

Central Gurdwara Resource Centre

Volume 1 Issue 6

March 1996

The Newsletter for the Sikh Youth of Today

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

Six months have passed and I feel that this humble project is growing each month with more and more of you contacting us.

We have been very fortunate to have Singh Sahib Prof. Manjit Singh, Jathedar Sri Akaal Takhat Sahib visiting England recently. It is very refreshing to listen to a person who is in the highest position in the Sikh religion, but also someone who is so accessible and easy to talk to. He took some time to attend a question and answer session with the Sikh Youth at Shepherd Bush Gurdwara and it really was a pleasure to listen to his thoughts, we hope to bring you a transcript of his answers in the next issue. As I write, Singh Sahib Yogi Harbhajan Singh is also visiting England.

This month we celebrate Hola Mahalla on the 6th of March. This celebration was started in Anandpur Sahib by Guru Gobind Singh Ji. he felt that the Hindu festival of Holi and the splashing of colours was not appropriate for his Sikhs and so on this last day of Holi he started sports and martial arts competitions. Let us also try to continue this tradition.

The articles this month include a young man's thoughts on why we Sikhs should be proud of our heritage and unique identity, we then bring you an interesting article which examines the foresight and modern views of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

Finally I would like to announce the formation of the Central Gurdwara Youth Group we will be organising seminars and other events and so I will ask if you would like to get involved please do contact us.

Editor

Sikh Workshop

Discussion Group for Sikh Youth of all ages is held every Sunday at Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Havelok Road, Southall from 2pm to 4pm in the Library (Car Park)



Singh Sahib Prof.
Manjit Singh,
Jathedar Sri Akaal
Takhat

This is **YOUR** newsletter please let us know what you would like to see in these pages and please do send in your articles, poems even anecdotes.

If you are organising an event please let us know if you would like to publicise it in the newsletter

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The Month Of Chet

The Month of Chet this year runs from 14 March to 12 April 1996 and is the first month of the Bikrami calendar which was popular in the time of the Gurus. This verse is the second of the Gurbani of Bara Majh of Guru Arjan Dev Ji.

This Gurbani celebrates the coming of spring. The image is of sat sangat filled with joy at God's Presence in the world.

ਚੇਤਿ ਗੋਵਿੰਦੁ ਅਰਾਧੀਐ ਹੋਵੈ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਘਣਾ ॥

Chet Govind aradhiai, hovai anand ghana
In the spring month of Chet if we meditate on the Lord, we obtain immense joy
ਸੰਤ ਜਨਾ ਮਿਲਿ ਪਾਈਐ ਰਸਨਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਭਣਾ ॥

Sant jana mil paiai, rasna naam bhana
In the company of saints we enjoy the honey-sweet gift of singing God's Name
ਜਿਨਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਏ ਤਿਸਹਿ ਗਣਾ ॥

Jin paia prabh apna, ae tish gana
Whoever finds God in themselves, their life blooms
ਇਕੁ ਖਿਨੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਜੀਵਣਾ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਜਣਾ ॥

Ik khin tis bin jivna, birtha janam jana
Each second lived outside God's Presence is wasted
ਜਲਿ ਥਲਿ ਮਹੀਅਲਿ ਪੂਰਿਆ ਰਵਿਆ ਵਿਚਿ ਵਣਾ ॥

Jal thal mahial puria, ravia vich vana
God is present in water, land, sky and in the green forests
ਸੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਵਈ ਕਿਤਤਾ ਦੁਖ ਗਣਾ ॥

So Prabh chit na avai, kitra dukh gana
If this Spirit of Life is not remembered, there is pain
ਜਿਨੀ ਰਾਵਿਆ ਸੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਤਿੰਨਾ ਭਾਗੁ ਮਣਾ ॥

Jini ravia so Prabhu, tina bhag mana
Those who have made God their companion are fortunate
ਹਰਿ ਦਰਸਨ ਕੰਉ ਮਨੁ ਲੋਚਦਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਪਿਆਸ ਮਣਾ ॥

Har darsan kaun man lochada Nanak piass mana
Nanak, to meet this Spirit my mind-heart-soul is thirsty
ਚੇਤਿ ਮਿਲਾਏ ਸੋ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਤਿਸ ਕੈ ਪਾਇ ਲਗਾ ॥

