

Taajudin's Diary

Account of a Muslim author who accompanied Guru
Nanak from Makkah to Baghdad



By

Sant Syed Prithipal Singh ne' Mushtaq Hussain Shah

(1902-1969)

Edited & Translated By: Inderjit Singh

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Foreword

I feel flattered by the opportunity to write this prologue to the book that describes Guru Nanak's travel to far off countries that were the mainstay of Muslim culture and Islamic religion. Guru Nanak attached great importance to this mission of his. The present book describes Guru's journey to Middle Eastern countries and gives introductions to his visits to some other places. It details many dialogues that the Guru had with Muslim clergy and their followers.

When Guru Nanak Appeared on the World Scene

When Guru Nanak came into this world, the paths to enlightenment were devoid of divinity; they were thoroughly distorted towards the unholy goals of the exploiters of people. They were mostly self-serving. The powerful who often pretended to protect and to spread their faith actually led to struggles that could only be resolved through the subjugation of the other. Thus, they routinely resulted in bloody conflicts. Further, there was a score of instances where the rulers chose to protect their own skin by staying aloof that amounted to letting the mighty prevail.

The religious leaders routinely concocted rituals and practices to thrust on people to serve unholy interests and self-serving. These interests were mutually supportive, and they always succeeded in scheming a variety of concealed tricks to fool people who were seeking peace and salvation. The religious institutions had devised beauty shows with religious practices that were intended to attract innocent minds. For example, they invented deities with accompanying stories, idols with descriptions of their powers, recitations to invoke imaginary gods, and rituals that buttressed each other. They asked people to erect stunning buildings to house gods and promised accessibility to gods at precise times, and places opened only through the expense of wealth, time in subjugation, and energy. As an example of these schemes, the sacred institution of altruism was so perverted that it only benefited the clergy and their enterprises.

Many other tricks were employed to speed a religion's institutional agenda. For example, miracles were invented to convert people and to influence human behaviors. The religious myths were designed to answer real questions and then safeguarded those cleverly devised myths by un-testable threats and promises. Further, organized religious institutions established cults of visible marks and body wrappings to encourage hatreds, murders, and wars against those who did not toe the line, or who were associated with the competing religions.

People were asked to invest a massive amount of money, time, and mind in ritualistic illusions and also in corrupted beliefs such as, either converting others or serving clergy with wealth and flesh that would guarantee heavens that no one had ever seen. Above all, they used horrific fears to ensure compliance to their tricks.

Guru Nanak's Travel

Guru Nanak came out of his enlightening meditation at the *Veni River* with fervent zeal to spread what he said was inspiration from the ONE CREATOR MANIFESTED IN ALL. He assigned a symbol of 'ੴ' (Ek-Onkaar) to represent the Creator. He termed the calling as to spread the universal message of *naam, daan, isnaan*. His message meant a lot of theology, but it is sufficed to paraphrase it here as the *Mind of Enlightenment, the Culture of Altruism and Thankfulness, and, the Ethics of Good Deeds*.

To accomplish his mission, Guru Nanak undertook four long journeys over a period of thirty-five years. He traveled over 30,000 miles in over thirty years. Two faithful provided companionship; Bala, originally from a Hindu background and Mardana, coming from Muslim upbringing. The countries he covered included, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Pakistan, Tibet, Nepal, south-west China, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Ceylon. Stories of his contacts are continually

being discovered from sources in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Syria, and Rome.

Guru Nanak's Mission Was Outright Universal

What is universal? Universal is that applies universally, that is, for "all similarly situated individuals," regardless of geography, culture, race, gender, religion, nationality, or any other distinguishing feature. When one looks at Guru Nanak's travels, his teachings, and lifestyles, it becomes evident right away that his visions, concerns, and approaches were all universal. Let me explain the universality of Nanak's mission a bit more as most of us as yet have not grasped the distinction between universal and ethnic.

One of our community leaders was visiting the USA sometimes ago. In our conversation over what he observed he stated his great gratification in this way. He said he was so pleased to see that Sikhism was becoming very universal. No matter where he traveled, he always met Sikhs, and they were all flourishing. To him, it was not always like during his prior visits. I responded that his observation of meeting Punjabi ethnic Sikhs everywhere was correct and was heartening, but Sikhi was not at all going universal. No matter how many Punjabi Sikhs he found in how many unexpected places, this, itself did not bring universality to Sikhi.

Rather, Sikhi would be universal only when the teachings of our Guru would have everyday appeal to civil societies in many countries within and beyond where Guru Nanak was born. It will be universal when it is practiced by many diverse cultures across the oceans.

A universal is something – maybe a practice, a concept, an idea, a feeling, etc. – that can be shared in practice across different cultures and languages. When the ideas or teachings can be readily exported beyond the domain in which it originated, independent of transporting people

who practiced those concepts, only then, Sikhi values have become universal.

For example, Christians have exported the idea of “God”, or ‘religion’ beyond its origins in the Middle-Eastern and Greco-Roman context. As a result, Native Americans, Black Africans and Caucasian alike have accepted Christianity. Western secularists have exported the idea of democracy beyond its European and American context. Buddhists and Hindus have exported the concepts of dharma, karma, meditation, yoga, and transmigration, beyond India. There are much more examples of the values that have earned the ranks of universality. Such is not yet the case with the Sikhi values.

Such was precisely the objective of Guru Nanak and his mission; to take his message across oceans and mountains to civil societies everywhere. Prevalence of similar cultures, languages, particularly religious beliefs, weather, landscapes, business opportunities, or political system was not a requirement to entice Guru Nanak to visit a given location. He had no plans to export or take with him any ethnic peoples or languages to the places he would select to visit. His whole objective was to promote dialogues with religious people and promote interfaith engagement all over the globe towards the universal pathways to enlightenment (NAAM), to the culture of altruism and thanksgiving (DAAN), and the ethics of goodness (ISHNAAN). All this becomes apparent when one examines the Guru’s dialogues and his travels judiciously.

Guru Nanak saw serious problems with the civil societies all over the world. His objective was clearly to stir the hearts and minds of people everywhere and all over the world. Bhai Gurdas, the Sikh theologian of the highest repute, witnessed this in the following verse.

ਬਾਬਾ ਦੇਖੇ ਧਿਆਨ ਧਰ ਜਲਤੀ ਸਭ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਵੀ ਦਿਸ ਆਈ॥ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਬਾਰ ਹੈ ਹੈਰੈ ਕਰਦੀ
ਸੁਣੀ ਲੁਕਾਈ॥

ਬਾਬੇ ਭੇਖ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਉਦੱਸੀ ਕੀ ਰੀਤ ਚਲਾਈ॥ ਚੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਸੋਧਨ ਧਰਤ ਲੁਕਾਈ॥ Gurdas –
Vaar 1, Pauri 24, Stanza 7.

Baba Guru Nanak gave lots of thought to the prevailing conditions of all humanity. In his meditation, Baba witnessed the whole earth burning (with the fire of lust and exploitation). Without the mind of enlightenment, there was the utter darkness of ignorance and falsehood, and he heard the cries from all civil societies.

To help the people, Guru Nanak donned robes of a traveling reformer and expounded people of many lands to move into the enlightened minds to overcome their darkness. Thus he traveled extensively to win the humanity with extensive dialogues, love, and reasoning.

Guru Arjan then vouched that Guru Nanak's teachings could be universally practiced by all four distinctive cultures of Hindu Society. The Indian society was divided into, namely, the *Kshatriyas* who were the nobility and the protectors of society., the *Brahmans* who provided education and religious leadership, the *Vaishya* who produced, and the *Shudras* who served other sections of society through menial jobs. He was very vocal in saying that,

ਖੜ੍ਹੀ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਸੂਦ ਵੈਸ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਚਹੁ ਵਰਨਾ ਕਉ ਸਾਝਾ ॥

Guru Nanak's teachings were the same to all four layers of society (as against the discriminatory provisions of education) for Kshatriyas, Brahman, Vaishya, and Shudras. SGGS - 747.

The Book Story

Acquaintance with Syed Prithipal Singh

During my high school in Haripur Hazara, before the Partition of India, I had the opportunity to meet Syed Prithipal Singh. He was a learned scholar who visited our town periodically during his lecture tours of *Pothohar* areas (now in Punjab, Pakistan). He was a favorite speaker so much so that many Muslim friends used to come to Gurdwara to listen to him.

I vividly recall his presentations in the evening gatherings which were organized in front of our Gurdwara, *Guru Nanak Satsang Sabha, Haripur*. Space inside the Gurdwara was insufficient to accommodate the large sizes of audience. Thus, the road in front was barricaded to traffic, and rugs were spread on the roads for the audience to sit. His popularity was partly on account of his telling us the stories of Guru Nanak's visits to Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries. In his speeches, he often quoted Guru Nanak in Arabic and in Persian.

I was one of his many admirers, first while I lived in Haripur, and later in Patiala after the Partition of India. It is from those days that I longed for a book to describe Guru Nanak's travels to Makkah and Medina as Syed Sahib used to narrate.

Discovery by Sardar Mangal Singh

After migrating to the USA in 1956, I first returned to visit India in 1963. Then I paid a visit to Sardar Bahadur Mangal Singh. He was a kind friend and the President of the Chief Khalsa Divan, a premier Sikh organization. He suddenly asked me if I could visit a village with him. There a saint Baba had a manuscript that I should examine and advise him on its publication. I agreed and accompanied him the following day to the village after many hours of a car journey. Sant ji who wore white clothes, I did not recognize him then as my old friend, Syed Sahib. The

saintly figure brought a handwritten document, several pages thick drafted in Gurmukhi script with black ink for our inspection.

I hurriedly went through the manuscript. I concluded to Sardar Mangal Singh that it was a handwritten account of Guru Nanak's visit to Makkah. It recorded Guru's dialogues with Islamic leaders there. I was thrilled to see this document. My advice to Sardar Sahib was that the manuscript should be cautiously preserved for research and be published if possible after it is viewed by other historians for its authenticity. I do not remember anything further about the contents except some questions asked of Guru Nanak about his religion and about the future of the world's religions. I recall Guru Nanak predicting that the Gurmat under multiple names would be the ultimate religion of the world. I also remember noticing the term "Khalsa" used in the manuscript.

Professor Kulwant Singh's Treatise

During my visit to Amritsar in the year 2000, I met my old colleague Professor Kulwant Singh. He took me to his home and gifted me his book on the Guru Nanak's visit to Makkah and Medina. He told me that it took him almost 20 years to publish that book as it was a tedious journey to locate and search over a dozen or so research manuscripts.

His book *Makkah Medina Di Gosht* is widely referenced in the present book done by Inderjit Singh. It referenced 17 different old documents and 365 questions and answers between Guru Nanak and his audience. During the further conversation, Professor Sahib told me of other books and documents on this subject.

Sardar Inderjit Singh is very comprehensive in his account as he referenced almost all of the known manuscripts on the subject.

Generosity of Mohinder Singh Bedi

I had lost track of my longtime friend Mohinder Singh Bedi until I read Sardar Himmat Singh's account of Guru Nanak's visit to Makkah. I called Himmat Singh in Patiala as he was an old colleague and asked for Sardar Mohinder Singh Bedi's contact. You will read all about Bedi Sahib in the book under review.

I immediately contacted Bedi Sahib in London and accepted his invitation to visit him there personally to explore further the project of doing a book on Guru Nanak's travels to Makkah. When visiting him, I understood Bedi Sahib's apprehension in handing over the treasure he so carefully preserved to anyone without being assured that it would not be exploited either for making money or taking any other kind of dubious advantage. He was also committed to preserving its purity and authenticity.

Both, Bedi Sahib and his wife Kuldip Kaur, were very hospitable when I visited as their guest in London. Bedi Sahib virtually handed over to me everything he had. They were handwritten diaries and documents, some photographs and audiotapes. I did not take with me anything, but together we made arrangements for the documents to be scribed, typed and then translated into English for publication.

A portion of the archival material of Syed Sahib had to be obtained from Patiala, which took considerable time and efforts. Dr. Himmat Singh of Patiala and Sardar Gurmeet Singh of London had a great deal to do with transcription of the documents.

As and when we received the documents we passed them on to Sardar Inderjit Singh who had earlier offered to translate everything in English and typeset it in a book form. The result of Inderjit's labor is in your hand.

Inderjit was enthusiastic and very charitable to translate the portions that he first rendered into a coherent story for publication, all done as a team with Bedi Sahib and others involved at all stages. Inderjit's is the first effort to tell the story in English as it was extracted from the handwritten material left behind by Syed Prithipal Singh. There are other materials also left behind by Syed Sahib and collected by his son, Mohinder Singh Bedi. Hopefully, scholars would come forward to research those material and bring them to public's attention soon.

A Significant Book

The book is essentially a diary of Guru Nanak's travels to the Islamic world by the Arab followers of the Guru. Syed Prithipal Singh deserves credits for recognizing its value and collecting from the Arabian sources. He is entirely responsible for the verification and its evidence. Also, the translator being a Sikh may not be familiar with some terms that may appear to belittle the Quran or the Prophet. We Sikhs respect all religions and their sacred scriptures. There is no intention to belittle anyone, any prophet or any scripture or hurt any feelings. If anything looks like a sacrilege even distantly, it is not intentional, and everyone involved in the project offers genuine regret and apology.

This book is the latest effort first to collate and preserve the evidence as well as the universal teachings of Guru Nanak. The evidence to support the Guru's travels through the Middle East is substantial. It is unfortunate that a lot of the physical evidence (buildings, stone tablets, manuscripts, etc.) is being destroyed either purposefully or through mere neglect. The Guru's monument at Baghdad was accidentally destroyed during the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion by the US in 2003. We are, however, content with the assurance given to us that it would be repaired and restored after the war in Iraq ends.

In Saudi Arabia, especially around Makkah and Medina, the Wahhabi influence has systematically destroyed religious and historical sites which did not fit their perception of Islam. In this pursuit, Wahhabis

didn't even spare some Islamic heritage itself and evidence linked to the Prophet and his family. "The Wahhabi clergy (body of religious scholars) viewed local religious practices as unfounded superstition superseding codified religious sanction that was considered a total corruption of religion and the spreading of heresy. What followed was a removal of the physical infrastructure, tombs, mausoleums, mosques, and sites associated with the family and companions of Prophet Muhammad¹." In the process, the evidence of the relationship of Islam with other world's religions as the path shown by Guru Nanak was also eclipsed.

Thus, it is more important to research and document history related to Guru Nanak before all traces of evidence of his visit is entirely destroyed. The writer has compiled some of this evidence in the Appendix of this book.

Recommendation

Both scholars and laity will benefit from the most recent treatise on the travels of Guru Nanak collated and translated by Inderjit Singh. It is suitable for research on Guru Nanak's mission and his travels. No reader will miss noticing the amount of work and dedication that Inderjit put into completing this project.

There are points scattered here and there in this book that may seem to be not consistent with Guru Nanak's teachings as we perceive them

¹ Rentz, George S. (2004). "Devotion." *The Birth of the Islamic Reform Movement in Saudi Arabia*. London: Arabian Publishing Ltd. p. 139. The Wiki site http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Destruction_of_early_Islamic_heritage_sites_in_Saudi_Arabia provides a partial list of famous mosques and sites destroyed by Wahhabis. The list includes some of the sites referenced by Sant Prithipal Singh in this book. For example, the Tomb of Eve in Jeddah was sealed with concrete in 1975.

today. For example, there are references to “karamat” or miracles by the Guru; there are citations from sources yet not confirmed, and there are included selected verses from Holy Quran. However, the author himself realized those limitations by saying that he might not agree with all of the observations of Syed Prithipal Singh.

This book is very timely because, Sikhs stand at a new juncture, new crossroads. This book gives a glimpse of how Guru Nanak welcomed the globalization and showed a path to make use of such a globalization with a message that is really universal. It is upon all of us to welcome the citizenship of the global village and rearticulate Guru’s teaching as universal values.

ਪਰਥਾਇ ਸਾਖੀ ਮਹਾ ਪੁਰਖ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਸਾਝੀ ਸਗਲ ਜਹਾਨੈ ॥

Great men speak the lessons by relating them to individual situations,
but the whole world may share in them. – SGGS 647

We are challenged to realize a form of subjectivity that is genuinely plural and is in consonance with the message of Guru Nanak. This way we follow Guru Nanak’s footsteps and encounter the coming waves of global uncertainty with confidence and optimism. Ignoring the path that Guru Nanak showed through his travels and dialogues with every religion in favor of heresy stories or *Sakhies* will retreat us into the usual kind of romantic self-emulation.

Harbans Lal, Ph.D., D.Litt. (Hons)

Foreword - Sant Prithipal Singh Ji Syed, My Father

I am the third son out of five and only one surviving at present. I am in my eighties now with failing health. It has been preying on my mind that I should discharge my duty of publishing my father's manuscript on Guru Nanak's pilgrimage to Makkah. I observed Baba Prithipal Singh Ji Syed both as a remarkable father and a great visionary of the time. I listened to his impressive lectures on Guru Nanak very attentively since the young age of four (1939) till his death on 12th November 1969, I was always astonished to learn the depth of his understanding of Guru Nanak's Mission besides being Hafiz in Quran Sharif.

It is my intention, due to my long association with my father, to say something about my father's family background (I had met his relatives in Mirpur in 1993). How he was touched by the book "Sihayto Baba Nanak Fakir" that he found in Medina Library on a Haj to Makkah with his father and Syed Kafla from Jammu and Kashmir. What a huge impact this book had on him, how it transformed the rest of his life, with what courage he left his high family and riches and indeed spent his entire life preaching Guru Nanak's mission.

When I was in my teens, around 1950, I remember my father was approached by Sardar Gulzar Singh Sidhu to write a book on Guru Nanak journeys to Makkah-Medina. Mr. Sidhu was the President of Gurdwara Nagina Ghat, Nangal Dam, Punjab at that time. This Gurdwara is built on the bank of the River Sutlej, and it was from this point that Guru Gobind Singh Ji crossed the Sutlej River.

A very small part of his manuscript called *Babe Di Bagdad Pheri* was published a few years ago. This created an immense interest and craving among the Sikh historians to know more about Guru Nanak's journey to Baghdad and Makkah. In 2013, we assembled a team to translate the manuscript of my father into English. Inderjit Singh was asked to lead the job with assistance provided by Harbans Lal and

Gurmit Singh. My father's manuscript is a part of the Sikh heritage, and I feel honored to hand it over to the Sikh World.

Mohinder Pal Singh Bedi

‘The Lion of the Lord took to the trade of the Fox’ – Translator’s Note

According to Punjabi lore, young Ashraf-al-Nisa on her deathbed begged her mother to keep an unusual promise. She wanted her Quran and her double-edged sword buried with her upon her death. Ashraf-al-Nisa was a devout granddaughter of Abdul Shamad Khan, the Governor of Lahore in the early eighteenth century. She used to spend her days reciting the Quran with her sacred sword by her side. Ashraf told her mother that her soul is crying as cruelty and moral corruption in Punjab knew no bounds. Shamad Khan had slaughtered Sikhs and had sent Banda Bahadur to his torture and death. He was outdone only by his son Zakariya Khan, who made it a crime to be a Sikh and placed bounties on their heads. Zakariya carried out mass executions of thousands of innocent Sikhs. During this dark period, Ashraf couldn’t bear the thought of any evil hands touching her sacred Quran and sword after her death. She begged her mother to bury her in a simple grave with these items at her side. Allama Iqbal has immortalized Ashraf-al-Nisa in his famous Persian epic *Javid Nama*.

We are a part of God, and all of humanity is our family, but when we ignore this and embark on evil deeds, the Guru has likened our state to that of a “beautiful swan that has forgotten its true self and has taken to eating a rotting carcass – SGGS 790.” Iqbal in his chapter on Ashraf-al-Nisa echoes the same sentiment when he laments:

“Until the Moslems did with themselves what they did,

and time’s revolution rolled up their carpet.

The man of God was mindful of other than God,

the lion of the Lord took to the trade of the fox.”

[As a result of this degradation, the Khalsa claimed justice and piety]

“You know well what befell Panjab—

the Khalsa snatched away sword and Koran”

The Palace of Ashraf-al-Nisa, Javid Nama, 2855

Javid Nama outlines two recurring themes: the struggle between right and wrong, and aching souls searching for truth amidst hypocrisy. Two centuries after Ashraf, Mushtaq Hussain, a pious young man from Kashmir, found himself similarly distressed when he felt surrounded by “lions taking to the trade of the fox.” During his search for truth, Mushtaq chanced upon a manuscript on the travels of Guru Nanak Dev ji in a library in Medina. The manuscript was a detailed diary, written by a Middle-Eastern author named Taajudin Naqshabandhi. Taajudin stayed with Guru Nanak for roughly two years during the Guru’s travels through the Middle East around 1510 AD. This manuscript changed Mushtaq’s life. He adopted Guru Nanak’s path and went on to become the renowned Sant Syed Prithipal Singh.

This book takes us on a journey of transformation, seen in the lives of Mushtaq Hussein as well as the contemporaries of Guru Nanak Dev ji touched by the message of the Guru. Sant Prithipal Singh ji provides a remarkable historical account of Guruji's Middle Eastern travels referencing three texts, all written around 1510 AD and previously unknown in India:

1. *Sihayato Baba Nanak Shah Fakir*, a Persian-Arabic manuscript by Taajudin Naqshabandi. This manuscript was discovered by Mushtaq Hussein in 1927, in a library in Medina.
2. *Twarikhe Arab*, by Zainul Abidin of Makkah who became a Sikh of Guru Nanak. In 1929, Mushtaq Hussein met in Makkah Mehboob Rehman, a descendant of Zainul Abidin whose family still followed Guru Nanak ji.
3. *Guniya-Ut-Salehin*, by Pir Abdul Rehman. This Pir met Guru Nanak in Baghdad.

Based on notes of his travels Sant ji prepared a manuscript in Punjabi in 1951. Sardar Gurcharan Singh published a small extract from this manuscript, which I then translated in 2012 under the title *Guru Nanak's Journeys to the Middle East*. The full manuscript of Sant ji has remained unpublished. Professor Himmat Singh received the manuscript from Professor MPS Bedi (Sant Ji's son) and worked diligently and prepared an edited and typed version in Punjabi. I received a lot of mail once my English translation of the extract was made public on the internet. During this period, I also heard from Doctor Harbans Lal, who encouraged me to edit and translate the full manuscript. Professor Bedi, Gurmeet Singh, and Bedi Sahib's other family members provided me a wealth of information which included scanned copies of Sant Ji's manuscript, notes, photographs, and Sant Ji's audio recordings. Professor Himmat Singh has provided me with research materials related to this manuscript.

At the beginning of the book, I have included a translation of a brief biography of Sant ji, written by Professor Himmat Singh. I am also thankful to Dalvinder Singh Grewal whose articles are included in the Appendix of this book. I am thankful for everybody's help. This translation would not have been possible without their help and encouragement.

Professor Bedi wrote to me to ask me to not turn this book into a life story about “a Muslim who became a Sikh.” He wrote that his Pita ji happened to be the right person, an Arabic speaking scholar, in the right place, at the right time, to be impacted by Taajudin’s remarkable book. He was so touched by studying this book that he spent his entire life preaching Guru Nanak’s philosophy from that time onward.

I sincerely hope that this book will bring Guru Nanak’s message of the oneness of humanity to the readers.

Translator and Editor: Inderjit Singh, July 2018.

About Me – Preface by Sant Syed Prithipal Singh

It is natural that one is hesitant to talk about oneself. Many learned people in the Sikh Panth were of the view that biography of this humble servant should be published. I am embarrassed to write about my insignificant life and my humble struggles. But glorious are the sons of the Guru who know that the path of Sikhism is narrower than a hair and sharper than a blade, still, in their wisdom, they commanded me to put to paper my autobiography and the greatness of Sikhism which I witnessed with my own eyes.



Sant Syed Prithipal Singh (1902 – 1969)

The command of the Sikh community members and my internal wish to share my experiences in the service of Sikhism compelled me to write. However, “ਭੂਖੇ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ॥ How I perform your devotional worship my Lord if I don’t have enough to eat – SGGS 656.” Looking after the family members, the Guru had entrusted in me constantly became a

barrier to my good intentions. In the absence of any other income, I was bringing up my family solely by singing Lord's praises which always kept me on a move from one gurudwara to the next. These responsibilities were not leaving me any time to write.

Finally, the encouragement from fellow Sikhs and humble prayers to the Creator resulted in the opportunity for me to start writing in March 1950. I was blessed to be at Gurudwara Ghat Sahib. This is the sacred place where the Tenth Lord Father sat by the banks of the River Sutlej and edited the massive literary work *Vidiyadhar Granth*. The Guru had commissioned the fifty-two poets in his court to write this massive work summarizing Vedas, Simritis, Shashtras and other ancient Indian texts. It took the Guru thirteen months and thirteen days to have this work compiled which was said to weigh over nine maunds (1 maund = 37.4 Kg). These writings were lost when Sikhs had to abandon Anandpur Sahib.

Not far from Gurudwara Ghat Sahib, the Tenth Guru sat on a high plateau and documented *Chaupi Sahib*. This is also the place where Rana Bhabour enjoyed the bliss at the Guru's feet – Gurudwara Bhabour Sahib has been built here in commemoration. During the Guru's time, there was a dense forest by the River Sutlej. The Guru used to go hunting in this forest and here he also met the King of Bilaspur. I have the good fortune to write my autobiography at this sacred and peaceful Gurudwara Ghat Sahib (Nangal, Punjab) with the infinite blessings of the Tenth Guru and the Sikh Sangat.

Introduction – A Brief Biography of Sant Syed Prithipal Singh by Professor Himmat Singh

Syed Prithipal Singh (né Mushtaq Hussein) was the only son of Mujafar Hussein, and the grandson of Pir-Bakur Shah of the famous family of Mirpur, Kashmir. The period from 1927 to 1930 was the most revolutionary in his life. During this time, his father decided to go to the Hajj and convinced his son to also go to Makkah-Medina for higher Islamic education. While researching in Medina, Mushtaq Hussein came across a manuscript, *Siyahto Baba Nanak Fakir*, in a library. An Arabic-Persian writer named Taajudin Naqshbandi wrote this manuscript. Taajudin joined Guru Nanak in his journey between Erar and Baghdad. While living with Guru Nanak, he had kept a diary—the *Siyahto Baba Nanak Fakir* manuscript—which he had submitted to the library in Medina.

Upon his return to Mirpur in 1930, Mushtaq was deeply saddened by communal violence stoked in Kashmir by Sheikh Abdulla's supporters, and in Jammu, by his own father, Mujafar Hussain. In this region, the Sikh Gurudwara of Kirtangarh was the target of arson and destruction. This gurudwara was constructed by Sant Baba Sunder Singh to care for the congregation and to promote education.

Rioters fueled by feelings of animosity towards Dogra ruler Maharaja Pratap Singh made the Sikh community their first target. Witnessing the destruction first hand, Mushtaq was troubled by these acts of persecution in the name of Islam. His appeals for peace fell on deaf ears.

Mushtaq had been touched by Taajudin's accounts of Guru Nanak's journeys, which were intended to promote the welfare of all humanity. Through these same accounts, he had also seen the ugly face of religious fanaticism, which resulted in the torture and death of Rukn-ud-Din, a respected religious leader of Kaaba. Disappointed, Mushtaq decided to leave for Lahore with his wife, Gulzar Begum, and his son, Mehmood Hussein. At Lahore, he initially studied the Arya Samaj sect, and then Christianity. Finally, he researched Sikhism carefully at the

gurudwara built at the site of Guru Arjun Dev ji's martyrdom. It was at this gurudwara that he received *Khande di Pahul* (Sikh initiation) from Giani Achhar Singh (later Singh Sahib Achhar Singh), after many persistent appeals to the Giani. Mushtaq became a Sikh on the fourth of *Jeth* (a month in the Indian calendar which roughly corresponds to May/June) in 1935 and later achieved renown as Sant Syed Prithipal Singh of Patiala. He dedicated his life to the service of the *Panth* (the path founded by Guru Nanak).

Sant Syed helped in settling the dispute around gurudwara Shahid Ganj in Lahore where Sikh men and women were martyred by the tyrant Mir Mannu. Around 1950, he worked with Akali Kaur Singh in India and abroad. Later, he served at the Gurudwara Ghat Sahib in Ropar. He then went to England to help build the gurudwara in Southall. In 1966, he was at the forefront of the campaign to return Guru Gobind Singh ji's personal weapons to India.

On his way back, Syed Sahib stopped in Kabul, Afghanistan, where he met the Head of the State and got the rights to hail the Sikh flags on 17 gurdawars in Afghanistan. He completed his successful human journey in Kanpur while organizing the anniversary celebrations of the birth of Guru Nanak Dev ji in 1969. He is survived by his family living in England and in Patiala.

1. Discovery of Taajudin's Manuscript

Eighteen years before I (Syed Prithipal Singh) penned these lines, I was Mushtaq Hussain Shah, a member of a famous family of the Sadat clan in Kashmir. From this celebrated family, Pir Bakur Ali Shah, my grandfather, had served as a senior minister in the cabinet of the late Maharaja Pratap Singh of Kashmir. My grandfather is remembered in Kashmir for his simple and spiritual living. My father is a famous scholar and *Pir* (Muslim religious leader) of the Gojar² tribes of Kashmir. He is an honorary magistrate and a well-known landlord. My father's name is Pir Muzaffar Hussain Shah. I had graduated as a *Maulvi* (a qualified Islamic scholar) from Darul Ullum (house of knowledge) Deoband and had trained as a naturopathic doctor at Azmalkhan's Tabiya College in Delhi.



**Prithipal Singh ne'
Mushtaq Hussain Shah**

One day upon returning from a visit to Lahore, I found my father preparing to go to Hajj. He asked me to accompany him. As per the Islamic religious rules, I requested permission from my mother³ who also belonged to a famous Syed family of the Sadat tribe. I received her permission and got ready for Hajj. In 1927, a group of Kashmiri hajjis

² Gojar is an ethnic group in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. This group is also called Gurjar or Gurjara. [9]

³ A person must seek parents' permission before going to Hajj. "They [parents] can stop him from going for a voluntary Hajj, and they will not be sinners if they do that. But they do not have the right to stop him from going for the obligatory Hajj, and they will be sinners if they stop him. If he goes for (obligatory) Hajj without their permission, his Hajj will be valid regardless – even though he would be a sinner if he went for a voluntary Hajj without their permission. He also has the right to travel to seek knowledge without their permission." [Fatawa al-Imaam al-Nawawi, p. 94]

(pilgrims) under my father's leadership went to Makkah Sharif⁴ via Karachi, Aden, and Jeddah Sharif. We completed the pilgrimage on foot and reached Makkah forty days before the date of Hajj. We completed Hajj as per the Islamic customs and rules.

My father wanted to visit the Mazare (tomb) Sharif of Hazrat⁵ Muhammad. My father and I left for Medina, and the rest of the Kashmiri hajji group decided to return to India. A priest in Medina hosted us and put us up in a tidy room until we could find another accommodation. My father asked me to get Islamic education in Medina as we were planning on staying there for a while. My father found a quiet guest house and started worship in solitude, and I started working on Hadith education at Mina University⁶ to become a moulvi. The City of Medina being a center of Islamic culture has a grand library.

I used to go to this library to study after my classes. During my research here, I came across a handwritten book called *Sihatyo Baba Nanak Fakir*. The Arabic title translates to (Travels of Baba Nanak). When I read the name 'Nanak', I was taken aback. I started wondering: Baba Nanak, an Indian, the founder of the Sikh religion, a religion whose adherents Muslims call 'Kafir'⁷ - why is this book here? I ignored everything including my studies and kept reading this book carefully again and again. The more I read, the more the narrative astonished me.

⁴ Sharif means noble. It is an Arabic title of respect used for holy places or for descendant of Prophet Muhammad

⁵ Hazrat is an Arabic title of honor similar to the English title 'His Holiness'. Islam has 12 great Hazrats (including Muhammad, Moses and Jesus). This title can also be used for Imams, or for any respected personality.

⁶ The word "University" in "Mina University" is likely included colloquially by the organizers of the institution to signify higher learning. The first formal university in Medina was not established until 1961.

⁷ Kafir in Arabic means a non-believer or infidel. In Islam this term is used for anybody who ignores or denies the "Islamic version of Truth."

But I also grew deeply fascinated and inspired by what I read. What astonished me the most was that the top leaders of Islam had embraced Baba Nanak's teachings. Because of the Baba, these powerful Arabic leaders, *ullamas* (Islamic scholars), *qazis* (Islamic judges), and *fakirs*⁸ started meditating on mantra given by the Baba.

I already mentioned the meaning of the book *Sihayto Baba Nanak Fakir* above; the author of this amazing sacred book was from the Undlas region. He was a scholarly man named Taajudin Khalaf Baha-ud-din Mufti Tariqa Naqshbandi⁹, and belonged to the Shafi'i school of thought (a sect of Sunni Islam). This author accompanied Guru Nanak during his Arabian journey for two years. He described the grandeur of the Baba which he witnessed with his own eyes.

From Baghdad, the Guru departed for the city of Khorram. At this point, Taajudin separated from the Guru.

After receiving blessings from the Guru, Taajudin came to Medina and sat by the tomb of Hazrat Muhammad Sahib and completed his manuscript. For the benefit of future generations, he then entrusted this manuscript to the library¹⁰ in Medina around 917 Hijri. Four hundred and fifty years later, I the lowly worm [Mushtaq Hussain] discovered this book.

⁸ Fakir or Faqir is derived from Arabic word 'Faqr' (poverty) it means Islamic ascetic

⁹ Tariqa (way or path) Naqshbandi (means engraver [of the heart]) is a Sufi order related to Sunni Islam which got its name from its founder Baha-ud-Din Naqashband Bukhari (1318-1389AD) [10].

¹⁰ Sardar Jasjit Singh Ahluwalia through his research discovered that there is a public library inside the Prophet's mosque in Medina and it is a center of knowledge and hence attracts large number of students, researchers and pilgrims who want to enhance their knowledge in various Islamic topics. The library was established in the Hijri year 886 (1481-1482). It is possible that Taajudin left his manuscript in this library which was later discovered by Mushtaq Hussain. [53]

2. The Author of the travels is blessed by the touch of the Guru's feet

The author [Taajudin] begins the book with his own story. He said that it was in a mountainous forest in Iran where he first met the Lord Nanak and received the blessing of the touch of his feet. He described that he was passing through the forest, and suddenly he saw Indian fakirs sitting in a serene spot. One of them was playing a rebab (musical instrument), and before him sat a venerable man whose forehead was illuminating with a spiritual glow. They were singing something in a very sweet and poignant way in a spiritual bliss which was both touching and mesmerizing.

Taajudin writes, "I approached them and wished *Assalam Alaikum* (Muslim greeting meaning 'peace/blessing be upon you'). The man with the rebab responded, "*Wa Alaikum Assalam.*" I wanted to sit in their company, but I was getting late for my *namaz*¹¹, and I proceeded onwards.

The man with the spiritual aura with a face glowing like a moon in the middle of stars, said softly in Pashto "کنهان¹² kinhan" meaning, "sit." I

¹¹ Namaz is a ritualistic prayer in Islam [as opposed to a supplication] and is performed five times a day. It is preceded by a ritual ablution. "As one of the Five Pillars of Islam, namaz is a key Muslim worship ritual that consists of the repetition of a dozen prescribed physical actions, words and prayers. It is obligatory for all Muslims except those who are disabled, prepubescent, very sick, lactating, pregnant, in a menstrual period, frail and elderly or travelling on a long journey" [11].

¹² Most of the phrases in the Arabic script in this book were not copied from Taajudin's original manuscript. Saving just a few exceptions, Sant ji transliterated Arabic/Persian phrases into Punjabi in his handwritten manuscript. I used services of an Arabic translator to produce Arabic script from my English transliterations. It's possible that some mistakes may have been introduced in these series of conversions from Arabic to Punjabi, Punjabi to English and then finally from English transliteration to Arabic script.

sat down, but a few moments later I got up to leave. This time, the master said in a mildly scolding voice,

“وال تازاهو، كنهان Wale ta zaho, kinhan” meaning, “Sit, why are you leaving?”

I answered in Persian

“Hazrat mara waqte namaz اب نشات -ي-هزرت مرة وقت نماز اسات، اينجا ششما asat, eenja chashma-e-aab neshat” meaning, “Hazrat (Your Holiness), it’s time for my namaz, I am looking for some water for ablution, as soon as I find some, I will perform my namaz.”

He said,

“لا تقنطوا من رحمة الله La taknatu miramahtilla” meaning, “O man of Allah! Don’t doubt Allah’s mercy.”

He then said,

“اينجا شيشما آب باسيار اسات Eenja chashmae aab basiar asat” meaning, “Have faith, you will get plenty of water here.”

Taajudin writes fondly:

“This exchange in a mix of Pashto and Persian deeply touched my heart and I sat near the Guru’s feet on my two knees. I became so carefree that I forgot namaz.

“After a few moments, I felt as if he himself is the one to whom I should be offering namaz, and I forgot everything. But the focus of all namazes got worried about my namaz.

The master interrupted his singing, pointed towards me, and addressed his rebab-playing companion:

“Mardana ji, this saintly soul has to perform his namaz, please look for some water for him.”

Mardana respectfully replied,

“My kind guru! I too have been thinking of water and am suffering from thirst. Out of respect I have been sitting still, but my sight has been wandering in search of water all over these hills, I have not spotted it anywhere. Please, get us some water, I am suffering from thirst.”

Listening to Mardana, the Sahib’s celestial lips uttered with a smile,

“O Mardana, you are Lord’s bard. This land has heard his praises from you. Don’t worry. Undoubtedly this land will yield water for you. Here, take my walking stick, and dislodge that stone over there, and God will be merciful.”

Hearing this, Mardana bowed and took the walking stick and using it as a lever dug out the stone.

Oh, my wondrous, wondrous Hazrat Nanak! Hazrat’s blessed glance started a spring out of rocks. The water started flowing towards us. In ignorance, we leaped to get our belongings out of the way lest they get wet. The blessed master just stretched his feet towards the oncoming water. Oh, the sight! The water ran to kiss the master’s feet, and then it retreated to form a pool around the spot where it had erupted.

Taajudin writes “This unique miracle cemented my faith. I cried: The most lovable! The most lovable!”

Hazrat Nanak said, “Do the ablution and say your namaz.”

Hazrat’s words reminded me again of the namaz. I did ablution in the celestial pool and performed my namaz. Then I turned to my master and requested “Please, would you perform the namaz also.” The master

said, “Bar Juban Tasbihe Dard Dar Dile O Gao Khar. Een Chanin Tazbihe Dard Cheh Asar.¹³”

I folded my hands and pleaded “Hazrat! If I have made a mistake in my namaz, then won’t you please set me right?”

The master said,

“O saintly man, the whole world is mistaken. It’s due to these mistakes the world is wandering on unfamiliar paths. The truth is that I will perform this namaz at Makkah in Arabia.”

Hearing the master, I was flabbergasted, and couldn’t help but say, “Oh Hazrat! This is *deegar*¹⁴ namaz; not much time is left, the sun is about to set. Makkah is a thousand miles from here. I don’t understand when you say that you will perform this namaz in Makkah.”

I was looking at the master’s face waiting for an answer. All of a sudden, the master’s eyes, face, and forehead lit up with the intensity of a thousand flashes of lightning. Unable to bear the brightness my eyelids closed. The next moment, somebody touched me, and as I opened my eyes, I found myself standing next to the arcade of the Aqsa Mosque in the city of Baitul Muqaddas¹⁵, the largest city in Arabia.

The master standing to the right of me smiled. I realized that the smile was in answer to my statement where I had implied that Arabia was too far.

¹³ Translation for this sentence was not available in the manuscript

¹⁴ The five namazes, offered at set times of day, have different names. Deegar or Asr is the evening namaz.

¹⁵ Baitul Muqaddas is Islamic name for Jerusalem

3. Hujra Nanak Shah Qalandar¹⁶ (The Monastery of Master Nanak the Fakir)

Aqsa is the Mosque where the Muslims believe that Jesus will appear to kill Dajjal (the false Messiah or the Anti-Christ). Baitul Muqaddas is the city established by Hazrat David, the prophet. This place holds special eminence in the Islamic world.

From Aqsa, the Guru proceeded to the great cemetery outside the city and started singing just as he did in the Suleyman Shah Mountains of Iran. Soon men and women started gathering around the master. As people arrived, they reverently greeted the master with a familiarity as if they had known him for a long time. The master blessed everybody:

“May Kartar (Creator) reside in your heart.”

Taajudin writes, “It was later that I came to know the word ‘Kartar’ and its philosophy; in reality, this word is the great name of Allah. The Guru stayed in the cemetery for only three days, and in a mere three days, everybody in the city was echoing the word ‘Kartar’. I was surprised that everybody in the city knew Guruji.

On the last day, the Guru held the hand of Ibne Wahid, a Sufi man who had become increasingly devoted to the Guru and instructed him,

“This place has heard the echo of the divine; this place will exist until the end of the time. You be the caretaker here. What you have seen here, preach to others.”

Prithipal Singh writes:

¹⁶ Qalandar is an Islamic title given to a highly spiritual saint

Readers! A great Mandir built in the shape of a Masjid stands at this place today. Ibne Wahid's descendant is a priest here. This place is called "Hujra Nanak Shah Qalandar." The two tribes in this town, the 'Sibi' and the 'Badhu', are devotees of the Guru. They recite Japuji Sahib.

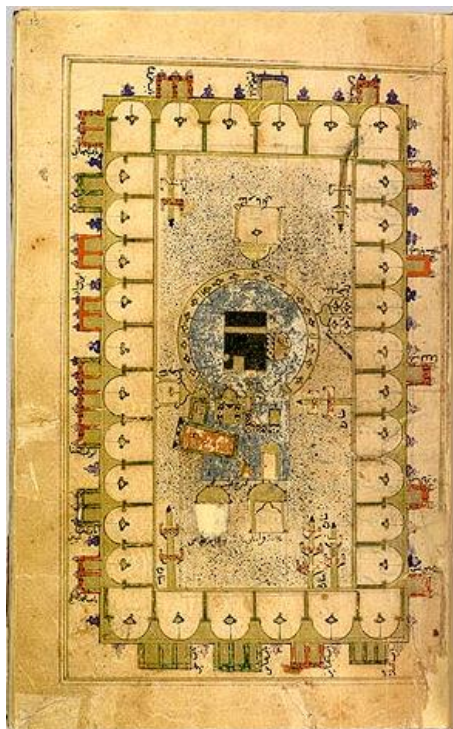
4. The Makkah Moved

The author of *Sihayto Baba Nanak Fakir* writes,

“after bestowing the limitless flow of Naam in Baitul Muqaddas for three days, the master handed the preaching responsibility to Ibne Wahid (mentioned earlier), the respected member of the Sibi tribe.

The master, Mardana and I then set out for Makkah. After several days we reached Kaaba in the evening. Kaaba is built outside Makkah, on one side. At night, priests and caretakers go home.

The Baba (Nanak) circumambulated the deserted Kaaba¹⁷ carefully and then sat down on the great *mussala*¹⁸ of Sunni sect and started kirtan (spiritual singing).



Mid-16th century depiction of Makkah from a Leaf from the book *Futuh al-Haramain*

¹⁷ Kaaba, is the small black structure in the depiction above, the large compound without a cover is Masjid Al-Haram. The dimensions of the Kaaba at 10m by 15m have not changed significantly over the history although it has been rebuilt around twelve times. The Masjid has gone through a lot of expansion. It started out at roughly 35m by 50m at the time of the Prophet, and currently it is oblong shaped at around 124m by 164m. At the time of the Guru the Masjid was roughly 50m by 150m [14].

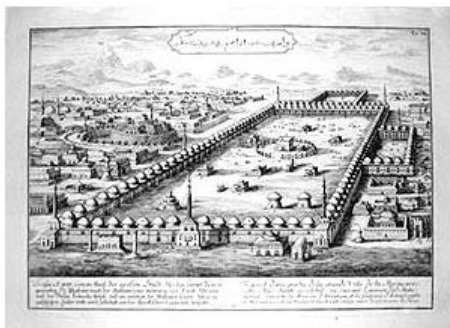
In the third quarter of the night (around 3 am), the Lord ordered Mardana: “Brother, do not stop the kirtan.”

The Guru then lay down pointing his head away from the Kaaba and rested his feet against the wall of the Kaaba and fell asleep.

All of us were surprised; if the Guru was going to fall asleep, why didn't he also permit us to sleep?

The purpose of this instruction got apparent later: the master was going to wake up the masses of Makkah who had fallen into a deep slumber of delusions and superstitions.”

At the end of the third quarter of the night, a caretaker¹⁹ with a broom approached from the city and started cleaning around the Kaaba. He was absorbed in singing kalma (verses of the Quran) at the top of his voice while sweeping the “House of Allah” in service.



Another 16th century depiction of Makkah and the surrounding town around the period of the Guru's visit

All of a sudden, he came across a man sleeping with his feet touching the walls of the Kaaba.

With a hoarse voice quivering in anger he shouted,

¹⁸ Mussala is the name of open space for prayer outside a mosque

¹⁹ In Vaaran Bhai Gurdas and in Janamsakhis, this caretaker is named “Jeevan”. Based on the name, Bhai Vir Singh ji thinks that Jeevan was probably of Indian origin, and either he or his parents settled in Makkah.

“كفارنا هذا كفرهم ذنب عظيم” Kufaruna Haza Kufrahu Biazbun Azim”, meaning, “These kafirs (non-believers) are blasphemous beyond belief.”

He continued shouting more and more intolerable insults. But thinking objectively; he was right, as a Muslim, he was witnessing an ultimate sacrilege to the house of Allah.

When ignorance started crossing all limits, the merciful Guru sat up and addressed the caretaker in a loving voice:

“my dear good man! Why are you so angry with me? What have I done which is so bad that you are threatening me with fatwas of blasphemy?”

The caretaker thundered, “You Indians appear to be kafirs. Kafirs will definitely be put to death. You insult the house of Allah, and then you ask what you have done wrong! Mark my words! When the head Qazi (Islamic judge) shows up, he will tie you to these pillars and will tear your flesh with lashes. Then you will understand what you have done wrong.”

The Guru tried explaining to him, but there was no effect on the caretaker’s soul which was soiled by hatred. Once the Guru realized that no words would permeate the man’s fouled intellect, he simply put his feet back and lay down again as before.

Taajudin writes that the caretaker started burning in rage and said,

“Before I thought you had made an innocent mistake, now I know that you are committing this blasphemy on purpose to hurt my feelings. Remember! I will get the Qazi to put you to death unless you admit your guilt and ask for forgiveness.”

The embodiment of compassion the Satguru said very patiently,

“Oh man of Allah! I didn’t do this to hurt your feelings. Instead, I am seeking knowledge from you. My friend, please move my feet in the direction where you don’t see Allah?”

The caretaker dropped the broom, and furiously dragged the Guru’s feet and spun his body until his head was touching the wall of the Kaaba and his feet were pointing in the other direction. Then he thanked Allah and said, “This is the house of merciful Allah. You ought to show respect here.”

Pleased with himself as if he had won a battle, the caretaker grabbed the broom, started reciting kalma loudly again, and resumed sweeping.

When he turned around, he found Guru’s feet touching the Kaaba again. He was perplexed and started thinking that the Guru and his companions are harassing him, and the Guru has moved his feet again.

Ignorance is like a dark night. The caretaker leaped and dragged the feet away again. Once he picked up his broom and turned around, he saw the feet touching Kaaba again. Now he was beyond upset and said, “This time, I am going to drag you and throw you in that hole over there.”

Listening to his ignorant diatribe, we started worrying that driven by his fire of hatred; the caretaker would commit some disrespect.

Burning in anger, he grabbed Guru’s feet and started dragging. Before, Kaaba moved when the caretaker was not looking. This time, the

caretaker saw with his own eyes that Kaaba followed the Guru's feet²⁰. I too saw this amazing sight three times with my own eyes.

Having witnessed the miracle, the caretaker fell on the Guru's feet and started begging,

“Taharana Ya Rabi Alaklubu Zulhalu” meaning, “Oh man of Allah, please grant me inner strength so that I can recognize you.”

The Guru sat up and said, “May you remember Allah”, and then went into a trance.

²⁰ Some Muslims take offense with the reference that Jeevan saw the Kaaba move as he moved Guru Nanak's feet away from Kaaba. They claim that this could not have happened. However, there are many famous references in Islam which talk about the Kaaba moving:

- Hazrat Iban writes in his book *Fatuhah Makkah* that he saw the Kaaba rise to crush him when he thought inappropriate thoughts about the Kaaba during the Hajj (*Israr Shariat*, part 2, page 74)
- Rabia, when passing through a forest on her way to the Hajj for the second time, saw the Kaaba coming towards her to welcome her. Rabia said, I was hoping to see God. I have no need for God's house. If he were to walk towards me a length of a hand, I will advance a yard towards him. What do I do with the Kaaba? This doesn't please me.
- Hazrat Ibrahim Azam went to Makkah, and was surprised to see the Kaaba missing. He thought his eyesight was failing him. He heard a voice which said, “There is nothing wrong with your eyesight, the Kaaba has gone to welcome a lady who is too feeble to walk to the Hajj” (*Tazkiratul Awliyah*, page 62). [52]

Guru Nanak Dev Ji was not interested in showing miracles. Instead, he wanted people to realize that God is everywhere. It is possible that the Guru did not physically move the Kaaba, but simply created a perception in the minds of Jeevan and others that the Kaaba is moving. It is not uncommon for people to have a deep spiritual experience in the presence of a highly spiritual being.

The caretaker bowed again, hoping that the Guru would talk to him, and he could beg forgiveness for his mistakes. He tried a few times, but the Guru remained in a trance.

Mardana started singing on his rebab (a string instrument),

“As long as he says mine-mine, not even a single thing works. Once you give up I and mine (ego), the Creator comes and resolves all affairs – SGGS 1160.”

At some point, the Guru’s silence and the piercing message of Mardana’s singing overwhelmed the caretaker, and he got up and started running towards the town.

We got worried - what if he goes and incites a religious mob or a Mufti from the town?

I (Taajudin) started following the caretaker. He went to the Jama Masjid and climbed the tall minaret and started shouting in Arabic.

“Hear Ye Arabians; you have been claiming for centuries that the chamber of Kaaba is the house of Allah. Come and see today, Allah is sitting in his abode. Come behold his vision and fulfill your heart’s desires.”

The announcement worked like a talisman on the Arabs who are known to admire miracles and power. In no time, all the town’s men and women congregated in the masjid.

Soon Rukan-ud-din, the senior Qazi of Amir-e-Makkah (The Islamic Judge appointed by the ruler of Makkah) joined the crowd with his entourage.

After a quick religious hearing, the mullahs issued a fatwa of blasphemy. The decision was that it didn’t matter if the person in

Kaaba was holiest of the holy. Once he made the Kaaba circle around himself, he committed the gravest blasphemy.

Upon hearing the fatwa, Arabs grabbed knives and axes and started screaming hack him! Kill him!

