

Central Gurdwara Resource Centre

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December 1996

The Newsletter for the Sikh Youth of Today

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

December, a month full of festivities here in the west, but looking back through history we find that Sikhism has often suffered great loss in this month. Just looking at the dates section on the back page we see that Guru Tegh Bahadur and the 4 sons of Guru Gobind Singh ji were martyred in this month. However the Gurus would not want us to mourn, but to become stronger. In fact I feel that it is through our troubled history that Sikhism has become stronger, however, we do face troubled times ahead and we must always look to the Guru Granth Sahib for inspiration. Our main article this month looks at Sikhism in the context of the looming 21st Century.

There is a lot that each of us can do for the Chardi Kala of the Panth, but the most important is for us to be true to our Guru. We must make efforts to follow the teachings of Guru Nanak:

- ⊕ Naam Japna
- ⊕ Kirat Karni
- ⊕ Wand Chakna

And live a truthful life, only then will we be able to step forward into the 21st Century to see the Khalsa go from strength to strength.

"DEG TEGH FATEH"

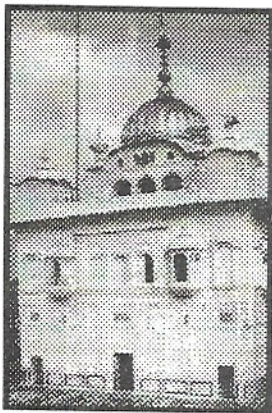
Bhupinder Singh

Siri Guru Gobind Singh

Camp on Sikhism

For the Youth organised by the Youth
From Monday 23- Friday 27 December 1996
Siri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara
Cross Road, Coventry
from 7 yrs to Adult please register asap
Contact: Coventry Gurdwara: 01203 684802
or Onkar Singh, SIS Slough : 01753 572737
Gain a deeper understanding of Sikhism
"Be proud of being a Sikh and keep your unique identity"

Singing the Glorious Praises of the Lord, one is satisfied forever, never to feel hunger again. Guru Amar Das p. 769



**Gurdwara
Baba Bakala,
where Guru
Tegh Bahadur Ji
was found**

Please do not throw
away - pass on to
someone else.

This is **YOUR** newsletter
please do send us your
comments, articles & poems.

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

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Final Stanza of Bara Maha

ਜਿਨਿ ਜਿਨਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਕਾਜ ਸਰੇ ॥

Jin jin Naam dhiaia tin ke kaaj sare

Those who meditate on the Naam, their affairs are
all resolved

ਹਰਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਪੂਰਾ ਆਰਾਧਿਆ ਦਰਗਹ ਸਚਿ ਖਰੇ ॥

Har Gur pura aradhia dargeh sach khare

Those who meditate on the Perfect Guru, they are
judged true in His Court

ਸਰਬ ਸੁਖਾ ਨਿਧਿ ਚਰਣ ਹਰਿ ਭਉਜਲੁ ਬਿਖਮੁ ਤਰੇ ॥

Sarab sukha nidh charan Har bhaujal bikhm tare

The Lord's Feet are the Treasures of all joys; they
cross over the treacherous worldly ocean
ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਭਗਤਿ ਤਿਨ ਪਾਈਆ ਬਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਹਿ ਜਰੇ ॥

Prem bhagat tin paia bikhia nah jare

They obtain love and devotion, and they do not
burn in corruption

ਕੂੜ ਗਏ ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਨਸੀ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਚਿ ਭਰੇ ॥

Kur gae dubidha nasi puran sach bhare

Falsehood has vanished, duality has been erased,
and they are totally overflowing with Truth
ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਸੇਵਦੇ ਮਨ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਏਕੁ ਧਰੇ ॥

Parbraham Prabh sevde man andar ek dhare

They serve the Supreme Lord God, and enshrine
the One Lord within their minds

ਮਾਹ ਦਿਵਸ ਮੂਰਤ ਭਲੇ ਜਿਸ ਕਉ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇ ॥

Mah divas murat bhale jin kau nadar kare

The months, the days, and the moments are
auspicious, for those upon whom the Lord casts

His Glance of Grace

ਨਾਨਕੁ ਮੰਗੈ ਦਰਸ ਦਾਨੁ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਹੁ ਹਰੇ ॥

Nanak mangai daras dan kirpa kroh Hare

Nanak begs for the blessing of Your Vision, O
Lord. Please, shower Your Mercy upon me

Regular readers will realise we have now
completed the Bani, Bara Maha of Sri Guru Arjan
Dev Ji from pages 133-136 of Sri Guru Granth
Sahib. Bara Maha is a form of folk poetry in a
romantic mode and expresses the effects of the
changing seasons on humans,
animals and vegetation. Guru Nanak
Dev Ji has also written a Bara Maha
in Raag Tukhari in Sri Guru Granth
Sahib, but it is the former written in



Raag Majh that is traditionally read on the first day of each of the lunar months.