Chet milae so Prabhu, tis kai pae laga
In Chet I will joyfully fall at the feet of whoever unites me with the Spirit of Life

This months
Gurpurabs:

17 Mar - Gur Gaddi
Guru Har Rai Ji
20 Mar - Gur Gaddi
Guru Amar Das Ji
23 Mar - Joti Jot
Guru Angad Dev Ji
24 Mar - Joti Jot
Guru Har Gobind Ji

*"By blending
into society,
they are
giving up
more and
more of what
they are"*



ਮਨਿ ਜੀਤੈ ਜਗ ਜੀਤੈ
Man Jeetai Jugg Jeet
Self-Conquest is the
Conquest of the World:
A Conference
24-27 May 1996
Chicago, USA
Tel: 00 1 313-396-5963

Think before you Snip

Sikhs have asked me many times, "does it really matter what you look like on the outside? Is it not what you are on the inside that God is pleased with?" They are asking me, as Sikhs, whether we need to keep uncut (long) hair. Their reasons for asking this question are: they don't want to be ridiculed by their class-mates in school, they want to fit into or be accepted in this society's norm. They feel keeping long hair is not a requirement to be a Sikh and it's what is on the inside that truly matters. They don't want to have to keep explaining to the ignorant society around them, who ask them questions, about the significance of keeping hair, and the other gifts given to the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh Ji. All in all, they want to feel to belong and blend in with western society and not stand out as some funny looking icons.

It is an ironic fact that they talk about wanting to be "individuals". They talk about carving out their own identity. Yet they do not see, by blending into society, they are giving up more and more of what they are, their history, their culture, their traditions, and eventually their values and religion.

I would just like to give my reasons why Sikhs should not give up so easily and cut their hair just to blend into society and make life easier for themselves which I believe is the greatest myth sold to them by western society.

To be a Sikh, is to want to be a "student, disciple, a son/daughter" of the Guru, and obey in humility. His wishes and teachings, which are set out in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib to help us attain the ultimate Truth (Mukti/Awareness of the Presence of God while living in the world), the purpose of this gift of human life.

Ask yourself, are we as Sikhs today so weak, so shallow, so selfish, so egoistic and without a sense of pride that we fear this world, which will not kill us if we maintain the Sikh form. Have we forgotten the countless Sikhs who gave their lives, in times much harsher to maintain this gift given to us by our Guru and God.

These Sikhs sacrificed their lives but did not accept Islam. They fought for the right for Sikhism to exist but did not give up their faith, and the gifts given to us by Guru Gobind Singh. Today we voluntarily let go of Sikhi, so we can gain material things and other worldly pleasures.

Are we Sikhs today so ignorant to the sacrifices of our Gurus as well as the many Sikhs who kept long hair, such as Bhai Taru Singh (who told the

Muslim who was to carry out the sentence of cutting his hair off... not to cut his hair, but cut his scalp off instead, so he would be able to keep his Guru's command!) Such is the strength, courage, and love of true Sikhs for their Guru's teachings.

I would like us Sikhs to look at the "American" (White-convert) Sikhs who have a lesson to teach us. Though they are white in appearance, and are part of the dominant culture by their birth and easily fit into the western culture, and gain all the materialistic things we all yearn to gain by trying our hardest to assimilate into this culture and giving up our faith and religion. They have instead done the reverse. They have adopted a foreign religion, they have become "outcasts" amongst their own people, have given up a lot of friends and family and still have not been able to integrate amongst the Sikh community.

Why have they given up so much? Yet we lustfully try to gain those things! Simply because they have taken the time to understand the Sikh religion, it's message, it's history, and it's greatness. They have spent time reflecting on the Gurus wisdom, the divine knowledge the Gurus shared to us and the love and sacrifice they gave to humanity. They see the strength and courage the Gurus had to uphold their conviction and by their actions they showed this to the world and taught their Sikhs how to lead their lives.