The caretaker, upon seeing the flames of ignorance got distressed. He ran through the mob and reached Rukan-ud-din at the front and pleaded “O great Mufti, I know that your decision will be correct. But please be mindful lest you commit a sacrilege. Indeed, he (Allah) himself is sitting in his own house in person.”

Jeevan’s devotion-filled words left a mark on Rukan-ud-din’s soul. The Guru’s blissful words to Jeevan “May you remember Allah” had cut through his ignorance and had washed his mind clean. Words coming from Jeevan’s hallowed mind were affecting Rukan-ud-din.

Rukan-ud-din asked Jeevan politely, “When you beheld the Creator, was he in a human form? Would I be able to see him and recognize him with my own eyes?”

Jeevan became emotional and said with tear-filled eyes.

“Sire, it’s beyond my abilities to describe the majesty and glory of the Master. You have to see it to believe it. But, go there with love and respect. This mob, which is rushing there armed with ignorance, please don’t take them with you.”

Rukan-ud-din agreed and said,

“I am the authority here. I will order this mob disbanded. My good man Jeevan, I will take just a few pious men with me.” Taajudin wrote that Rukan-ud-din limited the group to one hundred fifty towns people and set out to Kaaba.

Zain-Ul-Abidin, the author of *Twarikhe Arab* (Arab History), wrote that when the group was walking towards Kaaba, somebody said,

“The fakir at Kaaba should be crushed in an oil press.”

A Qazi named ‘Syed Ibne Walid’ quoted from the great book and said, “A person like that should be stoned to death.” Another Qazi added, “It would be appropriate to get him ripped apart by dogs after stoning.” Rukan-ud-din kept listening to these men quietly.

Taajudin, the author of *Sihayto Nanak Shah Fakir* wrote,

“I was there, I witnessed everything, and I heard everything.”

When the group was roughly a hundred steps from Kaaba, they stopped for further discussion. When they tried to walk again towards Kaaba, only Rukan-ud-din proceeded, the other could not, as if the ground had grabbed hold of their feet. Janamsakhi Bhai Bala also writes that earth had frozen the group’s feet lest they do something in disrespect and that only Rukan-ud-din got to Kaaba. Jeevan’s enlivening words were not lost on Rukan-ud-din his soul had started to soften up. Rukan-ud-din was not yet fully convinced, but definitely, some respect had taken hold in his heart.

5. Dialog between Rukan-ud-din and Guruji

Rukan-ud-din, without his companions, approached Guruji, who was singing kirtan. With respect he said, “Assalam Alaikum” (Muslim greeting meaning: Peace/blessing be upon you). In reply the Guru promptly gestured towards the sky and said in a loud greeting “Sat Shri Akal, Gurbar Akal²¹” (The Lord immortal is the sole truth; the all-powerful timeless God).

Rukan-ud-din was surprised by this unusual greeting. Rukan-ud-din promptly asked,

“فلاي مذهب تنتمي؟” Fala Alla Mazahbu,” meaning, “which religion do you belong to?”

The response was, “إني عبد الله، لا مذهب لي.” Abdulla Allah La Mazahabu,” meaning, “I am Allah’s man; I have no religion.”

Qazi said, “Alabdohu Ilal Mazhab” meaning, “Sir, If you are a man, then you must belong to some religion, as Allah has made all the religions in the world for men. Please tell me the truth. Who are you? What is your religion? Where do you belong? What is your real purpose in coming here? Why are you singing in violation of sharia? I heard that you made Kaaba do your circumambulation. Everything you have done is against our religion. No wonder Muslims of Makkah are bewildered. One hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets have acknowledged that Kaaba is Allah’s abode. Imam and the Prophet have told us that music and singing are sacrilegious. But you did all this, and why?”

²¹ According to Janamsakhi Bhai Mani Singh, the Guru used a similar greeting in Baghdad: “Gurbar Akal, Sat Sri Akal, Chit Karan Naam” [15]

Guruji listened to the qazi patiently, and then with rebab sang the following in Arabic:

لي كن دي اخي قمر الزمان فلا تحشي واكتتب الاماني

Rukan-ud-din Akheen Kamaruzaman || Fala Tehshi Wa
Aktabulamaani ||

مجاورمكه يا نور عيني فلا تحشي واكتتب الاماني

Mujavar Makkah To Ya Noor Anee || Faa Tehshi Le Arasha
Tilasaani ||

ان ملك الشر لرضه اذنها باعيننا ميفاتيح الجناني

Eena Mulko Aashri Fato Azina Raha || Ba Aanana Meefa Teeh
Al Janaani ||

و اخلاق كروض المزن تحكي مباسمها شفور لا قخوان

Wa Ikhla Ko Karuzal Mazne The Ki || Maba Samha SaguRula
Kehvani ||

اذن طقو فدي او عقيق قوا فهيم مرتبه المعاني

Aaz Natakoo Fidran O Akeekan || Kawan Fee Hum
Marutebatulmuaani ||

بروهي ساده ملكوفودي مواظبهم علي هام الزماني

Baruhi Saad To Malkoo Fahudi || Mawazi Huam Alla
Hamuzamaani ||

Meaning: Rukan-ud-din, you are the senior qazi of Makkah and one of the administrators of Kaaba. You shine like a moon in the Islamic world. The entire Islamic nation honors your fatwa. Congratulations! But sadly, when it comes to truth and wisdom, you are a blank. Your

ego will keep you and your brethren away from the destination. Dear Qazi, your quest for worship and obedience from your people will turn you into fuel for hell. Become a servant of Allah, and worship only Allah. That alone is the path to your salvation.

The purpose of my arrival is to meet people here so that together we can understand the truth that is Allah. Success is not in shouting ‘Allah Allah’ from minarets but in our accomplishments. One’s first responsibility is to recognize oneself. Once we have realized our true selves, then we should think about others, because we are all his creation.

Taajudin writes that most of the day passed in questions and answers between the Guru and Rukan-ud-din. He said that there were 360 questions and answers in total. The Qazi, in every subject, was stressing complete mental obedience to the religious law saying that’s what is commanded in sharia by our Imams and the Prophet.

The Guru was trying to convince the Qazi that there is nothing to be gained in becoming a slave to religious rules created by mortals (“Reliance on mortals is in vain; know this well - SGGS 281”). The Guru said that Islamic religion lays claim to the Creator yet when it comes to partnering with his creation your religion is a major offender. What you say and do, even your Quran Majid (Quran the glorious) does not condone. Take the question of music and singing, the ban is an invention of mullahs. Your Prophet was very fond of music and singing. He used to seek out and enjoy these gatherings. There is a famous story, in this regard, related to Prophet Sahib, which is mentioned in Hadees (Islamic religious book).

Once the Prophet was invited to a wedding within the Quraysh tribe, when the prophet reached there, girls were singing folk songs. Seeing the Prophet they quickly switched to hymns.

The Prophet interrupted them and said, “I enjoyed what you were singing before, please sing those songs again, and may Allah bestow honor upon you.”

The Guru said, “Now dear Qazi! The Prophet is asking for a blessing of honor from Allah for girls singing folk songs. My songs, which have nothing but the praise of the Creator, you call them blasphemous. What kind of justice is this? Dear Qazi, why not first learn from your own Prophet?”

Hearing this reference from Islam, the Qazi bowed his head, he joined his hands in humility and prayed, “Ya Rabi Inal Tahrahoo Fil Kaluboil Rab”, meaning, “Your Majesty, I have heard that you are Allah Himself, please grant me the ability to recognize you.”

Saying this Rukan-ud-din’s voice choked, and his eyes welled up, and he placed his head at the Guru’s feet. The Guru lifted Qazi’s head with his hands and said the blessing “Sat Kartar, Sat Kartar, Kartar Chit Aaway” meaning, “True is the Creator! True is the Creator! May you be reminded of the Creator always.”

Then, the Guru said, “Dear Qazi, your bowing has been accepted in his court. But mind your companions who came with you, they had suggested punishments for me. They didn’t doubt that you will execute those punishments. Now seeing your actions to the contrary, they are plotting against you. It’s possible that they will attack you before you return to the city. You had decreed a fatwa of blasphemy against me. Instead of punishing my blasphemy, you bowed your head on my feet. I accept your bowed head, but you should prepare to save yourself from these people.”

The Guru was testing the Qazi with the above words like somebody strikes a vessel to hear its sound before purchasing. But exalted are the

blessed feet of the Guru whose mere touch had cleansed the mind of the Qazi.

The blessed Qazi got up and took a look at his companions. Indeed, they were biting their fingers in disbelief and were red with rage; they would have loved to get their hands on the Qazi and would have ripped him to pieces.

Hail to the Satguru, the true warrior whose arrow of love when it strikes, even the worst of the egoists' crumble in surrender. And in surrender, the Qazi's whole nature transformed: 'One who does not frighten anyone, and who is not afraid of anyone else – SGGS 1427'.

The fearless Qazi who was now aware of the inner thoughts of his companions turned towards the Guru and requested with folded hands, "Your Majesty, to remove my companions' delusion and false pride I beg your forgiveness to trouble you with two more questions. Please oblige me with an answer."

6. Reference to Uncut Hair from the Quran

Qazi Rukan-ud-din was no longer afraid of his companions. Instead, his query stemmed from his new spiritual state which sought the welfare of his companions so that their doubts could be removed. The Guru answered, “I have taken the trouble to travel a thousand miles. I have come here for the sole purpose of offering true direction and answering any questions you may have. Please ask without hesitation and remove any doubts you may have.”

Question: Our prophet has instructed that men trim the mustache which extends past the length of three fingers. The length of one’s beard shouldn’t be allowed to grow more than a closed fist. Similarly, he has advised removing underarm and pubic hair, and head hair at a length where it touches the neck. Why do you keep your hair uncut?

Answer: The Guru smiled and said, “I have been telling you for a while now that following another human being will turn you into fuel for hell. Live how Allah has wished for us, and worship only Him. Salvation lies only in following Allah. Worship of Allah is our objective, worshiping anybody else will trap us in delusion.”

Rukan-ud-din said with folded hands, “Oh Prophet from India, I know not what Allah truly wishes from us. Please explain.”

Guruji laughed and said, “Good man! Allah’s word in the Quran provides you the direction.”

Rukan-ud-din: “Does the Quran solve this issue?”

Guruji: “Quite well, in fact very clearly.”

Hajj is a foundation of Islam; it's the beginning of a spiritual journey for Muslims. Hajj is like *Baptism* for Christians, *Janeu* (sacred thread) for Hindus and *Amrit* for Sikhs. For Hajj, the instruction from the Quran is: "Keep hair uncut for completing the Hajj, during this period cutting hair is strictly prohibited." Muslims who pay only lip service to Islam may not follow it, but Muslims who are true to Islam, the ones who have surrendered their self to Allah, becomes their duty to maintain uncut hair. This principle is consistent with "ਸਾਬਤ ਸੁਰਤ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਸਿਰਾ. Consider the maintenance of God-given unaltered appearance as a sign of your respect (i.e. turban on your head) – SGGS 1084" and "Mukheshamsharni naha kasha na sharish– Yajurveda saruti 119).

The crowd of clergy was impressed by Guru's explanation. Rukan-uddin was comforted by this change in attitude in the crowd, and requested the Guru, "Your Eminence, we are beginning to understand. There is one more clarification which will help remove our doubts. I, therefore, have one more question: from the time of Prophet Ibrahim to Prophet Muhammad, all the prophets have acknowledged that the building of Kaaba is Allah's abode. You have shown disrespect, and have slept with your feet touching Kaaba, but why?"

7. Clarification about Kaaba from the Quran

Rukan-ud-din saw that the Guru had courageously and wisely dismissed old stories propped up in the name of religion and had exploded superstitions created by the clergy. He also noticed that the crowd had softened to the Guru, so he took this opportunity to understand the matter of Kaaba.

It was now afternoon, and everybody was paying attention to what Guru is going to say about Kaaba. The Guru sitting steady like a mountain replied affectionately to the Qazi, “Same as before, your Quran does not allow that this building be called Allah’s home. Quran, the most gracious, contradicts your belief: نحن أقرب اليه من حبل الوريد: nahnu aqrabu ilaihi min hablil warid²³”

Meaning: Allah had made it clear to Prophet Muhammad Sahib that I don’t reside in buildings and homes. Instead, I am closer to every human being than his jugular vein. As in Gurbani:

“ਪੁਹਪ ਮਧ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਸ ਬਸਤ ਹੈ ਮੁਕੱਰਰ ਮਾਹਿ ਜੈਸੇ ਛਾਈ।। ਤੈਸੇ ਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਬਸੈ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਘਟਿ ਹੀ ਖੋਜੋ ਭਾਈ।। - As fragrance is in flower and image in a mirror, so does God dwell inseparably inside; Oh my brother seek him in your own heart – SGGS 684”

Upon hearing this ayat of the Quran, not just Rukan-ud-din but all in presence bowed and cried out “جزاكم الله تعالى، مرحبا، Labaak, Marhaba, Labaak, Jazakahmulahetaala,” meaning, “Welcome.”

Soon the word spread in Makkah that the chief Qazi along with his companions has accepted Nanak Shah Fakir as their spiritual guide, and this became the talk of the town among the faithful.

²³ Surat Qaf (50:16): I [God] am closer to him [man] than [his] jugular vein.

The news reached the Amir (Ruler) of Makkah that Nanak Shah Qalandar, the Indian saint has descended with his powers in Makkah and that Amir's chief Qazi himself had become Nanak's disciple.

8. Guidance to Rukan-ud-din and his Companions

Taajudin, the author, writes that Makkah had split into two groups. On one side were the ones who had placed their faith in Master Nanak, on the other were the supporters of the Amir who were saying, “Non-believers have adopted a kafir (infidel) as their spiritual guide. Therefore, all of them including Rukan-ud-din are now infidels.”

The True Guru, the sun of the Bedi family, spent his second-night doing kirtan at Kaaba. The ones who were fortunate enough to sit at the Lord’s feet the previous day showed up again early in the morning. They bowed to the Guru and kissed his hands with great affection and reverence. The Arab congregation soon surrounded the merciful Lord like bumblebees around a flower.

Mardana ji sang kirtan with affection. Camel milk and offerings of dates piled up.

When the kirtan concluded, Qazi Rukan-ud-din, Khawaja Zainul Abidin (author of *Twarikhe Arab*), Haaji Gulam Ahmad (a rich man and the Chief of the Quresh tribe), and Ibne Asawad (the Grand Chief of the Badhu Tribe) rose up. The four men took turns offering their tributes to the Lord, and then requested

“Oh Lord Nanak, master of both the worlds! You have blessed our land and removed our doubts. Could you please bless us with further guidance for our deliverance?” The merciful Lord said, “May remembrance of Kartar (Creator) remain in your heart always.”

The sound of ‘Kartar’ resounded around Kaaba, and the spiritual scene at this moment was beyond description. A short while later, brother Rukan-ud-din welling with love requested,

“Your Eminence! Please show us a way so that we could pass through this world without desires and enter His royal-court with dignity.” As in:

ਜੇ ਤੂ ਤੁਠਾ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਨਿਧਾਨ ਨਾ ਦੂਜਾ ਵੇਖਾਲਿ

If you are pleased with me, Oh merciful Lord, then don’t let me seek any other – SGGS 761.

Keep me at your feet and break my attachments. The congregation in unison called out, “Aameen, aameen in agreement.”

Upon hearing this love-filled supplication, Baba Nanak, the knower of hearts, closed his eyes and went into meditation. After a while when his trance broke, he sang this hymn in *raag* (melody) Tilang, – SGGS 721:

ਯਕ ਅਰਜ ਗੁਫਤਮ ਪੇਸਿ ਤੇ ਦਰ ਗੇਸ ਕੁਨ ਕਰਤਾਰ ॥

I offer this one prayer to You; please listen to it, O Creator.

ਹਕਾ ਕਬੀਰ ਕਰੀਮ ਤੂ ਬੇਐਬ ਪਰਵਦਗਾਰ ॥੧॥

You are true, great, merciful and spotless, O Cherisher. ||1||

ਦੁਨੀਆ ਮੁਕਾਮੇ ਫਾਨੀ ਤਹਕੀਕ ਦਿਲ ਦਾਨੀ ॥

The world is a transitory place of mortality - know this for certain in your mind.

ਮਮ ਸਰ ਮੂਇ ਅਜਰਾਈਲ ਗਿਰਫਤਹ ਦਿਲ ਹੇਚਿ ਨ ਦਾਨੀ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Azraa-eel, the Messenger of Death, has caught me by the hair on my head, and yet, I do not know it at all in my mind. ||1||Pause||

ਜਨ ਪਿਸਰ ਪਦਰ ਬਿਰਾਦਰਾਂ ਕਸ ਨੇਸ ਦਸਤੰਗੀਰ ॥

Spouse, children, parents and siblings - none of them will be there to hold your hand.

ਆਖਿਰ ਬਿਅਫਤਮ ਕਸ ਨ ਦਾਰਦ ਚੂੰ ਸਵਦ ਤਕਬੀਰ ॥੨॥

And when at last I fall, and the time of my last prayer has come, there shall be no one to rescue me. ||2||

ਸਬ ਰੋਜ ਗਸਤਮ ਦਰ ਹਵਾ ਕਰਦੇਮ ਬਦੀ ਖਿਆਲ ॥

Night and day, I wandered around in greed, contemplating evil schemes.

ਗਾਹੇ ਨ ਨੇਕੀ ਕਾਰ ਕਰਦਮ ਮਮ ਈ ਚਿਨੀ ਅਹਵਾਲ ॥੩॥

I never did good deeds; this is my condition. ||3||

ਬਦਬਖਤ ਹਮ ਚੁ ਬਖੀਲ ਗਾਫਿਲ ਬੇਨਜਰ ਬੇਬਾਕ ॥

I am unfortunate, miserly, negligent, shameless and without the Fear of God.

ਨਾਨਕ ਬੁਗੋਯਦ ਜਨੁ ਤੁਰਾ ਤੇਰੇ ਚਾਕਰਾਂ ਪਾ ਖਾਕ ॥੪॥੧॥

Says Nanak, I am Your humble servant, the dust of the feet of Your slaves. ||4||1||

Twarikhe Arab says that three hundred disciples heard the above sermon, and they started meditating in solitude. The above Twarikh has described the story of these love-crazed Arabic Gursikhs in three hundred pages.

9. Bhai (Brother) Rukan-ud-din Ji

I [Prithipal Singh] find it important to relate to the readers a brief description of Bhai Rukan-ud-din Sahib, the chief of the Arabic Gursikhs. Rukan-ud-din did not set foot in his home after the sermon of Kaaba; nothing else matters to a beloved [soul] after she meets her love [the Guru]. The importance of the sacred Friday night of the Shawaal²⁴ month of 916 Hijri²⁵ cannot be described by anybody other than the one who tasted amrit [Rukan-ud-din] or the one who bestowed it [Guru Nanak].

The Guru and the disciple remained imbued in the kirtan which continued all night at Kaaba and joy knew no bounds. The author writes that he, too, enjoyed the sight before him and had all his desires satiated.

²⁴ Shawaal month is the tenth month in the Islamic lunar calendar. Depending on whether or not it's a leap year, the lunar year is 12 or 11 days shorter than the solar year. As a result, Shawaal month moves around relative to solar months, and can occur during any month of the solar calendar (January to December). In 1511 AD, Shawaal would have started on December 22, 1511.

²⁵ I suspect that in the Punjabi version a mistake has been made with the year 917 Hijri (Islamic calendar linked to the birth of the Prophet). I have changed the year to 916 Hijri, because we have proof that Guruji was in Baghdad in December 1511 AD. The date on the stone inscription in Baghdad is 5 Shawaal, 917 Hijri (December 26, 1511 AD). It would have taken the Guru roughly one year to go from Makkah to Baghdad, a distance of 1,200 miles, especially once one considers that he spent roughly one month each at the following places on the way: Amara, Medina, Kufa, Kai Kai and Mashhad in addition to other small towns before reaching Baghdad.

Taajudin says that the Guru presented his big toe to touch the initiation water²⁶, and Rukan-ud-din instead of washing the toe sucked it with his mouth.

Then Rukan-ud-din proceeded to wash the toe, and the Guru said it's no longer necessary. Rukan-ud-din went into a trance. I proceeded to wake Rukan-ud-din up, and the merciful Baba Nanak signaled to me to stop and said, "Let him enjoy the Lord's royal court. Rukan-ud-din has to look after the entire Arab world."

Shortly after Rukan-ud-din said, "Kartar, Kartar" and opened his eyes. The Guru sprinkled some water on the Qazi's face and he became fully attentive. The Guru placed his hand on Rukan-ud-din's shoulder and said, "My dear man, whatever you saw just now, share that with your countrymen. You must bear the unbearable. Kartar will remain with you always."

Upon listening to the Guru's words about this unusual responsibility, Rukan-ud-din placed his head at the Guru's feet and said,

"Humul Phukra Ehlalai Haq. Lakad Haza Wabzeeka Alpharkhe Fakhra
Humul Phukra Kad Sabaru Wa Jil. Pha Auwiz Hum Bizaksabaro Aajra
Humul Phukra Wa Ausadata Hakun. Wa Min Hum Taksibul Akvani
Itra Pha Kum Sabur Allai Jaimul Yabi. Wakad Hamdula Al Arsho
Sira."

Meaning: "Oh the one who is recognized in the court of the Lord, the holy of the holies! Please bless me so that I always receive contentment from your holy court. May I always enjoy your spiritual protection. So

²⁶ Before the Tenth Guru started the modern-day tradition of preparing Amrit (the Khalsa initiation nectar) using a double-edged sword, the initiation Amrit used to be created by the Gurus as per the ancient Indian tradition of touching the water with their toe.

that contentment may grant me the strength to endure the bliss which is beyond a human's capacity to endure. As a reward for enduring this unendurable bliss, may I always receive the fragrance of your feet. May my last breath be in your and Allah's praise.”



Guru's Kharav at Gurudwara Lakhpat Sahib

The Guru blessed Rukan-ud-din, gave him his *Kharav*²⁷ for memory, and then set out for Medina from Makkah.

²⁷ Kharav means wooden shoes. Shoes of holy men are often sought and revered by devotees to show humility and respect. The above photograph of Guru's kharav is from Gurudwara Lakhpat Sahib, Gujrat. It is believed that Guruji stayed here on his way to Makkah. Please note that the above kharav are not the ones given to Rukan-ud-din.

10. The Account of Rukan-ud-din from Twarikhe Arab

Khawaja Zayn Al-Abedin wrote that, after bidding farewell to the Guru, Rukan-ud-din didn't go home. Instead, he went to a nearby cave in the mountains and started meditating.

Meanwhile, mullahs in Makkah had complained to the Amir that Rukan-ud-din had turned into a kafir. They told the Amir that Rukan-ud-din has taken spiritual guidance from Nanak, the Indian saint, and has turned his back on Islam. The mullahs complained that Rukan-ud-din has forsaken the rules of sharia and is sitting in caverns of Umra reciting false kalma. The Amir sent a legal complaint to the Qazis, and the mullahs started issuing fatwas against Rukan-ud-din, which included:

- Rukan-ud-din is a kafir (infidel) as he followed Nanak Shah, a kafir whose teachings are blasphemous
- Confiscate all of his property
- Order his kin to leave the country²⁸
- Give him thirty lashes and then lock him in a dark box without food for eleven days
- Paint his face black and parade him through the streets of Makkah mounted on a camel
- Hang him upside down
- Bury him in hot sand. The historian writes, "When Rukan-ud-din was dug out of hot burning sand, he was calm, and one could hear Allah's name from every pore of his body."

²⁸ Sant Prithipal Singh claimed that Rukn-ud-din's descendants lived around the Tirah Mountains in Afghanistan.

According to the last fatwa, Rukan-ud-din was to be buried up to his chest in sand and then stoned to death. The masses of Makkah stood around Rukan-ud-din with the skirts of their robes full of stones ready to rain death to please the Amir.

Rukan-ud-din, buried in sand up to his chest, was absorbed in simran and had his eyes closed. Instead of sadness, his face glowed in peace.

As per the tradition, the Amir asked two qazis to document Rukan-ud-din's last testament. The two men approached him and shouted,

“By the sharia law, you are about to be put to death. Give us your last statement.” Rukan-ud-din opened his eyes looked at the two men and smiled. He remembered his Guru's last words, “Whatever you saw just now, share that with your countrymen. You must bear the unbearable. Kartar will remain with you always.” The time to share with his countrymen had arrived.

In front of everybody, he stated his last testament:

“ربي الإمام حضرة نانك، اكلمه ان فيها مسلم
Nanak ma, akallamehu ina feehay musle mun.”

This meant that “my religion and my god is Guru Nanak. He brings the greatest sacred message and the book. I believe in him. If you wish for redemption, then seek Nanak's shelter. Whoever reflects on this, will go to heaven.”

Upon saying this, his neck slumped, and he left his body²⁹.

²⁹ This would make Bhai Rukan-ud-din the first Sikh martyr, his martyrdom preceded that of Bhai Tara Popat (generally listed as the first shahid in Sikh literature). Bhai Tara was martyred by Babur's soldiers in 1526. Babur was angered by resistance to his invasion of Lahore and ordered the city burned. Bhai Tara from a nearby village came to the rescue and refused to relent even when people told him that Babur had ordered that nobody is allowed to put out the fires. Bhai Tara sacrificed his life to stand up to tyranny.

Sadness fell all around, stones fell on people's own feet, and the guilt-ridden crowd went home. Half of the people in the crowd turned their faith to Nanak, started simran and absorbed themselves in *Kartar*.

Even to this day, the people of the Badh tribe, who are lion-hearted, and who are descendants of Nanak's devotees, still live in Makkah and Baitul Muqaddas. They still are Guru Nanak's Sikhs.

On the west side of Makkah, there are three memorial dwellings named after: Hazrat Sultan Bahu, Sheikh Farid Sahib, and Nanak Shah. In the Nanak Shah dwelling, Guru's Kharav (wooden sandal) is kept as a memento.

Another beautiful Guru's memorial building which has a dome is in the middle of the town, houses Guru's aasa (walking staff). I (Mushtaq Hussein) visited these places during my visit to Makkah³⁰.

Rukan-ud-din and his companions had offered to the Guru a silk robe which had the Quran ayats (verses) inscribed on it.

Karoon Hamid, an Egyptian ruler, also offered a robe to the guru, this robe too was adorned with inscriptions from the Quran. According to Taajudin, the Makkah robe had Surat Fatihah inscribed on it, and at the end, there was the inscription: "La Ilaha Illa Aamta Subhanka Inni Kun Te Minzalemin." Surat Fatihah, which occurs in the beginning of the Quran and is read daily as part of Namaz, is:

³⁰ The above statement is validated by Sant Ram of Budail, who visited Makkah and Medina and other places in Middle East around 1910 and his statement has been recorded by Arjun Muni in his book Gurdwara Darpan. On page 42, he says about one and half miles towards the East of Ka'aba on the road to Amra there is a mosque of Baba Nanak Wali Hind Pir, close to Baba Farid's mosque [31]

“Alhamde Lilahe Rabul Alamin, Arahma Nighime, Maale Keyo Mideen, Iiya Kanahbudo Wa Iiya Ka Nastain, Eh Hado Nasira Talmusatkim, Wa Sira Taujeena, Anamta ale Him Geril Magdoo Be Alehim Wa ladawa Leen. Aameen.”

I do not know which of these two robes is kept in Gurudwara Dera Baba Nanak³¹.

³¹ The chola (robe) at Gurudwara Chola Sahib, Dera Baba Nanak, India is believed to have been presented by an Arab king to Guru Nanak. The chola has 30 pages of the Quran Ayats inscribed on it. This chola was transferred from Guru Nanak to successive Gurus until Guru Arjan ji. Guru Arjan ji pleased with the devotion and services of Bhai Tota Ram blessed him with the chola. Bhai Tota Ram took the chola to his native place in Bukhara, Uzbekistan. The chola was brought back from Bukhara to Dera Baba Nanak in the mid-eighteenth century by Bhai Kabuli Mal, a ninth-generation descendant of Guru Nanak. [17]



S. Anoop Singh Bedi (left), a descendant of Guru Nanak showing the Guru's robe



A close-up shows verses of the Quran inscribed on the Guru's robe in Dera Baba Nanak

11. Medina

When the Guru was leaving Makkah, people were inconsolable at the thought of his departure. Taajudin writes that the Guru gave them his staff and said, “Aasa Man Fazale Rabeen Deedarun Pheere, Haka Ru Vaseera Tul Musatkim.” Translated, this means “Consider this staff a seal of Allah. It shall remind you of the path to Allah.” I have talked about this staff, it’s an object of reverence for the local people.

From Makkah, the Guru went to the nearby town of Amara. It was in Amara that the Guru granted benediction to the town’s chief, Janab Imam Gulam Kadar, son of Imam Jafar. To display his gratitude, the Imam dedicated his family mosque to the Guru and his teachings.

To this day, (according to Mushtaq Hussain), this mosque is known as Masjid-e Wali Hind (Mosque of the Indian Prophet). The town’s people had to build a separate mosque for themselves.

From Amara, the Guru went to Medina. Here, he made his presence known on the mausoleum of the Prophet Muhammad. He sang in Arabic, “Neehum, Hafat, Chahar Da Ha Salasa Wa Rubaya Nijota Ale Rubaya, Wala Illa Wahdatun Kaanu Le Ilaha La Nabiyun Jaya Waala Wahibayan Nazla” meaning, “the nine regions, the seven continents, and the fourteen worlds are all manifested in three qualities. Hinduism claims that the four Vedas have divided human life into four sections as per Allah’s writ. Allah is one, and none is his equal. Allah has not restricted his message to a prophet, nor does he need such dependence.”

Medina is a sacred Islamic city. Prophet Muhammad Sahib spent his last days here, and this is where he breathed his last. There is a great mausoleum built in Medina for the Prophet. When the Muslim community heard the singing—and on the mausoleum of Prophet Muhammad of all places—it caused a flood of emotion and anger.

They grabbed whatever arms they could and ran, but as they raised their hands to strike and kill, they froze.

These events caused a stir in the town. Khalifa (leader; a successor of Prophet Muhammad), who was a descendant of Hazrat Ali (son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad), arrived at the scene with the four Imams and the local mullahs.

Khalifa Sahib put his fingers in his ears to block out the singing and froze in this pose. The four Imams—Imam Zaa-far Sahib, Imam Safi, Imam Jamal Din and Imam Kamal Din—were all wonderstruck.

Imam Zaa-far came forward and sat in the Guru's presence with reverence. At the end of the singing, he made a request,

“Oh Great One! These insolent people have been in contempt. Please in the name of your kindness, grant them forgiveness.”

They were forgiven. All, including the Khalifa, bowed at the Guru's feet and received blessings. The town accepted the Guru as a prophet and revered him. Here Baba Nanak preached his message of universality for twenty-seven days. At the time of his departure, the congregation requested a memento, and the Guru obliged with the second foot of his kharavs; this kharav is available here for viewing.

12. Blessing for Kufa

Kufa is a beautiful ancient city near the Furat canal. Imam Muawiyah³², who had common ancestors with Hazrat Muhammad Sahib, lived in Kufa. This is the city where Yazid had martyred Hussain (son of Ali) and his entire family. The place of martyrdom is located in the south corner outside the city and is known as Karbala. Not far from Karbala, in the cemetery, there is a memorial for *Nanak Wali Hind* (Nanak the Indian saint). The Guru had spent over three months here for the salvation of humanity. In this city, the majority of the people are descendants of Imam Mavia, and many in this city are the Guru's disciples. The priests at Nanak's memorial are descendants of Imam Mavia. Taajudin wrote that the benevolent Guru used to sit here entranced in Kirtan, and a big congregation used to gather. Some seekers of peace loved to talk to the Guru. A woman who attended daily used to sit quietly in a corner to simply enjoy the bliss. Her name was Salima. Sometimes, she would bring food and serve it affectionately in the congregation. She was an extremely pious lady. Salima's husband, a camel trader, was off on a long trip abroad. As soon as he returned home, the busybodies rushed to him to complain about Salima. They told him that his wife had abandoned modesty and the veil and thrown all sharia decencies to the wind and that she spent her days and nights with hermits at the cemetery. There is no harm, they said, in visiting a hermit once in a while, but your woman has practically moved in there. These hermits may fool some people, but

³² Muawiyah Abi Sufeyan, the second Caliph, shared great-great grandfather with Prophet Muhammad and Hazrat Ali. Muawiyah's sister was married to Prophet Muhammad, and Ali was son-in-law of the Prophet. Yazid ibn Muawiyah, who succeeded Muawiyah Abi Sufeyan, was responsible for massacre of son of Ali and his family, in the battle of Karbala (a key event for Shia Islam). In early Islam, soldiers used to be lodged away from civilian populations to avoid corruption. The city of Kufa started as a garrison of early Islamic soldiers [51].

we suspect they are kafirs. Your wife has given up namaz, Islamic hymns, and sharia commands and instead is fixated on these hermits.

13. Blessing for Salima

Exalted indeed is the Guru's path and his shelter, but it's not easy; the Guru continuously tests those who choose to walk on his path.

One day, Salima sat in the congregation near Baba Nanak, and she found such peace that she went into a trance. The sun was setting, and the Baba told me [Taajudin], "Ask this child to go home."

I was surprised because never before had the Guru asked me to interrupt anybody sitting in deep meditation. I called out softly, and Salima woke up, startled. She opened her eyes and beheld the Guru, and the Guru commanded, "Child go home, and go promptly."

Before leaving, Salima touched Baba's feet. A kind glance from the Guru, the ocean of bliss, elevated her into perfect bliss, her soul filled with light. She took ten steps toward her home then turned around to the Guru and said, "I believe that my husband has returned. I will bring him to you tomorrow."

The Baba said, "Child, remember to be patient and endure the powers Allah has just granted you. No matter what the circumstances, you must remain humble." Salima bowed and left.

Salima reached home, and there he was – her husband encircled by busybodies. The husband glared at Salima. Salima with utmost respect welcomed him home but realized that people had turned her husband against her. She asked him how he had been. The wound-up husband roared in rage, "I have been informed that in my absence you trampled on my respect and dignity."

Salima: "Dear Husband, what! I trampled on your dignity? No, no. It's the result of my devotion and prayers that you are home safe and sound.

Otherwise, you would have been executed in Egypt on the charges of murder.”

Husband was aghast: “Salima! Who told you about Egypt? I haven’t told a soul to avoid unnecessary worries.”

Salima: “I know that you came home from Egypt and dug out five hundred gold coins and gave them to Majid.”

Husband: “Yes, I came and returned immediately and quietly. I didn’t mention my Egyptian experience to anybody. For Allah’s sake, tell me how you know all these secrets?”

Salima: “I will tell you everything, but first you must eat something.”

Husband: “Dear Salima! I don’t understand how you know all this. Okay, please bring me some food, and then sit with me and tell me who told you all this.”

Salima: “Dear one! First tell me why did you have to appear in the Egyptian court?”

Husband: “I don’t know what to say other than that it was Allah’s will. My problems just appeared out of nothing. If a gentle soul had not come to my rescue and bailed me out, then I wouldn’t have been able to pay my debt to my nephew Majid, and I wouldn’t have seen you again.”

Salima smiled and said: “Who bailed you, and what happened?”

Husband: “I had finished performing my morning namaz, just outside the Egyptian city, and set out with the caravan. We were passing by an orchard, and Bagra broke a branch from an apple tree and ate it. The orchard owner, an old man, came running out and was beside himself with anger. He hit the camel in the head with a stone, and Bagra fell

dead. Salima, you know Bagra. He was my favorite. He sired over fifty camels for us and has been in our family for a very long time. I lost my temper, watching my favorite camel killed. I grabbed the same stone and threw it on the old Egyptian man, and he died on the spot. I tried to run away with my camels but got caught. The old man's family took me to the Egyptian Amir's court and demanded death for me for causing death. I was scared; there isn't a saint, a holy man or a prophet to whom I didn't pray for help."

The ruler listened to the statement from the old man's family, and turned towards me angrily saying, "Have you heard the charge against you?" I humbly responded, "Yes, your highness. But their old man had killed my favorite camel with a stone. I couldn't tolerate his death and struck the old man with the same stone, and he died. Oh, Amir! This camel was priceless to me."

The ruler said, "Don't you know the sharia justice? If they had killed your camel, you could have sued this family for damages in my court. I would have done justice to you. Now you will have to die for this murder. Do you have anything else to add?"

"Salima! During these difficult moments, I couldn't think of anything else and requested, 'Your Highness, I don't want to make any excuses, I bow before the sharia law. If you could please grant me a three-day reprieve, I have been holding some property in trust which belongs to orphans. Only I know where it's hidden. I will return this property and will hurry back in three days. I have no further requests'." The ruler said, "If somebody is willing to be your guarantor, you can go for three days." In the crowded court, people heard the Amir's ruling, and all eyes turned towards me. The Amir asked again, "Do you know anybody here who can be your guarantor?"

I looked at everybody intently. In this foreign land and during this distress why would somebody stick out their neck for me? All of a

sudden, I spotted a man dressed in white. He had a beautiful glowing face, and something in his eyes made me think that he was asking me to pick him. I surrendered my trust to Allah and pointed to that man and said, “This gentleman will be my guarantor.”

The ruler turned to the man and asked, “Will you post a bail for this murderer?” The man did not refuse. Instead, he rose up and confirmed, “I will take responsibility for him. If as promised, he doesn’t return within three days³³, then execute me in his stead to avenge the murder.”

“I rode my fastest camel here and hurried back after returning the orphans’ property to Majid. Salima, I was afraid that if you found out, you would try to talk me out of returning.

Until I returned to Egypt, the kind face of my guarantor remained etched in my mind. The attraction of his sacred face kept motivating me to hurry back. I had vowed in my mind that I would not risk the life of such a kind soul.

With Allah’s grace, I reached there in the nick of time. The court was overflowing with people. Plaintiffs were already saying that I would never return. They told the ruler that my deadline had passed, and their murdered kin should be avenged by killing the guarantor.

It was an unusual scene; the guarantor surprised everybody by calmly claiming that plaintiffs deserve their revenge and that he was ready to

³³ The town of Kufa, Iraq is over a thousand miles from the modern day Egyptian border. One may question, how Salima’s husband could have gone back and forth this distance on a camel in three days. During the time of Guru Nanak’s visit (1510 AD), Mamluks ruled Egypt (Mamluks were defeated by the Ottoman Empire in 1517). The last Mamluk Sultan of Egypt (1501 to 1517) controlled most of the Middle East which included Syria and portions of Iraq. The rest of Iraq (including Kufa) was under the Persian dynasty of Safavid. With Mamluk Sultan at the center, Mamluk Emirs held power in smaller regions. It is possible that during Nanak’s visit, one of these Mamluk emirates was within three days of travel from Kufa [18].

die. At that very moment, I got off my camel and walked into the court and wished Assalam Alaykum to the ruler.

The ruler praised me for returning on time, others in the court were also saying: Well done! Well done!” “Salima! Only Allah knows what went through the ruler’s mind. He went quiet, and after thinking for a while, he said, “Because of your exemplary honesty and the goodness of your guarantor, this Islamic court is acquitting you.”

Salima (with a big smile): “Do you still remember the face of the kind man who became your guarantor?”

Husband sighed and said, “Of course I remember, but I don’t think we can find him. After my acquittal, I looked for him everywhere without success. I asked about him high and low, but nobody knew him. People kept telling me that they had seen him only twice, once when the bail was pledged and the second time when the bail was called. I think that the Prophet himself helped me.”

Salima was smiling and remembering the day when the Guru had told her, “Child, your husband was sentenced to die, and he has been saved.” Today she found out the details from her husband. Her eyes closed in gratitude, and she started whispering “Sat Kartar, Sat Kartar.”

Husband: “Salima! Are you well? What are you reciting?”

Salima, smiling: “Would you be able to recognize him?”

Husband (with a surprised look): “Him - the man who pulled me from the jaws of death. He is always in my memory; I will never forget his face.”

Salima: “You have finished eating, why don’t you mind the camels, and I will be back very shortly.”

Husband: “Where are you going?”

Salima: “It’s been too long since I beheld the Godly saints, I will be back promptly.”

Husband (angrily): “No you won’t. Tell me who these people are? I heard they are Indians.”

Salima: “Yes, they are Indian. Why don’t you also come with me?”

Husband (raised his voice in anger): “You want me to go meet kafirs? It will never happen. I don’t believe in anybody other than Allah and his sacred Prophet, the Prophet who will be my witness in the next world, the one who undoubtedly saved me in the Egyptian court.”

Salima (alarmed): “I see something moving in your pocket. Careful don’t put your hand in your pocket.”

Husband: “Now, are you pretending to get secret messages and seeing through clothes too!”

Husband, ignores his wife and sticks his hand in his pocket and screams when he is stung by a scorpion. Salima rushed and started sucking the venom out of her husband’s finger. The husband felt relief from pain, and exclaimed: “Do you know spells or have miracle powers?”

Salima: “No miracles! I simply reflected on the Indian saint and sucked your finger. You felt better due to the mercy of the saint you don’t want me to see.”

Husband: “All right! If you believe that the saint is of such a high spiritual state, then I will come with you to meet him.”

It was late afternoon. The sun was giving its last rays to the world. While most people were returning home from their daily businesses, this blessed couple was setting out to meet the saint. Salima was repeating Kartar Kartar in her mind and was walking briskly, few steps

ahead of her husband while smiling at the thought of her husband finally meeting the Baba.

About fifty paces away from the Guru, the awestruck husband with his arms flailing started shouting, “Salima, it’s him! It’s him; truly it’s my guarantor from Egypt.”

The next moment, the husband ran like a crazy man, placed his head on the feet of the Guru and was weeping uncontrollably. Salima followed her husband, bowed at the Guru’s feet and sat down quietly. The Guru affectionately blessed ‘Gulam Yahya’, the husband, and shared with him the wonders of the path of the Creator and started him contemplating on Kartar.

Taajudin writes that after receiving the touch of the Guru’s feet, the blessed couple’s devotion knew no bounds. Every day, as soon as his family chores were done, Gulam Yahya used to rush to the Guru’s congregation.

The devotion of the blessed couple moved many in Kufa to follow the Guru. The group in town blinded by bigotry was equally motivated. They were intensifying their vitriol and were getting exceedingly entrenched in their opposition to the Guru.

Finally, one day, people in the congregation informed the Guru that the head Qazi had issued a fatwa against the Guru, and some anxious devotees requested permission to teach the qazi a lesson. The Guru told them not to worry and continue contemplating on Kartar.

14. Salvation of Pasha Hali

Pasha Hali was the most senior Qazi in Kufa. One day, when he saw fewer than usual attendees in Jama Masjid for Friday's prayer, he asked for the reason.

People told the Qazi that Indian monks are staying in the cemetery outside the town, and many townspeople visit them daily. Whoever goes there, turns away from the faith; not only do they stop namaz, they even turn away from divine verses. They just lose themselves in meditation and ignore anybody who wants to talk sense to them; we don't know what type of evil spell are they under.

Hearing this, the Qazi issued a fatwa in his sermon and proclaimed "Indian monks are kafirs (non-believers). Whoever goes to visit them will also be deemed kafir and should be considered ex-communicated from Islam."

When the Guru was informed of the fatwa, he listened patiently and smiled. The daily congregations continued, people used to gather in the last quarter of the night to enjoy the spiritual nectar and left for their daily work at the break of dawn.

This night, Yakub Ibne Sahlab, one of the congregants stood up and announced,

"Inal Hazerina Fa Pasha Hali Halaktun Fi Marje Khalizav Salashu Binjeneena Marga, Haza Muhajzatun, Haznabi Fala Ila Nankun Hi Nat Muratdatun."

This meant: "Respected audience! Pasha is dying of a stomach ailment. He has been writhing on his deathbed for three days. He insulted our Baba and is now facing the power of our prophet."

All agreed, crying, "لعنة الله على هذا الخناس Laanata Allahu ala al khannas," meaning, "may this devil be cursed by Allah the pure!"

Baba asked everybody, including Mardana (Guru Nanak's lifelong Indian companion who accompanied him on his Arabian journey), "Let us go and inquire of his [Pasha's] health."

The congregation replied,

"Why should we go when he is the one who passed a *fatwa* against us?" Nanak ji said:

"*فما اخلق انساني* khuliqa insaniyun," meaning, "A person's responsibility is not to torment a tormentor, but to make him better."

Baba left for qazi's house, while Mardana and I [Taajudin] followed. The Lord knocked at qazi's door. Qazi's young daughter about eleven years old came out and asked,

"*فما اسمها؟* Fala Ismahu" meaning, "What is your name?" At this time, Taajudin was with Nanak, and the Guru answered "*اسمي ناناك* Ismi Nanak" meaning, "My name is Nanak."

She went in to inform her father. As soon as he heard the name 'Nanak', the qazi flew into a rage and said, "The religious court has branded this man kafir, I will not meet him, tell him to leave my house."

The tender soul of the daughter was extremely impressed by the spiritual splendor of the Guru, but she had no choice but to deliver her father's message. With utmost politeness, she said, "O Fakir, I do not wish to repeat the words used by my father. Please leave."

The Guru, the ocean of mercy, in a soothing voice said, "Child, please let your father know that I am here to inquire about his health, he should allow me to come in."

The daughter took the request to her father again. But even on the deathbed, the qazi was still raging under the spell of the demon of

bigotry, and he again said no. Daughter came back and again requested the Guru to leave.

The Guru again lovingly said, “Child, this time deliver my message to your father that I have come to beg forgiveness for my blasphemy.”

The *qazi* thought that Nanak wished to embrace Islam. He permitted entry and asked his daughter to spread his turban on the floor to welcome Nanak. The daughter did as her father wished, and said to the Guru, “O Saint, please come in - my father welcomes you.”

Rather than stepping on it, the Guru gathered the turban as he walked towards the *qazi*. The Guru entered the room where the *qazi* lay near death.

One glimpse of Nanak and the *qazi*'s soul felt peace. He tried to get up to kiss the Guru's feet but couldn't because his body was too weak. The Guru helped him up by putting his hands under the *qazi*'s arms and then hugged him.

Guru's touch broke the locks of ignorance on *qazi*'s soul. He saw a vision that the angels of death who were pushing him towards hell, were directed to take him to heaven because the vision of Nanak blessed his fortunate soul. From his embrace, the Guru gently lowered the *qazi* to his bed, and the *qazi* breathed his last breath.

Taajudin writes that the news of *qazi* Pasha Hali's salvation spread across Kufa. Pasha's kin and other citizens from the town, from all walks of life, came and fell at the Guru's feet.

For three months and a few days, the Guru's heavenly congregation and singing of the Creator's praises brought a flood of spiritual enlightenment in the town. The Guru's daily sermons in Arabic blessed the citizens with the divine mysteries of Gurbani.

On the last day, Salima and her husband Gulam Yahya rose and asked the Guru with folded hands,

“The congregation will not be able to bear your separation. Where and how will we ever see you again?”

The Guru offered them a book of Japuji Sahib and said, “You shall see me in this book. In this place of congregation, infinite Gurbani has flown. This place shall be your shelter. Maintain this place, and it shall lead you to salvation.”

The blessed couple, Salima and Yahya, built a wonderful memorial here, and it's known as Wali Hind. The Japuji Sahib book can be viewed [here](#).

To this day, roughly fifteen percent of the people in this town keep their hair long and worship at Wali Hind. Many of these people are descendants of the grandfather of Prophet Muhammad Sahib.

15. Blessing of Karoon Hamid

At the break of dawn, the Guru left Kufa and walked along the river Dajla³⁴. The restless citizens of Kufa had gathered on a plateau. Salima was thinking of the soil at the banks of Dajla which had the good fortune to touch the Guru's feet. She started murmuring "Soil, you are blessed! You are blessed!" and went into deep meditation."



Google satellite view of Kufa. The Guru would have walked north along the Furat River towards Baghdad. The Great Mosque is roughly 1.5 km from the river.

The Guru crossed the Dajla delta and reached a town named 'Kai Kai', the capital of Karoon Hamid, an Egyptian Khalifa.

The Guru sat outside the royal citadel with Mardana and started singing in Arabic. The singing of Gurbani attracted people like light attracts moths, and they started appearing in droves.

³⁴ The river near Kufa is Furat (Euphrates) and not Dajla (Tigris). Dajla flows farther east from Kufa, and the two rivers join north of Kufa. I believe the name Dajla is mentioned by mistake. Later on in this chapter a correct reference is made to the Furat Canal.

Pir Jalal, an educated man, who was the spiritual guide of Karoon Hamid, heard about Guru Nanak and came to see him. He was pleased to hear Gurbani, and bowed before the Guru and requested,

“Your Eminence! The local Khalifa is my follower. He is cruel, greedy and miserly and torments his subjects. He does not listen to anyone; I too am sick of him. Please, if you would be kind enough, set him on the right path.”

The Guru replied, “Oh saint, I came here because of your follower, Allah will be merciful.” The Pir bowed again at the Guru’s feet and said, “Oh saint, this infidel has built forty treasuries by sucking his subjects’ blood. He still is not content. He would sell a coffin just to add some extra money to his treasure.”

The Guru repeated Nirankar (the formless God), Nirankar and went into meditation.

The congregation grew especially after people saw Khalifa’s mentor Pir Jalal in daily attendance. Many souls found contentment in the daily flow of Gurbani. Pir Jalal was convinced that Allah himself had appeared in his wondrous splendor to shower mercy.

One day, Pir Jalal found an opportune moment in Khalifa’s court and said to him. “Your Highness, an Indian saint named Nanak Shah has come to your city. I have heard that the mighty in Makkah, Medina, and Kufa have bowed to him. He is a holy saint.”

Karoon Hamid was pleased to hear the praises of Nanak and said to Pir Jalal, “Oh Pir, why don’t you take me, your follower, to meet this holy saint.”

The Pir, who was already hoping for this outcome wasted no time and took Karoon Hamid to the Guru. It was late afternoon, and the king

was surprised to see a large crowd of his citizens gathered around the Guru.

With the utmost respect, the king bowed before the Guru and sat down by him.

Karoon: “Your Eminence! It’s my great fortune that I can behold you. Please grace me with your mercy so that even a lowly being like me could get salvation.”

The Guru took out a small needle from his bag and gave it to the king and said, “Take very good care of this.”

Karoon: “Your Eminence! What is it?”

Guru: “I entrust this needle as a loan to you. Please guard it for me.”

Karoon: “Where should I keep it?”

Guru: “Don’t worry, keep it in one of your forty treasures.”

Karoon: “Your Eminence! I am not safekeeping any loans in my treasures. Is it worth going through the trouble for a small item like this?”

Guru: “Everything is a loan. Hands, feet, skin and bones, hair. Everything is somebody else’s a loan to you. Nothing is yours; you will have to account for everything.”

Karoon: “Whose loans are my hand and feet?”

Guru: “The one who gave you birth in this world.”

Karoon: “Allah is the one who gave me birth in this world.”

Guru: “You are right. This body belongs to Allah. He is going to ask an account from every part of your body.”

Karoon: “What do I have to account for my hands?”

Guru: “Good deeds.”

Karoon: “And feet?”

Guru: “Steps taken for welfare.”

