reading these beautiful verses all night long. The next day, during my Maths exam, I slept and ended up getting a compartment and failed. Thanks to Heer Ranjha! What a touching love story in Punjab. This is one of the most well-read and famous texts in Punjabi literature. People love to read, listen and sing about Heer Ranjha both in East and West Punjab, and abroad.

The land of Punjab has produced some of the world's famous poets. The tragedy is that no one has taken pains to translate the works of Baba Farid, Peltu, Waris Shah, Baba Bulle-Shah, Hashim, Shah-Hussain, Qadir Qaar, etc. They are no less than William Wordsworth, Byron, Keats, and Shelley. May be we are so selfish, trying to keep our heritage to ourself and not sharing it with the outside world.

Imagine, you are hardly 11 years old, having a bag full of books on your shoulder, walking to school about 5 miles away

from your home, going through the jungle with wild growth, making your way through the densely-leaning straw with dew in the morning, and at the same time watching out for poisonous snakes, deers, pigs and other wild animals. This was the daily routine of life for three years. While cycling to school and jumping the creeks flowing with water, we would sometimes drop everything in the water. Then pickup the books one by one, and dry them under the sun. After school, we would be working in the field, grazing the cattle, cutting green straw for them with a sickle and at times having big cuts on the hands and bleeding. Grazing the cattle was great fun, when you have a group of eight to nine people all together playing *gulli-danda*, hide and seek, kabaddi, and high and long jump. Sometimes, we even went for hunting with dogs and killed rabbits. With the hard way of life, we used to sing and console ourselves and that was the best treatment for mental relief. This was the way of life everywhere near the border area.

I did my Masters in Economics from Punjabi University in Patiala, but jobs were not easily available. We were on the streets many times, protesting against the government over the lack of employment opportunities. Some of us were interviewed by the Punjab State Electricity Board (PSEB) and finally got appointments in Bassi Power House (Joginder Nagar), in Himachal Pradesh. I was appointed as an upper divisional clerk for Rs 600 per month at that time in PSEB. My two other friends got appointments in the PSEB school in Joginder Nagar. We all were staying in a very nice hilltop villa. The beauty of Himachal girls was just as "Heer" would have been, as mentioned by Waris Shah. I only worked there for six months. All I learned over there was how to sign the big and fat files. Of course I fought with my executive engineer of PSEB about six times in six months, mainly over the usage of the company's jeep.

CHAPTER 2

Leaving India Again and Again

I left for West Germany in the year 1979. It was not a pleasant trip. I got caught while entering West Berlin from the East and was deported back to Delhi. But how can Punjabi blood sit in one place and not do anything? A few months later, I tried again and went to West Germany. The pain of separation from your homeland can only be realized while you are far away from it. Most of the Punjabi people of India and Pakistan were in West Germany, living and working next to each other and partying with drinking, dancing, music and of course getting into fights, sometimes serious ones. They all were working very hard enough to make German Marks, eating well, dressing well and sending money back to their families. They had lots of fun with German people while still learning their Deutsch language. I worked as a helper doing welding on the German railway track (Bundesbahn). I worked 12-hour shifts all night in snow, sometimes 2-3 feet deep! I worked so hard for a year-and-a-half, lost my good friend in a fight, got very frustrated and finally left West Germany and came to Canada.

From West Germany To Canada

When I arrived at the Edmonton (Alberta) International Airport, the people who were supposed to pick me up never showed up. I was boarded in a beautiful hotel inside the airport and a beautiful Canadian was my guard as well as my host. I had to bail myself out and got out of the airport the next day. I think it was July 6, 1981. I had a very tough time in Edmonton.

A bitter experience among my own people. After six months working in a spaghetti factory, I was picked up by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). I was locked up in the correctional center in the main city. I applied for political asylum but it was denied and there were no more chances for me to stay in the country and finally, I got the order for deportation.

Do you believe in miracles? Yes, I do. After spending seven days in the correctional center, I was taken out of my cell and an RCMP officer got me handcuffed in his car. I had no idea what the hell was going on! I thought maybe they were taking me to the airport for deportation or maybe I was being taken to the court house, or what? I had no idea. The officer's behavior was nice while we were on the main street. On the way to my apartment, he told me that he was taking me to my place just to search inside. We got to my building where I was living in the basement room. The officer opened the back window and got me first to jump in. Then he jumped into the basement room. He searched my luggage, cabinets, and closets. I was not worried about anything since I had nothing objectionable inside the room. It took about 45 minutes before we got back in the front lobby of the correctional center. A beautiful police officer lady on duty counter asked me:

“What's your name?”

“My name is Singh,” I answered.

“Oh Singh, you are bailed out. Get your belongings from the closet and you can go now,” she said.

I was stunned and could not believe what I just heard. It was all in my mind and I was not trying to show my reaction to the comment, “you can go now.” It was a miracle, no less, because just a week ago I was requesting the judge that I will put down the security money to bail me out, but her answer

was, "How do we believe you that once you are bailed out, you will appear in court for the hearing?" And she was right. Had I ever been bailed out, I would just skip the country and go to America, which I did anyway. When I arrived at the airport from West Germany, I had to put \$2,000 Canadian for my own bail, which I violated for not appearing in the court hearing later on. Soon, I changed my dress at the correctional center and took off from there. The first thing I did was to pick up my cheque from the spaghetti factory where I was working and had got picked up by the RCMP. A guy from Ludhiana district was a taxi driver and I asked him to get me to the US border, which he refused to do.

To US with Canadian \$10

The weather was not very favorable either, since it had been snowing for many days. Finally I gave my cheque to him and started heading for Great Falls (Montana). It was bone-chilling cold with 2-3 feet snow on the ground. I was without any passport and here I was trying to enter the US. The taxi driver with one of his friends from Calgary dropped me off half a mile from the US-Canadian border. I had no choice but to walk in the dark and cross over the border. It took me around an hour before I met them on the American side at the designated sign. From there, they picked me up and we headed for Great Falls. Now I was in the USA with no documentation, no luggage, no money. The only thing I had on me was a jacket with a lot of holes to protect myself from the sub-zero temperature. It was the beginning of the month of December of 1981. I only had \$10 Canadian in my pocket. It took me four days and three nights on the Greyhound bus from Great Falls to Alexandria, Virginia. Here I had my senior college friend from Gurdaspur and I stayed over there for a few months. My confidence and adventurous behavior finally paid off.

Wonderful dreams and excitement kept my spirits high to confront any odds and get to the final destination. Entering the USA was my first life battle, which I won with great odds. I had no other choice but to make my way in this country. While I was travelling on the bus from Great Falls, the picture of my village was in my mind and I was still feeling the pain and tough hard life my people were going through. My determination was a great challenge to me to do something about it. "Did I accomplish my material and social task?" I think I did. How? It is a long story but let me say in a few words that today I have around over 40 immediate family members and about 60 other community members whom I helped to settle in a strange country, one of the richest countries in the world. It all happened by crossing over to the US from Canada with \$10 Canadian in my pocket with holes in it. I was destined to go through all this and make my way, no matter what the circumstances were.

Childhood Dreams

Right from childhood, I was very fond of old folk songs. Those singers were Lal Chand Yamla Jatt, Kuldeep Manak, Inayat Hussain Bhatti. Kuldeep Manak's *Mirza-Sahiba*, *Heer-Ranjha*, *Dulla-Bhatti* were my favorite songs. I had the burning desire to visit those places in Pakistan Punjab. Yamla Jatt's *Satgur Nanak Teri Leela Neyari Aee* gave me another boost to trace the footsteps of Baba Nanak and Bhai Mardana (a great magician who spent 40 years of his life with the founder of Sikhism). Bhai Mardana, a "low caste", "untouchable", according to the Hindu Varna, happened to be from the same village as Guru Nanak Sahib Ji in Talwandi, now in district Nankana Sahib.

The hard life in the US could not take away my yearning alliance with my Punjabi culture and language. The cultural

programs and sports were our main entertainment events. For about 20 years, we were very active in the Punjabi functions like bhangra, giddha, drama, stage shows for singing, kabaddi and volleyball, etc. I was a public relations officer (PRO) for many years in the local gurdwara.

Every time I looked upon Pakistan Punjab from the high-ramp (Dhussi Bundh) built on the border while working in the fields, I cursed the British rule for the partition of Punjab. What a political tragedy on the people of both sides. How the politicians on both sides would justify by not providing the facilities to the people who got separated from each other. This is a big shame for the politicians. Several times, the relations between the two countries were getting close to better and here comes the issue of Kashmir. This Kashmir problem is almost eating up half of the defense budget of both the countries. No one is serious to resolve this issue. Many countries tried to help them resolve the Kashmir conflict and each time India would utter with roar that "this is our internal matter". Okay fine, then why don't you get over with it? Why is this still going on since 1947? Let both countries agree to keep what they are controlling. India should not claim what Pakistan is controlling and vice versa. Is anybody serious about making the Kashmiri people's future safe and prosperous?

Has any country learned any lesson from the wars of 1948, 1965, 1971, and then Kargil? Would any other conflict between the two nations make the situation normal? No, not at all. The common masses of both countries must not play in the hands of the few fundamentalist fanatic clergy elements. These people have no normal humane nature. Practicing religion is something personal and no one should impose one's will on the other. Political course must stay away from one's faith, whatever that may be. You believe what suits you well, but do not interfere in others' business.

To people who believe in "*Raj Bina Nahi Dharm Chale Hai, Dharam Bina Sab Daleh Maleh Hai*", my question is: who will control the "will" of a fanatic hardcore mind to stop the violence against the innocent? If "Raj" (political power) helps you to expand your religious geography, the same "Raj" should have the power to shoot you when you become evil for the non-believers. No *dharm* teaches you to become violent. If it were so, then of course you are "Daleh Maleh ho". Why would I be given the liberty of preaching my faith when even I do not follow it? Today, the preachers of different faiths almost have their petty pseudo motives. Their final target is to grab political power and material gains. To achieve these targets, they would even gamble their family members.

CHAPTER 3

Leaving For Punjab (Pakistan)

Finally, the day had arrived and we both decided to visit west Punjab. Since we were going directly to Lahore from the US, we also planned to visit India. So while applying for the Pakistan visa, we asked for multiple entry, which we were granted. That way, entering India from Pakistan via the Wagah-Attari border added another excitement to our first visit to Pakistan. Travelling by Emirates Airways, touching down at Dubai and then Lahore on October 30, 2006 was a good experience. The Munawar family, our neighbor in Accokeek, Maryland, who also runs an auto repair shop, was already in Johar town, near Punjab University, Lahore. He was going to have his engagement ceremony in Lyallpur, now known as Faisalabad, also known as Bar-Da-Ilaka in the old days. From the airport, we were heading for Johar town going through Lahore. It was 3 in the morning, but the city of Lahore was still awake.

We were very tired because of the long travel but that did not slow us down. When you have big dreams, excitement and determination, how can anything stop you from being not active. Many people in the United States were discouraging us not to go to Pakistan since the situation was not very good and safe, but nothing changed our minds. We listened to everyone but we did what our mind was set for. Since our first visit was only for six days, we planned our schedule for each day and made sure we got up early everyday no matter how

late we went to sleep. It all worked out very well as planned. We travelled for a two-week schedule in just five days. On October 30, 2006, around mid day, we paid our deepest respect to the holy place of Baba Farid Sahib, which was behind the district court and senior superintendent of police's office in Lahore. Baba Farid Sahib's divine words were in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the holy book of the Sikhs. One example of the writing of Baba Farid Sahib:

Fareedhaa Mai Jaaniaa Dhukh Mujh Koo

Dhukh Sabaaeiaai Jag

Oochae Chare Kai Dhaekhiaa

Ghar Ghar Eaehaa Agg"

Meaning: "Farid, I thought that I was in trouble;
The whole world is in trouble.
When I climbed the hill and looked around,
I saw this fire in each and every home."

Here is another example:

*"Farida Khaak Na Nindiya, Khakoo Jeid Na Koi,
Jeevdyaa Pairaan Thalay, Moyaa Ooper Hove."*

•Meaning: "Farid, do not slender the dust, nothing is as great as dust, when we are alive, it is under our feet and when we are dead, it is above us."

People in East Punjab recite the name of Baba Farid everyday while they read the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The *saloks* of Baba Farid are so simple and easy to understand that sometimes the people of east Punjab can't distinguish whether they are written by Farid Sahib or Guru Nanak Sahib. After all, there is a great message to humanity on how to live a simple and truthful life without any "*Kaam, Krodh, Lobh, Moh, Hanqkar*" (lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego). The question arises about how many of us are learning anything after

spending hundreds and thousands of rupees every year celebrating their days. A few hundred yards away from Baba Farid Sahib's shrine, we went to see a magnificent place known as Data Ganj Baksh Darbar. A large number of people go there everyday and bow their heads and pray for peace and harmony. Recently, even this beautiful darbar was not spared from a terrorist attack and many worshippers were killed there. It was evening time and we went to see the old and new Anarkali Bazaar. This place was looking like a newly-wedded bride. We did some shopping there and had a nice dinner of pure Punjabi dishes.

It is a normal saying in Punjabi culture that if you have not seen Lahore, then you haven't seen anything. The second day we are at the Minar-E-Pakistan, a tall monumental minaret in Iqbal Park at Lahore, just across the Badshahi Mosque, the Lahore Fort and Gurdwara Dera Sahib. Minar-E-Pakistan was built in commemoration of the Lahore Resolution. This was the place where on March 23, 1940, the Muslim League passed the resolution for a separate country of Pakistan. Its total height from the ground is 92 meters and it was completed in October 1968. This reminds me of the Washington Monument, in Washington DC, which is 555 feet tall. It was built between 1848 and 1884, as a tribute to George Washington, the first president of the United States.

A Visit To Lahore Fort

After crossing over the main road, we were entering the main gate of Gurdwara Dera Sahib, where fifth Guru Arjan Dev Ji was tortured and put to death by the order of Mughal Emperor Jahangir on May 30, 1606. At that time, river Ravi was flowing by this place after touching the foundation of Lahore Fort. The gurdwara is in good shape. *Langar* (common kitchen) is served here and there is accommodation for visitors

too. Just behind the gurdwara are the cemeteries of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, his wife Jinda, son Kharak Singh and grandson Nau Nihal Singh, along with others who committed suicide (*sati*). Behind the gurdwara and cemeteries is the Badshahi Masjid, which was built by Emperor Aurangzeb in 1673. Opposite to Shahi Masjid is the Shahi Qilla (Royal Fort). The royal fort has its own history of almost 700 years. Actually it was built by Emperor Akbar in 1566 over the muddled ruins that were a century old. There are so many memories of the Mughal and Sikh periods attached to it. The great Mughal and Persian architecture can be seen in each and every building.

Here, I would like to raise a serious concern over the attitude and views of some writers in Pakistan.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the Textbooks

Right from 1860, almost all the British and Muslim writers have been putting the blame on Ranjit Singh (Maharaja of Punjab from 1799-1839) for removing the marble from the old historical mosques and shrines and donating it in the service of the Golden Temple of Amritsar. This has been brought forth in the research by Amritsar-based historian Surinder Kochhar. The first time two British writers, J.M. Kipling and T.H. Thornton, wrote an article claiming this in the 'Travelers' published from the National College of Arts or 'Mayo School of Arts' in 1860. There was no authentic proof given in the book about this claim but in 1892, Syed Mohammad Latif giving the reference of the above-mentioned article went further than the British writers. M. Latif added other places like Shalimar Bagh, Dil Kusha Bagh, Pari Mahal, Marble Summer House, and the Mosque of Noor Jehan, and Jahangir, Mirza Abul Hasan, Asaf Khan, Parvez, Nawab Bahadur Shah, Mullah Shah, Shah Rustam Gazi, and Shah Sharaf. These ground less

and baseless claims are not only written in text books but even billboards displayed in the places mentioned before.

Surinder Kochhar challenged the Pakistani intellectuals for the first time on September 7, 2005. He gave them the historical facts that how Maharaja Ranjit Singh gave Rs 21,000 to Mistri Muhammad Yar Khan to fix the steps of the sacred *sarovar* and to build the basic structure of the main doors of the Golden Temple. Looking at the wonderful job done by Muhammad Yar Khan. Maharaja Ranjit Singh got so happy that he gave him another Rs 21,000 for the marble.

Just for the knowledge of Pakistani writers, here is an example how nothing is ever used at the Golden Temple if it has already been in use. In 1826, the Nizam of Hyderabad presented a beautiful hand made canopy to Maharaja Ranjit Singh as a token of gift. There were jewels and diamonds in the canopy. Looking at the canopy, Maharaja said it was too good for him and should be in the Harimandir Sahib. And guess what, the chief of the Golden Temple refused to accept it and said no matter how good or expensive anything maybe, it will not be used at Harimandir Sahib if it has already been in use. The price of the canopy at that time was about Rs 1.5 lakh. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had to apologize for his act and in lieu of his mistake, he granted two villages to Harimandir Sahib, namely Bharnori in Kangra (Himachal Pradesh) and Narainpur in Gurdaspur district.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh also gave many grants and *jagirs* to the Maulvis and Muslim societies. He appointed many Muslim officials at high positions in his cabinet. One of them was Fakir Aziz Ud Din, who was the foreign minister of the Sikh empire. He spent Rs10,000 to get the holy *Quran* translated, which is still preserved at the Lahore Central Museum.

Very interestingly, the Pakistan government is trying to preserve all the old and historical monuments and shrines in their original form. Not like in India and especially in east Punjab, where almost all the Sikh historical places are marbled so badly that you cannot tell their originality and time period. How sad it is when control is in the hands of those who have no sense of history and its importance for the coming generations. What would you tell the young kids?

“Hey, see, this is 300 or 500 years old.”

“No way, this is only 10, 20, 50 years old.”

Baba Bulleh Shah (Kasoor)

The Lahore Fort is so large that once you enter it, it becomes very hard for someone who is historically inclined to learn something new, to come out. I was one of them but we came out because our next goal was to visit another historical and famous town named Kasoor, which was about 60 kilometers south of Lahore. The road was not in a good shape and it took us about two hours to see the face of the beautiful old Kasoor. Kasoor is related to a famous Punjabi poet, Waris Shah and then Baba Bulleh Shah. Like Waris Shah says in his famous *Heer-Waris Shah*:

“*Waris Shah di kharach tehseel vicho, hisa sirf Kasoor da katoian ni*”(when I die and out of my leftover property, only give a proper donation to the town Kasoor).

What love for the land! Kasoor still reminds the old civilization with narrow streets and old-style shops. Finally, we entered the place where Baba Bulleh Shah’s *mazar* was. Baba Bulleh Shah’s place of resting has been there since 1757. How heart-rendering his writings were and here is one of that:

“*Parh parh alam Fazal hoya tay naam rakha qazi,
seh wari haij mekka da keeta naam rakhaya haji,
Pharh talwar dilawar banyon tay naam rakha ya gazi,
Je ve Bhuliya Kuch na khhatti-ya, jay peer na keeta razi.*”

In English: They read all the sacred texts and call themselves Qazis. They make a hundred pilgrims to Mecca and add the suffix Haji to their name. They wield their swords bravely, and called themselves Ghazis (warriors) but Bulleh Shah says, you have done nothing, if you have not pleased your *pir* (spiritual master).