Jaswinder Singh, Toronto

The Revelation of the Modern Age

"Now the essence of the experience of the four ages is this; that for the human species, the One Lord's Name alone is the treasure of blessings...Every age has its own faith...In this world, perfect and approved are they alone who through the Guru meditate on the Lord God." (Guru Granth Sahib, pp.797-8)

This quotation suggests two things - the first being that Guru Nanak's message is a reaffirmation of the essence of all religions, that Guru Nanak's message is the perennial philosophy which all saints of all religions at all times have come to. This idea is repeated in the Bachitar Natak, "This Wonderful World", revealed through Guru Gobind Singh when he traces how God has sent Messengers to preach the Name, but how humankind has subverted their message. The second idea is that the Path of the Guru is peculiarly suited for the time in which it is revealed. Guru Nanak started his mission in 1469 which is the dawn of the modern world.

The modern world is made up of three trends -

globalisation, science, and humanism - which all began around the time of Guru Nanak's birth. In 1492 Columbus "discovered" the Americas and soon after people had sailed around the world. As people began to see other religions and ways of life they began to question the stories they had been told about God and the world. This supported the growth of science. People would try to understand things through science rather than magic and superstition. If it made no sense it should be abandoned. In turn, this led to humanism. People decided to leave blind tradition and evolve their own rules and goals for life. Humans would make their own rules.

Guru Nanak was sent to herald this new age. The first part was to reaffirm the universal concept of God. Ik Oankar means "There is One God". One God for Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Jains, Christians, and Jews. No scripture provides a more comprehensive account of the Sacred using the Names and concepts of the Sacred found in all the different religions. Thus, Guru Granth Sahib acts as a bridge for people from different religious groups to understand each other. So Guru Nanak is treated as a God-inspired saint in Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist traditions. In a global world it becomes clear that there is no religion except God, no faith except the Name.

The second point was the rejection of magic and superstitions like idol worship, praying in different directions, pilgrimage, special days or months, animal sacrifice etc. What was crucial was inner spirituality. There is no religious discipline except spirituality. Of course, today we have the five Ks and the five institutions. We should be careful not to mess up the Guru's mission by turning these into rituals. The five Ks and five institutions in the Gurdwara are part of a logical discipline to help us to harmonise the five impulses of human behaviour. This is through attuning ourselves to the Unstruck Melody, the Divine Melody of Life through the struck melody, the Revelation, the Gurbani.

Guru Nanak also criticised the Hindu and Islamic creation myths in the Japji Sahib. Science and religion do not mix. Big bang theory, Darwin's theory of evolution, and experiments on superstrings challenge and contradict other religions, but only confirm Guru Nanak's message that God's mystery are known only to God. Humans can never hope for final knowledge, but growing, useful ideas about the nature of God, of themselves, and of the universe.

The final point was humanism. Traditions must be subjected to critical reason. Guru Nanak's five ideologies, the basis for all our social, economic, and political views were developed earlier than

the Enlightenment writers of the West such as Rousseau and Voltaire.

Thus, it becomes clear that Guru Nanak's teachings were intended as the spiritual basis for the modern world. Today, the core doctrines of the Sikh faith - there is no religion except God; there is no discipline except spirituality; there is no way of life except the five ideologies - have become dominant. This is God's Will, a Hukam, rather than any achievement of the Sikhs. Yet the forces of conservatism oppose the modern world. The Sikhs must bring afresh the mission of the Guru. It is also part of God's Hukam that Guru Nanak is the only founding Prophet of any religion whose personality or teachings have not been criticised by peoples of other faiths. This is due to his unique mission.

Missionary work does not mean conversion. Guru Nanak was sent to change what people did, rather than what they called themselves. In describing the true Hindu or true yogi or true Muslim he was calling for the reform of those faiths rather than their abolition. The major reformers of those faiths have changed towards Guru Nanak's vision of life.

Rana Ranvir Singh

Nishan Sahib The Sikh Flag

The Nishan Sahib is the flag of the Sikh Nation and plays an important role in our community. Every Gurdwara must have a Nishan Sahib either outside or on top of the building. Gurdwara's will often also have a Nishan Sahib inside the main hall close to the Guru Granth Sahib.

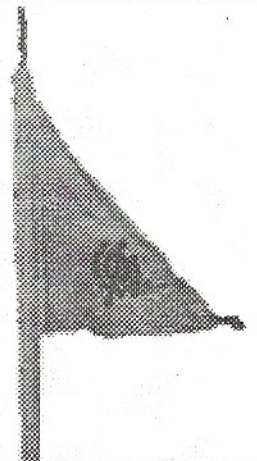
Some research suggests that even in the time of Guru Nanak Dev Ji a flag was hoisted which was white with Ek Onkar written on it, but it was at the time of Guru Hargobind Ji when the Kesri (saffron) coloured flag was raised at the Akaal Takhat Sahib in Amritsar, after the Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji.