Karoon: “I have to account even for my hair?”

Guru: “Yes, hair too. You must account for the loan of hair also.”

Karoon: “Your Eminence! When would I have to return your loan?”

Guru: “Not to worry, I am in no hurry.”

Karoon: “It would help, if you gave me some idea, I would get the treasurer to make a note.”

Guru: “I will get it back from you in the afterlife.”

Karoon (startled): “What! That doesn’t make sense. Oh, saint! Nothing goes with you in the afterlife.”

Guru: “You are absolutely correct. When the time comes, everybody has to go empty-handed.”

Karoon: “Then how would this needle go with me?”

Guru: “I didn’t say that the needle will go with you. I just said, please return it to me in the after-life.”

Karoon: “Your Eminence! It’s beyond me. I can’t return this needle to you in the after-life.”

Guru: “Hamid! If you can’t handle a small needle, how will you return these forty treasures in the after-life? You will be asked to account for every penny.”

Karoon: “Ahm! Return? You mean...!”

Guru: “Without a doubt, you will have to return everything.”

Karoon broke down and fell at the Guru’s feet crying. In front of the crowd, he said, “Your Eminence! Please help me. Tell me how can I be saved?”

The Guru’s arrow had met its mark. Karoon had realized that he had been extremely cruel to his subjects and started begging the Guru for forgiveness. The Guru consoled the king and said, “Hamid! Do not worry. Human beings come to this world to recognize the true purpose of their time here. So seek the true purpose.”

Karoon, with tears flowing from his eyes and with folded hands said, “Lord! Tell me what should I do now? Please forgive my offenses. Please do whatever is necessary and tell me that I can be salvaged.”

The Guru, the ocean of mercy, said, “O King, your subjects are dying of hunger, they are destitute and suffering. Distribute your treasures to your hungry and needy subjects. This is the way to your salvation.”

Karoon had seen the light. He complied and distributed his wealth among his subjects. The kingdom became prosperous and turned to gratitude. Karoon Hamid had discovered the truth and became blissful.

Pir Jalal, who was extremely grateful, was appointed by the Guru to spread piety and the Lord’s word. On the south side of Kai Kai, outside the town, there is a platform built by the Furat Canal. This platform is known as a memorial of ‘Nanak Wali Hind’. Karoon’s needle is kept at this memorial for the faithful to behold.

16. Meeting with Shah Saraf

Giani Gian Singh in his book *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* writes that Guruji traveled through areas around Dera Ismail Khan to Nithankot where five rivers meet. This place was the last border town of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's kingdom.

A great monument to Guruji stands in Nithankot where he reformed a cruel and hypocritical Brahmin. From here Guruji traveled along the river, blessing the local people. He passed Rohri the town of seven rivers and stopped at an Island near Sukkur.

Baba Vankhandi Das of Udasi³⁵ Sect of Sikhism rediscovered this spot and built a great monastery known as 'Sadh Bela' which is widely revered by people in the Sindh province.

After leaving this island, Guruji preached near the port of Karachi, where Sikhs established a gurudwara named 'Akhal Bunga' after great sacrifices.

Sikhs launched an agitation for the right to manage this gurudwara. I (Prithipal Singh) had the good fortune of joining a batch of 2,000 Sikhs to court arrests in this agitation In the October of 1938.

From Karachi, Guruji crossed the sea and reached Aden. There stands a beautiful place here in memory of the Guru just outside the big fort in Aden.

From there Guruji went to Jeddah Sharif and sat near Eve's³⁶ grave. There too is an important commemorative place called 'Nanak Shah Qalandar'³⁷.

³⁵ Udasi sect is made of celibate monks and was started by Baba Siri Chand ji, the son of Guru Nanak ji.

Taajudin writes that roughly twenty-two miles from Jeddah, Guru Nanak joined a caravan and started walking in front of the Shah Saraf's camel.

Shah Saraf was leading a group of Hajj pilgrims from Panipat (India). He was a spiritual, God-loving person. In Taajudin's account, Shah Saraf asked his camel-minder, "Who is walking in the front?"

The camel-minder asked Guruji, "Who are you?" The Guru replied, "I am neither Hindu nor Muslim. My body is made of five elements, and they call it Nanak."

The camel-minder reported to Shah Saraf, "The man is called Nanak. He appears to be a Hindu."

The Shah got off his camel and approached the Guru and asked respectfully, "Where are you going?" The Guru said, "The same place where everybody else is going."

The Shah felt that he was dealing with a holy saint, and so started a discourse.

In all, he asked sixty-two questions, such as: Awal Fakiri Chisat? Aakhar Fakiri Chisat? Khana Fakiri Chisat? [Meaning What is Fakiri

³⁶ Muslims believe that upon expulsion from heaven, Adam landed in Sri Lanka and Eve in Jeddah. Jeddah is named after Arabic word "Jeddah" meaning, "grandmother" of all mankind [13].

³⁷ Qalandar is a sect of Muslim monks

(conduct of a recluse)? Where does Fakiri end? What is the key to Fakiri?³⁸]

The Shah and the other hajjis were satisfied by the Guru's answers. In the end, the Shah respectfully stated,

“O Nanak Fakir, you know the mysteries of the house of wondrous Allah. But my people have a shortcoming: they will brand you a Hindu and will not let you in Kaaba.” On hearing this, the Guru chose to part with the caravan.

Five months later, when Shah Saraf's group reached Makkah, they were surprised to hear that Nanak Shah had arrived in Makkah five months ago. They also heard about Kaaba circumambulating, and the fact that many famous people of the town, including Qazi Rukan-ud-din, had become disciples of Nanak.

Shah Saraf was already impressed with Nanak, and hearing this, he too became a disciple.

³⁸ These questions and answers between the Guru and Shah Saraf have been found in writings dated around the early 1600s. Kulwant Singh in his book *Meccey Medine Di Gost* (the dialog of Makkah Medina), published by the Punjabi University, researched historical manuscripts and compiled the Guru's dialog with different people from Arabia. Please refer to Appendix B for translation of Questions and Answers between the Guru and the Shah.

17. Liberation of Pir Baghdad

Taajudin writes that after receiving direction from the Guru, Karoon passed his throne to his son, renounced everything and devoted his time to worship.

From here, the Guru proceeded to Mashhad Sharif, the tomb of Hazrat Ali³⁹, and blessed many souls. From Mashhad, the Guru traveled to Baghdad, the famous city of Abdul Qadar Jilani.

Pir Jilani is considered the Pir of Pirs and is called “Pir Dastgir of Islam” (the one who holds your hand and leads you). At the time of Nanak, the city was ruled by Khalifa Bakar, and Pir Abdul Rahman (fifth⁴⁰ in line), occupied the seat established by Pir Abdul Qadar Jilani.

The Guru set up his camp to the east of the city in a dense forest of date trees in a cemetery. In the early morning, Mardana sang

ਪਾਤਾਲਾ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਲਖ ਆਗਾਸਾ ਆਗਾਸ ॥

There are nether worlds beneath nether worlds, and hundreds of thousands of heavenly worlds above.

ਉੜਕ ਉੜਕ ਭਾਲਿ ਥਕੇ ਵੇਦ ਕਹਨਿ ਇਕ ਵਾਤ ॥

The Vedas say that you can search and search for them all, until you grow weary.

³⁹ The modern day tomb of Hazrat Ali is Mazar-i-Sharif, Blue Mosque, Afghanistan. According to the legend, originally, Hazrat Ali (son-in-law and the cousin of the Prophet Muhammad) was buried at the site of his murder in Najaf, near Baghdad. Fearing desecration of his body, Ali’s companions moved the body to a secret grave in Afghanistan. Mazar-I-Sharif, the site of the grave in Afghanistan was said to be rediscovered in the 12th century. [19]

⁴⁰ I believe a mistake has been made Abdul Rehman could not be fifth in line of Pir Abdul Qadar Jilani who died in 1166. It is not likely that, 340 years later (at the time of Nanak), there would only be the fifth person in line to the seat established by Pir Jilani. After his death, Pir Jilani’s Qadriyya sect separated into many branches; it is possible that Pir Abdul Rehman was fifth in line in one of these branches.

ਸਹਸ ਅਠਾਰਹ ਕਹਨਿ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਅਸੁਲੂ ਇਕੁ ਧਾਤੁ ॥

Islamic scriptures say that 18,000 worlds started from one God

ਲੇਖਾ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਲਿਖੀਐ ਲੇਖੈ ਹੋਇ ਵਿਣਾਸੁ ॥

[In reality worlds are beyond count] If you try to write an account of this, you will surely finish yourself before you finish writing it.

ਨਾਨਕ ਵਡਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਆਪੁ ॥੨੨॥

O Nanak, call Him Great! He Himself knows Himself. ||22|| -
SGGS 5.”

A disciple of the Pir heard the singing and upon finding out the meaning was beside himself. He went to the Pir and pleaded,

“O Dastgir, injustice has lost its limits! Some Hindi monks have arrived in the eastern cemetery. They are saying in their native tongue that Vedas proclaim that there are countless planets and skies and that there is no end to worlds. On top of that, they are singing with music which is against Sharia.

The Prophet has told us that there are only fourteen worlds [seven earths and seven heavens].

O Hazrat! To me, these people look like Kafirs (non-believers).”

Pir Abdul Rehman⁴¹ reddened with rage ordered, “Bring me my horse immediately.” He mounted his horse, and before galloping away, he shouted, “I will bury these kafirs as soon as I get there!”

Pir Abdul Rehman has written a book called *Guniya-Ut-Salehin* to guide the seekers. In this book, the Pir writes about his encounter with the Guru:

“I was racing my horse, and all of a sudden, it came to a stop. I spurred it with my heels and whipped it, but the horse refused to move. I looked up and saw the fakirs sitting a hundred paces from me. One of them had the aura of a bright sun around his face, and I could not keep my eyes open. I heard my soul admonishing me: even this animal is better than you. Even after taking a beating from you, it’s keeping itself and you from committing an irreverent act. Come to your senses; this is the same fakir around whom Kaaba moved and on whose feet great ones like Rukan-ud-din fell for salvation.”

The Pir said, “I indeed came to my senses. I abandoned the horse, and out of respect, I even took my shoes off and walked to the Guru and put my head on his feet.

⁴¹ Is there an independent corroboration of the name of Pir Abdul Rehman? Bhai Gurdas ji’s vaar associates Pir Dastgir with the ‘Patala Patal’ incident but does not provide the name of the Pir. As implied by the name, Pir Dastgir most likely would have been a descendant of Pir Dastgir Jilani. Therefore Bhai Gurdas ji’s vaar is consistent with Taajudin’s account. There is a wiki article (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qadri>) which states: The Qadriyya sect was established by Sheikh Abdul Qadar Jilani in twelfth century. During the Safavid rule of Baghdad, from 1508 to 1534, the sheikh of the Qadriyya was appointed chief Sufi of Baghdad and the surrounding lands. However, the wiki article has a missing citation for the name of this sheikh. [20]

At that time, the following sentence came involuntarily out of my mouth:

“Eh Meere Dasatgir Ton Daste Maha Bageer. Dastam Channa Bageer Ke Goyund Dasatgir” which means “O Dasatgir⁴² Pir, please take hold of my hand. Please hold it firmly, so that when my disciples hear about it, they may tell others, without hesitation, that their mentor has sought direction from a man of Allah.”

I [Pir] then said, “Shaha Ze Mushak Toay Allum Muatsar Asat. Takseere Nafash Mara Booay Name Rishad”, which means “O Lord of Lords, by bringing people to one Allah you have spread bliss across the Arab lands like a fragrance, but I am still bereft. Please place your blessed hand on my head too.”

The merciful Lord heard my prayers, and with his sacred hands, he lifted my head from his feet and said,

“O Fakir! Your request has been accepted in His court. But you had told your followers that you would burn the kafirs. Your followers are now looking at you are sitting at the feet of the same kafir. They are confused and are losing respect for you. They may attack you. You should think of your safety.”

I looked back and saw a crowd of about a thousand people in a state of shock. They were glaring at me. But this scene did not make me afraid. I knew that I had entered the circle of protection where nobody can exert fear.

I turned to the people and said, “Haza Faki Rulazi Bahat Munakba. Naahi Ahna Showkel Raubta”, which means “Friends! Please do not be

⁴² Dastgir is a Persian word which means “Holder of the hand”

surprised or get angry just because I have bowed before this fakir. I have done so only after I have recognized his greatness.”

“Balago Salami Alley Ya Seemosaban. Aanta Khuda Ya Safaki Wa Bitin.” Which means, “You too shall bow and offer your salaam (greeting). He is not just a *pir* (saint), he is a prophet. Only if you could see through my eyes, you will find that he is Allah himself—the Lord of both the worlds.”

“Lila Kaume Aaza Jowel Areze Mini. Fee Subhan Lelin Sajudannamu Kibtala” Which means “I ascertain that from where the universe started to where it ends, everybody bows before him day and night. You, too, should bow in respect.”

“Illa Ya EhleHazar Haya Fee Runfin. Kanakum Jasmana Fee Hasasa Tun” Meaning, “He himself is immortal Allah. To doubt this is a cardinal sin.”

“Hubal Gareeko Fee Kiblatun Jaddi. Hayatun Hazar Bee Mutlekaya Aakhi” Which means “Generations of my family have been your guides. They all died. I, too, will die. But this guide is above life and death.”

After listening to my address, all in attendance bowed and offered their greeting and showed gratitude for the introduction.

Then I [Pir Dasatgir] said,

“Wakad Teera Wabahoova Sighu. Kaleema To Saruran Wa Khalas Hu.” Which means “Credit to those who recognize their duty. You used to read Kalma (word) of the Prophet. From now on, read the Kalma of Nanak, the Prophet, and you will find joy and salvation.”

I said, “Ahle Baghdadula Hazanabi Kalema To Fasjadu Fee Kana Balade Hi.” Which means “O people of Baghdad! You may be

wondering what is the mystery of Kalma of Nanak, the Prophet? Pay attention and follow.”

“Niyyadi Allah Alla Rabularshey Muallah Mashafo. Ta Khutabul Arshay Ahla Hazaismu Hoo. Kablo Musa Wa Issa Dawood Nawarsule Hil Karima. Torat Injeel Hum. Haza Kalmato Fidiyana Tarkimatun. Al Arzo Wana Sun Shamsul Karim.” Which means “The merciful Allah’s true Name which is engraved on ‘the Preserved Tablet by His Throne⁴³’. The prophet Moses interpreted the same Name and gave the Torah, the heavenly book to his people. Later, Jesus, David and Muhammad Sahib did the same thing. The truth is that all of the four religious books are transcriptions of the same Name. Nanak’s Kalma is the same Name.”

Pir Abdul Rehman writes, “My address affected the crowd deeply, and the gathering of close to a thousand-people bowed before the Guru. The compassionate Lord showered mercy on all present.”

Someone from the crowd asked, “Why do you play music and sing?” The Sahib Nanak said, “If singing were sinful or prohibited, then the Prophet Muhammad would not have carried young Aisha on his shoulders to go listen to the singing.”

This answer with references to Islam and Muhammad Sahib - satisfied the crowd and people started reciting ‘Sat Kartar’. The Pir started joining the Guru’s daily congregation, and others in the city followed.

⁴³ Muslims believe that the Quran was copied literally from the divine original, which is engraved on the *Luh-i-Mahfuz*, or Preserved Tablet close by the throne of God [22].

18. Deliverance of Behlol

Following Pir Dasatgir's example, many from Baghdad came to the shelter of the Guru's feet, and the city started to resound with the chant of 'Sat Kartar – Sat Kartar'. People thought of the Guru as the latest prophet and sought refuge.

The morning light had not yet broken, past the cemetery at the foothills of the mountain a Pir sat mesmerized with moonbeams hitting the waters of river Dajla. He sometimes laughed, and sometimes clapped and appeared to be addressing the moon beams. Then he stood up startled and started running while yelling "Come my friends! Let's meet our loved one, no-no the Allah himself; Come and behold the Lord."

The Pir was running, and his disciples ran after him until they reached the cemetery where the morning congregation has just concluded. Pir Behlol fell at the Guru's feet and kept repeating "AlAman AlAman."

The disciples standing in a circle around their Pir were whispering, "Behold the Lord." Watching their Pir prostrate at the Guru's feet, and beholding the aura of the Guru, the disciples suddenly fell into solemn silence.

Behlol: "يا مجيب الدعوات Ya MajibudaHawat!", "You are the Lord owner of all hearts. Please bless this land which has been longing to see you for so long."

Guru: "Oh Pir, I had no choice but to be here. The love of your brother [Pir Abdul Rehman] has been tugging on me."

Behlol: "Oh honor of the meek! Thank you for your blessing and mercy. I am overjoyed with the news that Abdul Rehman is now yours."

Guru: "No need to thank me, it was my obligation."

Behlol pleaded with folded hands, “Ya Hazrat! This land is blessed to receive the touch of your feet; It’s purified – as if washed with milk. But, I too have a wish. Please fulfill my wish also.”

Guru: “Oh Pir, this world is built by the flights of our mind and is fueled by wishes and expectations. Salvation lies in ending these wishes and expectations.”

Behlol: “But my one wish is without any expectations.”

Guru: “Then tell me, what is your wish?”

Behlol: “Please bless my humble house with the touch of your feet.”

The Guru laughed and said: “Are you planning on snaring free birds used to living in cemeteries?”

Behlol: “Oh, no, my Lord! I don’t live in palaces and fancy abodes. Over there, by the bank of Dajla, I live in a hut made of reeds. Please bless my humble hut.”

The Guru, seeing Pir’s boundless love said, “As you wish.”

The Pir was beside himself with joy, as the Guru walked to his hut. When the Guru reached the hut, Behlol laid out a sheet on the ground for the Guru to sit.

The Pir asked, “Please tell me, how is the Rasool (the Prophet Muhammad)?”

To the amazement of all present, the Guru said, “See for yourself.”

The Pir went into a trance, and when he opened his eyes, he said,

“Marhaba! Afuna Nanakin Shah Wali! Waja Fooni Maniratul Ishara Ka. Kad Hudana Ziarat Kurbo Minha. Ina Tuamal Firaka Mirul Majaka” meaning, “O people, I congratulate you for beholding [the

Guru], the one who showed me the divine. I am blessed with the vision of the Prophet, but the description is beyond me. Instead, it is better to bow to the glory of the most high.” Saying this, the Pir lied prostrate in front of the Guru.

Talking with the Guru, swept the Pir in a flood of love, and he made one more request and said,

“Now this is my last wish, please accept a meal from me.” The Guru smiled without saying anything.

The Pir took the smile as an acceptance and called out to Umar-Raza, “Dear Umar, and hurry! Please fetch some food from the town and prepare a meal. It’s a blessing to gain the opportunity to serve the Guru.”

Umar full of love and respect got up to go to the town. Before he could leave, the Guru gestured Umar to sit next to him and said, “Umar! In the town, only buy things from human-shopkeepers.” Umar accepted these as ordinary words and nodded yes and got up to go. The Guru stopped him again and said, “O Saint! Buy only from humans, and only from true humans.”

Umar, with folded hands, replied, “Oh Saint of Allah! Dasatgir, the Pir of Pirs has blessed this town. Everybody here lives a pious life. Even the dogs in this town are certain that they will receive salvation.”

The Guru said, ‘Oh Saint! That is a wrong-headed belief based on baseless pride. It’s each person’s own conduct that gets him to his destination. Belief in another person’s support is useless. Our own actions and the worship of Allah is what counts; relying on another man turns us into fuel for hell.’”

As Umar tried to justify his stance, the Guru ran a comb through his hair and made coils of two strands of his hair. The Guru then turned to Umar and asked, “What do you see?” “Hair” Umar replied.

“No”, the Guru said, “They are spectacles. Umar! Take these hair-spectacles. Before you buy anything, look at the shopkeeper through them.

You should buy only if you see a human being. Take this coin, and pay only with this coin.” Umar took the coin and carefully tied the hair in his handkerchief and set out to town.

The crowd was surprised by this exchange. Arabs are fond of miracles, and so they followed Umar to town. Umar went to the first shopkeeper in town and put on his hair-glasses and was startled when the shopkeeper appeared as a deer. When he took the glasses off, he saw the same pious shopkeeper, with a rosary around his neck, religious garb, sporting a beautiful beard of a namazi.

Umar went to the next shop and saw a chicken.

Umar spent a long time running from one shop to the next and found no human being. Dejected, he ruminated: “It’s correct! Relying on another human being is indeed useless. The people who are proud that they will certainly achieve salvation by living in this sacred town, blessed by the Pir, appear to be stuck as animals in the cycle of life and death.

What will happen? What will happen to me?”

As Umar hopelessly passed by a humble shop, he saw a man with long hair, carefree eyes, and a glow on his face. Half-heartedly, he put on his glasses and suddenly saw a ray of hope. He looked very carefully, and took off and put on the glasses many times, and mused to himself “It is true! He is human! No doubt, a true human.”

Calmly, he approached the shopkeeper, and gave him the coin and asked for groceries. The grocer recognized the coin, touched it to his head with reverence, kissed it several times, and then went into the back of the shop to safely stow the coin.

He tied a bundle of rice, and another one, filled with sweets and other food.

Umar, on seeing the size of bundles said, “Sir, I think you have made a mistake and given me too much.” “No mistake”, the grocer said, “These groceries are not in exchange of the coin – they are just for the privilege of beholding it.”

Umar asked “Beholding it. What do you mean?” The grocer replied, “Brother, the coin’s worth is too high for anybody to pay. Please do not waste time asking more questions. Hurry back with the groceries. You should not keep people waiting for food.”

Umar touched the grocer’s feet and said, “You appear to be a man of miracle. I have placed my faith for achieving salvation in obedience to my mentor. Could you please tell me if I will succeed, or will I get stuck in transmigration like the others I have seen today?”

The grocer quietly held out his palm in front of Umar like a mirror. Umar looked at the palm and saw himself as a dog and started trembling. He pleaded, “Oh man of Allah! Have mercy on me! Please grant me the blessing so that I may live a life fit for a human.”

The grocer said, “The ability to transform animals into humans lies in the hands of the one who sent you here today and showed you these wonders. I have no power.”

Hearing this, Umar got up and started running back to Nanak while singing, “Ina Nanak Gosasazman Jaika Jaikayasi. Minal Yuman Ajabun Filhashre Waka”, meaning, “Nanak is the *Pir* of the *Pirs*, the

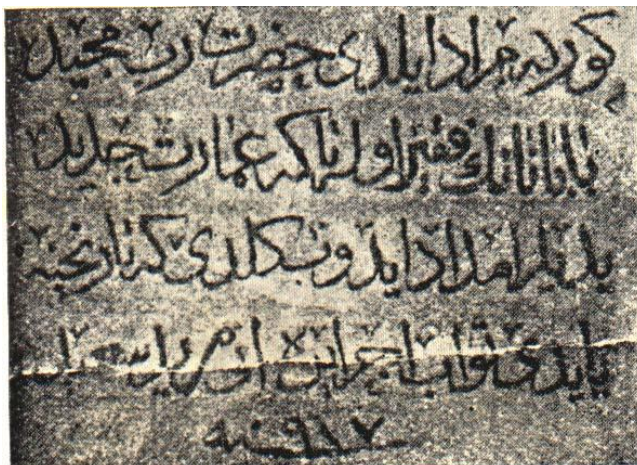
*Gownse*⁴⁴ of the *Gownses*. The ones who deny Nanak, the *Wali*⁴⁵, shall be punished in hell.”

⁴⁴ Gownse is a high spiritual state among Islamic saints. Muslims believe that when a Gownse saint goes in a trance, pieces (limbs) of his body appear to be strewn in different places.

⁴⁵ In Islam, this term is used for somebody who is vested as Guardian by the authority of God.

19. The Disciple Kept the Mentor's Remembrance Alive

After cementing his faith at Guru Nanak's feet, Behlol built a shrine in the memory of his Guru. This shrine is in the shape of a platform⁴⁶. In front of the platform is a stone slab⁴⁷ with



Photograph of inscription on the slab

the following inscription:

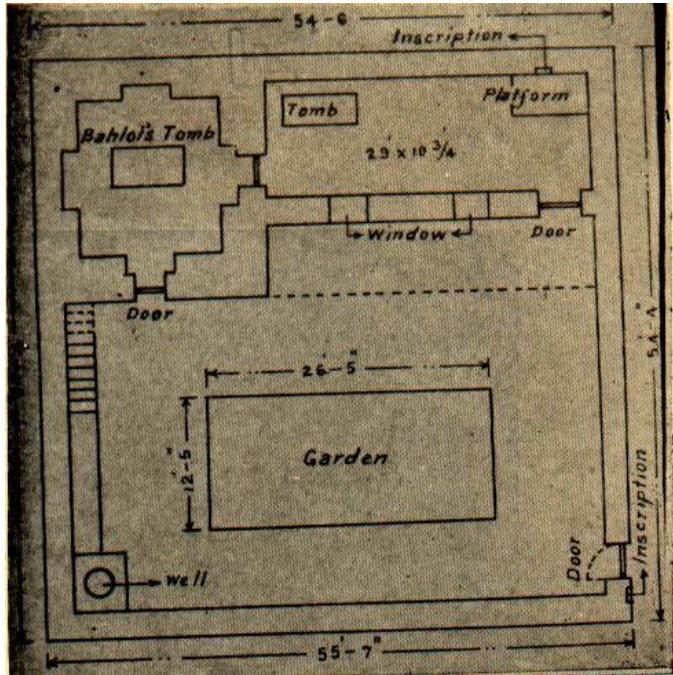
*'Guru Murad Aldi Hazrat Rab-ul- Majid,
Baba Nanak Fakirul Aulah Take Imarte Jadid,
Yadeed Imdad Idwath Guldi Ke Tarikhena,
Yapdee Nawab Ajra Yara Abee Murid Sayeed.
917 Hijri'*

The word 'Guru', when translated according to *Sarf Wa Nahav* (Arabic Grammar) is 'Rab-Ul-Alamin' which means, "the one who nourishes the world." 'Murad Aldi' means "grantor of wishes." 'Rab-ul- Majid' in Arabic is a name given to God.

⁴⁶ Refer to Appendix A for pictures of the Gurudwara in Baghdad and other eyewitness accounts going back to the early twentieth century.

⁴⁷ The stone slab pictured above was either stolen or destroyed during the Iraqi invasion in 2003.

In summary, Behlol is saying “O Allah, the grantor of wishes! You are manifest. So, what if you chose to come here in the form of Saint Nanak! I have recognized you. I am establishing this memorial



for coming generations. It's important that I

Floor plan of Guru Nanak's Monument in Baghdad prepared in 1918 by Dr. Kirpal Singh, a Captain in the Indian Medical Service

ask for your assistance in this task, so that there is an excuse for the memory of your fortunate disciple could continue.”⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Many people have tried to decipher and translate the inscription. Another version is: “Korla Murad Aldi Hazrat Rab Majid, Baba Nanak Fakir Aulah Nake Imarte Jadid, Yadeelar Imdad Aidub Kildi Ke Tarikhena, Yapdee Nawab Ajra Yara Abee Murid Sayeed. Sun 917 Hijri” Meaning: “Behold! How a wish has been fulfilled by God the benefactor. Baba Nanak's building is suddenly built, Seven pirs helped and this date 917 Hijri was set [for the building] so that the memory of his fortunate disciple could continue as a holy place established on earth. Year 917 Hijri”

The inscription is in mixed Arabic and Turkish, and it took a lot of hard work to decipher and translate. In addition to numerals, the date and year on the slab is also written in text, which when calculated using ‘*Haraf Abjad*’⁴⁹ is ‘5 Shawal, 917 Hijri’ (December 26, 1511 AD)

During World War I, Sikh soldiers erected a small room on the platform when they went to Baghdad as part of the British invasion in March 1917. After the end of the war, large numbers of Sikhs, mostly *Sehajdhari* traders from Sindh, moved to Baghdad. They kissed Baba Nanak’s hallowed ground and built a gurudwara on the site using contributions from their hard earnings. The tall *Nishan Sahib* (Sikh flag) on this gurudwara is visible from the far corners of Baghdad. The stone slab which used to be on the Guru’s platform is now at the entrance to the gurudwara.

The same sangat installed the Guru Granth Sahib and appointed a Sikh Granthi for the gurudwara. The owner of this place is Umar Raza, a descendant of a disciple of Behlol.

Umar Raza has a manuscript which contains Japuji Sahib, the inaugural composition in the Guru Granth and was originally composed by Guru Nanak. The manuscript has several other hymns of Guru Nanak from

⁴⁹ Arabic writers when describing a year, used letters from the alphabet (Alph, Be, Jeem, Dal, etc.) in their words so that if the sequence of the letters is written, it adds to the year being described. Based on difficulties in deciphering the faded inscription on the slab, there is also some confusion among experts as to whether the Guru’s visit was in 917 or 927 Hijri. The year 917 Hijri is more plausible, refer to Appendix A for details.

the Guru Granth. This manuscript also has an account of the Guru's discussions in Makkah and Baghdad⁵⁰.

On one side in the building is the tomb of Pir Behlol; on the other side is the platform for the Guru Granth (gurudwara). There is another tomb in the middle, which bears an inscription: "*Muhammad Pasha Arna Aoot.*" The Sikh Sangat also takes care of Behlol's tomb with great devotion. Both of these places are under Umar Raza's care. In the south-east is a well which is known as the spring of '*Wali Hind*'. Similar to the water from the famous Zamzam,⁵¹ water from this well is also considered sacred and is sought by Muslim and Sikh devotees from far and away.

⁵⁰ Sardar Kartar Singh Kartar of Sansarpur Village, Jalandhar, the President of Central Sikh Committee Baghdad, in the 1930's spoke to the caretaker in-charge of Behlol's shrine. The caretaker told Kartar Singh that he had an old Arabic manuscript containing an account of Guru Nanak's visit, but unfortunately, it was stolen in the 1920's. [23]

⁵¹ Zamzam is a well in Makkah, sixty-six feet east of Kaaba. According to Islamic belief it is a miraculously-generated source of water from God, which came into existence thousands of years ago. Pilgrims to Hajj visit this well. [32]

20. Thirst of the Loved-One

Taajudin continues to report, “The true devotion of Behlol created an amazing atmosphere. Many started gathering for evening congregation. Pir Abdul Rehman also started attending this congregation with his disciples.

One day in the middle of the congregation, Mardana stopped playing his rebab and stood up and said to the Guru, “You have been very kind and have blessed me the visit to this city of sacred Gownse Pirs, but the water here is not fit for drinking. I have been living here with a thirst for a long time. Could we please move to a place where water is sweet?”

Behlol said, “No! Brother Mardana! Sahib is going to stay here for a long time.”

The Guru said, “Whether I stay here, or leave is by Allah’s will, but a loved-one must not go thirsty.”

The Guru then handed his staff to Mardana and said, “This land has listened to Allah’s praises. His holy congregation has been gathering here for a long time. This land will definitely yield sweet water for you. Drive this staff in the ground and Allah will be merciful.”

Mardana, the true believer, drove the sharp end of the staff into the ground, and when he pulled the staff out a spring of sweet water erupted. Mardana and the sangat drank their fill. This well remains at this spot to this day.⁵²

⁵² According to the Article 'Gurudwara in Baghdad', Sikhiwiki.org :“The people of Baghdad depend on the River Tigris for water. Wells, in and around Baghdad, are brackish. It is said that the Guru’s disciples together with others who visited the takia, complained to the Guru about the difficulty in procuring drinking water. Guru Nanak got a well dug in the southeast corner and it produced sweet water. Even now, it is the only well with sweet drinking water.” The fact that most of water around Baghdad is brackish is also validated by the UK military report - ‘IRAQ WATER TREATMENT VULNERABILITIES (U) – Jan 1991’: “Much of Iraq’s ground water supplies are brackish to saline”. [24]

21. The First Dialog with my Father

Dear readers! After reading the above accounts by Taajudin, I [Mushtaq] felt compelled to discuss these with my father.

It was early morning. The cool breeze from the desert sands was soothing the streets of Medina. Native Arabs were busy tending their flocks of camels and sheep. Visitors were getting ready to move on to their next destination. The clock had struck four. During this ideal hour for being one with Allah, the local Mullah had climbed the minaret and was loudly inviting the faithful to worship.

At that time, I exited my room, in the lodge built for hajji travelers, and knocked on the door of my father's room. I entered his room and placed Taajudin's book in front of him and politely said,

“*Qibla* (O Respected One)! For four days, I have been reading this book *Sihayto Baba Nanak Fakir* in astonishment: Is it a book or a miracle? Please, you must read it and discourse it with me.”

My father took the book from me and read the title and said, “Stories of Nanak are no more than tall tales. I bet that's what it is. Why are you so surprised?” I said,

“But it's not just stories. Please read it, and after careful thinking and analyzing, I want you to tell me what you think of Islam?” My father was taken aback by my words and was looking at me in puzzlement. I bid him “Assalamualaikum”, and came back to my room.

I was thinking that after reading the text, my father would call me back to discuss about the book. The third day after no response, I went to him myself and asked for giving the book back. My father refused to return the book.

My father's refusal brought a flood of anxiety over me; for a moment, I felt my whole world was slipping from me. In sadness, I just walked

into the streets of Medina, as if to seek a trace of Nanak. I came across a group heading to Baitul Muqaddas.

22. Baitul Muqaddas

Taajudin's book on Guru Nanak's journeys had documented that Baitul Muqaddas was the first place the Sahib had blessed with his feet. It occurred to me that I should go to Baital Muqaddas and seek the place which Guruji had blessed and talk to any believers I should find there.

Taajudin had mentioned that this sacred place was called 'Nanakshah Qalandar'. I joined the group without informing my father. After four or five days of a journey through the desert, I was in the holy city of Baitul Muqaddas. I was thirsting to behold the site made sacred by the Guru's feet.

During the journey, I got to know a man whose camel's saddle I shared while traveling. I found out that this dear man belonged to the 'Sibi' tribe and he was one of the fortunate people who had gone mad for saying the name '*Guru Kartar*'.

This gentleman showed me a *gutka* (a small book containing hymns from Guru Nanak) with words written in golden ink. It was a translation of *Japuji*. The same man also took me to the 'Nanakshah Qalandar' site in a cemetery outside the city. The site was a beautiful,

old-style building with a dome⁵³. Inside, in the middle of the room, there was a platform covered with a white sheet. Four or five Arab devotees were sitting around the platform and were singing sweet songs about the Guru. I recall the Arabic words of the songs as follows:

“Kumya Nanak Zaye Hasnul Sanaha. Haiso Rabul Alaka Bataha.

Fatanat Bijmalahu Albadnehata. Sha Raktana Vanazaatifi Hova.

Kum Ya Tawafun Baitula Toyal Rabi. Wa Kaibo Mi Ei Nalo Laka Ha.

Shamsaha Fil Kalube Bishohe Ha. Jullahu Yu Yarbomasawaka Al Aaha.”

The camel owner’s companionship over the course of the journey, and then these love-filled songs were of great help to me. The singers

⁵³ Historical accounts by Giani Gian Singh also provide information on the Guru’s memorial sites in Arabia. The Giani started as an employee of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and wrote the famous historical texts, *Panth Prakash* (1880), and *Twareekh Khalsa* (1892 AD). He wrote that there are numerous places built in Arabia in memory of Nanak Qalandar, but five of the very famous ones are in Aden, Jeddah, Makkah, Medina and Baghdad. At the end of the nineteenth century, four of these places were under the sponsorship of the Ottoman Empire. The priests and caretakers of these houses were employees of the Turkish ruler. With the exception of Aden, the other four served langar (free kitchen), paid for by the ruler. All the houses were built in the shape of a mosque with a golden dome. Inside each, there was a platform. The priests wore a blue kachh, which covered the knee but not the calf. The Giani based his account on testimony of Hajji travelers from Punjab. These travelers included: Hajji Gulam Ali of Rangpura, Hajji Gulam Muhayudin Maulvi, Hajji Gulam Muhammad son of Ilahi Baksh of Sialkot, Hajji Fateh Khan ship broker from Bombay, Shahbaz Khan from Kabul, Hajji Kutab Din of Lahore and Hajji Imam Baksh of Delhi (*Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, page 182). [7]

finished their *kirtan* (devotional singing), I addressed one of them and inquired,

“فالى اي مذهب تنتمي؟”

Fala ay mazhab tantamy?” meaning, “To which faith do you belong?”

He answered, “Our faith belongs to the Indian Pir Nanak Shah.”

I asked,

“من نبيك؟ Man nabiyuk?” meaning, “Who is your prophet?”

The man answered: “نانك نبي الله به Nanak nabiyu Allahu bih”, meaning, “Nanak is the prophet on whom our faith rests.”

I asked,

“هل نبيك نانك له ثلاثة آيات؟ كتاب، كرامة، امة، Kul hal nabiyuk nanak lahu salasa ayat? 1 Kitabun, 2 kramatun, 3 ummatun” Meaning, “Does your Nanak, the prophet, have the required three signs⁵⁴: (1) the book, (2) the miracle, (3) the followers?”

⁵⁴ According to the Islamic belief authenticity of a prophet of God can be tested by a set of characteristics. Three of which include revelation, miracle and followership.

1) Revelation: Every prophet states clearly that what he receives is not of his own making, but from God, for the well-being of mankind. He also confirms what was revealed before him and what may be revealed after him. Therefore, as per Islamic beliefs coming of a prophet must be foretold in an earlier text. Muslims have spent a lot of effort to prove that Prophet Muhammad’s arrival was foretold in Bible and Vedas. Islamic examples of books of revelation given by God to the prophets are: Torah, Bible and the Quran.

The man I was talking to went quiet, but the elderly gentleman sitting next to him thumped his chest and said,

“اما امتي Ama Ummaty” meaning, “We all are his followers.” He pulled out a small gutka and said, “هذا كلام

Haza Kalamun” meaning, “This is a sacred revelation.”

He then pointed both his hands towards Makkah and said,

“هذا بيت الله شاهد لي يوم الحشر - Haza Baytullah shahidun li yomil hasher”, meaning, “That house of Allah [Kaaba] will bear witness until the judgment day that it had circumambulated Nanak.”

I was satisfied by these fitting answers, and I felt further drawn to Guru Nanak’s path. Now I was feeling eager to return to Medina to hear what my father had to say.

When I returned to my father, seeing me anxious and tormented, he returned my book but refused to give me his opinion. Instead, he scolded me, “You didn’t come here to read stories, focus on your objective.”

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- 2) Miracle: A prophet is supported by miracles to prove that he is not an imposter. The miracle must establish the superiority of the prophet according to what is considered important by his contemporaries. For example, magicians were important at the time of Moses, therefore, his miracle involved defeating all the magicians. At the time of Jesus, physicians or healers were important. Jesus’ superiority was established by his miracles of resurrection and curing incurable diseases. At the time of Muhammad Sahib scholarship was important. Therefore, the unmatched magnificent poetry in the Quran is considered his miracle. Similarly, Prophet Muhammad Sahib split the moon for a short period to convince Quraysh in debate.
 - 3) The third test is that God will make a large number of people to follow his prophet. [25]

23. Dream

My father's scolding had made me anxious. I felt sad and spent the first half of the night in studying the book *Sihayto Baba Nanak Fakir*. In the end, I stood up solemnly and addressed Guru Nanak in prayer,

“Oh the helper of God! If what I read is true, then please grant me a blessing! Please appear to me and grant me the wisdom so that I can follow your path without doubts and trepidations.” My prayer ended, but my anxiety did not, and I laid down and fell sleep on the floor.

Maybe the prayer of the seeker had reached the all-knowing. In my dream state, I saw a vision of the judgment day.

It was exactly as it is described in the Islamic books: all the beings in creation are standing naked in a field. They are looking in awe at *nama-e-amal* (description of their deeds) written on their hands. The sun is blazing dead-center overhead and is scorching the earth to the color of copper. Everyone is in a state of dread, trembling in extreme anxiety.

According to Islam, during this hard hour of judgment, Allah will appear and will remove the suffering of his creation himself; he will sit on a throne and will render judgment of heaven and hell. The throne was also visible in my vision, decorated with rare emeralds, pearls, and stones. A gold palanquin with four curtains sat on the dazzling throne. The people in attendance believed that Allah would reveal himself from the palanquin and they will all be forgiven.

Then a voice was heard from the worried crowd, “Look, the Prophet Jesus Christ is coming.” Everyone's hopes rose up; the crowd thought that maybe Jesus would intercede for their sins. Jesus was accompanied by his followers, who were loudly reciting Christian sacred writings.

Upon reaching the throne, Jesus bowed and stood solemnly to the right of the palanquin. His followers joined the rest of the crowd.

The crowd was disappointed. Someone shouted again, “Look, Moses is coming.” But Moses too, like Jesus, bowed and stood by the palanquin, and his disciples joined the crowd. Then the Prophet David did the same.

Finally, the arrival of Hazrat Muhammad was announced. Everyone seemed pleased because Muhammad Sahib had promised that he would be their intercessor on the judgment day. The crowd remembered the promise and shouted the Islamic slogan, “*Labbaik* (meaning at your service)!” Muhammad, too, did nothing and joined the other prophets.

The prophets stood silently, and this heightened everyone’s anxiety. Then a voice arose from the crowd “Welcome! Bless Allah! Baba Nanak Fakir, the forgiver, is coming.”

Everybody started shouting, “*Subhan, Subhan!*” I was naturally enamored with the name Nanak, and I looked carefully at the Sahib walking in his spiritual glory.

The Guru was throwing his glancing left and right at the crowd while walking in his carefree gait. He brought peace wherever he glanced. His followers were carrying a *kesri* (deep orange) flag. In a steady voice, alternating once softly and once loudly, the followers were reciting, “Waheguru! Waheguru! Waheguru!” The Sahib’s body exuded a divine light and splendor, which made all other lights appear dim.

Guru Nanak wore a round white turban and a knee-length robe, with a beautiful *mala* (rosary) in one hand. His arms were long, his fingers stretching passed his knees, and a glance at his face was enough to entangle one in love.

Dear readers, since joining Sikhism, I have looked at a lot of paintings of Nanak, yearning to see that face again, but my wish has remained unfulfilled.

Back to my dream: just by beholding the Guru, the crowd forgot all about their sins and punishments and started reciting “Waheguru! Waheguru!” When the Guru came aside the palanquin, the four prophets bowed respectfully, and the Guru entered the palanquin. Everyone thought they would glimpse God in this palanquin. Curtains were raised from all four sides, and people saw Nanak, the divine light, sitting in the palanquin.

Everyone could view the incredible splendor of Sahib Guru. Everyone bowed, and so did I. I awoke at that moment.

This incredible dream increased my yearning for the Guru, and my faith was now as steady as the Himalayas. The clock showed four in the morning. I got up and walked to my father’s room. My father had finished his namaz.

I recounted my vision to him and asked him what he thought of my dream. He laughed, called out my name and said, “You have fallen into superstitions. I did not bring you here so that you could waste your time. Wake up, the date of *Umrah* (non-mandatory pilgrimage to Makkah) is approaching. We have to return. It would have been nice if you could have earned a qualification from this University in Medina.”

I said, “*Qibla-Jaan* (term of respect)! I am just trying to understand the meaning of my dream and learn the truth behind Taajudin’s book.

This time, my father replied liberally,

“Son, in truth, Nanak was a great saint of Islam. Nanak, the *wali* (custodian of faith) has labored magnificently for Islam. Nanak was a bright star in the world of theology, but sadly he committed not just a

mistake, but a crime beyond pardon. Allah will not forgive this crime of Nanak's. Well, he was a man. A man can make a mistake. Even great prophets have made mistakes.”

24. Praise for Gurbani

Continuing my discussion, I asked my father, “Your words have proven that Nanak was a Muslim, and he did great things for Islam. I don’t understand, even after doing so much for Islam, what possibly was his crime, which cannot be forgiven?”

My father replied with great emotion, “Yes, Nanak’s crime is that he created his own revelation in competition with revelation from Allah. Nanak’s supernatural revelation has challenged the glory of the Quran.”

I said, “How can revelation of a man challenge Allah’s revelation? It’s not possible.”

My father said, “Mushtaq! I have seen myself a few times, Nanak’s writings have magical powers.” He continued, “Once, I was staying with Zaildar (a feudal title in British colonial administration) Muhammad Yusuf, in the hill area of Khanpur, near Khurihata. Two Sikhs and an elderly Hindu man came to see me from Khurihata (This place is in Tehsil Rajauri, District Mirpur, Jammu, India). These people were talking in hill dialect, and the old man said to me,

“ਯਾ ਪੀਰ! ਆਪ ਸਮਰਥ ਹੋਈ ਗਛਣੇ ਹੋ। ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਕੋਲ ਆਈਗੇ ਹਾਂ, ਯੋਹ ਬਸਿਠ ਸਿੱਖ ਦੇ ਤੇ ਇਸਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਦੀ “ਤੁਣਕੂਹੀ” ਗਰਾਏ ਵਿਚ ਔਹ ਨੱਕੀ ਤੈ ਦਿਸਣਾਂ ਵੀਏ। ਉਥੈ ਨੇ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਸਿੰਘੈ ਨੀ ਕੁੜੀ ਨਾਲ ਹੋਈ ਗੱਛੀ ਸੀ, ਯਾ ਪੀਰ ਤਰੈ ਸਾਲ ਹੋਈਗੈਨ। ਉਜਾਗਰੈ ਦੁਸ਼ਟੈ ਇਸ ਗਰੀਬੈ ਕੀ ਖਾਕੂ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਾਈ ਸੋੜਿਆ ਐ, ਨਾਂ ਕੁੜੀ ਕੀ ਭੇਜਨਾਂ ਐ, ਤੇ ਨਾਂ ਇਨਾਂ ਗਰੀਬਾਂ ਕੀ ਸੁਖੈ ਨਾਂ ਸਾਹ ਘਿਨੀ ਦੇਣਾਂ ਐ। ਪੀਰੋ! ਉਸ ਦੁਸ਼ਟੈ ਨਾਂ ਮਕੂ ਬੁਨੀ ਸੋੜੋ? ਝੇਹਾ ਮਕੂ ਬਨੋ ਜੀਣੈ ਜੇਗਾ ਨ ਛੋੜੀ ਗਛੈ, ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਕੁਰੈ ਰਹੀ ਗਿਆ ਸਾਰਾ ਲਾਕਾ ਹੀ ਤਲੀ ਤੋਪ ਆਣੀ ਸੋੜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ।” ਮੇਰੇ ਪੈਰ ਪਕੜ ਕੇ ਕੈਹਨ ਲੱਗੇ, ਇਸ “ਦੁਸ਼ਟੈ ਕੀ ਕੋਈ ਕਲਾਮ ਦਈ ਘਿਨੋ ਜੇ ਮਰੀ ਹੀ ਗਛੈ।”

Meaning: “O Pir! We have heard that you have powers. That’s why we have come to you. This Sikh married his daughter to Ujjagar Singh in

the village Toonkoohi three years ago. The wicked Ujjagar Singh has raked this man's honor in the mud. Ujjagar Singh is refusing to send for his wife and is not letting these poor people take a breath in peace. O Pir, teach the wicked Ujjagar a lesson. Teach him such a lesson that he is not left fit to live." He then touched my feet and begged, "Do magic that will kill the wicked man." My father said, "Their sad story, told in my native dialect, moved me. A thought crossed my mind that I have the *kafir* (non-believer) exactly where I wanted. I decided to kill the infidel to secure my place in heaven. The three petitioners were already pleading for the death of Ujjagar Singh, and also Islam is clear that killing or converting an infidel leads to heaven. I thought to myself Allah had created this opportunity for me to put an end to this non-believer. I asked the men to bring me something sweet, and they brought me some dried dates. I casted a spell on the dates and told them, "Feed these to Ujjagar Singh, and in no time, he will go insane and will kill himself by striking his head against walls."

My father said, "Early the next morning the petitioners were back and started crying in front of me." They said,

“ਯਾ ਪੀਰ! ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਕਲਾਮ ਪੁੱਠੀ ਪਈ ਗਛੀਐ, ਜਿਸੈ ਵੇਲੇ ਨੀ ਉਹ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਚੀਜ਼ ਖਲਾਈ ਹੈ, ਉਦੋਂ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਵੈਰੀ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ ਏ, ਸਾਰੀ ਰਾਤੀ ਬੱਟੇ ਗੀਟੇ ਮਾਰਦਾ ਤੇ ਗਾਲ਼ੀ ਕੱਢਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਯਾ ਪੀਰ ਯੁਹ ਕੈਹ ਹੋਈ ਗਿਆ ਦੇਸ। ਉਚੀ ਉਚੀ ਹਾਲ ਪੁਕਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਗ ਪਏ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਸੋਚਿਆ ਕਿ ਸ਼ੈਦ ਝੂਠ ਬੋਲਕੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਬਦਨਾਮ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ‘ਚੋਂ ਜੋ ਬਿਰਧ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਸੀ ਉਹ “ਖੂਹੀਰਟੇ” ਦੇ ਚੰਗੇ ਸ਼ਾਹੂਕਾਰਾਂ ‘ਚੋਂ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਵਾਕਫ਼ ਸੀ ਨੇ ਹੱਥ ਜੋੜ ਕੇ ਕਿਹਾ “ਪੀਰੋ! ਇਹ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਖਿਆਲ ਨ ਕਰੀ ਗਛਿਓ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਐਵੇਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਆਖਣੇ ਹਾ, ਕਸਮੀਐ ਤਵਾੜੇ ਖੁਦਾਐ ਤੈ ਰਸੂਲੈ ਨੀ ਅਪਨੀ ਹਥੀਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਛੁਹਾਰੇ ਕਲਾਮੇਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਉਜਾਗਰੇ-ਬੇਈਮਾਨੈ ਕੀ ਖਵਾਈ ਦਿਤੇ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਖਾਣਿਆਂ ਸਾਰ ਹੀ ਸੂਰੈ ਨੀ ਸਵਾਰੀ ਉਧਰ ਚੜੀ ਗਛਿਆ ਹੈ, “ਏ ਪੀਰ ਹੁਣ ਤੂ ਜਾਣ।”

Meaning: “Oh Pir! Your spell has the opposite effect. After eating those dates, he grew even bolder. All night he was hostile to us. They

started wailing loudly, “Oh Pir! What has happened?” I thought maybe they are lying to make me look bad. I knew the old Hindu man. He hailed from a well to do family from Khurhata, he said, “We are not making it up. I swear by God and your prophet. We fed that treacherous Ujjagar those dates with our own hands. But as soon as the pig ate them, he started abusing us. Now, I leave it to you to figure out what went wrong.”

I believed that the old Hindu man was telling me the truth. I hypnotized an eleven-year-old boy as a medium to find out what happened. I pointed to the petitioners and asked the medium, “Who are these people?” The medium was able to tell me their names. I then asked, “Tell me, did they feed the dates to Ujjagar, or are they lying.” The medium said, “They have fed the dates to Ujjagar Singh.” I then asked, “My spell was tried and true. Why did it not work?” The medium said, “Ujjagar Singh is Guru Nanak’s Sikh. Nanak’s bani is defending him. Your spell does not affect Ujjagar.” In a surprise, I asked the medium, “My spell was from the Quran, what could be more powerful than the Quran? The medium said, “Ujjagar recites Japuji in the morning and Kirtan Sohilla in the evening. None of the spells will work on him.” My father said, “I had heard it before, but now I found out for myself that the evil magic of Nanak’s bani is very powerful.”

