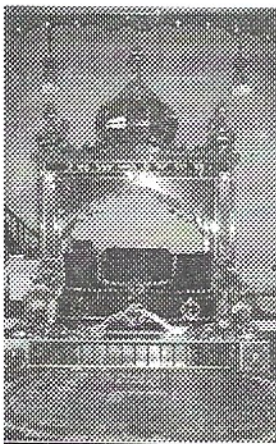


Central Gurdwara Resource Centre

Volume 1 Issue 5

February 1996



**Palki Sahib at
Shepherds Bush
Gurdwara**

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

What an interesting Month we just had. Starting with the Saint-Warrior function in Southall which went off with a bang - literally (fireworks display as the finale) to seeing the framework of a new Encyclopedia of Sikhism.

But we were also reminded of other forces at work among our community, with more threatening letters coming to light from other communities. Obviously the solution is education, firstly of ourselves and then others. We all need to ask ourselves "What does Sikhism mean to me?". Collective efforts are also needed and we should all be taking active part in any community activities and in particular those aimed at the Youth.

Coming up on 2nd March 1996 is an Open Forum which promises to bring up problems facing Sikhs today and will try to offer solutions.

Finally we must thank all our contributors - this really is YOUR newsletter and we are so pleased to see your response in the form of articles and poems.

Editors.

Sikh Youth Forum

on **Saturday 2 March 1996**
starting at 1pm.
at **Guru Nanak Gurdwara, High Street, Smethwick, Birmingham**
For more information please
contact **Surinder Singh**
Tel: 01384 873379

Sikh Workshop

Discussion Group for Sikh Youth of all ages is held every Sunday at **Havelok Road Gurdwara, Southall** from 2pm to 4pm in the Library building in the Car Park.

The Month Of Phagan

The Month of Phagan this year runs from 13 February to 13 March 1996.

In the first half of this Shabad Guru Ji refers to God as the bride-groom and his devotees as the bride. This metaphor is often used in Gurbani to describe the relationship between God and his devotees. The Shabad goes on to tell how God blesses his true devotees and saves them from re-brith.

ਫਲਗੁਣਿ ਅਨੰਦ ਉਪਾਰਜਨਾ ਹਰਿ ਸਜਣ ਪ੍ਰਗਟੇ ਆਇ ॥

Phalgun anand uparjana Har sajan pragate ae

In the month of Phagan the bride is in bliss because her friend the Lord has come to her house.

ਸੰਤ ਸਹਾਈ ਰਾਮ ਕੇ ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਦੀਆ ਮਿਲਾਇ ॥

Sant sahai ram ke kar kirpa dia milae.

Saints who help in the process of union with God, have been graceful to bring about this union.

ਸੇਜ ਸੁਹਾਵੀ ਸਰਬ ਸੁਖ ਹੁਣਿ ਦੁਖਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਜਾਇ ॥

Sej suhavi sarab sukh hun dukha nahi jae.

All pleasures have come to the loving bride. Her bed as become comfortable. All sorrows have been banished.

ਇਛ ਪੁਨੀ ਵਡਭਾਗਣੀ ਵਰੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਇ ॥

Ichh punni vadbhagani var paia har rae.

She is fortunate to have her wish fulfilled. She has obtained the Divine Lord as her husband. ਮਿਲਿ ਸਹੀਆ ਮੰਗਲੁ ਗਾਵਹੀ ਗੀਤ ਗੋਵਿੰਦ ਅਲਾਇ ॥

Mil sahia mangal gavai jit Govind alae.

With her friends she sings the songs of joy and the celestial songs of the true God.

ਹਰਿ ਜੇਹਾ ਅਵਰ ਨ ਦਿਸਈ ਕੋਈ ਦੂਜਾ ਲਵੈ ਨ ਲਾਇ ॥

Har jeha avar na disie koi duja lavai na lae.

There is none to be seen equal to God and there is none like Him.

