

Central Gurdwara Resource Centre

Issue 9

Internet: <http://www.demon.co.uk/charities/Sikh/home.htm>

June 1996

The Newsletter for the Sikh Youth of Today

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

It gives me pleasure this month to introduce our ninth newsletter and with the Grace of Waheguru and your support we will continue this small Seva.

This month we have two interesting articles, one about Punjab with various little known statistics and the second answering some questions about Women in Sikhism. Together with the regular items I hope you all enjoy the newsletter.

I urge you all to lend support to the various events that are taking place over the next few months: including the Demonstration in Hyde Park marking the attack on Harmandir Sahib; and the Sikh Youth Forum. These are both National events that all Sikhs should endeavour to attend.

Bhupinder Singh - Editor

Demonstration to mark the 12th anniversary of the Attack on **Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple)**
9 June 1996 - 12 midday
Hyde Park, London
info: 0181 574 1749 or 0181 571 3926

The 3rd National Sikh Youth Forum
22 June 1996 - 1pm
Guru Nanak Gurdwara, High Street, Smethwick, Birmingham

The Alliance of Religions and Conservation present:
Faith and Conservation
4 June 1996 - 10 am - 3pm
Dr Johnson House, Birmingham City Centre: contact: 0121 523 4144

PEACE MAKING - TYRANT SHAKING - LOVE GIVING - LIFE LIVING -
GOD PRAISING - GURU LOVING - HARD WORKING - WEALTH SHARING -
PEOPLE CARING - TRUTH TELLING - TURBAN KING:
MR SINGH

The Month Of Asarh

This year Asarh is from 14 June to 15 July 1996. This Gurbani about the Summer month stresses the importance of faith in GOD.

ਆਸਾੜੁ ਤਪੰਦਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਲਗੈ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਹੁ ਨ ਜਿੰਨਾ ਪਾਸਿ ॥

Asarh tapanda tis lagai. Har Nah na jinna paas
Asarh is a scorching month for those who are seperated from the Lord-Spouse

ਜਗਜੀਵਨ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਤਿਆਗਿ ਕੈ ਮਾਣਸ ਸੰਦੀ ਆਸ ॥

Jag Jiwan purkh tiagkai, manas sandhi aas
They place their hopes on man and forsake the Lord, who is the life and support of the Universe

ਦੁਕੈ ਭਾਇ ਵਿਗੁਚੀਐ ਗਲਿ ਪਈਸੁ ਜਮ ਕੀ ਫਾਸ ॥

Duyai bhae viguchiai gal pais jam ki phas
They are strayed by placing their hopes on others and thus find themselves in the stranglehold of Death

ਜੇਹਾ ਬੀਜੈ ਸੇ ਲੁਣੈ ਮਥੈ ਜੋ ਲਿਖਿਆਸੁ ॥

Jeha bijai so lunai mathai jo likhias
They reap what they have sown, they get what is written on their foreheads

ਰੈਣ ਵਿਹਾਣੀ ਪਛੁਤਾਣੀ ਉਠਿ ਚਲੀ ਗਈ ਨਿਰਾਸ ॥

Rain vihani pachhtani uth chali gai niras
The wife seperated from her Lord-Spouse passes her night (life) in regrets and leaves the world in despair
ਜਿਨ ਕੋ ਸਾਧੂ ਭੇਟੀਐ ਸੋ ਦਰਗਹ ਹੋਇ ਖਲਾਸੁ ॥

Jin kau sadhu bhetai so dargeh hoe khalaas

Those who are blessed with the company of the Saints attain the final bliss

ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਪੁਭ ਆਪਣੀ ਤੇਰੇ ਦਰਸਨ ਹੋਇ ਪਿਆਸ ॥

Kar kirpa Prabh apni tere darsan hoe pias
Oh God, by your grace, create in me thirst for Your sight

ਪੁਭ ਤੁਧੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਦੁਜਾ ਕੇ ਨਹੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੀ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥

Prabh tudh bin duja jo nahi, Nanak ki ardas
Nanak thus submits that their is no one else except YOU

ਆਸਾੜੁ ਸੁਹੰਦਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਲਗੈ ਜਿਸੁ ਮਨਿ ਹਰਿ ਚਰਣ ਨਿਵਾਸ ॥

Asarh suhanda tis lagai jis man Har Charan Niwas
Even the burning month of Asarh may be pleasant for those who have lodged God's feet in their hearts