25. The Second Dialog with my Father

Readers must be surprised by my father's story above. Indeed, it's a surprising tale. My father was trying to remove my doubts about Islam and wanted me to detest even the name of Nanak. But here, also, my father's scheme backfired. Through God's will, my father's words instead increased my respect for Gurbani (Guru's hymns). My faith in the Guru quadrupled, and my zest to follow this incredibly powerful Gurbani intensified. I started yearning for the day when I would be able to walk on the path to truth.

During this period, I sought out and visited sacred places built in the Guru's memory in Kai Kai and Karbala. I talked to Nanak's Arabic disciples who were madly in love with Guru's Naam. They told me, "ناناك الوالي هو حق ربي Nanak wali howa hakka Rabbi", meaning, "Nanak the Wali was no different than Allah. We [Arabs] failed to see the truth."

After wandering through these places like a love-sick madman, I returned to my father for another confrontation and my questions to him resumed.

I humbly said to my father, "Oh respected one! Ujjagar Singh's story proves that Nanak's word is the true word of Allah. Allah's word is supposed to be a companion in need. If Nanak's sacred word stood by his Sikh here, then no doubt it will stand by him in Allah's court. I do not believe in the claim that Prophet Muhammad Sahib was the last prophet and that after Muhammad Sahib Allah will not send anybody else to this world with his message. When the Prophet Muhammad Sahib was proclaimed the last prophet as indicated in the Quran "مت كان Ma kana muhammadun aba ahadin min rijalikum walakin rasoola Allahi wa khatama

annabiyyeena⁵⁵”, the Prophet’s wife Aisha, protested and said to the Arabic people, “بعده انبياء لا تقولوا لا و الانبياء خاتم انه قولوا” Qooloo Innahu Khatamul Anbiyaa'I Wa Laa Taqooloo Laa Nabiyya Ba'Dahu “, meaning, “Say he is the 'seal of the prophets' but do not say 'there is no prophet after him’⁵⁶.”

My above statement annoyed my father, and he said, “Your thoughts have been corrupted by doubts. It’s true that too much education can lead to doubt. To doubt the Quran is not just a mistake, it's blasphemy. Be warned: cleanse yourselves of these thoughts and go visit the tomb of the Prophet to repent.”

I humbly pleaded again, “O respected one! At least give me some argument as to why I should believe Quran and not believe Nanak’s bani. How sad, that at the very spot where Islam was born the respected Rukan-ud-din, Allah’s saint Shah Saraf, the great Imam Jaffar, the Baghdad’s Pir of Pirs, all of them chose Nanak by saying “Taharana Ya Rabi Alaklubu Zulhalu⁵⁷.”

My father: “Look! Do not criticize Allah’s word. We came here for a blessing, not for criticizing his word. Only Allah knows his mysteries; a man is nothing.”

My father became angry and said, “You have read a few things about this kafir (non-believer), the chief of a band of idol-worshippers, and you disrespect Islam and speak against the Quran. Who is this Nanak in reality? He is the son of a Hindu Khatri money-manager. Nanak, for the sake of his livelihood, used his black magic and occult powers and

⁵⁵ Quran Surat Al-'Aĥzāb 33:40. Muhammad is the “Seal of the Prophets”. That is, he is the last Prophet and no other prophet will come after him.

⁵⁶ The above quote is from Hadith Takmilah Majma'ul Bihaar, p. 85

⁵⁷ Meaning, “Oh man of God, please grant me inner strength so that I am able to recognize you”.

created Sikhism, a band of heretics. Islam, the conqueror of the universe, is our timeless, beloved religion. Forget about that idol-worshiper. It's almost two o'clock in the afternoon; it's time we both perform *namaz*. I had no food, and no water, you have been torturing my brain since morning. All this time you have been criticizing Islam. My God! All these lies, you have been possessed by the devil. Now get up and go perform your *namaz*." Before leaving, I convinced my father to continue our discussion, after the *namaz*, by saying, "I want to understand idol worship."

After I completed my 'Zohar'⁵⁸ *namaz*, I went back and greeted my father in his room. I had barely sat down, and my father showed me a letter from Haji Fazal Karima which was mailed from Jeddah Sharif. The Haji was leading a group of five hundred pilgrims from Punjab, and was expected to reach Makkah during the days of 'Umrah'⁵⁹.

My father said, "Let's pack, and meet the group in Makkah. We are in the country, I don't wish to miss the sacred pilgrimage. Besides, one's security can be guaranteed only if one connects with Lord."

I said, "Father! I am already packed and ready. I just want to talk to you a bit more."

My father: "What do you mean "I am packed?" Is your packing separate from mine? Talk to the servants. We will perform next Friday's *namaz* in Kaaba."

⁵⁸ Zohar is the prayer performed around midday. Muslims are required to perform *namaz* (prayer) five times a day. The names of these prayers and approximate times are: Fajr (5:30am), Zohar (Noon), Asar (2:54pm), Magrib (4:30pm) and Isha (6pm).

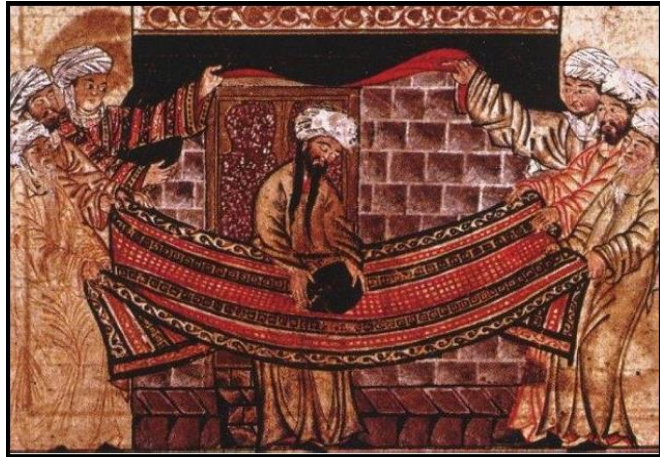
⁵⁹ Umrah is called a minor pilgrimage to Makkah; Hajj being the major one. Hajj is mandatory for Muslims, Umrah is optional. Hajj can be performed only during one specific month every year, whereas Umrah can be performed any time of the year.

I: “We don’t need the servants’ help. Why not throw the blanket on your shoulder and start walking like Nanak, the fakir?”

My father: “Nanak was a reclusive pauper and an Idol-worshipper! An idol-worshipper’s life is useless.”

I: “Father, please pardon my insolence! You go both ways. You, yourself had called Nanak a very important Islamic fakir.

Now you are saying that he was an idol-worshipper. I must say, I am starting to lose faith



Early 14 century Persian Jami al-Tawarikh, depiction of Prophet Muhammad setting the Aswad stone in Kaaba (see footnote below)

in your words. Truthfully, the more I talk to you, the more my respect for Nanak increases. An idol-worshipper is a person who worships stone idols. Muslims worship ‘*Hajr e Aswad*’⁶⁰, by this definition, aren’t Muslims also idol-worshippers?

⁶⁰ *al-Hajar al-Aswad* (The Black Stone) is the eastern cornerstone of the Kaaba. Muslims revere this stone. The stone was venerated at the Kaaba in pre-Islamic pagan times. A story found in Ibn Ishaq's *Sirat Rasūl Allāh*, one of the biographies of Muhammad (as reconstructed and translated by Guillaume), describes Muhammad settling a quarrel between Makkah clans as to which clan should set the Black Stone cornerstone in place. According to Ishaq's biography, Muhammad's solution was to have all the clan elders raise the cornerstone on a cloak, after which Muhammad set the stone into its final place with his own hands. [27]

I: Father, I don't understand your pride. In this Arabian land, fifteen percent of the population has faith in Nanak fakir."

My father: "What! Nanak's followers here? Impossible."

I: "If you wish, should I arrange somebody to meet with you?"

My Father: "Definitely! I would be glad to meet such a person."

I returned to my room and had a cup of tea and then set out to see the owner of the house in town [Medina] where Guruji's one shoe, and the old Japuji Sahib text were kept. The owner's name was Mehboob Ibne Jaffer. He was descendent of Imam Jaffer.

I arranged a meeting between my father and Mehboob after the 'Isha' (evening) namaz. Both had a long and intimate discussion. Mehboob said, "People here do not openly proclaim Nanak because of a fear of reprisal. Otherwise, the whole country would have followed Nanak. Currently, there are one hundred and fourteen families in Medina who keep their hair uncut, follow Nanak, and believe in one God."

After Mehboob left, my father commented, "Did you see his long hair? A den of lice. That is no way for a human to live. I give up, Mushtaq! What kind of joke is this? What kind of wisdom is it to bow before a man and to make a man one's focus of religion? *Lahoul Walla Kuwatt* (There is neither might nor force except through Allah). This is all the work of the devil."

26. Justification of Uncut hair from the Quran

I decided to address the two points made by my father above: 1) Un-cut hair is a den of lice. 2) Bowing before a man is blasphemous. The readers may remember that Guruji had relied on the Quran while explaining the importance of uncut hair to Rukan-ud-din in Makkah. I too decided to rely on the Quran in my discussion.

I explained to my father that, from the beginning, God created humans with hair. Therefore, it is important that we maintain our bodies, as created by the Lord. God knows our inner thoughts; if our actions were acceptable to him, he would have created us without hair.

When God saw that people were following their own wishes to an extreme and were ignoring his will, he through his Prophet sent instructions to the people coming to Kaaba for a hajj: “Wa a`dh-dhin finnasi bil-hajji [Quran 22:27].” This means, “Announce to mankind about the Hajj.” “Faman hajjal baita 'awi`tamara falaa janaaha 'alaihi [Soorat-ul-Baqarah ayah 158].” This means, “Anybody who does Hajj or Umrah will have his sins forgiven. The one who obeys the rules of Hajj and Umrah is a candidate for forgiveness.” Any Muslim who travels to Hajj after incurring substantial expense, and is about to enter the area of Hajj, Allah the Merciful instructs him before entering: “Waatimmoo alhajja walaAumrata lillahi fa-in ohsirtum fama istaysara mina alhadyi wala tahliqoo ruosakum [Surat Al-Baqarah 2:196].” This means “And complete the Hajj and Umrah for Allah. But if you are prevented, then [offer] what can be obtained with ease [sacrificial animals]. And do not shave your heads until the sacrificial animal has reached its place of slaughter.” The fifth chapter of *Israr ul Shriya* indicates that cutting hair has become vanity, and people are instructed not to cut their hair during Hajj.

My father: “Okay, you have proven to me that we shouldn’t cut hair during the days of Hajj. But the rest of the time, the Muslims must follow the Prophet’s ‘*Sunnat*’⁶¹ (Instructions).”

I replied, “Hazrat Muhammad kept his hair uncut⁶². The prophets who came before him: Jesus, Moses, David, and Ibrahim all had long uncut hair; they did not follow Sunnat. In my mind, if a Muslim wants the blessings of the Lord and hopes to enter his court one day, then it’s important, nay essential, for him to save his hair and enter the Lord’s court maintaining the gift of God to him. Muslims of today, who think they are devout just because they do Sunnat [cut their hair], are in reality challenging the Lord. Look, father! It doesn’t matter how closely you shave. Nature brings the hair back the next day. If you don’t see a barber for a couple of months, people will start calling you Sadhu Singh. Father! Battling the Lord’s will is the greatest sin.”

My father said, “Son, I am impressed by your arguments. In all honesty, I agree with you. But what can one do? If you proclaim the truth, the religious vultures will pull the flesh off your body. One has to keep with tradition.”

I said, “Father ‘Jazak Allah’ (may Allah reward you)! You have confirmed the truth. One must always speak the truth, even if flesh were to be pulled off the bodies of those who utter it, like Rukan-uddin, in Makkah, who spoke the truth even when facing the wrath of

⁶¹ Sunnat is a source of Islamic law second only to the Quran. It outlines a way of life prescribed as normative for Muslims on the basis of the teachings and practices of the Prophet Muhammad. These practices also prescribe the acceptable length of hair for different parts on a Muslim’s body. For example, hair on the head should be to ear lobes or lower. The beard should not be shaved or cut shorter than the length of a fist. The moustache should be trimmed very short, hair in armpits or below the navel should be shaved.

⁶² Refer to the early 14th century illustration of the Prophet Muhammad in the previous section, where the Prophet is depicted with long, uncut hair.

people blinded by sharia. I believe that, rather than following our own wishes, we ought to follow our Lord's; following tradition blindly will prove to be fuel for hell.”

My father was a spiritual and a scholarly man. After listening to my views, he kept looking at me in silence. Finally, I politely asked him, “If you would permit, could I please leave for Makkah tomorrow?” He said, “Mushtaq, I understand you. But what's the hurry? We can leave together in about a week, and in the meantime, the group of pilgrims from Punjab will also arrive.” After my continued insistence, he decided to leave early with me.

Once I reached Makkah, I made a beeline for all the places linked to Guruji. Here too, I introduced my father to Mehboob Rehman ji, a descendant of Khawaja Zainul Abidin, and Ahmad Sadiq ji who hailed from the Badu family. My father was very happy to meet them. This time, in front of these gentlemen, my father praised Guruji profusely and said that its duty of every '*moman*' (a Muslim believer) to accept Nanak.

Hajj was still a month and a half away, and I wasn't sure if my father would wish to stay in Makkah even after the Hajj. I was eager to return to Punjab and grew increasingly restless after a sleepless night in Makkah; I decided to pack my belongings. In the morning I went to my father to ask his permission to leave. My father tried very hard to dissuade me from leaving. He told me that Hajj days were near, and to leave now would be bad luck. I remained resolute, at the end with tears streaming from his eyes my father said, “Son, as you wish. But please make sure that you head straight home. I will also get back soon after Hajj. I would like to see you at home when I get back. Please do not spend time in places like Jeddah, Aden or Karachi.”

27. Getting to Jeddah

My father walked with me for a mile to see me off. My changed views were weighing heavy on his heart. He kept telling me, “Don’t spend too much time on the way, and write to me as soon as you get home.” Tears kept rolling from his eyes; I think he had resigned to the fact that I am about to change my faith.

I reached Jeddah and visited Guru Nanak’s sacred memorial which is not far from Eve’s⁶³ tomb. The priest at the memorial had immense love for the Guru. He told me that every full moon he goes to Gurudwara Sachkhand at Karachi (this gurudwara is maintained by Sindhis) to enjoy the congregation of Guru’s loved ones.

This priest left a lasting impression on me. You can imagine his faith when he told me, “Allah himself came to this world as ‘Nanak’, but people failed to recognize him. But mark my words, anybody who even hears the name ‘Nanak’ will be forgiven in his court.”

This great man’s name was Waleed Ibne Sahlab. He was a highly spiritual man and was always reciting Japuji Sahib. I saw many gurbani books written in Arabic and Gurmukhi in his possession. His company further strengthened my faith and lifted me into ‘*chardi kala*’ (high spirits). I remembered the poem: “Yak Zamana Suhbate Ba Aulia. Behtar Aaz Sad Saal Tayat Be Riya. Gar To Sange Khar Oh Marmar Bawi. Chun Ba Sahib Dilrasi Gohar Shavi” which means “A short period in the company of God’s loved ones is better than worship for a hundred years. Oh human being if you are like a thorn, or hard and stupid like marble stone, then spend time with God’s men. They will turn you into a diamond.”

⁶³ Muslims believe that upon expulsion from heaven, Adam landed in Sri Lanka and Eve in Jeddah. Jeddah is named after Arabic word “Jeddah” meaning, “grandmother” of all mankind. Eve’s tomb is established in Jeddah

ਕਬੀਰ ਏਕ ਘੜੀ ਆਧੀ ਘਰੀ ਆਧੀ ਹੂੰ ਤੇ ਆਧ ॥ ਭਗਤਨ ਸੇਤੀ ਗੋਸਟੇ ਜੇ
ਕੀਨੇ ਸੇ ਲਾਭ

Kabeer, whether it is for an hour, half an hour, or half of that,
whatever it is, it is worthwhile to speak with the Holy. - SGGS
1377.

28. Reaching Home in Mirpur

When I reached my home in Mirpur on May 1, 1930, I had a big shock. The whole of Kashmir was in the grip of sectarian hatred. Kashmiri Muslims had started an agitation based on fourteen demands. They claimed legitimacy of their demands because Muslims in Kashmir made up 85% of the population, and they believed that these demands were necessary for safeguarding their rights.

As soon as the government resisted the demands, religious bigots concocted a story to fan hatred. The story claimed that a Hindu kicked a Muslim man when he was performing namaz. Soon Muslim zeal whipped the story into an insurgency, and nobody bothered to notice that the British were engineering this unrest⁶⁴.

As this communal zeal was building, my father returned from Makkah to Mirpur in September 1930. Soon after my father's return, a huge Muslim conference was arranged by Majlis-i-Ahrar Islam, and a fatwa for jihad followed. The communal vitriol gave way to savagery. A mob of ghazis⁶⁵ and common criminals armed with spears, swords, and knives came out on the streets to massacre innocent Hindus and Sikhs. Murder, looting, and mayhem ruled everywhere. Innocent, helpless women were raped, and the streets were red with blood.

⁶⁴ The new Dogra King of Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh who ascended the throne in 1925, proved to be too independent-minded for the British. He kicked the British army out of Gilgit. Gilgit located at the juncture of Russian, Chinese and British empires, was strategically important to the British. "With an uncooperative Maharaja, the British found it difficult to achieve their goals easily in Gilgit. They therefore chose to use the communal weapon. He[Maharaja Hari Singh] was rightfully proud of the existence of communal peace in his state. But everything was to change after 1930, when the British began actively encouraging communal elements both in and outside of the state so as to precipitate a crisis for the Maharaja. In short, the British objective was to put enough pressure on the Maharaja to force him to cede control of all of Gilgit" [33]

⁶⁵ Ghazi: An Islamic warrior or crusader

29. Madness in Kashmir

Majlis-i-Ahrar Islam chose Sheikh Abdulla (the Lion of Kashmir) to lead activities in Kashmir, and my father the same in Jammu and Punch⁶⁶. Zaildar⁶⁷ Choudary Fazal Elahi, a childhood friend of mine, lived in village Panyam which was not far from my home in Mirpur.

The zaildar and I had similar views, and we both started speaking against Jihad. One day when zaildar went to collect taxes from rebel farmers in his area, a mob gathered from three or four villages and attacked him. In self-defense, he fired his revolver into the charging mob, which caused death and injuries and the mob ran away. The government, to calm the people down, arrested the zaildar and sent him to Jammu.

The mullahs whose influence was threatened by my campaign against jihad in the area decided to complain to my father. They told my father, “After we prepare people for fighting for Islam in an area, your son goes there and has our work undone, and even incites people against us. Your son especially favors Sikhs.”

My father was well aware of my views from our discussions during hajj. However, under pressure, he wrote me the following letter to appease the mullahs:

Yuhibbunahum (lovable), Mushtaq,

My dear, today Maulvi Muhammad Abdullah Ladarwi and Maulvi Siakhan came to see me, and they complained about

⁶⁶ Majlis-i-Ahrar Islam (MAI) was a pro-Congress Muslim party which moved away from Congress during the Kashmir unrest and became increasingly communal. Towards the end of 1931 MAI and Sheikh Abdullah had a falling out.

⁶⁷ Zaildar - A feudal title in British India. A zaildar among other duties also collected agricultural land taxes.

you a lot. Son, I know your views well, but one has to pay obeisance to society. If you do not wish to support the religious movement, the least you can do is not oppose it. Why don't you stay at home for a while, and avoid going anywhere and saying anything to anybody? I am sending this letter to you in the hands of Mian Badiuzman. Please pay heed to what he has to say.

December 2, 1930. Jammu Tavi.

Maulvi Badiuzman handed me the letter and gave me a lecture. A few weeks later, I wrote the following response to my father and handed it to the same maulvi for delivery:

My Respected One,

I am sad at the condition of Islam! Dear father, you may remember that while in Medina I had told you that the fact that people do not follow the message of the Quran doesn't reflect well on Islam. Allah's word invariably influences people. Why has the Quran become ineffective? The message of the Quran is clear:

1. Obedience to the ruler of the land is my [Allah's] obedience
2. Only a Muslim ruler is authorized to issue the fatwa of Jihad
3. Curse of Allah be upon the liar

Today's Islam has shunned the message of Quran. The Quran says, "O ye faithful! Faith does not teach you oppression. If you inflict tyranny on others, shame on you and you will be made to stand among the tyrants."

Dear father, look at the situation justly and tell me if you think today's Muslims are following the message of the Quran? I still wish to follow the Quran and fight oppression. It is my duty to also listen to your wishes. You are a fair man. You must agree that what's happening these days is oppression.

Yours truly.

Jan 13, 1931. Mirpur

I handed the letter to Maulvi Badiuzman, who was very close to our family. However, unrest in Kashmir had spread so much hate that even close ones had moved apart. The Maulvi instead of delivering my letter to my father handed it to Maulvi Abdullah Siakhan who was the General Secretary of Majlis-I-Ahrar. With this letter in hand, Maulvi Abdullah finally had me cornered.

On a Friday prayer, he waved the letter in front of a crowd of fifty thousand Muslims who were thirsty for blood. The prayer was an excuse; in reality, the gathering was organized to launch an attack on the Hindus in the city. He did not bother reading the contents of my letter. How could he? The letter would have proven him to be a fraud. Instead, waving the letter, he announced that the respected son of Pir Muzaffar Hussain Shah [meaning I] does not recognize our Jihad.

The Maulvi was at his cunning best he had condemned me as the denier of Jihad but did so using flattering, respectful language. Maulvi's announcement was very effective. The mob started burning with rage against me. Mob's reaction was not a surprise because mullahs had brainwashed people into believing that whoever opposes Jihad is a kafir and therefore must be excommunicated. Intolerance in Islamic history was nothing new. A famous Indian poet, Bulleh Shah,⁶⁸ was

⁶⁸ Bulleh Shah (1680-1757) was a Punjabi Muslim Sufi poet

condemned as a kafir and suffered at the hands of fanatics when he sang:

ਭੱਠ ਨਮਾਜ਼ਾਂ ਚਿਕੜ ਰੋਜ਼ੇ ਕਲਮੋਂ ਦੇ ਮੂੰਹ ਸਾਹੀ।

Throw namaz in fire, fasting in mud, and deface religious
verses

ਬੁੱਲੇ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਸ਼ਹੋ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਪਾਇਆ ਭੁਲੀ ਫਿਰੇ ਲੋਕਾਈ।

Bulleh Shah has found God within him; the whole world is lost
in darkness.

Alas! The bigots didn't understand that Bulleh Shah's couplet had captured the essence of the Quran "Walaqad khalaqna al-insana wanaAlamu ma tuwaswisu bihi nafsuhu wanahnu aqrabu ilayhi min habli alwareed."⁶⁹

Pir Bhikham Shah⁷⁰ was similarly condemned as a kafir by his disciples when he sensed the birth of God's loved-one and bowed towards Patna with his back to Kaaba.

Today's Muslims were no different. They hid the truth, turned their back on the message of the Quran, and because of their greed and bigotry were suppressing any voice of reason. Hearing about the vitriol

⁶⁹ Quran (50:16): "And We have already created man and know what his soul whispers to him, and We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein"

⁷⁰ Pir Bhikham Shah, a mystic Muslim saint, while in Karnal had sensed the birth of a holy soul (baby Gobind Rai, later Guru Gobind Singh ji) in faraway Patna. He bowed to Patna instead to Makkah. The Pir's action shocked and agitated Muslims around him. He made the trek to Patna to see the holy child. The Pir devised a test to see if the great soul will favor Muslims or Hindus. He placed two bowls of sweets in front of the child one representing Hindus and the other Muslim. Thinking whichever bowl the holy child touches will foretell which religion the holy soul would favour. Gobind Rai placed his tiny hands on both the bowls. The Pir was immensely impressed and deduced that the Guru will treat both religions equally. The Pir remained a steadfast supporter of the Guru his entire life.

against me, my father, and especially my mother, grew extremely worried. Under these terrible circumstances, my father wrote to me, “Your life appears to be in danger. I would like you to go live at Daata Ganj Baksh at Lahore. Please do not return until the unrest in Kashmir subsides.”

I received my father’s letter with the above instructions on February 10, 1931, at my home in Mirpur. After serious consideration, I concluded that the time had come for me to join a circle of people who understand God’s worship, in its true sense, and honor his principles.

How sad! I thought: if people believed that the Quran was the word of Allah, then why don’t they follow it? After the storm of ideas in my mind subsided a bit, I wrote the following letter to my father - my last one:

Respected One, Peace be upon you.

I beg to state that this humble soul has accepted your command and is bidding farewell to this land. Here, ignorance, injustice, and tyranny have passed all bounds. There is no sign left of justice. Even God hasn’t escaped hatred in this land.

[Compared to you] I am a mere child. What should, or could I tell you? Oh, respected one! You are the mentor of our nation. You hold sway with the authorities as well as with Majlise-Ahrar, and as such, you can promote justice and tolerance. I remember the famous saying of Khawaja Hafiz Sahib: “A moment of justice is better than a hundred years of worship.”

Look at the learned people in our land who have gone blind and deaf to justice. These people have not put any of their learning into action. What good is intellect without deeds? A person who doesn’t practice what he believes is like a bird unable to

fly. Bahadur Shah Zafar wrote: “The one who burdens himself with books but lacks deeds is an ox, not a man.”

Lest my integrity is snuffed in a land like this, this humble one wishes to leave for good. Dear respectable one! This is my last conversation with you, and I hope it doesn't become a futile one. Therefore, I mustn't pull any punches. A fanatical religious war is going on, and you have chosen to go along with it. Rumi said best: “No dearth of so-called God's men, they are all wandering in forests.” You have asked me to leave, and I am obliging. But before I leave, I wish to tell you that I don't intend to be the type of religious man who just wanders in the forest [oblivious to humanity]. I wish to care for my fellow beings and become a man who loves God's people.

February 11, 1931

Mushtaq, Mirpur

30. A Prayer and a Dialog with my Wife

I sent the above letter through the mail. I bowed to my mother and apprised her of father's wishes. Next, I consulted my wife. I told her that, following my father's wishes, I have decided to leave for Lahore. I also shared with her that I am leaving in search of a true path and a righteous endeavor. I said to her, "If through Allah's grace, I find success in my search, I promise you that I will definitely return to you."

I then prayed to Allah and said, "Lord, I surrender to you and am leaving in search of your true path. I will accept whatever you grant me but please also grant my wish for you to remain close to me through this journey that you will guide me every step of the way. I shall not complain that I want things this way or that way. I shall be happy in your will."

Listening to the words of my prayer, my wife became anxious and said, "It sounds like that you are not just deserting your home and your parents, but, that you are also deserting me. I pray to Allah that you realize your objective. But please take me with you. I don't have anybody else without you. I will be lonely. Our community here is going through a dangerous period. Why not keep me with you?"

After saying these sad words, Gulzar, my wife, who was well-versed in the Quran and was very pious, burst into tears. We both were in a similar state of mind. My wife was sad, but in her heart, she knew that leaving home was my best option. Finally, I summoned the courage and said, "Gulzar, I swear by the same Allah, the one whose path I am seeking, that I will return as soon as possible. Currently, I am leaving as a seeker, bringing you along will make my task difficult. Keeping my promise in mind, please pray for me and wish me well."

Gulzar composed herself and in a confident voice said, "May you prosper." It was an amazing experience.

31. At Lahore

I packed up and gazed one last time at my home, feeling a magnetic pull, but my father's command and my own objective of seeking the truth gave me the courage to leave and not look back. Upon reaching Lahore, I met Muhammad Sadique, a family friend, and caretaker at the shrine of Daata Ganj Baksh Sahib. Muhammad Sadique arranged living accommodations for me.

At the morning namaz, the local Imam announced that the coming Friday's namaz would be held at the Wazir Khan Mosque. He invited all the faithful to arrive there by one in the afternoon and volunteer for the Kashmiri Jihad.

Hearing the phrase "Kashmiri Jihad" created a strange longing in me. I reached the Wazir Khan Mosque on Friday and heard Maulana Zafar Ali Khan deliver a rousing speech. After the speech, the Maulana said to the crowd of five thousand faithful, "There are fifty buses parked outside the Delhi Gate to take you to the "Garden of Heaven" (meaning the Jihad in Kashmir). Any 'momen' (faithful) who seeks heaven should go and take a seat in these buses. The ones who seek hell should exit the Mosque and turn in the other direction towards the Mochi Gate. As soon as the word "heaven" was uttered, the crowd of gazis (crusaders) started shouting "Allah is great." It wasn't long before the fifty buses were packed full.

I was surprised to see the fire of Kashmir also burning in Lahore. I followed the heaven-crazed gazis to the buses parked near the Delhi Gate. Another mullah was delivering a fiery speech to the crowd near the buses. I climbed on the roof of one of the buses and started addressing the crowd and said, "Dear gazis! Do not become emotional and destroy your life by going against the Quran. Please pay heed to the following instructions of the Quran:

- Jihad is not legitimate until it has been requested by an Islamic ruler
- Obeying the laws of the land is obeying Allah.

If you go to Kashmir, you are not going there just to oppose the Maharaja of Kashmir. Instead, you will go there and oppose the instructions of the Quran and Allah. All you faithful! Your first duty lies in understanding the situation in Kashmir. A deputation of Muslims has been sent to the Amir in Kabul by Majlis-I-Ahrar to get the Amir's permission for the Jihad. Action on Kashmir is on hold until the deputation returns. I am from Kashmir and want you to know the facts.”

Emotional speeches propelled ignorant people to fill the buses, but once they heard my speech they were gone in no time. Then Hazrat Zafar Ali Khan arrived at the scene. He panicked on seeing the empty buses and started shouting, ‘Isn’t there any gazi left in this city?’

An onlooker said to Zafar Ali, “Maulana Sahib! The buses were all full. But before you arrived a maulvi from Kashmir explained to us that Ahrar had put the Kashmir issue on hold. The maulvi also explained instructions from the Holy Quran and talked about the pending permission from Amir of Kabul.”

The dejected Zafar Ali Khan shouted, “Gentlemen! The lamp lit by the brilliance of Allah can’t be put off by falsehood. The voice which curtailed your crusading zeal was arranged by Satan. Get ready to go and destroy non-believers in Kashmir. Kashmir is the paradise on earth

for believers. Go and establish Islamic rule and earn lullabies in the lap of mother Fatimah⁷¹.”

Mullah Zafar Ali shouted at the top of his lungs, but the arrow of my speech had hit its mark. The mullah’s effort on this Friday went in vain. Enraged and embarrassed, the mullah went to his office and found an article in his favorite newspaper with the title, “Save the Muslims from Treachery.” I had sent this article to several newspapers in Lahore. The article had referenced several Muslim religious texts to prove that people organizing trouble in Kashmir were worse than Satan.

After reading the article, the mullah went looking for me and reached my place. He argued with me unsuccessfully and then wrote a long letter to my father in Jammu complaining about me. In response, my father sent me a letter asking me to desist from my activities.

⁷¹ Fatimah was the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, wife of Ali, and mother of Hasan and Hussein. She became the object of veneration by all Muslims because she was very close to her father and because of the historical importance of her husband and her two sons.

32. Search for the True Path

My father's letter reminded me of my true purpose in coming to Lahore, which was to seek the true path. Not far from Daata Sahib stood 'Gurdit Bhavan', the massive religious center of Arya Samaj⁷² where I started my research into this religion. I was greatly pleased and impressed by the glory and the depth of Arabic and Persian intellect at this center.

After twenty-one days of research, I was turned off when I discovered the concept of 'Niyog'⁷³. I spent another month studying Sanatan, Brahmo Samaj⁷⁴ and other Hindu faiths. As per the verse, "The Hindu is blind, and the Muslim is missing an eye. The one who knows the spiritual path is better than both of them – SGGS 875", I couldn't accept the concepts of idol worship and spiritual purification through rituals.

During my search, I also studied Christianity. I joined the Bible Society and talked to priests in the church on the Mall Road. I had difficulty reconciling that Jesus Christ was the son of God. To keep the narrative

⁷² Arya Samaj (Aryan Society) is a Hindu reform movement based on teachings of Veda founded by Swami Dayanand ji in 1875 in Bombay. Arya Samaj was against idol worship and found most of its success in Punjab.

⁷³ The Niyog code of marriage allows a woman who can't conceive with her husband to have sex with another man to produce an offspring. If not successful with one, up to seven different men are allowed.

⁷⁴ Sanatan Dharam was another Hindu reform movement which promoted idol worship. Brahmo Samaj (Society of Brahmins) was a Hindu reform movement started in Bengal in 1828 which promoted monotheism, Vedas and Upnishdas. Brahmo Samaj split in 1860 to form Sadharan Brahmo Samaj which was against caste system. The all three reform movements (Arya Samaj, Sanatan and Brahmo Samaj) were very active in Lahore and clashed with each other. "The aftermath of the bitter and violent attack of Aryasamaj on idol-worship and an equally enthusiastic rebuttal by Sanatanis in the first three decades of this century presented as alarming a scene as a clash between Hindu and Muslim" [Essays on Rabindranath Tagore, Vimal Prakashan, 1987].

short, I have not gone into the details of my discussions and findings related to the above faiths.

In my search for truth, I wandered all over Lahore. I had to keep searching because I knew that the objective of human life was not limited to filling one's stomach like an animal or wasting time in useless fights and confrontations. Instead, a human being's first duty and the objective is to seek a path in life which will justify his existence. This path must address physical and spiritual needs; this is essentially what religion is. At some time in human history, the first religion must have started to quell chaos and to address the human need for truth, philanthropy, and worship.

Nobody wants to fall victim to tyranny and troubles and to suffer pain. Everybody seeks peace and comfort. Most people believe that the main purpose of human existence is to achieve salvation and most people do try to achieve this purpose. However, despite the importance of this purpose very few spend the effort to search the right path. Fraudsters thwart millions who wish to reach this destination [salvation].

Most of those who climb high minarets and pulpits to assure others that they have the truth, prove to be fraudsters and back-stabbers when put to the test. "He stands exposed, like a counterfeit coin, when inspected by the Lord, the Assayer – SGGs 381." There are many so-called religious leaders whose main purpose is to rob people and pave a path to hell. It's incumbent upon a seeker to use his or her own brain and eyes, and not follow anybody blindly. Shouldn't a person take responsibility for their own wellbeing?

My pursuits were taking a mental toll on me. Three months had passed without any success since I arrived at Lahore, and my anxiety was mounting. To calm my upset mind, I decided to perform my Friday's namaz at the Jama Masjid in Lahore. Being a Friday, large crowds

were converging on the mosque. Jama Masjid is a great center of Islam. I thought that, over the centuries, millions of Muslims, including Mughal emperors must have prayed and achieved salvation at this royal mosque. As soon as I kneeled, I heard my conscience talking to me and saying, “Oh deceitful man! You will gain nothing from this kneeling which is utterly devoid of faith and sincerity.” I even felt the sacred soil of the royal mosque was saying to me, “Do not desecrate me. You can find God only if you give up your ego. If you want peace, then lose yourself in the True One.”

Then, suddenly my pessimistic thoughts turned upbeat, and I heard my conscience telling me, “If you possess wisdom and intellect, then don’t give up. Nobody has ever achieved anything without trying. You are very close. Get up and take another step. Your longing is over. Prepare to enter the realm of joy. Lose yourself in God in such a way that nobody can tell you apart. Take the step now, you are at the brink of your destination.”

I interrupted the namaz mid-ways, exited the mosque through the door on the side of the Baradari Garden, and sat on the stairs, lost in thought. I thought if I am “on the brink of my destination,” then I should see my true path soon. I sat on the stairs and started humming in a mournful voice.

33. Gurudwara Dera Sahib

Sitting despondently, I saw a Sikh gentleman in white walking on the far road in Baradari. The man appeared very serene to me and, suddenly, I was reminded of all my experiences in Arabia.

I felt instantly drawn to this man. I hurried to join him and asked, “Sir, where are you going?” “To that gurudwara,” he pointed and replied. “Am I allowed to go?” I asked. “This door is open to everybody,” he answered.

We reached Gurudwara Dera Sahib. He took off his shoes, rinsed his feet, and went inside. A volunteer stopped me and asked, “Are you carrying cigarettes or any other intoxicants?” “I am not,” I replied. The volunteer then requested that I take off my shoes and rinse my feet before entering the gurudwara.

I went in and started looking for the same gentleman, but I couldn’t find him. I asked around but could not locate him. Finally, I came back to the volunteer at the door and asked him, “Who is the manager of this gurudwara?” The volunteer informed me that Jathedar⁷⁵ Achhar Singh was the manager, and he also told me that the Jathedar lives at Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s Memorial.

I went to the Jathedar’s house. He was a very learned and pious man. Upon seeing me in Muslim attire supporting a turban with a turra⁷⁶, he came out of his house and met me warmly. After sharing courtesies, I said, “I would like to ask you some questions about Sikh principles if

⁷⁵ Jathedar (group leader) is a title given to a Sikh who leads a group or a community

⁷⁶ Turra – An end of the turban, stiffened with starch, that is made to stick above the head, fashioned as a plume.

you can spare some time for me.” The Jathedar agreed and respectfully offered me a seat.

I: “My understanding is that Sikhism focusses on oneness with God. But I was surprised to see paintings [of Gurus] in the Gurudwara. Is that not duality?”

Jathedar: “Sikhs keep these paintings to remind them of their history. These are not objects of worship.”

I: “I saw a man in the Gurudwara bowing in front of the Guru Granth Sahib. Is that not a sign of idol worship?”

Jathedar: “It is true that Sikhs bow in front of the Guru Granth Sahib but there is good reason for doing so. Sikhs show respect to everything which teaches them of oneness and worship of God. If teachings about God were absent, then Sikhs would have nothing to do with a bundle of paper.”



Jathedar Achhar Singh

I: “I have heard that Baba Nanak has praised Islam, and that he subscribed to the Prophet Muhammad’s ideas.”

Jathedar: “Guru Nanak loves everybody but he has opposed the oppression and hardship brought on by Muslims.

I: “I heard from a Sikh that Baba Nanak used to perform Islamic worship and that secretly he was an adherent of Islam.”

Jathedar: “This is not believable. I don’t believe a Sikh would make such a statement.”

I asked about Sikhism's position on reincarnation. The Jathedar explained the Sikh view by quoting from Japuji Sahib and Sri Rag, to my satisfaction. There were many other questions and answers, which I am omitting here to remain brief.

The Jathedar asked me my main reason for coming to see him. I replied, "I am a seeker of the truth. I am convinced that Sikhism will lead to salvation. I have come here to surrender myself to you. Please let me drink from Nanak's cup of salvation and teach me his true lessons."

The Jathedar said with folded hands, "Syed Sahib, you belong to the Sadat family. Sikhism is a very narrow and difficult path of love. I don't believe that you will make it through this path." I asked, "Jathedar ji, isn't everybody allowed to enter this path of love?"

In response, the Jathedar quoted the verse, "If you desire to play this game of love, then step on this path with your head on your palm – SGGS 1412." Tears started flowing from my eyes, and I said, "Please look in my eyes, and you will see I am ready to place my head on my palm."

The Jathedar was looking and listening to me carefully. I talked and begged for four hours. In the end, the Jathedar got up and left, and before leaving told me in his carefree manner, "Shah ji! Sikhism is a very difficult path." After the Jathedar left, I sat there for a while in a crestfallen state. This rejection made me feel as if my soaring kite had nose-dived into the earth as if I fell just when my swing had achieved its full-swing. Then my inner voice told me, "Don't behave like a novice. Come back to your beloved's door tomorrow. If he won't grant you your wish, at least he will scold you – that's much better than being ignored."

Next day, before sunrise, I made a beeline for Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Memorial and sat on the stairs where Jathedar had left me yesterday. I was able to hear singing and music from the gurudwara. A few times, I felt like going to the gurudwara to pay closer attention to singing, but I kept telling myself that if I don't catch my dear friend, I will lose another day. At last, I saw the Jathedar, and said, "I have been waiting for you since 6 in the morning."

"Wow! Shah ji, you could have come to the gurudwara to meet me," the Jathedar said. I replied, "I have met my goal of seeing you. Nobody knows me at the gurudwara. There I would have been ignored like a lowly horn in an orchestra." The Jathedar said, "I will be right with you after having a cup of tea." Two more hours passed. Finally, the Jathedar came and recited the couplet, "So what if you have to sacrifice your head to meet God, even then it's a bargain."

The Jathedar's words jolted my tired mind into a state of attention. The Jathedar said, "O Syed King! What brought you here again today?" I said, "Jathedar ji! Please accept my request from yesterday. I have truly gone crazy for Nanak. Look, this book *Sihayato Baba Nanak Fakir* propelled me through a long journey which brought me to you today. If only you could hear my story, then maybe you would not make me suffer so.

Please allow me to shelter at your feet. Please show me the path and teach me the secret which will help me reach Nanak's feet." I recounted my experiences from the Middle East to the Jathedar over the next two hours and felt some relief. Finally, I placed my head on the Jathedar's feet, and my turban slipped off my head and fell down. The Jathedar smiled and placed the turban back on my head and said, "Shah ji, you are asking for Sikhism while wearing your turban with an

Alexandrian turra [a sign of status]. There is no room for ego in Sikhism. Sikhism is a house of poverty [humility].”

I immediately took off my turban and threw away the under-cap. I re-tied the turban in a simple fashion, without a turra, and said with folded hands, “If Sikhism is a house of poverty, then I am a lowly pauper. I will be happy in this house.”

After a few moments of silence, the Jathedar said, “Okay Shah ji, but you will be embarking on a difficult path. Please go home and meditate on this for one more day.” The words “one more day” were music to my ears because now I knew that my wait was over. I walked back to my place at Daata Baksh, and everybody was looking curiously at the new style of my turban.

I passed the night, welcomed my lucky day, and was back at the Jathedar’s place at 5 in the morning. The Jathedar was leaving for the Gurudwara and was very happy to see me. He ran and hugged me, and said, “Why has the ‘*army*’⁷⁷ arrived so early in the morning?” I said, “Jathedar ji, as per your advice, I am here after making my final decision. Please have mercy on my condition.”

At this time, my condition was that of a lowly beggar. The Jathedar cheered me up and brought me into the gurudwara. After the service, he introduced me to Sardar Amar Singh Sher-I-Punjab, the president of the gurudwara, to Sardar Karam Singh Bhamba, the vice president and to Giani Khazan Singh. He told them my story. Sardar Amar Singh,

⁷⁷ Guru Gobind Singh ji’s Khalsa Sikhs fought an incredibly lopsided battle at Chamkaur Sahib. Forty Sikhs, in a fort-like house, faced a very large number of enemies (some claim the enemy number approached a million). Sikhs stepped out of the house in batches of five and fought to death to keep the enemy from rushing the gate, while the rest of the Sikhs provided cover from inside the house firing guns and arrows at the enemy. Since then, a single Sikh is affectionately called an army of *sawa-lakh*, the equivalent of 125,000 soldiers.

from Kamalpur, was a very famous scholar and a writer of Urdu and Persian. All of the gentlemen were amazed at my story of the visit to the Middle East and suggested to the Jathedar that he arrange a tour of Amritsar for me and introduce me to Sikh history.

I was ecstatic; it was as if I had found a great treasure. I felt I had reached my destination.

Now, in hindsight, I know that it was only my first step on the great path of Sikhism.

With permission from the Jathedar, I moved my belongings from Daata Sahib to the room allotted to me at Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Memorial. Now I had access to the daily morning and evening services at the gurudwara as well as an opportunity to share views with the top minds of the Sikh religion.

One day, Jathedar ji took me to Harimandir Sahib Amritsar. That same day, I was also blessed with visits to Shri Akal Takhat Sahib and gurudwara at Tarantaran Sahib. A bath by Dukh Bhanjani and *Guru Ka Langar* removed any remaining rust on my soul. In the evening we returned to Lahore.



S. Amar Singh Sher-I-Punjab

34. Meeting Gursikhs at Mirpur

My stormy mind had become calm after receiving love and encouragement from the congregation at Gurudwara Dera Sahib Lahore and after a blessed visit to Shri Harimandir Sahib. Dear readers, our mind doesn't like sitting still; it wants to always flow like water in a river and blow like air. As an ocean creates waves, our mind creates desires. As long as our mind is creating the waves of desires, we remain stuck in pleasure and pain and remain ignorant of the love of God. It is our mind that attaches us to the visible creation. Through our mind, we feel pride and embarrassment, hot and cold, attachment and hate. These are all ideas in our mind. Our soul has nothing to do with these ideas. The soul is always pure and aloof. When our mind merges with our soul, peace arrives, and all of the problems of the world disappear.

After attaining peace, I went to Mirpur and met my wife. I shared with her my experiences from Lahore. I told her that I found what I was searching and my wanderings were over. I told her that I have decided to become a Sikh. I did not wish to impose my choice on my wife and offered her an alternative. I told her that she belongs to a well-to-do family and that she is welcome to stay at my father's house or move back to her father's place. I reminded her that I am back, as promised, and when I leave now, I shall not come back.

My wife started crying and said, "I do not want you to leave me. Without you, both of the houses here will feel depressing like graveyards to me. I promise to be with you through thick and thin."

I asked her to get ready and not share the plans of our departure with any relative. The day passed in getting ready, and we packed some necessary belongings. Then came the challenge of getting to the train station which was several miles away. We wanted to leave in such a way that nobody would find out. Soon it became dark. I recalled that one of our neighbors was a Sikh named Sohan Singh. I went and

knocked on his door. It was dark, and these were the days of unrest in Kashmir. The Sikh was reluctant to open the door and did so only after I pressed him for it. As soon as he opened the door, I offered the Khalsa greeting: “Waheguru Ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.” The Sikh was surprised and offered me a seat and said, “O welcome Pir ji, welcome.” I calmed the anxious Sikh and narrated to him the story of my last three and a half months of absence. I also shared with him my experiences at Dera Sahib, Harimandir Sahib, and my plan to become a Sikh. My neighbor was having difficulty believing me. He probably thought I was involved in a conspiracy related to the unrest.

When I related the names and details of the famous Sikhs from Lahore, the Sikh all of a sudden touched his forehead to my feet and started reciting: “Dhan Guru Nanak! Dhan Guru Nanak!”, meaning, “Blessed Guru Nanak! Blessed Guru Nanak!” He then, with folded hands said, “What is your command for me?” I said, “Singh ji, my wife and I have to get to the Jhelum Railway Station before morning so that we can leave for Lahore.”

The Singh said, “I am blessed to be at your service.” He arranged three mules. He sat me on one, my wife and our five-year-old son on the second and placed our luggage on the third. The Sikh said an ardas (prayer) before leaving and got us to the station by sunrise. Before parting, I requested the Sikh keep my departure confidential. The Sikh, who was about fifty years old, hugged me and recited Dhan Guru Nanak again and said, “May all go well for you with the Guru’s blessing.” He then entrusted me with five rupees to offer an ardas on his behalf at the Guru’s feet.

We were all excited on the train journey. It was as if we were going to meet a long-lost loved one. When we passed the Kapoki station, I told my wife we would be at Lahore soon. All of a sudden, I was hit with a new worry: How would my wife enter the gurudwara wearing a burka?

I had studied Arabic at Lahore and was well known in the city. If the wrong person saw the whole family entering the Dera Sahib Gurudwara, it could create trouble.

35. Tests by the Guru

When the Guru puts us through difficulties and tests, it's important for a Sikh not to lose faith. Initially, we also went through some difficulties. Later on, my wife and I both agreed that it took us some time to understand the Guru's will.

I needed some time to figure out a plan to get my family into the gurudwara without causing a riot. I thought of a follower of my father named Imam Din – a foreman in a mill at Shahdara⁷⁸ and went to his place. Imam Din considered it a privilege to host the family of his Pir (religious leader). I left my family with Imam Din and took a tonga to Dera Shaib and related my concerns to Jathedar Achhar Singh ji.

The Jathedar suggested that I take my family to the Akal Takhat in Amritsar to take *Amrit* (Sikh baptism ceremony) on Sunday. Once Amrit is taken, my family could then return to Lahore. I immediately agreed and was happy that we would be blessed with Amrit the next day.

ਨਰ ਚਾਹਤ ਕਛੁ ਓਅੁਰ ਓਅੁਰੈ ਕੀ ਓਅੁਰੈ ਭਈ ॥

ਚਿਤਵਤ ਰਹਿਓ ਠਗਅੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਫਾਸੀ ਗਲਿ ਪਰੀ ॥੩੮॥

“A man plots one thing, but something entirely different happens. He plans to deceive others, but God puts a noose around his neck instead – SGGS 1428”

We spent the night at Shahdara and went to the station early morning the next day to go to Amritsar. I left my wife and child by our leather suitcase, and I went to purchase tickets. When I came back, the suitcase which had seven hundred rupees, my wife's jewelry, and other important items were gone.

⁷⁸ Shahdara is a suburb of Lahore

My wife, who had not traveled before, was not aware of thieving at railway stations. She was an easy target, as she sat clad in a burka with our son in her lap facing away from our luggage.

We put off the travel and went to the police station to report the crime. No thieves were apprehended, but in this commotion, we wasted the whole day.

Had I known that the Amrit ceremony at Akal Takhat was held only once a week on Sunday, I would have remained at Lahore. I thought it was a daily ceremony and reached Amritsar on Monday.

I placed my wife and child at Ghanta Ghar and went to Akal Takhat to inquire about the schedule for taking Amrit. A granthi told me that a person had arrived from Lahore yesterday to arrange Amrit for my family but left after a long wait when my family didn't arrive.

I went to the offices of Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC, the supreme body charged with managing historical gurudwaras in Punjab), and tried to meet officials, but was not successful. Finally, I returned to Ghanta Ghar to my wife and shared with her my frustrations with the fact that nobody seemed to care or was available to help us.

My wife, who had recently lost her favorite jewelry, took a deep sigh and said, "I had promised you that I would take whichever path you choose. Therefore, I am saying this very reluctantly.

Maybe this is an Islamic miracle, and somebody doesn't want us to turn our backs on our religion. First, there was a theft. Now we are dealing with people who don't care. Everybody wants growth for their religion. People get overjoyed if somebody wants to join their religion. Here people don't even bother talking to us. I think we still have the opportunity to return to our home."

I realized that my wife's mind was wavering. She also had not eaten anything all day. To reassure her I said, "Look dear, we are about to

join the true path. We probably will have to go through many tests before success.”

A Sikh, sitting nearby, heard our conversation and said that our Guru defined a true Sikh as:

“ਤੈਸਾ ਸੁਵਰਨੁ ਤੈਸੀ ਉਸੁ ਮਾਟੀ ॥ As is gold, so is dust to him.

ਤੈਸਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਤੈਸੀ ਬਿਖੁ ਖਾਟੀ ॥ As is ambrosial nectar, so is poison
to him.