This Nishan Sahib was triangle in shape and had the 2 swords of "Miri" (temporal authority) and "Piri" (spiritual authority). Later in the time of Guru Gobind Singh Ji the quoit (circle) representing humanity, and the Khanda (two edged sword), representing the supremacy and might of Almighty Waheguru, were added in order to make the Sikh "Coat of Arms" that we today call the Khanda.

The Nishan Sahib gives the Sikh Nation unity and represents the path to salvation. The fluttering of the flag emits a message of hospitality, safety and shelter for all and offers hope and assures justice, compassion and peace.

Gurcharan Singh

Guru Nanak's teachings were intended as the spiritual basis for the modern world



Nishan Sahib

poets Corner

Mountain of a Man

Baba Deep Singh ji Baba Deep Singh ji
Baba Deep Singh ji Baba Deep Singh Ji

Long flowing beard as white as snow
Battle clothes bluer than the river flow
Face shining more than the sun we know
Waheguru's light gives him this glow.

Riding in front of the Khalsa Army
On a mission to uproot the evil enemy
How dare the Muslims invade this place
The Golden Temple is not their base.

Baba Deep Singh ji, Baba Deep Singh ji,
Baba Deep Singh ji, Baba Deep Singh Ji

Roars like a quake - makes the planet shake
The empire of evil is about to break
Rides like the wind against those who've sinned
The Storm of justice is about to begin.

Furious and frightening his grip is tightening
Around the Khanda - sharp as lightning
Strikes the Khanda with a crack of thunder
Blessed by the power of the God of Wonder.

Baba Deep Singh ji, Baba Deep Singh ji,
Baba Deep Singh ji, Baba Deep Singh ji

2 miles before the Golden Temple trouble
His head is chopped off in a mighty struggle
Miracle of miracles he gets up to fight
The body is dead - the spirit still has might!

He promised Guru ji to reach the holy land
Now he fights holding his head in his hand
Running out of time he throws his precious head
Guru ji's power carries it there instead.

Baba Deep Singh ji, Baba Deep Singh ji,
Baba Deep Singh ji, Baba Deep Singh ji

Long flowing beard as white as snow
Battle turban bluer than the river flow.
Face shining more than the sun we know
Waheguru's light gives him this glow.

The Perfect Saint Soldier saved the holy land
Fearless he stood - mountain of a man
I will never forget Baba Deep Singh ji
The perfect follower of Guru Gobind Singh ji.

Baba Deep Singh ji, Baba Deep Singh ji,
Baba Deep Singh ji, Baba Deep Singh ji

Harjit Singh



Free

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Birmingham
B20 1BS

If you are part of any
Sikh organisation and
can distribute this
newsletter among
young Sikhs please
contact us.

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Important dates in Sikh History March

- 2 Mar 1644 Guru Hargobind Ji left for heavenly abode
3 Mar 1644 Gur Gaddi - Guru Har Rai Ji
5 Mar 1892 Khalsa College Amritsar founded
11 Mar 1787 Dal Khalsa led by S.Jassa Singh Ahluwalia conquered the Red Fort in Delhi
13 Mar 1940 Udham Singh assassinated General O' Dwyer who ordered the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre of 1911
29 Mar 1552 Guru Angad Dev Ji left for heavenly abode
30 Mar 1664 Guru Har Krishen left for heavenly abode and the Gur Gaddi was passed to Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji
30 Mar 1699 Guru Gobind Singh Ji created the Khalsa and introduced Amrit in Anand Pur Sahib on Vaisaki.
31 Mar 1504 Birth of Guru Angad Dev Ji
31 Mar 1973 Kar Seva (cleaning of the Sarover) at Harmandir Sahib.

Computer Corner

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

We are now the UK agent for:

Khalsa-Net

This is an Internet mailing list for the discussion of Sikh issues. If you have an Email account you can subscribe now send a request to:
Khalsa@liaison.demon.co.uk

Resource Centre SHOP

We have available the following items for sale.
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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
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