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ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ

ਰਹਿਤ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਮੁਤ ਕਰਿ , ਸਿਖ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਨਹਿ



In Search

of

THE TRUE GURU

ਕੂਪ ਕੋਬੰਦ ਕਾ । ਰਜ ਖਲਸੇ ਕਾ । ਸਿੰਕਾ ਸੇਨੇ ਕਾ



Khalsa is my identity true



In Khalsa do I reside



Manmukh



To



Gursikh

By: Bhai Rama Singh Ji (from Manmukh to Gursikh)

The Name of *Paramatma* (Universal Spirit¹) is written in the destiny of every human being from the outset; this realisation comes through the Grace of the Lord. Before taking birth on this earth, the human soul vows to remember the Lord's Name. Until such time as the child is in the mother's womb it carries on with *swas-swas simraan* (utterance of God's Name with each breath). However, after taking birth, caught in the enticing circle of *maya* (Mammon), he forgets *Paramatma* (the Supreme Soul). Bhai Gurdas has made it clear that *Waheguru* (the Wondrous Enlightener) is the *Gurmantar* (Guru's mystical formula) which may be recited by anyone regardless of caste or religion. All the wishes of one who recites this *Gurmantar* are fulfilled. There are two methods for reciting *Waheguru*: the first is to recite the word *Waheguru* and the second to repeat *Waheguru* with every *swas* (life breath). The method for repeating *Waheguru* with every *swas* is taught by the *Panj Piaray* (the Five Beloved Ones - see Glossary). In this way, by doing *swas-swas simraan* in the early morning, a time comes when the *swas* begin to ascend to the forehead (to *thrikuti*, a spot between the eye-brows) and one experiences as follows:

"You brawling, ignorant person of low mentality, reverse your breath and turn it inward. Let your mind be intoxicated with the stream of Ambrosial Nectar which trickles down from the furnace of the *tenth gate* (see *dasam duar* in the Glossary)." (SGGS p. 1123)

In this state, *Waheguru* resides in the *swas* (life breath) and one is unable to speak. *Waheguru simran* (recitation of *Waheguru's* Name) is continued automatically and subconsciously in the mind. In this state, all thoughts stop. While *simran* continues, first the feet go numb and then the rest of the body. One feels no discomfort while sitting cross-legged. Then, such is the joy of *simran* that time passes unnoticed. When the end of a human being comes, *Waheguru's Naam* (God's Name or Being) which resides in one's *swas* takes one straight to the *Sachkhand* (the ultimate Reality, the Plane of Truth or the Lord's country). If a human being so desires, then he can find a home for *Naam* in his mind. As in India, the string that pulls the water container from a well, cuts a groove on the stone edge of the well; so, if a string can make its permanent mark or groove on a stone, why can't a human being locate (*Waheguru's*) *Naam* in his *hirda* (inner self - see Glossary)?

¹One of the many names of God in the Indian Vedic tradition. Many traditional Hindu and Islamic names of God are used in the Sikh Holy Scriptures, Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS). However, the Sikh definition of God is as in the basic precept, the *Mool Mantar*, at the beginning of SGGS, and no other.

Dedicated

On the tercentennial anniversary of the inauguration of the Khalsa Panth to those who recited (God's) Name, shared their food (earnings) with others, continued with the community kitchen and wielded their sword in defence of the weak and achieved martyrdom.

Need for publication in English and acknowledgements

While writing *Roop Gobind ka, Raj Khalsay ka; Sikka sonay ka* in Panjabi, I felt that there was a need for an English translation for the benefit of our next generation and those who cannot read Panjabi. Also, there were many requests for an English translation when the book was published in Panjabi and distributed widely to the global Sikh Sangat. However, the difficulty was in finding a Gursikh whose proficiency in English (to which western educated young Sikhs could relate) matched his in-depth understanding of the Sikh way of life. With Guru Ji's blessing, Sardar Kesar Singh Mand introduced me to Sardar Gurmukh Singh, retired Principal officer from the British civil service. My prayers were answered and this project has now been completed.

I am grateful to Gursikhs from many countries who have given me much encouragement and support to produce this English publication. I would like to thank Sardar Gurmukh Singh Ji for a most readable, accurate and educational translation which will also help the next generation to understand the main *Gurmatt* words and concepts. I also thank Sardar Kesar Singh Ji Mand for his message and continued support and advice. I thank the following for their invaluable support in proof reading: Master Santokh Singh Nijran, Nottingham, Bhai Onkar Singh and Bhai Kuldip Singh, Slough, and Bhai Kamaljit Singh, Bradford. This project could not have been completed without the most dedicated and untiring support of Bhai Sukhdev Singh Ji, Bibi Amarjit Kaur and Bibi Jagdeep Kaur Kudhail.

The daily *Ardaas* of this humble servant before Waheguru Ji is to bestow the divine gift of *Naam simraan* and the desire to do *sewa* on all.

Servant of the Sangat
Bhai Rama Singh

A few words about this English publication

There are two main aims of this English translation of Bhai Sahib Bhai Rama Singh Ji's publication in Panjabi : *Roop Gobind Ka, Raj Khalsay Ka, Sikka Sonay Ka* (*Identity of Gobind, Raj of the Khalsa, Coinage of Gold*).

Firstly, to make this compilation of Bhai Sahib's worldly and spiritual experiences available to those who are either not able to read Panjabi, or who find it easier to read some of the deeper *Sikhi* (Sikh way of life) concepts in English. There is a wealth of guidance here, charming and readable due to Bhai Sahib's simple narrative style. Every effort has been made in this translation to retain that style. Whatever views one may have about the Sikh way of life, one cannot remain unimpressed by Bhai Sahib's honesty and frankness. His message comes from the depths of his soul, about that the reader cannot remain in any doubt. For that reason, this collation of real life experiences of this *Gursikh* (Guru's Sikh) will have a lasting impact on the reader.