ਤੈਸਾ ਮਾਨੁ ਤੈਸਾ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ ॥ As is honor, so is dishonor.

ਤੈਸਾ ਰੰਕੁ ਤੈਸਾ ਰਾਜਾਨੁ ॥ As is a beggar, so is a king.

ਜੇ ਵਰਤਾਏ ਸਾਈ ਜੁਗਤਿ ॥ Whatever God wills, that is his way.

ਨਾਨਕ ਓਹੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਕਰੀਐ ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ॥ O Nanak, such a being has
attained salvation while alive – SGGS 275

My wife: “Brother! We don’t even have a nickel left to our names. What are we going to do in this foreign land?”

The Sikh recited another verse from the Guru Granth:

ਜੇ ਰਾਜੁ ਦੇਹਿ ਤ ਕਵਨ ਬਡਾਈ ॥

If You gave me an empire, then what glory would be in it for
me?

ਜੇ ਭੀਖ ਮੰਗਾਵਹਿ ਤ ਕਿਆ ਘਟਿ ਜਾਈ ॥੧॥

If You made me beg for charity, what would it take away from
me? ॥1॥ – SGGS 525.”

The Sikh said, “Sister, on the path of Sikhism, it doesn’t matter whether you get riches or lose everything, the Guru tells you to always recite ‘Wonderous Lord! Wonderous Lord!’”, and then the Sikh recited:

ਆਵਤ ਹਰਖ ਨ ਜਾਵਤ ਦੁਖਾ ਨਹ ਬਿਆਪੈ ਮਨ ਰੋਗਨੀ ॥

Coming [of wealth] does not please me, and going does not bring me pain, and so my mind is not afflicted by disease.

ਸਦਾ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਪੂਰਾ ਪਾਇਆ ਤਉ ਉਤਰੀ ਸਗਲ ਬਿਓਗਨੀ ॥੧॥

I am in bliss forever, for I have found the Perfect Guru; my separation from the Lord is totally ended. ||1||

– SGGS 883.”

After saying the above, the Sikh left. My wife gave me a puzzled look and said, “He is a strange man, how can everything be same?” I said, “This is a mine of diamonds, a fistful is more than enough to change one’s life.” My wife said, “You may be right, but what would you do now? We don’t even have a penny.”

I pointed to my wife’s gold ring and said, “We have that. If you agree, I can get a lot of money for that.”

I sold the ring in Hall Bazar; it didn’t fetch much. We bought some food to eat, and then, at the railway station, we bought tickets to Jullo, a village near Lahore.

I remembered that a rich farmer, a follower of my family, lived at Jullo, and we went to his house. From his place, I sent a letter to the Secretary of Gurudwara Dera Sahib outlining our troubles.

Two days passed in much anxiety; even feeding ourselves had become a worry. We were both wondering what would happen but had faith that the Guru would come to our rescue.

On the third day, I went for a walk on the road. I saw Kishan Singh ji, the storekeeper of the Dera Sahib Gurudwara, walking towards me briskly. Kishan Singh ji was a very pious and endearing Sikh. As soon as he approached me, he gave me a big hug, with tears streaming from his eyes.

He showed me my letter and said, “You have been cheated cruelly, but it’s all God’s will. The path of Sikhism has often demanded sacrifices from the ones who have adopted it. The ones who became Sikhs have

given up their scalps, have been stretched and broken on wheels, and have been boiled alive.

You are joining Sikhism. You are a blessed one. No more worries, I have come here to take you back with me.”

I said, “Sardar ji, you are very generous to go through all this trouble for us. It may not be wise for my whole family to travel with you to the gurudwara. Could you please go ahead? We will follow you tomorrow morning.”

The next day, I entered the Maharaja Ranjit Singh Memorial with my family through the side of the Naunihal Tower. Everybody was very happy to see us.

The Secretary of the Gurudwara requested the man in the kitchen to quickly prepare warm food with love for us. I said to the Secretary, “Gurmukho⁷⁹! The food can wait. Can we please take Amrit first?”

The secretary smiled and said, “Shah ji, this is not like conversion to Islam – that you cut your hair and you are done.

You will have to undergo a test for at least four months. If you pass, then you may take Amrit.” What! I couldn’t believe my ears and broke into a sweat.

Seeing my face blanched, the secretary patted my back reassuringly and said, “Do not worry. You will get Amrit. Please have something to eat.”

I panicked; my wife was worried even before we got here. What will happen if we don’t pass the test – would we have given up Islam for nothing? I was not able to eat much. We were worried all night.

My wife said, “You left Islam, you could have at least picked a religion where we could get a warm welcome. These people don’t value us at all.”

⁷⁹ Gurmukh (to face or follow the Guru) – somebody who lives his life based on the instructions of the Guru. The opposite is manmukh (to face or follow one’s own mind) – somebody who follows base and animalistic desires of his or her own mind.

I replied, “These people do not value bodies, they value conviction. They don’t seek large numbers, just the ones who love God. Once they see the love of God in our hearts, they will grow closer to us. Stop worrying and let’s focus on strengthening our faith.”

I was assigned the duty of cleaning and caring for men’s shoes at the gurudwara and my wife was assigned the care of women’s shoes.

Day by day, as our love of *sewa* (service) deepened, so did the love of the *sangat* towards us.

On the fourth day of Jeth, on the *Shahidi Jor Mela*⁸⁰, we were given Amrit in a great ceremony. Based on the command from Guru Granth Sahib ji, I was named Prithipal Singh; my Singhni was named Inderjeet Kaur, and my little son Bhagat Singh.

The bliss I experienced during the Amrit ceremony and at the kirtan afterward was beyond description. In the beginning, wearing the kirpan (dagger) and kachhera (shorts) was a novel experience. The feeling of

⁸⁰ Shahidi Jor Mela, the Annual gathering of Martyrdom, is organized on the anniversary of martyrdom of the Fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan ji (1563-1606 AD). Jahangir, the emperor of India, according to his autobiography, was alarmed at the increasing popularity of the Guru among Hindus and Muslims. He passed a death sentence based on the charge that the Guru had blessed the rebellious prince Khusro as he passed through Punjab. The sentence was also influenced by some Lahore courtiers who were against the Guru. Jerome Xavier (1549-1617), a Jesuit in Lahore at that time, records that the Sikhs managed to get Jahangir to commute the death sentence to a heavy fine, for which a rich individual, possibly a Sikh, stood as guarantor. The guru forbade the payment of the fine and was tortured and executed by being forced to sit on a burning hot plate. Gurudwara Dera Sahib is built at the spot where the Guru disappeared in the River Ravi after the torture. The sixth Guru built a small memorial at the spot in 1619. Maharaja Ranjit Singh built a gurudwara there during his reign. The gurudwara is built next to the Fort and Royal Mosque. A minaret of the Mosque is visible in the background in the photograph above. The Jor Mela is organized in the lunar month of Jeth (May/June).

bliss continued to deepen as I learned Gurmukhi (Punjabi script), read Gurbani, and increased *naam abhyaas* (meditation on God's name prescribed by the Guru).

Exactly one year after taking Amrit, I wanted to visit Gurudwara Panja Sahib, the great shrine built in remembrance of the Guru's miracle. The sangat at Dera Sahib fondly sent us to Panja Sahib.



Gurudwara Dera Sahib Lahore built at the place of martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev ji

36. The Panja Sahib Visit

The visit to Panja Sahib, and being able to behold the impression of Guru Nanak's hand in the large rock, was an incredible experience. Sardar Trilok Singh, the manager of the gurudwara, was an extremely pious and learned man. He came to know of my story and took special care of my family.

Only a couple of days had passed in the Guru's feet when my wife came down with typhoid fever. Sardar Trilok Singh

arranged the best possible medical care, but on the sixteenth day, she succumbed to the fever.



Sant Syed ji's wife and son

The loss of my life companion was too much for me to bear. Naturally, I lost all control and didn't know how to handle the situation. Weeping uncontrollably, I said to Sardar Trilok Singh, "Back home, my family would have arranged a big funeral with thousands of attendees. I have no idea what to do here. Could you please arrange a casket and ship my wife's body to my father? He will arrange the funeral."

The Manager Sahib, who was well versed with gurmat (the Guru's way) and who understood the human condition, consoled me. He also arranged a grand procession with the help of the sangat and consigned my wife's remains to a funeral pyre as per Sikh rites.

The sangat was concerned that in my grief I might hurt myself, and some of them followed me closely. I was left with a six-year-old son and a six-month-old baby daughter. The manager didn't want to lose

the surviving three souls to grief. He talked to Mata (mother) Kartar Devi, who was visiting the gurudwara with her son, Labh Singh, and daughter, Raj Kaur, from Darkali village from the Pothohar region.

The manager suggested to Mata ji, “Your daughter is old enough for marriage. If you agree to give your daughter to me, I will arrange her marriage.” The mother agreed. Soon after the tenth day of prayers for my deceased wife, I was wedded to Raj Kaur at the gurudwara.

Exalted are the gurmukhs and their foresight, the manager arranged all this to help me out of my state of grief. I lost a dear one but was blessed with the shelter of my new great family. The manager arranged for our departure to Amritsar with great care.

He wrote a letter to the SGPC for our care, and another letter to the great Sikh philosopher, Pandit Kartar Singh, who was a famous scholar of gurmat, Persian, and Sanskrit. Pandit ji became my religious mentor at Amritsar, and I learned a lot about gurmat principles from him.



Gurudwara Panja Sahib, Hasan Abdal, Pakistan

37. A New Test

At Amritsar, my love-filled Sikh life faced a third test. The Muslims of the city filed a complaint with the Deputy Commissioner that Sikhs had converted me, a famous Syed⁸¹ Muslim, by force. Many Muslims launched an agitation in the city. To keep the peace, the Deputy Commissioner ordered me to leave the city and banned my reentry. I was sad. Banning me from Amritsar, the center of Sikhism was like banning a Muslim from Kaaba.

Sardar Dalip Singh Doabia, the Vice President of SGPC, and the other officials advised me to go back to Panja Sahib. I stayed at Panja Sahib for a while, and then returned to Amritsar not realizing that my ban was permanent. I was arrested walking by the police station.

A police officer phoned the SGPC officials and called them to the police station. The officer, a Muslim, was a pious and god-fearing man. Instead of charging me, he suggested to the SGPC officials to get me out of the municipal boundaries as soon as possible.

The Muslim officer acted honorably, but there was a Sikh named Ranjodh Singh in this meeting, a member of the SGPC; he was a “crane pretending to be a swan” and had evil plans.

I would find out later that Ranjodh Singh was infatuated with my wife and saw this as an opportunity. He offered to take my family and me to his village of Tarsike (this village is five miles from Jandiala Guru). Nobody knew of the darkness in his heart, and everybody agreed to the plan. The police officers and the other SGPC officials helped load our luggage on a bus and sent us off with Ranjodh Singh.

⁸¹ Syed Muslims are direct descendants of the Prophet Muhammad and are therefore venerated in Islam

Ranjodh Singh gave us a room on the second floor of his house and stored our belongings in somebody else's house at the village. A couple of days later, my wife started crying and told me that we have been tricked and that she doesn't trust our host. She told me that she feels that Ranjodh Singh is evil and he is going to deceive us.

I reassured my wife and said, "You were born a Sikh, have some faith. I have read that when a Sikh grants refuge to somebody, he takes responsibility for the wellbeing of his guest. We are under Ranjodh Singh's protection. The Guru will make sure that no harm comes to us."

One night, around 9, when I went downstairs to get my wife from Ranjodh Singh's house, I found his mother and wife pressuring my wife to leave me. They were trying to entice my wife with jewelry, and were telling her, "Why do you want to live with this penniless foreigner?" My wife was crying and saying that what they were suggesting was against Sikhism. I asked my wife to leave with me.

Without any provocation, Ranjodh Singh attacked me and beat me until I was unconscious. My wife got me to our room with great difficulty. Previously my wife had told me that to get to her, she was afraid that our hosts were going to murder me. I thought she was exaggerating, but now I believed her.

At this time, my wife was totally demoralized. We got up at amrit vela (before sunrise) and were praying at the feet of the Tenth Guru, pleading that evil had taken over the minds of our hosts and please come and save us.

In the middle of these prayers, an elderly household servant came to our room and told me, "Sardar! You better save yourself. Ranjodh Singh wants your wife, and he and his companions have made arrangements

to kill you today.” With folded hands, he also begged that we shouldn’t tell anybody that he had warned us. I said to the servant, “Baba ji (O respected elderly one)! The Guru has come to save us through you. We will never betray you for what you have done for us.”

We took some towels and bathing clothes and left in bare feet, pretending to go for a bath at the canal. Our hearts were beating hard with fear, and in our minds we were constantly reciting:

ਜਾ ਤੂ ਮੇਰੈ ਵਲਿ ਹੈ ਤਾ ਕਿਆ ਮੁਹਛੰਦਾ ॥ When You are on my side,
Sahib, what do I need to worry about? - SGGS 1096

We took the long route, walking barefoot in the hot June sun and reached the Jandiala Railway Station around 2pm, carrying our little ones. We requested the Sikh station master to send a telegram to the SGPC at Amritsar. The station master was familiar with my name. He had read about my ban from Amritsar in a newspaper.

We related to this gurmukh station officer our terrible experience at the hands of the evil people. The gurmukh immediately took us to the local police station to file a complaint. Then the stationmaster took us to Sardar Doola Singh, a retired Police Inspector. Doola Singh was a devout Sikh who had built a gurudwara, a small place for langar (free kitchen), and a place for travelers to stay. Sardar Sahib treated us with a lot of love and made arrangements for our stay. He also sent a message to the police officer to follow up on our complaint diligently.

Mata Bechint Kaur, the wife of Sardar Doola Singh, was a highly spiritual soul who spent all her time in naam simran, and gurbani. Her affection and care for us were beyond description. We had left all our belongings at Tarsike Village, and we didn’t even have a change of clothes.

Mata Bechint Kaur arranged new clothes, bedding and other essentials for us. This was all Lord's play. God was using his own beings to put us in a bind to test our faith.

But Ranjodh Singh had not given up yet. He sent somebody to spy on us at Jandiala. This man acted as a sympathizer and pretended to serve us, gaining our respect and affection. We found out about his real intentions when, one night, he walked away with all of our newly arranged belongings.

Once again, we had no clothes. We prayed to the Lord:

“ਹਮ ਤੇ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਹੋਵੈ ਸੁਓਮੀ ਜਿਅੁ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਤਿਅੁ ਰਹੀਐ

I can not do anything by myself, O Lord and Master. As You keep me,
so I remain. - SGGS 216

Please keep granting me the strength so that I can maintain my resolve and remain thankful in your will. Sahib! The ones who set out to unite with you had to pay dearly: Bhai Mani Singh, Bhai Taru Singh, and Bhai Subeg Singh⁸². Bhagat Kabir ji was tied in a bundle and thrown in

⁸² Bhai Mani Singh, Bhai Taru Singh, and Bhai Subeg Singh were all three martyred in the eighteenth century by Mughal governors in Lahore because they refused to give up their belief. They all turned down the offers of wealth and position in exchange for converting to Islam.

Bhai Mani Singh had received permission from Zakaria Khan, the governor Lahore, for organizing a Sikh gathering on Diwali at Amritsar by paying a tribute of 5,000 rupees. Zakaria Khan saw this gathering as an opportunity to kill a large number of Sikhs and dispatched an army. Bhai Mani Singh found out about the governor's plan and sent messages to Sikhs, telling them not to come to Amritsar. Without a gathering no money could be collected and Bhai Sahib was unable to pay the governor. The Khan ordered Bhai Sahib's execution through dismemberment, joint by joint. When the executioner started to chop the wrist, Bhai Sahib urged him to follow the governor's orders and to start with his finger joints.

front of a dangerous elephant. When the sawed body of Bhai Mati Das ji fell apart, the last sound which came out of him was the last verse of Japuji Sahib:

ਜਿਨੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਗਏ

ਮਸਕਤਿ ਘਾਲਿ ॥

Those who have meditated on the Naam, the Name of the Lord, and departed after having worked by the sweat of their brows



Bhai Subeg Singh and Shahbaz Singh

ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲੇ ਕੇਤੀ ਛੁਟੀ ਨਾਲਿ ॥੧॥

O Nanak, their faces are radiant in the Court of the Lord, and many are saved along with them! ||1||

Bhai Taru Singh was sentenced to death for running a langar for Sikhs who were being persecuted by Zakaria Khan. His scalp was removed from his head and he was left to slowly bleed to death in a prison, where death came several weeks later. Soon after sentencing Bhai Taru Singh, Zakaria Khan fell ill, suffering terribly on his deathbed as he was not able to pass urine. The Khan sent a messenger to beg forgiveness from Taru Singh for the atrocities he had committed. Bhai Taru Singh forgave the Khan and instructed that the Khan be struck with Bhai Sahib's shoe to cure the urine problem. The Khan's suffering was eased and he was able to pass urine. He died a few days later. Soon after Khan's death, Bhai Taru Singh also passed away.

Bhai Subeg Singh was a Persian scholar and a government contractor at Lahore. He had good relations with Zakaria Khan, and often mediated between the Khan and the Sikhs. He carried the offer from the Khan which resulted in the establishment of Sikh rule under Nawab Kapur Singh. Subeg Singh had also counselled the Khan to beg forgiveness from Bhai Taru Singh when the Khan was suffering at his deathbed. After Zakaria's death, his son Yayha Khan became the governor. Some of the officials disliked Subeg Singh and the Sikhs. They told Yayha Khan that Subeg Singh humiliated Zakaria by convincing him to beg forgiveness from Bhai Taru Singh. Yayha Khan ordered that Subeg Singh be either converted or executed. Bhai Subeg Singh and his nineteen year old son Shahbaz Singh were mounted and martyred on body breaking wheels after they refused to convert.

– SGGS 8.”

A gurmukh named Sardar Swaran Singh had a new set of clothes tailored for us. The police officers from Jandiala and Amritsar tried to recover our belongings from the Tarsika village, but with no success. The police officer advised us to leave because he thought our lives were still in danger.

38. Speech at Bahawalpur

We left for Okara, then went to Montgomery, and finally ended up in the city of Rahim Yar Khan, in the princely state of Bahawalpur. There is a grand gurudwara in this city, and Channan Singh, the secretary of the gurudwara, hosted us.

I was asked to deliver a speech at the procession arranged for the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak. In this speech, I related to the audience the prophecies of Pir Wali Niamatullah Shah. I told the audience that Niamatullah, who lived three hundred years before Guru Nanak, had prophesized the following in Persian, about the Guru and Sikhs:

- “Shahe Babar Hakumran Bashad Pas Azwe Chand Roz. Yak Fakir Aj Salka Paida Shawad.” Meaning: “At the time of emperor Babur a Fakir will be born.”
- “Naam Uh Nanak Bawda Aarad Jahan Bade Rajoooh. Garam Bazare Fakire Bekran Paida Shawad.” Meaning, “His name will be Nanak. The whole world will follow him. The bazar of his fakiri will heat up.”
- “Darmiane Mulak Panjab Shasawad Shuharat Tamam. Kaum Sikhanz Marido Pirian Paida Shawad.” Meaning: “Especially in the middle of Punjab he will be very famous. People called Sikhs will worship him.”
- “Kaum Sikhian Adal Kar Dand Bar Riya. Tan Chehal Insaaf In Ander Jahan Pidas.” Meaning: “The Sikh nation will deliver justice. Their rule will last for forty years.”
- “Badazan Geerad Nasara Mulak Hindustan Tamam. Ha Sadi Hukamash Mian Jahan Penda Shawad.” Meaning, “After that Christians [English] will take the rule away from Sikhs. The Christians will rule over India for a hundred years.”
- “Bood Nanak Aar De MardeKhuda. Raaz Rai Matarfut Je Rah Kusha. Lakin In Marde Khuda Ahle Safan. Kirad Kaumen Kizab Rai Zar Han.” Meaning, “God himself will come to this

world as Nanak. The same man of God in his tenth incarnation will put an end to tyranny.”⁸³

During this same speech, I talked about the prophecy about Sikhism in the Quran Majid:

“Ya ayyuha allatheena amanoo man yartadda minkum AAan deenihi fasawfa ya'tee Allahu biqawmin yuhibbuhum wayuhibboonahu athillatin AAala almu'mineena aAAizzatin AAala alkafireena yujahidoona fee sabeeli Allahi wala yakhafoona lawmata la-imin thalika fadlu Allahi yu'teehi man yashao wallahu wasiAAun Aaaleem.”

Meaning, “O’ you religious people, when you move away from the faith, Allah will create a nation of the pure. Allah will love this nation, and they will love Him. You will know of this nation by the sign that they will be harsh on non-believers and gentle with believers. They will give up their lives for the path of Allah and will remove tyranny and

⁸³ Niamatullah is believed to be a Sufi Saint from Iran who spent some time in Kashmir. He wrote his prophecies in the form of Persian poems. According to Professor Mohammed Naim, South Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago: “For nearly two centuries these poems have circulated whenever there has been a major crisis in, what may be called, the psychic world of south Asian Muslims. The first recorded appearance was in 1850, after the “Jihad” movement of Syed Ahmad had failed in the north-west, followed by serial appearances after the debacle of 1857, the dissolution of the Ottoman Caliphate and the failure of the Khilafat and Hijrat movements in 1924, the Partition of the country and community in 1947, and the Indo-Pak war of 1971-72.” [34] Prophecies published in the mid-nineteenth century provided specific names of over a dozen famous people (including Guru Nanak) from the Moghul period, but no specific names are included in the prophecies covering the post nineteenth century period. This has led some people to surmise that these publications may contain alterations/forgeries where the forgerer included names from Moghul history which had already happened. Leaving the debate about authenticity aside, in his speech, Sant Prithipal Singh quoted the prophecies correctly from the published accounts.

will not be afraid of any criticism. [Then Allah says,] I will bestow my favor and power on whoever I please.”⁸⁴

As the third subject in my speech, I shared what I had learned about Sikhism at Makkah and Medina. I appealed to the Muslim brothers that in addition to the Quran they should also study Guru Granth Sahib which will help them become better Muslims.

My speech didn't go down well with some people. The Nawab of Bahawalpur State received three hundred complaints. Every mullah in the city considered it to be his religious duty to submit a report against my speech.

The next day, the Muslim ruler of the autonomous state issued an order for my arrest. I was arrested along with my wife and children on the day of the gurburb, which created quite a stir among the sangat.

The next day when the police brought me to the railway station to take me to Bahawalpur, they found thousands of Sikhs led by Sardar Chanan Singh and Sardar Harnam Singh praying and blocking the railway line.

There was a line-up over a mile long of Sikh protesters standing on the tracks. Chanan Singh informed the police captain that if he tried to

84 Quran, Surat Al-Maidah, 5:54, English translation by Sahih International, “O you who have believed, whoever of you should revert from his religion - Allah will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him [who are] humble toward the believers, powerful against the disbelievers; they strive in the cause of Allah and do not fear the blame of a critic. That is the favor of Allah ; He bestows it upon whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.”

transfer the prisoners by force, it would create another incident like Panja Sahib⁸⁵ that would leave a black mark on Bahawalpur.

The captain was sweating and was not prepared for this resistance. The captain phoned the Nawab and apprised him of the level of emotions running in the Khalsa sangat.

The Nawab relented and ordered our release on a bail of fifty thousand rupees with a promise to appear in court on the charges of

‘Insulting Islam’. Blessed is the Sikh sangat! The sangat raised the bail money in no time – women were offering their jewelry to raise the money.



**Bhai Pratap Singh Shahid
Panja Sahib**

⁸⁵ The British Government initially adopted the policy of beating and maiming peaceful agitators at the Guru ka Baag Morcha (1,625 Sikh received serious injuries – Josh page 179). After Rev CF Andrews’ famous statement about the atrocities: “hundreds of Christs being crucified [Josh page 171-172]” [35], the governor stopped beatings and ordered the policy of arrests. The local jails became full, and the prisoners were being sent to far away prisons. On Oct 29, 1922 a train load of Sikh prisoners were being taken from Amritsar to Attok. The sangat at Panja Sahib decided to feed langar to the Sikhs who had not been fed for two days. The Government found out about the langar plan and ordered that the train not be stopped. The local station master informed the sangat that the train would not be stopped, and that they had made preparations for langar for nothing. Sikhs lied down on the railway tracks on the morning of Oct 31st. The driver blew the whistle several times but nobody moved from the tracks. The train came to a sudden halt after crushing two Sikhs and injuring a few others. Bhai Karam Singh (30 years old) died in a few hours and Bhai Pratap Singh (24) died the next morning. The Guru had stopped the boulder at this place, and now his Sikhs had stopped the hurtling train, and the Sikhs were served langar. The tribunal investigating the incident questioned the Muslim driver of the train as to why he disobeyed the orders and stopped the train. The following is his testimony: “I had been given orders to not stop the train at any cost. As per the orders, I did not stop the train and it was moving at full speed. When the train hit Pratap Singh, I felt as if it had hit a huge mountain. I fell down and my hand got lifted from the speeder and the train stopped. After investigating the engine, it was found that the brake had not been applied. I felt that some unseen, hidden power stopped the train” [36]

The case started in the court of ADM (Assistant District Magistrate). There were two charges: ‘Insult to Islam’ and ‘Conversion of a Muslim to Sikhism’.

As soon as the ADM learned of the facts, he told me that if it weren’t for the political pressure, he would have thrown the charges out of the court. I said to the ADM, “I applaud you for your straightforwardness. I wish to have a public debate with the mullahs who have created this unnecessary problem for you.”

The ADM saw an opportunity for diffusing the sensitive situation through debate. He received permission from the Deputy Commissioner and sent out invitations for a public debate to the local Muslim societies. The challenge for debate was immediately accepted. On the scheduled time a huge crowd of Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus gathered for the debate which was being moderated by the ADM. At the start of the debate, my opponent, the maulvi said to me, “Hey you! You have been spreading lies. Tell me what you have to say for yourself.”

I said, “I have quoted about twenty sources to defend my statements. Courts recognize these sources. You are the one refusing to accept what I am saying. Your words are not the Quran. Please back up your claim with a recognized source.”

Maulvi: “What you have been saying is not supported by science. How can a wall [Kaaba] move?”

I turned to the Muslim audience and said, “Brothers! I am happy for this opportunity to share my views with a Shia scholar. However, I am sorry to say that Maulvi Sahib does not prefer to debate on the basis of the Quran and Islam. Instead, he is a believer of science. I will answer on the basis of science. I hope that the audience wouldn’t mind.”

An elderly Muslim from the audience said, “This is a debate. Please argue as you please.”

I turned to the Maulvi and said, “You are correct. I also accept that without a mechanism something cannot move. But could you please give us your views on *Shaq-e-Qamar*⁸⁶?”

Maulvi: “This too is nonsense sprouted from the mouths of ignorant. I do not believe it.”

At this time, I turned my back towards the Maulvi and addressed the Muslim audience and said,

“Brothers! Forget about the debate with this Maulvi; I can’t even stomach looking at him. In spite of being a Sikh, I am ready to accept the miracle of Prophet Muhammad. If this Maulvi, being a Muslim doesn’t accept the Quran, how can he ever treat Guru Nanak fairly and with respect.”

A Muslim man in the crowd leaped up and pulled Maulvi’s chair from the back and threw him on the ground from the stage. Other Muslims in the crowd joined in to insult to the maulvi further. The debate was over, and the ADM left the stage.

On the next court date, the ADM smiled and informed me that another Maulvi had challenged me to a debate, and this one was a Sunni. The second debate drew even a bigger crowd compared to the first.

The maulvi came up on the stage and said to me, “OK my Sikh brother! I will accept that Hazrat Baba Nanak rotated Makkah. However, if this had happened, then all of Islam would have started

⁸⁶ Shaq-e-Qamar (splitting of moon): According to the Quran 54:1-2 Prophet Muhammad performed a miracle by splitting the Moon into two pieces to convince Jewish non-believers about his prophethood

kneeling for prayer in a new direction. Since Muslims have not changed the direction in which they have always bowed, then your claim that Makkah turned must be wrong.”

I said, “Maulvi Sahib! Let me first start by applauding you for your sincerity in admitting that Kaaba moved around Nanak. But your second argument would not work as long as the mullah in Makkah kept moving the Guru’s feet to and from the same spot [i.e., Kaaba moved along the feet, but if the rotations ended at the initial spot, there would be no change in the direction in which Kaaba faces]. I am, however, convinced if the mullah had dragged Guru’s feet forty miles, the Kaaba would have followed.”

The Sikh crowd erupted in cheers and claps. The ADM had to request repeatedly that the crowd calm down. The maulvi had thought that his argument would be a knock-out punch. When his key argument didn’t work, he appeared to be out of ideas, flabbergasted he rose to his feet and said to me, “You are pretending to be a big knowledgeable Sikh. Tell me the name of the great grandfather of Nanak?”

I said, “Maulvi Sahib, your question doesn’t make sense. Muslims pay attention to the Prophet Muhammad and not to his parents. Similarly, Sikhs focus on Nanak and not on his relations. We have nothing to do with his grandfather.”

The maulvi had nothing more to say, and the debate was over. The Sikh crowd marched to the gurudwara reading gurbani verses and shouting jaikaras (victory slogans).

39. Victory of the Prayer

The public debates didn't diffuse the situation sufficiently. The Muslim administration of Bahawalpur wanted nothing short of a prison sentence for me.

Sardar Sher Amir Singh was very well connected, and a well to do Sikh in this city. He was keeping the SGPC apprised of the position of the court.

March 20th was the decision date in the court. Sikh sangat was anxious. Many used to show up on every court date, but this one being the decision date was especially important. The sangat started gathering at the gurudwara at night in preparation for next morning's court date. There was a huge gathering at the gurudwara by the early morning. After the kirtan (singing) of *Asa Di Vaar*, the ardas (prayer) was offered by Giani Channan Singh, and he said: "O Tenth Lord! 'The prayer of humble servants does not go in vain – SGGS 819'. Today your sangat is eager to see the power of prayer. Please bless your sangat with victory in the Moghul court." After humble supplications, we received the following command from Guru Granth Sahib ji:

ਅਉਖੀ ਘੜੀ ਨ ਦੇਖਣ ਦੇਈ ਅਪਨਾ ਬਿਰਦੁ ਸਮਾਲੇ ॥ ਰਾਥ ਦੇਇ ਰਾਖੈ ਅਪਨੇ
ਕਉ ਸਾਸਿ ਸਾਸਿ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਲੇ॥

He does not let his devotee see the difficult time. Such is God's innate nature. He protects his devotee with his own hand. He cherishes his devotee with each and every breath. - SGGS 682."

Although based on Sardar Sher Amir Singh's information, the probability of a positive decision was bleak. The Guru's command brought the sangat into high spirits, and the place resounded with jaikaras. The sangat set out to court singing the verse:

ਗੁਰੁ ਮੇਰੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਨਾਲੇ ॥

My Guru is always with me, near at hand.

ਸਿਮਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਤਿਸੁ ਸਦਾ ਸਮੁਹਾਲੇ ॥

Meditating, meditating in remembrance on Him, I cherish Him forever.

- SGGS 394

The sangat reached the court. There was also a huge crowd of Muslims. It was 11 am, the lawn outside the court was packed. ADM's office door was covered with a bamboo blind. Police officers were standing on one side of the door, and on the other side I was standing and praying in my mind and making supplications to the Tenth Guru, "Father, your children have been recently blessed by you with your amrit. Please don't let your blessed kesh be desecrated in the Moghul jail. O Tenth Lord, if the story of you personally guarding over Joga Singh is true⁸⁷, then please guard me against the Muslim ire and keep me in the service of the panth and please let me continue to cherish the love of your feet." When my eyes opened from my supplication, I saw a blinding light behind the blinds and a figure on a horse pointing downwards towards the ADM's table with an arrow.

⁸⁷ When Joga (means 'worthy of') Singh was a child he was taken to Guru Gobind Singh ji for a visit. When the Guru found out that the child's name was Joga, he asked him "Who are you worthy of?" The child replied "Only you, my Guru." The Guru was pleased and asked the parents if they could leave Joga Singh with him. Joga Singh grew up under the Guru's care. A few years later his parents came to the Guru and requested a leave for Joga so that they could perform his wedding. The Guru granted the leave to Joga on the condition that he would return as soon as the Guru summons him. To test Joga Singh, the Guru sent summons for Joga Singh in the middle of the wedding. Joga Singh interrupted the wedding ceremony and set out to Anandpur Sahib. The act of complying with the Guru's orders so single mindedly filled Joga with conceit. En route to the Guru, in Hoshiarpur he got attracted to a prostitute. At night he made several attempts to visit the house of the prostitute but was thwarted every time by a guard at the door. When Joga Singh reached Guruji, the Guru reminded him that he himself was the guard who kept Joga Singh from entering the prostitute's house. Joga Singh fell at the Guru's feet and begged forgiveness. The Guru told him that since Joga Singh had pledged himself to the Guru, the Guru had pledged himself to Bhai Joga Singh and it was Guru's responsibility to guard him.

I gestured to Channan Singh to come and see what I was seeing, but everything disappeared in a moment. Half an hour after my vision, the ADM came out of his room and read the following decision: “You had committed a grave crime. The ‘Hazrat Maula Janab Nawab Sahib Bahadur’ through his mercy has pardoned you. You are ordered to move out of the State within 24 hours. Case Number: 324/13, March 20, 1935. Rahim Yar Khan.”

As soon as the decision was read, the jaikaras roared everywhere. The Muslim crowd dispersed in no time. The Sikh sangat came back to the gurudwara for a congregation to offer thanks to the Guru. In the congregation, Sardar Sher Amir Singh shared the following information with sangat: “Based on our yesterday’s message, the SGPC in Amritsar sent a telegram to the Nawab. The Nawab telegraphed an acquittal order to the Deputy Commissioner Rahim Yar Khan. The order arrived at the ADM’s office at 11 am which resulted in our victory. Before this, we had sent several letters to SGPC. But when the Guru wills something it doesn’t take long.”



Gurudwara Bhai Joga Singh, Peshawar, Pakistan

40. Bibi Mohan Kaur's Kindness

Based on the Nawab's orders to leave the state within 24 hours, the sangat sent us off from Rahim Yar Khan. We went to the railway station Samasatta. Sardar Harcharan Singh was in charge of the Railway Police Station here. His wife, Bibi Mohan Kaur ji was related to Maharaja Ranjit Singh's family. The family was overjoyed to see us and requested that we stop over at Samasatta.

The family had built a beautiful gurudwara just outside the boundary of the railway station. Bibi ji arranged for me to serve as a granthi in this gurudwara.

With love and encouragement from the sangat, I started learning Gurbani path. With Guru's blessing, within a month I started taking turns in Akhand Path.

One day I was walking through the railway station, and Amar Singh, a Police Officer from Rahim Yar Khan, noticed me. This officer lodged a complaint with Police at Bahawalpur that I had not left the state as ordered. Instead, I had been living at the Samasatta Gurudwara for the past three months.

In the evening a special magistrate and a police party arrived at the railway police station to arrest me. Bibi Mohan Kaur found out, and she got the arrest party busy with a dinner at her place.

At this time, my son Inderpal Singh was just nine days old. Bibi ji got our belongings moved to a coolie's house, and sent us overnight to Multan on a freight train.

In the morning, the police party went to the gurudwara to arrest me, and they found nothing. The police filed a lawsuit against Sardar Harcharan Singh which got thrown out. A few days later Bibi Mohan Kaur came to see us at Multan gurudwara and delivered our belongings.

It looks like that trouble followed me everywhere. I was staying at the gurudwara in cantonment at Multan. The Singh Sabha announced that a

Sikh convert from a Syed family would speak at the gurudwara. The announcement created a stir among the Muslims.

At the time of the speech, Muslim demonstrators encircled the gurudwara and started shouting slogans. They demanded that I be handed over to them or else they would set fire to the gurudwara.

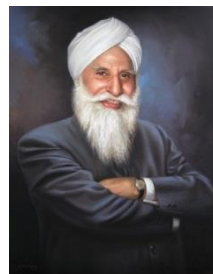
I was sent to Okara under police protection. The same thing happened there. There was a conflict in Lahore between Sikhs and Muslims regarding Gurudwara Shahid Ganj which was making Muslims very emotional all over Punjab.

I delivered a speech at the Okara Gurudwara. Police intelligence present at the gurudwara wrote a very negative report about me with a lot of errors. For example, I had used the word 'neighborly nations', and they reported 'bully nations' (words sound somewhat similar in Punjabi). As a result, warrants were issued for my arrest by the morning after the speech.

Sikhs wielded a lot of influence at Okara. Doctor Sardara Singh got the warrants canceled, and I was moved to the gurudwara in Chak (town) Number 26 which was a Sikh town six miles away.

41. Gurudwara Shahid Ganj Lahore

I really enjoyed my time at Chak 26/2 in the company of Sikh sangat and community. One day, Giani Gurmukh Singh Musafir, General Secretary SGPC came to see me. He asked me if I could understand Arabic. He told me that in the lawsuit regarding the ownership of Shahid Ganj Gurudwara⁸⁸ Muslims had submitted some documents in Arabic which neither the Sikhs' lawyer nor the Chief Justice could understand. The Muslims



**Giani Gurmukh
Singh Musafir**

⁸⁸ Shahid Ganj was originally built as a mosque in 1722 in Lahore. It's estimated that 250,000 Sikh women, men and children were martyred here (SGPC.Net) including Bibi Basant Kaur, the wife of Bhai Mani Singh ji. During these killings many of the Sikh men joined underground Sikh militia. The Governor of Lahore who had vowed to eradicate the roots of Sikhism in Punjab turned his ire towards women and children who were among most of the dead. This is the site where Sikh mothers were routinely forced to wear limbs of their murdered children around their necks. In 1762 Bhangi Sardar took over Lahore and converted the mosque into a gurudwara in memory of the martyred Sikhs. Maharaja Ranjit Singh used to visit this gurudwara weekly to pay homage. This gurudwara has remained under Sikh custody since 1762. After the British took over Punjab, Muslims brought several lawsuits to reclaim the mosque. Nur Ahmad claimed to be the legal owner/caretaker of the original mosque. He brought four lawsuits: in 1850 (criminal suit), 1853 (civil suit), 1855 (lawsuit with DC), 1856 (lawsuit with the JC). All of these lawsuits were settled in favor of the Sikhs. With the establishment of the SGPC in 1925 when ownership was being transferred, another flurry of lawsuits followed which were settled in favor of the SGPC in 1934. In 1935, the SGPC demolished the original mosque to expand the gurudwara. This triggered Muslim riots in Lahore. In October 1935, Muslims brought a new lawsuit. This time they were not claiming ownership of the property (which was already settled). Instead they claimed that Mosque cannot be converted to another purpose and Muslims maintain the right to worship at that place. On May 25, 1936 the court again found in the favor of SGPC, as did the High court in 1940 on an appeal. (The above description is based on the written High Court Judgment by George Rankin J., Masjid Shahid Ganj Mosque vs. Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, May 2, 1940) [37]. The very last lawsuit was found in the favor of Sikhs by a Pakistani court in 1988.

were claiming that according to the divine Islamic law a mosque could not be converted to a Gurudwara or any other use. Giani ji told me that the sangat needed my help in resolving this matter.

I went to Lahore to help in the lawsuit. Lala Badri Das ji, the lead counsel for the SGPC, showed me a copy of the Arabic draft filed by Muslims to support their claim. This document was causing a lot of anxiety among the Sikh circles. I found the document to be a fabrication.

To mount a rebuttal, I was able to get the needed Islamic books from the National Library at Anarkali. I documented fourteen references to discredit the Muslims' document. My references also included a documented incident during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad Sahib ji who converted a mosque into a stable.

At the court hearing, the Judge was so dejected by the ten-page Arabic fabrication prepared by Doctor Muhammad Alum that he not only dismissed the Arabic document, he even tore the presented copy.

Based on the judge's reaction, the Muslim lawyers decided not to argue for the document. Doctor Muhammad Alum also refused to defend his document on the basis that arguing with me was like arguing with a traitor [who is betraying their secrets] and as such he didn't want to weaken the Muslim case further. The Judge was now convinced that the Muslim side had built a castle of sand, and their claim lacked any substance. Not long after my testimony, the court decided in favor of the SGPC. It didn't matter that justice and truth had prevailed, the loss was simply too much to swallow for people blinded by religious hatred. They arranged for assassins to murder me as soon as I was to exit the court. However,

ਜਿਸ ਤੂੰ ਰਖਹਿ ਹਥ ਦੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਮਾਰਿ ਨ ਸਕੈ ਕੋਇ ॥

No one can kill that one unto whom You, Lord, give Your Hand and protect. - SGGS 43

After my testimony regarding Shahid Gunj, there was a lot of coverage and propaganda in newspapers which made things dangerous for me. Attempts were being made on my life wherever I went.

I was at the Gurudwara Joga Singh in Peshawar with Ishar Singh, and Muslims launched a deadly attack on me. Here Sardar Jaimal Singh, the head of the Tirahi Sikhs⁸⁹, courageously saved me.

In Koita, I was attacked by Pathans with pistols and Guru's grace made this attack unsuccessful. A gurmukh gurudwara organizer arranged protection for me to get me back to Punjab.

Later on, Sardar Baldev Singh who belonged to this same dear gurmukh family became a Deputy Commissioner who risked his life to save thousands of Hindus and Sikhs during the partition of 1947.

From Punjab, I went to Kanpur which was going through unrest at that time. Here I arranged pahul (Khalsa initiation) for 5,000 from the Khateek⁹⁰ community. When here too the drums of murder started beating, I decided to go to Hazur Sahib. On my way, I spent time at Agra, Jhansi, Nagpur, Madhya Pradesh, Amravati, and reached the City of Akola in Bihar. In this city, Contractor Natha Singh's was the only Sikh household. Sardar Natha Singh, originally from Pothohar used to serve Sikh sangat heading to Hazur Sahib with dedication. I too stayed at his house. Sardar Natha Singh arranged my speech at the local town hall. When I reached there, the hall was filled with non-Sikhs.

⁸⁹ There are two mountain passes between Peshawar and Kabul, the Galli and the Jawaki. There are some Sikhs who live in the Tirah valley in the Galli pass in the Afridis. These Sikhs are called Tirahi Sikhs or Tirahi Afridis Sikhs. People of the Afridis tribe are best armed and most war like. (Anglo-Indian Dictionary by George Clifford Whitworth)

⁹⁰ Khateek in Kanpur belong to a low caste (untouchable) Hindu community

Many in attendance were educated people, and quite a few were lawyers and barristers. I thought that the largely non-Sikh audience would not be impressed with the story of a Sikh martyr. Instead, I decided to relate the broad appeal of Guru Nanak in many countries he



In Tibet Guru Nanak Dev ji is revered as Rinpoche Guru. There is a history of Tibetans travelling long distances to Amritsar to pay respect to the Guru. Above is a rare color photograph taken by Stéphane Passet in 1914 of Tibetans in Harimandir Sahib. Dalvinder Singh Grewal who did extensive research on Tibetan Sikhs, wrote: "Lately, they have stopped coming in large numbers as they say that the sewadars there have been treating them very badly."

visited during his travels. I talked about Sikh memorials and sangat present to this date in many places⁹¹ including Kabul, Kathmandu, North China, Yarkand, and Lhasa. Guru Nanak's Sikhs are in many countries. The Guru had set out to liberate all of the humanity.

After becoming aware of Sikhism, I was keen on taking the Guru's message to different countries. I requested SGPC several times for support to help me go on a mission outside India; I pleaded that I was too poor to manage it on my own. If Sikh organizations could send preachers to different parts of the world, then without a doubt the humanity will benefit from gurbani. It is the benevolence of Sikh sangat that this worm is given the support to write my autobiography at Nangal Dam. I humbly remind the sangat of Guru's words:

“ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਧੂੜਿ ਮੰਗੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਕੀ ਜੇ ਆਪਿ ਜਪੈ ਅਵਰਹ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ ॥

Humble Nanak begs for the dust of the feet of that GurSikh, who himself contemplate the Naam, and inspires others to chant it. - SGGS 306.”

Guru Nanak spent his entire blessed life in bringing all of humanity on the path of equality and unity with God. Sadly, we are depriving humanity by no longer bringing this much-needed Guru's message to the world.

⁹¹ Recently Guru Nanak's sangat and many historical places maintained in his memory have been discovered in Nepal, Sikkim and Tibet. Refer to Appendix C for details.

42. 'Nanak Wahid Paigambaro Tawheed Asat' – Nanak the Peerless Messenger of Oneness

I met an English Christian priest at Koita, Baluchistan who had returned from Iran after a missionary assignment. I asked him, "Sahib, you appear to be a learned man with a lot of experience. May I, please ask you a question?" He replied in Persian, "Sure." I said, "It's clear from the human history that whenever God is forgotten, and morality disappears, God has sent light to this world in the form of a messenger or a prophet. But these prophets have often worked on their own popularity and have asked people to follow them rather than God. Somebody said I am Ram. Somebody said I am Bhagwan (Supreme Being). Jesus claimed he was the son and soul of God. Moses was proud about the Sinai Mountain and claimed he was the word of God. David told his nation that he was the *Khalifatullah* (Vice-Regent of God). Prophet Muhammad Sahib ji claimed he was the seal of the prophets and gave the slogan: 'There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah'.

My question is: In your research, have you come across anybody who effaced himself and established only the one-ness of God?"

The priest was a wise scholar. He immediately opened his mouth to answer me, but I interrupted him and said, "Sir, I am hoping that you will answer this question not as a priest but as a human being."

As soon as he heard the word "human being", the priest closed his eyes. After a couple of minutes, he opened his eyes and said, "Rakhik, Iin Muimaye Ajibsuast, Darin Waqat Hulnami Bayad KumbeKus She Roza Muhalat Medehad", meaning, "Dear friend! If you want the answer as a human being, then please allow me at least three days. What I was about to tell you, I will not be able to say that now."

I said, "Respectable priest! I am searching anxiously. I am sure that your answer will help me find peace."

After three days, I returned to the agreed-upon spot and time, and the priest also arrived on time. I shouted from far away, “Have you brought my answer?”

The priest ran to me, hugged and said, “If being a Punjabi you still do not know this answer, then listen to me: ‘Guftam Bila Shako Shubha Nanak Wahid Paigambaro Tawheed Asat’, meaning: I will say without any doubt or hesitation that if anybody has established one-ness while effacing himself, that one and only one person is Nanak.”

43. Had Nanak been born in Europe

I was exiting Gurudwara Ratan Tala, Singh Sabha in Karachi after delivering a morning sermon when a Sikh informed me that on Sunday a priest from Spain would speak at the big church.

He told me that the priest is a very devout man of distinction and he would speak on how to achieve God. I decided to attend this lecture, as I remembered that the Guru wanted his Sikh to remain a seeker always:

“ਸਾਝ ਕਰੀਜੈ ਗੁਣਹ ਕੇਰੀ ਛੇਡਿ ਅਵਗਣ ਚਲੀਐ ॥

Let us form a partnership and share our virtues; let us abandon our faults and walk together with others – SGGS 766.”

On Sunday, I went to the lecture with Giani Ratan Singh and two other Sikhs. The elderly priest delivered an impressive lecture.

Giani Ratan Singh ji was interested in getting a copy of the Bible, and we went to the home of the head priest. He treated us with a lot of respect. While we were talking to him in his living room, I mentioned to the priest that the Church building was very beautiful and that I especially liked the beautiful paintings of Christ.

The priest placed his hand on my shoulder and said, “Sardar Sahib! I am disappointed that you got so easily impressed by stone walls. Had Baba Nanak been born in Europe, there wouldn’t have been any place on this earth without churches of gold in his name.

I am sorry that the Baba was born in Punjab, and to make things worse, his mission has been left at the mercy of the Sikhs.”

We were saddened by these comments from a white priest. After a moment of pause, Giani Ratan Singh requested a Bible. The priest opened a closet and asked, “Which language do you prefer?” I said, “Since you asked so confidently, do you have one in Arabic or Persian?” He said, “I can get you one from Lahore. The purpose of our Bible society is to provide free Bibles in all languages.”

I started thinking, “O Lord, your gurbani is ‘ਬਾਣੀਆ ਸਿਰਿ ਬਾਣੀ ॥ The supreme word of words – SGGS 920.” If even a single verse is explained to people on the main road in Karachi, the whole of Karachi would have come under your shelter. It’s sad but true that we have not given enough prominence to your bani.”

Sikhism is not what we think it is. A Sikh is:

“ਆਪਿ ਜਪੈ ਅਵਰਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਏ ॥ The One who himself chants the Naam, and inspires others to chant it as well – SGGS 140.”

The meaning of Sikhism is not religion. The moment we think that Sikhism means religion, we go against Gurbani, and we insult the Formless God. The Guru explains what Sikhism is:

“ਸਿਖੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ॥ ਨਦਰੀ ਕਰਮਿ ਲਘਾਏ ਪਾਰਿ ॥

The one who learns] the lesson through contemplating on the Guru. [The merciful God’s] grace ferries that person across – SGGS 465.”

The following three requirements are fundamental for a Sikh: 1) Reading Gurbani, 2) Contemplating Gurbani, and 3) Following Gurbani.

If somebody meets these three requirements, then that person can thump his or her chest and claim: I am a Sikh, Nanak is mine, and I am Nanak’s.

It’s useless pride If somebody claims that they are Sikh because they were born in a Sikh household. This pride will lead to a disaster:

“ਪਉੜੀ ਛੁੜਕੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਹਾਥਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਅਹਿਲਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਗਵਾਇਆ ॥ Once one has slipped from a ladder it’s hard to regain a hold that person’s life is wasted, and the opportunity will not come back – SGGS 796.”

You will get to Guru’s house only if you follow the objectives of Sikhism. Sikhism is to realize:

ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥

O my mind, you are the embodiment of the divine light, recognize your true origin – SGGS 441.

The ones who are in love with Sikhism, they are being scalped, their flesh is ripping on the wheel, they are boiling in hot water, they are being sawed like a log, and yet they are reciting:

ਕਹੁ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਤੇ ਕਿਆ ਹੋਇ ਆਵੈ ॥ ਜੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੇਈ ਕਰਾਵੈ ॥

ਇਸ ਕੈ ਹਾਥਿ ਹੋਇ ਤਾ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਲੇਇ ॥ ਜੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੇਈ ਕਰੇਇ ॥

ਅਨਜਾਨਤ ਬਿਖਿਆ ਮਹਿ ਰਚੈ ॥ ਜੇ ਜਾਨਤ ਆਪਨ ਆਪ ਬਚੈ ॥

ਭਰਮੇ ਭੂਲਾ ਦਹ ਦਿਸਿ ਧਾਵੈ ॥ ਨਿਮਖ ਮਾਹਿ ਚਾਰਿ ਕੁੰਟ ਫਿਰਿ ਆਵੈ ॥

ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਜਿਸੁ ਅਪਨੀ ਭਗਤਿ ਦੇਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਜਨ ਨਾਮਿ ਮਿਲੇਇ ॥

Tell me - what can a mere mortal do? Whatever pleases God is what He causes us to do.

If it were in their hands, they would give themselves everything. Whatever pleases God - is what happens.