We had Kasoori Andrassy, a very tasteful and unforgettable food. Kasoori methi, which Punjabi people use in many dishes, has its own aroma.

From Kasoor, we headed for a village named Kanganpur. This is a place where Guru Nanak Sahib along with Rababi Bhai Mardana *Ji* passed through while delivering the message of love and value of life to the common people. Having simple and saintly dresses on them, the people of the village made fun of them. There on, Guru Nanak Sahib uttered from his lips, "Live on here (*vasde raho*)", and moved on the next village called Manak-De, at a short distance from Kanganpur. People of this village welcomed both of them and served food to them. After being served food, Guru Nanak *Ji* and Bhai Mardana *Ji* sang melodious hymns of Godly words. There on, Guru Nanak Sahib again uttered the words, "Go away from here (*oojarah jaho*)." Listening to Guru's words, Mardana *Ji* got curious and asked Nanak Sahib why he was telling those who did not treat them well to "live on" and those who accorded them a warm welcome to "go away from here". Guru *Ji* explained to Bhai Mardana *Ji* that people with good behavior and nature should go from one place to another to spread the good message to other people, and the one with bad thoughts and nature should stay at one place and not spread the wrong ideas to others.

It was very late when we were visiting these villages. At the village of Manak-De, our visit got all of the people of that town together and we were welcomed by the whole village.

They treated us like we had known each other for a long time but there was nothing like that. If anything was common, it was the Punjabi culture, tradition and language. That bondage of culture brought tears in my eyes.

Nankana Sahib

Baba Nanak Shah Faqir, Hindu Da Guru, Mussalman Da Pir

On the third day of our visit, we went to Nankana Sahib, which is 92 kilometers west of Lahore, on November 1, 2006. This was a much-awaited desire to see the land of Baba Nanak Ji, who was born at Talwandi, a village on the Ravi, at the time when Emperor Bahlol Lodhi was ruling India in 1469 AD. While we were travelling to the destination, I was explaining to my Pakistani friends the contribution Baba Nanak made to mankind, his simple philosophy and how he sarcastically denounced the old orthodox myths, especially the Hindu way of life. One very interesting and revolutionary break away from the old school of thought was that one must adopt a guru and worship and bow to him. This did not happen with Baba Nanak Ji. He never chose anyone to follow, except the One (IkQkar, the Almighty) in his own way. His very basic thoughts, which he proved in his life time, were to work hard, meditate, and share with the needy. In the last 15 years or so of his life, he tilled the land with his own hands and started something which never happened in Hindu culture before, and that was the *langar* (common kitchen), with everybody sitting on the ground and eating together, no matter how rich or poor, low or high, as it was never tolerated in the Hindu religion. Some hardcore Hindu thinkers and political leaders always say that Baba Nanak did not start any new religion and that Sikhism is nothing but a part of Hinduism. The fact of the matter is that there is a basic departure as far as language, culture, traditions

and celebrations are concerned between Hinduism and Sikhism. In so many ways, Sikhism is more close to Islam. For example, both in Sikhism and Islam, they believe in worshipping the one almighty, omnipresent and everlasting God or Allah. In Hinduism, they worship the sun, the moon, the fire, the mountains, the water, the cows and their dead ones. The Sikhs and Muslims do not believe in worshipping statues.

Before I move on, I would like to share an incident that took place at Haridwar. During the festival of Kumbh Mela. Guru Nanak Sahib along with Rababi Bhai Mardana went to see the Mela. Nanak noticed a party of Brahmins bailing out the water from a river with their hands as if to irrigate their drying field. Their faces being turned to the east, the Brahmins were performing their superstitious belief that the thirst of their dead ones would by virtue of the act be quenched. Nanak Sahib, who was standing on the opposite side of the river, began to imitate their actions but with his face to the west. The Brahmins evidently considered Nanak a *faqir*, to be out of his senses. They told him that his insane performance was in vain as it was not going to help relieve the thirst of the departed. Nanak replied to the Brahmans, "I am not giving water to my dead ones, but irrigating my fields in Kartarpur to prevent them from drying up because of the scorching heat of the sun." The Brahmins uttered, "How can this handful of water benefit your fields which are such a long way off?"

Guru Nanak Sahib replied, "How can then your water reach the next world and quench the thirst of your dead ones? If the water cannot reach my fields in Punjab, how can it reach your dead in another world?"

The Brahmins had no answer and surrendered to the wisdom of Nanak Sahib.

During the life of Guru Nanak Sahib, there were such countless incidents and Nanak Sahib proved how the preachers

in different sects, the kings and the rich exploited the common people. He held so many discussions with the established group of saints, *faqir*, *yogis*, and always proved their wrong practices and how they befooled the innocent people.

Nanak Sahib had the courage to challenge Emperor Babar's atrocities on the common people in Eminabad. He made Babar realize that the emperor is the servant of the people and is not there to torture, loot, and massacre them.

Just before the sign board of Sheikhupura, we took a left turn and crossed the river bridge and after going through the small village, we were heading straight to Nankana Sahib. Since we are coming close to Nankana Sahib, it felt like we are going to see a very special relative after a long period of time. So many emotions and heart palpitations brought tears in the eyes. It's difficult to explain the kind of feelings that came. Finally, we entered the village just after crossing the railway line. First, we went to see Tambu Sahib. This is the place where Nanak Sahib had rested and meditated after feeding the hungry faqirs. There are still 15-16 trees which are very very old and spread in an area of 10-12 marlas (1 marla= 3 square yards). We had *langar* at the gurdwara. After this, we went to see three more gurdwaras before we headed for the main Nankana Sahib gurdwara, where Nanak Sahib was born. This gurdwara has its own unique outlook and beauty. There was a big gate where the security people had our names and addresses on their register. This was like entering a big fort. After entering the second gate, there was a water well on the left side which Nanak's family were using for daily needs. It is called the well of Bebe Nanaki (Nanak Sahib's elder sister). Right after the well, there is a small room where Guru Nanak Sahib was born. Now the *Guru Granth Sahib* is seated there.

Rai Bular, the landlord of Talwandi village, was the first person who saw Nanak as a prophet, a genius. Rai Bular donated his 17,000 acres of land to Nanak Sahib. Over 15,000 acres of that land is under cultivation and all the revenue goes to the Nankana Sahib Foundation. The Pakistan government gave the status of a district to Nankana Sahib in 2005. This is a great honor to the land of a great rebel of the 15th century who exposed the true picture of the emperor, the landlords, the bureaucrats, the gurudom of various sects and showed them the real way of life to live.

At about 3pm, we are on the road again to visit Danabad village. Danabad was the village of Mirza, of the Mirza-Sahiba fame. Both were childhood friends, and fell in love with each other. Later, Mirza kidnapped her from her home on the day of her wedding. In Punjabi culture, this is a serious act of crime and most of the time resulted in killing. Mirza also met the same fate but he is also considered a brave man and young people in Punjab always have regard for him. They take Mirza as their pride. There are so many folk songs and movies made on Mirza-Sahiba. He was considered a great sharp shooter of his time. After two hours on the road, which was under construction, we stopped at a petrol pump. A young man there had his last name Sidhu. His elders were from Ludhiana before India's partition. We all opened up, and they served us very nice tea with sweets and at the same time advised us not to go to Danabad since it was getting dark and it was winter time. According to them, people in this area roamed around on horses and camels and blocked roads with trees to loot travellers. This area was very backward and covered with dense forests. I was not going to give up, so I promised myself to come back soon and return to Lahore for now.

Panja Sahib (Hasan-Abdal)

On the fourth day of our visit to Pakistan, that is November 2nd, 2006, we were on Motor way-2 at 7:30 in the morning. This route goes all the way to Taxila via Pindi Bhattian, Chakwal, Rawalpindi. This was a long journey of 395 kilometers. We were in Hasan-Abdal, where Gurdwara Panja Sahib is situated.

Baba Nanak Ji was 52 when he along with Mardana *Ji* came to this hilly place in 1521. According to different *Sakshis*, Mardana *Ji* got very thirsty and started looking for water but he could not find it anywhere. Baba Nanak asked Mardana to go up the hill and look for it. Mardana went up the hill and there he met with Wali Kandhari. Mardana asked for water to drink but Wali Kandhari refused. Mardana came down and told Baba Nanak Sahib what had happened. Baba Nanak sent Mardana up the hill again, but did not get water again. Mardana was sent again the third time to Wali Kandhari and asked for water. This time Wali Kandhari told Mardana that if his Guru was so powerful and close to God, why could he not provide him the water? Hearing this, Mardana went down and narrated the incident to Baba Nanak. Guru Sahib went back to meditation and after a while asked Mardana to lift a rock (stone) which was a few yards away from where they were sitting. Mardana moved the rock away from its original place, and out sprang a fountain of cold and clean water. Mardana quenched his thirst and thanked God and Baba Nanak. When Wali Kandhari got thirsty, he went to get some water from his well but it had dried up. Seeing this, he became furious. All the water from the hilltop was drained out to the foot of the hill from where Mardana picked up the rock. In extreme anger, Wali Kandhari threw a rock from the top of the hill. When the rock started rolling down the hill exactly where Nanak Sahib was sitting, Baba Nanak put a stop to the rolling rock with his

right hand. This is how this place got the name of Panja Sahib of Hasan-Abdal. Finally, Wali Kandhari came to his senses and bowed his head before Baba Nanak Sahib. Here Baba Nanak gave the message of mankind, love and helping the needy. Another message he conveyed was not to be egotistic. After that, Wali Kandhari became one of the preachers of the ideology of Nanak Sahib.

After the victory of Peshawar, Hari Singh Nalwa, one of the commanders of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, came to Hasan-Abdal and built a beautiful gurdwara. Fresh, cold and clean water is still running with the same speed here since 1521. The water outsource is being used by the rest of this town.

In my belief, water is everywhere and nowhere in the mountain area. The geographical character of the land is so full of miracles that it makes a layman wonder what to believe.

The water fountain level is about 6-7 feet below the ground level. Imagine the change in the ground surface over five centuries because of soil erosion. The mountainous view of Hasan-Abdal is stunning. Of course, we shake our hands with Baba Nanak Ji without any fear in mind.

On the 5th day, that is November 3rd, we stayed at Lahore and went for shopping. People showered such love and affection that it is very hard to pen it down. Wherever we went and people saw a Sardarji with a beautiful turban, they would say, "Sat Sri Akal, Sardar Ji," and I would respond with "Sat Sri Akal" and "Assalamu Alaykum". In the evening, we went to Bashir-Dar-Ul Mahi Fish Place and had a great dinner. Very interestingly, it was a three-level building and packed with customers. We were on the top level in the open air and it seemed like all the wrestlers of Punjab state were there that day. Everyone was eating and talking. I was thinking that the West Punjab youth were stronger than the East Punjabis. Many of them sitting close by asked me so many questions. No one

was drinking unlike in East Punjab, where at that time of the evening almost everyone is high, thanks to the liquor industry of India and especially the Punjab government. As if they cannot survive without liquor.

After dinner, we came out and noticed that our car had been towed away because of the wrong parking. When we went to the car impounding place, they asked for a fine but on seeing me, they got surprised.”*Oh Sardar Sahib bhi aapke sath hain.*” When my hosts explained that I was their guest, they replied, “Okay, take your car but take care Sardar Sahib.”

Visit To Kartarpur Sahib

On the 6th day of our visit on November 4th, at about 7am we were going to visit Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib near Narowal.

It is 130 kilometers from Lahore towards the north east of river Ravi. On the way, I noticed that houses in villages on both sides of the road were made of mud and the land was uninhabited. Every 20 to 25 kilometers, you see a very beautiful police station building like a small villa; the reason may be the nature of the borderline of India and Pakistan.

Because we were driving close to the Ravi, the whole area was covered with fog. We got to this beautiful place at 10:30 am. This gurdwara has three storeys and is being taken care of by Bhai Gobind Singh, the Granthi Sevdar. There are beautiful flower plants all around the building. The quality of the soil of Kartarpur Sahib is the same as of my village, which is about 4 kilometers west of Kartarpur Sahib. Guru Nanak Sahib spent more than 15 years of his life at this place. Here, Guru Sahib did farming and started the common kitchen (*langar*) for the people of all castes and creed. People would come from all over to visit Guru Sahib and listen to his *kirtan* and share food (*langar*) while sitting on the ground. Before

Guru Sahib departed from this world, he appointed Bhai Lehna, later known as Guru Angad Dev, for preaching to the mankind. Nanak Sahib did not appoint any of his sons — Shri Chand, born in 1494, or Laxmi Das, who was born in 1497 — as his successor for preaching. This was the parameter of the person who gave a new philosophy of life to the world.

Outside the gurdwara building is a well that was used by Guru Sahib to irrigate the crops. Nice and clean surroundings with various types of flower plants adds to the attraction of the historical place.

Coming back from Kartarpur Sahib to Narowal, we went to see another famous town of Gujranwala district: Saidpur, now called Eminabad. The fifth generation from Timur, Babar, was born on February 14, 1483 and succeeded his father Umar Sheikh on June 14, 1494. He joined the family struggle for power and finally made himself the master of Kabul. He entered Punjab in 1523 on the invitation of Daulat Khan Lodhi and Alam Khan, an uncle of Ibrahim Lodhi, the Delhi Sultan. But war in his home country made him go back till his final invasion on November 15, 1525.

Babar's army of 12,000 men was mostly undisciplined and just wanted to loot the riches of India. Babar's invasion of the town of Saidpur, after conquering Sialkot without any resistance, happened while Guru Nanak Sahib along with Bhai Mardana were also visiting the town. They were witness to the havoc wreaked during the invasion on the villagers. Guru Sahib in his famous epic *Babarvani* describes the atrocities of Babar and his men in Punjab. Many people from the area were arrested along with Guru Sahib and Bhai Mardana. It was the wise words of Guru Sahib which made Babar set free all the prisoners with their belongings. Maharaja Ranjit Singh granted 150 acres for this gurdwara, which is known as Rohri Sahib. There are two other places related to Guru Sahib's visit, named "Chaki Sahib"

and the well-known “well of Bhai Lalo”. At this place Guru Sahib wrote the famous hymns challenging God over the attack of Babar over Hindustan and it goes like this:

*“Jaise mein aave khasam ki bani, tesera kari bian ve Lallo,
Paap ki jan le kabalo dahia, jori mange dan ve Lalo”*

Reading between the lines, one can easily understand how fearless and bold with a strong vision Guru Sahib would say his words, no matter what the consequences considering that the rulers were fanatics and narrow-minded.

Unforgettable Pindi Bhattian

From Emenabad, I insisted on visiting Jhang Sial, where Heer-Ranjha’s cemetery exists. It was a long way off so a decision was made to go to Pindi Bhattian, the land of the great legend of five rivers: Dulla Bhatti. I was adamant on going, even though the driver, who had never visited this place before, felt it was getting dark and he did not know the way either. Stopping at a few places for directions, we finally ended up in Pindi Bhattian. It was already 9 pm and very dark. We asked a motorcycle rider to take us to the descendent of any Dulla Bhatti clan. A very nice young man took us straight to the big haveli related to the legend. Here we sat amidst the 12th generation of Dulla Bhatti. There were six to seven charpoys in the haveli and about 10 people sitting along with a few kids. They were puffing away the traditional hookah. First they all got very surprised over our late night visit. They thought we were people from the film industry for some story. They were a little reluctant to talk openly but when we told them that we were from the other Punjab, they got all excited. Janab Asghar Ali start talking very frankly. He asked a few questions about East Punjab and the amazing thing which we all enjoyed was their Punjabi language, a little glazed with a beautiful Urdu touch.

Before we start asking them any questions, I did mention that I was trying to get as much authentic information as

possibly about Dulla Bhatti and that one day if I had enough money I would produce a movie on the great son of Punjab. They told us that in the last five years, there were some people from the Bombay film industry who visited for information on Dulla Bhatti. They virtually had tears in their eyes when I told them that it was my childhood dream to visit their village and meet the descendants of Dulla Bhatti.

“Are you proud of your great-great-grandfathers?” I asked. “Sure we are proud of them, what sacrifices they made! But some writers made Dulla Bhatti a dacoit (*daku*) and we do not like this.” I promised to one day write a book on Dulla Bhatti, and it would prove that he was never a dacoit but a rebel against the rulers of the time. I did write a book *Dulla Bhatti — A Legendary Warrior of Punjab*. In 2010, this book was released on the day of Lohri (a famous festival of Punjab) at DAV Public School in Amritsar by the then Deputy Commissioner Kahan Singh Panu. There was a stage show performed by about 25 school boys and girls on Dulla Bhatti. There was pin drop silence in the crowded auditorium hall of the school. Just imagine the love for this great warrior. Even a man in handcuffs came to the auditorium, to everyone’s surprise. He was in the district court of Amritsar for his hearing and he requested the judge to allow him to see the show. Since the judge also liked Dulla Bhatti, he allowed him to go with the police party.

Janab Asghar Ali narrated the detailed history. How Dulla Bhatti’s father Farid Khan Bhatti and his father Sandal Khan Bhatti confronted Akbar’s forces on different occasions and Sandal Khan Bhatti was arrested and put to death. Later, Dulla Bhatti’s father Farid Khan Bhatti was hanged to death. Dulla Bhatti was born 12 days after his father’s death. We spent about an hour-and-a-half in the village of Dulla Bhatti, known

as Dulle-Ke. This village is around 2 kilometers east of Pindi Bhattian. One of the legendary stories is that Dulla himself settled here during the reign of Akbar. The other version is that Dulla's son Jahan Khan populated this village.

We had a serious discussion on Dulla Bhatti. There were some tough questions but answers were not satisfying. I asked them if there was any body in Pindi Bhattian who had done some work on the legend of Sandal Bar. The motorcycle rider mentioned the name of Prof Sheikh of Government Degree College in Pindi Bhattian. He had written a book *Dulle-Di-Bar*. Before our departure, I promised to return and start something different in Pindi Bhattian.

Sandal Bar was named after the grandfather of Dulla Bhatti i.e. Sandal Bhatti (alias Bijli Khan). Sandal Khan had control over 12 villages of the area during Akbar's rule of Punjab. He was a brave man with great valour. He was the first one to sow the seeds of revolt against the Mughal emperor. He had a strong group of young men always on the horseback and looking for trouble against the regime. He organized the farmers of the areas between rivers Ravi and Chenab to not pay revenue to the Mansabdar of the ruling power.

Even it was a feudal conflict for supremacy, at least it was the beginning of the new kind of confrontation between various classes of people against the state power. After the death of Sandal Khan Bhatti, his son Farid Khan Bhatti carried on his father's legacy and kept the flame of revolt alive in a guerilla war act. He had the support of the poor and the middle class countrywide.