The second aim of this translation or, more correctly interpretation, is educational: a "Glossary" of the key Panjabi words used in the Sikh ideology and religious tradition like *sewa, Sangat, Pangat, Naam simran, rehat, Ardaas, matha tekan* etc. has been compiled and the usage of these is shown in the text of the book. The pronunciation has been made as easy as possible, although, due to the limitation of the 26 letters of the English alphabet, it is not possible to entirely satisfy this aspect. Anyone should be able to pick up these words (shown in *italics*) and remember them in the context of their usage. In this way, word-concepts in line with *Gurmatt* (Guru's teaching) can be easily picked up and remembered. To make it easy for the young Sikh and non-Sikh readers, such words have been briefly explained in brackets (as in this introduction) when first used, so that one need not refer to the Glossary every time. Fewer explanations are given in the second half of the book; hopefully, by then, the reader should know the meanings of these commonly used words. This method of presentation may be quite unique and could

prove to be a model for acquainting the next generation with the original key *Gurmatt* words and concepts.

In retaining Bhai Sahib Ji's original, simple and attractive personal style, there is less concern for rules of syntax. Bhai Sahib Ji's recitation of own experiences and Gursikh episodes are given mostly in the original format. The footnotes give further explanation and background information where this is deemed necessary.

Sometimes, use of *Gurbani* or *Gurmatt* words is also a form of "shorthand" and it saves space. The expression "*matha tekana*" is a very short way for saying, "A way of paying respect to Guru Ji. You approach Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji with folded hands. Then by going down on your knees; and by balancing yourself on the palms of your hands; you bow forward and touch your forehead on the ground. You then stand up with folded hands, bow to the Guru and move away." But if you say "*matha tekana*" to a Gursikh then he or she will know immediately what is meant. Words like *kautak* also need proper understanding. *Gurmatt* forbids the performance of miracles or magic. To translate *kautak* by Guru Ji as performance of a miracle would not be appropriate, although, only the discerning reader would know the difference between a *kautak* and a miracle. Therefore, the word has not been translated, although, it has been explained in the Glossary.

There is no gender discrimination (i.e. sex discrimination) in Sikhi. So, care has been taken to use gender neutral words like "humankind" instead of "mankind", "individual", "person" and "one" etc. However, following the standard usage, unless we keep repeating "he or she", depending upon the intended meaning of the sentence, "he" means "he or she".

Honesty in translation or interpretation is more important than complete agreement with all that is translated. This translation is no exception. Spiritual experience, by its very nature, is personal. However, it needs to be understood that the central theme of *Gurbani* is to control the aimless wandering of the mind which harms both, worldly and spiritual objectives of this life. Whether some experiences described by Bhai Sahib Ji can or cannot be

explained logically or (psychologically) is to miss the point. Gurbani says that everything is within His Will and everything can (ultimately) be explained once His *Hukam* (Law or Order or Scheme of Things) is understood. The *Gursikhi* (Sikh way of life) stress in this life is on continual and continuous mind-focus on *Naam*, the All Pervading Presence of The Ultimate Reality, "Waheguru", the One and Only Mystical Formula (*Mantar*) for a *Gursikh*. No power is "supernatural" and no power is greater than the All Powerful Positive One (Ik) Creator (*Oangkaar*). Bhai Sahib's experiences can be of help to those prepared to follow the Guru's spiritual path in humility. The ultimate guidance for *Gursikhs* will always be that of the Guru's Own Word, *Gurbani*; that is Guru Gobind Singh Ji's injunction. I have learnt much during the process of translation and while interpreting Gurbani concepts. I thank Bhai Rama Singh Ji for this opportunity. I am also grateful to S. Kesar Singh Ji Mand for persuading and encouraging me to undertake this *sewa*.

Acknowledgements: I owe my gratitude to Bhai Sukhdev Singh, Bibi Amarjit Kaur and Bibi Jagdeep Kaur for their great effort in cross checking the draft with the Panjabi version and suggesting improvements; to my son Inder Bir Singh for giving his views about the style and presentation; and, to my wife Harpal Kaur for her patience and the timely cups of *garam chaa* while I punched away at the PC for long hours.

That this *sewa* has been completed is indeed a *kautak* (see Glossary) in view of my total lack of experience for such a task. For this, my *Ardaas* (Prayer) of thanksgiving to Waheguru Ji.

Gurmukh Singh
E-mail sewauk@hotmail.com
January, 2001

Message from Sardar Kesar Singh Ji Mand

Bhai Sahib Rama Singh Ji was born in a Hindu family in 1930. However, his search for the Perfect and True Guru (*Poora Satguru*) which started from a very young age, led him to the path of Gursikhi (*Gursikhi maarg*).

When I first read about Bhai Rama Singh Ji's life experiences in Panjabi (*Roop Gobind Ka; Raj Khalsay Ka; Sikka Sonay Ka*), it became clear to me why he was spiritually attracted to *Gursikhi* (Sikh way of life). His spiritual connection with Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji and *Sikhi* went back over previous life cycles. His search was predestined. The spiritual longing for returning to the Guru's path was already there from childhood. How he was able to return to the Guru's fold is a spiritually moving story. Many have read Bhai Sahib Ji's life story in Panjabi and have found much spiritual comfort and guidance as some comments quoted in this book will show.

It is the message of determined pursuance of the Guru's path and complete faith in the Guru that is central to this life story of a Gursikh. No one who reads this book, with whatever Sikh ideological beliefs or belonging to whichever school of thought, can remain untouched by Bhai Rama Singh Ji's simplicity, sincerity and single minded dedication to *Naam simran* and Guru's service (*sewa*). By making his life experiences available to the followers of the Guru's path, Bhai Sahib Ji has done a great service: this publication is an experience based guidance for spiritual progress in this life. The impact on the reader is that much greater seeing that Bhai Sahib Ji was born in a high caste Hindu family and his own path was full of great hardship. Bhai Sahib Ji never wavered from his quest for the True Guru, Who then blessed him with *partakh darshan* (experience of divine sight).