Through ignorance, they are engrossed in falsehood. Had they known the truth, they would have saved themselves.

Deluded in doubt, they wander around in the ten directions. In an instant, their minds travel back and forth to the four corners of the world.

Those whom the Lord mercifully blesses with His devotional worship - O Nanak, they are absorbed into the Naam
SGGS 227.

44. My True Form is Khalsa

There are many faiths in this world. The prophets and gurus of these faiths have maintained distinction between themselves and their own followers. But the Guru is quoted to say that there is no difference between him and his Khalsa:

ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਖਾਸ ॥ Khalsa is my true form

ਖਾਲਸੇ ਮਹਿ ਹੋ ਕਰੈ ਨਿਵਾਸ ॥ Within the Khalsa, I abide (Sarbloh Granth).

Similarly:

ਗੁਰੂ ਸਿਖੁ ਸਿਖੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਏਕੇ ਗੁਰ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਚਲਾਏ ॥

The Guru's Sikh, and the Sikh's Guru, are one and the same; both spread the Guru's Teachings – SGGS 444

The Khalsa or a Sikh described in the above verses is a person who has come under the shelter of the Guru and has purified his mind. In his mind, there is no room for impurity of duality. He seeks union with God and remains detached from the transient maya (illusion). He doesn't set out to alter his God given form. He praises and worships only one Creator. These are the qualities which define a Khalsa. As the Guru says:

“ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਜਨ ਭਏ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਭਗਤਿ ਜਿਹ ਜਾਨੀ ॥

Says Kabeer, those humble people become pure - they become Khalsa - who know the Creator's loving devotional worship – SGGS 655.”

When the Tenth Guru gave amrit, he told his Sikh: “Waheguru Ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji ki Fateh” meaning, “Waheguru is Khalsa [so become Waheguru's]. For a Sikh [there is no personal victory or existence], victory is only Waheguru's.”

God's creation stemmed from His hukam (natural order or will). One who lives in harmony with the natural order and adopts qualities of the natural order will become Khalsa. It's important to note that Khalsa came into being in harmony with God and with the approval of God:

“ਮੈ ਅਪਨਾ ਸੁਤ ਤੇਹਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ॥ ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਚੁਰ ਕਰਬੇ ਕਹੁ ਸਾਜਾ ॥

I adopt you as my son and have created you for the propagation of the path.

ਜਾਹਿ ਤਹਾ ਤੈ ਧਰਮੁ ਚਲਾਇ ॥ ਕਬੁਧਿ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਲੋਕ ਹਟਾਇ ॥

Therefore go and spread Dharma (righteousness) and cause people to move away from evil actions. Dasam Granth - 136"

The Khalsa was created through the command of God. Therefore, a true Khalsa must always act within the command (will) of God. One can only be called Khalsa if:

“ਜਾਗਤਿ ਜੋਤ ਜਪੈ ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸੁਰ ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਮਨ ਨੈਕ ਨ ਆਨੈ ॥

The true Khalsa lives in remembrance of the ever-awakened Light throughout night and day and does not bring anyone else in his mind

ਪੂਰਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਸਜੈ ਬ੍ਰਤ ਗੋਰ ਮਤੀ ਮਟ ਭੂਲ ਨ ਮਾਨੈ ॥

He practices his vow with whole hearted affection and does not worship, even by mistake, the graves, monuments or monasteries.

ਤੀਰਥ ਦਾਨ ਦਇਆ ਤਪ ਸੰਜਮ ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਨਹ ਏਕ ਪਛਾਨੈ ॥

He does not recognize [as means of salvation] pilgrimages, charities, merciful acts, austerities, and restraints. For him, except for One Lord, nothing else counts.

ਪੂਰਨ ਜੋਤ ਜਗੈ ਘਟ ਮੈ ਤਬ ਖਾਲਸ ਤਾਹਿ ਨਖਾਲਸ ਜਾਨੈ ॥

If the perfect light of the Lord illuminates his heart, only then consider him the immaculate Khalsa. Dasam Granth – 1351.”

“ਜਾ ਕੈ ਮਨਿ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਪਰਤੀਤਿ ॥ ਤਿਸੁ ਜਨ ਆਵੈ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਚੀਤਿ ॥

One who has faith in the Guru in his mind. He dwells on the Creator –
SGGS 283.”

In all religions, people commonly say that if you have faith in your prophet, then that prophet will help you. But looking through history, oneness with God and intensity of faith in Sikhism is unique – whether you look at Sikhs from long ago like Bhai Joga Singh or Sikhs of today like Bhai Lachhman Singh and Bhai Tehal Singh (Shahids at Nankana Sahib)⁹².

⁹² Mahant Narain Das who occupied Gurudwara Nankana Sahib had become extremely corrupt. In 1918, in two separate incidents, seven women devotees were raped by Mahant's men, the youngest victim was 13. Sikhs started agitating to liberate the gurudwara. Two hundred Sikhs under the leadership of Bhai Lachhman Singh and Bhai Tehal Singh started marching to the gurudwara on the night of Feb 19, 1921. Before leaving, the Sikhs offered an ardas (prayer) and vowed to liberate the gurudwara and remain peaceful regardless of the level of aggression used by the mahant's men. The mahant had support of the local administration and had hired Pathan mercenaries and acquired a lot of weapons to murder the Sikhs. The SGPC found out about the mahant's evil plans and sent two separate messengers to persuade the marching Sikhs to cancel their plan. Bhai Tehal Singh refused to relent because he did not want the ardas dishonored. The Sikhs entered the gurudwara in early morning and started the kirtan. The mahant ordered his mercenaries to attack the peaceful Sikhs, and they murdered the sangat sitting in the presence of SGGS with guns and sharp edged weapons. The mahant had stockpiled oil and wood in the gurudwara to burn the bodies and to destroy the evidence. Bhai Lachhman Singh who was wounded was tied to a Jand tree and was burnt alive. Before the authorities arrived most of the Jatha members were murdered and their bodies were burning. The Government put the death toll at 126. Police Inspector Bachan Singh had counted 156 dead. The next day, Sikhs announced another jatha of 2,200 Sikhs to march to the gurudwara under Kartar Singh Jhabbar. The government deployed the army and told Jhabbar that the army will open fire if they marched to the gurudwara. Jathedar Jhabbar refused to stop and dared the army to shoot them. The government backed down and handed over the keys of the gurudwara to SGPC. Irked by Jhabbar's defiance the administration arrested him a few days later from the Gurudwara Nankana Sahib on trumped up charges and sentenced him to prison for 18 years (Akali Morche te Jhabbar – page 202) [38].

A human life [which enables union with God] is precious among all life forms on this planet. A gurmukh life is precious among all human lives

- “ਮਾਣਸ ਜਨਮ ਦੁਲੱਭ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

Rare is the human life which a guru’s devotee receives – SGGS 751.”

Live your existence in the manner of a Khalsa and as a gurmukh. Dear ones! Life as a Sikh is a rare and incredible opportunity.



Bhai Tehal Singh



Kartar Singh Jhabbar⁹³

⁹³ Jathedar Kartar Singh Jhabbar was a close friend of Sant Syed ji. A brief biography of Sant ji can be found at the end of Jhabbar’s biography published by the SGPC. MPS Bedi, Sant ji’s son as a young child, fondly remembers always asking Jhabbar about the stories of his encounters with the colonial authorities whenever the Jathedar visited Sant ji’s post-independence home in Patiala.

Jhabbar was a remarkable Sikh, and his tireless and selfless service earned him the name *ਗੋਸਾਈਂ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਲਵਾਨੜਾ* (God’s humble wrestler). His whole life was full of sacrifices for his people. He was sentenced to death for defying the martial law after the Jalianwala Bagh massacre in 1919. His death sentence was commuted to life in the dreaded offshore Kala Pani prison. The intense worldwide coverage of Jalianwala Bagh, led the British King to release all the martial-law prisoners by a decree in March 1920. Jhabbar returned to Punjab and continued leading *Morchas* (agitations), in spite of confiscation of his property, torture, and repeated prison sentences. He was a highly intelligent man, and a great orator. He was active in liberating all of the major

gurudwaras in Punjab, and was instrumental in stopping the discriminatory practice of not allowing the so-called “lower castes” making offerings at Harimandir Sahib.

Jhabbar was a fearless leader, and risk of death never deterred him from the righteous path. When he liberated the Gurudwara Nankana Sahib, he was leading a jatha of 2,200 Sikhs. He was informed that 150 white soldiers are ready with machine guns to stop him. He divided his group into 11 sub-groups of 200 each, and each sub-group was assigned a leader, and the Sikhs were marching in straight line formations with sub-group leaders on horses. Jhabbar was leading the whole group on a horse wearing a Kirpan and carrying a *safa-jang* (small axe with a long handle). Jhabbar gave a speech to the group, and said, “Khalsa ji! Soon we will be approaching the machine guns. When the firing starts, run towards the guns. Do not mind the ones who fall but keep running. Snatch the guns from the soldiers, and make it to the gurudwara”. Soon he was met by four white officers, Mr King Deputy Commissioner (DC) Lahore, Mr Emerson DIG Police Lahore, Mr Currie DC Sheikhpura, and the army commander. Mr. Currie addressed Jhabbar and said, “Stop the group. This general has deployed his army. Do not proceed forward; the firing will start.” Jhabbar replied, “Sahib, then you start your firing. You have 150 white soldiers, and I have my 2,200 men. You fire, and my men will show you how things are done when bullets are flying.” “What do you want from us?” said the police officer. Jhabbar said, “I don’t need anything from you. Why have you locked us out of our gurudwara? We are not after Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s fort, this is our Jerusalem. What justification do you have taking over our place of worship? Give us the keys, and remove your army or shoot us. We have offered *ardasa* (prayers of resolve) to recite today’s Rehras (the daily evening prayer of the Sikhs) at the gurudwara.” Mr. Currie said, “You want the keys? Very well, keep your group here overnight, and we will give you the keys in the morning.” Jhabbar said, “You are trying to buy time to bring more army so that you can grab us while we sleep here overnight. Give us the keys now or shoot us.” Jhabbar then turned to his group, and shouted, “The Sahib wants us to spend the next four *pehar* (a *pehar* is 3 hours) here before he will give us the keys.” Gian Singh from the group shouted back, “Forget four *pehar* we are not ready to wait even four more minutes”. The group started stomping and shouting *jaikaras* (Sikh victory cry). The white officer was visibly shaken by the dust storm and the noise raised by the group. Jhabbar told him, “Sahib, get out of my way, I don’t want to be responsible for you getting hurt.” Mr. Currie said to Jhabbar, “Sardar Sahib, please wait for two more minutes.” Then the group of four white officers went aside for a private huddle. Soon one asked Jhabbar to come and

join them and take the keys from the commissioner. Jhabbar replied, "Commissioner can come to me and give me the keys.". The Commissioner came to Jhabbar and handed him the keys and said, "Please keep your group here, while we remove the army." Jhabbar agreed, and said to the group, "Khalsa ji! The Guru has fulfilled our ardas. Here are the keys. Please stay here, I will go and check. Once the army is removed, then I will come back to take you to the gurudwara".

Similar to Jhabbar's resolve at Nankana Sahib, another incident at Kot Fateh Khan is also legendary. Kot Fateh Khan, near the City of Rawalpindi, was a British-controlled small princely state under the rule of a Muslim Nawab. There is a famous gurudwara in this state. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had allotted thirty acres land to this gurudwara. Generations of Nawabs of this state were respectful devotees of this gurudwara because one of their ancestor's life was saved by a blessing from this gurudwara. However, the situation changed when British-educated Nawab Mohammad Nawaz became the ruler. He didn't like the gurudwara in his predominantly Muslim state. He forcibly encroached the gurudwara land, demolished a Hindu temple built on the land, and filled the sarovar (sacred pond). His goons murdered the lawyer hired by the gurudwara manager to fight the Nawab's illegal actions in a court. The Nawab challenged the Sikhs that he will not allow the annual Baisakhi gathering at the gurudwara. At the invitation of a local Sikh, Jhabbar took the challenge and arrived at the gurudwara with a group of 85 Sikhs a few days before Baisakhi. The cowardly Nawab fearing prosecution after the anticipated violence left for Lahore but got his men to gather roughly 12,000 Muslims who marched to attack the gurudwara with drummers leading the mob. Jhabbar was at the gurudwara with his group and roughly twenty other local Sikhs. Jhabbar addressed the group, "Khalsa ji! Saandal Baar [most of his group hailed from this region] is far away from here. If we tried to run back, we will not make it. If we do not stand and fight now Sikhism will get a bad name. Death is bound to come one day. If that day is destined to be today, then come and join me in giving your head for this right cause. Let's face the fight and become shahids (martyrs)". He ended his speech with a jaikara. His group drew their kirpans and ran towards the advancing mob. When they were roughly twenty yards away, the mob turned and ran dropping the drums behind. Jhabbar ordered his group to halt. Sikhs celebrated the Baisakhi gathering in peace. Jhabbar refused to leave the gurudwara until the local deputy commissioner gave a guaranty and set up a permanent police post to ensure security of the gurudwara [38] .

45. Guru's Teachings are a Path to Salvation

Everybody seeks salvation. But there are very few people who make an effort to seriously search the path to salvation, and there are fewer still that follow it. People who are qualified to speak of this path are rare, and rarer still are the ones who have received salvation.

“ਕਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰੇ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਏਹ ਵਖੁ ਦੇਇ ॥ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਉਤਮ

ਕਾਢੀਅਹਿ ਵਿਰਲੇ ਕੇਈ ਕੇਇ ॥

Says Nanak, this treasure is bestowed through the Lord's grace.

The ones who receive it excel in the world, and they are very rare – SGGS 517.”

Every religion is beating their drum that salvation is available only exclusively through them. There is endless preaching in the name of salvation. This claim of exclusive rights to God is the root of most of the hatred in the world. Religious hatred has eclipsed the reality. Many in Islam claim that there is no salvation without becoming a Muslim but according to the Quran (Surat Baqar) pious Hindus [non-Muslims] have nothing to fear and will definitely achieve salvation:

“Inna allatheena amanoo wallatheenahadoo wannasara wassabi-
eenaman amana biAllahi walyawmi al-akhiriwaAAamila
salihan falahum ajruhum AAinda rabbihimwala khawfun
AAalayhim wala hum yahzagoon.”

Meaning: “Those who are Muslim, or Jews, Christians or those without religion. Anyone among them, who believes in the

existence of God, believes in the end of the world, does good deeds, is near God, and has nothing to fear.”⁹⁴

Also refer to (The Quran, Surat Al-Imran 3:104):

“Waltakun minikum ommatun yadAAoona ila alkhayri
waya'muroona bilmaAAroofi wayanhawna AAani almunkari
waola-ika humu almuflihoon“

Meaning: “Let there be from you a nation who guides its people to do righteous deeds, and forbids evil deeds. That nation will find salvation.”

It is clear from Quran’s above promise that a Muslim, Hindu, Sikh or a person from any other religion can meet God. All a person needs to do is professes faith in God, believe that one day God’s creation (universe) will end, and live by good deeds. Such a person will achieve salvation regardless of what his other religious beliefs may be. Those in Islam who do not worship God, or perform good deeds and instead focus on empty rituals and don’t even follow the Quran, how will they ever achieve salvation? These people will be surprised on the ‘Day of Judgment’.

There is salvation through Sikhism because its teachings focus on oneness. There is no blind faith or empty promises. One can achieve

⁹⁴ The word ‘Sabeen’ means people without religion. However, Quran translators have defined Sabeen as “people without religion [who existed before Prophet Muhammad]”. This interpretation is used to validate the statement that with the exception of ‘believers’ (Muslims) and ‘People of the Book’ (Jews and Christians) nobody else will achieve salvation (refer to translation by Sahih international, Quran, Surat Al-Baqrah, 2:62). Those who claim that anybody other than a Muslim will face eternal damnation also quote: “And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted of him, and in the hereafter, he will be one of the losers. (Quran, Aal `Imran 3:85)”

success only by following the teachings. You can't call yourself a Sikh if you don't follow the Guru's teachings. Only the one who effaces himself and follows the teachings is a Sikh:

“ਮੁਰਦਾ ਹੋਇ ਮੁਰੀਦ ਨ ਗਲੀਂ ਹੋਵਣਾ॥

Mere talk does not make a Sikh, one must give up his or her existence (ego)

ਸਬਰ ਸਿਦਕ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਭਰਮ ਭਉ ਖੇਵਣਾ॥

[Becoming a Sikh involves] getting rid of doubts through contentment, faith and self-effacement

ਗੋਲਾ ਮੁੱਲ ਖਰੀਦ ਕਾਰੇ ਜੋਵਣਾ॥

It involves God purchasing the Sikh as a slave (receiving God's grace) and then getting the Sikh to do only what pleases God

ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭੁਖ ਨ ਨੀਂਦ ਨ ਖਾਣਾ ਸੇਵਣਾ॥

Such a Sikh suffers no hunger or slumber and rises above eating and sleeping. (Bhai Gurdas, Vaar 3, Pauri 18).

The Guru does not offer inducements like paradise, abode in Puris (cities of Hindu gods), virgins or rivers of milk and honey to get people to join Sikhism. Instead, the Guru asks for a person's head before he or she is allowed to become a Sikh. Before one is allowed to enter the circle of Sikhism, the Guru has asked for a promise to:

“ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਲੋਭ ਮੋਹ ਤਜਾਰੀ ॥ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਸੁਚਾਰੀ ॥

Renounce lust, greed and attachment. Enshrine Naam, charity, true cleansing, and righteous conduct – SGGS 740.”

Purpose of Sikhism is not to simply increase its population. If it were so, then Maharaja Ranjit Singh could have converted all of Punjab and the Frontier Region. The path of Sikhism is:

ਖੰਨਿਅਹੁ ਤਿਖੀ ਵਾਲਹੁ ਨਿਕੀ ਏਤੁ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਜਾਣਾ ॥

The path they take is sharper than a two-edged sword, and finer than a hair. – SGGS 918.

When a Sikh adopts charity, true cleansing, righteous conduct and concentrates on Naam, then even while living as a family person he or she becomes a raj-yogi (living humbly while being a king). Such a Sikh becomes like Bhai Bhikhari⁹⁵. Such a Sikh's slogan becomes:

ਰਾਜੁ ਨ ਚਾਹਅੁ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਚਾਹਅੁ ਮਨਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਚਰਨ ਕਮਲਾਰੇ ॥

I do not seek power, and I do not seek liberation. My mind is in love with Your Lotus Feet. - SGGS 534

People have unsuccessfully spent their entire lives in caves in the Himalayas denying themselves food and practicing austerities just to become a yogi. But raj-yog is granted to a Sikh effortlessly while living as a family person. Guru Gobind Singh ji has described what a Sikh needs to do to be a raj-yogi:

⁹⁵ In Sukhmani Sahib Guruji has described the state of a model Sikh for whom gold and dirt is the same, disrespect and praise is the same, joy and sorrow is the same, etc. (SGGS 275). Bhai Mani Singh ji wrote in *Sikhan Di Bhagat Mala* that a Sikh begged Guru Arjan Dev ji if he could be introduced to such a model Sikh. Guruji directed this Sikh to go and meet Bhai Bhikhari who lived in Gujrat, Punjab. As the Sikh reached Gujrat he found festivities at Bhai Bhikhari's house due to the wedding of his son. But Bhai Bhikhari sat calm and unexcited, mending an old mat. The Sikh introduced himself and was warmly received by his host. The visiting Sikh found Bhai Bhikhari's detached attitude odd. Overnight the newlywed son died unexpectedly. The next morning Bhai Bhikhari spread out the mended mat for the mourners as the festivities turned into wailing. The visiting Sikh approached Bhai Bhikhari and asked, "Did you have a premonition that your son was about to die?" Bhai Sahib ji nodded yes. The Sikh consoling Bhai Sahib ji said, "I noticed that you were praying quietly all day yesterday. I am sorry that your prayers were not answered and your son died anyways." Bhai Bhikhari replied, "No, the Guru has answered all my prayers. I was thanking the Guru for blessing me with a son. I was also praying to the Guru for his grace so that I remain as thankful upon the death of my son, as I was at his birth."

“ਧੰਨ ਜੀਓ ਤਿਹ ਕੇ ਜਗ ਮੈ ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਚਿੱਤ ਮੈ ਜੁਧੁ ਬਿਚਾਰੈ ॥ ਦੇਹ
ਅਨਿੱਤ ਨ ਨਿੱਤ ਰਹੈ ਜਸੁ ਨਾਵ ਚੜੈ ਭਵਸਾਗਰ ਤਾਰੈ ॥

Bravo to that person, who remembers the Lord through his mouth and reflects in his mind about the war of righteousness; who considers this body as transient, boards the boat of the Creator's praise and ferries across the dreadful ocean of the world.

ਧੀਰਜ ਧਾਮ ਬਨਾਇ ਇਹੈ ਤਨ ਬੁੱਧਿ ਸੁ ਦੀਪਕ ਜਿਉ ਉਜੀਆਰੈ ॥ ਗਯਾਨਹਿ
ਕੀ ਬਢਨੀ ਮਨਹੁ ਹਾਥ ਲੈ ਕਾਤਰਤਾ ਕੁਤਵਾਰ ਬੁਹਾਰੈ ॥

Who makes this body as the abode of tranquility and enlightens it with the lamp of intellect and who taking the broom of knowledge in his hand sweeps away the rubbish of cowardice.
Dasam Granth – 1135.”

A Sikh passes through raj-yog on his way to become a brahamgyani. A Sikh's ultimate objective is to merge with the creator,

ਜਿਉ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਜਲੁ ਆਇ ਖਟਾਨਾ ॥ ਤਿਉ ਜੇਤੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਜੇਤਿ ਸਮਾਨਾ ॥

As water becomes indistinguishable when it blends with water. A Sikh's light blend with God's light – SGGS 278.

When a Sikh is making an honest effort to walk on the path laid by the Guru, then the Guru takes responsibility for that Sikh's success:

“ਚਰਨ ਸਰਨਿ ਗੁਰ ਏਕ ਪੈਡਾ ਜਾਇ ਚਲ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਕੋਟਿ ਪੈਡਾ ਆਗੇ ਹੋਇ ਲੇਤ ਹੈ ॥ When a Sikh walks one step to seek protection of Guru's feet, the Guru walks millions of miles to receive him. Bhai Gurdas, Kabit Savaye 111.”

So exalted are the Sikhs that the Guru himself shows humility to his Sikh:

“ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾਂ ਕੀ ਹਰਿ ਧੂੜਿ ਦੇਹਿ ਹਮ ਪਾਪੀ ਭੀ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਂਹਿ ॥

O God, please bless me with the dust of the feet of the Guru's Sikhs so that a sinner like me could also be saved – SGGS 1424.”

Dear reader! Gursikhi path is supreme. It does not claim exclusivity, or require the worship of a middleman, or offer empty inducements or promises. There are no outsiders or others, it embraces everybody, and focuses only on one-ness. If one misses truth after receiving this human life, and that too in Guru Nanak's house then that is truly unfortunate and sad.

46. Blessed Meeting with an Immortal Soul in Utrakhand

I [Prithipal Singh] the seeker had the good fortune of meeting the great sage Sant Sangat Singh ji Kamaliye Wale in Montgomery. Sant ji said to me, “*Purkha!*”⁹⁶ You have entered the circle of lions. There is no dearth of respect-worthy achievements in this circle. You are a scholar, eat only what you hunt yourself⁹⁷.



Sant Sangat Singh ji Kamaliye Wale

I requested, “Please bless me with advice for success.” Sant ji said, “The first thing: rely only on Gurbani and Guru’s door for your achievements. The second thing: seek a perfect saint. May the Guru’s blessing on you remain infinite!”

I then said, “Your Highness! Nobody is a truer saint than you.” Sant ji replied, “This is wrong. I am a seeker.”

I was fortunate to remain with Sant ji for a month. During this period, Sant ji explained *Mool Mantar* to me and impressed upon me that:

“ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਾਰੇ ॥

Gurbani is the Guru. The Guru is Gurbani. Any worthy thing one may seek can be found in Gurbani – SGGS 982.”

⁹⁶ Purkha (means man) is a respectful way of addressing a man in Punjabi

⁹⁷ Meaning: Read and experience Gurbani on your own rather than relying on other people’s interpretations and stories

At the time of departing, on the railway platform in Montgomery, Sant ji again reminded me to search for a perfect saint and told me that the one I seek will be found around Hardwar.

A long time had passed since the above conversation with Sant ji. I was doing sewa (service) at a gurudwara in Abdulla Pur, Jagadhari, where I met a great soul who was heading to Hardwar.

After my two days of love-filled service, he was pleased and invited me to accompany him. I asked three days of leave from my family and left with this man.

After reaching Hardwar, we bathed in the Ganga River, and he then took me to Rishikesh to meet some sadhus. I saw a surprising sight. On a large boulder at a high spot, there was Prakash of Guru Granth Sahib ji. A naked Sadhu was sitting at *tabya* (sitting in respectful attendance of the Guru) and was explaining Gurbani with a reverence beyond description. He was addressing a sangat of naked sadhus who sat at the foot of the boulder. There was a not a single soul in the sangat who wore a kirpan or kachhera.

After the service was over, I asked the sadhu who was explaining Gurbani why a Sikh (with five Ks) was not sitting in tabya. The sadhu said, "Sikhs are wrong if they think they own God's bani. They are also confused if they think that Gurbani was written only for their salvation. Gurbani belongs to every being on this earth."

I said to the sadhu, “Please bless me with your grace, I am hoping to learn about *panch shabad and anhat dhun*⁹⁸ from you.” The sadhu laughed and said,

“Only a perfect yogi can explain that to you.”

This sadhu took me to the Kamliwala area to have a meal, where we met two sadhus of the Udasi Order⁹⁹. We continued our discussion about the Panch Shabad with these Udasi Sadhus.

They invited me to join them in visiting a very old Udasi saint in the Gangotri area who they claimed was 389 years old¹⁰⁰. This saint’s

⁹⁸ **During naam-simran**, there comes a stage when the mind stops running and becomes quiet. At this stage, when the mind is no longer busy listening to the din of its own ideas, it’s able to hear celestial singing and music which is coming from everything, all the time. Celestial singing is called ‘Panch Shabad’ (meaning superior word) and celestial music is called ‘anhat dhun’ (melody created without striking an instrument).

⁹⁹ **The Udasi** Order is a denomination of Sikhism made of an ascetic, monastic sect of sadhus which was established by Baba Sri Chand ji, the son of Guru Nanak ji. During the confrontation with Moghuls, Udasi sadhus managed gurudwaras and continued Sikhi as Khalsa was driven into forests to avoid persecution.

name was Shiv Charan Hari. He was a Sikh of Guru Nanak, a Vedic scholar who spent his time in Naam Simran. I accompanied the Udasi sadhus. We walked through Badrinath to Gangotri. The saint's cave was in a mountain to the right of Gangotri. The saint's skin was sagging from his bones. His eyebrows were very long and reached his cheeks. He told me that he lost and regained his teeth and his eyesight several times.

I stayed with this Udasi saint for eleven days. On my last day of sangat with him, he commented:

“Our illusionary eyesight has created entanglements. I focus only on one Divine.”

I requested his advice for success. The saint said, “Brother! All of the achievement is in the Divine word. Perform the yoga of the Word. Sit

¹⁰⁰ **There are** no verified cases of people living such a long age. However, claims of very long age in Indian yogis are not uncommon. One such case is Devraha Baba who passed away in 1989 claimed to be at age 700. He was routinely visited by Prime Ministers and Presidents of India. His video shot by a Russian TV channel is available on YouTube [40]. Vincent J. Daczynski in his essay ‘Amazing Longevity’ wrote: “It was rumored that Devraha Baba claimed that he had lived for over 700 years. Until I can substantiate this rumor I need to consider it just a rumor. Nevertheless, I make mention of this rumor because Devraha Baba's family tree records place his age to be at least 250 years when he took mahasamadhi (relinquished his body) in 1989. If he was able to live to be 250, then it is possible that he lived for 700 years as well. Baba was called, "The Ageless Yogi." Devraha Baba gained mastery over the khecheri state of yoga whereby he was able to control his hunger and the time of his death. Dr. Rajendra Prashad (1884-1963), who was the first president of India, verified Devraha Baba's old age. He said that he personally attests to Devraha Baba being at least 150 years old. He said that when he [Rajendra's father] was 73 years old, his father took him to see Baba, who was a very old man, and that his father already had known Baba for many years before that [Rajendra Prashad's father Mahadev Sahai died in 1907]. An Allahabad High Court Barrister had stated that seven generations of his family had sat at the feet of Devraha Baba. Incidentally, Devraha Baba had predicted the time of his death five years in advance.” [39]

in solitude, contemplate on shabad and Gurbani, and envision in your mind that you are gazing into Guru Nanak's eyes.

ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਧਿਆਨੁ ॥ ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਮੰਤਰ ਮਨ ਮਾਨ ॥ ਗੁਰ ਕੇ
ਚਰਨ ਰਿਦੈ ਲੈ ਧਾਰਉ ॥

Meditate on the image of the Guru within your mind; let your mind accept the Word of the Guru's Shabad, and His Mantra. Enshrine the Guru's feet within your heart. - SGGS 864.

Keep working on increasing the amount of time you can concentrate on the Guru's eyes¹⁰¹. A day will come, when your mind will become pure, and your concentration and soul will merge with the celestial music. Do not stop practicing this concentration, do not become restless. If the mind doesn't give up its wandering ways, say a prayer for help. Do not try to rush things. Whatever is achieved gently is received through the grace of God; it will remain permanently with you. Day by day your achievement will increase. It doesn't matter how great your achievement becomes never give up contemplating shabad and Gurbani".

¹⁰¹ Guru's true form is not physical but word. There are two views on whether or not one should imagine and concentrate on a physical face of Guru Nanak during Naam simran. Similar to the above description, many saints including Baba Nand Singh ji and Sant Issar Singh ji Rare Wale advise imagining a physical face of Guru Nanak ji. Many other saints (e.g. Sant Kamaliye Wale and S. Raghbir Singh Bir) advise otherwise. They agree that this practice of imagining a physical face accelerates progress in the beginning but becomes a barrier later on. The Guru wants us to contemplate on *Nirakar* (formless) God, and a time comes when the Sikh has to unlearn concentrating on a physical shape before further progress can be made; this unlearning exercise can become slow and difficult. Instead of the face of Guru Nanak, Sant Attar Singh ji Mastuane Wale used to advise beginners to write the word 'Waheguru' in large block letters on a piece of paper and concentrate on the word, and then try to view the word with eyes closed while doing Naam simran.

The Udasi saint continued, “I have described what happens externally, now I will share with you what I have seen inside. When our mind becomes still then our sight turns inwards and sees a sky inside us. At this time, the soul leaves the body and rises upwards. The lotus of the thousand petals is located in this sky. Each petal serves a unique function in this universe. Viewing this lotus, the soul fills with joy. There is an extremely narrow passage here through which the soul must pass (“ਕਬੀਰ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸੰਕੁੜਾ ਰਾਈ ਦਸਵੈ ਭਾਇ || O Kabeer, the gate of salvation is narrow, less than one-tenth of a mustard seed – SGGS 509.”). This narrow passage leads to the Kundalini artery. The artery is a winding path. Curves follow short straight runs. It appears to go downwards, and then suddenly it rises upwards. Kundalini path leads the soul into the second sky. In the second sky is the *trikuti* region which is millions of miles wide. There is no end of miracles and light in this region. Here, souls from many different faiths mistakenly think they have reached the ultimate destination. Pay attention! The True Guru speaks of regions beyond this spot. At the top of the *trikuti*, there is an imperceptible ethereal door. This place is beyond description, but I will make a feeble attempt to describe.

Here light from millions of suns and moons will appear dull in comparison. There is infinite enjoyment. There is a pleasant melody of Oung and Hu Hu which plays constantly. Here soul becomes ultimately sublime. Countless *apsaras* (angels) roam everywhere.

“ਪ੍ਰਿਅ ਕੀ ਸੇਭ ਸੁਹਾਵਨੀ ਨੀਕੀ ||

The glory of my Beloved is noble and sublime.

ਹਾਰਾ ਹੂਹੂ ਗੰਧੁਬ ਅਪਸਰਾ ਅਨੰਦ ਮੰਗਲ ਰਸ ਗਾਵਨੀ ਨੀਕੀ ||

The celestial singers and angels sing His Sublime Praises in ecstasy, happiness and joy.

ਧੁਨਿਤ ਲਲਿਤ ਗੁਨਗਜ ਅਨਿਕ ਭਾਂਤਿ ਬਹੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਰੂਪ ਦਿਖਾਵਨੀ ਨੀਕੀ ||

The worthiest beings sing God's praises in beautiful harmonies,
in all sorts of ways, in myriads of sublime forms – SGGS
1272.”

Breaking through this third curtain, the soul rises countless miles and enters the sunya (absolute state of meditation) region. Sufi saints have called this region *Alam-I-Lahut* (Realm of Divinity). Again this realm is beyond description. Souls reside here in a state of enjoyment which is beyond words. The glow in the previous trikuti region pales in comparison to this region. There are lakes of amrit and forests in bloom. Fish swimming in ponds appear as if they are arrangements of precious stones, light emanating from them mesmerizes the heart. There are wondrous structures and heavenly abodes where souls reside in the will of their beloved God. Yogis have called these souls a gathering of *hans* (swans). Everything here exists not on a physical plane but a subtle one. The ethereal and sacred swan souls are nourished by faith rather than foul physical bodies. Only great souls can understand and experience this beauty. Describing the beauty and mystery of this place is neither possible nor appropriate.

If the Guru so wills, then the soul is allowed to travel even beyond. It travels five *arab* and seventy five *crore jojans*¹⁰² to enter the sunya region of total darkness.

The sunya region extends trillions of miles. The soul first descends and then rises to a path shown by the True Guru. It then reaches a region which has four places which saints have not described anywhere. In these places reside countless souls which are exalted but have been banished from the presence of God. There is absolute peace and

¹⁰² Jojan is a measure of distance, where 1 Jojan is roughly 9 miles. Arab and crore are part of the Indian counting system: 1 arab = 1 billion, 1 crore = 10 million.

enjoyment, and the souls create their own miraculous plays but long to be one with God. There is a pre-ordained time when these souls too will merge with God. When the saints pass through this region, these souls draw immense enjoyment upon seeing their brothers. The saints too draw immense pleasure on meeting these souls and provide help to them. It's impossible to describe this region. Beyond this region lies the cave of whirling vortex. There is a sublime rotating vortex called 'Hindol' and souls ride on it. Around the vortex there are infinite blissful regions from where souls enjoy a constant melody of 'Allah Hu' and 'Sohung'.

The soul continues to a region of wondrous gardens of beauty and fragrance where emanates an indescribable melody of shabad and music from string instruments. Here each tree is of immeasurable size and suns and moons are studded like flowers on these trees. Souls play around on these trees like birds. Traveling further the soul enters the region of Truth which is filled with light and splendor. Here there are regions of beauty, regions of unobservable, unreachable and indescribable Lord. This is the destination of saints and everything goes quiet here and I too shall remain quiet about these regions.

O the ones who are in love with Nanak! This is what his saints are like. The ones who stopped at the very first region and thought they had reached God, what can they tell others? Only a saint who has traveled beyond can talk about the other regions. What can somebody tell people stuck in the lower regions? They believe they have found God; they lack the faith to listen to somebody who is capable of describing beyond what they have seen. People's limits of listening extend only as far as what they have seen or heard. Muslims are bound by the limits of the Quran and Hindus by the Vedas. It is painful for a person to listen to something which is beyond their belief system. So talk about these things only if you find an eager seeker from Nanak's house. There is nothing to be gained by sharing these experiences with others."

ਵਿਣੁ ਗਾਹਕੁ ਗੁਣੁ ਵੇਚੀਐ ਤਉ ਗੁਣੁ ਸਹਯੋ ਜਾਇ ॥

If you try to sell a virtue when there is no buyer, then it
becomes cheap

ਗੁਣੁ ਕਾ ਗਾਹਕੁ ਜੇ ਮਿਲੈ ਤਉ ਗੁਣੁ ਲਾਖੁ ਵਿਕਾਇ ॥

But if you meet a discerning buyer, then the same virtue sells
for hundreds of thousands – SGGS 1086

“I tell you the mystery of the saints: They must endure what they experience (i.e. not flaunt what they have learnt). Share their knowledge with worshipers and seekers of the Guru’s path. The one who toils will swim across this world ocean. He will behold the true Guru and will attain salvation. ‘ਇਉ ਕਰੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਅਪਣਾ

ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥ Thus says Nanak: O my mind, you are the very image of the Luminous Lord; recognize the true origin of yourself – SGGS 441’.”

47. ‘Tarika Shabad Surat’ (The path to Spiritual Awareness through Word)

Wow! Mysterious is the Mighty Lord’s power. God created such an illusion of his Maya that human beings while living in this darkness are utterly unaware of the reality. Guru Nanak came to this world to deliver the wonderful wisdom of the Divine Word to make us aware of the darkness.

“ਗਿਆਨ ਅੰਜਨੁ ਗੁਰਿ ਦੀਆ ਅਗਿਆਨ ਅੰਧੇਰ ਬਿਨਾਸੁ ॥

The Guru gave us the eye-drops of spiritual wisdom which can remove darkness of ignorance - SGGS 293.”

Naam is the medicine - these wonderful eye-drops. Once Naam enters our darkened mind, the darkness departs, and we experience spiritual light brighter than those of millions of suns. Merely acknowledging or vocalizing God’s existence does not produce this light. The light is produced only by Naam.

The question is where did this Naam spring from? The answer is that Guru, the spiritual light of God, brought this Naam to this world. Therefore, ones who have faith in the Guru and the ones who lovingly surrender at the Guru’s feet, only those partake in his Naam, only their singing and listening bears fruit.

ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਪਰਤੀਤਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਤਿਸ ਕਾ ਗਾਵਿਆ ਥਾਇ ਪਵੈ ਸੇ ਪਾਵੈ ਦਰਗਹ ਮਾਨੁ ॥

One who has faith - his singing is approved. He is honored in the Court of the Lord.

ਜੇ ਬਿਨੁ ਪਰਤੀਤੀ ਕਪਟੀ ਕੂੜੀ ਕੂੜੀ ਅਖੀ ਮੀਟਦੇ ਉਨ ਕਾ ਉਤਰਿ ਜਾਇਗਾ

ਝੂਠੁ ਗੁਮਾਨੁ ॥

Those who lack faith may close their eyes, hypocritically pretending and faking devotion, but their pretenses shall soon wear off – SGGS 734.

Those who lack faith can't possibly seek or yearn for a union, it is not possible for such people to meet God. The Guru has blessed us with the awareness of Naam through Gurbani. Singing Gurbani is remembering the virtues of the Virtuous One. There is no separation between the virtues and the virtuous. The separation exists between the speaker's concentration and the virtues he is reciting. If the concentration did not completely immerse into the virtues, then it is difficult to envision the identity of the Virtuous One.

Singing Gurbani has a magnetic effect on our concentration. This is the reason why the Guru has proclaimed that Kirtan is supreme in today's age.

ਕਲਜੁਗ ਮਹਿ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਪਰਯਾਨਾ ॥ In this Dark Age of Kali Yuga, the
Kirtan of the Lord's Praises is supreme – SGGS 1075

That is why the Guru has commanded his Sikhs:

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਗਾਵਹ ਭਾਈ ॥ ਓਹ ਸਫਲ ਸਦਾ ਸੁਖਦਾਈ ॥

Chant the Word of the Guru's Bani, My brothers. That is always
rewarding and peace-giving – SGGS 628.

While reading, singing and contemplating Gurbani, we have to keep reminding ourselves that we are singing the praises of the Creator. If our concentration wanders off while reciting gurbani, then we know that our mind is thinking about the qualities of an entity other than God. In that moment, we are not seeking the One God instead we are seeking one of his creations in duality.

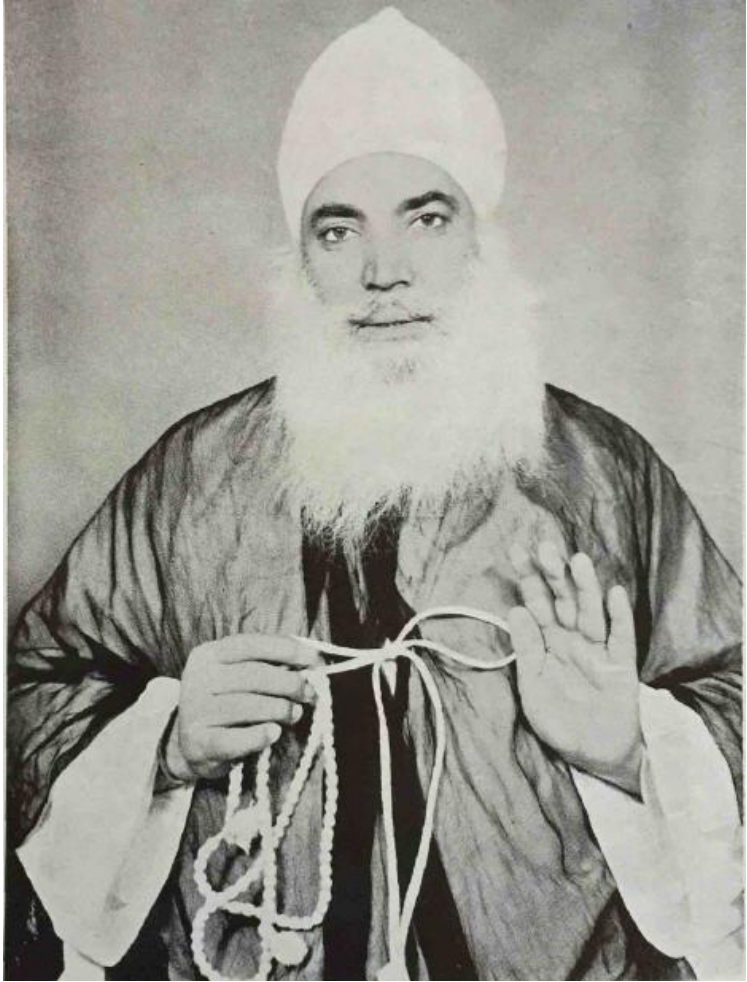
It's important to always remain immersed in Gurbani and Naam to be one with God. The ones who recite Naam with every breath, the Guru's

light always shines in their minds, they see the Creator everywhere and all the time.

Those who fall in love with Gurbani, they are blessed with rays of His light, as this love strengthens so does the light of God in their mind. The true Guru has blessed countless with this light, he has the ability to bless, and he will always bless. If we remain without the Guru's blessing even after taking birth in his family, then we have not understood the true importance of our human life. In which case the Guru has warned us:

ਪਉੜੀ ਛੁੜਕੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਹਾਥਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਅਹਿਲਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਗਵਾਇਆ ॥

He misses the step of the ladder, and this opportunity will not come into his hands again; his priceless life is wasted, uselessly
– SGGS 796.



The End

My Recollections of my Father - 1902 to Nov 12, 1969 –

**Afterword by Professor Mohinder Pal Singh Bedi, the Son
of Sant Prithipal Singh**

After going through my father's manuscript, I came to know the background of my father, his parents' and grandparents' names, the village he came from and the encounters he had with his family when he expressed his desire to become a follower of Guru Nanak.



MPS Bedi (second from left)

There was a natural craving for me to find out my Dad's ancestors, so, armed with this information, I approached the Pakistan High Commissioner in London and booked a private meeting. I explained the sensitivity of visiting the Syed family in Mirpur of Pakistan Kashmir and that I was a visible practicing Sikh. I did not wish to invoke any religious and family tension. However, the High Commissioner invited me after two weeks to inform me that likewise, my Muslim relatives were well educated, broad-minded, in high positions that one of my relatives was a Deputy Commissioner at Mirpur in Azad Kashmir and that they were looking forward to my visit. I became very excited to meet my father's family.

My respected sister-in-law Mrs. Manjit Kaur Bansal from Los Angeles, USA offered to accompany me as she had a great respect for my father. When we landed in Islamabad in 1993, we were pleasantly surprised that one of my Dad's nephews who was a Deputy Commissioner in Mirpur was personally there along with other relatives to greet us.

My journey from Islamabad to Mirpur was very emotional. On arrival at Mirpur, we were delighted to meet a large number of my father's relatives who invited us to their homes for dinner and to socialize. I

found all of them very liberal minded and most hospitable. We exchanged gifts.

My father's actual village is "Syed Da Gurha" that has been flooded by the Mangla Dam. But in January the water had receded, so we set to drive to the village with my cousin.

This village is only 3 miles from Mirpur. This village along with other surrounding villages was given to honor my dad's grandfather Pir Bakar Ali Shah's services as he occupied a very high position in the court of Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir.

As I walked on the footpath leading to the village, it appeared I was walking on the footprints of my father. We saw a big mansion that belonged to Bakar Ali Shah, a magnificent Mosque that he built and the graveyard where all ancestors were buried. I picked up "Nanak Shahi bricks" from each of these places as sweet memory and brought these back with me to London as a memorial to my Dad.

I left Mirpur after a stay of ten days. It satisfied my inner urge to meet most of the father's relatives, who mostly lived in the street primarily occupied by Syed families. I now realize the courage that my Dad must have required to leave all those comforts for his immense love of Guru Nanak's teaching that kept him inspired all through his life.

My relatives from Pakistan remain continually in touch with me, and we respect each others' faith and convictions. Whenever they visit London, they come and do *sajda* (pay respect) to my father's large size portrait that hangs in my lounge.

My father was a seeker of truth right from the early years of his life. As he read the book from a library in Medina *Sihayto Baba Nanak Fakir* he began to peruse Guru Nanak's mission and studied Guru Nanak's philosophy in depth. He became convinced that Guru Nanak's spiritual message is a complete philosophy of life and answers all the questions that a seeker of truth is looking for. He came to Lahore Gurudwara Dehra Sahib in Punjab in 1933 and took Khande De Pahul with his family from Singh Sahib Achhara Singh. From then on he was called

Prithipal Singh instead of Syed Mushtaq Hussain Shah. His son became Sardar Bhagat Singh from Mahmood Hussain Shah. Bhagat Singh, who was also known as Master Mohan Singh became in charge of Guru Ram Das Niwas, Amritsar, in later life. Besides this, he was the greatest Gateka Master ever known in Punjab after Baba Gian Singh. My brother, Bhagat Singh, died on 14th February 1980 in Guru Ram Das Niwas, Amritsar.

After joining Sikh congregation my father had embarked upon a mission to spread Guru Nanak's Doctrines. Sikh Jagat would listen to his lectures on Guru Nanak's spiritual teachings of One God and love of humanity



Sant ji in UK with Guru's khanda from first pahul in 1699

as Guru Nanak exchanged his thoughts with various Pirs and Hazrats during his journey to Makkah.

In 1934, Baba Prithipal Singh Syed's wife Inderjeet Kaur (nee Syed Gulzar Begum) died at Panja Sahib. Soon after, my dad's marriage to my mother Mata Raj Kaur was solemnized. It is through this union, my other five siblings were born. We did not have a fixed abode, and my father was propagating Guru Nanak's mission through his lectures from town to town Gurduaras. It was only in 1940 that we settled in Amritsar. In 1946 we moved to Patiala, our present residence.

My father quickly grasped the Punjabi language, studied Sri Guru Granth Sahib with meaning. In 1966, The Management Committee of Gurduara Singh Sabha Southall, London invited my father for Sikhi Parchar. London was an International city.

My father initiated 51 Shri Akhand Path Sahib for world peace and universal brotherhood at Gurduara, The Green Southall. Since this was a small place for Sikh worship, the Committee under Dad's inspiration bought a new building at Havelock Rd that now constitutes present Gurduara Singh Sabha. It was previously a milk dairy.

In 1967, as my dad was planning to return to India, he was approached by Sikh Sangat from Kabul if he could visit them on the way back to India.

On arrival, in Kabul my father was very impressed with the love of Sikhi amongst Kable Sadh Sangat. They enjoyed father's lectures both in Panjabi and Farsi, and many Muslims were astonished to note how well he could explain Qurane Sharif as well for love of humanity.

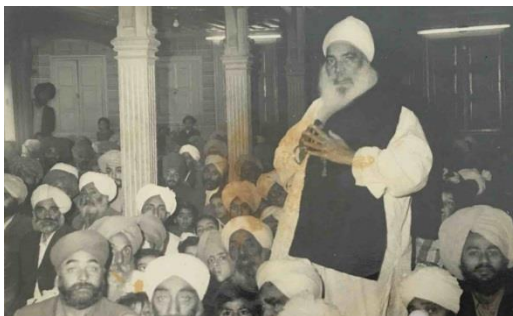


Sant ji in a Gurudwara in Kabul

My father along with members of Kable Sangat met King Zair Shah who was very impressed to note my Dad's competence both in the Quran and Guru Granth Sahib. He was impressed to learn Guru Nanak's love of humanity.

It is at this meeting that Shah of Afghanistan permitted first time to hoist Sikh Nishan Sahib on the 17 gurduaras in Afghanistan. Earlier, only Afghani flag was required to be hoisted on all public buildings.

In September 1969, Gurduara Sahib Kanpur invited my Dad on the 500 birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. My Dad again initiated Akhand Path Sahib for World Peace and began to preach Guru Nanak's Mission. This was to be his last stoppage in life and his last mission.



Sikh Sangat in Kabul

He passed away amongst Sadh Sangat after doing Katha on 12 November 1969 in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib Ji, his ultimate soul mate. All Sadh Sangat in Kanpur gave him their most loving and touching farewell.

Thus came the end of a remarkable Sikh missionary Baba Prithipal Singh Syed, a true disciple of Guru Nanak born in 1902.

I hope his lectures and manuscript on Guru Nanak's Journey to Makkah continue to inspire others with love of humanity and peace. I am personally indebted to my dad that at the time of my birth I had Waheguru Grace upon me with a Sikhi way of life. I hope and pray: "Sir Javey te Javey Mera Sikhi Sidik Ne Javey" ("If my head were to roll, let it be, as long as my Sikhism remains intact") till the end of my life journey.

Page 16 GAZETTE Wednesday, October 24, 1990

Bomb threats

FRANK of bomb threats against his business in the area of the city. He is currently under a 24-hour security watch. He is currently under a 24-hour security watch. He is currently under a 24-hour security watch.



90172

By Jo Francis

MEMBERS of the Sikh community and representatives from the Hindu, Moslem and Christian faiths flocked in their hundreds to pay their last respects to Mata Raj Kaur, a leading campaigner for world peace.

Her son, Prof Paul Bedi, entertained world renowned religious leaders, among around 1,000 guests from the local community, including Hayes and Harlington

Tributes to peace veteran

MEMBERS of the Sikh community and representatives from the Hindu, Moslem and Christian faiths flocked in their hundreds to pay their last respects to Mata Raj Kaur, a leading campaigner for world peace.

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90171



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Brunel discovery

RESEARCHERS have discovered a hidden chamber in the Brunel building in London. The chamber is believed to contain the remains of a person who died in the building in the 19th century.

