THE SIKH RELIGION:

WHAT WAS TAUGHT

VS.

WHAT WE DO TODAY

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Chapter One

Who is a Sikh?

The word Sikh means a student, a learner, a follower or chella. Over the last five centuries, the word Sikh has denoted a distinct group of people who are followers of a faith or a religion, founded by Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji during the fifteenth century, called Sikhi or Sikh religion. Anyone who follows the principles, laid down by guru Nanak dev Ji and preached by the next nine gurus, as we Sikhs call them, the next nine guru Nanak’s. We also believe that Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the eternal guru. A Sikh is a person who believes in above mentioned criteria. A true Sikh has to have certain qualities and follow specific guidelines set by the gurus for Sikhs to live his life by.

The most important rules are the three golden rules of Sikhi as established by Guru Nanak and preached by each and every Sikh guru, and now, until eternity, are taught by the eternal Guru Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

1  Always remember Waheguru or God because he is the creator of all, is present everywhere and watches over us all the time. We cannot hide anything from him.

2  Earn your living by honest means. Do not try to gain material wealth by fraudulent means because it is forbidden by the guru and the guru-given common sense.

3  Out of your earnings, give some of it for the care of the needy who are less fortunate than we are. Guru Nanak Dev Ji has told us that the hungry man’s stomach is Sikhs golakh, or depository.
These rules to live one’s life by is not for the Sikhs only, but these are the guidelines for every human being on this earth, because Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji did not bring this religion to this earth just for the Sikhs. He created a religion, called Sikhi, as a universal religion for everyone to live his or her life by to achieve salvation. Any person who lives by these rules cannot commit any sins. All other Sikhi rules are derived from these three golden rules of Sikhi. If a Sikh does not follow these rules, then he or she can not be a good Sikh. Some of the sub-rules for a Sikh are as follows;

1. A Sikh gets out of bed at least before day break. The guru called it amrit bella. After taking a bath, a Sikh recites god’s name before he or she starts his or her daily chores. This has a profound effect on a person’s health, productivity, cheerfulness and accomplishment in general. We have all heard the phrase, “the early bird gets the worm.” This may not be a proper phrase to use here but it can remind us of some of the many practical, common sense benefits of early rising out of bed.

2. A Sikh never lies because it is against the principals of Sikhi and has important connotations. A person loses his or her credibility, loses respect of his peers, loses self confidence and, once you tell a lie, you have to remember it all of the time or you will be exposed as a liar. The benefit of speaking the truth is that you do not have to remember it.
A Sikh always has to be humble. Humble does not mean to be a coward; it means to be respectful but do not yield to a bully.

A Sikh believes in human rights and equal rights for everyone, because we are all created equal by the same or common creator. For this reason, all of us have the same privileges and rights to attain our own destiny. A phrase “to live and let live” describes this point very well.

A Sikh never cheats anyone out of any material things because it is immoral, illegal, fraudulent, and it is against the teachings of our guru.

A Sikh always has a guru given duty to protect and help the downtrodden and the weak who cannot protect themselves from predators.

A Sikh never steals or takes away anything from anyone or any place that does not belong to him or her.

A Sikh is always aware of shame and is the possessor of a true conscious.

Without these two one cannot be a good Sikh.

A true Sikh never uses anyone or any public property to advance his or her own agenda or to achieve personal gain, whether it is material or self advancement of any kind.

A Sikh should be egoless.

A Sikh should put other people’s needs ahead of his own. That is, the legitimate needs.
12 The most important belief a Sikh has is that he or she believes, without a doubt, that the spirit that traveled through the ten gurus was one and the same and that is the spirit of Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. And now, this spirit resides in our eternal and universal guru, Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

13 A Sikh never bows to any human who claims to be a guru.

14 A Sikh never reads, listens or accepts anything else as Sikh scriptures except Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, as this guru is ordained by the tenth and the last in human form, Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, who ordered the Sikhs that after his leaving this earth Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the one and only Sikh guru. There is not, and will never be, any other Sikh guru, and any Sikh who does not abide by this order is a manmattia, or a fake.

15 A Sikh never uses his religious place or gurdwara to promote his or her personal businesses or branches of these by the space or money that is donated by the sangat, or “congregation”.

16 A Sikh never fools or tries to fool the sangat by making them feel that he is doing it for the benefit of the congregation, but it is really money going into his pocket.

17 A Sikh never pays his pledges with fake money.

18 A Sikh never uses the gurdwara for banking purposes.
19 A Sikh always pays on his pledges. He never makes a false pledge to donate money, property or other material things or services of any kind. It is a sin not to fulfill that pledge.

20 A Sikh never becomes a dictator to the sangat but feels like a good sewadar to the community, always and under all circumstances.

21 A Sikh never uses foul language anywhere.

22 A Sikh never says to anyone that he or she is not a Sikh. Because he himself does not know if he is a good Sikh himself. Only the guru knows who is a Sikh, good or bad, and gurus, during their stay on this earth for two hundred and thirty-nine years never said to anyone that he or she was not his Sikh. Now, for two hundred and ninety eight years, our eternal guru has never said this either. Guru Ji tells us that, before finding faults in others, we should look for hidden ghosts in our own closets.

23 A Sikh remembers that his religion is the newest, practical, common sense and universal religion on earth, without an exception.

24 A Sikh should not question some one else’s Sikhi, because that part belongs to the guru alone.

25 A Sikh should try to learn to read gurbani. This is the best way to gain true knowledge of the guru’s message, otherwise, we fall prey in to the clever preachers hands by accepting the fables he or some one else has created.
26 A Sikh always loves everyone and everything because all of it is created by the omni-present Waheguru. He or she never discriminates against anyone because of their religion, creed, color, caste or occupation.

27 A Sikh should always remember that if something seems or feels bad, and your conscious agrees, then that deed is bad. A Sikh avoids doing bad things or bad deeds.

28 A Sikh always remembers that shame and conscious are the reminders to make him or her walk on the line of righteousness.
Guru Nanak Dev Ji was born at village Talwandi, now known as Nankana Sahib Ji, located in Pakistan. His father’s name was Kalian Das Ji, also known as Mehta Kalu Ji. His mother’s name was Mata Tripta Ji. The guru’s sister was named Bibi Nanki Ji and she was five years older than him. She was always very protective of him and she was one of the very first one who realized at the guru’s very young age that he was not an ordinary child. She realized her brother was a messenger of Waheguru. She started treating him as such. Many times when Kalu Ji would get mad at Guru Nanak for some reason, she would plead with him and would try to convince her father that her brother was not an ordinary human being but a gifted person from god. Guru Nanak’s childhood was unique. When he was registered at school by his father so he could receive an education that would be useful in becoming a successful businessman, Guru Ji did not make a fuss, like most children did, and still do, because it confines them to one place. They cannot run around at their free will and do mischievous things. Guru Ji learned everything that the hindu teacher could teach. The teacher was told by the guru that most important lessons a teacher can teach children is to make them aware that everything on this earth is temporary and only god is immortal and omnipresent and to teach them to remember his name always. After listening to the guru preaching to him instead of the other way around, the teacher was convinced in his mind
that Nanak was god’s messenger. He told Mehta Kalu Ji that his son was not an ordinary child but that he was a god-sent person on earth to unite man with god.

Mehta Kalu Ji was not convinced, so he registered his son with an imam, a muslim teacher, so he could learn persian, because this was a language that was very useful for business people in order to do trading with the neighboring countries where persian was the language of choice. The guru learned the language in no time. The imam was more astonished to hear the guru talking to him about god. The guru asked him to teach the children that there is only one god and we are all his children; that he loves us all in the same manner; that the most important thing in our minds should be to remember him always, have love for each other and help the needy. There should be no barrier due to race, color, creed or religion. We are all created by the same god with equal rights to pursue our chosen goals and our creator should be at the top of all things. The imam told Mehta Kalu Ji what he thought of Guru Nanak being a god sent person to teach passion to god’s creation.

We all know some of the sakhies, or stories, of the guru’s childhood. We should think about Guru Ji’s life as a lesson and every word he uttered and everything he did as a persuasion for us to do the right thing and use guru given common sense. When the guru was sent to graze the cattle, a farmer came to town and claimed that Mehta Kalu’s cattle had eaten and thrashed his corn field. Mehta Kalu was mad and Rai Bullar, who was in charge of the district, went with him to appraise the value of the damage so Mehta Kalu could pay the farmer for his loss. When they got to the farmers place they found no damage to the
crop. Everyone including the farmer was surprised and astonished especially the farmer who had seen with his own eyes that cattle had eaten and thrashed his crop. Everyone realized that Nanak was no ordinary person he is a god sent prophet to preach the world about true god. Rai Bullar had also seen a cobra protecting the guru’s eyes by creating shade with his hood.

Mehta Kalu Ji seeing all these things and listening to others such as guru’s teachers, Rai Bullar and others that the guru is a divine person, he still wanted his son to become a businessman and a family man. He kept trying. He gave the guru some money and sent him on a trading mission where he suppose to have learned how to make profit out of the deals that he supposed to make. Bhai Mardana, guru’s friend and companion, was sent with him for supervision and advice. During their travel they came across a group of people who seem to be fakirs or holy men as they were called. They were sitting in groups according to their caste and were very hungry. They told the guru they had not eaten in days. Guru Ji told Mardana Ji that they should go to town to buy and prepare food for those hungry people. Mardana Ji reminded the Guru Ji that Kalu Ji has given him money to make good deals and make profit. He is going to be very mad when he finds out that you have spent the money on feeding these beggars. Guru Ji said that there is no better bargain than feeding the hungry. They both went to town and bought and prepared the food. They brought the food to those fakirs and saw them sitting according to their caste. Guru inquired why they were not sitting next to each other in line. He was told that some of them were from low caste. Guru Ji asked them if their hunger pains were superior to others. The reply was
negative. The guru said to them that god has created everyone equal and we should treat each other as equals and asked them to please sit in line next to each other because that is god’s way. They obeyed Guru Ji’s request and satisfied their hunger. They thanked Guru Ji not just for the food but also giving them a lesson about the truth of creation. When Guru Ji came back from the trip and Kalu Ji learned about what was done with his money he became angry at Mardana Ji but Guru Ji told him that it was not his fault, it was I who decided that there was no better bargain than to feed the hungry. Kalu Ji realized that his son was truly a man of god. He had seen it time and time again from his answers to the pundit who tried to put a janeoo, a string made up of cotton thread, which signifies that a hindu child has become a man to the true bargain, but still did not give up. He had him married to Sulakhni Ji who bore him two sons named Siri Chand and Lakhmi Das. Guru Ji kept on with his daily ritual of singing gods praises while Bhai Mardana Ji playing the rabab, a musical instrument, and preaching the masses that there is only one god and he is omnipresent.

Before Guru Ji left on his missionary work and world travels he spent some time in Sultan Pur while living with his sister Bibi Nanaki and her husband who got Guru Ji a job in Nawabs Modikhana. One day when Guru Ji was suppose to be selling the grains from the storage he was giving them a lot more than what they paid for. Some people complained to the nawab who became angry. He called his accountant and wanted him to check on Guru Ji’s books. After going through the books with tooth and comb the accountant found no mistake. The nawab, the accountant, the complainants and everyone else who heard about
this incident came to believe that he was not just Nanak but he was Guru Nanak and pledged themselves to be Guru Ji’s followers. By then Guru Ji decided that this was the time for him to go on his missionary trip to other parts of the country and some parts of the world. Bibi Nanaki along with her husband, the nawab with other towns’ people begged Guru Ji not to go but they were convinced by the guru that he had a bigger and more important mission to fulfill that he was here for. Guru Ji had the utmost respect for his sister Bibi Nanaki and asked her permission and blessings to go on his mission. Although she did not want him to go but she was one person who knew from the beginning that her brother was not an ordinary person but he was god’s messenger. With her teary eyes she gave her blessings for safe journey and success in his mission.

Before we go over the gurus teachings any further we should review the history and try to understand why Guru Nanak Dev Ji came to this earth. How people were thinking about the creator. How people related to the priests of their chosen faiths. How the government was carrying out justice. For the public they suppose to protect.

Before Guru Nanak Ji was born it was like a dark age. Poor people were manipulated by the rich and weak were being taken advantage of by the powerful. The rulers would leeve taxes of all kinds upon middle and lower class. They force their religion by force. If they did not become Muslims they were put to death by the ruler’s representatives.

The religious leaders of the Hindu faith are called Brahmans and that of Muslim faith are called imams or quazis or mullahs. They were all greedy, deceitfull, and
manipulators. They fooled their followers and extracted material things out of them so they could live the life of luxury. They made middle and low income class their frequent victims. The reason was and always is that rich people have such big egos that word god has difficulty penetrating it unless it fits their plan of deception. This description does not fit every rich man but it fits most of them. Brahmins and quazis would create myths about everything bad that happens in life such as illness, problems in business, crops not doing well, and running out of sources to provide ones family with the necessities of life such as food, clothing or medicine for a sick child. They would explain all these problems or miseries having origin in some one putting a curse on their family or they would state that certain deity is mad at them because they offended them in known or unknown ways. They would volunteer to take this task of removing the curse or to make the mad deity happy. The catch always was that the victims of their scheme have to pay for it in a prescribed manner that they devise for them. Mostly the parents of sick children would fall pray to them. Over the centuries of this practice people started believing in curses and mad deities. No one was there to preach the masses that god is not cruel, instead he is very forgiving.

The other reason for Nanaks coming to earth with a universal religion is that the rulers of those times were cruel and unjust. They looted the public in legal and illegal ways, especially if they were not muslims. Islamic rulers made this their mission that they were going to make everyone become a muslim or die. They used torture, bribery or levy heavy taxes against anything they own. To relieve people of their problems created by the pundits and the quazis or by the rulers, Guru Ji came to uplift the downtrodden, the weak and the
poor and give the world a universal religion which teaches the equality of mankind and god as omni-present.

Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji is the only prophet, a pagamber or a guru who traveled extensively, and preached directly to the people of different countries in their native language. In my younger years I never saw a picture of Guru Nanak without Bhai Bala on one side of Guru Nanak Ji and Bhai Mardana on the other side. During the last few decades Bhai Bala has disappeared from the side of the guru. Why? The only answer I got from some sources is that Bhai Bala was a myth. He never existed. Strange, and we will discuss this toward the end of the book.