This English translation by Sardar Gurmukh Singh Ji, with the most apt title of *In Search of the True Guru*, while retaining full flavour of the original book by Bhai Rama Singh Ji, is also a highly educational work. It will benefit thousands of next generation Sikhs and many non-Sikhs. Sardar Gurmukh Singh Ji has explained

complex *Gurmatt* words with great clarity for the benefit of western educated next generation Sikhs and non-Sikhs.

I recommend this unique publication to all research students of *Gursikhi*, the Guru's way.

Servant of the Sangat

Kesar Singh Mand (Journalist)

Hayes, Middlesex, England

Message from Harjinder Singh Mander
(Chief Editor, Panjab Times)

While I did not know much about Bhai Rama Singh Ji's life, I was aware that he had been living in England for some years. However, never did I realise that Bhai Sahib Ji's life represented the history of the Sikhs of UK. When I read about his thoughts and sentiments, and about his way of life from the book written by him, I could not remain unimpressed by his unique personality.

Ordinary beings suffer from weaknesses and a lax attitude; and as I was editing the (original Panjabi) book, I also found time for self reflection. The way Bhai Sahib has outlined the life of *Sikhi* (Sikh way of life) and described the lives of Gursikhs, on reading that, an ordinary person would certainly become impatient to adopt *Sikhi*. Although, it is another matter if:

A bamboo does not become fragrant even when growing next to sandalwood.

(SGGS p.1365)

Like a rock in the middle of a river, such a mentality remains dry from the inside. Otherwise, it cannot be that on reading this book one remains mentally unaffected and hesitates from adopting *Sikhi*. It may be that to some people of a certain type of mentality, some incidents may appear to be over stated. However, for those steeped in spiritual thought and experience, these are blissful experiences.

The fourth part of the book is a unique and wondrous example of the outline concept of Khalsa Raj (*Sikhi* concept of the ideal state). The main objective of this book is to reiterate the Guru's teaching to the Sikhs and to link them to that teaching.

Harjinder Singh Mander
Chief Editor, Panjab Times
Derby UK.

(Original message of March, 1999, in Panjabi.)

Comments from readers

Some extracts from the many letters received by Bhai Rama Singh Ji from the readers of his book, *Roop Govind ka; Raj Khalsay ka; Sikka sonay ka*. The wording in brackets is for clarification.

"After reading the book I could not stop from reproaching myself. I was compelled to think that we are millions of miles away from our true mission. What did our Guru Ji teach us and what are we doing? What form did the *Dasmesh Pita* (Tenth spiritual Father, Guru Gobind Singh Ji) bestow on us and what form are we living in. We have forgotten all the sacrifices He made for us. Not only I, but hundreds of thousands of Sikh youth like me have deviated from the path shown to us (by Guru Ji). To bring these young people back to the right path, it is important that they are made aware of the truth through the right type of preaching.....By writing this book you are helping hundreds of thousands in this world. Guidance is given about how to follow the right path and achieve salvation. The path to *Sach Khand* (Waheguru's Court) is shown through the recitation of *Naam* (Waheguru's Name). Whoever reads this book will at least realise own deficiencies and will certainly make efforts to sort out (his or her) remaining life."

(From a letter in Panjabi by Narinder Singh, Spain)

"In my sorrow, I always recall this portion in your book describing the time you were supposed to leave this world and when your soul left your body and travelled offwhen you asked to see Guru Ji, you were not allowed to because there was something else you had to work on. The stories that you have shared through your book have been truly enlightening and I enjoyed reading it."

(From a letter in English from Bibi Parveen Kaur of Singapore.)

"Baba Ji, this book about your life truly shows the right path to meet *Paramatma* (Supreme Soul). Anyone who reads about your holy life will surely take Amrit and become *Guru wala* (follower of the Guru i.e. Guru's Khalsa).....we will distribute your books to Guru's devotees. They will get closer to Satguru Ji after reading about your saintly life."

(Letter in Panjabi from Bhai Mohinder Singh of New Zealand)

"I read your book *Roop Gobind Ka, Raj Khalsay ka; Sikka sonay ka*. I gained much knowledge after reading it and developed an interest in doing *simran* (recitation of Waheguru's Name). I developed an interest in preaching Gurbani and reciting Sukhmani Sahib. I recite Sukhmani Sahib daily.....I was so impressed by your book that I read it in a short time. From now I do "Waheguru, Waheguru" *simran*. Please pray for me that Guru Ji bestows on me the gift of *Naam simran* (spontaneous recitation of Waheguru's Name). I have been very much influenced by your book.....After reading your book one understands how to live a life of *Sikhi*."

(Letter in Panjabi from Bhai Darshan Kumar from Ghotri (Sindh), Pakistan.)

"I was told by my wife to read this book (*Roop Gobind Ka, Raj Khalsay ka; Sikka sonay ka*). That it was a very good book.....Your every story fills one with wonderment and I cannot describe how impressed I was. The first thing which impressed me was that despite belonging to a Hindu family you have come so close to the Guru. We belong to Sikh families, yet we are so far away; this shows clearly that your love for *Paramatma* (Supreme Soul) is true, for which reason you have also experienced *darshan* (divine sight) of Guru Sahib Ji. After reading your book I feel that I have wasted my whole life.....because it is only now that I understand....."

(Letter in Panjabi from Bhai Jaswinder Singh, Jalandhar, Punjab.)