Duncan will

THE former Prime Minister, James Callaghan, will be buried in the same place as his wife, Mary. The funeral will take place in the same place as his wife's funeral.

Mata Raj Kaur wife of Sant ji passed away on Oct 3, 1990. Left a tribute to Mata ji in Gazette

Appendix A – Summary of Evidence of Guru’s Journeys to the Middle East

There are posts and videos on the internet, mostly by our Muslim brothers denying that there is any historical truth to Guru Nanak’s journeys through the Middle East. Professor W.H. McLeod also questions the veracity of Guru Nanak’s journey to Makkah. To make his case, he asserts no non-Muslim has ever been allowed in the precincts of the City of Makkah, let alone allowed to enter the holy Kaaba. McLeod overlooks all other evidence, including the fact that the Guru was dressed as a Muslim pilgrim, and that sixteenth-century Makkah was a desert city which was not subject to the level of management and control that it is today.

What more, before Wahhabi control which started in 1923, Makkah had been managed, since the thirteenth century, under the much more liberal Hanafi rule of the Ottoman Empire. In the Hanafi school, it is permitted for non-Muslims to enter all mosques, including the Haram of Makkah, as they banned idolaters only based on the Quranic verse 9:28 “O you who believe! The idolaters only are unclean. So let them not come near the Inviolable Place of Worship after this their year.”

This stance is validated by an Ottoman imperial *furman* issued during the reign of Indian Mughal Emperor Akbar (1556-1605AD) which proclaimed: “No Muslim and believer in the unity of God should be hindered in any way if he wishes to visit the Holy Cities and circumambulate the luminous Ka’ba.” 42. M.D., vol. 6, f. 17, firman no. 39, 1564-5, quoted by Faroqhi, op. cit. 147.

The evidence to support the Guru’s travels through the Middle East is very strong. It is unfortunate that much of the physical evidence (buildings, stone tablets, manuscripts, etc.) is being destroyed either purposefully or through neglect. The Guru’s monument at Baghdad was destroyed during the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion by the United States army in 2003.

In Saudi Arabia, especially around Makkah and Medina, the Wahhabi administration has systematically destroyed religious and historical sites which do not fit their definition of Islam. In this pursuit, Wahhabis do not even spare Islamic heritage and evidence linked to the Prophet and his family.

As George Rentz notes: “The Wahhabi ‘ulema’ (body of religious scholars) viewed local religious practices as unfounded superstition superseding codified religious sanction that was considered a total corruption of religion and the spreading of heresy. What followed was a removal of the physical infrastructure, tombs, mausoleums, mosques and sites associated with the family and companions of Muhammad (p. 139) [1].¹⁰³”

It is important to research and document evidence related to Guru Nanak’s life before it disappears completely. I have compiled some of this evidence in Appendices of this book.

¹⁰³ The Wiki site “Destruction of Early Islamic Heritage Sites in Saudi Arabia” provides a partial list of famous mosques and sites destroyed by Wahhabis. The list includes some of the sites referenced by Sant Prithipal Singh in this book. For example, the Tomb of Eve in Jeddah was sealed with concrete in 1975. [41]

A.1 Route of Guru Nanak's Middle Eastern Journey Based on Historical References



Probable route taken by Guru Nanak Dev Ji (base image of map is from Google)

Important Places	Historical Places and References Related to Guru's Visit
Talwandi, Sultanpur, Multan, Lakhpat, Karachi	Meharban Janamsakhi, Historical Gurudwara at Lakhpat
Hinglaj	Puratan Janamsakhi, Meharban, Bhai Bala Janamsakhi, Historical monument at Hinglaj
Aden	Historical monument outside the fort
Jeddah	Monument of Nanak Shah Qalandar near the Tomb of Eve
Makkah	Taajudin – Sihayato Baba Nanak Shah Fakir , Zainul Abidin – Twarikhe Arab, Varan Bhai

	Gurdas, Puratan, Meharban, Bhai Bala, Makkahy Medina Di Gost, Dwelling of Nanak Shah – Guru’s Kharav (wooden shoe) was kept here (this dwelling is close to the Dwelling of Baba Farid), Another Memorial with a dome built in the middle of the city – Guru’s aasa (walking staff) was kept here
Medina	Taajudin, Bhai Gurdas, Meharban, Bhai Bala, Makkahy Medina Di Gost. A house where Guruji’s Kharav and Japuji Sahib pothi is kept. According to Mushtaq Hussein, he visited this house and talked to the owner Mehboob Ibne Jaffer who still followed Guruji.
Amara, Kufa, Kai Kai	Taajudin, Masjide Wali Hind in Amara, Memorial of Nanak Wali Hind outside Kufa in a cemetery near Karbala, Platform of Nanak Wali Hind in Kai Kai by Furat Canal – Karoon’s needle was kept here
Baghdad	Taajudin, Pir Abdul Rehman - Guniya-Ut-Salehin, Bhai Gurdas, Janamsakhi Bhai Mani Singh, Guru’s shrine in the cemetery, Guru’s well in the same cemetery, Stone slab with inscription (destroyed in 2003), Stone slab with inscription about the Guru and Pir Behlol (seen by Swami Ananda Acharya)
Khorram	Taajudin wrote that he separated from Guruji in Baghdad and went back to Medina as Guruji and Mardana left for Khorram
Kandhar	Bhai Bala
Kabul, Jalalabad, Peshawar, Tila Bal Nath, Talwandi	Puratan, Meharban, Guru’s shrines in Kabul and Jalalabad

A brief description of the historical buildings referenced above, as well as written accounts of Guru Nanak's travels is provided below.

A.2 Guru Nanak's Commemoration Places in Baghdad

Swami Ananda Acharya, a *Sanyasi* (a sect of monks in Hinduism) living in Switzerland wrote a book of English poetry, *Snow-birds*, which was published by MacMillan in 1919. In this book, there is a poem about Guru Nanak and Bahlol, which was inspired by a stone inscription Ananda Acharya came across in a building outside Baghdad.

According to Ananda ji, the inscription in Arabic, dated 912 *Hijri*, read: “Here spake the Hindu Guru Nanak to Fakir Balol, and for these sixty winters, since the Guru left Iran, the soul of Balol has rested on the Master’s word, like a bee poised on a dawn-lit honey-rose.”

The famous Sikh organization ‘Chief Khalsa Diwan’ sent historian Karam Singh to pre-WWI Baghdad to research places related to Guru Nanak¹⁰⁴. Karam Singh said that there is a place built in the memory of Abdul Kadar Jilani outside Baghdad in the north-east of the city, where Guruji had stayed. The inscription seen by Ananda ji was likely in this place. However, Karam Singh could not visit this place because non-Muslims were not allowed. Karam Singh, however, talked about another commemoration place for the ‘Hindi Pir’ to the west of the city built near the Baghdad-Samara railway line.

During the First World War when British and Indian armies conquered Baghdad, Sikhs discovered the place where Guru Nanak had his discourse with Bahlol. It lies to the west of the town, between the old graveyard to the north and the present Baghdad-Samara railway line to the south.

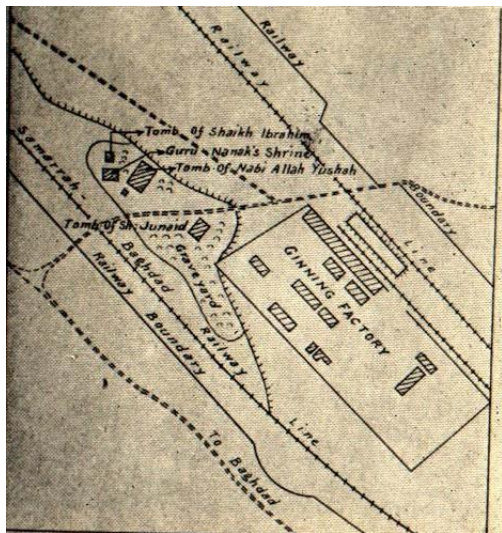
¹⁰⁴ The newspaper Khalsa Samachar, July 4 1918

Dr. Kirpal Singh, then a captain in the Indian Medical Service, also saw it during the war, and he, in his letter, dated October 15, 1918, described it as follows¹⁰⁵:



1918 Photograph of Guru Nanak's Shrine in Baghdad

"It is really a humble looking building and known to very few people except Sikhs. To some Arabs, it is known as well by the name of 'Tomb of Bahlol'. You enter the building by a small door, on which something is written in Arabic, not visible to a casual visitor. Even with attention it is difficult to read. I could not read it hence could not copy it. I have taken the photograph of the outside, which I shall forward to you in due course.



1931 Map of Baghdad Showing Location of Guru Nanak's Shrine

Entering the building, you come to a brick paved passage going to your right straight into the room (with a verandah), wherein you find the tomb and the raised platform. In the courtyard

¹⁰⁵ The Divine Master, by Sewaram Singh. Sewaram Singh was the brother of Captain Dr. Kirpal Singh, IMS, who was in Baghdad in 1918. P155 [42]

there are a few trees, mostly pomegranates.”

In the building a stone with the following inscription in Turkish was found:

“Korla Murad Aildi Hazrat Rab Majid, Baba Nanak Fakir Aulah Nake Imarte Jadid, Yadeelar Imdad Aidub Kildi Ke Tarikhena, Yapdee Nawab Ajra Yara Abee Murid Sayeed. Sun 917 Hijri.”

The stone with this inscription was turned into rubble during the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

The above inscription is written in a mixture of old Turkish and



Inscription on the Stone Slab in the Shrine

Arabic which is difficult to

translate. The following is one of many translations available:

“Behold! How a wish has been fulfilled by God the benefactor. Baba Nanak’s building is suddenly built, Seven *pirs* helped and this date 917 *Hijri* was set [for the building] so that the memory of his fortunate

disciple could continue as a holy place established on earth. Year 917 Hijri¹⁰⁶

A.3 When did the Guru Visit the Arab Countries?

There is no consensus in estimating the period of the fourth udassi (travel to the Arab countries). The common periods listed in literature are: 1504-1507 AD, 1510-1512 AD, 1518-1521 AD and 1510-1521 AD.

The following items and events help us in estimating the timeframe of this travel:

- The most compelling date of Guruji's presence in Baghdad is provided by the stone inscription in the cemetery – Hijri 917 (1511-1512 AD).
- Swami Ananda ji discovered another stone inscription with a date of 912 Hijri, documenting Bahlol and Guru Nanak in Baghdad. Subsequent visitors from India could not locate this encryption. It is possible that Swami ji may have misread the date on the inscription which had faded over the centuries, the number 7 '√' in Arabic, can be easily confused with 2 '٢'.

¹⁰⁶ In order to support his thesis that Guru Nanak did not go to the Middle East, Dr McLeod made a feeble attempt at discrediting the above inscription. He enlisted the help of Dr V.L. Menage, reader in Turkish at the School of Oriental and African Studies at London to read and interpret the stone inscription. Dr Menage concedes that first six or seven syllables in the second line read Baba Nanak Faqir or Baba Nanak-i-Faqir, but says that this does not fit into the meter and should be ignored. Dr. Menage also confessed: "which I cannot understand is the passage" ... "I regret that I am unable to suggest the correct reading." The above was good enough for Dr. McLeod to conclude that the Guru didn't go to Baghdad. Dr. McLeod had no qualms with ignoring the second line in the stone inscription or overlooking Dr Menage's self-confessed inability to read and interpret the inscription.

- Guru Nanak established the town of Kartarpur, Pakistan in 1522 AD (SGPC.Net), which means that Guruji was back in Punjab before 1522 AD.
- According to Taajudin, Guruji started his return journey through Khorram, Iran in 917 Hijri. If this is true, then Guruji would have reached Punjab around 1512-1513 AD.
- There are memorials to Guru Nanak Dev ji built in Nepal and Sikkim which date his visit there in 1515/1516 AD (refer to Appendix C for details). This implies that the Guru must have returned to Punjab around 1512-1513 as suggested by Taajudin, and later on gone to Nepal.
- Guruji was a witness to Babur sacking Saidpur (now called Eminabad). According to Donald G Dawe and Sahib Singh Sethi, the sacking happened in 1521 AD, but according to Sri Ram Sharma, it was after 1523 AD.
- Some historians believe that Guruji was passing through Saidpur as he was returning from the Middle East. Considering the date of establishment of Kartarpur (1522 AD), it would be possible only if sacking happened in 1521 AD. The other possibility is that Guruji returned to Punjab around 1513 AD and went to Saidpur on a visit not linked to the travel to the Middle East.
- If Guruji did not return to Punjab until 1521AD, then it's not clear what happened during the ten-year period between 1511 and 1521 AD. There are the following two theories to explain this anomaly:
 - According to Syed Chan Shah Pir Qadri the Guru remained at Baghdad for six years [2].
 - Major Gurmukh Singh has tried to explain the gap of ten years by claiming that the date on the stone inscription is 927 instead of 917 Hijri [3] . According to

the Major, the letter ‘1’ in the inscription is on a slant and may be mistaken as ‘2’.

- However, the rest of the inscription does not support the hypothesis of 927 Hijri. If the different words in the fourth line describing the date (Yapdee Nawab Ajra Yara Abee Murid Sayeed), are evaluated based on *Abjad*¹⁰⁷ math, they are respectively (27 + 59 + 205 + 215 + 13 + 258 + 244) which adds to 917, which matches the actual date written at the end of the inscription.

Conclusion:

Based on the above-listed events, it is certain that Guruji was in Baghdad in 1511 AD. Therefore the fourth udassi likely started around 1509-1510 AD. Most likely the Guru was back in Punjab around 1513 AD (based on Taajudin’s account). This will make it possible for Guruji to be in Nepal and Sikkim around 1515/1516 AD, and establish Kartarpur in 1522. This would also imply that the Guru’s visit to Saidpur was not part of his return journey from the Middle East.

¹⁰⁷ Arabic writers when describing a year, used letters from the alphabet (Alph, Be, Jeem, Dal, etc.) in their words so that if the sequence of the letters is written, it adds to the year being described.

A.4 Monuments in the Middle East Dedicated to Guru Nanak

Mushtaq Hussein writes that he personally visited memorials built in the name of Nanak. He describes: “On the west side of Makkah there are three memorial dwellings named after Hazrat Sultan Bahu, Sheikh Farid Sahib, and Nanak Shah. In the Nanak Shah dwelling, Guru’s kharav (wooden sandal) is kept in his memory.” Sant Ram of Budail described the exact same dwelling in Makkah.

Arjun Muni records Sant Ram's visit to Makkah and Medina and other places in the Middle East in his book, *Gurdwara Darpan*, published at Lahore in 1923. On page 42, he writes: “Makkah is forty kos from Jeddah. About one-and-a-half miles towards the East of Ka’aba, on the road to Amra, there is a mosque of Baba Nanak Wali Hind Pir, close to Baba Farid’s mosque. Here in the mosque was the first discussion with Rukun-ud-din held.”

Mushtaq Hussein writes that he visited Guru’s memorials in Aden, Jeddah, Makkah, Medina, Kufa and Kai Kai. He describes: “Another beautiful memorial building with a dome is in the middle of the town, housing Guru’s aasa (walking staff). I [Mushtaq Hussein] visited these places during my visit to Makkah.”

Giani Gian Singh has corroborated the existence of the same buildings in *Twareekh Guru Khalsa*, Volume 1, p. 182 (authored in 1892): “Five very famous houses built in the memory of Guru Nanak in Aden, Jeddah, Makkah, Medina, and Baghdad. Four of these places were under the sponsorship of the Ottoman Empire. The priests and caretakers of these houses were employees of the Turkish ruler. Except for Aden, the other four served *langar* (free kitchen) paid for by the ruler. All the houses were shaped like a mosque with a golden dome.

Inside each, there was a platform. The priests wore a blue *kachh* which covered the knee but not the calf.”

The Giani based his account on descriptions provided by many Hajj travelers from Punjab which included Hajji Gulam Ali of Rangpura, Hajji Gulam Muhayudin Maulvi, Hajji Gulam Mohammad son of Ilahi Baksh of Sialkot, Hajji Fateh Khan, shipbroker from Bombay, Shahbaz Khan from Kabul, Hajji Kutab Din of Lahore and Hajji Imam Baksh of Delhi.

A.5 Guru Nanak’s Platform at Kai Kai

According to Taajudin’s account: “[Guruji] reached a town named Kai Kai, the capital of Karoon Hamid, an Egyptian Khalifa. The Guru sat outside the royal citadel.”

Mushtaq Hussein visited this spot and wrote, “On the south side of Kai Kai, outside the town, there is a platform built by the Furat Canal. This platform is known as the memorial of ‘Nanak Wali Hind’. Karoon’s needle is kept at this memorial for the faithful to behold.”

Gyani Gian Singh in *Twareekh Guru Khalsa*, Volume 1 page 195 describes the same platform : “After leaving Medina, [the Guru] travelled through Ajara, Mashad, and Karbala meeting famous Muslim saints along the way and reached the town of Kai Kai in Egypt (this is where Sultan Karoon Hamid lived) and sat near the fort. Here, outside the south gate near the canal on the road to the military garrison is built Nanak Wali’s platform. In 1885 AD the Sikh Army Number 15 saw this platform when the army was in the area (sent by the British) to quell the Mehdi revolt. The Army arranged *Karah Prashad* of Nine Hundred Rupees at this platform. This Nanak Wali Platform is well known in this area.”

Note: Kai Kai falls in present-day Iraq near Kufa (see the map of Guru's travel at the beginning of this Appendix). During the Guru's time, this territory was under Egyptian rule.

A.6 Siyahato Baba Nanak Shah Fakir by Taajudin Naqshbandi

Siyahato Baba Nanak Shah Fakir written around 1511 is likely the oldest known text on Guru Nanak's life. The author, Taajudin Khalaf Baha-ud-din Mufti Tariqa Naqshbandi, was a Persian writer familiar with Arabic. As suggested by his name, Taajudin belonged to the Sufi order related to Sunni Islam, which got its name from its founder, Baha-ud-Din Naqashband Bukhari (1318-1389 AD).

Taajudin remained with Guruji for one-and-a-half to two years between the period 1510 to 1512 AD. He documented in detail, the Guru's journey between Makkah, Medina and Baghdad. Taajudin separated from Guruji after Baghdad and returned to Medina where he completed his manuscript and entrusted it to a local library.

Taajudin's manuscript was discovered by Mushtaq Hussein (later Syed Sant Prithipal Singh) around 1927, in Medina, while he was studying there to become a moulvi.

Currently, the original document is not available. Mushtaq Hussein carried the manuscript with him, showed it to his father, and brought the original to India upon his return. Before converting to Sikhism, Mushtaq showed this manuscript to Jathedar Achhar Singh in Lahore. Before acquiring a permanent address in Patiala, in 1946, Sant Prithipal Singh ji and his family were constantly on the move. It is unknown if the document remained with Sant ji through these moves (considering he lost a lot of his belongings at Village Tarsike). Sant ji, in his manuscript in 1951 has extensively included Arabic/Persian quotes from Taajudin's manuscript. It is unknown whether Sant ji referred to

his notes or Taajudin's original manuscript. If Taajudin's manuscript still exists, it is most likely at Sant ji's house in Patiala.

A.7 Twarikhe Arab by Zainul Abidin

According to Taajudin's document, Zainul Abidin was one of the key figures in Guruji's sangat at Makkah. His account covered Guru's visit as well as the life of Arab Sikhs after Guruji left Makkah.

Zainul Abidin narrated in detail the shahidi of Rukan-ud-din which occurred a few months after the Guru's departure. Based on the above events, this document must have been written shortly after 1510 AD. According to Mushtaq Hussein, this document was 300 pages. Mushtaq did not indicate where he saw this document. However, he writes about meeting a descendant of Zainul Abidin in Makkah in 1930; it is likely that this document was in the custody of this descendant. This book provides Arabic excerpts of this document. The current location of this document is unknown.

A.8 Guniya-Ut-Salehin, by Pir Abdul Rehman

Pir Abdul Rehman was the Pir Dastgir of Baghdad around the time of Guru's visit. He was head of the Qadriyya Sect established by Pir Dastgir Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (died 1166 AD in Baghdad). During the Guru's visit, Baghdad had just fallen under the Safavid rule (1508 to 1534 AD), and the head of the Qadriyya sect was appointed chief Sufi of Baghdad and the surrounding lands. Sant Prithipal Singh ji has included some Arabic quotes from the Pir's document. It is unknown if Mushtaq Hussein had access to a copy of this document or to a secondary source. A copy of this document is not available among Sikh circles.

The Qadriyya sect has strong connections with India and Sikhism. Syed Mohamad, also known as Bandagi Mohammad (died 1517 AD), had come from Baghdad and settled in India (p4 [4]).

“Mian Mir, a devoted friend of Guru Arjan, was born and brought up at Baghdad among these Qadiriya saints, and it is quite possible that as Guru Nanak’s son lived up to the time of Mian Mir, the Dastgir Pirs’ son might have been living up to the time of Mian Mir and gave him firsthand account of Guru Nanak’s spiritual influence.

It is likely that even before coming to India Mian Mir had been strongly influenced by Guru Nanak’s faith and beliefs. That accounts for the deep reverence in which he held Guru Arjan and his son, and also for the decision of Guru Arjan to ask, Mian Mir to lay the foundation of the Golden Temple at Amritsar. This actually accounts for the close relations and the profound friendship between Mian Mir and Guru Arjan and Guru Hargobind. [5]”

A.9 Varan (Ballads) by Bhai Gurdas

Bhai Gurdas ji (1555 – 1636 AD) is probably the oldest and most reliable biographer of Guru Nanak in India. His account in *Vars* is brief but extremely valuable on two counts:

- He was born not long after Guru Nanak’s passing (less than two decades), which means he had access to first-hand accounts of the Guru.
- He was better placed than most to know Sikh affairs. He was orphaned and was raised by his Uncle Guru Amar Das ji from the age of 12. He was a maternal uncle of the fifth Guru.
- Bhai Gurdas lived with the third, fourth, fifth and the sixth Gurus. He was exposed to the Sikh affairs and leadership of the time and was close to Baba Budha ji, who had spent time with Guru Nanak. Bhai Gurdas ji was an accomplished writer. He

knew multiple languages including Persian and served as a missionary of Gurmat in India and Afghanistan.

Bhai Gurdas ji makes specific mention of the Guru's visit to Makkah, Medina, and Baghdad. Guru Nanak's sojourns and discourses in Makkah are described in Pauri (stanza) 32-34, and Baghdad in Pauri 35-37. In these Pauris, the following are some key details described by Bhai Gurdas ji:

- During his visit to Makkah, the Guru was dressed as a haji faqir with blue clothes, held a walking staff, a book under his arm and was carrying his prayer mat and a *lota* (jug). (Pauri 32.1-2)
- Guru Nanak was sleeping with his feet towards Kaaba when an angry mullah named Jeevan confronted him. Jeevan dragged Guru's feet away from Mehrab and saw Makkah move following Guru's feet (Pauri 32.4-8)
- There was a dialog on religion between the Guru and Qazis and mullahs from Makkah (Pauri 33)
- Wooden sandal of Baba Nanak was kept as a memory, and he was worshipped in Makkah (Pauri 34.1)
- Baba Nanak accompanied by Mardana reached Baghdad and stayed outside the city (Pauri 35.1-2)
- Pir Dastgir met Guru Nanak (Pauri 35.6)
- During questions and answers with the Pir, the Guru explained that there is no end to skies and netherworlds (Pauri 36.3)
- The Pir requested a proof of the endless worlds. The Guru took the son of Pir Dastgir asked him to close his eyes and in a wink of an eye accompanied the Pir's son to endless galaxies. (Pauri 36.4-7).

A.10 Janamsakhi by Sodhi Meharban

Sodhi Meharban was the son of Baba Pirthi Chand (the elder brother of Guru Arjan). Baba Pirthi Chand started a separate sect (Mina) which was hostile to Guru Arjan and the subsequent Sikh Gurus. Meharban and his son Sodhi Hariji were both prolific writers of prose and poetry.

Similar to the Guru tradition, they wrote poetry under the name Nanak as Mohalla 7 and 8 (claiming to be the rightful seventh and eighth Gurus under Guru Nanak's lineage). This Janamsakhi was written around the early seventeenth century, probably around the same time as Varan Bhai Gurdas ji.

Despite the hostility with the House of Guru Arjan, Meharban's Janamsakhi is a valuable source of history of Guru Nanak. The original Janamsakhi was a collection of six books which contained 575 *goshits* (argumentative dialogs) only 288 dialogs are now available. A manuscript of this Janamsakhi is available at the Khalsa College Amritsar.

According to Meharban's Janamsakhi, the Guru's Middle Eastern journey covered Multan, Hinglaj (Baluchistan), Makkah, Sham (Syria), Rum (Turkey), Kabul (Afghanistan), Peshawar, Tila Bal Nath (District Jehlum) and Talwandi (modern day Nankana Sahib).

A.11 Puratan Janamsakhi, Author Unknown

Puratan Janamsakhi (meaning ancient or oldest Janamsakhi) is a composite work compiled and published by Bhai Vir Singh in 1926. This is based primarily on two old and similar manuscripts Hafizabad version and the Colebrook (Walayat Wali) version. H.T. Colebrook in 1815 AD took a manuscript of this *Janamsakhi* to the East India Company Library. Around 1872, Sikhs requested copies of this *Janamsakhi* and were obliged by Charles Aitcheson, the Lieutenant

Governor General of Punjab. Thus, it acquired the name *Walayat Wali* (Foreign) *Janamsakhi*.

The date of composition of this *Janamsakhi* has been worked out to be around 1634 AD (the time of the sixth Guru). The language, spelling, and location names used in this work, such as Saidpur in place of Eminabad, confirm its antiquity. This *Janamsakhi* also corroborates the Guru's visit to Makkah.

A.12 Bala Janamsakhi, Author Unknown

The text in *Bala Janamsakhi* claims that it was written by Bala Sandhu in 1592 at the time of the second Guru. However, the *Janamsakhi* contains references to terms, places and Gurbani which did not exist until a long time after the Second Guru. Historians believe that the *Bala Janamsakhi* was written around the mid-seventeenth century¹⁰⁸. This *Janamsakhi* is controversial because of its implausible claims of origin, and the haphazard order of places. This *Janamsakhi* on its own may not serve useful historical purpose, but supplemented by other sources, it can fill in some blanks. This *Janamsakhi* also narrates Guru Nanak's visit to Makkah.

A.13 Maccey Medine Di Gosht, Author Unknown

There are several different Punjabi manuscripts of *Maccey Medina Di Ghost* available in libraries in Punjab (11 were in the Sikh Reference Library before they were destroyed or stolen during the Indian Army's

¹⁰⁸ "The earliest available copy of it [Bala Janmsakhi] which was discovered recently from the house of one Pyare Lal of Delhi, a migrant from West Punjab, is dated 1715 Bikrami (1658 AD)", p 11 [43].

invasion of Harimandir Sahib in 1984¹⁰⁹). It's claimed that the original manuscript (no longer available) was in Persian¹¹⁰. Professor Kulwant Singh started his research in 1968 and after a long hiatus published his book *Macey Madine Di Gosht* in 1988 referencing 17 different old manuscripts. The different manuscripts are very similar with some questions/answers worded slightly differently or listed in a different order.



Burnt Sikh Reference Library in 1984

¹⁰⁹ The Sikh Reference Library contained rare books and manuscripts on Sikh religion, history, and culture. The Indian Army claimed that the library burnt down with all its contents on June 5, 1984. SGPC witnesses alleged that CBI had taken the contents of the library to the Amritsar Youth Club and the army burnt the Library afterwards. In 2003, Ranjit Nanda, a former inspector for the CBI turned whistleblower and revealed he was part of a five member team which scrutinized the documents at the CBI's makeshift office at Amritsar's Youth Club. He revealed that officials from his department were "desperately looking for a purported letter written by Indira Gandhi to Jarnail Singh Bhindrawale." Unable to locate the letter, the library was burnt as a cover-up. Nanda corroborated the SGPC version that contents of the library were catalogued and packed in 165 numbered gunnysacks and were loaded into army vehicles. On May 23, 2000 George Fernandez, the Defense Minister of India, in his letter to the SGPC acknowledged that army had given the contents of the library to the CBI. He advised the SGPC to approach the Ministry of Personnel under whose jurisdiction CBI falls. In 2004 SGPC moved the Punjab High Court which ordered the Central Government and the CBI to return the materials. In 2009, A.K. Antony, the Defense Minister of India claimed in the Parliament that the Army is no longer in possession of the materials taken from the library. Save a handful of office files and insignificant documents, the Indian Government to-date has not returned the contents of the library [44].

¹¹⁰ "According to Gyani Gyan Singh it [Maccay di Gosht] was first recorded in Persian by Sayyad Muhammed Gauns, a Sufi who met Guru Nanak at Makkah and was an eye witness. Bhai Bhana an Arora Sikh translated into Punjabi and Thakari. Then Bhai Dayal a Masand prepared a copy in Punjabi. [5]"

These manuscripts narrate Guru's travel to Makkah and Medina and outline *gosht* (argumentative dialog) between the Guru and various Islamic leaders. According to this document, the Guru met Shah Saraf on his travel between Jeddah and Makkah. In Makkah, the Guru and Mardana met: Rukan-ud-din (who was the head Qazi), Jeevan (who was carrying a broom when he discovered Guruji sleeping with his feet towards Kaaba), Imam Karim Din (Sadat), Pir Baha-ud-din Gaus, Pir Jalaldin Baghdadi and several other mullahs and qazis. Before Medina, the Guru met Karoon Hamid. In Medina, the Guru met four Imams: Imam Gaus-ul-alam or Gaud-ud-din, Imam Kudabdin, Imam Kamaludin and Imam Sayad Jamaludin. Kulwant Singh believes that this gosht was written in the second half of the seventeenth century [6].

A.14 Janamsakhi by Bhai Mani Singh

The latest Janamsakhi also called Gyan-Ratanavali is attributed to Bhai Mani Singh who wrote it with the express intention of correcting heretical accounts of Guru Nanak. Bhai Mani Singh was a Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh. Some Sikhs approached him with a request that he should prepare an authentic account of Guru Nanak's life. They urged Mani Singh that this task was essential as the Minas and others were circulating objectionable things in their version¹¹¹.

Bhai Mani Singh took Bhai Gurdas's Vaar as his basis and expanded it with the accounts he heard from Sikhs at the court of the Tenth Master.

At the end of the Janamsakhi, it is stated that the completed work was taken to Guru Gobind Singh Ji for his approval. Therefore, the date of this Janamsakhi is placed at the beginning of the eighteenth century

¹¹¹ "There were three great schisms of the Sikh religion which led to the falsification of old, or the composition of new Janamsakhis. The schismatics were known as the Udasis, Minas and Handalis. [45]"

(Guru Gobind Singh ji passed away in 1708 AD, and Bhai Sahib ji was martyred by Zakaria Khan in 1738 AD). The Indian Army destroyed four manuscripts kept at the Sikh Reference Library. Two manuscripts are at Khalsa College Amritsar and three in a private collection at Patiala. The oldest available manuscript is at Patiala and is dated 1721 AD.

Appendix B – Questions and Answers between Guru Nanak and Shah Saraf

The account of Guru Nanak meeting Shah Saraf is found in many Janamsakhis including Puratan Janamsakhi and B-40 Janamsakhi (named after the catalog number of the manuscript kept in The India Office Library, London).

At the time of Guru Hargobind ji (around the early 1600s), there was a proliferation of manuscripts which documented Guru Nanak's visit to Arabia and his dialog with famous Islamic leaders. Giani Gian Singh in Twarikh Guru Khalsa (authored in 1898) has listed the dialog between Guruji and Shah Saraf Vol1 p180 [7].

Kulwant Singh in his book *Meccey Medine Di Gost* (the Dialog of Makkah Medina), published by the Punjabi University, researched 17 historical manuscripts and compiled Guru's dialog with different people from Makkah and Medina. The dialog between Guruji and Shah Saraf in the form of questions and answers is provided in *Meccey Medine Di Gost* p36 [6].

Guruji and Mardana while walking to Makkah met Shah Saraf and his four hajji companions in the desert. The Guru's *fakiri* (saintly) attire caught Shah Saraf's attention. The Shah said to his companions, "Let us ask this fakir some probing questions about 'fakiri' (saintliness). If he answers correctly, then we know he is a true fakir, if not we will strip him of his hypocritical attire."

Shah Saraf approached the Guru and asked, "O Fakir, Who are you?" The Guru replied, "O Noble Darvesh! By definition a fakir is someone who has broken the relationship with this world and is a recluse.

Therefore, your question is inappropriate.” Shah Saraf was left speechless and went quiet for a while. Upon realizing that the Guru is no ordinary fakir, Shah Saraf decided to ask questions about fakiri.

The original dialog was in Persian. The following is an English translation based on the Punjabi translation provided in *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* and *Meccey Medine Di Gost*:

Q1 : What is the beginning for a Fakir (recluse) ?

A1: The beginning for a Fakir is to destroy one’s egoistic self.

Q2: Where does Fakiree end?

A2: The end is God.

Q3: What is the Key for a fakir [to open the door to God]?

A3: The Key is abhyass [simran or reiteration].

Q4: What is the safety tether or chain for a fakir? [to keep from falling away from God]

A4: Bandagi/worship.

Q5: What is the tomb for a fakir? [where should fakir reside to rest safely]

A5: Modesty or humility.

Q6: Where can a fakir find a chest? [where can one find the treasures]

A6: Sat Sangat (company of the True ones) is the chest.

Q7: What is the Light for a fakir? [what will show the path]

A7: Gian or guidance from Guru.

Q8: What is growth for a fakir? [What will grow us or is worth growing in us]

A8: Wisdom or learning.

Q9: What is happiness for a fakir?

A9: Sight [nothing short of meeting God will bring happiness].

Q10: What is Food [nourishment] for a fakir?

A10: Contentment [nothing else satiates]

Q11: What should a fakir wear?

A11: Truthfulness [only this type of cover will bring respect and grace]

Q12: What is the necklace of a Fakir?

A12: To be dead while living [to be mindful of death is the necklace]

Q13: What is the smoke [the slow-burning pile] for a fakir? [what provides warmth and comfort]

A13: Firm wisdom and an unwavering stance [faith].

Q14: What brings benefit to a fakir?

A14: Oneness

Q15: What is a head cover for a fakir?

A15: To live in the will [of God].

Q16: What is fakir's home?

A16: Being carefree

Q17: What is the conversation of a fakir?

A17: Truth

Q18: What is the boat for a fakir? [to ferry across this world ocean]

A18: Good deeds.

Q19: What is the loincloth of a fakir? [protection against desires]

A19: Chastity.

Q20: What liberates a fakir?

A20: Unshakable faith.

Q21: What is the core of life for a fakir?

A21: Justice

Q22: What is the existence for a fakir?

A22: To coexist harmoniously with all

Q23: What are the arms of a fakir? [what is strength]

A23: Friendship.

Q24: What should be the posture of a fakir? [what posture to use when sitting in Samadhi]

A24: To be [steadfast] like an iron spike.

Q25: What is a Journey for a fakir? [what to bring along while going through life]

A25: A fistful of air [remain detached].

Q26: What does God look like?

A26: Only one, only one [He is the only one – therefore, he is beyond comparison or description].

Shah Saraf was impressed with the above answers. He then said, “Many adopt the attire of a fakir and pretend that they are better than everybody else. One can’t become a fakir just by dressing like one. These fake people are neither family men nor recluse; they have gained nothing.

There is one more question in my mind. Could you please explain the purpose of things a fakir wears?”

The Guru said, “Listen O Shah Saraf. First, the fakiri has to grow inside - just like the essence of fruit which grows inside the tree before it becomes visible outside. For a true fakir, it does not matter whether he lives as a family man or a recluse. If one adopts the articles of a fakir (such as shaved head, a cap, a shroud, and a loincloth) but inside he remains attached like a family man, then these articles of fakiri cry out in dismay. They say, ‘O man! First become a fakir, otherwise, you have no right to wear us.’”

First, the cap spoke out: “Lack of hair is natural for babies. If you want a head without hair and wish to wear a cap, then give up hatred and favoritism and become innocent like a baby, otherwise, keep your hair uncut and tie a turban.”

Next, the shroud spoke: “I am a cover for a dead person. Wear me only if you exist without desires like a dead person. If you can’t break attachment to this world, then don’t wear me.”

Then the broom spoke: “I sweep garbage and clean a place. If you are prepared to sweep garbage of ill-deeds from your heart then keep me, otherwise not.”

The smoke said, “Do not burn me unless you are willing to burn your five evils.”

The bag said, “I hold things for others and keep nothing for myself. Keep me if you wish to be selfless.”

Similarly, the bowl, the staff, the loincloth, wooden sandals, and dust said, “If you want to keep us then you have to adopt our qualities. Otherwise remain a family man and earn an honest living and be useful to yourself and others.”

Shah Saraf was impressed by the answers, he concluded his discussion with the Guru and went back to his companions. Soon the Guru and Mardana also joined the Shah Saraf’s group. The hajjis, accompanying Shah Saraf, asked the Guru are you Muslim or Hindu? The Guru replied, “I am a Hindu fakir.” The hajjis then said, “You should not come with us. If a Hindu enters Makkah, he is killed, and because of you, we too will be branded criminals.” The Guru said, “We will leave your group before we enter Makkah, and we take responsibility of our own safety.” The hajjis said, “No, you have to leave us now.” The Guru said, “Mardana, let these people leave. If it’s destined, we will do

the hajj. Besides, this pilgrimage is fruitful only if one goes with grace, love, and service. You cannot be a hajji if you indulge in mockery, and carry contempt and resentment.”

The hajjis asked, “How do we receive grace? What qualities are necessary for performing a successful hajj?”

The Guru responded¹¹², “Those who remember God have grace – ones who forget have pain. Faithful is a friend – faithless pariah. Conceit is a curse – slandering is like blackening one’s own face. Honest person’s face glows – dishonest’s is blotted – thankless one’s is ugly-yellow. Falsehood is hell – truth is heavenly. The one caught in desires will come and go – the one above desires is a saint. Enlightened one is humble – ignorant is a savage. Meditation is above-all – contentment is saintliness – discontentment is a fraud. Use of force is oppression – harmony is sacred. Prayer is a treasure – lack of prayer is pain. Justice is pure – greediness is thievery – favoritism is dirt. Singing God’s praise is ablution – forgetting him is filth. Sweet recital of God’s name is the *azaan* (Muslim call to prayer) – God’s creation is the true miracle. Seeking God is obeying the prophet – straying from God is disowning the prophet. Compassionate one is a Darvish – cruel one a butcher. God sustains all. Sword is for the brave – justice is for the king. Wise is the man who has these qualities.”

The hajjis were awestruck, and said, “We are afraid of the religious fanatics; they are evil and don’t listen to logic. We know its easy to call ourselves Muslims, but becoming a true Muslim is very hard.” After this, the Guru and Mardana separated from Shah Saraf’s group.

¹¹² This response is in the form of a poem called ‘Hazar Nama’. Hazar Nama is attributed to Guru Nanak but is not found in SGGGS.

Appendix C – Guru Nanak in Nepal, Sikkim, Tibet, Bhutan, China and Ladakh

There are historical monuments, Sikh sangat, and documented references which indicate that Guru Nanak Dev ji visited Nepal, Tibet, Sikkim, Bhutan, Arunachal Pradesh, Burma and China. This leg of Guruji's journey has not been well known in India. In the latter half of the twentieth century many of these places have been discovered by Sikhs from India. A summary of these discoveries is provided below.

C.1 Finding Guru Nanak's memorials in Nepal in 1992¹¹³

Manjit Singh Saini was planning his wedding in Delhi when his family endured the Sikh massacre in November 1984. He turned to religion to cope with this tragedy. A few years later, he came across a reference about Guru Nanak Dev Ji's visit to Kathmandu, Nepal, but very little was known about this visit.

Manjit Singh decided to change that and in 1992 left for Nepal on a research mission. He stayed at the Rosy Hotel in Kathmandu and spent several days visiting religious places asking if anybody had heard of Guru Nanak. He got no leads.

Finally, he came across a garland weaver sitting in front of Pashupatinath Temple who told him about a bearded, long-haired man who did not smoke or chew tobacco. The weaver gave the address of the grocery shop where this man shopped.

Manjit Singh went to the shopkeeper and introduced himself and explained his mission. He inquired about the long-haired man. The shopkeeper told him that a person called Nem Muni visits his shop and

¹¹³ Summarized from Manjit Singh Saini's accounts [46]

a long time ago some Pir from India had visited his house. The shopkeeper did not know Nem Muni's address but promised to phone Manjit Singh when next time Nem Muni visits his shop.

Three days later the call came from the shopkeeper. Manjit Singh rushed to the grocery shop. The shopkeeper pointed him to Nem Muni who was loading groceries on his bicycle.

Manjit Singh greeted the man and asked him whether he worshipped Vishnu Ji or Shiv Ji since both these deities had long hair. Nem Muni looked at him from head to toe and said,

“Are you the Sikh from India?” Manjit Singh nodded yes.

Nem Muni said that Guru Nanak Dev Ji visited his house a long time ago and then got ready to leave. Manjit Singh was all excited and asked Nem Muni if he could go with him to see his house.

Nem Muni was a bit reluctant to take a stranger to his house but agreed when the shopkeeper confirmed that Manjit Singh came to Nepal for the sole purpose of finding the place where Guru Nanak had visited.

Nem Muni said, “I live ten miles away how are we going to get there?” Manjit Singh suggested that he will pedal the bicycle and Nem Muni could ride on the carrier. Nem Muni insisted to pedal instead and said, “I am used to the mountains, and we Nepalese don't get tired easily.”

With Manjit Singh on the carrier, they both set out to Nem Muni's house. On their way, Manjit Singh wanted to know how and when Guruji came to Nepal.

Nem Muni narrated the following story which had been told in his family from generation to generation.

C.1.1Nanak Muth

At one time, a severe drought caused famine leaving the King of Nepal, Raja Jai Jagat Mal¹¹⁴, worried about his people. The king was a very religious and a humble person. He thought that a saintly person's blessing could end his people's suffering.

He consulted his advisors who suggested that the king should visit Guru Nanak, the incarnation of God on earth. The king sent his men to locate Guruji. A few months later the word came that Guruji was in Varanasi, India.

Raja Jai Jagat Mal hurried to Varanasi with his family accompanied by a group of advisors.

The king paid respect to Guruji and fell at his feet asking for his blessings. He explained that

famine had caused misery in Nepal and begged for help for his people. The constant worry of his subjects had driven the king into a severe depression.



Nanak Muth, where Guruji stayed for over a year

¹¹⁴ Mal (also spelled Malla) dynasty (1201 -1769) was established by Ari Mal (Mal in Sanskrit means a wrestler). Yaksh Mal (1428-82) was the last ruler of united Nepal. After his death, his six sons initially tried to rule jointly (like their forefathers) but ended up fighting and divided the kingdom. Ratna Mal was the first to rebel against this system of joint rule, seizing Kathmandu in 1484 and ruling there alone until his death in 1520. Raya Mal, the eldest brother, ruled Bhadgaon with the other brothers until his death. Guruji visited Nepal around 1515. Raja Jai Jagat Mal was probably one of the brothers ruling Bhadgaon at that time [47].

In private, the family consulted the Guru about king's illness and depression. The Guru blessed the family and assured them that the king would rule for a long time.

After a few days, the king humbly invited Guruji to Nepal. Guruji promised to visit and sent the king back to his kingdom. After some time, Guru Nanak Dev Ji came to Nepal and stopped at the banks of Bishnumati River at the *dera* (compound) of Royal Yogi, Sidh Hari Daas.

Hari Daas, a devotee of Hindu gods Vishnu and Hanuman ji, was a great yogi and had achieved *riddhis and siddhis* (miracle powers). Hari Daas, a practitioner of *Hath Yoga* was in deep meditation at his dera. Guruji asked Bhai Mardana Ji to start playing his rebab and started singing kirtan. The sound of melodious kirtan interrupted Hari Daas's meditation, and he came out.

Hari Daas wanted to talk to Guruji, but the Guru with his eyes closed continued singing gurbani with deep devotion. Hari Daas was egotistic and considered him the most powerful yogi. He felt ignored and became annoyed. As soon as the Guru opened his eyes, the yogi started showing off his miracles and changed his appearance seven times. Then he asked the Guru to show him his powers. The Guru refused politely saying that he had no powers. The Guru pointed towards the sky and said that only Waheguru could show miracles. Hari Daas was astonished to see angels showering flowers on the Guru from the sky. The yogi was humbled and fell at Guru's feet begging forgiveness. Hari Daas and his disciples became Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Sikhs. The news of Hari Daas becoming Guru Ji disciple spread like wildfire in Nepal.

Raja Jai Jagat Mal also heard the news and came to the dera of Hari Daas with his family, expecting it must be Guru Nanak Dev ji who made Hari Daas his disciple. The king was overjoyed to see the Guru and fell at his feet and thanked the Guru for coming to his country. The king invited Guru Nanak Dev Ji to stay at his palace. Guruji instead chose to remain at the dera of Hari Daas. Guruji stayed at the dera for

one year and fourteen days. This dera is now known by the name of Nanak Muth.

C.1.2 Kaal Mochan or Mukti Ka Dwaar

After a few days, the Guru walked to a cave located about two miles from the dera of Hari Daas. The Guru entered the cave while the crowd accompanying him remained outside. The crowd heard voices of two people in the cave shouting in excitement, “Guru Nanak Dev Ji has come, please give us salvation.” According to legend, there were two sadhus (holy men) sitting in the cave in samadhi (deep meditation) for a very long time. These sadhus were



Mukti ka Dwaar

cursed and were told that only Guru Nanak Dev Ji would break the curse and give them mukti (salvation). Guruji came out of the cave alone after giving mukti (liberation) to both the sadhus.

Since then this place is known by the name of “*Mukti Ka Dwaar*” (Doorway to Salvation) or “*Kaal Mochan*” (Redeemer from Death). People pray and meditate at this place with the belief that like the sadhus they too will be granted mukti by the Guru.

C.1.3 Gyan Dhaara

About a mile from Kaal Mochan Guru Nanak Dev Ji came across a place where people were suffering from lack of drinking water. People



Gyan Dhaara – The fountain sprouted by Guruji

gathered around

Guruji and women put their little children at Guruji's feet and begged the Guru for help with drinking water. Guruji pressed his thumb against the face of the hillside where he was standing, and a fountain of water sprung from the hill. People's suffering was alleviated.

When the king heard the news, he came to see the Guru the third time and again offered his thanks. This place where Guruji sprouted the water fountain from the hill is known as Gyan Dhaara.

In reverence to the Guru, the king got a base and a structure built around the fountain. For the past five centuries, the water has been flowing uninterrupted as a blessing of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Even today, people line up in front of the fountain to fill their water pitchers for daily use. Many people also use this free-flowing water for bathing and washing clothes.

C.1.4 Gyaneshwor

At Gyan Dhaara, the king thanked the Guru for the water fountain and begged for a similar blessing for all of Nepal. Guruji walked few steps from the fountain and sat under a tree and went into deep meditation. He remained there motionless with his eyes closed for six days and six nights.

On the seventh day all of a sudden it started to rain. Guruji opened his eyes and thanked God for his mercy. It rained all over Nepal, and everyone was happy and delighted.

A memorial was built at the place where Guru Nanak Dev Ji sat for six days it is called ‘Gyaneshwor’. Raja Jai Jagat Mal came to see Guru Nanak Dev Ji for the fourth time at this place and fell at Guruji’s feet in gratitude.



Gyaneshwor

The king requested the Guru to stay in his kingdom until the entire nation was back to normal. Guruji accepted and advised the king to open his food granaries to his subjects until they can grow new crops. The king at once obeyed the Guru’s wish, and a langar was started under the Guru’s guidance at Nanak Muth.

Big earthen pots were made under Guru’s orders, and Bhai Bala ji was made in charge of the langar. Thousands of needy people came to eat langar every day. Balaji’s langar became famous all over Nepal, and people started calling the place Balaju Nanak Muth. The king would come here every day to listen to Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s kirtan and sermon.

C.1.5 Departure from Nepal

Raja Jai Jagat Mal bequeathed large properties around the above described four places under Guru's name. The Guru who had no interest in material things decided to leave Nepal. Mahant Hari Daas and the rest of the congregation were devastated. They asked Guruji for a blessing so that the kirtan could continue after his departure and begged him to leave something behind as a token of remembrance.

The Guru stood up on the flat slab where he held his daily congregation and impression of his feet was melted into the rock. This slab with the Guru's footprints is present at Nanak Muth. Mahant Hari Daas and his descendants (including Nem Muni) claim that they hear Guru Nanak Dev Ji's kirtan at the site of this slab every month on the night of the full moon.

C.1.6 Dera of Baba Sri Chand ji at Thappthalli

Nem Muni also mentioned that after Guruji left Nepal his son Baba Sri Chand Ji came to Kathmandu and founded his dera at Thappthalli. Following his father's order Baba Sri Chand Ji continued Guru Ka Langar.



Dera of Baba Sri Chand Ji

C.1.7 Manjit Singh at Nanak Muth

By the time Nem Muni finished telling his story, the two had reached their destination. Nem Muni stopped the bicycle and pointed to his house. The house which once belonged to Hari Daas and where Guruji had stayed for one year and fourteen days in 1515 AD.

Nem Muni took Manjit Singh inside his house and showed him around. He took Manjit Singh to a pipal tree in the backyard and pointed to the stone slab with impressions of Guru's feet and said, "These are Guru Nanak's feet, and they are also Vishnu's. They are both the same."

Manjit Singh paid obeisance at the slab and thanked Waheguru in his heart for helping him find this place. Nem Muni also showed him the room where Guru Nanak Dev Ji stayed for a year with Bhai Bala Ji and Bhai Mardana Ji.

Nem Muni told Manjit Singh that he had three swaroops (copies) of Guru Granth Sahib ji at his house. Nem Muni shared that these swaroops were sent to Nepal by Banda Singh Bahadur around 1709-1710. Banda Singh sent these swaroops and several other pothis in a horse-drawn chariot accompanied by five Singhs.

It was getting dark, and Nem Muni asked Manjit Singh to stay with his family, and he gladly accepted. Manjit Singh requested to spend the night under the pipal tree next to the slab. Nem Muni thought it was unsafe to remain outside at night because of the risk of wild animals. However, he relented in the face of Manjit Singh's determination. As the night grew dark, the sounds of wild animals started to scare Manjit Singh, but he remained outside doing jaap of gurmantar.

Around midnight, Manjit Singh heard the faint sound of kirtan which continued until 4 am.

C.1.8 Attracting Sikh World's Attention to the Historical Places

Manjit Singh stayed in Kathmandu for two more weeks. After returning home, he was eager to tell everyone about his discovery¹¹⁵. He went to several Gurudwara's including the Delhi Gurudwara Committee and Harimandir Sahib in Amritsar, but no one would believe him.

He continued to spread the word without getting discouraged. Any donations he could collect, he would send it to Nem Muni in Kathmandu. The caretakers at the five shrines connected to Guruji would divide the money equally among themselves.