It was very late night to visit someone you have never met before. When time is short and there is much to learn and know, a situation like can be very confusing. But here in my

case, there was no apprehension of trying to knock at some stranger's door late at night. You know why? Because of my faith in Punjabi culture. There is no village in East and West Punjab where you do not find people who have a love for history, literature, and progressive thoughts. On top of that, I was brave enough to face any kind of odd situation with my confidence and knowledge of the Punjabi culture and tradition.

So, at Pindi Bhattian, we stopped at the medical store which was ready to close. What a coincidence when we asked if they knew anything about Prof Asad Sheikh, They nodded at once and in a few minutes Prof Sheikh was walking to us with his friend Mohammad Bashir Diwana. We greeted each other like family members meeting after a long period of time. This is the traditional Punjabi way of life, which goes back into centuries. Actually the medical store belonged to Prof Sheikh's family and being run by his father and brothers. Walking through the narrow and old streets of Pindi Bhattian, we sat at the upper level of the traditional old house in the middle part of Pindi Bhattian. Prof Asad's family accorded us a warm welcome and soon we were served tea. Wasting no time, we got busy in discussing the history of Pindi Bhattian. I was interviewing Prof Asad like a press reporter. I asked him some tough questions first. I was amazed when he showed his newbook on Dulle-di-Bar, a book of over 350 pages of which a major part was dedicated to Dulla Bhatti. Since it was in Persian script, I asked him if he could translate it into English, to which he gladly agreed. It was a very short visit but proved to be really long lasting. We were determined to do something about the legacy of Dulla Bhatti. There were so many options open to start with, but we left all open for the future to decide what is best to go with.

Our meeting lasted an hour and 45 minutes. What were the reasons that we got so close to each other? First of all, both of us share the same feelings for Punjabi legends like Dulla Bhatti, Jaimal Fateh, Jagat Singh Jagga alias “Jagga Daku” and many many more. On the literary side, Baba Bulle Shah, Shah Hussain, Waris Shah, Peelu, etc. Secondly, Professor Asad had great interest in history having written nine books on various aspects of Punjab life. Thirdly, Professor Asad had done a deep study on the caste system of the villages of Hafizabad district. He travelled the whole area of Hafizabad for three months on his motorcycle and collected all the information. Coming to the Jat sub-castes of Goraya and Sekhon, he gave much information since I and my wife belong to these sub-castes, respectively. Not too far from Pindi Bhattian, there are about 10-11 villages belonging to Gorayas. Both these sub-castes have the same generation lines as of Rajput Bhattian.

The composition of population of a village unit is very interesting. No one is born a farmer, a carpenter, a smith, a lender, or a thief. The socio-economic background determined that. Back in the old days, means of transportation were equal to none. In order to meet the needs, a village had to be almost a complete market for everything. That is how some opted for farming to produce food. Some would make ploughs and other farming tools, others chose carpentry. There were those who traded items. Over a period of time, these occupations were carried on from generation to generation and had their names established:” Jatt’ doing farming, “Tarkhan” doing carpentry, “Jolaha” doing cotton weaving, “Beopari” doing trading,” Nai” doing hair and nail cutting.

Coming to Punjab’s sub-caste system, let me say one thing very clearly: no sub-caste is high or low. All these sub-castes

were only for one purpose in the old days and that was for their tribal identification. Other than that, there was nothing in it. The tragic part of the old Hindu faith (Varna an ancient four-fold arrangement of socio-economic categories called the Varnas) divided the society into four categories: Brahman, Vaishya, Kshatriya and Shudra. This was one of the worst things to have happened in Hindustan. This division resulted in the Mughals ruling over India for about 700 years. It was said that there was a “order of the king” i.e. the Mughal ruler, that anon-Muslim shall not ride the horse, shall desist from any loud religious preaching, shall not wear at urban, shall not bear any arms. Everything changed when the Khalsa was formed by the 10th Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, on the Baisakhi day of 1699 at Anandpur Sahib. All the orders of the king were violated on the beat of the drum (*nagara*). Where did the Khalsa come from? The Panj Piaras (the five beloved ones) came from the lowest of the low, untouchables who were never welcomed at the doors of ‘high class’ Brahmans. These five were Bhai Daya Singh (1661-1708), a Khatri from Lahore; Bhai Dharam Singh (1666-1708), a Jat from Meerut; Bhai Himmat Singh (1661-1705), a Kumhar from Gujarat; Bhai Mohkam Singh (1663-1705), a Chhimba from Gujarat, and Bhai Sahib Singh (1662-1705), a Nai from Karnataka. Guru Gobind Singh rightly said: “I am the son of the warrior, not the Brahman” (“*Kshatriya ka putt hu Brahman ka nahi*”). It was the army of the low, untouchables and poor farmers who liberated the honor and dignity of the Hindustan populace during the time of Ahmed Shah Abdali and Nadir Shah. Such were the circumstances that it became a daily saying:

“*Khada peeta lahe da*”

“*Baqi Ahmad Shah-eda*”

“Whatever you can eat, fine,
the rest Ahmed Shah is going to snatch”

Now the time had come for a 19-year-old boy to challenge King Ahmad Shah Abdali’s grandson Shah Zaman. “O Shah Zaman, the grandson of Abdali, here the grandson of Charat Singh challenges you to a single combat. If you have any manhood left in you, come out and face the challenge.” It seems to me that Maharaja Ranjit Singh fulfilled the dream of Dulla Bhatti as it became very common in the Punjabi culture:

“Mai dhawan Delhi de kingrae”

“kara Lahore tabaa”

Shah Zaman did not come out for the safety of his life and left Lahore Fort in the cover of the nocturnal darkness and fled to Kabul.

There are countless incidents that took place in the land of Ravi and Chenab areas which are not recorded and have not got proper attention. They are more one-sided to please the *hakam* (rulers) of the time. This is how Dulla Bhatti was portrayed by the Mughal writers, who were granted *jagirs* and prestigious positions in the Darbar of Lahore and Delhi.

Walking back to the streets of Pindi Bhattian, it was almost midnight and very quiet, but it felt that I was walking in my own village in Ransinke-Mira. The only difference was that we had semi-pucca streets and no bazaars and shops. Other things like people, language and culture was the same. The air, dust, and water seemed the same too. As were the crops, animals, and celebrations.

We had to say good bye to our host Prof Asad Saleem Sheikh because the next day we were going to Faisalabad (Lyallpur–Bar Da Ilaka) for the engagement of Haseeb Munawar, our neighbor in USA.

*Khaiye kanak bhave howai ullie,
Rahiye Lahore bhave howai kuli*

First Muslim Wedding: Lyallpur (Faisalabad)

Another famous fact about Lahore is that the people here go to bed late, and get up very late. The evening before, we were told that we would be leaving Lahore at 8am for Faisalabad since it was a two-and-a-half hour drive. It was November 5. We got up quite early even though tired from the travelling the previous days. Afraid of being late, we were good to go by 8 am, but were surprised to see that nobody was ready and there was no rush and excitement for the engagement ceremony. Finally, around 11 am, we got into two vans heading for Faisalabad. Later on, I was told that the Lahorians are well known for not being on time. They feel insulted if they ever get anywhere on time. Well, that is the life style of the city of Sufis, poets, scholars, and above all the legends who sacrificed their everything for the common cause to break the chains of slavery.

After a nice ride, we are in Faisalabad, a very old city with factories and industries. It was a good welcome on the bridal side, a typical Punjabi way. This was my first Muslim engagement ceremony to witness. They really got surprised to see a Sikh couple in their family, and they were very pleased to meet us. I talked to some elders in the family about the city's history. I also told them that we had an old relationship with their are a going back a 100 years. Our grandfather used to have over 25 acres of land for farming. He was always riding on his horse back and forth from Lyallpur to Lahore and Gurdaspur district. If you look back into the British time in Punjab, this is the last generation to talk about and learn so much from their experience. Some of them also mentioned

the name of Jagat Singh 'Jagga' when he made the big robbery and how he gave a hard time to the police force of the time.

Besides being the third largest city of Punjab, the residents of the city cannot drink the water from the ground. The land and the water underneath are so polluted from the waste of the factories, that they have to use the tank water coming from the near by canal after its purification. There's a famous clock tower (Ghanta Ghar), with eight corner streets going to eight different directions in the city. There's also an agricultural university that was established in 1908. There's a big food market, dry port, and a railway junction. Before 1880, there was a thick forest all over the area. Strategically, this area was very important for the British rulers to develop as being a hub for business. Railroad was used for transporting goods from Lahore to Karachi. That's why the canal system was developed and the ownership of land was allotted to the outstanding people in different fields.

The imperialist character of the British empire, as the ruler of half the world, made them develop their colonies so that they could exploit as much wealth and raw material as possible. Their imperialistic nature of keeping the third world colonies under their thumb gave them the character of being cruel rulers.

. Lyallpur became very famous in a short time among the Punjabi people. The uninhibited and virgin land was very fertile with plenty of water, and the city became famous for the food market and trading. The hard work of the Punjabi farmers made the Lyallpur belt like California of USA. These people could not enjoy the fruit of their hard work for a long time because of the partition of India and formation of Pakistan in August 1947.

Lyallpur was a part of Jhang and Sandalbar and was founded in 1892 by a British officer, Charles James Lyal. That

is how it got its name Lyallpur. Later on, in 1977, its name was changed to Faisalabad after the name of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. In Punjabi folklore, it is well known as Lyallpur, for example:

*“Jagge maria Lyallpur daka
Taran kharak giyan.”*

Lyallpur is proud of sacrificing its son Shaheed Bhagat Singh for the freedom of India on March 23, 1931. Great classical singer Nusrat Fatch Ali Khan also belonged to Lyallpur. We arrived at Lahore very late in the day. The bride's parents honored us with Nauges (suits) as a custom of Punjabi culture. People in Punjab are still trying to keep alive the centuries-old customs and traditions. All these traditions had a deep meaning in the olden days. Things have changed now, now we are modern, updated, and smart. But we have more tensions, problems, anxieties, and sickness.

November 6, our eighth day in western Punjab. If someone were to ask me how I would describe my visit in a few words, my answer will be: a very rich experience with unforgettable memories.

From Johar town in Model Town, just across Punjab University in Lahore, it took us only about 35 minutes to get to the Wagah-Attari Border. It's so called because there is a village named Wagah on the Pakistan side and a big and historical village (Attari) on the Indian side. One of the great fighters of the war between the British and Sikh forces on February 10, 1846 at the village of Sabar on was Sardar Sham Singh Attariwala, who happened to be from the the village of Attari. This was one of the railroad links from Delhi to Lahore and beyond before 1947. Railway service has been suspended and resumed many times because of the unpleasant relations between the two countries, mainly due to the “Kashmir issue”.

Why not resolve it once and for all, but none of the countries is sincere and serious and the main hurdle are the selfish politicians, who always like to have some burning issue and slogans in their hands to be fool the common people.

The week-long visit to West Punjab made me realize that there are some crucial things that should happen soon, because it will help the normal people's lives in a beneficial way:

- 1) Normalisation of relations between the two nations will be beneficial in all walks of life.
2. Expansion of trade as far as daily consumable goods like meat, vegetables, beans, and other accessories in the medical field are very important.
3. Exchange programmes must be organized among the farmers, technicians, as far as agricultural tools and machines are concerned.
4. The city of Lahore has its own unique and rich heritage, civilization and its history should be translated in other languages.
5. Economic up liftment of the populace will help reduce the terrorist activities in both countries. Politics and religion must stay in their own boundaries and must not mingle with each other.

Countries in South and East Asia like Burma, China, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, and Afghanistan should have a "No War Zone" Treaty. They should help each other make a viable balance of each country's basic infrastructure, with a total tariff-free trade, by railroad and ground transport. Doing this will cut each country's defense budgets drastically. These nations have the resources and think tanks and they can put the Western nations in deep thought and it will change the course of world supremacy.

CHAPTER 4

Second Visit To Punjab (Pakistan)

It was almost two years after the first visit to West Punjab before I made the second trip. During this time, I was in constant touch with Prof Asad Saleem Sheikh. We started planning how we should organize a historical function to honor the great legend of Punjab's Dulla-Bhatti. Finally, we came to the conclusion to organize a Dulla Bhatti Sangat in Pindi Bhattian involving people from different walks of life: scholars, newspaper editors, professors, lawyers, students, and common villagers. And it was rightly done so very nicely.

As agreed, Prof Asad did finish his book translating it into English from the Persian script. It was a great honor for me that he dedicated his book named *Dulle-Di-Bar* to me, published by S.M.Ali Anjum, Izharsons, Lahore. As said by famous Punjabi poet Hashim Shah, "*Fateh Nasib Una Nu, Jina Himmat Yaar Banaie*(victory is bestowed to those, who befriend courage)."

It was passion and excitement which kept me going to explore something new. It was not easy to prove otherwise somebody who was portrayed as a bad guy, a bandit or a merciless killer. Yes, he was a bad guy for the Mughal Empire, just as Gandhi, Jinnah, Nehru, and Bhagat Singh were for the British Empire. Yes, he was a bandit for the Mughal merchants and their agents. Yes, he was a merciless killer for those who had no mercy for the common countrymen, women, and children. This is in the psyche of Punjabi culture that they

honor and respect anyone who dares to challenge the prevailing system. No one is born to do any harm to anyone. The political, economic, social, and cultural agents of life make one who he or she is and what they do.

Before my second visit to West Punjab, the Dulla Bhatti Sangat agreed that we must start and set an example for a new tradition to cultivate the legacy of Dulla Bhatti. Therefore, the following issues were unanimously agreed upon:

1. There will be a festival in the memory of Dulla Bhatti at the end of March every year.
2. Poor students in the Government Degree College of Pindi Bhattian with good academic performance will be honored with Dulla Bhatti Scholarship.
3. There will be an award for outstanding people in different fields like writing, singing or other heroic acts.
4. Dulla Bhatti Sangat will work on promoting the real cause of the legend and make the common folks in the countryside aware.

Finally, I was all set to go to Pindi Bhattian to make my dream come true. My elder brother Kulwant Singh (Sarpanch) along with our driver Raju headed for Amritsar in the early morning of March 27, 2008. My friend Surinder Kochhar and his wife Anita Sarin from Amritsar too went towards the Wagah-Attari Border. After about 35 minutes, we are at the borderline, going to Pakistan from India by road. This was my first chance to feel the ground reality of the Customs, Immigration and other checks.

After the Indian Customs and Immigration checks and on entering the common thick white line that was drawn on the black road of Wagah Border, I felt for a moment that I was nowhere. My one step was inside the boundary of India, and the other towards Pakistan. I crossed a big gate, reached the

Customs lounge and completed the formal operation of checking of documents. There was hardly anybody other than me in the Immigration hall and the Pakistani official's behavior was very friendly, and most importantly, their Punjabi language blended with Urdu was more pleasant than any good ghazal in Hindi. I dragged my suitcase and went outside. The pleasant, naughty wind of the last days of March was kissing my face and making my long beard scattered. The wind was going across the man-made border, it didn't need any Pakistani or Indian visa. No one could bound nature. It's humans who have made themselves prisoners of geographical boundaries.

Dozens of trucks with perishable and non-perishable goods were ready to go to the other side of the border. While crossing these trucks, when I reached the compound, I found my hosts, Prof Asad Saleem Sheikh, Advocate Malik Tanveer, and Bashir Diwana present to welcome me. I embraced all of them and we set off towards the city of Lahore. After passing through the countryside, reminding me of the East Punjab of the Seventies, my real destination was the place where the popular folk Punjabi hero Dulla Bhatti resided, but we had to stay in Lahore for a while too. My American neighbor Tosseef's house was in this city and he was in Lahor eat the time.

As soon as I came out of Wagah, I made a telephone call to him. He was still asleep, a typical Lahorian way of life. He was pleasantly surprised to find me in Lahore and at once invited me to his home. He resided in Johar Town, which was in a corner of Lahore, near Punjab University. As our car was entering the city, the volume of traffic was mounting. From Bata-pur area, we were passing Dhar Mura, beside the canal. At one point, railway line crossed the road, with one or two underpasses. There were colorful flowers around the road, and at times the shade of tall and thick trees fell on our car. We

passed by the famous Mall road, and moved by the side of the canal. After a few minutes, the canal left us or we had left the canal and we were on another road. Eventually, we succeeded in reaching Tosseef's house. He greeted us warmly, took us in the drawing room where he served us cold drinks and then he led us to a restaurant for lunch.

This restaurant was in the Moon Market of Allama Iqbal town, an area of Lahore, and was known as "Bundu Khan". One side of the lawn of the restaurant had a barbeque where tikkas were being roasted on coals. Everywhere there was the fragrance of food. We found a great many people in the restaurant. There were a variety of dishes but the most prominent was the full thigh of the goat in its particular cooking style. I was informed on my way that it was known as "sajji". In about half an hour, we were done with our food. Every dish was delicious. Here, people were fond of spices as well as meat. My tongue was burning with these spices and made it cold with cold drinks. When we got free from our lunch in Bundu Khan, it was mid-afternoon and we had to set off towards Pindi Bhattian where I had to attend the three-day celebrations of Dulla Bhatti Sangat.

We bid Tosseef good bye and moved towards Pindi Bhattian, leaving Lahore behind, while asking him to come for the function at Pindi Bhattian, which he did.

We were on the new Motorway-2, which goes from Lahore to Islamabad. Pindi Bhattian was on this road at a distance of 110 kilometers. While we were on Motorway-2, we doubted if Pakistan was a poor country. This road touches European standards, with trees on both sides and greenery everywhere across. The wheat fields were all around, punctuated with fields of saffron and their yellow flowers. There was no big town or city until we reached Pindi Bhattian. A railing had been fixed

on both sides of the Motorway so that no traffic or wild animals could enter. There are inter changes near every town or city. There was an interchange for Sheikhupura too after coming out of Lahore.

After an hour-and-a-half's drive, we entered the city of Pindi Bhattian. This was the city of Dulla Bhatti, the hero of Punjab, who died as a martyr more than four centuries ago while showing his bravery.

Professor Asad asked to stop the car at Deera when we entered Pindi Bhattian. Malik Tanveer and Bashir Diwana left, and I and Prof Asad moved towards his home on foot. We reached his home passing through two or three narrow streets. His wife and daughters welcomed us.

The next day, 28th of March, I as usual got up early in the morning and since there was nothing to do, I opened the book *Dulle-Di-Bar*. The opening ceremony of this book was going to be held the following day. As I was went through the book, I became familiar with Dulla Bhatti and his land.

Dulla's Birthplace

We had to go to the birth place of Dulla Bhatti as per the day's program. It was a village known as 'Choochak', at a distance of about 6 kilometers to the west of Pindi Bhattian. Mrs Sheikh cooked a delicious breakfast and we set off towards Choochak.