I would like to write some of the stories of Guru Nanak Ji as I have read them and heard them. We all have our most favorite ones and I will try to write some of these that are my favorite and seem to teach us the lessons that we ought to remember all of our waking hours. Guru Ji told us that we should not believe in magic, fake rituals, believe in fables, be superstitious or bow to pictures of deities. He preached that we are only going to reap what we sow. We will receive the fruits of our own deeds and not some one else’s. Before we discuss some stories I would like to present my opinion, in fact opinion of all those that I have discussed this subject with, Guru Nanak Ji laid down the foundation of the palace of Sikhi. With the knowledge from reading Guru Ji’s bani and the rest of the gurbani of the other five gurus it seems that Guru Nanak Ji not only laid down the foundation of Sikhi palace but he built a complete palace and furnished it with all the amenities necessary. The next nine Guru Nanaks preached the same message. Their bani repeats the same message
but may seem different because each shabad or stanza is uttered by each guru according to the times, situations and the individual or a group of individuals they are conveying the message to. Where ever the guru went, he met different types of people and also of different faiths. This is the reason why at times we start arguing in place of discussing and we end up at the wrong end. When we discuss gurbani we should read the whole stanza and learn what kind of people Guru Ji is talking to and what the situation was when Guru Ji uttered those shabads.

Every word Guru Ji uttered was an instruction to make our life worth living. When Guru Ji went to Mecca he laid down with his feet pointing towards Mecca. An angry caretaker was mad at the guru and told him that his feet should not be pointing towards where god lives. The guru asked him politely to move his feet to the direction where there is no god. When the caretaker tried to move Guru Ji’s feet he felt that Mecca was moving along with it. He and the others who were present there realized that guru was not an ordinary person but a true holy man. The Guru Ji preached the oneness of humankind and that god is omnipresent resides everywhere and in every one of us.

Every step that Guru Ji had taken and every sakhi he has created is enough for us to live our lives by with peace of mind. All of us have our most favorite ones. Most of us think that the sakhi of Bhai Lalo and Malik Bhago is one of the most important sakhis because we are faced with the problem of the rich pushing the poor around, whether it is in the business world, in professional world, in farming, co-ops, or even in our gurdwaras. This sakhi starts with Guru Ji leaving Sultanpur and heading towards Eminabad. Making
many stops on the way to preach his message of three golden rules of Sikhi and making people aware of omnipresent Waheguru. Explaining that god has created everyone equal with equal rights and no one is superior or inferior to the other. God wants us to love, respect and help each other so we all can live a harmonious and happy life. Bhai Lalo always served the men of the cloth. He had already heard about Guru Ji and was very anxious to meet the guru. When Guru Ji reached Emnibad he went straight to Bhai Lalo’s place. Lalo was a very humble and courteous host. He tried his best to serve the guru. He was assured by the guru that being poor is not a crime. It is a person within you that counts in the eyes of the god. This made Bhai Lalo very happy and even more humble. Guru Ji stayed at his house. Every evening guru will recite gurbani while Bhai Mardana would play the rabab. The village people started gathering there every day and the numbers started increasing daily. Malik Bhago was not used to this because all the holy men use to stay at his place and sing his praises. Malik Bhago became jealous and started telling people that guru was supposed to be a khatri, and his companion was a low cast mohamden and he is staying and dining at the house of a shuder. He advised some of the town’s people to tell him that he is committing a sin by living and eating at a shuders house and this was not proper for a hindu of the high caste. Guru Ji told them that he was neither hindu nor musalman he is a man of god. In his eyes there is no lower or higher class of people. They are all equal and no one is higher or lower. They went back to Malik Bhago and told him what the guru said. This made him very mad but he did not want the guru or the town’s people to know that he was jealous of Bhai Lalo. He sets up a special feast for the
brahmins and the sadhus. Guru Ji did not show up. This made him mad and he had no other alternative or patience left. He sent his men with the order that if guru does not come willingly, bring him by force. Guru Ji went with those people to Malik Bhago’s place and asked the guru why he did not accept his invitation for the feast. The food was much better and the company was supreme. Guru Ji asked him to bring some of his food and also asked Bhai Lalo to bring some food from his house. Malik Bhago’s food appeared rich and delicious but Bhai Lalo’s food dry and hard. Guru Ji took Bhago’s food in one hand and Lalo’s in the other and squeezed both hands. The audiences were shocked and amazed to see that blood was coming from Bhago's food and milk from Bhai Lalo’s food. Guru Ji explained to Malik Bhago that he had earned his money through deception and not by honest means; Bhai Lalo has earned his living by hard and honest work. Malik Bhago fell on guru’s feet and asked his forgiveness. He also became Guru Ji’s follower and he changed his way of life. After Guru Ji left Eminabad Malik Bhago helped Bhai Lalo to operate a dharmsal at his house and later built a bigger one because more people were starting to come to hear Bhai Lalo sing guru’s bani.

We think that this sakhi is more important than many others. The reason is that it is applicable to our daily life. The reason for this is that most but not all rich people are very arrogant and with swollen ego. They brag about their material possession and put down the poor at every chance they get. They talk about the money that they have given to charity and take over community places by force. They always demean the poor.
They monopolize through their riches and this hopefully can bring them to their senses by thinking of this sakhi and knowing that god loves humble and honest people over the rich and the arrogant.

Almost all the people that I have talked to like the sakhi when Guru Ji went to Hardwar next to the sakhi of Bhai Lalo and Malik Bhago. Every year, there are some special days when lots of people go to Hardwar for pilgrimage. When Guru Ji went there he saw hundreds of thousands of people there. One day early in the morning Guru Ji went where people were getting into the water. Guru Ji went into the water where the Brahmans were. Soon after the sunrise they started throwing water towards the sun. Guru Ji started throwing water toward the opposite side or away from the sun. One of the brahmans tapped Guru Ji on the shoulder to get his attention. When Guru Ji looked at him, he told the guru that he was throwing water to the wrong direction. Guru Ji inquired why it should make any difference which direction the water is thrown. By that time they all were looking at the guru. The head Brahman started to explain the reason for throwing water towards the sun. He explained that there was no water up there where our forefathers have gone after death and this water, we are throwing towards the sun to day will go to our pitters or departed souls. The Guru Ji said that he was not throwing water for his forefathers but he was throwing this so his corn fields would not die from lack of water. The Brahmin asked where his cornfields were located. Guru Ji said in Kartar Pur. They all started laughing and saying to each other that the guru was an ignorant man. The Brahmin said to the guru, don’t you know that this water you throw upwards it falls back into the river just a few feet from
you. How can it reach Kartar Pur? Guru Ji replied that if your water can reach the sun which is millions of miles from here why his water won’t reach Kartar Pur. It is only a few hundred miles from here. The Brahmans were speechless and they bowed to Guru Ji and everyone there realized that Guru Ji was not an ordinary man. He was a man of god. This sakhi teaches us what Guru Ji accomplished in this exemplary way that fake rituals are forbidden in Sikhi. A Sikh should never do or participate in any fake rituals. These fake rituals were the ones that kept the qazis and Brahmans to keep deceiving the innocent and unsuspecting public. If we put this thought somewhere in our minds we can be better Sikhs and be able to live happier lives.

There are countless other very important stories which teach us how we can serve god. We have heard the sakhi of Kauda Rakash, who was a carnivorous or man eater. Guru Ji converted him to public servant through his preaching’s and became a true Sikh of the guru. The same thing Guru Ji taught to Sajjan the robber by showing him the way of Waheguru. He taught Duni Chand, one of the richest men of Lahore, that his good deeds are the only ones that are going to stay with you and is going to help you live a happy and peaceful life on earth. Duni Chand had confided in him that he was very rich but he was very unhappy because there were a few people in town who were richer than he was and he would not be happy unless he is the richest man in Lahore. Guru Ji taught him a lesson the same way as he did everywhere else, by creating an example so there is no difficulty in understanding it. He gave Duni Chand a needle to keep for him until they meet in the next world. Duni Chand replied that no one can take anything from this world after they die.
Guru Ji smiled and said Duni Chand how are you going to take all this money. Duni Chand understood and fell at Guru Ji’s feet and begged for his forgiveness. He became guru’s follower and used his money to help the poor and the needy. Like other people whose’ hearts were touched by the guru’ he also became gurus follower and an instrument in spreading the message of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

Guru Ji always preached everyone to be humble, egoless, and a public servant. The time to show this is when you are in a position of power because poor and week can not afford to be arrogant. Guru Ji taught this to Wali Qandari and created a sakhi or story to learn a lesson of unselfish service to humanity. Wali Qandhari was living up on top of a hill. There was a water spring on his property. The excess water would flow down to the valley and the people living there were using this water for all of their needs. This was the only source of water for them. Guru Ji used to sing gurbani while Bhai Mardana played the rabab every morning and evening. The town's people would gather in increasing numbers daily. Bawa Wali Qandhari was considered by the town’s people a holy man. People started going less and less to the top of the hill to listen to Wali Qandhari’s services. He became very angry and jealous of Guru Ji. He constructed a dam to stop the excess water from flowing downward to the valley. They begged him to let the water flow as before but he refused unless they stop listening to the Guru. . Guru Ji sent Mardana twice to plead with Wali Qandhari but to no avail. Guru Ji was sitting next to the hill in meditation. The water started flowing down its natural course and Wali Qandharis reservoir was becoming empty. This made Qandhari very mad. He rolled a huge rock down the hill towards where
Guru Ji was sitting. Guru Ji raised his hand and stopped the rock. Guru Ji’s hand impregnated the rock. Bawa Wali Qandhari came down and fell on Guru Ji’s feet to beg his forgiveness. Guru Ji advised him to do god’s work. He became Guru Ji’s follower like countless others whose’ hearts were touched by the Guru Ji by teaching them a practical lesson. At that spot a beautiful gurdwara named Punja Sahib is standing to day and Guru Ji’s hand print can be seen imbedded in that rock.

There are books written about the sakhies of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. I like to stop repeating anymore of them. To me it seems that we get the picture that Guru Ji was and is the man of god and his universal religion called Sikhi will live for ever.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji left this world in 1539 leaving behind the most modern, simple, easy to follow, practical, common sense and universal religion, which will stay this way till eternity, Guru Ji’s instructions will keep guiding us through his nine hundred and seventy four shabads. Guru Ji was loved by all, whether one was a Hindu or a Muslim. At the end Muslims wanted to bury his body and the Hindus wanted to cremate it but there was no body under the sheet. They divided the sheet and did their own religious rituals.

In summary Guru Nanak Dev Ji did what no other prophet ever did before. He always acted humble and taught people of all ages, of all religions that there is only one god and he loves us all and there should be no barriers to achieve his union. He taught every one to live with peace of mind. This was the only way to achieve happiness. He taught every one that our own deeds are the ones that are going to help or hinder us. We have to live a life of contentment and satisfaction. No one else can do it for us. He showed us that
we have to live an exemplary life, which means we have to live by the same rules that we preach others to live by. He told us we can not buy salvation nor we can fake it. We have to earn it ourselves through righteous living. After Guru Ji’s travels were completed he lived in Kartar Pur as a farmer to show that you have to earn your living by honest means and share it with others. He had two sons, Siri Chand and Lakhmi Das.

Guru Ji wanted to leave his mission in the hands of such a person who believed the same way as he did. He did not see that in his own sons but saw those qualities in one of his Sikhs named Bhai Laihna Ji. He was a tireless sewadar. He did what ever Guru Ji asked of him without questioning the Guru. If Guru Ji asked him to undo what he has done upon guru’s order, he would do it without asking any questions, no matter how many times Guru Ji would ask him to redo. So before leaving this earth Guru Ji made Bhai Laihna Ji our second Guru Nanak and gave the name Angad or a part of some one’s body and here it means to us that Guru Nanak Ji had just changed the jama or body and the spirit of Guru Nanak Dev Ji transferred to Siri Guru Angad Dev Ji.
Chapter Three
Siri Guru Angad Dev Ji (1504-1552)

Guru Angad Dev Ji was born in a village called Sran Matta. His father's name was Baba Ferru and his mother's name was Matta Sabhrai Ji. Pheru Mal Ji was working for Takhat Mal as his accountant. Later on the family moved to Hari Ke Pattan and opened up a shop of their own. After doing business for a short while the family moved to another town which was not too far away from where they were. The name of this town was Sangger and the family started a new business of their own in this town also. The Pheru Mal’s families were worshippers of goddess Durga. Lots of people of this town used to go to this place for pilgrimage every year. Baba Pheru Mal Ji was their leader and Guru Ji’s name at that time was Laihna. Baba Pheru Mal Ji died when Laihna was about twenty five years old; he became the leader of the town. The responsibility of leading the town’s people to goddess Durga’s place for annual pilgrimage became his duty. He performed every duty with great enthusiasm. Once when he was visiting his aunt who lived in Khadoor, about three miles from Sanghar where Bhai Lehna had his business, he met a Sikh of Guru Nanak and his name was bhai Joadh. After listening to him singing gurbani Bhai Lahna was moved. He inquired about the shabad as to who wrote the shabad and where does he live. Bhai Joadh told him that the shabad he was singing was of his guru Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji and he was living in Kartar Pur.
While Bhai Lahna was preparing for the next pilgrimage to goddess Durga he made a plan to make a stop at Kartar Pur because this was near where they were going to go through. While the group stopped for the day Bhai Lahna went to see the guru. He was riding on a horse. He met an elderly man and asked him for Guru Nanaks place. The man said that he was going that way and he will lead him to that place. Bhai Lehna rode the horse and the man walked on foot. When they reached the place the man pointed towards guru’s place and told him that he would find the guru. There. Bhai Lehna went to that place. When he entered the room he was shocked to see that the man sitting there was the same man that brought him there. He fell on guru’s feet and asked for forgiveness because he rode the horse and let the guru walk in front on foot. Guru Ji said to him that he was the host and Bhai Lahna was the guest. It was the duty of the host to respect the guest. They both sat down and talked like old friends for long time. Bhai Lahna realized that he had found what he was looking for. He made up his mind that he was not going any farther. He went to his people and told them that they should continue their journey without him. They were very disappointed but could not convince Bhai Lahna to lead them to goddess Durga’s place.

Bhai Lahna stayed in Kartar Pur for a few days then went back to his home town to clear all the loose ends of his business there. He gave his business to his nephew and moved to Kartar Pur permanently along with his wife Kheevi and children. The children’s names are Dasu and Dattu, the two boys, and Amro and Anokhi, the two daughters. Bhai Lahna found the purpose of his life that he was going to serve the guru for the rest of his
life. He was doing chores at the farm and Kheevi Ji worked in the langar along with all the other sewadars. He would get up at the same time when Guru Ji would, because he did not want to miss anything that Guru Ji said or did. He also wanted to be there so Guru Ji would not have to look for him to do any service. He pleased the guru so much that Guru Nanak Dev Ji started testing him to see if he was fit to be the next guru. There are many sakhies or stories where Bhai Lahna would not ask Guru Ji why he had to do it; he would always just do it. Guru Ji would always ask Siri Chand and Lachmi Das first. If they refused then he would ask Bhai Lahna and he would always do it without any question. Once when a wall fell down Bhai Lahna build it over and over again because guru told him that he did not build it right the first time. He would get up in the middle of the night to fix the leak in the roof when gurus children refused to get out of bed to fix the roof which to them was an ungodly hour and below their dignity. Another time Bhai Lahna Ji jumped into a pool of dirty water to retrieve a cup while everyone else refused to retrieve it. Once Guru Ji went to the river to take a bath a hale storm came down. All the Sikhs who were there ran for the shelter but Bhai Lahna stayed with the guru. During the years there was never a time that Bhai Lahna showed any remorse for leaving the life of comfort and respect that he had in his hometown. He made it and showed it that the life of service of the guru was the only life he wanted to live. He had won Guru Ji’s heart and Guru Ji had assured himself that Bhai Lahna Ji was the only one to continue guru’s mission on this earth. Before leaving this earth Guru Ji chose him to be the second Guru Nanak and gave him the name Angad. This is how Bhai Lahna Ji became Guru Angad Dev Ji to continue the mission of Guru Nanak
Dev Ji which was not only color blind to race, color, creed or caste but also to religion.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji was the only prophet the Sikhs called their guru, the Hindus called him their god and Muslims called him Pir Nanak. Even to day you can find Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s banis in some of their homes and hold the same respect as the Koran does.