"Bhai Sahib Ji, after reading your book *Roop Gobind Ka, Raj Khalsay ka; Sikka sonay ka*, a soul full of deficiencies like me has gained much. The teaching is very helpful. I do not have the intellect to write it or describe it.....Thanks to your kindness that through your book I have also seen (the *Gursikhi* lives of) other Singhs.....You have shown great kindness (by writing this book).

(Letter in Panjabi from Bibi Ranjit Kaur of New Zealand.)

Bhai Rama Singh Ji:

Born:	1930
Father:	Vaid Chandar Pal
Mother:	Bibi Lashmi Devi
Brothers/sisters:	One brother and two sisters
Education:	Eighth class.
Village:	Chhariavli
District:	Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, India.

The True Guru

Praise be to the Wearer of the plume², who destroyed ego.
The Lord of countless galaxies calling himself a beggar.
O True Guru! When the Vaisakhi comes I am tearful.
I turn my tear filled eyes towards my Lord, when will He come.
For Whose sake I am distressed, the Lord is not to be seen.
As I shed tears, who will console me now.
Praise be to the Wearer of the plume, who destroyed ego.
The Lord of countless galaxies calling himself a beggar.
My friends ask me, why are you tearful?
Only my mind knows my plight, who knows another's pain?
How shall I speak of my own deeds, how I have wasted my life?
The Lord Who gave me everything, I have not given an abode.
Praise be to the Wearer of the plume, who destroyed ego.
The Lord of countless galaxies calling himself a beggar.
Every moment, life ebbs, youth does not last.
No-one knows about tomorrow, whether tomorrow will come or not.
One day in my dream came the Lord of countless galaxies.
Prepare for *Amrit*³, for without *rehat*⁴ one cannot be called a Sikh.
Praise be to the Wearer of the plume (Guru Gobind Singh Ji), who
destroyed ego.
The Lord of countless galaxies calling himself a beggar.
From the time I took Amrit, O True Guru I sit in your lap.
The nectar of the True Name showered upon me, I remained not
conscious of self.
Recite yourself and persuade others to recite the Name, this the True
Guru taught me.
Meditate on the Name with the holy congregation, break the cycle of
birth and death.
Praise be to the Wearer of the plume, who destroyed ego.
The Lord of countless galaxies calling himself a beggar.

²Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

³*Amrit* initiation into *Sikhi* (see Glossary for *Amrit* and *Sikhi*).

⁴Sikh discipline (see Glossary)

Introduction by Bhai Sahib Bhai Rama Singh Ji.

Ik Onkar Satgur Prasaad

(One Universal Creator, By the Grace of The True Guru)

“The Lord Himself has stood up to resolve the affairs of the Saints; He has come to complete their tasks.” (SGGS p. 783)

This servant⁵ is grateful to the Eternal Living Light, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, for granting him the wisdom to write this book. In this *Kalyug* (see Glossary), many individuals are wandering around aimlessly. They have no knowledge of the True⁶ Guru. I too suffered from such ignorance in my youth, looking in many directions for the True Guru. I wandered through many paths to finally reach the true path.

When the *Panj Piaray* (the Five Beloved Ones - see Glossary) in the Guru's Own Image, initiated me to the Khalsa Panth through the *Amrit Sanchar* ceremony, they preached that *sewa* (selfless service), *simran* (meditative recitation of God's Name), charitable acts and humility were the pillars of *Sikhi* (the Sikh way of life). This servant acted on those principles and after studying Gurbani of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, took to heart certain precious gems. For example:

⁵Bhai Rama Singh Ji has referred to himself in the traditional Gursikh way as “daas” (humble servant) instead of using the first person. However, in the remainder of this translation, the first case is used.

⁶Literal translation of *Puran Guru* is the “Perfect Guru”. However, unlike the word “puran” in Panjabi, “perfect” in English has the scope for subjective interpretation. The preference here is to equate the “Perfect Guru” with the One and Only *Sat Guru*, the True Guru as intended, thus avoiding any possible misinterpretation.

From Japji Sahib:

“In the *Amrit Vela*, the ambrosial hours before dawn, chant the True Name, and contemplate on His Glorious Greatness.

From Anand Sahib:

“The saintly beings and the silent sages search for the Ambrosial Nectar; this *Amrit* is obtained from the Guru.”

“O my eyes, the Lord has infused His Light into you; do not look upon any other than the Lord.”

“O my ears, you were created only to hear the Truth.”

From Sukhmani Sahib:

“Meditate, and by meditating continually, find contentment and happiness.”

“One, whose eyes do not gaze upon the beauty of other⁷ women (i.e. other than own marriage partner).”

“One whose heart is mercifully blessed with abiding humility, O Nanak, is liberated here, and obtains peace hereafter.”

In this way, I followed the Words of the *Satguru* (True Guru) Ji. Any person who follows the teaching of Satguru Ji, will be saved from the cycle of birth and death. I had no intention of writing a book. On one occasion Bhai Balvir Singh met me at a camp. He asked, “Bhai Sahib Ji, I would like to know why you adopted *Sikhi* despite your Hindu background?” I was reluctant to say anything but

⁷*Par tria* should not be interpreted as another's woman in a proprietary sense, as is done by some. In *Sikhi*, women are not chattels which can be possessed! *Par* in this context means “one who is not your marriage partner” and therefore the word includes all other women who should be treated as mothers, sisters and daughters.

I could not help mentioning that Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji gave me his *darshan* (holy sight) and instructed me to partake of *Amrit* initiation and do the *sewa* of *Amrit Sanchar* (see Glossary). Hearing this, he showed much interest and encouraged me to write about my life experiences. That many would benefit from such a publication. In the same way Bhai Satnam Singh and Bhai Prithipal Singh also encouraged me. I thought, that if by writing about my life others can benefit, then an effort should be made.