We were in Choochak in 20 minutes. Prof Asad, Bashir Diwana and Tanveer Malik were with us. The villagers, who were dancing (Zumar) on the beat of the drums, welcomed us as we entered. All the prominent people of the village, including M. Nawaz Bhatti, Allah Yar Bhatti, and Ehsan-Ul-Allah-Bhatti, were present there. The children of the village looking in a curious way as they had seen a Sikh for the very first time. The women of the village were also looking at this scene from

a distance. In the corner of the village, which was surrounded by greenery, was the Dera of Muhammad Nawaz Bhatti. We were seated there and served with lassi and milk. We had *gupshup* over there with the inhabitants of Choochak. They seemed very loving and kind. We spent about an hour-and-a-half in Choochak village and exchanged our views on Dulla Bhatti. What a tragedy that in Indian Punjab the song of Dulla Bhatti is still sung on the Lohri festival in the middle of January every year, but nothing of the sort happens in West Punjab (Pakistan). Hearing this from me, their eyes welled up and tears flowed. They also showed me the family tree of the descendents of Dulla Bhatti on a large sheet of white cloth. I announced three scholarships for three children of Choochak from Dulla Bhatti Sangat in return for that love.

The villagers bade good bye to us in the same enthusiastic way as they had greeted us. Prof Asad asked to stop the car 2-3 kilometers from Pindi Bhattian and said "Sardarji, let's show you; Delhi Darbar". I was surprised. Yes, the "Delhi Durbar of Malangs". Tanveer Malik turned the car to the left. Then we came to know the reality of "Delhi Darbar". Three to four Malangs were busy in grinding "bhang". This was the famous dera of Malangs. Their guru, Salim Mastan, is buried here. The devotees of Salim Mastan say he spent all his life in shorts. Neither did he take a bath nor cut his hair for 60 years. The length of his hair was 9.5 feet. This is called the "Delhi Darbar" because it is the royal palace of Malangs and its chain is in the entire sub-continent. A fire is being burnt here from the last 90 years and Saein Malan himself burnt it during his period. Malangs rub the ashes of this fire on their bald heads and face and express their specific school of thought. Salim Mastan died at the age of nearly 125. A fair is also held here in his name every year.

We came out of the "Delhi Durbar of Malangs" past noon. We were feeling hunger pangs, so we had lunch at Prof Sheikh's house, and rested. We had to reach Safina restaurant on Motorway-2 near Pindi Bhattian before evening where Prof Asad's friends had arranged a tea party. We reached there before sunset. This restaurant was at a distance of 20 kilometers from Pindi Bhattian on the Lahore-Islamabad motorway. The environment was beautiful and pleasant there. Many passengers and vehicles stopped there and set off. We sat on the chairs in the green lawn for a long time. We were introduced to Advocate Nawaz, poet Waheed Sheikh and others. We were served sandwiches and *pakorras*. We exchanged thoughts about Pakistan-India relations and the socio-political conditions of the sub-continent.

Everyone was of the opinion that there is a need to accelerate people-to-people contact between the two countries and the hurdles should be removed in this sub-continent. Both the countries are a living reality and they should live like good neighbors, accepting each other's existence. Some were of the opinion that perhaps the establishment or some politicians from both sides were creating hurdles. It was soon dark as our conversation went on. There was a chill in the air because river Chenab flowed at a short distance from here. After spending over two hours, we came back to Pindi Bhattian.

In the morning, the freshness of the air gave a feeling of spring. The breakfast was traditional Punjabi style of *makai roti, saag, guruh* and *lassi* of *chaati*. We ate to our fill. After breakfast, we went to Prof Sheikh's college. In the staff room, we got introduced to the principal of the college, Prof Hafiz Abdur Rehman, and some other Professors. We had a chat with them. We were served with the tea in the library. Here we found thousands of books in English and Urdu. I also went

to a classroom for a brief interaction with senior students. The college discipline was great. Then we went to the girls college accompanied by Prof Hafiz Abdur Rehman, where Madam Farida Kareem and Mrs Rubab greeted us. We got introduced to the students and they asked many questions regarding India. The passion to resolve the problems of the region was felt in them too. One of the students demanded that I sing a few lines of Waris Shah. A photo session was also organized. We went to Prof Sheikh's house once again at noon.

“Dulle-Di-Bar”, A Book By Prof Asad Saleem Sheikh

The inauguration of the Dulla Bhatti seminar and the launch of Prof Asad Saleem Sheikh's book *Dulle-Di-Bar* was scheduled for 4 pm. The ceremony had to be presided over by me and some invitees from Lahore had also come. As soon as we entered the hall, the ceremony began. The chief editor of Punjabi union, Mudassir Iqbal Butt, and a member of the Punjab Public Service Commission and writer of *Safar Nama*, Niggar Dawood Tahir, also joined us on the stage. The chairman of Dulla Bhatti Sangat, Prof Asad Saleem Sheikh, too joined us on the stage. The speakers expressed their views on the bravery and personality of Dulla Bhatti and some presented their comments on the book.

Being the chief guest at the function on March 29, 2008, I would sum up my lecture as below:

“In the political upheaval of the last almost five centuries, many writers and historians did not do justice to the people born with rebellious thoughts. So many *pir-faqirs*, saints, thinkers, and warriors were scaled down according to the wishes of the rulers. It was like the old Punjabi saying ‘*lakho-kakh; kakho-lakh*’. Same way Dulla Bhatti was the legacy of history books, he was written off just as a dacoit, a robber, a

killer and what not. No one ever thought about pointing out the tragedy in the textbooks. Everything was coming down the time like '*lakeer de faqir*'. To challenge the establishment, to fight for a just cause, to take up arms, to be the shield for the oppressed and helpless was the name of Dulla Bhatti. To fight against the mighty forces of the Mughal Empire, knowing that the final result will be martyrdom in the battle field, could not stop the Sandal Bar hero to fight to the end.

“Dulla Bhatti organized the poor and small peasantry along with the common working class of the country side not to pay any land revenue to the Mughal Haqumat (government). This was a big enough issue for the Mughal Mansabdar to declare Dulla as a danger for the Empire. Dulla Bhatti and his group attacking the Mughal traders and caravans passing through the Sandal Bar territory was another issue raising the eyebrows of the Lahore and Delhi Darbar against Pindi Bhattian. And the end-result of the conflict between the Lahore Darbar and Pindi Bhattian was the arrest of Dulla Bhatti and his being put to death, which he faced with grace and bravery. The eye witness of this great incident in Punjab's history was the great Sufi saint, Sai Shah Hussain, himself on March 26, 1589 at Lahore.”

Here I would like to pay a tribute in a few lines to Dulla Bhatti:

*Jadoon kade vi aankh di gal turdi
Kai mard agahmah yad kar laien
Ayepar koi na wich jahhan ditha
Dulle Bhatti Punjab naun yad kar laien
Ladhi maan di kukh da laal hoya
Jangle bailyan wich parwan hoya
Pith lakhi da shah aswar hoya
Taroo panj daryawan noon yad kar laien
Dulle Bhatti Punjab naun yad kar laien*

*Aisa bar wich mard daleer hoya
 Jabar zulam lai siwa toun sher hoya
 Shahi takht Lahore lai hanher hoya
 Nit ikeewain katti da phair hoya
 Aisay put panj aab naon yad kar laien
 Dulle Bhatti Punjab naun yad kar laien
 Haq sach da pahray dar hoya
 Ankh abroo da barkhurdar hoya
 Bey khauf niddar sardar hoya
 sandal bar di mitti da yar hoya
 Ayse soormay taien salam kar laien
 Dulle Bhatti Punjab naun yad kar laien
 Bhulle bhatkiyan lai ooh rah hoya
 Aayan sharn jo dulla mehrban hoya
 Sundar mandraye lai sarbrah hoya
 Zamindaran lai khauf da phah hoya
 Aise dill darya naun yaad kar laien
 Dulle bahtti Punjab naun yad kar laien
 Tainun 'Dharma' aiman dey naal dasay
 Qahar zulam dey bohat ne aan vasay
 Ainan zalman nu pakarh nal rasay
 Aiyo sabak Goraya dulla nit dasay
 Himmat har jay taan, Dulle naun yad kar laien
 Dulle Bhatti Punjab nuan yad kar laien.*

Let us go back to the times of the Mughal rule in India. Dulla Bhatti's grandfather Sandal Khan Bhatti was the direct descendant of Rawal Jaisal Singh, who founded the "golden city" of Jaisalmer, belonging to the warriors of the Rajput clan of Bhattis. Even Babar in his *Babarnama* mentioned the resistance offered to him by this tribe. The lifestyle of the Bhattis was the composite blend of Hindu and Islamic rituals and traditions. This tribe was dominating the regions lying

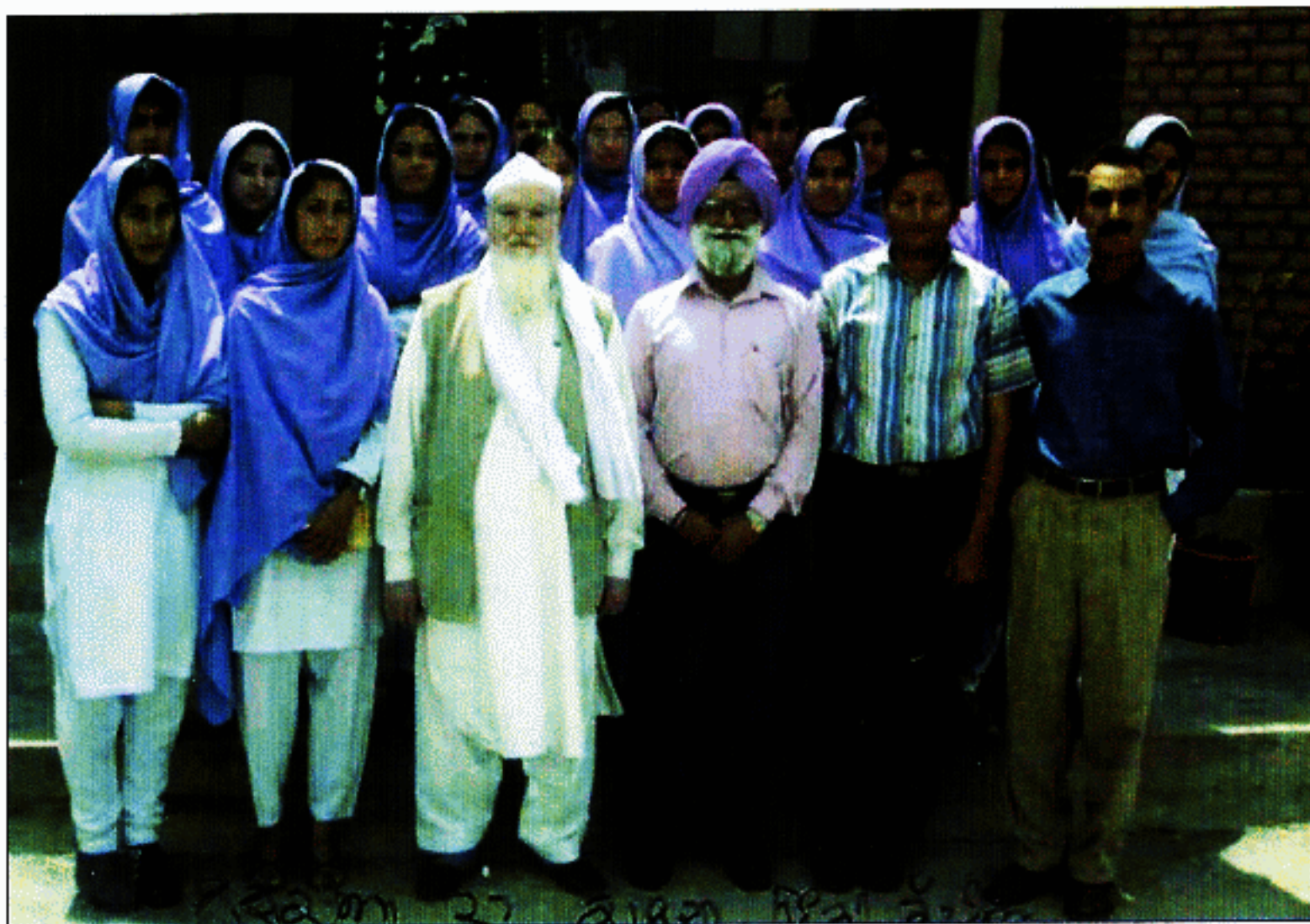
between the Ravi and Chenab rivers. People of this area never paid any taxes; rather, they openly defied the Mughal authority and were involved in looting the royal caravans of the Lahore Darbar. The head of all these activities was Sandal Khan Bhatti and after him his son Farid Khan Bhatti.

Dulla Bhatti followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather and waged a guerilla war against the Mughal Empire. Dulla refused to accept the legitimacy of the Mughal King, Akbar. Such was the level of resistance that Akbar had to shift his capital from Delhi to Lahore for nearly 15 years and made Lahore Fort his headquarters and Lahore his capital.

Dulla was not even born when his father and grandfather were executed. For some reason, he was never told why his father and grandfather were put to death until he was a young man. The story of Dulla has been poetically treated by many (similar to *Mirza-Sahiban* by Peelu and Bhagwan Singh)

*“Tera Sandal Dada Maareya , Ditta Boreya Vich Paa,
Mughlaan Puthiyaan Khallaan Laah Ke, Bhariyaa Naan
Hawaa.”*

Dullah was born in 1547 at Badar near Choochak on the bank of Chenab. Choochak was the place from where people went across the river to do their daily business and farming. According to Prof Asad Saleem Sheikh's *Dulle-Di-Bar*, “Choochak was one of the ancestors of Dulla Bhatti. Aidan was the fourth generation of Dheer Bhatti. Out of 14 of Aidan's sons, one was Lakhara. Choochak was the son of Lakhara. The three sons of Choochak — Nasso, Bader and Waris — lived at a village named Bader between the villages of Choochak and Behlolpur. Dulla Bhatti was born at village Bader, which was later washed away by river Chenab, resulting in the inhabitants migrating to Rohi Wala Khoo, now known as Choochak.



At Gov't Girls College Pindi Bhattian



Deputy Commisioner of Amritsar Sardar Kahn Singh Panu releasing the book "Dulla Bhatti" written by Dharam S. Goraya



Prof. Asad S. Sheikh honoring Dharam S. Goraya



Author with Prof. Asad S. Sheikh at Dulla Bhatti's Tombstone



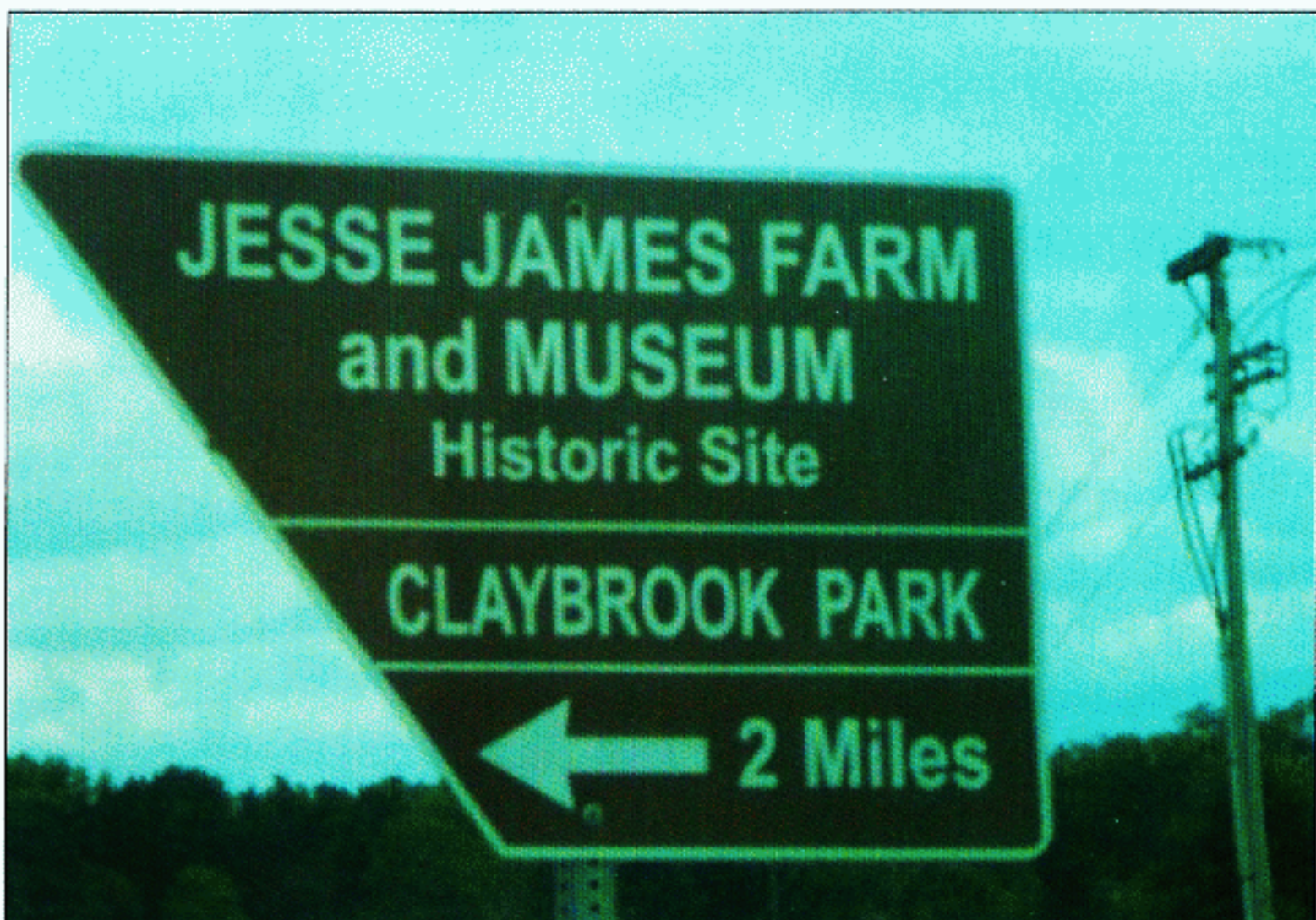
Author with wife Balbir K. Goraya at Kartarpur Sahib