Bhai Lahna Ji became the second Sikh guru on 7-9-1539 at Kartar Pur. Siri Chand and Lachmi Das were not very happy because they assumed that guruship was theirs as birth right. Siri Chand was very knowledgeable religion wise and was not very happy with his father’s choice. He was very jealous and hate full towards Guru Angad Dev Ji. He tried to create problems for Guru Ji and insulted him at every chance he got. Soon afterward Guru Angad Dev Ji moved to Khadoor Sahib along with his Sikhs. Baba Siri Chand tried to act like a guru but the Sikhs refused to follow him. Eventually he formed a cult named udasi. Many Hindus became his followers and it still exists. Many of the mahants who took over the gurdwaras during the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century were udasis. The most prominent of them all was Narain Das who took over the gurdwara of Nankana Sahib. He was also an udasi and we will talk about him after the brief history of the gurus.

Guru Angad Dev Ji spent about seven years as Bhai Lahna serving the guru in Kartar Pur. His entire mission of his life became clear to him that he was going to serve the guru and obey his command without any question. Guru Nanak Dev Ji tried to show him the way because he knew that Bhai Lahna was going to be Guru Angad Dev Ji some day.
Bhai Lahna learned all the rules of Guru Nanak’s religion from three golden rules to the total human needs. No prophet or a medical man ever understood what human health is and the factors that play a very important role to make one a complete healthy person. Guru Nanak preached all three as body, mind and spirit has to be in synch for a person to be in peace with himself or herself. Guru Ji encouraged people to lead simple family life. He taught them they should eat natural foods in moderation, not to use any kind of intoxicants such as alcohol, tobacco products or any other drugs that would cause pain or alter the thinking process, or cause inhibition or excite the thought process uncontrollably. He was the only sewadar amongst all of them who passed all the gurus tests to be just like Guru Nanak.

After taking over the guruship Guru Angad Dev Ji preached as if Guru Nanak Ji was still there and he was because it was the spirit of Guru Nanak residing in Guru Angad Dev Ji. He encouraged the Sikhs to learn gurmukhi so they all could read the shabad, he wrote gurmukhi primers and his Sikhs far and near who learned how to read and write the new language taught other Sikhs in their towns. He met and salvaged people from all walks of life, from beggars to emperors, like Guru Nanak Ji who never accepted any kind of material help from the ultra rich people, who were used to buying praise from holymen, for his langar. Every thing was donated by the Sikhs and others who earned their living through honest means.

There are sakhies or stories about the people he met and preached Sikh and also during daily, twice a day gatherings. He did not travel as much as Guru Nanak Ji did. He
stayed in Khadoor sahib the entire time of his guruship. He had all the Guru Nanak’s shabads (974) and added 69 shabads of his own. Guru Nanak Dev Ji gave him all the collection of bhagat bani that he had collected during his travels. Guru Angad Dev Ji made sure that nothing fake is added to gurbani or bhagat bani. Guru Angad Dev Ji also had a sewadar who mocked him in sewa when he himself was at Kartar Pur performing sewa to Guru Nanak Dev Ji. This sewadar was about thirty-five years older than Guru Ji. His name was Amru and through his tireless sewa he became the third Sikh Guru or third Guru Nanak with the name of Siri Guru Amar Das Ji.
Chapter Four

Siri Guru Amar Das Ji (1479- 1574)

Guruship (1552- 1574)

Guru Amar Das Ji was born 5- 5- 1479 at Basarke near Amritsar. His father’s name was Bhai Tej Bhan Ji and his mother’s name was Matalakhmi Ji. Guru’s Ji’ wife’s name was Ramo Ji. They had four children. Two boys named Mohan and Mohri and two girls named Bibi Dani and Bibi Bhani. The family had a business in town. From an early age Guru Ji was looking for some one or some place to put his faith in to achieve salvation. He went to Hardwar to take a dip in the river Ganga for piece of mind and soul. Somehow Guru Ji was not satisfied with his religious rituals because his soul was not at peace no matter how hard he tried to focus on his inner desire. There are many stories that how he set out to find the guru that he was looking for. He found the answer right in his own family. Guru’s nephew was married to Bibi Amro, the daughter of Guru Angad Dev Ji. She used to get up early in the morning and recite gurbani. He started listening to her every day and started to like what he was hearing. One day he asked Bibi Amro where she learned what she recites every morning. She told him that it was Guru Nanak’s bani and her father, Guru Angad Dev Ji, is the second Guru Nanak residing in Khadoor sahib. Siri Ram Das Ji learned guru bani from Bibi Amro Ji and started reciting it every morning himself.

One day he asked Bibi Amro if she could take him to her father. She agreed and did what she promised. She accompanied him to Khadoor sahib and introduced him to the
guru, her father Siri Guru Angad Dev Ji. They both talked for a while when Siri Amar Das Ji expressed his desire to become his Sikh. Guru Angad Dev Ji granted him his wish. Siri Armadas Ji moved to Khadoor Sahib Ji permanently and started serving the sangat and the guru. He made up his mind to serve the guru whole heartedly without any question. Whatever duty guru assigned to him he would do it by saying yes sir. He never questioned the guru.

He used to get up before anyone. Every morning he would walk to the river to get water for the guru’s bath. Many times the weather was very bad during the winters but he never missed a day that he did not fetch the water for the guru’s bath. There are many stories about his hardships during wintry weather. One early morning he fell into the weaver’s hole, while coming back with the large water pitcher full of water on his head. The weaver said to his wife that there was someone outside. She called few names to Siri Amar Das Ji and said to her husband that it must be that old Amru. Little later the weaver came out and saw him with the water container on his head and standing in the hole full of water during the cold, rainy, wintry morning. The weaver helped him out of the hole. Siri Amar Das Ji was in his late sixties at the time.

Guru Angad Dev Ji was very pleased with Siri Amar Das Ji’s unselfish sewa. He may have already made up his mind about who the next Sikh Guru or third Nanak was going to be. Any sewa that no one else would want to do, because of its difficult nature or it was a dirty job, Siri Amar Das Ji would volunteer to do it. Guru’s sons acted that the sewadars were like their servants, so they did not want to do menial tasks. They always ask
the Sikhs to do those. Siri Amar Das Ji performed this sewa for a few more years and Guru Angad Dev Ji kept testing every one including his sons and the other Sikhs but no one else could come close to the humble attitude and willingness of doing any sewa that Guru Ji asked him to do. Guru made him do many things over and over again just to see if he raises a question as to why, he never said why. When the time came for Guru Angad Dev Ji to leave this world he appointed Siri Amar Das Ji as third Guru Nanak. This was the way Siri Amar Das Ji became Siri Guru Amar Das Ji. Soon after receiving the guruship he moved to Goindwal and continued preaching Sikhi from there.

Mata Lakhmi Ji and their younger son Datu Ji did not have any problem with Guru Angad Dev Ji’s decision to give the reins of Sikhi to Guru Amar Das Ji but Dasu the elder son was very angry with their father’s decision to give guruship to a servant. It was very difficult for him to take that his father did not pick him for the guruship. He was unable to accept, that to be a guru one had to have some qualifications and on top of the list was egoless service and living the kind of life that guru preaches to others. Guru Amar Das Ji was the only one who passed all the tests in the making of the guru. Dasu was very jealous of Guru Amar Das Ji and tried to disrupt guru’s work in any way he could. Guru Ji was always very kind to him. He always called him Dasu Ji.

After a while Guru Amar Dev Ji moved to Goindwal and many of the Sikhs who were there in Khadoor sahib moved with him to Goindwal. The number of Sikhs was multiplying. Guru Ji felt the need of giving worthy Sikhs, the opportunity and responsibility to spread the word of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. He saw that it was from difficult to
almost impossible for many Sikhs to travel from far away towns to join in the many services at Goindwal. He established twenty two posts or districts and called them manjis. Unselfish sewadars, who passed the guru Ji’s tests of service without question, were made in charge of these manjis. Their task was the same as was being performed by the guru at Goindwal, as to having morning and evening prayer meetings and the propagation of guru shabad. This made it easier for the Sikhs for not to travel so far, for those people who wanted to see what they were hearing about, a new way of life called Sikhi.

Each day of the guru’s life is a new sakhi or story. Guru preached the message that Guru Nanak Dev Ji preached and Guru Angad Dev Ji did before him. As the public was becoming aware of the new, practical, simple, common sense and universal religion, which taught equality among people without any regard to color, creed, race, religion or caste, more and more people started coming to the guru’s places every where. Brahmins, qazis and other self made holymen became intimidated and jealous of the guru. They tried to create many problems for propagation of Sikhi. They did their best to stop people from going to the guru, but none of their trickery worked. They started harassing the Sikhs to make their lives more difficult. They cut down their water supply from some of the wells. Some of the Sikhs became angry and wanted to retaliate but guru asked them to have patience because two wrongs do not make it right. Guru Ji guided the Sikhs to divert their anger energy to be used for a beneficial cause where every one living in Goindwal could benefit. He asked them to start digging a very wide well or bowley so it could be used for more purposes than just a regular well for just domestic use. The Sikhs dug and dug until
they reached the water level. They built the steps leading to the water level. This was to serve more purposes than just supplying the drinking water. It was considered a good exercise to go up and down the stairs, as some people used to do those days, where ever there was a bowley with the steps. It was also used by those people who wanted to sit at a quite place to meditate. This also attracted more people to the guru because they realized that guru works for the benefit of everyone. He is not limited to helping only his followers.

Akbar was the ruler of that time. He was one of the most open minded kings towards other religions. He knew a lot about the Sikh gurus. One time he stopped at Goindwal to visit Siri Guru Amar Das Ji. He was very pleased to see the guru feeding the hungry in the free kitchen. He offered to help by providing sources or jagir or cash, but the guru refused his offer and told him that this has to be supported by the honest working people by donating part of their honest earnings.

There was a young man doing sewa in guru’s langar who had moved to Goindwal about the same time when Guru Amar Das Ji moved from Khadoor sahib to Goindwal. His name was Jetha and he used to make living by selling salted grahams. He started attending guru’s morning and evening diwans and doing sewa in the langar. He became a totally devoted sewadar to the guru. No matter what was asked of him, he would do it without asking a question. Guru’s older daughter Dani was married to Rama who was also doing sewa there. When their younger daughter named Bhani became of marrying age, Mata Ramo Ji asked the guru that they should look for a young man who would be suited for Bibi Bhani Ji. Guru agreed with her and asked a trusted Sikh to go and find a suitable young
man for their daughter Bibi Bhani. The Sikh came to the house to get specific instructions to the kind of qualities he should look for in that young man. At that time Bhai Jetha Ji was selling salted grahams in front of Guru Ji’s house. Mata Ramo Ji pointed to Jetha and said that he should be one just like that boy. Guru Ji said that there was no other young man like him in this world. He is the only one who is exactly like him. The search for a husband for Bibi Bhani Ji ended before it was started and Bibi Bhani Ji and Bhai Jetha Ji were married. He kept earning his living by his trade and also kept serving the guru. For almost twenty two years he served the guru with body, mind and soul. Guru was very pleased with his devotion. Guru Ji made every effort to make sure that he was the one who was fit to be the fourth Guru Nanak as Guru Ram Das Ji. Bhai Jetha’s name was Ram Das. He was always called Jetha because he was first born. Guru Ji had his sons, Mohan and Mohri, and the other son in law named Bhai Rama along with Bhai Jetha Ji to do certain things. Guru Ji was testing them to see who was fit to be the next guru after he leaves this earth. When they were through, he would tell them that he did not like it and ask them to do it again. Eventually Bhai Jetha Ji was the only one who would say that he was sorry he made the mistake and did not follow Guru Ji’s instructions. Guru Ji knew that he was the only one who was fit to be the next guru. He told his family and all his Sikhs that Bhai Jetha was going to be the fourth guru or the fourth Guru Nanak as Siri Guru Ram Das Ji after he himself leaves this earth.

All the treasures of gurbani that Siri Guru Amar Das Ji had in his possession, including 869 shabads of his own, were given to Siri Guru Ram Das Ji.
Guru Ram Das Ji was born in Choona Mandi, Lahore to father Bhai Hardas Ji Sodhi and mother Mata Daya Kaur Ji in 1534. They gave him the name Ram Das but called him Jetha because he was the first born after many years of their marriage. Mata Ji died while Jetha was just an infant and the father died when he was just seven years old. His maternal grand mother raised him in her house in a town called Basarke near Amritsar. Jetha started selling salted, boiled or roasted grahams in streets to earn his living at an early age. His parents, while alive did not believe in any kind of idol worship or tirath yatera. They believed in one god and worshiped him. Jetha was influenced by his father’s belief in god. When he would see a hungry fakir or holyman he would give free grahams to them. While he was still very young he went to Goindwal with some Sikhs to see the guru. After watching and listening to the guru he became so impressed that he decided to stay in Goindwal. He started his trade selling salted grahams and spending all his spare time doing sewa in guru’s langar. We all know the story that Bhai Jetha married Guru Amar Das Ji’s younger daughter Bibi Bhani, who was also very devoted to guru sewa. They had three sons named Pirthi Chand, Mahan Dev, and Arjan Dev.

At the passing of Guru Amar Das Ji Bhai Jetha became the fourth guru Nanak named Siri Guru Ram Das Ji in 1574. He wrote 688 shabads. As we find in guru history that each guru preached the same fundamental rules of Sikhi as were preached by Siri Guru
Nanak Dev Ji, one god who created everything and watching over every thing, is the one that all humans should remember and pray to. He made himself available to anyone and everyone who wanted to learn the way of god. He met all kinds of people during his ministry from simple folks to religious leaders to arrogant self righteous holymen. Guru Ji told every one of them that there is only one way to achieve salvation, which was to believe that there is only one god and he has created everything and everyone. Every human being has equal right to happiness and prosperity. To help the needy and to feed the hungry is the way to please god.