Few know how exalted the life of the artist Sobha Singh was, except for what can be assessed from his portraits of the Gurus. First he opened his heart to the Gurus and then he painted their portraits. In the same way, first the melodious compositions form in the mind of a *raagi* (professional *Gurbani* singer) and he sings them on the harmonium and is pleased himself; he then conveys that enjoyment to the *Sangat* (Holy Congregation). The *kathakar* (one who preaches *Gurbani* - see *katha* in the Glossary), first studies *Gurbani* and understands it and then wins the hearts of the *Sangat*. A poet forms an idea before writing a poem. Then he selects the right words and composes a poem which he recites to the *Sangat* and feels happy. In the same way, I had a vision (of the Khalsa beau ideals):

“Roop Gobind Ka, Raj Khalsa Ka, Sika Sonha Ka.”

With Guru Ji's blessing, as I recited Waheguru's Name, I experienced thought flashes which I started noting down.

“I do not know anything about spiritual wisdom, meditation or *karma* (philosophy and rituals), and my way of life is not clean and pure.” (SGGS p. 702)

Before starting this book, I prayed to the Living Light, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, the Benevolent Provider of unlimited number of qualities, to bestow upon me the effort to realise my aim. This humble servant has experienced four *kautaks* (unusual happenings - see Glossary). First, a divine message in the jungle of Hardwar;

second, *darshan* (holy vision) of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji; third, the gift of *simran* (recitation of God's Name) at *Amrit vela* (early morning - see Glossary); and fourth, a vivid dream of Khalsa Raj. All that is written in this book is my own personal experience; the fruit of the labour of dedicated pursuit of spiritual attainment and not something heard from others.

"I am not celibate, nor truthful, nor scholarly. I was born foolish and ignorant into this world." (Rehraas Sahib)

I am not a writer and there will be many shortcomings in my writing. All are liable to err for only the Creator is Perfect. A human being will always make mistakes. I apologise to the *Sangat* (Holy Congregation) for any omissions. Please accept what you like in this publication, and write to me if you do not like anything. The purpose of this book is served if any person gains from it. Even if a single individual, on reading this book, partakes of *Khanday Baatay da Amrit* (i.e. undertakes *Amrit* initiation - see Glossary), starts earning the credit of *Naam Simran* (recitation of Waheguru's Name - see Glossary) and walks on the path to salvation, then the effort of writing this book would have been worthwhile.

I am grateful to all those brothers and sisters who have supported in any way in producing this publication. The names of the following need special mention: Bhai Prem Singh who produced the cover design and the picture of Sri Harmandar Sahib; Bhai Manpreet Singh who produced the picture conception of the underground tunnel; Bhai Sukhdev Singh and Bibi Amarjit Kaur for their support in writing; Bhai Ram Singh Gravesend, Bhai Kesar Singh Mand, Bhai Rajinder Singh Purewal, Bhai Harjinder Singh Mander, Jathedar Balvir Singh and Bhai Bhupinder Singh, Bhai Balkar Singh Dhillon, Bhai Baljinder Singh and Bibi Davinder Kaur Dhand who gave me full support and encouragement in every way.

Finally, I am extremely grateful to Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji *Maharaj* (the Great King), who placed His Benevolent Guiding Hand on my head and blessed me to accomplish this *sewa* (service).

Whatever the Great King inspired me to write, so I have done my best to put on paper. I have written nothing in *haomai* (vanity), but if anyone does get that impression, then I seek forgiveness in all humility.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa;

Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

“The Khalsa belongs to the Wondrous Enlightener, Who is always victorious.”

Servant of the *Sangat* (Holy Congregation)

Bhai Rama Singh

Sardar Gurmukh Singh

Sardar Gurmukh Singh retired as a Principal officer in the British Civil Service after thirty-four years service. He was the first *sabat surat* Gursikh to represent the UK abroad at official level and has held many responsible positions. He received his *Gurmatt* education from his father, Giani Harchand Singh Ji Bassian, a well known Gursikh *pracharak* of Malaysia. His studies aim to collate constructive interpretation of Guru Nanak's mission in the context of contemporary issues.

Contents

A few words about this English publication	X
The True Guru	XIX
Introduction by Bhai Sahib Bhai Rama Singh Ji.	XX
Contents	XXV
PART 1: Childhood	
Childhood	2
A Selfish World	7
<i>Sant Samooh Anek Mati Kay:</i> (Men of God belong to many schools)	9
Three Impostor <i>Saadhus</i> (Holy Men)	11
<i>Saadhus</i> of the Jain Faith	15
Celibacy as a way to salvation	18
Worship of <i>Shiv-Ling</i> ⁸ and Worship of Sayiad	19
The Five Fires	20
In Banaras, the suicidal saw in the well of salvation !	21
Donation of a cow to charity	22
Bathing the Statue of Mahadev	23
Donation of a Bed to Charity	24
<i>Saraadh</i> (Offering of food, clothes etc. to Brahmins for the benefit of dead ancestors.)	27
<i>Naag Panchmi</i> (Snake Worship)	29
The worship of <i>Kali Maaee</i>	30
The benefit of <i>Matha Tekan</i>	31
A scene of death	32
Part 2: Search for the True Guru	
No salvation without the Perfect (True) Guru	34
Journey to Indonesia	36

PART 1

Childhood

Childhood

In front of our house there was a platform where my father would sit and dispense homeopathic medicine. Sometimes, visiting holy men would use the same platform to preach from the Hindu holy books of *Gita* and *Ramayana*. The villagers would listen to the sermons with attentive devotion. I too was very keen and used to listen with great interest.

One day I came home after playing outside and saw my mother and some other ladies washing clothes at the local well. They would first rub soap on the wet clothes and would then beat them with a small piece of wood (*thaapi* shaped like a small cricket bat). I was curious and asked my mother, "Why are you beating the clothes like that?"