The place where Jesse James got killed on April 3, 1882



First daylight robbery of Jesse James happened on Feb



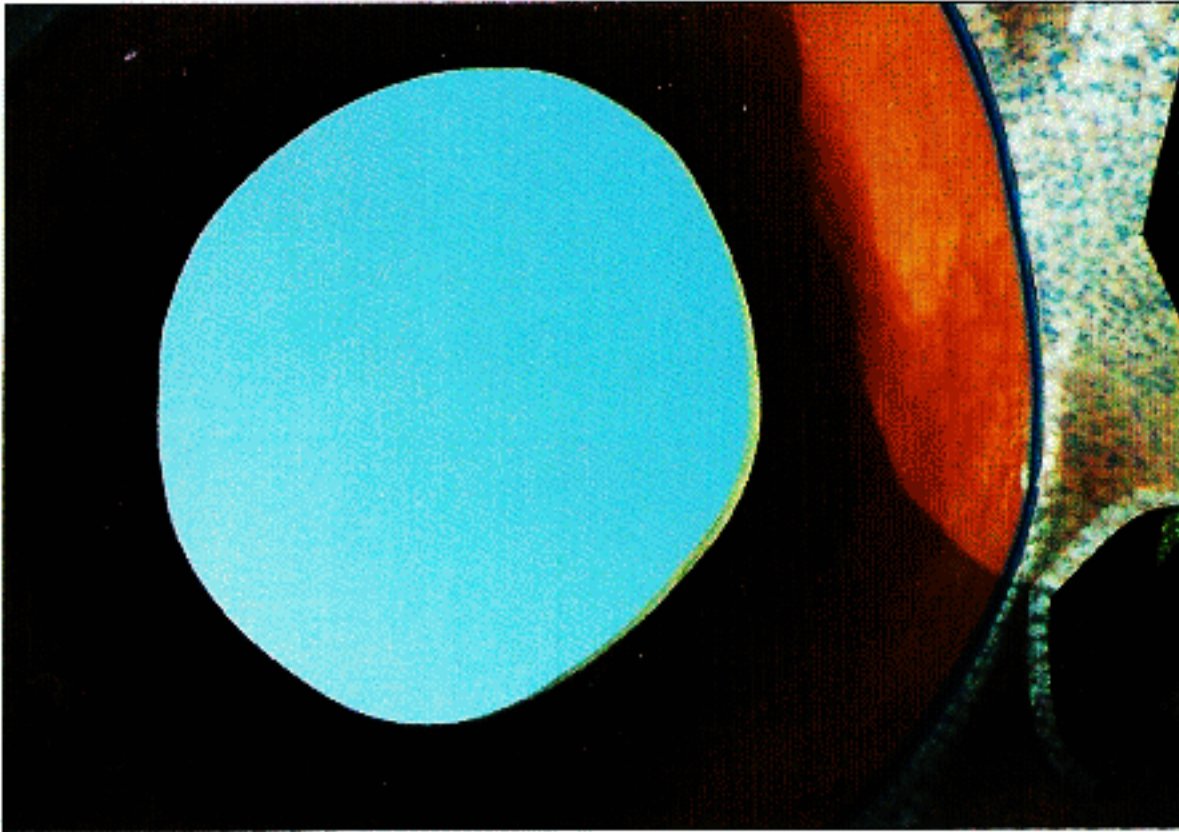
Directions to Jesse James Museum



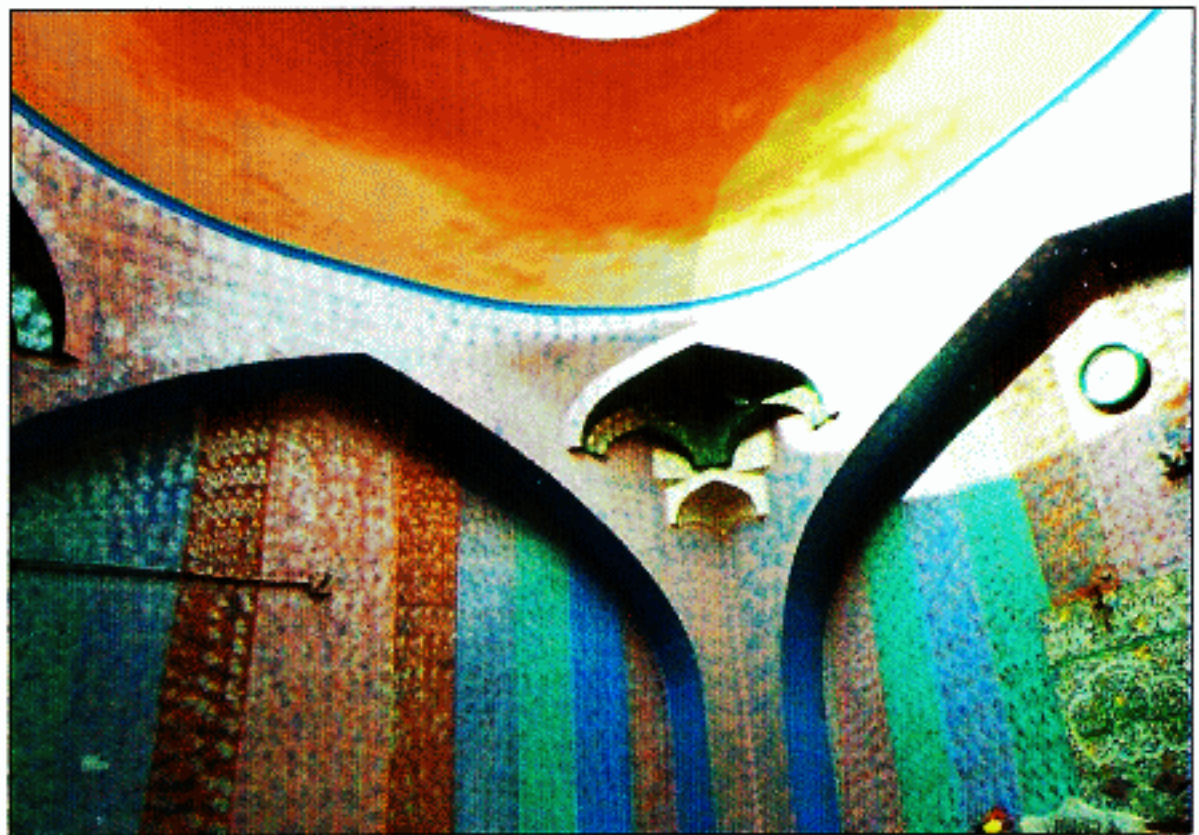
Author at first
Dulla Bhatti
festival in
Pindi Bhattian

Author with
friends at
Takht-Hazara





Open roof of Heer's Mazar



Interior of Heer's Mazar



Author at Heer's Mazar



Author at Hafizabad



Babar's first army darbar at Kalar Kahar



Author looking at the top of the Katas hills



Author at Katas with left: M. Bashir Diwana and right:
Asad S. Sheikh



History of Katas



Author (Dharam S. Goraya) delivering a lecture on Dulle-Di-Bar Book ceremony



A place at Kalanaur where Akbar was crowned as Emperor of India



Author at Salt Mine Khewra



At Khewra's Door



In Lahore at Restaurant at 'Dera'



An open view of the village Takht Hazara



Author's Ancestor Haweli at Ransike Mira

Dulla's childhood was just like any other village boy's. Back in the old days, life in the villages of Punjab was quite similar. Little boys and girls got together and played hide and seek, grazed the cattle and swam in the ponds and rivers. The simple way of living and hard earning of livelihood made them tough. Farming and hunting were very common. The whole area of Sandal Bar was densely forested, green, wooded and full of wild animals. Riding on horses and hunting in the jungle was a great excitement for the youth. Such was the daily routine of life, which made them good horse men and hunters and, of course, brave at heart. I would definitely call it a great martial art. Education was not common at all. There is this story that has travelled by word of mouth over generations that Dulla was also sent to the village mosque to learn the basic *alph-bey-pe*. The starting school age during those days was 10-12 or maybe more. One day the Maulvi was teaching the little kids that if you study hard, you will be famous in the area. Dulla asked the Maulvi about how someone could become famous quickly. The Maulvi answered that there are two ways to be famous and that is if you do something good, you become famous after sometime. But if you do something bad, you can become famous very soon. Hearing this from the Maulvi, Dulla slapped him very hard on his face. And the news spread like wild fire in the area and everybody was talking about Dulla.

“SUNDAR MUNDRIYE TERA KAUN WICHARA,
DULLA BHATTI WALA”

According to Prof Asad Saleem Sheikh's *Dulle-Di-Bar* (page 148), “Mughal Emperor Akbar often took a round of the area lying between Hafizabad and Jandiala Sher Khan for hunting. One day, as per routine, he was on his excursion when his eyes caught sight of a pretty Hindu maiden who was in the

prime of her life. Akbar sent a message to her father Mool Chand Alias Moola to seek his consent for marrying his daughter to be a Mughal Empress. The unwilling Mool Chand was afraid to express his denial, and approached Dulla in Pindi Bhattian. Dulla Bhatti was already in war with Akbar. He sent a message to his Hindu friend Sunder Das, residing in the surrounding village, and asked him to accept the marriage proposal for his son. Sunder Das accepted this offer but on hearing about this, Akbar was out raged and sent his General named Hafiz to arrest Dulla Bhatti. On the other hand, Dulla Bhatti successfully arranged a marriage between Mool Chand's daughter and Sunder Das' son. That very day has been recorded in the cultural history of the land of Sandal Bar. Every year, on this day, the Hindus pay homage to the brave, bold, and courageous Dulla Bhatti for safe guarding the chastity of the maiden. Folklores are sung, the songs of Lohri are still popular, and resound in the ears of the inhabitants especially in East Punjab."

The folk tale of "Sunder Mundriye" has been narrated differently by Hindu poet Jeevan Prakash, A Hindu family ran a shop at Nikka village close to Pindi Bhattian. The Lambardar of the village always had his eyes on the young and beautiful girls of the area. The Lambardar ordered the Hindu family to present him with his daughter as a wife or they will be punished. Those days, as per cultural and religious traditions, a Hindu-Muslim alliance was not considered an acceptable match. The Hindu family approached Dulla Bhatti for help, and he assured that the daughter of the Hindu family would be married to a man of her own religion. Dulla Bhatti also conveyed a message to the Lambardar to bring the wedding procession on the appointed date. In the mean time, Dulla Bhatti found a suitable match for the girl. Both the wedding

processions came on the same appointed day. The Lambardar came with his companion riding on a bedecked horse with great pomp and show. The brave men of Dulla Bhatti fell upon the wedding procession of the landlord, knocking him down from his horse, leaving him with no choice but to kneel down and beg for his life. Dulla graced the wedding procession that came from Sangla. During the marriage rites, Dulla acted as the father of the bride. The people who witnessed or heard about it jumped with joy. It was biting cold that day but the dance party and melodious songs filled the atmosphere with warmth with firewood.

“SUNDAR MUNDRIYE TERA KAUN WICHARA,
“DULLA BHATTI WALA”

Now, Dulla had grown with the company of close friends like Partha Jatt, Dadu Dogar, Jamal Khan, Kamal Khan, Sarma Chorjora, Kalabar Wala, Sala Meerasi, Khabna Vazeeras and Daula Kola. They would all get together early in the morning and go for hunting and having a great party every evening. Dulla would make a target of clay pitchers full of water with his bow and arrow, sometimes making the women angry, but ending up making fun of each other .

One day, a beautiful girl ‘Nooran’ questioned Dulla,” If you think you are a brave man, then why don’t you take revenge from the Mughals who killed your father and grandfather?” Listening to this, Dulla was stunned and asked his mother Ladhi about how his father and grandfather died. Ladhi unwillingly explained the history of his elders’ enmity with the Mughal Empire. From that day onward, the whole purpose of Dulla’s life was to organize a mass uprising by the local people and declare an open war against the Lahore and Delhi Darbars. It was the time when Sheikh Ahmad Sarhadi, Mujaddid-al-Afsani and many others stood against Akbar’s new religious faith

Deen-e-Ilahi. Yousaf Shah and his son Yaqoob in Kashmir and Yusufzai in Swat valley also refused to submit to Akbar. Across the river Ravi, Sandal Bar became the shelter for dissidents. Aitzaz Ahsan, in his book *Sindh Sagar*, writes how the farmers of Indus valley and India were wading through poverty. It was increasingly difficult for people to keep body and soul together, whereas the princes and the landlords were enjoying a life of luxury. The landlords would snatch away the cattle and agricultural tools from the poor and helpless farmers. 'Veigar' was a common practice. The landlords would use their muscle power to make a herd of poor people work for them at no cost.

'Veigar', an ancient social evil, still prevails in different parts of the world, especially in Asian countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and many others. This happens when a powerful man uses the unskilled labour class for household activities like farm work, construction, etc. The wages are minimum and at times they are only given some food. This kind of exploitation of the working class gave birth to the idea of Communism. Karl Marx rightly said that "workers have nothing to lose but their chains, but have the world to rule".

It is very interesting to mention here that there were three contemporary personalities — Dulla Bhatti, Sufi Saint Shah Hussain and Shah Hussain's mentor Shah Behlol Daryai, whose shrine lies in the suburbs of Pindi Bhattian— who vehemently opposed Akbar. Shah Behlol stayed at Dulla's land, a testimony to the trio's relationship. Sometimes the spiritual touch adds energy and encouragement for the right cause and this for sure must have happened in the circle of Dulla Bhatti and his companions.

The conflict between Pindi Bhattian and Lahore Darbar was so high that one example is worth mentioning. News was received with the beating of drums that a Mughal caravan laden

with treasures had entered the jurisdiction of Pindi Bhattian. The commander of the caravan was Amir Bagh Malkera. He was challenged by Dulla's band. After a long chase and fight, Dulla Bhatti beheaded Bagh Malkera and handed over the skull to Maida Khattri. Maida Khattri had free access to Lahore Darbar. He was advised by Dulla to offer this gift to Akbar on behalf of Dulla, the grandson of Sandal and son of Fareed Khan. As a result, Dulla Bhatti and his comrades got many horses, weapons and a sizeable bounty. According to a famous folk tale, Maida Khattri tells Akbar of a great warrior named Dulla Bhatti and his mother Ladhi, whose husband had been killed. And that Dulla will take revenge one by one and he is challenging Akbar that if he does come to Pindi Bhattian, he will destroy the Fort of Lahore.

For a good period of 15 years, there were much guerilla warfare between Lahore and Pindi Bhattian. The final fight between the Mughal Army and Dulla Bhatti took place around the beginning of 1589 at the battlefield of Thikriwala-Pattan, about 17 miles from Lahore. Some are of the view that it was fought close to the shrine of Mia Ali Sharai at Khanqah Dogran, while others are of the opinion that it happened at Bhalke near Choorkana. It was Dulla Bhatti's way of fighting that he was able to divide the Mughal Army into small fractions. Mirza Nizam was the Mughal Army commander and during the fight when Mirza Nizam was on the verge of being beheaded, he cleverly knelt down before Mai Ladhi. He would have thanked the old Rajput tradition that when an enemy surrenders, you do not raise your hand at him. That was how Mirza saved his life from the sharp attack of Dulla's sword.

Here is something more to learn about the Punjabi culture and tradition. When a Punjabi heart falls in love with someone, they sacrifice everything but when they have an enmity with

someone, they sacrifice everything for that as well. So what do they really achieve out of these kinds of act? Nothing, but glory and fame. They get their memories imprinted in the hearts of the common people. People remember them for ages to come. It was the courage and bravery of Dulla Bhatti which made him a legend not only of Sandal Bar but of the whole of Punjab.

Mirza Nizam played a treacherous role and got success in arresting Dulla Bhatti. Now he would take Dulla Bhatti to the Darbar of Akbar at Lahore Fort. Just to get Dulla's head to bow down, they made him go through a small window. Dulla had to bow his head first but this did not happen. When Dulla put his feet first, everybody got surprised and upset with his behavior. Of course he was declared a dangerous rebel to the Mughal Haqumat.

Over the drum beats in Lahore it was declared: "*Suno Suno, Aaj Mughaliya Saltanat Ke Khatarnak Baghi Dulla Bhatti Ko Mohalla Nakhas Me Sulli Par Charh Diya Jayega* (Let it be known, notorious rebel Dulla Bhatti will be hanged at Mohalla Nakhas today)." On March 26, 1589, Dulla Bhatti (the lion of Punjab) was taken to Mohalla Nakhas in chains. A large number of people had assembled to have a last glimpse of the great legend of the five rivers. Right there was famous Sufi Saint Shah Hussain of Lahore. He danced in ecstasy and sang verses which became the rich legacy of literature for all ages:

*"Ya dilbar ya mar ke pyare
Dulle de lal laban de laray
Sulli par charh te le halaray
Aaan milasi dilbar yara
Ya dilbar ya sai kar pyare"*

Noor Ahmad Chisti, the author of *Tehqeeq-e-Chisti*, has narrated in *Tehqeeq-ul-Fuqra* that at the time of hanging, Dulla

Bhatti cursed Akbar. When Shah Hussain appeared on the scene, Kotwal Malik Ali rebuked him and shouted, "O wizard, you think I would be taken in by your spell. I myself will fix you up." Hearing this slanderous talk, Shah Hussain's face got flushed with anger. He said, "O accused soul, you yourself have earned your tragic end."

Akbar ordered that the hanging of Dulla Bhatti would be recorded and submitted to the Darbar. Malik Ali presented the report with abusive language spoken against Akbar. Hearing the filthy and obscene words of the Kotwal, all the members of the court hung their heads in shame. Akbar got outraged and ordered to drive a nail into Kotwal's back. Sufi Shah Hussain's prophecy had come true.

Perhaps Dulla Bhatti's resistance could not change the fate of the poor peasants, yet it resulted in more sovereignty being given to the local land owners. After the death of Dulla Bhatti, there was a great vacuum in the heart of Ravi and Chenab. There was nobody even close to the level of Dulla Bhatti to carry on his mission against the Chughtai Badshahi. The centuries-old tradition that "land belongs to the king" was challenged by Dulla Bhatti, who dared to say that the "land belongs to the tiller and not the king". Dulla Bhatti challenged the rule of Akbar as a foreign invasion of Punjab. He gave hope and courage to the people around Lahore Darbar that you must decide your own fate and have your own rule by not paying any revenue to the Mughal Darbar.

The Mughal Darbar, at the time of Guru Arjun Dev Ji (fifth Guru of the Sikhs), Sai Mian Mir, Shah Hussain and of course Dulla Bhatti, was passing through a hard time. There were two types of confrontation going on against the Lahore and Delhi Darbar. First was the open war against the Mughal rule of Akbar where the whole area of Sandal Bar was on its

feet. It was visible and vivid. The second type of war was even more serious and Emperor Akbar, being smart and intelligent, understood the long-term consequences. And that was being conducted by Guru Arjun Dev Ji, Sai Mian Mir, Shah Hussain, and Shah Behlol. They all were very honorable and respectable and had a good reputation everywhere in Punjab.

Akbar was making sure that the agriculture-land tax (revenue) must go to the treasury of Mughal Darbar. Just to make sure that there were no loopholes as far as the revenue collection was concerned, he took several steps. First, he made sure that the big landlords gave their support to the Mughal Darbar. Second, the landlords were told to get all the information from the agriculture land record supervisor (Kanungo) to make sure who puts on record the land revenue to be levied. Third, to make sure that the farmers paid agricultural land revenue regularly.

The fourth step taken by Akbar was to make sure that the blacksmiths (*lohars*) in the countryside do not make any rifles and other dangerous sharp weapons. Fifth, he made sure that the Mughal Army was ready to confront any unwanted situation from the countryside, and that the forest area was kept clean and roads were secured for the mobility of the Mughal army.