Guru Ji streamlined the process of communication between the Sikhs living in far places through manjis. He ordained masands, well versed in Sikhi. By doing this he facilitated the delivery of important messages and business correspondence easier and faster. They were sort of travelers between the manjis and Goidwal. Guru Amar Das Ji established that Sikh marriage should be simple, inexpensive, without too many rituals and with proper instructions for the marrying couple to make this union a life long commitment. Guru Ram Das Ji wrote four lamas which are the basis to make marriage a sacred and abiding in the presence of Waheguru. He did not want a marriage just a ritual, it suppose to be an oath and commitment to each other for life in the presence of the guru and sangat.

Guru Ji realized that the Sikhs were increasing in numbers and there has to be a center where all the information should be collected and kept for collection and dispersion. Guru Amar Das Ji created manjis system and Guru Ram Das created masand system. This was done because the Sikhs were increasing in numbers and the distance between the center
and newly created Sikh communities was also increasing. Guru Ji traveled to Guru Ka Chuk now called Amritsar probably a few times to establish an organized city which would have separate districts according to the type of businesses or residential areas and that’s what he did in establishing the city of Amritsar. Guru Arjan Dev Ji made this city to be the capital of Sikhi.

Guru Ram Das Ji knew that their youngest son was the most sewa oriented young man. He was taking Sikhi very seriously and he was the best of their three sons to continue in the line of Guru Nanak’s lineage. Pirthi Chand was a very learned person but he was not a humble person. He did not have the qualities of a guru. A guru had to live the life that he preaches to his Sikhs to live by. He knew that teachings of the guru has to be practical and universal. There was no place for ego in Sikhi. Pirthi did not fulfill the prerequisite for a guru. Mahan dev, the middle son, was a care free and happy go lucky young man. He did not care who their father gives the guruship to.

before leaving this world Guru Ji called upon the Sikhs and the family to let them know about his decision that he had named Arjan Dev Ji as the fifth Guru Nanak as Siri Guru Arjan Dev Ji.
Chapter Six
Siri Guru Arjan Dev Ji (1563 – 1606)

Siri Guru Arjan Dev Ji was the youngest son of Siri Guru Ram Das Ji and Mata Bhani Ji. He had two older brothers. The eldest was Siri Pirthi Chand Ji and Siri Mahan Dev Ji was the middle brother. Pirthi Chand always believed that he was going to inherit the guruship when their father leaves this earth to be with Waheguru. Mohan Dev Ji was free spirited young man. He did not care and he was the kind of person we call happy go lucky. Arjan Dev Ji was always serious and sewa oriented. He wanted to serve his father as a sewadar and not only as his son. He would always obey him without asking questions. Pirthi Chand was very intelligent and proud of being the first born son of the guru. He was a very calculating and focused person. He would always ask why he had to do what was asked of him to do. Arjan Dev Ji spent most of his time in sewa, reading or attending to the guru.

Pirthi Chand developed jealousy towards Arjan Dev Ji because he felt that Guru Ram Das Ji was treating Arjan Dev Ji more favorably than him. He tried many tricks to discredit Arjan Dev Ji and tried to misguide him. One time there was a wedding in guru’s relatives in Lahore but Guru Ji could not go. He asked Pirthi Chand to go in his place. He refused because he did not want to leave Arjan Dev Ji behind alone with the guru. Guru Ji asked Arjan Dev Ji to go to Lahore. He replied as you wish father. Arjan Dev Ji went to Lahore and stayed there for some time, waiting for the guru’s orders to come back to
Goindwal. He wrote a letter to Guru Ji but Pirthi Chand intercepted the letter. When Guru Ji did not answer his letter Arjan Dev wrote another letter. The same thing happened to the second letter what had happened to the first one, Pirthi Chand had taken it. Arjan Dev Ji finely realized that his messages were not reaching his father. This time he told the messenger not to give the letter to anyone else other than his father. This time Guru Ram Das Ji got the letter and sent for Arjan Dev Ji. These were some of the reasons that Siri Guru Ram Das Ji chose his youngest son to continue the mission of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Even then Pirthi kept putting road blocks in the path of Guru Arjan Dev Ji. Pirthi Chand continued to be the controller and distributor of the money that was coming in from donations from all parts of the country. He started cutting the amount that was to be used to run the langar. Because of this the quality of food in the langar suffered. This was happening due to Pirhi Chand’s scheme. He had bribed some of the masands who were bringing the donations from the Sikhs living far away from Amritsar and give it to him instead of taking this to the treasury. Guru Arjan Dev Ji did not want to offend or insult Pirthi Chand. For this reason he asked the sewadars in the langar to do the best with what they had.

About that time Bhai Gurdas Ji arrived in Amrisar to see the guru. Bhai sahib lived in Agra before moving to Amrisar. He was related to the guru on his mother’s side. When bhai sahib visited the langar and saw deplorable conditions there, he felt angry and very worried. He knew that guru’s langar used to have better food and of many varieties. He inquired about the reason for this. Guru Arjan Dev Ji would not complain against his
brother Pirthi Chand because Guru Ji always believed and preached that everything that happens, happen according to the will of Waheguru and we should accept it with grace. Bhai sahib did not stop there. He started investigating the cause. Some of the Sikhs told him the whole story that the root cause of the problem was Pirthi Chand. He was taking most of the money himself and using it to win support to take over the guruship. Bhai Gurdas Ji met with Pirthi Chand and wanted him to stop interfering with guru’s mission. He told about the condition of the langar. Pirthi Chand said to him that guruship was his. Their father should not have skipped two places. Bhai sahib explained to him that this was Guru Nanak’s mission. No one had the birth right or any other right on guruship except a sewadar, the one who performs an unselfish sewa, without questioning the guru. Guru Nanak Ji did not give guruship to his son. He made Guru Angad Dev Ji the second Sikh Guru. Why? Because he passed every test by performing sewa that Guru Ji asked him to do without making any excuses and without asking any questions. That’s why Guru Nanak Dev Ji chose Guru Angad Dev Ji for guruship. The same process was used by Guru Angad Dev Ji to select the third guru Siri Guru Amar Das Ji. When the time came for Guru Amar Das Ji to make the selection for the fourth Guru Nanak, he chose his son in law over his son. Why? Because his sons would pick and choose sewa while your father Siri Guru Ram Das Ji would do anything, whether it was menial, dirty, hard work or what time of the day or night it was, he went ahead and did it with pleasure showing on his face. This is how Guru Nanak’s house-rules work in selecting the next Guru Nanak. Can you say that you always tried to please your father? Did you always performed the sewa that guru
asked you to do without questioning it? Can you compare what you did and what your brother Guru Arjan Dev Ji did when called upon to do or perform a duty? When all the answers to these questions are no, then how can you say, or even think about that you should be the guru? This is not a birth right, it is a sewa right.

Pirthi Chand had no answers for bhai sahib but he still gave bhai sahib the impression that he was not going to let up until he gets what was his birth right, the guruship. After being convinced about the mission of Pirthi Chand bhai sahib set out to find out all there was to know and how Pirthi Chand was operating to disrupt guru’s work. He talked to the Sikhs who were faithful to the guru and also to those who were helping Pirthi Chand to defy the guru. He learned that one of the things he was saying to the Sikhs was that he was the real guru because he was the oldest son of the guru and the first born was always the recipient of his father’s title. The other thing he found out was that Pirthi Chand was telling the masands, who were bringing the donations from the Sikhs of far away places that he was in charge of the treasury of the guru. Another way was that he recruited some greedy people that could be bought then and can be bought today, who would sell their soul for the gain of material things such as money or goods. These people did the p.r. job for Pirthi Chand. They were telling the Sikhs that Pirthi Chand was the real guru or that he was in charge of the finances for the guru’s mission. Bhai Gurdas Ji found out that Guru Arjan Dev Ji was not saying or doing anything against Pirthi Chand and did not want Bhai Ji to do anything either.
After soul searching and consulting with the faithful Sikhs Bhai Ji made up a plan to spread the word to those who were mislead by Pirthi Chand that they were not being true to the guru. He and the other devoted Sikhs of the guru conveyed the message that Guru Arjan Dev Ji was the real guru and they were being used by Pirthi Chand against the guru and taking part in hurting the guru’s mission. They worked hard in and around Amritsar to convey this message. Some of them set out to go to other places to meet those masands who were giving the collected donations to Pirthi Chand thinking that he was the guru or that he was in charge of the treasury. Bhai Gurdas Ji completed his mission of informing everyone about the deception of Pirthi Chand at the request of some Sikhs and urging of Guru Arjan Dev Ji, he made up his mind to stay at Amritsar and serve the guru. Soon after the services of langar became better and to the level where these were and where these should have been.

Even with all of what Pirthi Chand did to put road blocks to hinder the guru’s missions, Guru Ji never showed any sign of bitterness or anger towards Pirthi Chand. He still let him stay there and take part in some of the projects there. Outwardly Pirthi Chand seemed to be reconciled with their father’s judgment that Arjan Dev Ji was the guru but he never gave up his plan to take the guruship away from him. After some time and thought he realized that he was never going to get the guruship for himself. So he ingrained this thought of making sure that his son would become the sixth guru and started planning for that.
Guru Ji started spending more time in Amritsar but he still kept traveling back and forth to Goindwal. He traveled to many other towns to spread the message of Sikhi. He established a place in Tarntaran to take care of the indigent and inflicted with incurable diseases that had no one to care for them. He also constructed a srover or pool or a water tank in Tarntaran for people to purify themselves. Because of his influence the numbers of Sikhs were increasing by the day. He facilitated the communication between the Sikh centers of the times by making himself available or some other learned Sikhs to go to such centers to preach and also to find their needs and to find ways to fulfill those needs. Amritsar became the center for the entire Sikh sangat. It became easier to receive and dispense the important messages regarding the affairs of all the Sikh centers because Amritsar was almost in the center of Punjab. Guru Ji wanted to make this a permanent Sikh center. For that they added **to the design of the city so it would develop in an orderly manner.**

In 1588 Guru Arjan Dev Ji decided to construct Darbar sahib and chose Mian Mir Ji to lay the foundation of this most sacred Sikh center. He had a design for four entrances to this place. The main purpose of doing this was to let the world know, that there would be no discrimination or bias towards anyone who wants to come to this most sacred place for worship or homage. This also was the massage of all the gurus to transmit the purpose of Sikh religion, started by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, that Sikhi was and always will be a universal religion. It will always stand for human rights and human dignity. A Sikh always had to be ready to protect the weak. A Sikh has to stand up not only for his own rights but for the
rights of those who can not protect their own rights also. When Guru Arjan Dev Ji thought of building this place of worship he must have been thinking of Guru Nanak’s philosophy of a religion. This also must be the reason for choosing Mian Mir Ji to lay the foundation stone, because he was a man of god and loved by every one. This adds one more reason that places of worships should not bar anyone from entering these places and no one should enter these places if there is any bigotry in their hearts. It took lots of time and money and very hard work by very dedicated sewadars from all walks of life. This uniquely designed and uniquely built shrine became a symbol of peace and will stay that way till eternity, no matter how many of them have tried and will try, beginning with the Muslim rulers to the Indian government, to erase this house of god from the face of this earth. Latter on Maharaja Ranjit Singh donated gold and service to have it gold plated and to all the people of the world it became popularly known as golden temple.

When Darbar sahib was completed, Guru Ji started his travels to different parts of the country to establish more Sikh centers for spreading Sikhi and social services such as langar for the needy and places for the care of those people who were indigent or inflicted with incurable diseases. He established such place in Tarntaran and then went to Kartar Pur (doaba) and preached around that area to establish a center there for that region. He continued visiting and revisiting the established centers and moving further and further from there to establish more new Sikh centers. Guru also felt the need that Sikhs should start expanding their occupations into all fields, such as farming, manufacturing, engineering and trading with in and outside the country. He encouraged the Sikhs to learn
more languages other than Punjabi which would help them in their business. He also told his followers to be as fit as they can be physically through physical exercises and mentally. He also encouraged everyone to learn and become competent in martial arts. In those days gattka or fighting with poles and swords were the best methods used in warfare. He wanted all the young and strong to learn the skills of self protection and be ready to protect those who were unable to protect themselves. He also wanted the Sikhs to become good horse riders.

In 1595 a son was born to Guru Arjan Dev Ji and Mata Ganga Ji at Guru Ji Wadali in Amritsar. They named him Har Gobind. Every Sikh and the friends of the Sikhs including emperor Akbar were sending messages of congratulations to the Guru Ji and Mata Ganga Ji except Pirthi Chand, the elder brother of Guru Arjan Dev Ji. Pirthi Chand and his wife were counting on Guru Ji not having any sons. This news spread darkness on all of their dreams. Since they reconciled with the truth and reality that Sikhs were going to honor only Guru Arjan Dev Ji as the fifth Guru Nanak and not Pirthi Chand, they were dreaming that their son would inherit the guruship after Guru Arjan Dev Ji. Guru Ji wanted his son to be fit to become the sixth Guru Nanak and along with it an administrator, a leader and an expert in horsemanship and martial arts. For these reasons Guru Ji started his training at very early age. In 1599 Guru Ji went on his missionary travel to Gurdas Pur area. He spent more than one year on this tour preaching and convincing the audience that all people are born equal with equal rights to live their lives the way they want it, but it should not infringe upon someone else’s right. He told the multitudes that sometimes you
have to stand up for your rights and during this process you may have to make sacrifices, even your life. After this mission Guru Ji came back to Amritsar.

Around 1601 Guru Ji decided that all the gurbani of the previous four gurus plus his own bani (2312 salokas) and all the bhagat bani that Guru Nanak Dev Ji had collected during his travels of this continent. There were some bhagats who were still living. Guru Ji sent Bhai Gurdas Ji to collect their bani. Guru Ji had established specific criteria for whose bani was to be entered into the Adi Granth, that’s what it was called after being bound. The bhagats who were chosen had to be reformers. They had to be secular and were trying to bring about justice in social and civil matters to benefit the ordinary person on the street. He selected passages from those who preached and stood behind their convictions even in hard times. Bhai Gurdas Ji being an excellent writer and well educated person was chosen by Guru Ji to copy the bani according to guru’s arrangement of the entire banis as to where certain bani were going to be written. By 1604 this huge task was completed. After Guru Ji made sure that every line of the gurbani and bhagat bani was, where it suppose to be, it was named Adi Granth. Before this it was called a pothi or dharam pothi. On August fourteenth, sixteen hundred and four, the first presence of the Granth was celebrated inside Darbar sahib. From then on it became a custom that Granth Sahib was always present and read during diwans. By putting all the gurbani and bhagat bani in one bound Guru Ji assured that no additions or deletions could be made by any one except the future gurus if they so desired.
Guru Ji had his mission completed as far as putting the panth in order except he had to prepare one more lesson for the world and specifically for the Sikhs to remember till eternity. This was a two part lesson. One was that sangat rules. Even guru has to give in to the sangat. This means that the real sangat and not the subservients. The real sangat is made up of those Sikhs who are dedicated to principles of honor without any regard to personal gain. They have to be unselfish when rendering a verdict.