"These clothes are very dirty, I'm beating out the dirt," mother replied and preached, "Those who take birth on this earth but don't meditate on the God's Name, get this kind of punishment from *jamdoots* (angels of death). If you don't remember God, then you too will get the same treatment."

Hearing this I was frightened and at that very moment I started saying '*Haaray-Rama, Haaray-Rama*' (i.e. started reciting the Lord's Name). While doing this *simran* (recitation) I felt great joy and calmness. I felt as if I was about to reap the fruit of the good deeds done in my past life. I was hardly six years old then.

A child's first teachers are its parents. A mother is the first person a child learns from.

I heard a sermon from Baba Ratan Das when I was eight. He said that according to the Hindu religion, there were 8.4 million life forms. If a person did not remember God's Name, then that person went through the suffering of all those life forms. Once caught in that cycle of births and deaths, it took a soul millions of years to get out of it. The life span of some life forms e.g. a crow or a snake is quite long. There is only suffering and pain in that cycle of births and deaths and no comfort at all.

Those ruling the world at one time must have done good deeds in their past lives. They were reaping the reward of a good religious living, charity and pilgrimages to holy places in their past lives. However, intoxicated with power, they then forgot God, started doing bad deeds and reaped the punishment in hell. If a person remembers God day and night, he could achieve salvation.

These words of Baba Ram Ratan Das had much impact on me. I thought that as a reward for reading Gita and Ramayana, I might be reborn in the family of a king in my next life; the wealth and power could make me forget God and I could go to hell as a result. Why shouldn't I meditate on God's Name in this life and achieve salvation? What Baba Ji meant was that we should meditate on the Lord's Name and make this life a success; *simran* (recitation of the Lord's Name) is very important.

One day, when I was about nine years old, I went to buy books from the city of Aligarh, which is about one and a half miles from our village. Upon entering the city, I saw a cart that was overloaded with goods. A horse with blinkers over its eyes was pulling it with great difficulty. Each time the horse slowed down the driver would beat it with a stick. On seeing the plight of this dumb animal, I was much saddened; the poor beast could not express its suffering and was taking all that punishment in silence.

When I returned to the bus station after buying the books, I saw that the horse-cart on which I had come was overcrowded like the cart I had seen earlier. Everyone had bought things from the city and the weight had more than doubled. The cart owner seated everyone and also loaded their luggage. He appeared to be totally unconcerned as to how the poor horse was going to pull all that weight. Each time the horse slowed down, the driver would strike the horse with a leather whip. The horse's back was sore with wounds but the driver kept striking on those wound so that the horse would run faster.

Everyday, during the school recess at mid-day, I would take food to our servant who was working in the fields. One day, I brought the food a little earlier. I saw that while ploughing the field,

the servant was hitting the oxen with a stick while swearing at them. At the end of the stick there was a nail. When the oxen behaved stubbornly, he would prod them with the pointed end of the stick. Feeling the pain, the oxen would move faster. I was distressed to see this; that if I did not meditate on the Name of God, I would suffer the same fate.

In the evening, the servant left the oxen at home after giving them water. I noticed that their backs were bleeding. Flies were sitting on the wounds and sucking blood. The oxen were repeatedly whisking away the flies with their tails.

“How can anyone know the pain of another, if there is no compassion and sympathy within?”

(SGGS p. 793)

Even human beings do not understand each other's pain; how could these dumb animals? They could not talk about their suffering to anyone. They had wasted the precious gift of their previous human lives, and as a result of bad deeds, they were reborn as animals. Seeing all this I was much saddened and tears rolled down my eyes.

My job was to put fodder before the oxen. While putting a basket of hay in front of each oxen, I started thinking, "Despite working hard all day, all these poor oxen get to eat is chaff and a drink of water and that only once a day!"

O human being! God has given you countless varieties of food to eat and clothing to wear; yet, you remember Him only when you are in distress. To be saved from such a punishment, such a frightening and terrible condition, every human being should start doing *simran* (reciting God's Name) for at least five minutes daily. With the True Guru's grace these five minutes can eventually become five hours of meditation. One only needs to make a start. Bhagat Kabir Ji says in this *salok*:

“Kabir, whether it is for one *ghari* (a time period of 24 minutes), half a *ghari*, or half of that, whatever it is, it is worthwhile to talk to (be in the company of) saintly people.” (SGGS p. 1377)

When I adopted *Sikhi*, I beheld the holy *darshan* (sight; also see Glossary) of Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. While I was doing *paatth* (reading Gurbani with reverence) of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the following lines reminded me of those oxen. What Kabir Sahib Ji says in the following *shabad* (hymn) is true:

“With four feet, two horns and a mute mouth, how could you sing the Praises of the Lord? Standing up and sitting down, the stick shall still fall on you, so where will you hide your head? || 1 || Without the Lord, you are like a stray ox; with your nose torn, and your shoulders injured, you shall have only the straw of coarse grain to eat. || 1 || Pause || All day long, you shall wander in the forest, and even then, your belly will not be full. You did not follow the advice of the holy men, and so you shall obtain the fruits of your actions. || 2 || Enduring pleasure and pain, drowned in the great ocean of doubt, you shall wander in numerous reincarnations. You have lost the jewel of human birth by forgetting God; when will you have such an opportunity again? || 3 || You turn on the wheel of reincarnation, like an ox at the oil-press; the night of your life passes away without salvation. Says Kabir, without the Name of the Lord, you shall smite your head, and repent. || 4 ||” (SGGS p. 524)

In this *shabad*, Kabir Ji says that if one is born an animal, then how can that dumb creature recite God's Name? It is only as a human being that one can make life a success and achieve salvation.