**Forever Fateh!
Always Victory!**

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

contact:
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0171 460-2020 (daytime)
Email:
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or Gurpreet Singh
0181 904 4191

Punjab: Island of Prosperity

The rich soil of Punjab stretches flat as a pancake in neat fields as far as the eye can see. Bullock carts and destitution of abject poverty - the hallmarks of much of rural India - are nowhere to be seen. Instead tractors driven by turbaned Sikhs buzz around the fields, helping make Punjab the country's bread basket. Prosperity is the order of the day in Punjab. Yet not long ago Punjab was the epicentre of bloodshed and devastation.

The year 1947 saw Punjab ravaged by the bloody and calamitous Partition. Sikh refugees from the new state of Pakistan were resettled on 25 acres of un-irrigated land, about a quarter less than they had held in the rich canal colony from which they had been driven. They left behind great mansions and found themselves having to inhabit the tiny buildings vacated by Muslims fleeing to Pakistan. However, by the 1960's the Sikhs had transformed the Punjab into India's boom state, a model of success. A model to which not only other regions of India, but indeed other third World countries aspire. Punjab's claim of being India's most prosperous state is backed up by ample statistics. A note for those who do not like statistics: Don't be put off from reading further, for you are about to be enlightened!

Punjabis, particularly the Sikhs are prospering - even in the aftermath of Operation Blue Star. Punjab's gross domestic product (GDP) per person is nearly 20 per cent greater than its closest rival, Maharashtra. Punjab's average per capita GDP is nearly twice that of other states. The income of an average Punjabi is 65 percent greater than that of the average Indian. All this prosperity is revealed in the standard of living enjoyed by the Punjabis - western writers have been staggered by the abundance of gadgets in the rural areas. Punjab has a population of under 2.5% of India's 800 million people, yet Punjab has 10% of India's television sets and 17% of its tractors. The Punjabi is twice as likely as the average Indian to own a radio and three times as likely to own a motor vehicle. He or she also has three times more road per square kilometre on which to drive and uses twice as much electricity as the average Indian; has twice as much money in the bank as the average Indian; and he or she has twice as many bank branches per 10,000 people, in which to make deposits.

Whether it is the prosperity which gives a certain flamboyancy to the Punjabi Sikh mentality or whether it is the flamboyant mentality which has produced the prosperity - I leave it to you to decide. What is true is that the Punjabi Sikh certainly has a particular mentality. Words such as pride, honour, generosity and aggressive masculinity may as well have been invented in this small state in Northern India. The Punjabi Sikh takes pride in eating well; in cooking in plenty of ghee; in forcing glasses full of steaming hot creamy milk upon their guests; in their daals not being watery, in their sabjis not being of small quantities etc. etc. Looking after guests with a generous display of food and drink, is a matter of honour and self-respect for the Punjabi Sikh. These are people who believe in hard



work, and would rather move their hands than wag their tongues - although plenty of tongue wagging also takes place. Punjabi Sikhs also value an aggressive masculinity - they love the tough guy; the Dara Singh, the Sher Singh, the wrestlers and gatka players. It is no wonder that their numbers in the Indian Army are in predominance to their numbers within the population as a whole. They also love to have fun: one only needs to look at their greatest cultural export - Bhangra music and dance - to realise the vitality of Punjabi culture and mentality.

All in all, the Punjabi Sikhs are vigorous virile people for whom everything has to be bigger, better, rougher and tougher - and who would have it any other way? Certainly not the Indian Government who gains immensely from all the taxation collected from this productive state - or so it should be. But you can't have everything, or can you?

Shaminder Kaur Rayatt

Q&A: SIKHISM AND WOMEN

1. What rights do I have as a Sikh woman?

A Sikh woman has equal rights to a Sikh man. Unlike Christianity, no post in Sikhism is reserved solely for men. Unlike Islam, a woman is not considered subordinate to a man. Sikh baptism (Amrit ceremony) is open to both sexes. The Khalsa nation is made up equally of men and women. A Sikh woman has the right to become a Granthi, Ragi, or one of the Panj Pyare (5 beloved).

2. Is God considered a Male or Female?

God is beyond gender, God is unborn "Ajuni": The Guru Granth Sahib contains many Names for God, both masculine and feminine. Indeed, in the Daily prayer Ardas, God is called Bhagwati, the Mother Goddess, Spirit of Power.