The second lesson that Guru Ji still had to teach was self-sacrifice for a just cause. Everything Guru Ji was teaching the world about the kind of life they should live, a life of unselfishness and sewa. Each guru made their lives as living examples for us to refer to, if we are faced with the same kinds of situations.

The last story of Guru Arjan Dev Ji’s life started with Chandu of Lahore was appointed some sort of in charge of affairs in the western part of Akbar’s empire. Akbar had many Hindus at high places in his government. Chandu had a daughter he wanted engaged into an upper class family. The pandit that was assigned to this task by Chandu went to Amritsar for reasons of his own. He was impressed with the high regard Guru Ji had in the hearts of Amritsar residents. After seeing Har Gobind he was convinced that there was no way he was going to find better family or more handsome boy for Chandu’s daughter than him. He approached the guru and discussed what he was there for. Guru Ji agreed to have Har Gobind engaged to Chandu’s daughter. Pandit went back to Lahore very happy and proud of what he had accomplished. When he informed Chandu about his mission, he became angry and told him in the presence of many that he had disgraced him.
by this arrangement, because he considered the guru to be from lower level in the community than he was. The Sikhs who were present there and heard the remarks, sent message to the guru that he has to cancel the commitment he made with the pundit. All other Sikhs agreed that Guru Ji should reject the engagement of Hargobind to Chandu’s daughter. Guru Ji accepted their verdict and completed the first lesson, that the sangat is higher than even the guru.

the second lesson Guru Ji wanted to teach us was by creating an example for us, so we would remember it till eternity, how to become a martyr instead of giving in to the demands of the tyrants. Guru Ji cancelled the engagement of Hargobind to Chandu’s daughter. After hearing the guru’s decision Chandu became very angry because he felt insulted. He was expecting gratitude but he received rejection. There were other enemies of the guru like some Hindu priests. Guru Ji’s teachings were hurting their pockets. The imams wanted guru stopped because many Muslims, specially the recently made converts by force, were becoming guru’s followers. Together they were trying unsuccessfully for some time to no avail. Emperor Akbar was Guru Ji’s admirer and he would not listen to their complaints against the guru. Akbar died in October of sixteen hundred and five and his son Jahangir became the emperor. He was not like his father Akbar. He wanted to see everyone in India become a Muslim. Now it became easier for guru’s enemies to file complaints against him, which they started doing.

Jahangir was jealous and afraid of the popularity of Guru Arjan Dev Ji, but he was looking for an excuse to arrest the guru. His son Khosro was not happy with his father and
rebelled against him. Soon after royal army defeated Khosro’s army and arrested him. Jahangir ordered his people to arrest and punish anyone and every one who gave any kind of aid to his son while he was on the loose. Guru’s enemies used this opportunity to name the guru. Without any investigation Guru Ji was arrested and taken to Lahore. Governor of Lahore made Chandu in charge of torturing the Guru Ji because he had asked for that job. Chandu wanted to take revenge to wash the enigma of shame that he was feeling from guru’s rejection. He had the guru sit on the hot plate and pour hot sand on his head. Chandu’s daughter in law pleaded with him for not to do that because she knew the guru was a divine person, but he did not listen to her and continued the torture. Mian Mir begged the guru to destroy them with his divine powers. Guru Ji told Mian Mir that we have to accept the will of god and we have to withstand any and every pain that is inflicted upon us. If I don’t withstand this pain for the truth then who will? Mian Mir could not stand what was being done to the Guru Ji. He begged Guru Ji to give him permission to use his Allah given powers to destroy them all. Guru Ji asked Mian Mir Ji to go home and pray that god should make these people realize what evil deeds they were doing and not worry about him because this was the time for him to leave this world anyway.

After many days of torture Guru Ji’s body was totally burned. There was hardly any flesh left that was not charred. The butchers of Jahangir led by Chandu could not do any more harm to Guru Ji than they have already done, so they decided that only way left for them to inflict more pain to Guru Ji was to throw him into the cold waters of river Ravi.
They took Guru Ji to the bank of the river and threw him in the water. This was the last
time any one saw the guru alive.

Guru Ji was preparing Har Gobind for the future guruship from his early years.
Though Har Gobind was only eleven years old when he had to take over the guruship but
he was ready in every way to take the responsibility that was thrust upon him. Guru Arjan
Dev Ji took the Sikhi to a level where preaching alone was not enough, the Sikhs had to be
prepared to offer an ultimate sacrifice for which he made himself an example. The other
thing the Sikhs had to do was to be self sufficient and strong to defend themselves against
the aggression of the enemy. Guru Arjan Dev Ji was preparing the Sikhs by asking them
to learn martial arts and be strong physically. Guru Ji had instilled these qualities in Har
Gobind Ji beginning at very early age, Guru Ji must have known that Har Gobind had to
take over for him at very tender age of just eleven years, before leaving for Lahore Guru Ji
had instructed the Sikhs, specially Baba Buddha Ji and Bhai Gurdas Ji, that Har Gobind
was going to be the sixth guru Nanak. He also relayed his advice to Har Gobind. Thus the
new era of Sikhi started.
Chapter Seven
Siri Guru Har Gobind Ji (1595-1644)

Siri Guru Har Gobind Ji was born at Guru Ki Wadali, Amritsar in 1595. He was the only child born to Siri Guru Arjan Dev Ji and Mata Ganga Ji. This day was celebrated everywhere, where Sikhs were living except at the house of Pirthi Chand, Guru Ji’s older brother. He had rough time reconciling with accepting Guru Arjan Dev Ji as guru but having an heir at Guru Ji’s house was totally heartbreaking news for Pirthi Chand and his wife. They were counting on Guru Ji not having a son so their son would inherit the guruship after Guru Arjan Dev Ji’s passing. The news of Har Gobind Ji’s birth put a permanent damper on their hopes. Guru Arjan Dev Ji was planning the next phase of Sikhi that was going to start with Siri Guru Har Gobind Ji, while Pirthi Chand with his wife was devising ways to end Har Gobind’s life. As we know Pirthi Chand tried to kill Hargobind through assassins. He bribed people to leave a poisonous snake in Hargobind’s room, hired a nurse to kill him and had someone put poison in his food, but none of these cruel plans wore fruits for Pirthi Chand. Hargobind survived despite all of these attempts against his life. Because of all this, Guru Ji brought Har Gobind Ji to Amritsar, where Guru Ji was spending most of his time.

Guru Arjan Dev Ji wanted Har Gobind to be well educated, very strong physically and mentally, and an expert in martial arts. The training in all these fields started at very early age. Probably Guru Arjan Dev Ji knew that Har Gobind had to take over the guru
ship at the tender age of eleven. Hargobind propelled himself in all these endeavors faster than anyone could even imagine. He was at the top in every thing including horsemanship. Guru Arjan Dev Ji knew that Sikhs had to learn self sacrifice for a just cause, and also be ready to defend him and others who can not defend themselves. To fulfill this mission he was preparing Har Gobind since his child hood. In 1606 Guru Arjan Dev Ji left his abode on this earth at the hands of his enemies through unimaginable tortures. Before leaving for Lahore, Siri Guru Arjan Dev Ji had instructed Baba Budha Ji, Bhai Gurdas Ji and the Sikhs of Amritsar that Har Gobind should be the next guru. Thus Har Gobind became Siri Guru Har Gobind, the sixth guru Nanak, on May twenty fifth sixteen hundred and six.

This is what the guru history written by various authors tells us about the Guru Ji’s personal history when Siri Guru Arjan Dev Ji broke Hargobind’s engagement to chandu’s daughter, guru said to the sangat that he would like to see his son married to the daughter of one my devoted Sikhs. After Guru Ji’s pronouncement of his wish, three Sikhs pledged their daughters to Har Gobind Ji. Their names were Mata Damodri Ji, Mata Nanaki Ji and Mata Mahan Devii Ji. With the urging of the Sikhs Guru Ji had all three betrothed to Har Gobind Ji and later married to him. Guru Ji had four sons named Gurditta Ji, Ani Raj Ji, Suraj Mal Ji, Atal Rai Ji and Teg Bahadar Ji. He also had one daughter named Bibi Veero Ji.

As soon as Guru Har Gobind Ji took over the guruship, he was faced with obstacles of great magnitude, he was only eleven years old in chronological age but he was mature enough to handle any problem or difficulty that was coming his way. There were Sikhs
who were disheartened by the passing of Guru Arjan Dev Ji and very discouraged about their future. The others were mad and furious and wanted to take revenge. They wanted to kill all those who tortured the guru. Guru Ji was very young in age but very mature in wisdom and knowledge. He said to the Sikhs that they all should remember, what his father has taught them, to have patience and think thru it all before taking action. Never do anything just to take revenge. He repeated his father’s mission for the future of his Sikhs. He wanted them to organize. There was a day coming when they will have to face the enemy with strength but that was not the time yet. He asked the Sikhs, young ones in particular, that they should make a routine to practice martial arts and horsemanship. Be as strong as possible, physically and mentally. He made it a routine that after morning and evening prayer meetings, there were physical exercises and martial arts classes.

The Sikhs were very much encouraged by the young guru’s wisdom and his plan for the future of the Sikhs. They started bringing arms and learned how to use them. Guru Ji himself was wearing two swords, called one of Piri Di and the other one of Miri Di. He began recruiting people in his army. There were many pathans and non Sikhs who were tired of the injustice of the rulers of the time and wanted to join the guru’s army. The guru’s plan for the future of the Sikhs became known to the Sikhs far and near. It also caused worry to those who took part in torturing Guru Arjan Dev Ji. They were afraid that Guru Ji was going to kill them all. They started filling Jahangir’s ears with the stories from Amritsar that Guru Har Gobind was preparing an army to attack his army to take over his kingdom by force. Eventually the emperor became concerned and began investigating.
The reason of revenge was given for all this by Chandu and other government officials from Lahore. They were more afraid of their own lives than worrying about Jahangir’s kingdom. His investigators found out that guru will never attack anyone unless some one attacks him. Jahangir wanted to make sure of Guru Ji’s kind and just nature. He started sending presents and invitations for the guru to meet him and become acquainted with each other. Guru Ji ignored all of this until some of the Sikhs started telling him that he should go to find out what Jahangir really wanted.

Guru Ji was still in his teens, but he was a very powerful man, when he accepted Jahangir’s invitation to meet him in Delhi. Guru Ji went to Delhi to meet him. The emperor was very polite and gracious host. He tried to please the Guru Ji in everyway he could and at the same time tried to learn what guru was really made up of inside. Guru Ji did not have to pretend, his knowledge and tender nature was penetrating into Jahangir’s heart. He firmly believed that Guru Ji was a genuine person of god. After a few meetings, Jahangir invited Guru Ji to go hunting, which Guru Ji accepted. They went towards Agra because there were lots of wild animals roaming around in that jungle. The story has it that a ferocious tiger was coming towards the king. His bodyguards got so scared that they could not make a move to protect the king. Guru Ji saw all this happening and was sure that the tiger was going to kill the king. Guru Ji quickly gotten off of his horse and killed the tiger with his sword while protecting himself with the shield. First the king was frozen with terror and was unable to get of his horse. After a few moments he collected himself and realized that if it was not for the Guru Ji, he would have been dead. He could not
believe that guru was so powerful and fearless man at such a tender age. Jahangir fully understood that Guru Ji risked his own life to save his. He came down from his horse and bowed to the guru and then embraced him. He showed his gratitude for saving his life. The emperor truly believed that Guru Ji does not hold any grudge against any one or would do anything just for the sake of revenge. He also believed that Guru Ji had no intention of taking his kingdom from him.

When Guru Ji returned from Delhi, he constructed Akal Takhat right in front of Darbar Sahib only a few hundred yards away from it. He kept recruiting more and more Sikhs into his army. The Sikhs wanted to attack Lahore but Guru Ji told them that no one was going to attack anyone unless someone attacks them. Government in Lahore was getting afraid of the guru’s popularity and increasing number of Sikh soldiers. For a while Jahangir did not believe the reports from Lahore. They wanted him to stop Guru Ji before he becomes so powerful that he would not be able to stop him from toppling the Delhi government. Chandu and others from Lahore government changed their strategy from asking Jahangir to attack Guru Ji’s army; they started telling him that he should arrest the guru and hold him long enough for his army to disperse. After a while this scheme became somewhat attractive. Jahangir was very comfortable for his relationship with Guru Har Gobind Ji. He was sure Guru Ji would never attack him unless provoked and he had no intention of doing that. After steady barrage of persuasion Jahangir started believing, that it would be harmless if Guru Ji was brought to Gawalier fort and kept there in house arrest and provided with all the comforts of life.
Guru Ji was brought to Lahore and was taken to Gawalier fort in around 1610. It did not turn out the way they had thought it would. Guru Ji’s Sikhs became sad and angry. They wanted to attack the fort but Guru Ji advised them against that. The Sikhs and other sympathizers started demonstrations in front of the fort. About the same time Mian Mir heard about what Jahangir had done. He was very saddened by this. He decided to go to Delhi and tell Jahangir about the terrible mistake he was making. He took the trip and reminded him about all the terrible injustices he was doing to men of god. God would never forgive him for that. After listening to Mian Mir Ji, Jahangir realized his mistake and ordered Guru Ji released. When these orders reached Gawalier and it was told to guru that he could go to Amritsar at any time he wanted.

Guru Ji refused to leave because there were fifty two or so rajas imprisoned by Jahangir’s orders. Those rajas were mistreated by the prison guards as to food, clothing and other necessities. Since Guru Ji was allowed to have anything he wanted. He would get all the supplies in access and gave these to the rajas. They were very happy to have the guru with them. When they heard the news that Guru Ji was being released, they became very sad. Guru Ji asked them why were they so gloomy? Was it that they did not like him to be set free? They apologized and said that they were very happy for him but they were gloomy about their own future without him being there to take care of them. They knew that the prison guards were going to start mistreating them like they did before Guru Ji had arrived there. After listening to them Guru Ji refused to leave the prison. When he was asked why, the guru told them he wanted all the rajas had to be released with him if he was
It was imperative for them to release the guru as soon as possible; they devised a plan by which a few of them could go. They suggested to the guru that they would release as many as could hold on to his garb (kurta) or hands. Guru Ji agreed to that.

Guru Ji asked the Sikhs to have a new kurta made with fifty-two or so corners (kalian). This was done and Guru Ji asked the rajas that each of them should hold on to one corner each. With this he got all the rajas freed.