I was filled with grief. I thought that I should remember God, otherwise I too would suffer the same fate as the oxen. An inner voice was telling me to meditate. The next day the oxen went through the same ordeal. When I looked at them, I was filled with such sorrow, that after giving food to the servant, I did not return home. Instead, I started walking towards the jungle. I found a place in the

jungle where no one could see me. There I started reciting 'Haaray-Rama', 'Haaray-Rama'. I was feeling frightened; I took off my shirt and tied it over my eyes. While I continued meditating, time passed and it was evening. I could hear the sound of animals and birds returning to their homes. It was winter. A cold breeze was blowing and it was drizzling. My mind wavered, that I should run home; however, I felt as if some mysterious force was holding me back.

Due to the cold, I did not fall asleep the whole night as I did not have any warm clothes with me. With God's Grace I did not even realise the passage of time while meditating. I began to enjoy reciting 'Haaray Rama, Haaray Rama'. It was dawn and I could hear the sweet chirping of the birds waking up. As the sun rose, I started feeling very hungry. I began to realise that it was not easy to remember God's Name. I wondered what to do; should I go home or not? If I went home, I would get a scolding but if I didn't, I would die of hunger!

I was still sitting there until 5 o' clock in the evening. Finally, I returned home in fear. The whole family was worried. My father was very angry and asked me, "Where have you been? We've been looking for you since yesterday?"

I said, "Father, a voice from inside me was telling me to meditate. I felt very sad and that is why I went to the jungle to do *simran*."

Hearing this, father cooled down a bit. Mother came in. She also had been worried about me. Father told her that I had gone to meditate at such a young age. He advised me that one should recite God's Name in old age. In any case, what was I so frightened of that I had started meditation at such a young age. He told me, "This time we forgive you because you have mentioned the Name of *Raam* (God), but if you go away again you will be punished!"

A Selfish World

An old man lived in our village and had two sons. As time passed, he thought of sharing his property between them. The money from the sale of his land was divided equally and given to them. At that time I was about ten years old.

Time passed. For a while the daughters-in-law served him well. Later they started complaining, "Sometimes he demands hot food, sometimes he falls sick or suffers from some other ailment, he is a burden on us." He felt very sad listening to all this and realised that it was his own fault because he had given away all his money to them. No one bothered taking care of him anymore, thinking that there was nothing more to be gained.

One day he became very sick and came to see my father for medicine. He told my father that he was given only left over food that was not healthy. He asked my father to give him some good medicine so that he could get well soon.

My father gave him the medicine and also suggested a solution to his problems. He put some stones in a clay pot and put 20 silver rupee coins on top of the stones. He told the old man, "Take this home. After you show it to your family, return the money to me."

When the daughters-in-law saw the clay pot they asked him about its contents.

He replied, "I had some money buried in the ground, but I thought that if I died, nobody would know about it. That's why I brought it home, so that you will know about it, and can have it after I die."

The daughters-in-law were very happy, and thought that their father-in-law had lots of money. They began to take good care of him. He returned the silver rupees to my father and hid the pot of stones under his bed. In those days there were no banks and people kept their money in their homes. The old man put two locks on the door to his room, and locked them both whenever he went out. From

then on, he started receiving good service. One daughter-in-law would say, "Father, today I have made *karah*¹ (a sweet dish) for you!" The other one would say, "I have made rice and special curry for you!"

Before, no one would bother about washing his clothes. Now, he started receiving washed clothes regularly. He thought how selfish the world was. Only wealth and not human beings received respect. A person was popular, if he had money. Otherwise no one really bothered. He came to my father and thanked him saying, "Nowadays I am looked after very well." And so time passed.

When the old man died, the family carried his body, together with his bed, out of the house. When they got hold of the clay pot under the bed, to their surprise and dismay, all that they found in the pot were stones!

Sant Samooh Anek Mati Kay (Men of God belong to many schools)

“I have seen many abodes, where groups of Sarogis, Sudhs, Sidhs, Yogis and Jains reside.

(Sarogis are a sect of Jains, Sudhs are those who remain clean, while Sidhs are those who possess occult powers).

(I have also seen) various groups of the brave men and demons, gods who drink nectar, and other saints, belonging to various sects.

I have noticed (religions of) different countries, but none seems to be (the religion) of (preaching worship of) the Creator (by which the soul becomes His slave).

All these are worthless, if these men do not earn the kind Glance and Love of God and faith in Him.” (Patshahi 10 Tav-parsaad Sawaiyae)

One day, a *saadhu* (holy man) came to our village. He went about naked even in freezing cold. In his desire to meet God, he went through austerities beyond the imagination of an ordinary person. The villagers would take food for this *saadhu*, and, after placing some money in front of him, they would bow to him. For his taste, he would eat finely ground food, but before it could reach his stomach and be digested, he would drink a large quantity of water and vomit the water mixed with undigested food out into an iron container. His followers would then dispose of the contents of the container in the fields. He had control over his internal organs including bowels and bladder, so that he had no need to relieve himself. His body was all bones and he looked quite frightening. In Hinduism, this is believed to be one of the ways of attaining God.

“If I perform hundreds of thousands and millions of religious rituals—still, all these are not equal to the Name of the Lord.” (SGGS p. 62)

“Some go and sit in the forest realms, and do not answer any calls. Some, in the dead of winter, break the ice and immerse themselves in

freezing water. Some rub ashes on their bodies, and never wash off their dirt. Some look hideous, with their uncut hair matted and dishevelled. They bring dishonour to their family and ancestry. Some wander naked day and night and never sleep. Some burn their limbs in fire, damaging and ruining themselves. Without the Name, the body is reduced to ashes; what good is it to speak and cry then? Those who serve the True Guru, are embellished and exalted in the Court of their Lord and Master." (SGGS p. 1284)

This *saadhu* also kept a vow of silence. He would not speak to anyone. I went to see him. There was always a crowd of people around him. I thought to myself, "This is a difficult path in search of God. How can this man meet God? He does not recite the Name of God but remains entrapped in his own rituals. Instead of enjoying the taste of *Naam* (God's Name), he tastes food." I became even more disillusioned.