This Bani follows the emotions of a young bride whose husband has had to depart to earn a living. She longs to meet her husband and each day, each month through the different seasons her condition changes. Guru Ji uses this metaphor to describe our relationship with God. We are separated from God and long to meet Him. Many hurdles lie in the way of Unity of the devotee and God. The five main hurdles are those of Kaam(lust), Krodh(anger), Moh(attachment to Maya), Lobh(greed) and Hankaar(pride).

Guru Ji warns us that we have been separated from God due to own actions and true happiness cannot be achieved without union with true God. The way to God realisation is by remembering His Name (Naam Japna), it is through the Naam that we can destroy the hurdles in our way towards God.



Sikhism in the 21st Century

The Challenging Road Ahead

Where do Sikhs find themselves as a religion and a people and where are they going as the next millennia approaches?

At this time the Sikh religion is firmly in control of the older generations from Punjab and it's religious institutions around the world are run as virtual extensions of Punjab and the Punjabi mentality. Many issues are not dealt with because they never had to be dealt with in the past and it is always easier to maintain the status quo rather than try to find new answers. What will happen ten or fifteen years down the road when the Sikh religious institutions around the world are run by a new generation which were not born in Punjab or have very little contact with Punjab? A lot of these potential problems that Sikhs will be faced with are still in their infancy right now. Either Sikhs can choose to ignore them today as they have been to a large extent, which means that they will become major crises for the religion tomorrow, or they can start planning and trying to develop solutions. We are approaching a major cross-roads as a religion which will either see Sikhism become truly a major world religion as the Gurus wished or we will see it wither away and become extinct over time. The choice is clearly in our own hands.

Karl Marx the father of communism once said, "If God manifests in the research institute, then only shall I believe in His existence." There is an increasing belief in the world today that the ideas of "faith" are blind and that "faith" is equivalent to "being blind". The question which should be asked is that does society not also place blind faith in science? Who has seen or touched an electron? Scientists have never actually seen a black hole in outer space, but only theorise its existence based on the bending of light waves of neighbouring stars and galaxies.

Can science convey the beauty of a sunset or the smell of a

rose or the value of a person? No it can not. All that science can do is to quantify these by breaking them down into various analysis that do not necessarily add up to describe the substance of the whole. A human being is much more than water, minerals and trace elements that make up our bodies. The smell of a rose is much more than the quantity and type of molecules that it releases into the air. God and religion can not be understood by blindly applying the scientific method.



"God is not found by intellectual devices; He is unknowable and unseen." (Guru Arjan Dev, pg.1098)

"He is not obtained by intellectual recitation or great cleverness; only by love does the mind obtain Him." (Guru Nanak Dev, pg. 436)

As science pushes back the frontiers of the known universe can science and logic be used to explain the entire universe?

"So many worlds beyond this world so very many! What power holds them, and supports their weight? The names and the colours of the assorted species of beings were all inscribed by the Ever-flowing Pen of God. Who knows how to write this account? Just imagine what a huge scroll it would take! What power! What fascinating beauty! And what gifts! Who can know their extent? You created the vast expanse of the Universe with One Word! Hundreds of thousands of rivers began to flow. How can Your Creative Potency be described?" (Guru Nanak Dev, Japji Sahib)

When Guru Arjan Dev and his scribe Bhai Gurdas finished compiling Sri Guru Granth Sahib in 1604, the technology of the time was limited to paper. Now 400 years later technology has advanced at a blinding pace and it's advancement is continuing at an exponential rate. How Sikhs deal with these advancements will be critical to their survival.

How can technology affect something as timeless and immortal as Sri Guru Granth Sahib? Well the definition of what exactly is our Guru is causing controversy in itself. Do we as Sikhs worship the teachings of our Gurus as our living Shabad Guru today, or do we worship the technology of that message, i.e. the physical "book"? Sikhs are very quick to point out to the unfamiliar outsider that may visit a Gurdwara that 'no we are not idol worshippers' because of the way we treat Sri Guru Granth Sahib in the Gurdwara. The standard Sikh response is that we worship and show utmost respect to the wisdom of our Gurus enshrined in the book and are not worshipping the book itself. If we truly worship the message and not the messenger than why is there so much confusion starting to develop over what exactly is the Shabad Guru? Some say that the Guru can only be in book form in it's original Gurmukhi form. That the Guru can only be in one volume, not two or 8 volumes.