3. What does the Guru Granth Sahib say about Women?

The Guru Granth ji is unique in religious history. It is the only religious text that was compiled and authenticated by the founders of its faith. It consists of beautiful hymns which teach you about your spirituality and purpose in life. Guru Arjan states that the Guru Granth Sahib will give you 'Truth, Contentment and Contemplation'. Concerning women, Guru Nanak has said,

'It is through woman that order is maintained.

Then why call her inferior from whom all great ones are born.

Pg 473, Guru Granth Sahib

Further, the Guru Granth Sahib uses the analogy of all disciples as female and God being the only Male, to describe the relationship that we have with God.

4. What restrictions are there on what I can wear?

When Sikhs take Amrit they must all, regardless of sex, keep the same 5 k's. Guru Nanak Dev Ji has stated that one should only wear those clothes which do not distress the mind or the body.

'Friend, all other wear ruins bliss, The wear that to the limbs is torment, and with foul thinking fills the mind.'

Pg 16, Guru Granth Sahib

The Gurus had also made a firm stand against the wearing of the veil. Guru Amar Das refused to allow a Hindu Queen from entering the sangat unless she removed her veil. In the Guru Granth Sahib the veil is compared to suppression.

'False modesty that suppressed is ended. Now with veil cast off am I started on the way of devotion.'

Pg 931, Guru Granth Sahib

5. Can I read the Guru Granth Sahib?

Yes. The reading of the Guru Granth Sahib is open to all. For example, Guru Amar Das was brought to the fold of Sikhism after hearing Bibi Amro reciting the Gurbani. In no other faith are women allowed to carry out any or all religious functions.

6. Can I be forced into an arranged Marriage?

Sikhs are forbidden from forcibly marrying off their children without their prior consent. Both Sons and Daughters are required to reach a mature age, both physically and mentally, before they marry. Thus, parents must ensure their children are allowed to grow and be educated to the fullest. Arranged marriages are the norm for Sikhs. The Gurus considered marriage an equal partnership. Guru Amar Das has stated,

'They are not said to be Husband and Wife who merely sit together, Rather they alone are called Husband and Wife, who have one soul in two bodies.'

Pg 788, Guru Granth Sahib.

This is in contrast to other faiths. In Islam the Husband is permanently the dominant partner.

'If your wives are over-bearing, advise them against it. If they do not care, refuse them sexual intercourse. If they still persist, then give them a thrashing.'

Holy Quran, Ulnissa 4-34.

GURMAT CAMPS THIS SUMMER

Khalsa Camp (Sikh Naujawan Sabha)

27 July to 3 August 1996

University of Wolverhampton, Dudley Campus

contact: Tel: 0181 925 8922

Sikh Missionary Society Camp

28 July - 3 August 1996

Gravesend, Kent

contact: Tel: 0181 574-1902

Sikhi Camp (BOSS & SIS)

7-12 July 1996

Leek, Staffordshire

Contact: Tel: 0973 350142 or 01268 558686

10th Annual Walsall Gurmat Camp

28 July to 3 August 1996

Nanaksar Gurdwara, Walsall

contact: Tel: 0121 523 0147

7. What about a Dowry?

Sikhs are forbidden from marrying off their children for monetary benefit. Concerning the Dowry, Guru Ram Das says,

'Any other Dowry, which the perverse place for show, that is false pride and worthless gilding.'

Pg 79, Guru Granth Sahib.

8. Who is considered more spiritual, Men or Women?

Unlike other faiths, Sikhism states both men and women are considered capable of reaching the highest levels of spirituality. A particular hymn in the Guru Granth Sahib states,

'In all beings is he himself pervasive, Himself pervades all forms Male and Female.'

Pg 605, Guru Granth Sahib.

9. Why are we then not treated equally at birth?

If this is the case, then this is against Sikhism. The Birth of a daughter or son is equally joyous for Sikhs. The practice of giving sweets and celebrating only on the birth of a boy is anti-Sikh like behaviour.

10. I may have religious rights, what about Independence?

No Sikh is taught to be subservient to anyone else. Thus, independence is open to both sexes. However, this does not mean that you merely know your rights and not your responsibilities. There is no priesthood in Sikhism, so every Sikh must lead a devotional life. The path of love which Guru Nanak initiated is open to all,

'Should thou seek to engage in the game of love, step into my street with thy head placed on thy palm, while onto this stepping, ungrudgingly sacrifice your head.'