For about eighteen years Guru Ji stayed around Amritsar and taking trips to most established centers of Sikhi and some other places to start new Sikh centers to make easier for the Sikhs to stay in close touch with each other. On these trips Guru Ji was also recruiting young, strong and courageous Sikhs to join his army. We should always remember that everyone, no matter how devoted one was, each could not then and can not now be at the level of a warrior. A dharam warrior had to have a total commitment to his duty at all times as the number one priority. One’s own self, family and his work takes a back seat to his duty. These are the soldiers Guru Ji was recruiting during his missionary trips. At all the Sikh centers one Sikh, who was totally dedicated, brave and well versed in gurbani, was in charge of those centers and responsible to do locally what Guru Ji was doing during his missionary trips. One of the most important centers Guru Ji established was Siri Kirat Pur Sahib. Watching Guru Ji’s growing popularity and strength in manpower created the feeling of threat to the emperor’s regional commanders. Jahangir trusted the guru and believed that Guru Ji’s mission was not to occupy land but to bring equal justice for everyone. During his remaining days guru’s enemies could not change his
mind about the guru. He died in 1627 and his son Shahjahan became emperor of the mogul empire. He was different in his views about other religions than Jahangir. He wanted the laws of the land should conform to the laws of Islam. He was influenced by the reports of his commanders against Guru Ji. He gave them the authority to do what they had to do to lessen the threat from the guru’s army. This gave them the chance to test Guru Ji’s strength.

In 1629 one of his commanders was hunting near Gumtala town where Sikhs were also gone on a hunting trip. The royal troops started interfering with Sikhs by blaming them that they were over stepping their right. They had to yield to the royal authority. The Sikhs refused by telling them that they had just as much right being there as they had. This did not set well with the commander’s desires. They gave the Sikhs the ultimatum, that if they did not leave by next morning, they would be driven out. The Sikhs informed the guru about the threat of the royal commander. Guru Ji informed the commander that they were not going to leave because of their right to be there as well. He told him the place was big enough for the both parties. Next morning royal forces, which were at least four times larger than the Sikhs, attacked Guru Ji’s army. After this was over the royal forces were running away from the battlefield and the Sikhs were victorious in the first Sikh encounter with the enemy.

After the first battle some of the Hindu and Muslim employees of the emperor started a campaign against the guru. They were afraid of their positions being run over by the Sikhs. In 1630 Abdullah Khan, one of the commanders of Shahjahan’s army, attacked
Guru Ji’s forces at Kartar Pur. The battle was fought very fiercely on both sides. Many soldiers on both sides lost their lives. The commander himself lost his own life in this battle. After learning the death of their commander the royal soldiers accepted defeat and ran away to save their own lives. After winning this battle Guru Ji went back to his missionary work.

One of guru’s Sikhs in Kabul raised two special horses for Guru Ji. When they were ready to deliver he set out on his trip to deliver these horses to Guru Ji. When he arrived near Lahore, the nawabs men robbed him of those two horses. He was unable to do anything to prevent this. This news reached Guru Ji when he was in the malwa area. One of the Sikhs volunteered to go to Lahore and bring those horses back to Guru Ji. The horses were kept under heavy guard so no one could steal them, because they knew that guru’s Sikhs were not going to rest until they get these horses back to the guru. Horses were not eating right and getting weaker. Bidhi Chand was a determined man to take the horses away from the nawab. He went out to the field and brought the most tender grass and offered it to the horse keeper to try to feed that grass to those horses. The two horses ate all of that grass. The horse keeper offered Bithi Chand twice the price for his grass if he would exclusively bring such grass to him and not sell it to anyone else. Bithi Chand obliged. Everyday he would bring hefty supply of grass and feed that to the horses himself. Bithi Chand became very friendly with the horses. They started trusting Bithi Chand more than any other caretaker. There was no way open thru which Bithi Chand could take the horses through, except the Ravi River, because it was the only side which was not guarded
by the royal soldiers. This route was also the most dangerous one because of the depth and the turbulence in that part of the Ravi River. When Bithi Chand assured himself that he had no other option he started making a plan. He believed that mission was to serve the guru and he left his success or failure at the Guru Ji’s mercy. He made up his mind to take this life or death chance in the service of the guru. One dark stormy night he got on top of one of the horses and jumped into the river. With guru’s blessing he brought the horse safely to the guru. Then he set out to get the other horse from the Nawab. He disguised himself as a fortune teller. Everyone including the Nawab could not believe or figure out how a horse could disappear from under such a scrutiny. There were guards at the doors on three sides and furious river Ravi on the fourth. There was no way any thief could steal the horse. Nawab put a large reward for a person who could solve the mystery of the horse’s theft. No one was able to convince the Nawab with their explanations. Then Bithi Chand volunteered to demonstrate how the thief stole the other horse. The Nawab and his associates all gathered at the horse barn. Bithi Chand saddled the other horse and climbed on top him, took the horse to the edge of the barn and told everyone present that this was exactly the way the thief stole the other horse. While he was talking to them he made the horse to jump into the river and brought him back to the Guru Ji, where he belonged. After the Nawab confirmed that Bithi Chand was guru’s Sikh, he became enraged. This became the cause of Guru Ji’s third encounter or the third battle against the royal forces. Nawab sent his army to Malwa to capture or kill the guru instead they were defeated by the Sikh soldiers even though they were in very small numbers in comparison to the royal soldiers.
This put a damper on some of the other commander’s courage to engage with Guru Ji’s Sikhs. For the next three years no one bothered the Guru Ji and he kept on his missionary work.

During 1634 Guru Ji came back to Kartar Pur. About that time Shah Jahan was also visiting the Doaba area. Guru Ji had a Sikh, who was very strong physically and expert in martial arts, named Pande Khan. Guru Ji practically raised him and trained him in martial arts. He was the best fighter Guru Ji had. Every Sikh praised him for his strength and bravery. This praise went to his head. He started disobeying even the guru at times. After the third Sikh battle he proclaimed that guru could not have won, if it was not for him. Guru Ji had over looked his previous behavior but he could not tolerate his swollen ego and arrogance. Guru Ji fired him as an officer and released him of all the other duties also. This made Pande Khan very mad. He told the guru that he was going to be sorry for doing that one day. He went to the enemy camp and offered them his services. After loosing three battles against the guru the commanders were very discouraged and had given up their dreams to defeat the guru’s army. Pande khan revived their courage because they knew about the heroics and they themselves believed they were defeated because of him. They were told some of the strategy of guru’s battle plans by Pande Khan. Couple of commanders joined their forces although Pande Khan was telling them that he alone could defeat the Sikhs and he made a promise to them that he himself would kill the guru.

The fourth and the last battle of Guru Ji against the royal forces took place in Doaba near Kartar Pur. The Sikhs were in smaller numbers as always in comparison to the royal
forces, but greater in courage and battle technique in martial arts. They were superior fighters than the royal soldiers. They were getting the beatings at the hands of the Sikhs. Pande khan faced the guru and tried to kill him. Guru Ji caught his sword on the shield and mortally wounded Pande Khan. He fell to the ground. Guru Ji came down from his horse and wiped his face with his handkerchief and tried to comfort him. Pande Khan begged for forgiveness and Guru Ji forgave him. After seeing all this and getting the beating from the superior guru’s army the royal soldiers started leaving the battlefield. Some Sikhs wanted to pursue them but Guru Ji stopped them from doing that. Guru Ji told the Sikhs, that they had learned their ultimate lesson which they would remember for long time to come.

After the fourth battle with the enemy Guru Ji decided to settle in Kirat Pur and conduct all the Sikh affairs from there. He wanted to establish more Sikh centers because new Sikhs were converting to Sikhi in great numbers in different parts of the country. Guru Ji sent Bhai Gurdas Ji to Kabul to establish and manage the Sikh center there. Many more Sikh centers were established in India. At the same time Guru Ji was dispensing all his energy to his missionary work, Shah Jahan realized that confronting the guru militarily was not going to be successful. He knew that there was no one in his empire who could stand against Siri Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji. He was the only one his royal forces could not defeat.

He assured himself that Guru Ji was not after his throne, all he wanted was justice towards all. He made an unwritten promise that he was going to change his order of no one
allowed to sit on a throne or have an army. He sent his orders to all of his commanders that no one should interfere with Guru Ji and allowed the guru to keep his army and his throne.

Guru Ji spent the next ten years spreading his mission near and far. He started and completed another phase of Sikhi. The gurus before him preached to protest for one’s own rights and the rights of those who could not stand up to protect their own rights, in nonviolent means. Guru Har Gobind Ji kept Piri as preached by the five previous Sikh gurus and added Miri right along with it. He did not pick up sword to conquer any land but only to protect human rights when every other effort fails. He declared that Sikhs should start wearing arms for protection only and never to use these for an aggression. He was the first true saint soldier and he expected his Sikhs to follow his examples. We should always remember that all our gurus created practical examples for us to follow and not just talk about them. Siri Guru Har Gobind Ji left this world on March third, sixteen hundred and forty four and gave the guruship to Siri Guru Har Rai Ji as the seventh Guru Nanak Ji.
Chapter Eight
Siri Guru Har Rai Ji (1630-1661)

Siri Guru Har Rai Ji’s father was the eldest son of Siri Guru Har Gobind Ji. He was very brave and took part in the fourth Sikh battle. He was expert in martial arts and dedicated Sikh missionary at Kirat Pur. He passed away some time before his father Siri Guru Har Gobind Ji. Since his death Guru Har Gobind Ji was preparing Har Rai Ji for the guruship because he appeared to the guru to be fit to take over the guruship. Guru Har Gobind Ji went through the same process in selecting Har Rai Ji as the gurus before him. He had five sons. Baba Gurditta Ji died in 1638 and Baba Atal Rai died soon after. Baba Ani Rai and Baba Suraj Mall were more of family men and involved more in worldly affairs than dedicated sewadars. Teg Buhadar Ji was totally dedicated to meditation and showed no interest in worldly affairs. Har Rai was completely involved in sewa and learning martial arts, gurbani and herbal medicine were his life’s interests. He was exceptionally tender hearted from the beginning. These qualities made him a perfect fit to be the seventh Guru Nanak.

Guru Har Rai Ji’s mother Mata Nihal Kaur had a big hand in molding Guru Har Rai Ji’s life. She taught him gurbani and tender manners and created a deep love for human feelings and Siri Guru Har Gobind Ji taught him the rest. Guru Ji kept the Sikh army intact but he never had any intention of fighting anyone unless forced to do so. His dedication to learn and dispense the message of gurbani was of the utmost importance. He was an expert
in herbal medicine and kept a large collection of rare and difficult to find herbs. The story has it that Shah Jahan's favorite son Dara became very ill. Royal physicians could not diagnose or find a treatment to cure Dara’s illness. One of the doctors devised a plan to treat him. His prescription contained some hard to find herbs. For the emperor that did not seem to be a problem. He ordered the medicine men to find the needed herbs. They looked everywhere but to no avail. When shah Jahan’s hope of seeing his son get well was dimming someone who knew about Guru Ji’s dispensary of rare herbs told the ruler that he would be able to get the needed herbs from the guru. The emperor became overjoyed to hear the good news but then sadness spread all over his face because he and his predecessors’ treatment of the gurus came rushing into his mind. He could not imagine that guru would be so humanitarian and forgiving. He did not even want to send someone to the guru to ask him even if he had those herbs until one of his advisors convinced him that guru is that forgiving and he would do all he could to save Dara. Upon his insistence and his own desperation a messenger was sent to Kirat Pur to see if those herbs were available at the guru’s pharmacy. When the messenger told the guru what he was there for, Guru Ji gave him the needed herbs. Dara got well and Shah Jahan thanked the guru and promised that he would be treated fairly as long as he lives.

Guru Ji spent lots of time preaching in Malwa and establishing new Sikh centers there. Many new Sikhs were joining these centers. Guru Ji did not want to have his Sikh soldiers to fight unless they were pushed into fighting and that was what happened. When Guru Ji was on his tour of Doaba, one of shah Jahan’s regional commanders attacked the
Sikhs. There were some brave Sikh soldiers with the Guru Ji. They fought with the royal soldiers and handed them a memorable defeat that they would never forget. This was the only time that Guru Ji’s army had to fight.

In 1657, Shah Jahan became seriously ill and the doctors gave him no chance to recover. He wanted Dara to be the next mogul emperor after his death because he was the oldest and his most favorite son. The other three sons were made in charge of different sections of his empire but Dara always stayed with him in Delhi. During his illness he declared Dara an emperor and ordered him to take over his empire. The news spread throughout his kingdom fast. Aurangzeb was in charge of the southern section of the kingdom and he was the extreme aggressor of the four brothers. He did not take the news too well. He was preparing for this day for sometime. He had created a well disciplined and well trained army of his own. He started to wards Delhi. He persuaded his other two brothers to join him in defeating Dara and share the throne with him. Dara’s army became disorganized and unable to fight. Dara had to run for his life. During his retreat Guru Ji helped him escape the orangzeb’s pursuit to capture him by having Sikh soldiers on the opposite bank of Bias River where Aurangzeb’s army was. They did not want to fight the guru’s army, so they did not cross the river. Finely Dara was killed in a fight. Aurangzeb had no intention of sharing the throne with anyone. He got rid of both of his brothers by killing one and imprisoning the other. During this period Shah Jahan got well but Aurangzeb had already taken over the government in all forms. He arrested his father, Shah Jahan, and imprisoned him in the Agra fort close to Taj Mahal, which Shah Jahan had
built in the memory of his deceased wife Begam Mumtaj, until his death some ten years later.

Aurangzeb wanted to convert every one of his subjects to the Muslim faith. He started levying heavy taxes against non Muslims and his commanders started treating non Muslims unjustly. Guru was preaching against that. Guru’s enemies were trying to use this as a tool against him. They started filling orangzeb’s ears against the guru. He already had animosity against the guru for helping Dara escape his army at one point. They all brought to his attention that the Adi Granth has verses that disgrace the Muslim faith.

Aurangzeb was very clever man. He did not want confrontation with the Guru Ji’s army because what happened to his grand father Jahangir’s army against Guru Ji’s grand father Guru Har Gobind Ji. He also new how Jahangir made mends with Guru Har Gobind Ji. He invited Guru Ji to come to Delhi so they could get acquainted and resolve their differences. Guru Ji did not respond to his repeated invitations until some of Guru Ji’s devoted Sikhs asked him that he should go to meet him, because he could be serious in learning more about Guru Ji’s mission. Guru Ji did not want to meet Aurangzeb. So he decided to send his elder son Ram Rai to meet orangzeb. Guru Ji advised him not to try to please the emperor by falsifying Sikhi mission or indulge in any kind of trickery. Speak the truth and do not feel intimidated was Guru Ji’s last instructions.

Ram Rai arrived in Delhi and met with orangzeb. He was very impressed with the emperor, specially hearing him praising Ram Rai for his knowledge and demeanor.