ਹਲਤੁ ਪਲਤੁ ਸਵਾਰਿਓਨੁ ਨਿਹਚਲ ਦਿਤੀਅਨੁ ਜਾਇ ॥

Halat palat swarion nehchal ditian jae.

To his devotees He has blessed this and the next life and has granted to them a place in the regions of eternity.

ਸੰਸਾਰ ਸਾਗਰ ਤੇ ਰਖਿਅਨੁ ਬਹੁੜਿ ਨ ਜਨਮੈ ਧਾਇ ॥

Sansar sagar te rakhian bauhar na janmai dhae
He has saved them from the worldly ocean and they will not take birth again.

ਜਿਹਵਾ ਏਕ ਅਨੇਕ ਗੁਣ ਤਰੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਚਰਣੀ ਪਾਇ ॥

Jihva ek anek gun tare Nanak charni pae.

Any contributions, articles, ideas and volunteers will be appreciated, in the first instance contact:

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Email:
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or Gurpreet Singh
0181 904 4191

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With one sole tongue it is very difficult to express His countless virtues. Those who swim across the worldly ocean they fall on his feet.

ਫਲਗੁਣਿ ਨਿਤ ਸਲਾਹੀਐ ਜਿਸ ਨੋ ਤਿਲੁ ਨ ਤਮਾਇ ॥

Phalgun nit salahiai jis no til na tamae.

In the month of Phagan we should praise him daily who is above all desires.

The Five Ideologies

There are three rings of protection around the Sikh. The first are the five ks, then the five institutions, lastly the five ideologies. These are democracy, human rights, equality between the sexes, social justice, and freedom of conscience.

The opposite of pride is democracy. Instead of one person making a decision, we all make a decision together and stick by it. The earliest European writers praised the republican traditions of the Sikhs. Sitting around Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as their Heart, all came to a decision, not by voting but by consensus - they would all agree as to what was the right thing to do. They would try to harmonise their general will with the Voice of the Guru, the Inner Conscience, the Spirit of Nature. The particular will, the ego, was eliminated from this process and so the decisions were called Gurmata, the decisions of the Guru. For as Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the Eleventh Guru on the piri side, so the khalsa panth in its completeness is the Eleventh Guru on the miri side.

Such a group does not operate for its own interests, but the interests of everyone's human rights. Thus, the Ninth Guru gave his life to protect the same sacred thread of the Hindus which Guru Nanak had criticised two centuries earlier. Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji revealed:

"Tegh Bahadur broke the mortal vessel of his body by striking it at the head of the Emperor of Delhi and retreated to his Original Abode [God]. Truly incomparable is this great deed done to assert and protect three basic human rights: the first, to secure for everyone freedom of worship; the second, to uphold the inviolable dignity of everyone's private and personal point of contact with God and the right to observe

dharma [what s/he thinks of as the basic principles of righteous existence]; the third, to uphold every good person's right to pursue her/his own vision of happiness and self-fulfillment." (Dasam Granth, p.54)

The opposite of lust is treating the opposite sex with warmth and respect as equals. The Gurus opposed sati, the killing of widows, and promoted widow remarriage. They opposed purdah, the segregation of women, and so out of 146 missionaries of Sri Guru Amar Das Ji, 52 were women. Rather than defenceless victims, women were given the Kirpan to fight, and took part in the gurmata of the eighteenth century. When Maharaja Ranjit Singh ended this democratic tradition, he dared not attack women's rights and he maintained a woman's regiment. Sri Guru Nanak Ji proclaimed the equality of women and men, almost three hundred years before anyone else raised their voice in protest. The Voice of God spoke through him:

"Of woman are we conceived, of woman are we born. To woman are we betrothed and married. It is a woman who is a friend and partner for life. It is woman who keeps the race going. How may we think low of her of whom are born the greatest. From a woman a woman is born: none may exist without a woman. (GGS, p.73)

Marriage was usually a time when women would become subordinated to men; in Islam and Hinduism these are religious duties. But the Gurus revolutionised all this. "Only they are truly married who have one spirit in two bodies." (GGS, p.788)

Previous religious systems had given little thought to social justice. Social stability became before all else and the people were exploited by kings and priests. Things would change. Guru Arjun reveals:

"Henceforth, such is the Will of God: No one shall coerce another; no one shall exploit another. Everyone, each individual, has the inalienable birthright to seek and pursue happiness and self-fulfillment. Love and persuasion is the only law of social coherence."