Even having done all that he could, Akbar was still facing a tough time in the area of Sandal Bar and in the surroundings of Chenab, Ravi, and Beas. He even made a visit to Goindwal and paid his respect to Guru Arjun Dev Ji, partaking of *langar*. It was nothing but the influence of the Guru and other spiritual leaders of the time that made Akbar do that. The peasants of the areas of Lahore, Amritsar and Bari-Doab (the area between the Ravi and Sutlej), came to Guru Sahib and complained about the heavy agricultural land revenue imposed on them. In 1598,

the Guru interceded on behalf of the local peasant class with Akbar to get the excessive levy on farmland reduced. Listening to Guru Sahib, Emperor Akbar agreed and did reduce the land revenue. This is how Guru Sahib came to be known as *Sachae Patshah* (True Emperor). In the womb of the history of Punjab, there was the germination of a 'state within a state'.

To fulfill a dream, Dulla Bhatti gave his life. It was Banda Singh Bahadar —after the death of the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh, in 1708, and defeat of Governor of Sirhind Wazid Khan — who introduced the new land reforms that "land belongs to the tiller and not the rulers". This had happened for the first time in the history of Hindustan and it happened in Punjab in 1710. In his first administrative order, Banda Singh Bahadar gave the ownership of the land to the farmers and tillers and let them live in dignity and respect. Petty officials were also satisfied with this change, Nawab Ameen-ul-Daula mentions the new image of the Sikhs in these words: "Dindar Khan, an official of the nearby village, took *amrit* and became Dindar Singh. The newspaper writer of Sirhind, Mir Nasiruddin, became Mir Nasir Singh." This is how history repeated itself if not at the time of Akbar, but during the time of his great-great-grandson Bahadur Shah, who was the son of Aurangzeb.

"Takht Hazara Mere Dil Vich Vasda"

March 30, 2008, was Day Two of the three-day Dulla Bhatti function at Pindi Bhattian. The day was dedicated to Punjabi poetry and Urdu *kalam* with music, which would start at 5pm. This way, we had the day free. On our first visit to west Punjab in 2006, we could not visit the famous 'Takht Hazara', the village of 'Dhedo-Ranjha'. So, we decided to visit this place and left Pindi Bhattian at 10:30 am. We were on the Motorway going towards Bahawalpur. The road was in a very

bad shape. It took us an hour-and-a-half before we got to the village name Halalpur. There were three students from Prof Sheikh's college waiting for us. They greeted us with excitement. They took us to one of their homes and served us cold drinks, tea and sweets. Sitting amidst the Pakistani Punjabi family and sharing the common language was a new and great experience. We were on the road again following our hosts, who were on their motorcycle in front of our car. A big wide road entered into Takht Hazara. Just before the village, there was a huge and very old building, looking like a mansion, on the left side. We stopped there and were told that the front of the Haveli was built in 1931 by Pandit Badrinath. According to the people of the village, the rear side of the Haveli belonged to the parents of Dhedo-Ranjha.

We were in a village about which Waris Shah wrote in his famous *Heer Waris-Shah*:

*'Ik Takht Hazare de gal keje,
Jithe Ranjia ena rang machaia ee,
Waris ki Hazare de sifat ankha
Goa surg zameen te aai ae ee'*

Just before entering the village, there was an old mosque on the right side. According to the caretaker of the mosque, this was the place where Ranjha took shelter in the dark night after having a fight with his family members. While walking through the old and narrow streets of Takht Hazara, I noticed that the village was at a 20-25 feet higher level than the outside field area. Because river Chenab flowed towards the east side of the village, it must have been levelled many times by the destructive flooding of the river. It has a population of about 5,000 people. On the far north side of the village, there was a high school surrounded by big and tall trees. I should call it a

mini city because almost everything for daily use was available in the bazaar. Most of the houses were bricked and some were double level with tall buildings.

Very interestingly, the house, on the roof top of which we went to take some pictures, was being built by a Hindu gentleman named Pandit ChuniLal in 1947. It still had the engraving in Hindi saying 'Swagatam', meaning 'Welcome'. I thanked the family living there for not wiping it off from the front of the house. The whole village looked very beautiful with one thing missing and that was the heartbeat of the Punjabi culture: 'Dhedo Ranjha'.

What pain the people of Jhang Sial had been hiding in their hearts for centuries. If you go to Jhang Sial, don't tell them that you come from Takht Hazara, just tell them that you come from Sargodha. Alas! One day if I could manage a handshake between Jang Sial and Takht Hazara.

Leaving the village behind felt like feeling leaving your heart there. This was the kind of feeling Punjabi people have for their legends, no matter the boundaries of the regions. Bulleh Shah rightly said:

*"Lokee Saujda Kabe Nu Karde,
Sada Saujda Zar Pyare Nu,
Dil Loche Takht Hazare Nu"*

A Beautiful Mehfil

We returned to Pindi Bhattian by around 4 pm. The evening Punjabi poetry function was to start in an hour. Prof Sheikh had arranged a pyjama and embroidered kurta specially for me. I really felt myself like a poet after wearing that. A large number of people had gathered there. The branches of trees were decorated with lights around the open lawn. The moon was peeping through the trees in the sky. On the stage, Iqbal Azam Toqeer, Waheed Sheikh, Safdar Saqi, Zahid Nawaz,

Hanif Saqi, Moeen Abbas and other poets were presenting their pieces of poetry. Each one was superb. I also presented my poem *Keekar*. A few singers sang *Heer*. I could not restrain myself especially when one sings *Heer*. I, like always, was fascinated by it so I also sang Waris Shah's *kalam*. This ceremony continued till 1:30 am. When we reached home, the whole town was dark. We also entered the forest of sleep. I must say that the people of West Punjab really write and sing poetry very well.

After 419 Years

“Dulla-Bhatti ——— Zindabad”

March 31, 2008 was the last day of the Dulla Bhatti function. It was 419 years ago that Dulla Bhatti was hanged in Lahore on March 26, 1589. It was the first time after the death of the great legend of Punjab that the people of his village along with those from Dulle-ke, Jalalpur Bhattian, Sangla Hill, Chiniot, Lahore, Hafizabad, Gujarat and Jhang were getting together to remember and honor the son of the soil of Sandal Bar (*Dule-Di-Bar*). There was a sea of people in Pindi Bhattian. A festival in the memory of Dulla Bhatti was going to be held in the huge playground of the Government High School No.1.

For the past one week, a kabaddi competition was going on between various teams and that day was the final match between Pindi Bhattian and Chiniot. When we joined the procession in the city, there were almost 3,000 people there already. We walked a kilometer down to the school ground and there was great enthusiasm among the people when they saw a turbaned Sikh among them. I was welcomed by former MLA Mian Ihsan Hussain Bhatti from Jalalpur Bhattian on the stage. Since I was the chief guest of the function along with Mian Shahid Hussain Bhatti. I was asked to say a few words to the people who had come from as far as Jang and

Gujarat. At the end of my lecture, I raised the slogans of “Long Live Dulla Bhatti”, “Dulla Bhatti Amar Rahe” and “Dulla Bhatti Zindabad-Zindabad”. There was a huge response from the audience and then on, after every 10-15 minutes, someone among the people would raise the slogans of “Dulla Bhatti Amar Rahe” and “Dulla Bhatti Zindabad-Zindabad”. In the kabaddi competition, Chiniot was declared the winner with a very small margin.

The ‘tug of war’ almost ended up in a war as the organizers had a very hard time controlling the excited crowds. Finally, the Pindi Bhattian team was declared the winner. The winner teams danced gleefully with excitement and enthusiasm. They were given prizes by us and we were presented memorable shields from the hosts. This shield will always be a source of memory of this great ceremony. The people of Pindi Bhattian gave me love and respect which I will never forget in my life.

On April 1, 2008, we travelled to Lahore. We wanted to visit the college of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, the hero of India’s freedom struggle, and the place where Bhagat Singh and his comrades had shot dead the British officer named *John Saunders*. Reaching Lahore at 11 am, Prof Sheikh’s friend Nasir Mehmood was already waiting for us. He took us to Dyal Singh College, situated on Nisbat Road of Lahore. He thought that Bhagat Singh had been studying there but that was not the fact. Anyway, we met with the Principal of Dyal Singh College in his office, and had tea over *gup-shup*. This college and Dyal Singh Library had been constructed by a great social leader of Lahore, Sardar Dyal Singh. He also started an English newspaper from Lahore, *The Tribune*.

A Salute To Shaheed Bhagat Singh

Professor Sheikh challenged his memory of history while sitting in Dyal Singh College and concluded that Bhagat Singh

had been studying in National College established by Lala Lajpat Rai. That was built in Law Hall and he also started narrating its history. We discussed the historical events regarding Bread Law Hall and Bhagat Singh and started to move towards the Law Hall. We had to pass through Old Lahore, first the Meo Hospital near Guwal Mandi, then Banswala Bazar, Anarkali, Bhatti and Loha Gates. We were on the road of Government College. Further ahead, there was Government Islamia College, Civil Lines. Prof Sheikh asked Nasir Mehmood to stop the car there. When we stepped out, he told me that this was the Chowk where Bhagat Singh and his comrades had killed Sanders. On the right side was Ratipan road, where Bread Law Hall was located. This was where Lala Lajpat Rai had established national college where Bhagat Singh was a student. At a short distance stood a historical building surrounded by houses and shops in an open area. There was a lock hanging on the big and old gate. The building was old and dilapidated.

After that, we went to the cemetery of Miani Sahib where Dulla Bhatti was buried. It was a huge cemetery and a board read:

“Mae Bhana Delhi De Kingre”

Dulla Bhatti Shaheed

RAQBA -75 75'x80'

Saheed 26 March, 1589

Dulla Bhatti Academy, Lahore.

We were in the inner part of Lahore to pay our respects to the famous site of Sain Mian Mir Sahib, who laid the foundation stone of Golden Temple in Amritsar on the invitation of the fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjun Dev, in 1604. Sain Mian Mir ji was very close to Guru Arjan Dev Sahib. Just imagine the broad and open ideology of the fifth Guru

that the Harmandir Sahib had four doors in all the directions. This was a clear message to humanity that everyone was welcome to visit this beautiful place for worship. Then we went to the Temple Road at Manazg, where we visited a place related to the sixth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Hargobind Sahib. This was the place where one of the worshippers of the Guru named Bibi Kaulla paid her respects in 1619.

On April 2, 2008, after spending the night at my friend's home in Johar town, I headed for the Wagah-Attari Border. I was so loaded with the love and respect that people had showered on me that the memories linger on and are still fresh. Will I ever forget those days? I do not think so! I must thank all my friends and well-wishers in West Punjab for providing me with everything I needed and helped me all the way to show me the places I had dreamed of during my childhood.

CHAPTER 5

“A Comparative Study Of Two Legends”

A Visit To Jesse James' Village In Kearney, Missouri USA

Before I move on to my third visit to West Punjab (Pakistan), I would like to make a comparative study of the two characters whom history has given the status of legends. They are Dulla Bhatti of Pindi Bhattian in Punjab and Jesse James of Kearney in Missouri, USA.

According to Ted P. Yeatmen, who wrote the book *Frank and Jesse James* in 2000. Jesse Woodson James was born on September 27, 1847 in the small town of Kearney, Missouri. His elder brother Alexander Franklin James was born on January 10, 1843. Jesse James was an American outlaw, gang leader, bank robber, train robber, and the most famous member of the James-Younger Gang. Some recent historians place him in the context of regional insurgency of ex-Confederates following the American Civil War, rather than a manifestation of frontier lawlessness or alleged economic justice. Both Jesse James and his elder brother Frank James were Confederate guerrillas during the Civil War. They were accused of participating in atrocities committed against Union soldiers. America's first day time robbery during peace time happened in a small town of Liberty, Missouri, on February 13, 1866. Something over \$57,000 in assets had been taken, the bulk of which was in government funds. Perhaps around \$18,000 was in currency or gold coins. After their first robbery in Liberty, the remaining robberies were as follows:

1. Lexington in Missouri (Oct 30, 1866); \$2,011
2. Savannah in Missouri (March 2, 1867); no money taken
3. Richmond in Missouri (May 23, 1867); \$3,500
4. Russellville in Kentucky (March 20, 1868); \$1,200
5. Gallatin in Missouri (December 7, 1869)
6. Corydon in Iowa (June 3, 1871); \$40,000
7. Columbia in Kentucky (April 29, 1872); \$15,000
8. Kansas City Fair (September 26, 1872); \$978
9. St. Jenevieve in Missouri (May 27, 1873); \$4,000

The list goes on. Besides the bank robberies, the Jamesgang followed a different route of robbing the trains also. Jesse James cut his teeth in the business of train robbery by wrecking, robbing, and looting a Rock Island lines train on July 31, 1873 near Adair, Iowa. It was one of the first recorded train robberies west of Mississippi and expanded Jesse James and his gang's operations from his speciality of bank hold ups to train robberies. They only got \$3,000 though they expected that the train was carrying around \$1,00,000. There were over one dozen train and stage coach robberies connected with the James gang, along with 16 killings directly linked to Jesse James and 180 killings related indirectly, including a government official and the informers.

Outgoing governor Silas had a few words about banditry in the state of Missouri in his final message to the general assembly on January 6, 1875: "The prevention of crime and the arrest of and punishment of violators of our criminal code, are subject of the highest importance." He told the representatives that 'despotic governments' had large-standing armies and police forces to enforce 'obedience to law', but in a 'free state', such matters were 'dependent on popular support', although he excoriated mobs and protection of hardened criminals by those who held 'popular sympathy with them'.

Allan Pinkerton was a self-made detective founder of Pinkerton's national defense agency, whose symbol was the all-seeing eye and whose motto was 'we never sleep'. Originally from Glasgow, Scotland, he fled to America after avoiding his arrest warrant for taking part in the movement for political reform in British elections.

Around 7:30 pm on Monday, January 25, 1875, a train approached the town of Kearney on the Hannibal on Saint Joseph Railroad line. It was unusual in that it consisted of only an engine, a tender, and a caboose. Its destination was strange as well, a wooded area 2 miles north of town, out in the middle of nowhere. When the train stopped, a party of men, variously estimated at between four and eight in number, left the caboose and headed south to the newly-fallen snow, cutting across towards the James-Samuel Farm after apparently joining other men who had brought horses.

Let's see what happened next. The whole objective of this operation was to finish the James gang, mainly Jesse and Frank.

Pinkerton had information that the James brothers would be there in the evening of January 25, 1875. The information was confirmed by the letter of Pinkerton to Patrick Henry Woodward, Chief Special Agent for the US Post Office Department.

"After great precautions and being positively assured that the James boys and the other of their friends were at home in their mother's house. On Monday night, everything was ready, we were well supplied with Greek fireballs of cotton well saturated with combustible material. After getting things ready, we advanced to the house, not a word was spoken and about half-past-midnight, we commenced firing at the building but judge our dismay when we found every window fastened on the inside with wooden boards, although so concealed by a

curtain that they could not be seen from the outside. However, my men were equal to the occasion and soon battered in the windows, then flung the fireballs into the house. Wild cries of dismay were heard from the inside and soon the residents ran from the inside, which was lit up as light as day.”

The attack on James’ house ended with his mother Mrs Samuels’ lower portion of her right arm amputated and the death of his youngest brother, Archie Peyton Samuel, who was 13 years old.

“Let not Caesar’s servile minions,
Monk the lion thus laid low
‘Twas no foeman’s hand that slow him
‘Twas his own that struck the blow.”

“According to ‘Sedalia Democrate’ of April 13, 1882, no one among the hired cowards, hard on the hunt for blood-money, dared face this wonderful outlaw. One even against twenty, until he had disarmed himself and turned his back on his assass in the first and only time in a career which has passed from the realms of an almost fabled romance into that of history.”

We called him an outlaw, and he was, but fate made him so. When the war came, he was just turned 15. The border was all aflame with steel and fire, and ambushade and slaughter. He flung himself into a band which had a black flag for a banner and devil’s for riders, what he did, and it was fearful. But it was war.

When the war closed, Jesse James had no home. Proscribed, hunted, shot, driven away from among his people, a price put upon his head what else could a man do with such a nature expect, what did he do? He had to live. It was his country.

Never got arrested by the authority, Jesse finally made his pseudo identification under the name of Tom Howard in St

Joseph. For nearly 16 years, there was a great hide and seek between the law enforcement officials and the James-Younger gang may be trying to change the course of life and settle down in St Joseph with his wife and two children. Jesse James was shot and killed on April 3, 1882, by one of his own gang members named Bob Ford to collect a \$10,000 reward offered by Governor Tom Crittenden. Despite the deal that was made with Crittenden, the Ford brothers received only a fraction, \$500, of the money they were originally promised.

On June 8, 1892, Edward O'Kelley killed Bob Ford, "the man who killed Jesse James". Edward was a relative of the younger brothers and also a friend of Jesse James. When Jesse got killed, Edward took the oath that he will kill Bob Ford in 10 years.

Each year, during the third weekend of September, a festival is in full swing at Jesse James Park north of Kearney on Highway 33. This festival has been taking place since 1960 at his birth place. And the people are proud of him one way or the other. This festival goes on not for one day but for five days every year.

Coming back to Punjab from US, people in the old days used to say: "Are you a Dulla Bhatti?" or "Tu wada Dulla Bhatti". What was behind these words? There was pride, proud promise and the people of Punjab have proved it time and again. They proved it when they confronted Alexander of Greece. They proved it when they had hand-to-hand combat with the forces of the Mughals, they proved it with the British forces in Punjab and of course there was a war between Pindi Bhattian and Lahore Darbar. This war went on from 1572 to the beginning of 1589. Actually, it started when Dulla was not even born. The foundation of this conflict was laid when the grandfather of Dulla Bhatti, Sandal Khan Bhatti, stopped paying

land revenue to the Mughal official, which resulted in his arrest and then he was put to death. His son Farcid Khan Bhatti (the father of Dulla Bhatti) followed in the footsteps of his father and he was also put to death at the Lahore Fort. The Mughal Haqumat was a symbol of alienation to the Sandal Bar area. There was a complete refusal to accept the hegemony of the Mughals. Nothing was common in the case of the James-Younger gang of US. The alliance of the common and poor farmers with Dulla Bhatti had profound reasoning behind it. Dulla Bhatti became the outspoken voice for them. He gave them hope for their future generations that the land you till belongs to you and not the emperor. Was there any such relationship between Jesse James and his companions during the time he was having a conflict with the prevailing system of his time? No.

The money and the material plundered by both sides had no similarities as far as the division and services were concerned. Jesse James never had the appreciation of the common masses as far as his wealth and material assets were concerned. On the other side, Dulla is still remembered as the savior of the poor and common people. Even after over four centuries, the people of both the Punjabs still remember him as their pride, and the protector of the helpless and the have-nots. At the time of the Lohri festival in east Punjab, the young boys sing his songs which go as:

*“Sunder Mundriye Tera Kaun Vichara,
Dulla Bhatti Wala...”*

Back in the old days, this song used to be sung by young boys and girls for at least 7 days. And this is how his name is still in the hearts of the people of Punjab. People in Kearney do not remember James like Dulla Bhatti.