Aurangzeb got Ram Rai where he wanted him, fallen in his trap, Ram Rai was so taken
over by the charms of Aurangzeb that he was saying only the things that were pleasing to
Aurangzeb. He showed him his powers when Guru Ji had advised him not to. The
question was of the verse Mitti Musalman Ki Pere Payei Ghummiar. He changed it to Mitti
Bayiman Ki instead of Musaliman Ki. Aurangzeb won him over but he fell from Guru Ji’s
grace. On his return to Kirat Pur Guru Ji refused to see him ever. The Sikhs were told not
to associate with him.

From this day on Guru Ji decided that Ram Rai was not fit to be a Sikh guru and
paid all his attention to prepare his younger son Har Krishan Ji for the throne of Guru
Nanak Dev Ji. In 1661 Siri Guru Har Rai Ji left this world. Before passing he declared that
Har Krishan was going to be the eighth Guru Nanak as Siri Guru Har Krishan Ji.
Siri Guru Har Krishna Ji was born to Siri Guru Har Rai Ji and Mata Kishan Kaur Ji on July seventh, sixteen hundred and fifty six at Kirat Pur. Guru Ji started learning gurbani and sewa at very early age. He would loose himself in meditation. Even painful stimuli would not make him blink. These were the lessons that all gurus taught us by making examples of themselves and Siri Guru Harkishan Ji continued the process so it would get ingrained in our own minds, if the circumstances warned, we should be able to withstand them. He was just five years old when on June sixth, sixteen hundred and sixty-one Siri Guru Har Rai Ji passed away at Kirat Pur and he became the eighth Sikh Guru.

The body was of a child with the mind and wisdom of grown wise man. The biggest challenge he faced was the road blocks created by Ram Rai, Guru Ji’s older brother. First he tried to get some Sikhs to consider him the real guru but it did not work. Then he bribed some masands to work on his behalf to bring some Sikhs into his fold. This effort also failed. He still did not stop from trying to uproot Guru Har Krishan Ji’s guruship. He lobbied the help of the rulers by claiming that the eldest son had the right to inherit the title of his father. When they learn more about this matter from the devoted Sikhs and learned more about the guru, they asked him to stop interfering with the Guru Ji’s work. He still did not stop. He thought that Aurangzeb was very friendly towards him when he met him in Delhi. This also went fruitless. One thing it did do was that
Aurangzeb wanted to learn more about Guru Har Krishan Ji and sent an invitation for the guru to come to meet with him in Delhi, which Guru Ji did not oblige with, immediately.

Guru Ji encountered great opposition from people who were jealous or afraid that Sikh religion was becoming popular and daring to the rulers of Punjab. Some of the pundits of the time it seemed to be an opportunity to harass the guru by indulging him into debates about religion. They believed that a child guru, no matter how knowledgeable he could be, was no match for them. They got surprise of their life when they put the questions about geeta, a sacred pothi of the Hindus, such as what it means or could he read it and translate it into a common language so even an illiterate could follow it. Guru Ji asked one of the sewadars, who was a care taker of the horses, to tell the pundit what geeta word means. He said to the pundit that it means a soul is immortal and you should never be afraid of dying. There was a mute who could not hear or speak in ambala. The pundit asked the guru to ask him to read the geeta. Guru Ji put his hand on his head and asked him to show the pundit that you can read geeta. This man read geeta to that pundit. The pundit was amazed and believed that Guru Ji was a divine person and not just an ordinary human being. They stopped questioning Guru Ji about the knowledge or any debate but they never stopped from trying to prevent the guru to spread Sikhi.

Guru Ji went to many places, near and far to establish new Sikh centers or just to visit the already established ones. He preached the same philosophy that Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji preached and all the other gurus preached that there is one god who is the creator
and keeper of all. He created all human beings equal with equal rights to choose their faith and occupation. There was no caste in his house and we should never forget his name.

After repeated invitations from Aurangzeb and persuasion from Raja Jai Singh, Guru Ji decided to go to Delhi but never wanted to meet or see Aurangzeb. This was the main reason that Guru Ji did not want to travel to that place. Raja Jai Singh ensured Guru Ji that he would not have to see the emperor while he was in Delhi and the guru could stay at his estate. Raja had made Aurangzeb to promise him that he would not use any force or trickery to see the guru, which he had agreed to. Guru Ji set out to go to Delhi with a few Sikhs. He did not want too many Sikhs to go with him because it will appear that Guru Ji had an intention to start a battle with Aurangzeb. He stopped in many towns to spread the message of Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. It took some time but eventually Guru Ji arrived in Delhi. Raja Jai Singh came out to receive Guru Ji and took him and his sewadars to his estate. Guru Ji stayed there and held morning and evening diwans daily. More and more people started coming to listen to the guru. Guru Ji also kept traveling to the neighboring towns to preach. Guru Ji kept receiving humble requests from Aurangzeb to give him a chance to see the guru but he never changed his mind. Staying in Delhi for a great length of time Guru Ji decided to go back to Kirat Pur where Sikhs were getting anxious to have the guru back in town. There was an epidemic of small pox in that area and Guru Ji was inflicted with this disease. Guru Ji was asked by the sewadars to use his divine powers to heal himself. Guru Ji replied that everyone on this earth had to accept the will of god and always thank him and remember him for what ever he throws our way. The next question
the Sikhs wanted to know was that who was going to take over the guruship after he leaves this earth. The last words Guru Ji uttered were Baba Bakalla, which surely meant that the ninth Guru Nanak was in the town of Baba Bakalla. Guru Har Krishan Ji took his last breath and rejoined the creator.
Siri Guru Har Krishan Ji passed away in sixteen hundred and sixty four at Delhi. He did not name Guru Teg Bahadar Ji as his successor by name, but did not leave any doubt in the minds of his Sikhs that they will find the next guru in Baba Bakalla. The thing they did not know who he was and how difficult it would be to find him. Guru Teg Bahadar Ji lived his life like a recluse. He would not go out of his place too often. Most of the people of the town did not know him and some of them never heard of him. He lived in a house in the outskirts of town with his mother, Mata Nanaki Ji and his wife, Mata Gujri Ji. They had no children.

Upon hearing the news that Siri Guru Har Krishan Ji had passed away and he had not named anyone for the guruship except that the ninth Sikh Guru lives in Baba Bakalla. Many of Guru Ji’s family members and some of the other opportunists started flocking in Baba Bakalla and declaring themselves the next guru. After a while guru’s true Sikhs began to become discouraged and sad. They were feeling like left without a sheppard. The most popular of them all was Dhir Mal. He had many things going for him. First he was the elder brother of Guru Har Rai Ji and second he possessed a bier of Addi Granth. For these two reasons and backing of some masands he had a foot in the door to become the Sikh guru.
Almost a year went by and Sikhs had no one that could call him their guru for sure. About that time there was a trader named Bhai Makhan Shah and he was bringing some goods on a ship. The weather turned stormy and it appeared to Makhan shah that his ship was going to be wrecked by the storm. Being a guru’s Sikh he knelt and prayed that if his ship reached shore he would give five hundred mohars, gold coins, to Guru Ji. His ship came in safe and sound without any loss or damage. The first thing he wanted to do was to go see the guru in Kirat Pur to give what he owed him. To his surprise he was told that the guru was in Baba Bacalla. He set out to go there. When he arrived there he had another surprise. He saw more than twenty people claiming to be the real guru. At first he got very confused and did not know what to do. He was a devout Sikh. He believed without any doubt that the real guru would know who he was and what he was there for. He devised a plan to find the real guru. He started giving each of the men claiming to be the guru one gold piece each. After receiving the gold coin each one would bless him for such generous donation. He gave one mohar to everyone he could find claiming to be the guru but found no one whom he could call the real guru. He became very disheartened. He started going from place to place asking if there was any other holy man in town. Finely he met someone who said that there was a recluse who seldom comes out of his house. He was always meditating. Bhai Makhan shah requested if he could direct him to that place. The man obliged and pointed towards a house in the outskirts of town. Bhai Makhan shah reached that house and knocked at the door. Mata Nanaki Ji opened the door and greeted the visitor. He asked her if he could see Teg Buhadar. She said that she would ask him if
he wanted to see you. He told Mata Ji who he was. Mata Ji went into the room and said that a man named Bhai Makhan Shah Lubana wanted to see him. Guru Ji told her to send him in. When Makhan Shah came in he placed a gold coin and knelt in front of him, Guru Ji said Makhan Shah where was the rest of the coins that you had promised when your ship was about to sink. Bhai Makhan was overjoyed and put five hundred mohars at Guru Ji’s feet and went outside yelling Guru Ladho Ji, Guru Ladho Ji, that he had found the real guru. The Sikhs started flocking at and around Guru Ji’s house. This news traveled through the Sikh centers all over. After one year, without knowing where the real guru was, they had found out for sure that who and where the ninth guru was.

Then guru’s troubles started. The other fakes continued to distract Sikhs from believing that they have found the true guru. One of them was the worst of the lot. His name was Dhir Mal. Being the older brother of Guru Har Rai Ji and in possession of Addi Granth he appeared more genuine than any of the other fakes. He developed animosity towards Siri Guru Teg Buhadar Ji. He went as far as having Guru Ji wounded and robbed of money and other possessions of the guru. The Sikhs traced this to Dhir Mal’s house and retrieved everything that was stolen and then some, including the Addi Granth. Guru Ji made the Sikhs to take all the things back to Dhir Mal that belonged to him, which they did except Addi Granth. They claimed that it did not belong to him but to the Sikhs. Latter on that was given back to him as Guru Ji explained that he had it through the years and he wanted him to keep it. There were too many obstacles that Guru Ji was facing in Baba Bakalla, which were not so conducive for Guru Ji’s mission, which to preach Guru Nanak’s
word. Dhir mal and his group wanted their control over the golakh. There were some
masands who did not like Dhir Mal because they wanted a bigger share and more say in the
affairs of Sikhi. The root of the problem was greed. There were many Sikhs who had
become successful businessmen and giving bigger donations to the guru’s golakh.
Everyone wanted to share a piece of it. Guru Teg Buhadar Ji wanted all of it to be spent to
spread Sikhi and most of it used in Guru Ke langar to feed the hungry who did not have any
source of income to feed themselves or their families. When Guru Ji was unable to spend
all of his time taking care of all phases of his mission in peace, he decided to leave Baba
Bakalla. The Sikhs of that area tried to talk the Guru Ji into staying and Guru Ji had to
convince them that the move was to facilitate and manage the affairs of Sikhi with out any
interference. It was imperative for the good of all Sikhs, even for those Sikhs who were
opposing him.

Guru Ji started towards Amritsar but found out that this place also was not going to
be what he was looking for in his main Sikh center. Masands were in charge of the affairs
and Guru Ji did not want an open struggle amongst the Sikhs. Guru Ji himself was very
humble person and of a very gentle nature. He did not enjoy arguing with anyone.
Always ready to discuss not argue about any problem and settle it in equitable manner
which would be fair for everyone, especially for Sikh mission. Guru Ji decided to go to
Kirat Pur and established the town named Anand Pur Sahib. Soon after, Guru Ji set out to
start his tour of other places. He wanted to spend some time in Malwa area because there
was a need of more Sikh centers manned by experienced and dedicated missionaries who
could handle the duties as organizers and the preachers. While on his tour of Bangar area, he found the need of starting langars in some towns, because there were too many people who were starving. In this endeavor Guru Ji was able to persuade some wealthy Sikhs and non Sikhs who were very happy to share the expenses of those langars. They kept on going from town to town preaching and preparing missionaries to take over when he would leave the area. Guru Ji arrived in Kurkashater and preached there for some time. Then Guru Ji started his tour to the east.

Before going on extensive tours to preach Guru Ji wanted to have a secure place for his family. He also wanted a place that was not so accessible, so he could have time alone to meditate on naam. He had chosen Patna Sahib. On December twenty-second, sixteen sixty six a son was born to Siri Guru Teg Buhadar Ji and Mata Gujri Ji at Patna Sahib. Soon after that Guru Ji started on his tours. Guru Nanak Dev Ji was the only guru who traveled more than Guru Teg Buhadar Ji. Stopping at big and small towns on his way to the eastern part of India he reached Bengal and spread the name of Guru Nanak and asking the wealthy and the powerful to help the poor and the downtrodden. He spent a lot of time in the eastern part of the country.

About the time Guru Ji left for the east, Aurangzeb had made up his mind that he was to make India a Muslim country. He started having meetings with his representatives in different states that how he should go about it. He heard reports from his people that there were many Muslims who believed in coexistence with other people no matter what their faith was. Aurangzeb gave the power to persuade them from helping the non
Muslims, if they did not agree and continued to ignore their order then to give them ultimatum of either accepting or dying. If they did not stop, they should be killed. With Aurangzeb’s cruel method to pave the way for a complete Muslim state had begun. All of the Muslims in favor to coexist with others were eliminated. Around sixteen hundred and sixty nine, Aurangzeb issued his most strict order of his regime, that every non Muslim should be given a choice to accept Islam as his or her religion or be killed. The majority of the population of India was Hindu; the directive ordered the representatives of the states that they should start dismantling the Hindu temples and replace those with mosques. The news was very heart breaking to the guru who was touring Asam at the time. He made up his mind to return to Punjab immediately to be with his people. Punjab was always more progressive, tolerant and prosperous than most other states and Aurangzev’s lieutenants were concentrating more on Punjab. Guru Ji came straight to Anand Pur Sahib and started preparing people for the rough times that were coming and we have to prepare ourselves to face this evil. After staying very short time at Anand Pur Sahib Guru Ji left for Malwa and other places in Punjab, to tell the people that the time to test our faith in god given right to choose our destiny is going to be tested. We have to stand up to those tyrants and proclaim that their swords could not silence or stop us from practicing our faith. He told everyone during his short stays in each town he visited, that everybody had to be willing to make the ultimate sacrifice which was one’s life. He told them that enemy was not going to be satisfied by just killing us outright. He was planning to torture us to death, so be prepared.
The enemy was concentrating on Punjab. Some of the area commanders devised a plan to hasten the task of making everyone a Muslim. They called upon the Kashmiri pundits and told them that they had to accept Islam or die. The reason for this was that if they could convert the pundits to Islam then all the Hindus would follow them. They gave them a few days to decide their own fate. The pundits were sure that they were going to be killed unless they accept Islam as their faith. They could not think of anything that could save them and their faith. When they exhausted all their efforts to find a way to escape this tragedy and could not come up with anything, they went to the Nawab, who was the leader, to ask him to give them six months to think and to consult with their congregations. The Nawab agreed.