Pg 1412, Guru Granth Sahib.

11. Asian women are subservient to their Husbands. Does Sikhism state that I must be also?

Sikhism is totally opposed to this view. Under western convention a women must change her name after marriage. The concept of maiden and married names is alien to Sikh philosophy. Sikhs practising it now do so out of ignorance. A Sikh woman is born with the surname Kaur and dies with the same surname. Thus, allowing her to keep her identity throughout her life.

12. Are there any famous Sikh women in our History?

Sikh history is one which has been made by both men and women. There are many, many outstanding Sikh women. The Gurus' wives led highly spiritual and independent lives. Mata Sundri ji led the Sikhs for a long period after Guru Gobind Singh's passing away. Sada Kaur was a famous Sikh general who led the Khalsa army alongside Ranjit Singh. The list of important Sikh women is endless.

Jatinder Singh, Reading

poets Corner

The Role of Princess

To my brother, dear LION kings
A small request , a benati
Khalsa ji please hear this plea.

My sister, my sister
I'm listening
so start your talkin'
but don't start naggin

Our creator, Satguru Nanak pita ji,
gave equality to you and to me,
why is it then that women are suppressed?
lets think hard, take one guess!

Sister what d'ya mean suppressed?
We treat you like the best
All you gotta be is beautiful
and fill our stomach's till they're full!

We need support from our Singhs
to have and to hold until we grow old,
cultivate our dharma is what
we have been told.

I ain't into lovey-dovey stuff
but I am loud and proud enough
Of you and my Sikh religion
sister just abide by my decision.

We've been blessed
with the role of Princess
to spread the fragrance of Shabad Guru
What else did we come here to do?

Sister I have heard your plea
But it's asking a lot from me
And I don't think I can change
I prefer things to stay the same!

Important dates in Sikh History June

- June 1 1746** Small Holocaust in which 10,000 Sikhs were killed by Lakhpat Rai on orders of the mughal governor of Punjab Yahiya Khan.
- June 3 1984** Invasion and desecration of the Akaal Thakt by the Indian Army
- June 6 1628** First battle of Amritsar fought and won by Guru Hargobind against the mughals
- June 9 1716** Banda Singh Bahadur was tortured to death in Delhi.
- June 14 1698** Birth of Baba Fateh Singh youngest Son of Guru Gobind Singh Ji
- June 19 1595** Birth of Guru Hargobind Ji
- June 28 1839** Death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh
- June 29 1606** Ascension to Guruship of Guru Hargobind Ji

Sikh Youth Groups and Gurmat Workshops/Discussion Groups

The Akaal Purkh Ki FAUJ (an organisation for Sikhs of all ages organised being developed and promoted as the way forward by the Takht Sri Akaal Takht Sahib), Reading unit (pilot project in UK) Every Sunday from 3 pm to 9 pm at the Siri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Reading. All are welcome to observe with a view to establish Units in their towns.

Contact: Bhai Autar Singh: 01734-599726

Sikh Workshops are held at:

Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Havelock Road,
Southall - Sundays at 2pm
and at:

Guru Nanak Gurdwara Sedgley Street,
Wolverhampton - Wednesdays 7-8pm

If you would like help in setting up a similar group please contact: Inderjit Singh: 01268 558686 or Amarjit Singh : 0181 571 1605

Khalistan Society

at the London School of Economics held their first meeting recently. For an info pack on starting your own society contact: Ravinder Singh Tel: 0171 574 5055

Resource Centre SHOP

We have available the following items for sale. Please call: Bhupinder Singh Tel:0171 460 2020

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, Essays on Sikhism, Photos of 200 Gurdwaras, Punjabi Fonts, Screen Saver, Slide Show, Video Clip's and more. **£60-00**

CRMKB Sikhism Disk 2 (PC-Windows-floppy) **New!** Learn the Punjabi alphabet with this easy to use multimedia program. **£5-00**

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-request@maboli.com

This months

Gurpurab:

2 June - Birth

Anniversary of

Guru Har Gobind Ji

Special Offer

Punjabi Language
Development Board

Posters & Stickers

for only 25p

available from:

Virdee Bros,

102 The Green,

Southall

between 2-8pm

available to personal
callers only

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

The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Editors or Management of the Gurdwara.

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