In 2006, through an intermediary Manjit Singh met Joginder Singh Vedanti, Jathedar Akal Takhat. After listening to the story, the Jathedar issued a letter to Manjit Singh authorizing him to do the sewa (service of the shrines). The Jathedar also urged Manjit Singh to arrange something in writing from the caretakers in Nepal documenting Manjit Singh's role in this sewa.

Manjit Singh came to USA in 2008 and continued spreading the word about his discovery by speaking at the various gurudwaras. In 2010, Simran Singh Khalsa, a construction contractor in New Mexico decided to join Manjit Singh in sewa of the shrines. He set out to Nepal after offering an ardas at El Sobrante Sikh Center Gurudwara Sahib.

Simran Singh met Nem Muni in Nepal and visited the five shrines which were now in dire need of repair. Simran Singh in collaboration with Manjit Singh and his family and the Nepalese caretakers charted a plan for restoring the sites while preserving their original appearance.

¹¹⁵ Dr. Surinder Singh Kohli has mentioned Nepalese Gurudwaras in his 1978 book. However, these gurudwaras have remained largely unknown to Sikhs. Kohli wrote: '[In Nepal] there are now two dharmshals in the memory of the visit of the Guru, one managed by Nirmalas and the other by Udasis. The gurudwara is situated on the western bank of river Bishnumati' p115 [48]

In November 2012, Manjit Singh founded the non-profit organization called Shri Guru Nanak Dev Sewa Society International and registered it in California, USA. The five Nepalese caretakers recognized Manjit Singh as the new caretaker and transferred the legal custody of these sites to him. With financial help from several congregations in the USA, the repair work on these sites is underway and much remains to be done.

On Baisakhi of 2014, Jathedar Giani Gurbachan Singh ji visited Nanak Muth in Kathmandu and presented a siropa to Manjit Singh Khalsa for his twenty-two years of tireless sewa. In 2014, these sites were opened to the general public for visit, and Sikh sangat has started gathering at these places.

C.1.9 Holy Relics in Nepal

There are 117 large earthen pots made under Guru Nanak Dev Ji's supervision when langar was started there for the first time. There are also big wooden spatulas, copper and bronze utensils from Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time. Chaur Sahib made with golden handle with the date inscribed on it and the original chimta (tongs) of Baba Sri Chand ji are also preserved there. There are also valuable old scriptures (granths and pothis). Also, there is a treasure of several historical daily-use items which need appropriate preservation.

C.2 Gurudwaras in Sikkim

Guru Nanak Dev ji's visit to Himalayas is mentioned in Varan Bhai Gurdas, several janamsakhis, Suchak Parsang by Bhai Behlo, Mahima Parkash by Baba Sarup Chand, and Nanak Prakash by Bhai Santokh Singh. However, the narrative in these texts is vague and lacks specifics. New details started to emerge when Sikhs from Punjab started visiting and finding various links to Guru Nanak's visits. These

visits started around 1960 with the deployment of Indian military in the area. Most sites were discovered through encounters with local Buddhists who revered Guru Nanak Dev ji and worshipped places linked to him. As a result of these visits, historical sites and artifacts linked to Guru Nanak Dev ji have been found in Lachen, Chungthang, Thangu, and Gurudongmar.

C.2.1 Relics at the Lachen Monastery

Local people believe that Guru Nanak Dev ji crossed into Tibet from Nepal through Nanak-la pass and reached Sakya Monastery. This monastery was held by Trasung Deochung, a Tibetan king of Karma-pa Sect who was deposed by the Ge-lug-pa sect. Guru Nanak helped reconstruct this monastery, and the king honored the Guru with a royal robe. This robe along with Guru's *kamandal* (water bowl) and his footprint on a stone are preserved at the Lachen Gompha.

C.2.2 Guru Dongmar Lake

Guru Dongmar Lake, at an altitude of 5,148 m is one of the highest lakes in the world. This lake is named after Guru Nanak, who is also known as Guru Dongmar. As the Guru was passing through this area, local people approached the Guru for help. The lake remained frozen most of the winter leaving no drinking water. The Guru hit the lake with his *dang* (stick), and a portion of it melted. It gave the name "dongmar" to this place meaning it was the place where Guru Nanak hit the iced lake with his walking stick. The temperature in this area falls to minus thirty-five degrees. The lake remains frozen from November to mid-May except for the small portion which was touched by the Guru's blessing.

C.2.3 Gurudwara Nanaklama at Chungthang

Guru Nanak visited the town of Chungthang after Gurudongmar, Thanggu, and Lachen. There are several items in Chungthang which are worshipped by local inhabitants who are mostly Buddhists because they are believed to be linked to Guru Nanak. These items include:

1. a boulder with the Guru's footprints;
2. a freshwater stream created by the Guru;
3. a tree grown out of Guru's stick dug into the ground;
4. and fields of rice and bananas started by the Guru.



Gurudwara Nanaklama

A Gurudwara was established here by Assam Rifles in the 1970s.

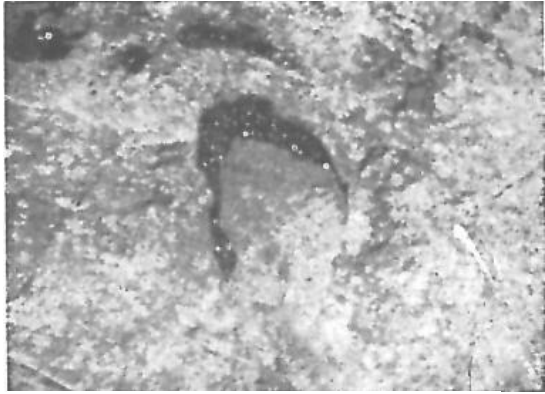
The following is an excerpt from Lieutenant Colonel Issar Singh's article in Sikh Review in 1965:

“Behind the Chorten where the Lama had appeared was a mound of solid black rocks about 30 feet high and 100 feet in diameter located in the center of the meadow at the back of the village. Surprisingly it supported two huge trees at the top to give a deep cool shade, and a trickling spring at its base was oozing cold refreshing drinking water. Was not it a traveler's abode! Is nature not strangely considerate!”



Boulder which has Guru's footprint

During his apostolic sermons, the local guide uttered Nanak, which pricked our ears. We were now alert and all composed to decipher each word. He told us that a great personality called Rimpoche Nanak Guru while on his way to Tibet had rested on that mound. The Guru had brought his rice



Footprint on the boulder

meal packed in banana leaves, as is the custom even today in banana growing areas. The two commodities were unknown to the hill folks. Guru having noticed their inquisitiveness bestowed them with a share of this strange cereal. They displayed forethought and instead of eating it sprinkled the rice over the meadow and buried the banana packing in a corner. Today the village harvests a rich crop of rice and bananas. As it was crop season, we had the unique opportunity and privilege of seeing Guru Nanak's gift to the inhabitants of that unknown and God-forsaken part of the world, sprouting golden yellow paddy. We also saw clusters of banana trees, but no fruit probably we were off banana season.



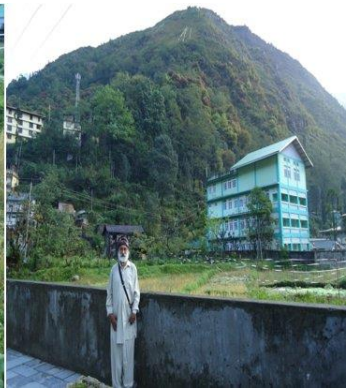
Tree sprouted from the Guru's walking stick

We were wonder-struck to see this strange phenomenon of rice and banana in the land of maize and apple... I was eager to find out the facts about Nanak's visit to Chunthang hence after lunch we climbed to a monastery located at the top of the hill behind the village. We wanted to

contact the inmates of this Gumpa on the subject. We found that the Lamas there were on a six-month praying spell with *mon varat* (silence) and no one was allowed to see them. In utter disappointment we walked back to Chunthang and spent the night dog-tired but full of suspense and speculation.

Next morning, we left for Lachung. I was rather impatient. The moment Head Lama Sri Gelong Chang Chube at Lachung Gumpa finished with his introductory talk about the monastery; I dragged him to the subject of "mound in Chunthang village."

He spoke fairly good Hindi; hence there was no room for conjectures.



Rice field adjacent to Gurudwara Nanaklama

He gave the name of the saint who visited that area as "Rimpoche Nanak Guru of Punjab." He also confirmed the legend of rice and banana plantation. He confessed that he was unaware of any written record, but he confirmed that the legend was a firm belief amongst the locals. He further gave details about the Guru's journey.

According to him, the Guru went to Tibet by that route. From there a track leads to Khora La, which connects North Sikkim with Pahari in Chumbi valley of Tibet. He also told us that on the outskirts of Payako Chin village, which is at the base of Khora La ridge, there is a stone with inscriptions in a non-local language. Inscription is probably in Hindi or Gurmukhi, and it is a common notion that it is an allegory giving details of the Guru's journey through that point.

This udasi [travel] of Guru Nanak has not appeared in any history so far as it yet remains to be discovered; therefore, the very idea of visiting the spot where this rock was indicated was exciting.

I wanted to photograph the inscription and approach the archeological department for its interpretation if in an unintelligible script.

The village Payako Chin was another 3 to 4 days march, and with our will and determination the objective seemed to be well within our reach, but unfortunately, the weather betrayed us, and for the next four days we had a literal cloudburst. The movement became impossible for quite some time due to the rivers being in spate. We were dwindling on our provisions, hence very reluctantly we had to take most unwelcome decision to abandon the proposed venture and retire. Many a time the fascinating idea of another attempt intoxicates me, but it seems that for the time being it shall remain only a question: Did Nanak visit Tibet?"

C.3 Guru Nanak in Arunachal Pradesh, Bhutan, Tibet, and China – By Dr. Dalvinder Singh Grewal

Colonel Dr. Dalvinder Singh Grewal during his army career spent many years around Tibet and had done extensive research on the Guru's travels in this area. He has also published several books on this subject.

The following article "Sikh Lamas of Arunachal Pradesh - Guru Nanak's Travels in Tibet", written by him in 2009 provides an excellent summary of the Guru's travels in Nepal, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Bhutan, Tibet and Yarkand (China):

"In 1986-87, I was posted as a Major, at an army outpost in the village of Segang-Menchukha in the northwestern corner of West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh, India. One night I was woken up in the middle of the night by loud and persistent knocking at my door.

"Who could it be at this time?" I wondered. When I opened the door, I found it to be the village headman, locally known as the Gaon Burha.

He was in an obvious state of distress and told me that his son was dying of a very severe pain in his stomach and if I would send for a doctor. I considered it fit to check the patient myself before I telephoned the doctor, who was some distance away and the track was quite hazardous. I decided to accompany the Gaon Burha.

He led me to his wooden hut, which was divided into two, the portion in front was for cooking and at the rear was the living room where I found a young boy writhing in pain and crying. As a precautionary measure, I had taken some pain-killing and Digene tablets with me, which I offered to the sick boy. A Lama who was standing nearby told the boy not to take medicine. It puzzled me, but there was little I could do because the Lamas are held in great esteem for all matters by the very superstitious people of the area.

However, immediately after, the Lama started saying a prayer obviously to appease the evil spirits. He first fashioned an idol with rice and butter, lit some incense and to the accompaniment of the ringing of a bell, started murmuring his prayers calling 'Nanak' 'Nanak'. After he had finished doing so, he took the incense to the bedside of the sick boy, read out "Om Mani Padme Hum" to him and then asked him to take the medicine I had given.

The idol that the Lama had made aroused my curiosity. I asked him as to whose idol was it that he worshipped. "Nanak Lama," he said. I must say I was quite perplexed with his answer because I never expected anyone in this area, nearly two-thousand kilometers away from Punjab, would know anything about Guru Nanak much less worship his idol.

I probed him for further details. He told me: "We worship Nanak Lama and consider him as one of our Guru Rimpoches. We call him Nanak Lama of Amritsar also. His idol is worshipped in our gompha on Dorgilling Hill. It is said that the Guru visited this area and meditated at Pemoshubu. Pemoshubu lies about 15 kilometers away from where we were.

"During his meditation at Pemoshubu," continued the Lama, "the Guru was attacked by a bear but the huge boulder, under which the Guru was

meditating, lifted him up and took him in its lap. According to this legend, the bear could do nothing and therefore soon after made his retreat. The marks of the Guru's body are still etched on this boulder, and we often go there to worship every year in the last week of March, because that is the month when the Guru is said to have come here.

A fair is held to commemorate Guru Nanak's visit.

Quite close to the boulder, there is a cave, through which the Guru used to pass to have his bath in the rivulet called Bamchu. Again, it is commonly believed by us all that it is only the people with a clean heart who can pass through the cave. Others, no matter how lean and thin they are, cannot pass through the entrance of the cave.

The Lama continued with his story, "The place where the Guru used to have his bath in the rivulet is now a natural shallow pool which is full of small black as well as white pebbles, and the water is always still. Whenever we want to know whether or not any particular wish of ours is going to be fulfilled, we close our eyes, repeat the wish, pray to Guru Nanak, and pick out a pebble from the pool. If the pebble is white, we believe, this wish is bound to come true. If the pebble is black, it will not be. If it has both black and white spots on it, the wish will be only partially fulfilled. You can try any number of times; the color of the pebble you pick out is always the same thereafter."

I must say I was quite intrigued by the Lama's story and persuaded him to take me there for confirmation. He agreed.

Next morning, we set out. To get to Pemoshubu, we had to pass through a thick forest which was known to be infested with bears, tigers and wild boars. Leaches stuck over every now and then and we had difficulty removing them. The track at times had vanished under the undergrowth and we had to cut the wagging branches to clear our way to the place in the dense jungle. In the midst of the thick undergrowth, we found a small clearing where an old traditional white Boddh flag, printed with 'Om Mani Padam Hum' was aflutter. The Lama told me that every time the flag flutters, God's name goes into the air 1001

times.

From the clearing, we started our descent towards the Bumchu River. After walking down for about five minutes, we came across a huge boulder which appeared to be about 30 feet high and with a length and breadth each of about 20 feet. It was leaning towards the east. Below it, there was a sort of rough platform on which were lying some white cloth flags with inscriptions on them in the Tibetan language.

The Lama bowed in deep reverence and started to ring his bell and chant hymns. He also laid on the platform a new white cloth flag as his offering. He then showed the marks of the bodies etched on the boulder. These were about ten feet above the ground. There appeared the impressions of two bodies etched on the boulder one of a bigger man and the others of a small one. The Lama told me that the bigger one was that of Guru Nanak's and the smaller ones were of his companions. The impression of the head, the shoulders, the arms and the upper part of the bodies were very clear. It did not look as if they had been chiseled but naturally hewn. Since I had no means of verifying the veracity of these marks, I did not question the authenticity of what the Lama said and bowed my head in reverence.

After that, the Lama took me further down through a cave and from its farther end we could see the beautiful rivulet, Bamchu flowing by down below at one corner clearly see the white and black pebbles lying at the bottom.

The lama bent over the small pool. Chanting Guru Nanak's name, he took out a stone from the pool, he got a white one. He was very happy. When I enquired as to what he had wished, he told that he had wished for another son. I was astonished at his material attachment despite being a lama. A junior commissioned officer Subedar Surat Singh Yadav, an Ahir from Haryana, who had accompanied us too did the same and prayed for becoming a Subedar Major. He got the black one. I knew it was not possible for him to become one. They both insisted that I too try for one. I had nothing on mind as God has always been kind to me. However, a momentous thought came to me, "Why not wish to

make a Guru's place of worship at the place if the Guru had come here?"

Having wished this, I took out a pebble and found it to be white. Hence, I pondered over the complete question; I considered it impossible to construct a place of worship at such a remote place, where leave alone, bringing up the material from the low lands in Assam: reaching and cleaning the forests were the major problems. I thought it better to consider it as a bad joke. Moreover, this was the aftermath period of 1984 riots when we could not think of doing such things.

However, my Subedar was quick to respond. "There will have to be a place of the Guru's here." He assumingly said. "But how I alone can make a place in such a difficult area?" I raised my doubt. "Why do you feel alone Sahib? We all will make it," added the burly Subedar. "We will make Guru Nanak's place here. It is His wish," said the Lama authoritatively. I was in a divided state of mind, but the other two had already started playing this idea on their minds seriously.

"We should not alter the originality and serenity of this place and keep it as it is", said Subedar Surat Singh. "a better place for the Gurudwara will be the triangular area between the two rivulets; that is within the limits as prescribed by the religious edicts." Subedar Surat Singh further said, "It should be within 500 yards of the place of the event," he explained. I was unaware of all this. As we walked across to the place and examined the area, I found the Lama to be in meditation sitting on a stone. I found the area to be flat but full of big trees and with thick undergrowth. However, it was not slushy because of the close flowing stream and the slope of the land into the streams.

It required enormous effort to clear the area. For bringing stores to this place was another very difficult proposition as even nails would have to be got from Tinsukhia, which for an ordinary person would have taken 10-15 days journey one way. The other alternative was through air i.e. helicopters, but the priority of helicopters was the ration for soldiers and ammunition for guns than anything else. Also, the carriage of these items for 16 kilometers from the helipad was another difficulty. The first requirement, however, was to clear the thick undergrowth up to the

selected place which itself was a major task. I did not think it feasible to prepare a worthwhile place of worship under these conditions.

“This is an auspicious place, fifteen days hence is the auspicious day to carry out stone laying for the worship place”, the Lama announced keeping his eyes closed.” It is perfectly alright. We will clear the place within that time”, Subedar Surat Singh took upon himself voluntarily, the preliminary task of clearing the area and also the track to the place.

The area was studied minutely, and the place was selected where the Lama finally put a small stick and a small piece of cloth bearing ”Om Mani Padme Hum” hanging over it as a flag. As we returned, Subedar Surat Singh studied the route seriously. The Lama told us whom all to contact locally for construction of the place of worship. I thought of it as to how I could get the building material. It was better to make a wooden structure which should consist of at least three rooms, one for main worship, one for the helper and the religious teacher and one for the store and other accessories. This could also be used for any person from outside who wished to stay at the place for a night or so. It would require about 800 wooden planks and about 100 CGI sheets in addition to other building material. “How can we manage this all?” I passed on the question to Subedar Surat Singh. Nothing seemed to unruffle the Subedar as he seemed to be quite determined. “We will prepare the planks ourselves by sawing wood. CGI sheets can be arranged by air from Dinjan (Assam),” he said as if it was not difficult at all. On return, Subedar Surat Singh was heard stating the whole incident to the men of my unit with a lot of enthusiasm. These deeply religious Ahirs from Haryana took every word stated by Subedar Surat Singh seriously and gave the word to him that they will do every bit to carry out the “Will of God.”

The work started without delay and the men, who were eager to do something, swung into action. Meanwhile, the Lama had told Segang people about the event. The Gaon Burha came with his men to help us in whatever way we wanted to utilize him. Subedar Surat Singh asked for the help of a carpenter and a saw man which the Gaon Burha deputed without a hitch. I requested him to get the land transferred to the institution which he agreed heartily. He along with the Lama

planned to meet the Extra Assistant Commissioner, Manchuka for permission and transfer of the land in the name of Gurdwara as a religious institution.

Work started the very next day with clearing a part of the route by the soldiers and a group of villagers. I wrote a letter to my wife then located in Dinjan Assam giving all the details and requested her to buy the required number of CGI sheets and other material and to arrange the money for the same. Bringing the material to Menchukha from Dinjan-Tinsukhia was certainly a problem. I thought of it for 2-3 days when I met the pilot of the helicopter providing us supplies. He too was eager to visit the place. I took him through the difficult route. After paying his obeisance, he saw the area around closely and mentioned that about 500 yards away, there was a good ground, which could be developed into a dropping zone and if some effort was put in, it could also be converted into a helipad. For this, permission and clearance had to come from higher headquarters.

The work progressed faster than expected. Soon the Assam Rifles soldiers also joined. The senior most officer of the area was the Battalion Commander of Mahar Regiment and at that time Major Yadav, again an Ahir, was officiating. As I told him about the place, he too went there out of curiosity. Visiting the area, he recommended deploying a company on the nearby hill as he found it to be yet an unknown route from the enemy side and needed an immediate coverage. The development of the area turned out to be much faster than I would have expected. Later on, the higher commanders of Army, Air Force and Assam Rifles, who visited Manchuka, made it a point to visit the place. With the help of the local carpenters and soldiers three rooms were constructed. As the development on the other side caused a great threat to the valley, a brigade was later planned to move to the place and a key location point was planned. Accordingly an artillery field firing range was also proposed. A company of Bengal Engineers comprising of Sikhs landed which not only improved the local constructions but was also given the task of preparing an advance landing ground for the aero planes as well as helipads and tracks/roads to various locations.

The place was given the name “Guru Nanak Taposthan” and had become a great place of worship not only for the local people but for all the outsiders as well, who longed to carry some worthwhile memories back home.

There was a big fair of the local people at the place on 24 March (1987) as this was the occasion mentioned by Lama on which Guru Nanak had come to the place. We arranged to give free lunch for all the people visiting the place and had hymn singing at the new place. Sri Guru Granth Sahib too had been placed by then which I got on one of my visits to Tinusukhia. Initially, I carried out the daily routine prayers and rituals at the place in which the Lama helped me. Later a soldier from the Engineer Company took over the task on himself.

We celebrated Baisakhi with all rituals as the soldiers of the Engineers Company comprised of Sikhs who took a keen interest in performing the rituals. We were able to have an Akhand Path i.e. non-stop recitation of the entire Sri Guru Grant Sahib within 48 hours.

Being inquisitive, I studied the travels of Guru Nanak to Himalayan region and his contact with Lamas in great detail. These details were published in three books: (a) The Amazing Travels of Guru Nanak to Himalayan Region, (b) Guru Nanak’s travels to North East and (c) So Than Suhawa.

Guru Nanak came in contact with Lamas during his visit to Himachal Pradesh in Rawalsar Area. The discussions at Mansarovar-Sumer Parbat were the turning point. During his discourses with Siddhas, Guru Nanak left a deep impact not only on Siddhas but also local people who were mainly of Tibetan origin. Amongst them was the then King of Tibet Trasuing Deochung, who was a lama from Karmapa sect who became Guru Nanak’s follower. He invited Guru Nanak to Lhasa, and the Guru accepted.

Guru Nanak advanced through Nepal to go to Tibet. He returned from Mansarovar all along Kali Nadi which flows along the western border of Nepal. After that through Terai region, he entered Nepal. Through Chatra Guru Nanak visited the fort of Dhomri. Shivpur and to

Brahamkund where he attended a fair and delivered discourses to the people gathered. After Brahamkund, Guru Nanak visited Lakhapur and Palti Lake, therefrom through the hills of Hawal Khanchi; he reached Krishna Tal area and preached True Name. After Krishna Tal, he proceeded through Dhaulagiri ridges to Belagarh and reached Kathmandu and Bhakatpur area the twin capitals of Patan and Banepa the later Malla King.

He proceeded through Doleghat, Chiyauba, Surka, Kirtanti, Chap, Nambo, Kabra, Valleys of Jarsakhola and Sikri Khola, Kiri and Batasha Danda ridge, Those, Shivalaya to Jhoding monastery at Thodungla and reached Bhandar. From Bhandar he is likely to have proceeded through Lamjurala, Sherpa villages of Dradobuk and Junbesi and visited Chiwang monastery. From Jusebi, he proceeded further through Phalali to Jubing, Kharela, and Phakding and to Namche Bazar, From Namche Bazar his next visit was to Khumijing monastery and Thayangboche situated at 3867 meters in the lap of Amba Dablam (6856 m).

Guru Nanak then visited Thyangboche monastery an important centre of Lamas, where Guru's idol and a manuscript had been preserved. Thyangboche Monastery is one of the most beautiful sites of the world on a table land, amidst breath taking scenery surrounded by the Panorama of Khumbu-Himalayas with Mount Everest. The Head Lama of the Thyangboche Monastery is a reincarnation highly revered by Sherpas.

Guru Nanak held discussions with the Head Lama of the Thyangboche Monastery. The Lamas were highly impressed by Guru's teaching and became his followers.

Captain Manmohan Singh Kohli leader of the famous Indian expedition to Mt. Everest mentions of a large sized idol and a manuscript of Guru Nanak at Thyangboche Monastery. He writes, "The cupboards in Gompha contained many manuscripts. There were idols of past lamas. These included an idol of Guru Nanak, Guru Rimpoche. Tibetans call Guru Nanak, Guru Rinpoche. His Holiness the Head Lama told him that some writings of great Guru were in his personal possessions. From

Thyangboche, Guru Nanak came back to Khumijing on the trading route of India-Tibet and proceeded to Tibet through Nanak La Pass (5,500m) (same name appears in the maps) and reached Tingri Dzong in Tibet where he had gone on the invitation of Trasuing Deochung, the then local Nyingmpa chief/king to help him in the reconstruction of Sakya Monastery. Guru Nanak is said to have reached this place in the ninth month of Tibetan Calendar.

According to a Karmapa legend Guru Nanak is said to have reached this place, tied the witches and turned them into masks (immobile/inactive). On the day of annual celebrations of this monastery these witch masks are stated to be shedding tears and dance bound by chains.

Guru Nanak was presented a robe by the local chief/king which is now preserved in Lachen Monastery (North Sikkim). This writer examined it at Lachen and later received the photographs of the items of Guru Nanak preserved at Lachen Gopa.

From Tibet, the Guru entered Sikkim through Chorten-Nyima-la. Near Chorten Nyi-ma-la there are 108 small lakes commemorating Guru's visit. As per this legend seeing the natural beauty of the area, Guru Nanak got in ecstasy and broke his rosary. The 108 beads spread around and formed into small lakes. This added to the beauty of the area further.

After crossing Chorten Nyi-ma-la pass, Guru Nanak came to Dolma Sampa and Tongpen route of Muguthang. He also visited Kedang, Bendu, Sherang, Lyingka, and a number of other homes sprung up during the upsurge of Nyingmapa Karmapa sect from Tibet.

In Muguthang valley there is a lake which according to local legend, had demons who used to swallow human beings possibly Cannibals as Cannibalism was prevalent in that area. Local people requested Guru Nanak for protection. Guru Nanak picked a huge boulder and threw it towards the lake. Sensing the danger the lake devils, a male and female came out of the lake and requested for forgiveness. Guru Nanak forgave them and held the falling stone with rope. The same stone with lake

marks can still be seen hanging over the lake. These two devils were forbidden from eating human flesh and were redeemed by guiding them to True Name, the Name of the God.

An annual local fair honoring Guru's visit is held every year at the place since then. Guru Nanak thereafter visited Kedang, Sherang and Culang valleys. At Kedang, he was enchanted by the beauty of the green rich valley. He blessed the valley as happy bewitching and called it "ki dang" (which astonishes).

From Muguthang through Guru Nanak went to Lawu Gompha where from he proceeded towards Gurudongmar. In Gurudongmar lake area, the grazers approached Guru Nanak to solve their problem of water shortage as the lakes all around froze in winter due to a low temperature at that altitude (17,500 feet). Guru Nanak hit the water with his stick. The ice melted giving way to milky water. Since then the water of the lake is stated to have never frozen. The lake and the hill feature atop came to be known as the Gurudongmar Lake and hill respectively. This writer found these names even in the maps printed in the nineteenth century. He also found the water of the lake unaffected even in December-January, when the snow falls upto ten feet, and the temperature falls to minus thirty degrees.

Some grazers projected another problem to Guru Nanak. Due to the effect of altitude, their virility was affected. They requested him to do something about it. Guru Nanak blessed the Gurudongmar Lake saying whoever takes the water of this lake would gain virility and strength. The people of these areas have firm faith in Guru's words, and the water of the lake is considered as nectar by them.

This lake is the originating source of Teesta River. A gurudwara was constructed at the site during the writer's presence at the adjoining hill of 22,000 ft. for over three months. Guru Granth Sahib was also established though the service of a regular priest could not be obtained despite our best efforts. It was because of extreme cold conditions there. The 800x500 square yards lake became a place of great attraction soon after my earlier articles on this subject. A helipad has been constructed, and a well-constructed track leads unto the Gurdwara and the lake site.

Groups of Sikhs especially from Delhi visit this place each year in March and September, as these are the best months to visit this glacial belt.

From Gurudongmar, Guru Nanak came to Thanggu. At Thanggu he relaxed under a boulder stone. Having heard about his super powers the people already thronged to him. He blessed the devotees and delivered sermons. His foot marks were stated to be existent on a huge boulder by the side of Teesta River, but the ignorant road construction party blew off the boulder stone in 1987. The stone fell into the river and was recovered by Lachen Lama and preserved in Lachen monastery. At Thanggu in Guru's memory, a Gumpa and a Chorten were constructed in which small 1002 idols of Guru Nanak are preserved. A Gurdwara has been constructed in the engineer company area to commemorate Guru Nanak's visit to the place.

His next stay was at Lachen. In Lachen Gompha Guru Nanak's foot mark are preserved on a piece of stone. A robe given to him by the then Tibetan king, the footmarks on stone and a kamandal of the Guru are also preserved. From Lachen, he proceeded towards the south and relaxed near Munsithang where he found a hot water spring. His body marks exist near this location.

From Munsithang Guru Nanak moved to South Chugthang (height 6,000 feet). Local people call Chungthang as Nanakthang. Here Guru Nanak spent his third and fourth night after his visit to Gurudongmar. There is a boulder stone about twenty feet in diameter and twenty feet high commemorating Guru Nanak's visit. As Guru Nanak relaxed near this boulder a devil staying on a nearby hill, threw a heavy stone on Guru Nanak. The boulder was brought to a halt by Guru Nanak with a stick. He then climbed on the stone to warn the demon. Finding Guru Nanak unaffected the demon fell at his feet. Guru Nanak asked him not to disturb the local people and to leave the place and follow the True Name of Lord, which he finally did. Footprints indicating Guru Nanak's climbing atop the stone are stuck into the earth in a straight posture. The stick has now taken the shape of a tree and is known as "Babe di khoondi."

Sitting at the top of the stone, Guru Nanak opened his lunch pack consisting of rice packed in banana leaves. The local people had not seen such banana leaves. They prayed to Guru Nanak, "There is no rice or bananas in our area. Please favor us with these." Guru Nanak threw some leftover rice around the boulder and buried the banana leaves. He then announced, "Henceforth paddy and bananas shall always be grown in this valley" Chungthang has been the only place around in the area for long where paddy and bananas grew since Guru Nanak's visit.

A woman living in a nearby hut requested, "I have to bring water from a distance. I am old. Moving down and climbing up is very difficult for me. Pray, do something about it." Guru Nanak scratched one side of the boulder with his hands and there appeared a spring. This spring (Chasma) on the side of the boulder has been flowing ever since. The Guru Nanak's blessing to these people is the reason for the prosperity of Chungthang valley. The local people always remember him and worship him with great devotion.

Guru Nanak visited North Sikkim during his Sumer Udasi (third itinerary) around the year 1516 AD. I have been able to discuss the background of Lamas and Lepchas and Guru Nanak's visit in Sikkim during my stay in 1971 and later from 1987 to 1991. The details of Guru Nanak's visits to Tibet, Sikkim and beyond were told to me by various Lamas and local people. Lamas of Thanggu, Lachen, Lachung, and Muguthang gave most of the details which have been examined and incorporated here.

They also say that Guru Nanak's sacred scripture and one tourlice were left under a boulder stone, which will be taken out by Guru Nanak's successor at an appropriate occasion. The local lamas worship Guru Nanak as Nanak Lama. They built a Gompha (Lama Temple) commemorating his visit. In the Gompha, a lamp of pure ghee burns day and night to vitalize the memory of the visit.

Assam Rifles Battalion stationed at Chungthang constructed an impressive building of Gurudwara under the guidance of Subedar Major Bhullar. The Gurudwara is now called Gurudwara Nanak Lama. The local MLA takes a keen interest in the protection, maintenance and

upliftment of the place “Babe di khoondi” is now a shapely tree which attracts the visitors and the worshippers alike. The footprints are well preserved. The water from the spring is considered as a source of strength and sign of purity and is being taken as charanamrit. The rice field is secured by a wall around. The kesari flag can be seen from miles, and one has not to do any effort to find the place as it is now in the centre of the valley as well as the town.

From Chungthang, Guru Nanak is also said to have proceeded to Phodong. A Grand monastery is reminiscent of Guru Nanak’s visit. The head of the monastery is considered as the reincarnation of Guru Nanak and an organized succession system exists. The present successor of Nanak Lama was installed in 1989. The installation ceremony appeared in the columns of local papers with photographs.

From Phodong Guru Nanak returned to Chungthang and went to Lachung (height 9,500ft). In Lachung monastery at the top of the nearby hill, there were excellent wall paintings depicting Guru Nanak’s visit to the area which now stand obliterated. After Lachung the Guru Nanak is stated to have stayed at Yumthang en route to Tibet and Bhutan. At Yumthang, Guru Nanak found these people quite unclean. They never took a bath for months as the water of the area was cold.

Guru Nanak removed a stone, and a hot spring appeared. The gushing water formed a rivulet. Guru Nanak asked the local people to have a regular bath and worship God early in the morning. The people follow Guru’s teaching till now.

From Yumthang, Guru Nanak went to Pharidzong through Pyakochin and Ghorala. At Pyakochin writing in Gurumukhi on a stone pillar commemorates Guru’s visit.

Guru Nanak is said to have entered Bhutan from North-East Bhutan after his visit to Sikkim and Chumbi valley. From Pharidzong in Chumbi valley, he entered Paro valley and visited the Dukhgyel Dzong, the eastern fort of Bhutan, famous for its great round towers. Tak-sang (Tiger’s Deb) was the next place he visited. Ha and Paro monasteries

were also visited by him. This monastery is a valuable treasure of art and religious paintings and manuscripts. Guru's paintings are also said to be preserved there. The holy Guru is believed to have tamed the dreaded demons and tigers of the area. Tiger's Den is stated to be reminiscent of the same event.

The story of Tiger's Den monastery as recorded in Sikh chronicles is as follows.

“At one place in that region, there were millions of lions. The Guru asked his companion Mardana to play upon the rebec. On hearing the sweet music, the hearts of the lions were softened, and they came near the Guru. The Guru asked them. “How have you come here?” They replied, “On seeing you we have gained the power of speech. Our previous sins had brought us in this form. We have a feeling that you have come to us as a redeemer.” The Guru asked again, “On what food do you live?” They replied, “We have eaten up all the animals of this forest which is spread over one hundred yajnas. Now if anyone amongst us feels drowsy, he is immediately eaten up by others, therefore we always stand without sleep. The Guru said, “You will become human beings in your next birth, but you will get the final emancipation only on following the instructions of the preceptor.” The Guru left the forest and came to the town. The local people were too afraid of the lions because the lions were very fierce and they spared no one. They said, “We have built this town on the tip of the mountain and have kept the cannons on all sides. We do not understand how you have not been devoured by them.” The Guru Nanak said, “I have made them nonviolent. All of them will die after some time for want of food.” All the inhabitants of the town felt very much pleased and became disciples of the Great Guru.” The legend which the Bhutan Lamas described to me was very similar.

From Paro, Guru Nanak visited Thimpu and Tashi-Cho-Dzong. Overlooking Tashi-Cho-Dzong is the White Glacier of the three Spiritual Brothers. This is said to be in reminiscence of the visit of Guru Nanak and his two disciples. At Tashi-Cho-Dzong, Guru Nanak visited the chief monastery. The head lama of the monastery benefited from his company and translated several hymns of the Guru in Bhutia Language.

The Guru also visited the residence of the Dharamraja and held discourses with him. The details of discussions as recorded in Janamsakhi B 40 are as follows. :-

“Story of Bhutan Desh starts: Nanak Baba came to Bhutan country. He came and stayed in a garden. Whosoever came to pay him obeisance, stayed there itself, neither he could get up nor could go home. People discussed about this. They talked about Guru Nanak stating, “A great man has come to this country that neither eats nor drinks anything nor speaks to anybody. Neither he begs, nor does he take any offering from anyone. He is without any desire.”

The king of the area heard of this and came to him (Guru Nanak). He brought choicest dresses and eatables and fell at his feet (Guru Nanak). By then Baba (Guru Nanak) had watched the system of the functioning of the state. The king used to weed grass. He wore fur dress. Whenever a girl from his kingdom married, instead of going to her husband for the first night she was sent to the king.

Baba Nanak told the king, “O king! Whatever evil deeds you are doing, you must leave this. This is the order of the Guru. Whatever you wish you must ask me. Guru Nanak is in a mood to bless you.” The king then said, “O Baba, rice and wool are in abundance in my country, but nothing else grows.” Guru Nanak blessed him with all types of mines, fragrances, and cloth. The mines included those of gold, silver, zinc, and lead. Many products like musk, silk and fruit started growing in those mountains. The king along with his people then became the disciples of Guru Nanak. Baba taught them true name; to give alms to the poor and to have regular bath. A temple (Dharamsala) was established on the name of Guru Nanak. Guru then planned to move from the place. The king and the public came to request the Guru to stay. “This country has been blessed by your arrival. You must stay here.” Baba understood that these people would not leave him like that. Sitting amongst them, he flew into the air and went to another country. Those sitting at the place were astonished. They exclaimed, “Guru was sitting with us a short while before, now he is seen nowhere. What unnatural event has happened! He has vanished! It must be some

miracle. We have not enjoyed his company to our heart full. He was a great worshipper of God, very close to Him, but we could not identify such a savior and helper of humanity.” They were repentant of this, but Baba had gone. They started their daily life by regular prayers of the True Lord, giving alms to the poor, having regular baths and living truthfully.”

The holy Guru is said to have then visited Bumthang. The legend of “Hidden Treasure of Bumthang” is said to be connected with Guru Nanak. The legend goes like this.

“Pamlingpa, a dwarf like a blacksmith and resident of Kunzamgda, when reached the age of twenty-seven, went to the forest to look for mushrooms but found none. On his way back, he met a hermit with a long white beard said to be Guru or “Rimpoche” Nanak. Pamlingpa spoke to him full of respect, sadly mentioning that he had not found a single mushroom. The Guru smiled, bowed and with his hands pushed aside the twigs that were spread on the ground, revealing a whole bed of wonderful mushrooms. Pamlingpa collected them and invited the old man to the meals; Guru Nanak gave him a scroll of paper roll to preserve.

When they arrived at Pamlingpa’s hut, the Guru stayed in the adjoining room, and Pamlingpa cooked the mushrooms with five kinds of fragrant herbs. When they were ready, he went to the Guru, but the Guru had disappeared. Pamlingpa called him again. He searched for him everywhere but in vain. Finally, and sadly, he ate the mushrooms alone. Afterwards, he climbed the roof of his hut, lay down and musingly watched the clouds sweeping over the sky. Then he took the scroll of paper given by the Guru from his pocket and studied ponderingly. He had not learned to read, but intuitively he grasped the deeper meanings of the written message or it had been whispered into his ear. “Go to the burning lake. There you will find a hidden treasure.” For the message was written in the so-called “fairy script” derived from Devanagari script of the Gods (probably Gurmukhi) which only a few could read. Pamlingpa understood more with his heart than with his mind, and it began to dawn on him that the heart might have been a manifestation of Guru Rimpoche, who himself showed in this form to receive Pamlingpa

as his true follower. Thus, according to the legend, Pamlingpa realized that he was, in fact, the embodiment of the true Guru. The legend goes on to describe how Pamlingpa got the spiritual treasure from the lake. This portion of the legend is akin to the legend connected with Guru Nanak's attainment of enlightenment in Wein River.

“From Tashi-Cho-Dzong and Bumthang, Guru Nanak is said to have visited Central Bhutan where tell-tale indications are available of his visit. He is also said to have visited Askord where Guru Nanak's paintings are preserved.

Guru Nanak crossed into Arunachal Pradesh and visited most of the part. First while going to Lhasa (Tibet), he passed through Tawang after crossing from Bhutan and entered Tibet from Samdurang Chu. He returned from Lhasa and went to the famous monastery Samye and entered Pemoshubu Menchukha in Arunachal Pradesh. He meditated for some time at this location. From Menchukha he went back to Tibet, brought the residents of Southern Tibet and got them settled in Menchukha. Thereafter through Gelling and Tuiting he proceeded to Saldya and Braham-Kund, before entering the state of Assam again.

On further enquires during my visits to the hills and from the study of the books I could link up Guru Nanak's visit to that of Sikkim and Bhutan. Armed with this information, I visited Bhutan and Eastern Arunachal in 1987 to 1989 and collected more details from Sela, Tawang, Lumla, Zimithang, Lumpung and other parts of the country.

According to this information, Guru Nanak went to Bhutan and visited Tashigong- Dzong, and Dukti after visiting Hajo in Assam. After that he entered Arunachal Pradesh. He visited Sela and Sabrela and crossed a hill now known as Govindgarh. From there he visited a place now known as Nanak Dzong. He stayed at the place for some days and held discourses. There the people worship him till today as Nanak Lama.

After that, the Guru proceeded further north and visited the famous monastery at Tawang. His painting is still preserved at the monastery. The Lamas worship Guru Nanak as their Guru Rimpoche. As he went further on the route adopted by Dalai Lama while escaping from Lhasa,

he relaxed on a boulder and praised the beauty of nature. This boulder has a special quality even during heavy snowfall, it remains uncovered while the snow engulfs every inch of the area up to six feet in winter.’

Guru Nanak then went to Nagula, where he meditated for some time. Now a meditation centre has been established for all religions in memory of Guru Nanak’s visit to the place. When I visited Lumpung monastery and met the head Lama, he told me that Guru Nanak reached Lumpung en route to Lhasa from Twang and stayed at the place for some time. He showed me a large-sized statue of about 20 feet stating it to be of Guru Nanak which I photographed. He also told me that the route adopted by Guru Nanak to the place and to Lhasa was more or less the same as adopted by Dalai Lama during his departure from Lhasa. Guru Nanak visited this monastery in the year 1516 AD, and the followers of the Guru projected their doubts which Guru Nanak cleared.

Guru Nanak entered Tibet (Fifth time) again from Negula and reached Lhasa. At Lhasa, Guru Nanak visited the famous Potala, the seat of Dalai Lama. At the time he power was transferred from Kar-ma-pa sect to Ge-lug-pa sect. The Ge-Lug-pa sect had started a reign of terror against the Kar-ma-pa sect, the sect which had become the follower of Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak is stated to have met the Second Lama at Potala and requested him to stop the bloodshed. During the stay at Lhasa, he visited the famous monasteries there. While staying at one of the monasteries, people requested Guru Nanak to answer certain questions. The Guru answered these questions with great magnanimity.

From Lhasa, Guru Nanak came to Samye monastery. At Samye monastery, Guru Nanak held discussions with the Lamas. From Samye Guru Nanak came to La Khanya and entered India (Arunachal Pradesh) along Yargapchu River into Pemsohubu. It is a thick natural forest area, where beautiful flowers are found spread over miles and miles together.

From Samye Monastery the Guru proceeded southwards towards India. Crossing through La-Khanya, he reached Menchukha a place where Lord Shiva, one of the Hindu Trinity is said to have meditated. Guru

Nanak was enchanted by the place and stayed for some time at Menchukha and meditated. He went back to Tibet and brought his followers of Memba sect from Dakbo-Kongba area and got them settled in Menchukha valley. There from through Tibet, he proceeded towards Gelling-Tuting valley in March 1516.

Near Pemoshubu, there is a hill at Segong Dorgilling on the top of which there is one Gompha (Lama Temple). Along with Lord Buddha's idol it has life sized idol of Guru Nanak, which the Membas (local tribe) worship. A regular fair is held in January at this place. A Lama told the author, "The monastery had a book of Guru's Shabds in their language which was destroyed in a fire about fifty years ago." The head Lama of this monastery had been visiting Gaya as well as Amritsar.

Guru Nanak is said to have visited Shekhar-Bhumja and Dojeeling in Menchukha valley as well. Regular fairs are held in February at these places. Fairs coincide with the dates of Guru Nanak's visit to these places. Calculation of the days and dates is as per Tibetan Calendar.

Close to Mechukha, there is a snow white cave. Guru Nanak is said to have meditated in this cave also. It is said that Guru Nanak stayed in this area for about 3 months. According to the local Membas, Guru Nanak brought them from Southern Tibet and got them settled in the valley and became far better off from their previous place. In their songs they give out the legend of their settlements.

From Mechukha, Guru Nanak proceeded towards Gelling and Tuting via South Eastern Tibet along Tsangpo River. Guru Nanak is worshipped in the Gompha of Gelling Tuting valley too. From Gelling Tuting valley Guru Nanak proceeded along Tsangpo (Siang River) and then crossed over to Saidya. From Saidya Guru Nanak went to Tezu and reached Brahmkund on Kartika Purnima. Here he attended the fair, held in honor of Parasuram, the killer of Kshatriyas who is said to have carved out Brahmaputra from the Brahmkund. From Brahmkund, Guru Nanak visited Walong at the eastern edge of Arunachal Pradesh. He is said to have visited Rima in China from here. Therefrom, he returned to Tinsukhia and Dibrugarh to Sibsagar. At Tinsukhia, the followers of Sankar Denab regularly visit Gurdwara on Guru Nanak's

Birthday in honor of Guru's visit to the area and call Guru Nanak as Guru Bhai of Shankardeb. About eighteen kilometer from Sibsagar, there are ruins of an old kingdom (Swarnpur) which Guru Nanak is said to have visited and held discussions with the ruler of the place who became Guruji's disciple.

Guru Nanak's next visit to Tibet was after his return from East Asia. Janamsakhi Bhai Bala states that Guru Nanak went to Sumer again after visiting Silmila Dweep and Suwarnpur. Dr. Surinder Singh Kohli wrote that it was about 1517 AD when Guru Nanak entered Kashmir from Sinkiang province of China. In China, he is said to have gone as far as Nanking on his return journey. An interview with Chhimed Ringdzin Rimpoche by this researcher revealed that Guru Nanak came from China through North Tibet visiting the famous Kokonoor Lake. The legend of Kokonoor Lake is also attributed to Guru Nanak. After visiting North-Eastern Tibet, Guru Nanak visited Lhasa and Mansarovar again, and through Gartok (Garu), Pudok and Panjong lake area entered Ladakh via Chushul.

Guru's return journey was through Kashmir. Guru Nanak entered Jammu & Kashmir state from Kashgar and Yarkand (China) through Karakoram Pass and reached Leh, as per Dr. Kohli. However, Drs. Fajua Singh and Kirpal Singh mention Guru Nanak reaching Leh through Chushul after the visit to Mansarovar. The second route seems more plausible. There is a tree near Leh under which Guru Nanak sat and delivered sermons. The tree is treated to be sacred by the local people.

From Leh Guru Nanak visited a number of places in Ladakh. At a distance of 24 km to the west of Leh on Leh Kargil road in the village Basgo, there is a rock on the roadside about 8 feet high and 8 feet in diameter. It has a cavity which appears to have the impressions of head, shoulders and upper part of the body of a man.

Legend has it that a few hundred years ago when Nanak Shah was returning from Yarkand he halted there for some time. His fame had spread far and wide. Becoming jealous of Nanak Shah's great virtues, a local demon or some other faqir rolled down the huge boulder from a

hill to kill Nanak Shah. But by a miracle, the Nanak Shah walked out unhurt and unscathed leaving a deep impression cast on the stone. A Gurdwara was constructed by Army Engineers of Border Roads near the place to commemorate the event. The Gurdwara is famous as Pathar Sahib. Gatherings on Sunday & Gurpurabs are attended by the Sikhs serving in the area and local Ladakhis.

Guru Nanak also visited Karu. There are two small hutments near Karu where the people worship only Guru Nanak and no other God. It shows the impact of Guru's visit to the place. No Gurdwara has yet been built there. Guru Nanak's next visit was to Hemus Gompha 40 km south of Leh where he held discussions with Lamas. Many people in Hemus believe that foundation stone of the Hemus Gompha was laid by Guru Nanak. From Leh, passing through Karu and Hemus, he moved towards Skardu. The Guru passed through Bimu, Khaltse Sarkot and Pask along Zanskar River and reached Skardu. "There used to be an ancient Gurudwara before 1949. However, its present state is not known.

All the above areas were the areas where Guru Nanak came in contact with Lamas. Guru Nanak followers are from Karmapa-Nyingmapa sects which number around 1 Lakh. These Lamas have their Gomphas where they have established statues of Buddha and other Lamas. Karma Pa and Nyingmapa sects Gomphas have large sized statues of Guru Nanak as both these sects worship Guru Nanak till date. They have been the regular visitors of Sri Harimandar Sahib which they call it as the place of Nanak Lama, but lately, they have stopped coming in large numbers as they say that the sewadars there have been treating them very badly. These are devoted Sikhs who follow Guru Nanak's ideals to the core and have the verses of Guru Nanak translated in Tibetan. We must establish regular contact with them and bring them in our own fold with due respect and honor."

C.4 Gurudwara Pathar Sahib in Leh Ladakh¹¹⁶

In the late 1970s, during the construction of the Leh-Nimu road, a large boulder was found in the middle of the road bed covered with Buddhist prayer flags. The flags were of the type often found, strung by Buddhist Lamas, along mountain ridges and peaks high in the Himalayas to bless the surrounding countryside.

The bulldozer driver tried to push the huge stone to the side, but it refused to move. Accelerating the engine, he pushed the powerful machine to its limits, but the boulder refused to give way. Suddenly, with a large snap, the blade broke, and the work stopped. That night the driver had a dream in which a voice told him not to move the stone.

In the morning he narrated his dream to one of the army officers who guard the mountain passes of Ladakh. The soldier told him, not to give any importance to the dream.



Boulder with mould of the Guru's body

When all efforts to remove the boulder had failed, it was decided to blow it apart with dynamite the next day. That night the army officer also had a dream telling him not to remove the stone. He too decided the dream should be ignored, but early that morning, being Sunday, he and the workers were visited by several Lamas and other Ladhakhis who came to tell them the story of a Holy Saint they called Nanak Lama and the unyielding boulder.

¹¹⁶ Summarized from Sikhwiki 'Gurudwara Pathar Sahib' [49]

The army personnel was told that the *pathar* (boulder) the road crew had been having so much trouble with was a 'mould' with a negative impression, of their revered Lama Nanak that contained a hollow imprint of his shoulders, head, and back.

The Lamas said that around the period of 1515-18 AD when Guru Nanak was returning to Punjab from Tibet and Yarkand, he had rested at this place. According to a local legend, a wicked demon (likely a person with demonic-attitude) lived in the area and terrorized the local people.

Guru Nanak established his sangat on the bank of the river below the hill. The Guru's popularity infuriated the evil man who decided to kill the Guru by rolling a boulder at him. The Guru was sitting in meditation, and the hurtling boulder softened like wax as it came to rest against the Guru's back. The man was surprised to find the Guru unharmed.

In disbelief, the man inspected the boulder with his foot and left a footprint in the boulder which was still soft. The man realized the greatness of the Guru and fell at his feet and begged forgiveness. Blessing from the Guru transformed the evil man into a noble soul who spent his remaining life serving people.

Today the site and the Gurudwara that now covers the boulder is revered by both the local Lamas and Sikh sangat. Currently, the Army is looking after the Gurudwara.

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