Going from Liberty to Kearney, you can see the sign on the Highway saying” Kearney, the birthplace of Jesse James”.

Then you enter the small city of Kearney and see the sign on a big billboard saying, "The Jesse James farm road." Then after a few miles, you enter the huge farm of Jesse James with a museum and other material that belongs to Jesse James and his family. Tourists come here from all over all the time, they pay a small amount for a ticket and the guide will show you the movie about Jesse James and then take you out for a tour and give you a brief summary of the life and death of Jesse James. This site has become a part of government property.

The same kind of museum you can see at the heart of Liberty city, where the first daylight robbery had happened in the United States history, on February 13, 1866.

Enough has been said about the two characters of history. Now the question arises, did we do anything in the memory of the legend of Sandal Bar to be proud of? Have we honored and preserved the legacy of the man who stood up against the mighty Mughal Empire and played a major role for over 15 years? Dulla Bhatti forced Akbar to shift his capital from Delhi to Lahore to sub due the guerilla war the former had launched with the help of the common people of Sandal Bar. The man brought pride and honor to the people of Punjab and became the talking point of the common masses of the time. The man gave us the glorious history to remember. People like Dulla never die. Just like Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad, Ashfaqulla Khan and many more who sacrificed their lives fighting against the tyrant rule of the British.

Prior to Partition in 1947, the festival of Lohri in the middle of January was celebrated in Punjab by all, be it a Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian. After 1947, the celebrations were cut by half. What happened in West Punjab? Is there anyone who has the answer for it? How about if I dare to say that the festival of Lohri was started in the memory of Dulla

Bhatti when he gave shelter to the poor Hindu families and helped their daughters get married into their own community. Dulla Bhatti never had a bias when he was helping the poor ones, as far as their color, creed, and religious faith was concerned. The festival of Lohri also signalled the changing of weather, from winter to spring and the cropping season. Like the old saying of "*Poh ridhi, Maag khadi*", which meant cooking the rice pudding (*kheer*) with sugarcane juice in the last day of Poh and eating on the first day of Maag. I'm sure all these things are still happening in West Punjab.

Yes, little is done in the memory of Dulla Bhatti in both the Punjabs. People in East Punjab still sing '*Sunder Mundriye Tera Kaun Vichara, Dulla Bhatti Wala*' on the festival of Lohri. There is nothing else in East Punjab in his memory. In West Punjab, there is a Dulla Bhatti Academy at Lahore and they do celebrate the martyrdom day of the legend on March 26 every year. The Dulla Bhatti Academy was founded in 1983 at Lahore. Justice Muhammad Alam Bhatti, Bashir Hussain Bhatti, M. Akram Bhatti, M. Aslam Bhatti, M. Afzal Bhatti, Khan Mohammad Lambardar, Mazhar Ali Khan Bhatti, and M. Khan Bhatti were its pioneering members, where as Bashir Ahmed Bhatti was named as the chairman of the academy. Because of the efforts made by the academy, the government of Punjab declared Dulla Bhatti shrine a historical place on March 24, 1988.

Dulle-Ke

A village named after Dulla Bhatti lies 2 kilometers to the east of Pindi Bhattian. Historically, it is associated directly with the legend. It is said that Dulla himself settled here during the reign of Akbar. The other version is that Dulla's son Jahan Khan Bhatti populated this village and Jahan Khan's descendants have been residing here since ages. The village

has three mosques, primary schools for boys and girls, a grave yard, five poultry farms, and 12 shops. Three shrines also stand here along with the Dera of Rustam Khan and Ahmed Khan Lambardar.

Dulla Bhatti Shaheed Chowk (Lahore)

The main crossroad in block A Gulshan-E-Ravi has been named after Dulla Bhatti under a notification by the Lahore Municipal Corporation issued on April 28, 1993.

Dulla Bhatti Bridge (TalibWala)

The foreign invaders attacked Pindi Bhattian and the surrounding areas by crossing over the river Chenab, about 10 kilometers west of the city, on many occasions. According to Raja Rasalu, Choochak Bhatti and his fellow men were assigned to discharge defensive duties on this check-post. They would timely alarm about the approaching danger. That is how this place was named Choochak Pattan. In old days, the river flowed near Choochak village and with the passage of time it changed its course and slipped away towards the west and winding through the land, locking the soil and embraced the village named TalibWala.

The geographical change also brought a change in the name, that is Talib Wala Pattan. With the efforts of Dulla Bhatti Academy, a newly-constructed bridge over the Chenab was named after Dulla Bhatti Shaheed. This meeting was presided over by Mian Haq Nawaz Bhatti, Chairman of the Municipal Committee of Pindi Bhattian. A plaque was displayed with the name of Dulla Bhatti Shaheed. It is very sad that after a short period of time, the Ranjhas of Sargodha dismantled the plaque bearing the name of Dulla Bhatti and opposed the activities. Thus, the mission remained incomplete.

Dulla Bhatti Chowk (Pindi Bhattian)

There is a beautiful chowk decorated with tile artwork, and it is situated in the Lari Adda in Pindi Bhattian.

Dulla Bhatti Sangat (DBS)

A cultural and literary society named Dulla Bhatti Sangat was established in 2008. Its aims and objectives are to highlight the character and personality of the hero of Punjab, Dulla Bhatti, and enrich the Punjabi culture. The founder members of this organization are Prof Asad Saleem Sheikh, Advocate Mohammad Nawaz Waseer, author Dharam Singh Goraya, BrigRab Nawaz Bhatti (retd), Khalid Iqbal Yasir, who is the Director of Urdu Science Board in Lahore, Tanveer Zahoor Bhatti (*The Jang*, Lahore), Aziz Ali Sheikh, Muhammad Bashir Diwana, Syed Hameed Raza Shah, Khalid Hassan Cheema and Muhammad Waheed Sheikh. Prof Asad Saleem Sheikh was elected as the chairman of the Dulla Bhatti Sangat.

With the efforts and hardwork of Dulla Bhatti Sangat, for the first time in the history of Punjab, a festival was organized in Pindi Bhattian in the memory of Dulla Bhatti after 419 years of his death. There were over 5,000 people who attended this festival with so much excitement and pride in their hearts and it left memories for future generations to be proud of.

DBS organizes an annual function in the memory of the legend and also recognizes the outstanding personalities for their contribution in various fields in the month of March. It also organizes cultural and sports activities and also give awards to the poor and intelligent students.

When I attended the first festival in 2008, the people of Pindi Bhattian promised me that ‘Singh Sahib, we will continue this tradition and we are proud of you that you gave us a new

way of remembering the hero of Punjab'. I have no hesitation in saying that Pindi Bhattian is keeping its promise.

Now I'm asking the people of Punjab (Pakistan) and especially the people of Dulle-Di-Bar that there should be an educational institution named after Dulla Bhatti. There is nothing wrong if they can start their efforts from the local level and then at the higher level to change the name of 'Government Degree College' at Pindi Bhattian to 'Dulla Bhatti College', and also make rename the girls as 'Mata Ladhi College'.

I have a full confidence that the Dulla Bhatti Sangat has already start working on these projects and sooner or later the administration of district Hafizabad will consider our heart felt demand. Again, we should keep in mind that people like Dulla Bhatti are not born every day. Very few like him are born in a century.

CHAPTER 6

Third Visit To Punjab (Pakistan)

It was 29th of November. The winter was not in full swing, though a cool breeze was blowing everywhere. When I crossed Wagah Border for my third West Punjab (Pakistan) journey, I found my hosts in Pakistan, Prof Asad Saleem Sheikh and Mrs Sheikh, waiting in the Customs lounge. I thought they would be in the outside area of Wagah Border, but finding them in the lounge was a pleasant surprise. The Customs official first looked at my passport and then at my face. I had a white beard on my passport but my nephew had me color my beard just before his marriage to give me a younger look. I had been in trouble due to this on the Indian Immigration side just a few minutes ago. It took great efforts to make them believe that it was me. The Pakistani Immigration and Customs officials didn't go into details maybe due to Prof Sheikh. They went through the formal proceedings and let us go. We set off towards Lahore in a car with our host.

We were familiar with all the routes we were taking. After sometime, we were on the bank of the canal. It was 1 pm. We had to reach Gaddafi Stadium where Prof Sheikh's brother-in-law Mr Khurram and his wife were waiting for us outside the restaurant named Fazal Haq Dera. Colorful cots and *peerahs* in the lawns of the restaurant were adding to the beauty of it. There were traditional utensils on the tables. Khurram took us inside the restaurant instead of the lawn. The inside view was not like outside. The outerview was a reflection of Punjabi

culture whereas the inside environment was a glimpse of western culture. Both the cultures were together here.

We found the same blend in dishes on the table. Rice, *handi* and *lassi*, everything was so delicious. After coming out of the restaurant, Prof Asad told us that this was the biggest cricket stadium of Lahore. There is a hockey stadium in the right side and in the left side is the building of Alhamra cultural complex. In this complex, there is an institute for the development of Punjabi language and culture. This institute arranges programmes in respect of Punjabi culture time to time. Prof Sheikh wanted us to meet the director of this institute, Dr Sagura Sadeef, but she was not in the office at that time. So, Prof Sheikh and his family took us to the new campus of Punjab University, which was not far from there. His eldest daughter, Marvi, was studying in the political science department. We felt the vastness and beauty of the university when we entered it. Almost 30,000 students study here. There was a crowd of boys and girls in each department. There was a great rush outside the bank of the canal and canteen. Student life is quite strange. Years pass in the twinkle of an eye. There is a canal in the middle and on the otherside there are hostels for students. We reached the other side of the canal through an under pass. Prof Sheikh's daughter and her friends welcomed us at the gate of the girls hostel. Guests are not allowed in the waiting area of the hostel except on Saturdays and Sundays. But Marvi and her friends took permission from the hostel warden and stayed with us there. First, they offered us kinnow juice and then tea with biscuits. Some other girls also gathered there seeing our specific dress with the beautiful turban and asked, "Are you from India?" I replied in Punjabi, "*Ji han, main Punjab toh han.*" They opened up and started asking questions. We sat there for about an hour and then set towards Pindi Bhattian through the Motorway. Khurram and his wife stayed in Lahore.

When we reached Pindi Bhattian, it was getting dark. At Prof Sheikh's house, I took a bath with hot water and felt relaxed and even felt more relaxed by sleeping soundly at night.

A Visit To Three Ks (Kheora)

This time I came to Pakistan Punjab with a longing that I would visit the tombs of romantic characters here. I had also expressed my desire to my host and other friends of Prof Sheikh. I had to stay here only for three days. So, he had already planned to show me more places in three days. Prof Sheikh told me that they are going to show me three Ks. Hearing that, I got astonished and asked about the three Ks and he told me that the three Ks are Kheora, Katas, and Kallar Kahar. These are three historical and recreational places. Prof Sheikh's friend, Advocate Malik Tanveer Ahmad, came to receive us in his car. After half an hour, we were on the Motorway that goes to Islamabad from Pindi Bhattian to visit these historical places. Bashir Diwana and Hameed Raza Shah were also with us. There was more chill in the air that day. We had travelled 15-25 minutes from Pindi Bhattian when we found orchards of oranges on both sides of the beautiful Motorway after crossing the Chenab. Everywhere there were oranges on trees of medium heights, some ripe and others still green. While we were passing by these trees, Malik Tanveer, who was driving the car, told us that this was Badwal area in the district of Sarghoda and its oranges are sold abundantly in foreign countries and they are world famous. These orchards were very wide with crops in the midst. Somewhere, there were ripe rice crops. Here the villages had the resemblance of Indian villages. We crossed river Jhelum on the Motorway after an hour. To our right side, there was the city of Bhera, which was the oldest city of the sub-continent. We could see the minarets and domes of mosques and the houses at a distance.

This city was existing even when Alexander the Great invaded Hindustan in 327 B.C. We left this city behind within moments. The road seemed of white color now. A mountainous range was in front of us. As we were moving ahead, the mountainous range was getting closer to us. We moved towards the road which leads to Khewra at the right side after getting down from the Motor way. Now, Kheora was only 28 kilometers away from here. There was a town named Pind Daad Khan before Kheora. Alberoni Degree College was on this road, outside the town. This college is associated with the name of Alberoni, who was a famous geographer. Prof Asad Sheikh told us, pointing to this area, that once a candidate from here went for an interview of the Public Service Commission. One of interviewers asked why this college was called Alberoni? The candidate replied innocently, "Because this college is quite outside of the city."

We were at the boundary of Khewra and had to go to the second largest salt mine. When we reached there, we found tall red mountains around. There was also greenery on some spots of the mountain. Prof Sheikh bought the entry tickets from the counter and we entered the mine with a guide. We were in a strange kind of world. It looked like a scene of a detective movie. A railway line was in the middle of the long way. As mall train passed us by, carrying salt from inside. There were electricity wires hanging above, the light of the bulb and red and white salt stone, shining.

We reached that point of the mine which was called "Chandni Chowk" by the guide. He told that this chowk is associated with Chandni Chowk of Delhi. From here, the mine gets separated into two ways. Standing here, the guide told us about the history of the mines. They are as long as 80 miles and are the biggest mines in terms of area and reserves and they

hold the second position in respect of exports. Salt has been brought out from here since the arrival of Sikander-e-Azam (Alexander) in India. When Sikander-e-Azam's armies stayed here, his horses began to lick the mountains. Sikander-e-Azam came to know about the salt herein this way. According to a historical document, salt was brought out first from Khewra in Sikandar-e-Azam's era and a native person named Asaf Khan informed Akbar about the salt on the condition that as long as he was alive, he would get the money equal to the minor's wages as the prize.

Salt began to be brought out on a scientific basis from this mine in 1870 when it was named Mayo Mines. The credit of digging the central tunnel goes to an Englishman named Dr Reth, who did this in 1872 to reach the reserves of salt. The fountain of sweet water was discovered here during the English reign. A railway line was laid here in 1870. Thousands of people visit this strange and amazing place to observe the salt coming out of these mines. The canals of salt in the mines, Chandni Chowk, Bano Bazaar, the hanging bridge, and the other scenes of salt, all are so interesting. Small cabins of salt have been made for the treatment of asthma patients. Asthma patients are kept for hours in these cabins daily. There is a canteen also in the mine. We got tea there when we felt tired. Two big ponds were also there in front of the canteen, made from salty water from the mountains. The water of these ponds seemed colorful in the colorful lights. That was a fascinating view. Near by, pieces of salt were shining like an artificial jewels in the colorful lights.

We had been there for about two hours. There were stalls of different decoration pieces made of salt beside the footpath. We didn't buy them thinking that they would melt due to water and moisture. Our next point of place was Kataas, the ancient and historical spot of Hinduism.

Our car had climbed onto the road that led to the mountain on the right of Kheora mines. The drive was slow because of the height and sharp curves. As we climbed up, the whole scene of Kheora town beneath touched our eye sight. The rising smoke of a cement factory was coming from somewhere. We were on great height of mountains. After 7-8 kilometers travelling upward, we began to come down gradually. Here the mountains were rather green and somewhere there were small trees also. There was a beautiful town in front of us when we came downwards from top at once after travelling for half-an-hour. It looked as there was a city in a bowl. This town was called Choa Saidan Shah. Here flowers of rose, the juice of Gulab and Locaht are very popular. We felt great difficulty while passing by because of a great number of vehicles on the road and the crowd of people. Malik Tanveer go this car filled with CNG and then we were in Katas in Chakwal district.

Going through the orchards of Locaht, we were feeling hunger pangs. So, first we had lunch in a restaurant. We parked our car near the restaurant and started walking to the historical temples of Katas Raj.

Katas

This historical place underwent repairs a few years ago and measures have been taken to make it safe. We found some girls of a college there. We got a glimpse of the building of that temple in the green water of the pond in front of us. According to Hindu belief, Katas is a sacred place and it is mentioned in *Mahabharata*. According to Brahma, when Lord Shiva's wife died, he was greatly affected by it and two lakes appeared on earth because of his tears. One of them is "Pushkara" in Ajmer and the other is the Ketaksha lake, which literally means rainy eyes in Sanskrit. Sanatam Dharmi Hindus

believe that Lord Shankara appeared at that place. So, a fountain emerged from which *amrit* flowed. The water of this fountain has been flowing for centuries. Matghara temple was found around this fountain. Some have disappeared and some have been saved. It's a collection of seven temples. The biggest temple is called Vishnu Ji temple. Second is Shivaji Maharaj, third is Ganesh, fourth is Shivling, fifth is Kali Maata, sixth Parbati, seventh is Lakshmi Devi Kathaya. Buddhists were ruling in Katas and the great Sanskrit University was also there in Katas Raj in 300 B.C. where different disciplines of knowledge were taught.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Army Commander, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, constructed his Haveli here during the reign of Sikhs, which was in its original condition. We reached the highest temple, passing by that Haveli. We could get a view of the whole of Katas from there. Security guards were also present. There was greenery and a youth hostel on the right side and in front, there was Katas Inter college and Mines Institute beside it. It was 3.30 pm when we came out. Malik Tanveer had turned the car towards Kallar Kahar.

Kallar Kahar

Kallar Kahar was 28 kilometers from here. There were two or three big cement factories outside Katas. The condition of the road was not so good. It is called Pothohari area. Its mountains presenta captivating view. There was greenery all around. A camel was bringing water out from a well on the roadside.

Some women were carrying pitchers of water. I was amazed to see that sort of traditional well in today's modern era. When I asked Malik Tanveer about this, he told that the surface of water there was quite low because of the height. That well was quite deep. Water could be brought out with the

help of animals. After half an hour, we reached Kallar Kahar. We crossed a bridge and moved towards the left, where there was a lake spread over a vast area. We went to a restaurant which was on a great height in front of the lake. After parking the car, we sat on the chairs of its lawn. We could have a look of the whole lake of Kallar Kahar, and the grassy plots around it, restaurant and shops. On the blue waters of the lake, there were many water birds. Sometimes they flew together in groups and sometimes they liked to sit there. There was great activity on the lake. Many colorful boats were also floating in the lake. The restaurant where we stopped was the biggest and standardized ones in the area for tourists. As the evening progressed, it was getting cold. That place was about 4,000 feet high from the sea level. Therefore, we were feeling cold and had tea to over come it. The sun was about to set behind the mountains and its red hue had spread on the lake completely. Hundreds and thousands of crows were coming down to the trees around the lake in a swarm. It was a strange view. We asked the waiter whether these crows were going to spend their night in the trees. He replied, "No sardarji, they would go to the bushes by the side of the lake as it gets dark." Then we saw two peacocks come in front of us, flying from the mountain. One of them was a he peacock and the other a she. Then they disappeared somewhere in the garden which was surrounded by banana and many other fruit trees. About the history of that garden, it's been written in English and Urdu that it had been constructed by Mughal Emperor Zaheeruddin Babar in 1519 and it was named Bagh-e-Suffa. The army had prepared a takht for Babar, by cutting a rock, when he stayed in Kallar Kahar and it is still present by the name of Takht-e-Babri. We reached the Takht-e-Babri, passing by that garden. We felt ourselves as kings for a moment as we

stood on the takht. But neither was there any army, nor the subjects, but we were kings to ourselves.