How do we deal with translations of Sri Guru Granth Sahib into different languages? How do we deal with a CD containing the original Gurmukhi and a English translation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib? How do we deal with Gurmukhi and English versions of Sri Guru Granth Sahib being transmitted across the Internet?

What is our Guru? A good starting place to start in searching for answers can be found at the very end of Sri Guru Granth Sahib itself in Mundaavane. Here Guru Arjan Dev Ji writes:

“Upon this Plate, three things have been placed: Truth, Contentment and Contemplation. The Ambrosial Nectar of the Naam, the Name of our Lord and Master, has been placed upon it as well; it is the Support of all. One who eats it and enjoys it shall be saved. This thing can never be forsaken; keep this always and forever in your mind. The dark world-ocean is crossed over, by grasping the Feet of the Lord; O Nanak, it is all the extension of God.” (Guru Arjan Dev, Mundaavane, pg. 1429)



Are Truth, Contentment and Contemplation not contained in two volumes, or on a Gurbani CD or a translation in another language or possibly transmitted across the Internet?

“The Ambrosial Word of Gurbani proclaims the essence of reality. Spiritual wisdom and meditation are contained within it. The Gurmukhs chant it, and the Gurmukhs realise it. Intuitively aware, they meditate on it.” (Guru Angad Dev, pg. 1243)

Are spiritual wisdom, meditation and the essence of reality not contained in two volumes, or on a Gurbani CD or transmitted across the Internet or translated into another language?

The Gurus undertook missions to spread their teachings in the native languages of the people they came into contact with. They never believed in the exclusivity of their teachings or in an intellectual elite with a ‘sacred’ language.

“All the sources of creation, and all languages meditate on Him, forever and ever.” (Guru Arjan Dev, pg. 456)

“Now, You are an Arab, now a Persian, now a Turk. Now the utterer of Pehlavi, now of Pashtu, now of Sanskrit, Now of the peoples tongue, now of the language of the gods.” (Guru Gobind Singh, Akal Ustati)

Guru Amar Das, the Guru which helped to turn Sikhism into an organised institutional religion by sending Sikh missionaries to the various parts of Asia wrote:

“Enshrine the Lord’s Name within your heart. The Word of the Guru’s Bani prevails throughout the world; through this Bani, the Lord’s Name is obtained.” (Guru Amar Das, pg. 1066)

How could the Guru’s Bani prevail throughout the world unless Guru Amar Das meant that the

message of the house of Nanak as found in Sri Guru Granth Sahib transcends all cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Unlike the Semitic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), Sikhism does not believe in the idea of a “chosen people”, yet we continue to propagate our religion for the most part solely through inheritance. How can Sikhism ever become a major world religion if we stick to this “ghetto mentality”? The Gurus had a true world view of humanity as opposed to a “Punjabi-centric” view that most Sikhs hold today.

“The True Guru, the Primal Being, is kind and compassionate; all are alike to Him. He looks upon all impartially; with pure faith in the mind, He is obtained.” (Guru Ram Das, pg. 300)

“The same eyes have they, the same ears, the same body, the same habits, a get-together of earth, air, water and fire. Allah is no different from Abhekha, the Puranas no different from the Quran. All men are made alike. They appear no different to me.” (Guru Gobind Singh, Kabitas 71-90, Akal Ustati)

Only by returning to our missionary roots and realizing and accepting that Sikhism must be propagated based on its virtues and principals as opposed to inheritance can we break free of this “ghetto mentality” which is seriously inhibiting the growth and global propagation of Sikhism.

Like most world religions today, we can see a divergence taking place. On one side you have people who have totally abandoned Sikhism or treat religion like a part time hobby. On the other end of the spectrum you have the development of hard-core fundamentalists with their “exclusive club” mentality, intolerance and attempts at distorting our religious heritage and history to accommodate their own views. Which is the more dangerous and destructive element? Narrow mindedness and intolerance is just as bad or worse than having no religion at all. Religion is not about showing others how devoted and religious a person one is, but actually living by the principles and teachings of the Gurus for ones own sake rather than for the sake of others.

The 5K’s and physical distinctiveness of the Khalsa are a cornerstone of Sikhism and this will never change, nor should it. What has changed though is the shift in emphasis to the ritualization of our religion as opposed to understanding and applying the spiritual teachings of the Gurus. Sri Guru Granth Sahib has become something only accessible and understood by an elite minority. The majority are happy just to go to the Gurdwara and listen to the hymns and show respect to the “book” without understanding what they hear or read. The shift in emphasis has occurred over time because of a lack of religious education, both on the institutional level as well as the family level. Unless this disturbing trend is reversed Sikhism will become nothing but a religion of empty rituals.