"Only they are truly married who have one spirit in two bodies."

	Pride	Anger	Lust	Greed	Attachment
Personal	Kara	Kirpan	Kaccha	Kanga	Kesh
Institutional	Guru Granth Sahib	Gatka	Anand Karaj	Langar	Gurdwara
Ideological	Democracy	Human Rights	Sexual Equality	Social Justice	Freedom of Conscience

(GGS. p.74)

From this emphasis on social justice and the earlier mention of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's incomparable sacrifice - the only Prophet of any religion to die for someone else's religion - it is clear that we must protect the right to people and believe and live as they please, whether we agree or not, as a duty to our own faith.

Rana Ranvir Singh

The Evolution of the Soul

Sikhism believes in Re-incarnation as opposed to the view that each person has just one earthly life followed by an eternity in Heaven or Hell. Guru Nanak Dev Ji tell us in the Jap Ji Sahib:

*By His writ some have pleasures, other pain,
By His grace some are saved,
Others doomed to die, relive and die again.
His will encompasses all, there is none beside,
O Nanak he who knows has no ego and no pride.*

According to this belief, there are two parts to each person, the body and the soul. The body of a person belongs to the world in which it was born, lives and dies. As such, it is not particularly important. It is only the vehicle in which the soul makes steady progress in its journey towards God.

It is a person's soul that really matters. This belongs to the Spiritual universe of God. Each soul is born time and time again until it is reunited with God, who alone is the Truth. The soul passes through every stage of existence and so evolves, or gradually develops towards God.

Sikhism teaches it's followers that they are not evil by nature. Indeed, at the beginning of time, people were good, but they were overcome by evil. The soul of each person is a very small part of the Eternal Soul, God, and so has existed since the beginning of time. Through a succession of re-births, the soul at last enters into a relationship which it enjoyed with God at the beginning of time. This is called "*the Evolution of the Soul*".

Guru Nanak Dev Ji taught that God can be reached by everyone no matter what their circumstances are - powerful or powerless, rich or poor, beggars or rulers, male or female. The form that a person's life takes in the next life depends on how he or she has lived in this one. Good behavior - caring for those who are less fortunate - leads to a better life in the next, but selfish behavior in the present life leads only to a

re-birth as a lower form of life.

For everyone life finally ends when they meet God. To do this is the Supreme Goal of every Sikh. When this happens, then the process of re-birth is over and the truth is reached at last. It was Guru Arjan Dev Ji who encouraged all Sikhs to look forward to this time when he told them:

*Since you have now acquired this human frame,
This is your opportunity to become One with God;
All other labours are of no use,
Seek the company of the holy and Glorify God's Name.*

Harpreet Kaur

Report on the Sikh Youth Forum held in Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Smethwick, Birmingham on 30 December 1995.

This event, organised by The Sikh Educational and Cultural Association was well attended by university students past and present from all over the Midlands and even as far as Liverpool and London. The purpose was to provide a forum for students to speak openly on the issues and difficulties facing them.

A vivid account of their torment and mental pain in trying to maintain their Sikh identity had come to light. As one student after another spoke of their ordeal and experiences it became evident that the prejudices they faced came mostly from fellow Sikhs adopting western culture as well as from teachers who took advantage of this situation. Sikh students with long hair and turban in particular are being ridiculed. They became easy prey for bullying in a variety of ways. When teachers themselves are prejudiced who do you complain to. You are one against many. They are afraid of involving their parents for fear the situation will get worse. With this fear in mind they battle out their problems alone in the best way known to them. Having left home for the first time, and being naive, they fall victims of unscrupulous forces who lure the innocent to embrace Christianity, Islam and other.