We saw peacocks flying and jumping there. The tomb of a saint on a mountain above the garden could be seen at a great distance. There was a way that led up in the corner of the garden. Many people were walking there. Dusk had fallen and peacocks had turned silent. It was time to head back.

When we returned to Pindi Bhattian through the Motorway from Kallar Kahar, the lights on the winding roads in the mountains seemed beautiful. The mountains could be seen in the flashes of lights of moving vehicles. The speed was 70 kilometers and somewhere it was 50 kilometers per hour. In that area of 10 kilometers, our car went upwards and sometimes downwards. We reached Pindi Bhattian at 9 pm, after a drive of an hour-and-a-half.

We felt very tired after the long recreation and slept soundly, getting up rather late in the morning.

A Visit To Hafizabad

It was 11 am. According to that day's schedule, we had to stay for sometime in Prof Sheikh's college and then had to go to Hafizabad. We were in the college till 2 pm. I came across Prof M. Awais, Prof Arif Noon, Ehsan-ul-Allah Bhatti and some old faces whom I had already met. I got familiar with some new people also. There was a great rush in the college. The boys were looking good in the same uniform, moving in the grounds, corridors and in the classroom. Prof Sheikh made us get familiar with the boys of his class. There was a brief exchange of questions and answers.

We were in Hafizabad in 50 minutes or so because it was situated at a distance of 55 kilometers from Pindi Bhattian. Mr Ali Sheikh was our host. He was the writer of five books, including *History of Hafizabad*. Some local writers had also

gathered at his home. Ch Salahuddin and Advocate Arshad Mehmood were present too. Lunch was ready on the table for us, after which we exchanged ideas on different topics. All these intellectuals were of the Left-leaning and were in favor of improving relations between Pakistan and India. Prof Salahuddin, who had retired as the principal of a local college, was of the opinion that the war of ideologies had weakened in the world after the break-up of the Soviet Union.

Many different ideas and ideologies came up for discussion over several rounds of tea. That meeting came to an end, and Aziz Sheikh and Prof Salahuddin took us to visit a historical gurdwara of Hafizabad. They were the earlier days of Muharram and Majalis and other customs of Muslim Shias had been going on. So, many security guards could be seen everywhere standing with their guns. There was a great rush of *tangas*, motorcycles, *rehras*, and other vehicles on the roads. We entered an open street, crossing those vehicles. There was an office of an artist in the corner. He came out on seeing us. Mr Aziz Sheikh introduced him as the famous artist of district Hafizabad, Shafarat Taveed, who painted on rice grains and had got much fame. He took a group photograph outside his office. We passed by a school and reached the historical gurdwara, famous by the name of Chatti Patshahi. The sixth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Hargobind Sahib, had stayed at Hafizabad while coming back from Kashmir. People gathered around on seeing us. The condition of the gurdwara was miserable. There was the grave of a Muslim saint at the place and no Sikh came here to worship. Some time ago, there had been a police station also.

We came out of that gurdwara and going back found a few elderly people sitting on cots in the street. They talked to us lovingly, inquired about us, asked how we found their city,

and proposed something to drink. The people living on the same land were divided on the basis of ideology but the pain of old relations never comes to an end. The relations related to land and love always remain alive in their hearts. I did feel that while hearing these elderly people talk. When we came out of Hafizabad, it was dusk already.

Before heading for Pindi Bhattian, we had to make a stop outside a village near Hafizabad. There was a farm house and there were about 10 young men waiting for us, some of them being students of Janab Bashir Diwana. They welcomed us like no other day, and served us with tea, sweets and *pakor*s. Then we came back to Pindi Bhattian with our hosts.

Visiting The Resting Place of Two Hearts (Heer-Di-Mazaar)

I had been waiting for this day for a long time. There had been a longing with in me to visit the city of Ranjha and Heer and see their grave; how the legends of the ever lasting story of love were sleeping there. Prof Asad Sheikh, Bashir Diwana and Farrakh Saleem, who was the youngest brother of Prof Sheikh, and I set off towards Heer's city Jhang at 9am. That day, Malik Tanveer was not with us due to his busy schedule. Farrakh Saleem drove the car. Jhang was at a distance of 115 kilometers from Pindi Bhattian and the historical city of Chiniot was also on the way. We reached Jhang at about 11am and went to Heer's tomb, asking many people about that. The tomb was on a high ground in an old grave yard. We parked our car outside that tomb and the guard of the tomb welcomed us. We kept our shoes outside the tomb and went inside. There was no roof of the tomb. There was an open sky above the grave. The four walls of the grave had been decorated with flowers. Salt had been kept on the upper side of the grave and people used to lick that salt, considering it sacred. Lovers come here

to pray for fulfillment of their wishes. There was a crowd of people due to early days of Muharram. Muslims go to the graves of their relatives during these days, mend them, keep flowers on them, and light incense. I asked some questions to the guard about Heer, asked the address of her real village, inquired about the place river of that time. He told that river Chenab flowed exactly at that place in those days. I guessed that he was right, seeing the height of the graveyard. If you present Heer as the beloved of Ranjha to the people of Jhang, they feel ill at ease. It is because in Punjab, the association of girls with strangers in terms of love is considered shameful. The people of Heer's tribe consider her a spiritual personality more than the beloved of Ranjha. Others in Punjab don't think like that. They think of her as the everlasting character of Ranjha's love. A lot of people also think that the story had not been common if Waris Shah would not have written it. Prof Sheikh was also of the opinion that the stories of such love could be seen in every time but fortunate people have access to Waris Shah. The one who made the story everlasting!

We stayed at her tomb for about an hour and then came back. There was the village of Khewa on the way which has been mentioned in the story of Heer-Ranjha.

Chiniot - Simply Beautiful

We reached Chiniot after half-an-hour's drive. It's a historical and cultural city of Pakistan Punjab. Its furniture made of wood is famous not only in Pakistan but also in other countries. Especially the work of Karoong is of great quality. Prof Sheikh's friends Prof Saleem Akhtar and Ghosh Akhtar were waiting for us. Saleem Akhtar was an English Professor and a great literary person. First he took us to his academy where some students were busy studying an English course. Then he took us to a historical place, passing bazaars and

streets on foot. On the way, we noticed specific heights of houses in the Chiniot style of construction. Beautiful Karoong work had been done on their doors and windows. Many ancient houses were in a miserable condition there. There was great activity in the market. The complexion of girls was quite fair there. The dialect of their Punjabi language was also quite different from the Lahorian dialect. There was a blend of Saraiki dialect. Many historical buildings of the Mughal period could be seen here, especially the Badshahi Mosque, which was built by Shah Jehan's chief minister Nawab Saad-ul-Allah Khan. Our host took us to a cultural building, the Umar Hayat Palace, instead of the mosque. Guide Muhammad Mushtaq welcomed us at the palace door and then gave us the details about the palace inside. Here is the story for you:

Umar Fatima

So many springs and autumns arrived and departed. Much water has flowed under the Chenab Bridge. The whirl winds of time have dimmed the features of many tales but the real story of Fatima Umar is still as fresh as a rose. The unique character of this tragic story lives on in our hearts. Recollecting the incidents, our eyes well up in tears.

There lived a man Sheikh Umar Hayat at Chiniot. He belonged to a respectable and renowned family. Following his trade fellows, he also proceeded to Calcutta from a business point of view. Within a short span of time, his business flourished by leaps and bounds. He became the sole owner of 50 vehicles that ran on the highway of Calcutta. Whenever he came to Chiniot, he visited the romantic bank of the Chenab and the surrounding areas. One day on his visit to Chiniot, he got an opportunity to attend the famous festival of Sakhi Sarwar at Pindi Bhattian. Besides other entertainment and fascinating shows, it was customary that female dancers and singers arrived

to add to the enjoyment of the spectators. Umar Hayat was taking a round of the fair. The prostitutes were busy in captivating in their respective deras. The musical concerts were at their climax. Fatima's Dera was the biggest one. She was the most beautiful prostitute of Pindi Bhattian. When Umar Hayat, clad in a white salwar kameez and turban reached Fatima's dera, he appeared to stand out because of his matchless beauty and blooming youth. Fatima's eyes rested on him and she gave special treatment to the rich man. Umer Hayat also couldn't resist and fell in love with her. This incident proved a prelude to their marriage. Returning to Chiniot, he readily decided to make Fatima his life partner. He sent his brother Muhammad Hussain to Fatima for the settlement of the marriage. After a few terms and conditions, both the parties agreed. The date of the Nikkah ceremony was fixed. The kith and kin of Umar Hayat, however, opposed this marriage and didn't attend the function but the Nikkah ceremony was happily held and the loving hearts were wed locked. After the marriage, the couple left for Calcutta and settled there. A girl was born to them. When she came of age, Umer Hayat arranged her marriage with his real nephew Muhammad Siddique. Unluckily the bride died in the flower of her life. After a long time, a beautiful son was born to Umer Hayat and Fatima in 1920. The happy couple organized a grand function on the arrival of the baby who was named Gulzar Muhammad. Mian Umar Hayat rolled in wealth. He decided to get a grand palace built at Chiniot. The construction work started in the beginning of 1924 and was complete at a cost of Rs 10 lakh. Soon after the finishing touches of the palace, Mian Muhammad Umer passed away. He left behind his magnificent palace, his beloved and their dear son. Gulzar, an apple of his father's eye, was only 13 when Seth Umar Hayat closed his eyes forever. Though the

mother and the son got a sizeable wealth and property as legacy, yet misery and misfortune hounded them. It is worth maintaining here that the courageous lady despite unfavorable circumstances steered the vessel of her life through problematic water like an expert captain. She dedicated the rest of her life in moulding and chiseling the character of her son. She focused all her energies and earnest desires in the training of Gulzar. Fatima Bibi was known as a kind-hearted and generous lady to the poor and the needy inhabitants of Chiniot. When Gulzar touched the borders of puberty, Fatima thought of arranging her son's marriage to renew the hustle and bustle of Umar Hayat Mahal. The marriage rites were celebrated with pomp and show. The colorful grand function lingered on for many days. The palace overflowed with ecstasy. The participants floated with joy. The whole city intoxicated in bliss. The unique marriage was registered in the record books of Chiniot. But nature was busy in devising different plans. It is said the sweetest things have the fleetest end. The wedding celebration turned into a funeral procession.

On the day of Waleema, the bridegroom went to the bathroom early in the morning to have a hot bath. The maid servant placed the hearth of burning coals in the bathroom to keep the water cosy. When the bridegroom didn't come out after a long time, the perturbed kith and kin knocked at the door but all in vain. On breaking through the door, they found Gulzar lying dead on the floor. The tragic news spread like wildfire. Hindus and the Muslims mourned over Gulzar's death with cloudy eyes. Cries and shrieks of the ill-fated mother pierced through the hearts of the people. She scattered the ash of the coal which caused her son's death in her stray tresses. On her insistence, the deceased Gulzar was buried within the premises of the Mahal. Fatima left Chiniot and stayed at Pindi

Bhattian with her relatives for a short phase of time. But the pangs of separation troubled the soul. She couldn't detach herself from the magnetic dust of the son's grave and once again came to Mahal. Scarcely after the expiry of a year, Fatima's soul flew to the heaven to join her husband and son. Thus, the tragic drama of the whole family ended. As per Fatima's will, she was laid to rest beside her son. Thus the glittering palace was enveloped in darkness. With the tragic end of Seth Umar Hayat's family, the palace lost its charm. Because of the ill-attention of the rest of the descendants, the palace became the abode of servants. Thus, the specimen of architectural beauty fell to wear and tear. An orphanage ran in this palace for many years. At last it was renovated in 1990 and a library was established. Thank God! This historical and cultural heritage has been preserved from further ruin.

That was our last day in Pakistan Punjab. When we returned to Pindi Bhattian from Chiniot, Prof Sheikh's brother-in-law Khurram and his wife had come down from Lahore to take us back. Prof Sheikh bid good bye with love and sincerity. We left Pindi Bhattian at 11 and came to Lahore with Khurram. From there we reached Wagah at 2 pm and reached India across that few inches of the thick borderline, crossing of which made us a foreigner.

CHAPTER 7

India - A Farce Democracy

It's a little over 65 years that India and Pakistan got their separate identities. There is nothing wrong to have a brief analysis of the political and economic system of both countries.

By and large, India has been able to stay with democratically-elected representatives. Till Jawaharlal Nehru was alive, money power was not very influential during the elections. His daughter Indira Gandhi stayed in power as Prime Minister of India for four terms. Her hunger for power did no good to politics, and she never liked any non-Congress party ruling over a state. No wonders she was so good with dissolving governments run by Opposition parties and subverting the process of real democracy.

The Congress party, for all its authoritarian tendencies and close identification with the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, did furnish a considerable element of stability. Pakistan has been under military rule for over 32 years of its existence. Even its civilian rulers have always governed with the apprehension that a coup might remove them from office.

India inherited and retained a well-oiled civil service and saw some what of a 'a bourgeois revolution'. The demand for Pakistan, by contrast, was led by landed aristocrats. This might explain why land reforms have been less far-reaching in Pakistan and why that country is still said to be governed more by feudal norms. But in the same tone, in far-eastern and southern states in India, land reforms are needed on solid grounds. That is why

there is always a big problem as far as the Naxalite movement is concerned.

India has an independent Election Commission and judiciary and elections are supervised by the civil servants. In Pakistan, the entire political leadership comprises landlords, industrialists, and rich lawyers. For the first time, the judiciary in Pakistan has become assertive and independent under Chief Justice If tikhar Chaudhry.

Hindu fundamentalism has grown into a Frankenstein monster. The urge to convert India into a Hindu state has intensified among extremist Hindus, egged on by the BJP. The minorities in India, particularly the Muslims, feel unsafe.

Poverty in India is wide spread, a country with an estimated population of 1.22 billion people. The World Bank states that 32.7 per cent of the total Indian population falls below the international poverty line of US \$1.25 per day.

Corruption in India is a major issue and adversely affects its economy. In 2012, India ranked 94 out of 176 countries in terms of corruption. Officials are alleged to steal state property. Through out India, in villages and cities, municipal and other government officers, elected politicians, real estate developers, judicial officers and officials of law enforcement are accused of acquiring, developing and sell land to private corporations in the most illegal ways. Peasantry is the one suffering the most; there are farmers' demonstration, rallies daily and they even commit suicide.

The situation of Pakistan is no better. About 58.7 million out of 176.7 million Pakistan is are living below the poverty line. This is according to the study of Sustainable Development Policy Institute's, Director Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri.

The people of Pakistan must work with intellectuals, writers, news media and labor organizations along with college and university students' organizations and struggle for democratic values in the political system.

How far below the so called politicians, generalists, writers, and show industry people can go, I must mention a recent incident happened in India.

On November 17, 2012 the supremo of the Shiv-Sena Bal Thackeray (B.T) died at the age of 86 years. On his cremation on Nov. 18, he was given the state of honor. He was portrayed as a great nationalist and statesman.

He was given more importance than Bhagat Singh and Mahatma Gandhi. The top leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-L.K. Advani, Sushma Swaraj and Arun Jaitley gave him the status of great patriotic and uncompromising human character. For famous film producer and director Ram Gopal Verma, B.T was a source of power. For Ajay Devgan and Amitabh Bachchan, B.T was a far sighted and man of courage and confidence. For Lata Mangeshkar, the whole nation has become orphan without B.T. Just imagine, the level of mental bankruptcy, the president of India, Pranab Mukherjee saying that the lose of B.T will never be fulfilled. The chief minister of Punjab was not behind anybody when he saying that B.T. was a bundle of Treasures.

Let us see the real side of this character:

He was involved:

- a.) He formed the local and regional organization, based on the ideas of separatism and fascism. Where he injected the thoughts of division, looting, torturing, and creating the enmity in Maharashtra.
- b.) He was against anybody other than Maharashtrians to work and do business in Mumbai.
- c.) He organized the attack on the office of a leftist trade union leader in Dec. 1967.
- d.) A communist MLA Krishna Desai was killed because he always opposed the Gunda and Separatist activities of the Shiv Sena.

- e.) 17 innocent people were killed in a communal riots in Bavandi in 1984. 59 people got killed when Shiv-Sena organized the riots of Nashik, Panvel and Nander. Shiv-Sena was also behind the riots of Mumbai and Aurangabad in 1989.
- f.) Indira Gandhi declared the state of emergency in India in 1975 and B.T was a great supporter of it.
- g.) B.T. was so anti-muslim, he would oppose the cricket match if the team of Pakistan is playing.
- h.) Based upon the report of justice Shri Krishna, B.T along with Shiv-Sena was behind the riots of Mumbai in 1993.
- i.) If the film producer do no pay their monthly dues to Shiv Sena, their movies will not play in the theaters.
- j.) A noted film actor Dilip kumar was awarded 'Nishan-E-Imtiaz by the government of pakistan but later on he has to face the anger of B.T
- k.) A famous cricketer Sachin Tendulkar said "Mumbai is for the whole india" but he also has to bow his head to this old man.
- l.) B.T used to say openly that Hitler is the source of energy for him and he was Hitler's great admirer. He even went on to say in an interview to 'naya kayl in 1967 that India needs a Hitler
- m.) Dawood Ibrahim's rise to the level of a mafia status definitely had the support of Shiv Sena.

What B.T did for the Mumbains life? 50 percent of the total population of Mumbai living in Shanty tents on the road sides . This 50 percent only has 6 percent of the land to live on. If there is any living hell and that is the city of Mumbai, a strong hold of Shiv Sena.

Should we call it the biggest democracy of the world? No, actually it should be called the biggest 'farce democracy' of the world, where according to the constitution of India, Article 19

(1) A, one can express their view points on any issue. But what happened when a 20 years old Muslim girl named Shaheen Dhandha expressed her views on Facebook that Mumbai got shut down not in the honor of B.T, it got shut down out the fear of Shiv-Sena. Another girl Renu Srinivasan also supported her viewpoints. And here comes the gunda terror of Shiv-Sena and both the girls got arrested. Thanks to the efforts of Retired Justice Markandey Katju who got the girls bailed out.

There should be no joy on anybody's death because human life is the supreme life, we must respect all human beings no matter what their religion, belief, faith or nationality.

We must learn the lessons from the supreme sacrifice made by the 9th Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji in 1675. He made the sacrifice of his life for those he had nothing in common but one thing and that was the human rights of the mankind. He is one of the greatest humanitarian in the world. Is there any other example in the world history where someone would offer his own life just to protect the others.

Guru Teg Bahadur Says:

bal chuttkeo bandhan parrae, kashu na hout oppaye.

bal huwa bandhan chutte sab kish hout oppaye.