Sandeep Singh Brar

poets Corner

PROTECTOR OF HUMANITY

Guru Tegh Bahadur Jee,
Loves all as His family,
And felt the suffering of humanity.
So He travelled as a missionary
teaching everyone Gurbanee
Just as Guru Nanak Dev jee.

The Guru returned to Anandpur
after completing his missionary tour,
One day Hindu saints from Kashmir
came desparately to His door:
'O Helper of the Weak,
O Destroyer of Tyrants,
O Honour of the Meek,
We beg You to protect us
from the merciless Moghuls
who having no fear of sin,
murder innocent Hindus
or convert them into Muslims'.

And even though He wasn't Hindu,
and even though He didn't believe
in the Tilak or Janjyoo,
These were all still the children
of Wonderful Waheguru.

And the young son Gobind Rai
said " Who better than the Perfect Master
to defend the rights of the innocent
and prevent certain disaster ".

The Protector of Humanity
and His loyal devotees,
Rode their horses and went to see
the Emperor at Delhi:
Guru Tegh Bahadur Jee,
Wore His turban beautifully,
Standing majestically,
He commanded masterfully:

'O Emperor of Delhi
You may try to convert me,
but if you do not succeed
then you should set the Hindus free'.

First they tortured the Guru's devotees
but they had no fear of death,
And the Guru was extremely pleased
that they said Waheguru with every breath.

Then the Executioner
chopped off the Gurus head,
but the Guru's light lives on
even though the body is dead.

The Guru's light lives on
in Guru Gobind Singh,
From every drop of blood
arise the Khalsa Kings.
Each one excels in bravery
inspired by Guru Tegh Bahadur jee
Harjit Singh Lakhani

This months Gurpurabs

Dec. 13 Guru Gadhi
Guru Gobind Singh Ji
Dec. 15 Shaheedi Guru
Teg Bahadur Ji
Dec. 22 Shaheedi
Wadhae Sahibjadhae
Dec 27 Shaheedi
Chotai Sahibjadhae

Your help needed

Sikh women (all
ages) required to take
part in an important
survey; write to:
Jatinder Singh
172 Spackmans Way,
Slough SL1 2SB
to receive a question-
naire all replies will
be confidential

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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Important dates in Sikh History December

- Dec 1 1764** Ahmad Shah Abdali attacked
Sri Harmandir Sahib.
Dec 2 1848 Anglo Sikh War fought at Sadulpur
Dec 5 1705 Janam Din, Bhai Vir Singh
Dec 12 1704 Shaheedi Chote Sahibjadhae Sirhind
Dec 12 1762 Abdali left Punjab after defeat- Sikhs
became rulers of their land.
Dec 12 1920 Inaugral meeting of SGPC
Dec 16 1634 Battle of Lahara Gaga between
Moghals and Sikhs.
Dec 16 1665 Guru Tegh Bahadur released from
Aurangzeb's detention.
Dec 17 1846 Treaty of Bhairawal signed between
the British and M. Dalip Singh.
Dec 18 1661 Guru Tegh Bahadur went to Delhi
to safeguard the rights of Brahmins.
Dec 18 1845 Battle of Mudki against British.
Dec 20 1520 Guru Nanak Dev Ji visited Baghdad
Dec 21 1838 Ranjit Singh suffered a stroke.
Dec 22 1899 Birthday of Sardar Udam Singh.
Dec 23 1667 Janam Din, Mata Sudari Ji.
Dec 26 1802 M. Ranjit Singh captured Amritsar.
Dec 29 1705 Battle of Mukatsar
Dec 31 1612 Guru Hargobind left Amritsar for
Delhi and then sent to Gwalior.

ITEMS FOR SALE

For any of the following items please contact
Bhupinder Singh contact number on front page.

- Cultural Roots Multimedia Knowledge Base
Vol. 1(PC/Mac CD-ROM)** covering The Sikh
and African Diaspora. For ages 5+ £35-00
CRMKB Sikhism Disk 1 (PC-Windows-floppy)
Sikh History and quizzes for all ages £5-00
CRMKB Sikhism Disk 2 (PC-Windows-floppy)
Learn the Punjabi alphabet with this easy to use
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Books by Santokh Singh of Canada

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English Translation £10-00
Fundamentals of Sikhism especially written for
Western Sikh children £6-00
Brain Washing- washing of societies specious
values £6-00

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InterNet. If you have an Email account you can
subscribe now send a request to:

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