At that time, I was in search of salvation. But after coming to the path of *Sikhi*, I realised that Guru Nanak Dev Ji's path was the simplest of all. While being a householder, one can meditate on the Lord.

"O Nanak, meeting the True Guru, one comes to know the Perfect Way. While laughing, playing, dressing and eating, he is liberated." (SGGS p. 522)

Three Impostor *Saadhus* (Holy Men)

I was eleven when one day, my father was reading the Gita before a large congregation. Two *saadhus* (holy men) came into the gathering looking for the *bhagat* (devotee) of Mahadev². They inquired if any of us had seen him. According to them, this *bhagat* was a *brahamgiani* (at one with God) and Lord Mahadev always appeared by his side. Whatever he uttered would come to pass. Sometimes, while meditating, he would disappear.

One of the two *saadhus* became very emotional and said that he could not live without the *bhagat* of Mahadev. Seeing such display of emotional devotion, the villagers thought that the *bhagat* of Mahadev must really be a very accomplished person and that they should help to search for him. The two *saadhus* went to the neighbouring villages and repeated the same story there. All the villagers were convinced that the *bhagat* of Mahadev must be nearby.

The two men set up their abode in the middle of four or five villages. They filled three large skin bags of water and buried these in the ground. Their leader who had been missing so far, joined them and sat in a meditative pose. The villagers were then led to believe that the *bhagat* of Mahadev had appeared. People from the surrounding villages gathered at that place.

The *bhagat* was meditating at the time. When he opened his eyes, he announced that Lord Mahadev told him that at that spot the rivers Ganges, Jamuna and Saraswati would meet. He then struck a *tarshul* (a spear, the special head of which is symbolic of the Hindu faith) at the spot where the three water-filled skin bags of water were buried. As the water spouted out, people started bowing in reverence to the fake *bhagat*. He announced that the place was sacred. That holy rivers Ganges, Jamuna and Saraswati had appeared there and

² Another name for Shiva, one of the three Hindu god-heads; the other two being Brahma and Vishnu.

Lord Mahadev had blessed the place. He added that Lord Mahadev would be pleased if a temple and a sacred pool were to be constructed there without delay. With the water of the three holy rivers, the green fields would flourish.

But first, the villagers were told to construct a wooden platform for sitting. When the Lord was pleased then everyone would be able to see him. The *bhagat* got the platform constructed in such a way that one man could sit underneath it. At night, one of his helpers would stand guard while the other would sit underneath the platform. The *bhagat* would wrap himself in a blanket and sit on the platform. The person beneath the platform would pass a fake snake-like rubber rope to him, which he swung around his neck making it look like a real snake. The naive people thought that Lord Mahadev's snake had appeared.

In those days, there was no arrangement for electricity. People used lanterns or oil-lamps. The *saadhus* had lit a lantern and kept the people away from the *bhagat*, saying that snakes came to him. People were kept outside a large circle so that they could not look too closely. The *bhagat* had hidden a small light bulb on his head (hidden in his matted hair locks) and his assistant under the seat operated it by connecting the wires to batteries. The other assistant standing outside would chant "Har, Har Mahadev!" and all the people gathered there would repeat after him "Har, Har Mahadev!" People's faith in the *bhagat* increased. They decided that the temple and sacred pool should be built without delay and started collecting money for this worthy project.

One day the headman of the village came to see the *bhagat* who said to the headman, "O devotee! Lord Mahadev is very pleased with you and you will find five silver rupees under a stone near a certain tree." The *bhagat's* helpers had already placed the money there. The headman dug up the area and found the five rupees. He was very happy; he was impressed that the *bhagat* was all-knowing and went to see him with the money he found. The *bhagat* asked him to donate the money to Lord Mahadev and with the Lord's blessings,

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he would receive ten rupees the following week and gold coins in the fourth week!

The headman's faith in the *bhagat* increased and day and night he started collecting money for the *bhagat* with great enthusiasm. He even donated his wife's gold ornaments because he was convinced that in the fourth week, he would be getting gold coins. The following week he found ten rupees as foretold and he donated this money to the *bhagat*. The *bhagat* told him, "Lord Mahadev is so pleased with you that wealth will not be exhausted in your family for ten generations. Do service of the Lord (i.e. collect funds) whole-heartedly. Do not tell this to anyone or the benefit will go to some other person."

The headman got together the most influential men in the village and started making a door to door collection. The villagers donated willingly and gave whatever they had. Some ladies even gave their gold ornaments. People in the villages believed that Lord Mahadev himself was present when the *bhagat's* head lit up. Everybody was eager and pleased to get a *darshan* (holy sight) of the *bhagat* for making this life a success³. At night, the headman would place a sack for the villagers to put their donations in. When the people left for their homes, one of the *bhagat's* assistants would keep the money in a safe place. This went on for three weeks. The water in the skin-bags placed underground, was beginning to dry up. One night, the fake *saadhus* took all the money and gold and slipped away. People saw that the *bhagat* was not there. They were at first frightened to see a snake under the wooden seat. However, a closer inspection revealed that the snake was made of rubber. They dug up where the water was seeping through and found three skin-bags.

Then people realised that the *saadhus* were really tricksters. The headman went to the place where he was to receive the gold coins and found only an empty pot. He cursed his bad luck in

³The main purpose of human life is to seek salvation and the traditional belief is that *darshan* (holy sight) of a diety is a step towards achieving this goal.

dismay, for he had given away all his savings. He filed a report with the police. When the police asked him for descriptions, he was unable to tell them anything because the *saadhus* had always covered their faces with ashes.

Nowadays, even well educated people get defrauded in this way. May God save us from such false holy men.