From the cry of help it has become evident that the students need easy grasp to resource material to give them a better understanding of the principles of the Sikh faith, their culture and their way of life. They admit lack of such knowledge makes them very vulnerable. When they attend the Gurdwaras they wish to have the GUR-VAAK/HUKAM NAMA translated into English for better and deeper understanding. They would

*God can be
reached by
everyone no
matter what
their
circumstances*

poets Corner

My Religion

My religion gives me such pride,
 When I think of all the people that died
 Everyone died as a fearless Sikh,
 Than give up thier faith, and fall to the
 Moghuls feet
 They killed the women to make us weak
 But we fought to the end; we're proud to
 be sikh!
 I wear my turban, high on my head,
 And think of all the blood that was shed
 Then I hold my kirpan close to my heart,
 As from my beloved religion I'll never
 part!

Harpreet Singh Baxi

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like to see the Sikh Youth playing an active role in running of these institutes. To hold planned programmes in Gurdwaras where basic Gurmata-Parchar, Gurbani-Vichar and discussions on Culture and Sikhi conflict on a regular basis. These sessions to be widely advertised and distributed to youth organisations.

The participants were overwhelmed with the success of this first Students Open Forum that they are demanding for more discussions on a regular basis. This is where the Sikh Sangat and Gurdwara Committees can help by, in the word of the Guru "*Tan, man, dhan de naal sewa karo*". The Gurdwaras have the means to finance such seminars and to help them buy resources, books and computer equipment with Email facilities to spread the GURU'S WORD to all Sikh Students in every University up and down the country. In the name of Guru Seva let us all get together and help our growing generation by meeting their demands. It is their cry for help. So let us do something about it.

The date for the **Second Students Open Forum** has been fixed for **Saturday 2 March 1996** at Guru Nanak Gurdwara, High Street, Smethwick, Birmingham starting at 1pm.

The president of Guru Nanak Gurdwara Smethwick has very generously agreed to reimburse university students traveling costs if they hire a minibus and travelled together.

Kartar Surinder Singh

If you would like to regularly receive this newsletter please let us know in writing to the address above.

If you are interested in copying and distributing this newsletter - again please contact us.

Important dates in Sikh History

February

- Feb 5 1762** The Great Holocaust - Ahmed Shah Abdali attacked the Sikhs, an estimated 30-50,000 sikhs were killed.
- Feb 21 1849** The last battle of the Anglo Sikh War was fought at Gujrat.
- Feb 21 1921** Massacre at Nankana Sahib, a group of 200 devotees was killed by Mahant Narain Das who did not want to give up control of this Gurdwara to the SGPC. the next day he was forced to hand over the keys.

Computer Corner

Find us on the Internet World Wide Web at:
<http://www.demon.co.uk/charities/sikh/home.htm>

We are happy to announce that we are now the UK agent for:

Khalsa-Net

This is an Internet mailing list and private WEB site for the discussion of Sikh issues, and the exchange of information on a global scale. If you have an Email account you can subscribe now send a request to:

Khalsa@liaison.demon.co.uk

If you don't have an account contact me by phone and I will be happy to advise how to get Online:
 Bhupinder Singh Tel:0171 460 2020 (daytime)

Resource Centre SHOP

We have available the following items for sale.

Cultural Roots Multimedia Knowledge Base Vol. 1(PC/Mac CD-ROM) covering The Sikh and African Diaspora. For ages 5+ £35-00

The Scriptures and Heritage of the Sikhs (PC CD-ROM) - includes Translation of Guru Granth Sahib, Sikh History, Gurdwaras, Punjabi Fonts, Screen Saver, Animation's and more £60-00

Gurbani Informant (PC Windows) Complete Guru Granth Sahib in Gurmukhi and Romanised, with excellent search features. £50-00

CRMKB Sikhism Disk 1(PC) Children's quiz on Punjabi and Sikh History £6-00