The pundits got extension for their fate but they could not come up with anything that would save them from disgrace or death. They were unable to sleep. Day and night the threat of terror was in their minds. They were hopping to find a solution even while sleeping or dreaming. One day one of those pundits thought of Siri Guru Teg Buhadar Ji. He had heard of him as the savior of all faiths. He could not wait to talk to the others about it. Early next morning he gathered all of his fellow pundits and discussed the possibility of going to meet with the guru. He thought that he may be able to advise them to find a way out of the pending tragedy. They were very happy to know that at least gave them hope and they started thanking their fellow pundit who thought of the Guru Ji. They found out that Guru Ji was back in Anand Pur Sahib and his family was also there. They set out to go to Anand Pur Sahib. They approached the guru with their problem and wanted his advice.
Guru Ji enquired about the decision of the Nawab to choose them as the victims. They told the guru the truth. Nawab thought that if they became Muslims then their followers would not have any resistance in converting to Islam, but they themselves knew that they were no martyrs and they told Guru Ji as such. After some thought Guru Ji said to them that someone of high morals and ethics and totally devoted to Waheguru given equal rights for all, should be willing to sacrifice his own life, was the only one who could save you and your faith. The Brahmins were so pleased to hear, that they were going to be saved. They did not take too much time to fall at guru’s feet and said; Guru Ji there was no one who could have those qualifications except you. Please save us, was the cry of those Brahmins.

Gobind Rai, the future tenth and the last Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji in human form, was listening to all of this conversation. He came to Guru Ji, while pundits were still sitting there and said that the pundits were right. He agreed with them that there was no one on earth who could be the savior of religions, other than you. Guru Teg Buhadar Ji was sad because he had to leave Gobind Rai at such a young age with so heavy a responsibility of guruship. He was also very delighted that his son was so wise and ready to take over the duties of a guru. This was the reason that Guru Teg Buhadar Ji had his son not only trained in martial arts and leadership but also a fluent speaker in all the Indian languages including Sanskrit and Persian. Guru Ji told the pundits that they should go back to the Nawab and tell him, that he was their leader and if they could convert him to Islam, and then they would also accept Islam. The pundits left Anand Pur Sahib elated with joy that they had
been saved by the Guru Ji from both evils of shame and death. Guru Teg Buhadar Ji
started making plans for his future and the future of the Sikh faith.

Guru Ji did not stay in Anand Pur Sahib too long because he knew that the enemy
was going to start searching for him very soon. He set out for places including Malwa area
where he had to relay the message of difficult times coming ahead. He wanted to prepare
the sangat for getting ready to become sacrificial lambs to save the sanctity of all religions.
He kept moving from place to place spreading his last message of his life. The enemy was
aware of Guru Ji’s movements but they were afraid of stirring up trouble to start an armed
conflict with the guru. They knew what guru’s Sikhs were capable of doing on the
battlefield. They had faced them in four battles against the Sikhs under the guidance of Siri
Guru Har Gobind Ji. They wanted the public to calm down about the atrocities they had
committed under the orders from the emperor, to change everyone’s religion to Islam.
Guru Ji kept on preaching and traveling for quite a long time, until he decided that it was
time to face the problem head on. The rulers were patiently thinking that they had to covert
only one person to make millions to accept Islam and they had the right person for that and
that person was Guru Ji. There are different stories or sakhiies about how Guru Ji ended up
in Delhi. The most feasible story goes like this that enemy did not want to arrest the Guru
Ji while thousands of Sikhs were either traveling with him or they were waiting in the
towns that Guru Ji was going through. Guru Ji was traveling towards Delhi on his own
accord but he was making stops along the way to prepare Sikhs for the future and to follow
and help Gobind Rai, his son, who was going to be the next guru after his martyrdom and it
was going to be different and the final chapter of the human Sikh gurus. When Guru Ji reached near Delhi he asked every Sikh to stay behind and not follow him. He wanted the enemy to know that he was not afraid of them and also knew that if he allowed the Sikhs to go with him, they would try to fight the enemy, which was not in his plan or in the plan of the creator Waheguru. He allowed three Sikhs named Bhai Mati Das Ji, Bhai Dyal Das Ji and Bhai Sati Das Ji.

The enemy agents were following Guru Ji from the time the Kashmiri pundits presented their proposal, which Guru Ji had devised for them for the Nawab of Surhind. They were waiting for Guru Ji to be alone or with just a few Sikhs with him. Guru Ji gave them that chance. He wanted to go alone but these three Sikhs would not hear of it. They wanted to be killed with him. The enemy agents informed Aurangzeb that guru was very close to Delhi and that he had only three Sikhs with him. Aurangzeb sent many soldiers to arrest the guru and the companion Sikhs making sure that this was not a ploy, thinking that other Sikhs might have been hiding and waiting to attack the royal forces. Under careful watch of the secret agents the soldiers arrested Guru Ji along with three Sikhs and presented them to Aurangzeb.

Aurangzeb presented Guru Ji with two options to save his own life and the lives of his Sikhs. He told the guru to accept Islam and quit preaching about god given equal rights for everyone or show some mystical powers so I would know that you are a divine person. If you refuse to do one of these, then get ready to suffer the consequences of torture and eventual slow death. Guru Ji told the emperor the same thing that he was preaching others
all of his life that everyone had to answer the creator how one treats his creation. Rewards for good deeds on earth would result in good rewards and evil deeds would bring evil rewards. So you make your own choice because you don’t have much time on this earth to make up for your evil deeds. Aurangzeb became furious and ordered the torture of all four of them. After a few days of torture, Aurangzeb asked all four of them if they had reconsidered his offer. Guru Ji gave him the same answer. He wanted the torture to be harsher than before. The orders were carried out. A few days later Aurangzeb asked everyone again if they had thought about changing their minds and wanted to live. He was told by everyone to go ahead and do whatever he had planned. No one was going to change his mind.

Aurangzeb had imagined that it was going to be easy to convert the guru and take credit for his superiority over people. It was hard for him to accept defeat. Some of his advisers asked him to stop; because there was no way that he was going to succeed in breaking the guru or his Sikhs, because they were righteous people and have no fear of death while performing their mission. Aurangzeb did not want to hear any of it. He thought that killing his Sikhs one by one in a manner that would be difficult to watch by the guru. He may change his mind because of them. He ordered that Bhai Mati Das Be tied to two pillars and sawed in two, which was done. All he got out of Mati Das was singing gurbani. Then he ordered that bhai Dyal Das Ji be placed in a large pot filled with boiling water until he died. He heard the same shabad from Bhai Dyal Das. He ordered that Sati Das be wrapped in cotton wetted with kerosene and then lit up with a match. The order
was carried out and the same shabad was heard, tere bhana meetha lagge, naam padarath
nanak mange until the soul left his body. Aurangzeb felt defeated but his cruel nature did
not allow him to admit it. He ordered the guru beheaded and his body to be displayed for
the public to see what Aurangzeb did to people who did not obey him. He left specific
orders that no Sikh should be allowed to come anywhere near or take any part of his body
for Sikh ritual. All this was happening in an open space. Gurdwara Sis Ganj is located
there now. It is said that a Sikh named Bhai Jaitha Ji somehow took Guru Ji’s sis or head
right from under the eyes of the guards and brought it to Anand Pur Sahib, where it was
cremated. A gurdwara Sis Ganj Anand Pur Sahib was built there afterwards. Next day
there was a severe wintry storm and the guards had taken shelter leaving the guru ji’s body
unguarded. A Lubana Sikh named Lakhi Shah was waiting for a chance and the storm
provided him that chance. He took guru ji’s headless body to his hut where he had already
gathered enough wood. He stacked the wood and placed the body on top of it. He placed
more wood to cover the body then set fire to his hut, thus cremating Guru Ji’s remains in
accordance with the Sikh ritual. Today a gurdwara called Rakab Ganj stands there.

Guru Teg Buhadar Ji was training his son for this day since infancy. He was
assured by Gobind Rai that he was ready and capable to handle the affairs of the Sikhs and
proved it to him on the day when the Kashmiri Brahmins came to beg Guru Ji to save them
and the Hindu religion. Gobind Rai became the tenth and the last Sikh Guru in human
form. Siri Guru Teg Buhadar Ji uttered 115 shabads, which Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji
added these shabads to Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji to make the final addition. From this time on one can not or should not try to alter it in any way, shape or form.
Chapter Eleven
Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji (1666-1708)

Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji was born at Patna Sahib on December twenty second, sixteen hundred and sixty six. He was the only child of Siri Guru Teg Buhadar Ji and Mata Gujri Ji. He was a unique child from the beginning. Guru Ji wanted his son to be ready to take over the guruship, which could fall upon him at anytime. He was learning martial arts and the knowledge of many languages at early age. As a child he did not play the games like other children. He practiced mock battles with his friends. He was the leader in sports and martial arts amongst his group. He had done many other things that would bring complaints to Mata Gujri Ji about his son. He would spill the water that some Hindus had brought from river Ganges or Ganga. He would tell them that it was superstitious to think it was sacred water. Patna sahib was one of the Muslim centers at that time and Mata Gujri Ji was always worried that they might try to hurt her son. For this reasons Guru Ji brought his family to Anand Pur sahib in 1672. Guru Gobind Singh Ji continued his education in academics and the martial arts. He also continued to perfecting the techniques and strategies of battle field. Guru Ji was capable of facing and taking charge in any emergencies that could arise at anytime. Guru Teg Buhadar Ji spent most of his time in tours to promote his mission.

When Kashmiri Brahmins came to Anand Pur Sahib to beg him for help, guru to be Gobind Singh Ji proved to his father that he was ready to face anything regarding Sikh
mission and he should do what he wanted to do, which was to sacrifice his life, because there was no one on earth as holy as he was. Guru Teg Buhadar Ji accepted the challenge and started his last tour of his life and preparing the Sikhs far and near about the things to come. After Siri Guru Teg Buhadar Ji’s martyrdom on 11-11-1675 Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji became the tenth Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji and the last guru in human form.

Guru Ji started preaching the Sikhs for the rough times that were going to come where they would have to be prepared to defend themselves. He continued to hold mock battle exercises regularly. He was devoted to gurbani and preached it to sangat twice a day. Like his grand father, Siri Guru Har Gobind Ji, he started recruiting young, strong and courageous Sikhs into his army. The neighboring rajas started feeling uneasy by the guru’s mock battlefield maneuvers and increasing number of Sikhs joining guru’s army. There were also the Muslim Nawabs who were in charge of specific sections of the Islamic kingdom, who had the same feelings as the Hindu Rajas had. They were also becoming jealous of Guru Ji receiving expensive and extensive offerings of gifts from the Sikhs and non Sikhs alike. The popularity of Guru Ji amongst the Sikhs and non Sikhs was making them nervous and afraid. Guru Ji was very popular because he always treated people with respect and dignity. Guru Ji knew that the day was coming near when he would have to fight for the rights of the Sikhs and of others, who could not defend themselves. He not only recruited young and strong Sikhs in his army but he started building some strategic forts for protection and keep watch over the enemy movement.
For many years no one bothered the Sikhs. Guru Ji resided in Ponta Sahib in 1684, where he preached and helped the poor and the downtrodden. Guru Ji did not stay in Ponta Sahib too long before he moved back to Anand Pur Sahib. Auranzeb gave orders that no public singing of religious songs be allowed by non-Muslims. It was also prohibited to beat the drums, the kind that were used by the royal army during emergency and to declare victory over the enemy. Guru Ji did both regularly. Kirtan was performed twice a day every morning and evening. Because of this restriction many of the poets and singers from other parts of the country moved to Anand Pur Sahib. Auranzeb was not paying any attentions to the complaint of some of his Nawabs because he was busy in the south where he was having problems controlling the uprisings against his rule there, he was leading his forces himself in the battle. Guru Ji knew that the time was coming when the mountain rajas along with the Nawab of Sarhind were going to attack the Sikh army.

Enemy spies were tracking Guru Ji’s movements and wanted to attack on most opportune time for them and a surprise for the guru. Guru Ji was in Bhangani area when, without the order or permission from Aurangzeb, Hindu Rajas and some of the Nawabs attacked the Guru Ji’s army. A fierce battle was taking place. There were many casualties on both sides but Sikhs were inflicting the heavy blows on the coalition forces. Guru Ji had over five hundred pathans in his force. For some reason, over four hundred decided to leave the Guru Ji’s force. The reason could be bribery or cowardness. They could have joined the Guru Ji’s forces just for free ride, thinking that they would never have to fight. There was a man named Pir Budhu Shah, a devotee of Guru Ji, the same as his
predecessors were who heard the bad news that Guru Ji was shorthanded because of the
desertion of pathan soldiers. He had over five hundred fight ready followers with him
including his two sons and a son in law. He led his army to join Guru Ji’s forces. The
battle raged for a few days. The enemy was getting the beating of a life time. The fighters
started leaving the battle field to save themselves. The generals and the proud Muslim
fighters were killed by Guru Ji himself and the others by Pir Budhu Shah’s sword. The
battle was won but Pir Budhu shah lost both of his sons and his son in law. Guru Ji stayed
there for a few days with Pir Budhu Shah, thanking him and praising him and sympathizing
with him for the loss of his sons and son in law.

Guru Ji knew that this was not the last he had to fight against the enemy instead it
was the beginning of many of the encounters to follow. Time and time again Guru Ji
showed and proved to the enemy that he does not hold grudge or animosity or a desire for
revenge against anyone. He was against injustice and cruelty levied upon the innocent and
the weak. He would always stand and fight against aggression. To our human instinct we
would interpret that the enemies of the guru were taking advantage of Guru Ji’s generosity
and forgiving nature. The following is an example of this. Guru Ji was not doing anything
for himself, he was creating examples for us to follow and live by those examples.

Mountain rajas were under the control of Delhi government and had to pay taxes.
In 1687 they could not pay the taxes because of the expenses of battle they fought against
the guru’s forces. Their treasury was empty. They requested for extension but the center
refused their request and demanded that they should pay immediately or face the
consequences. The rajas did not know what to do. They knew that they would not be able
to succeed against the royal army and they also knew that they needed help and did not
know where to get it. They became desperate and came to a conclusion that the only
person who could help them was Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, but they also knew that they
cost the guru money and lives of some Sikhs including Pir Budhu Shah’s irreplaceable loss,
two sons and a son in law. They had no other hope. They decided to go to the guru and beg
him for help, which they did. Guru Ji listened to there plea and promised to help them. In
1690 the center gave authority to the governor of Jammu to send his general with
substantial force to defeat the rajas and collect the taxes and expenses. He sent a large
number of soldiers under the command of General Alf Khan. This battle took place at
Nadon and is known as the battle of Nadon. Guru Ji took about five hundred of his soldiers
to help the rajas defeat the royal forces who were unable to match bravery and the strategy
of battlefield of the Sikh warriors. The enemy ran away from the battlefield leaving the
coalition forces victorious. The rajas thanked the Guru Ji and promised not ever to oppose
the Guru Ji in the future. This battle was fought in 1690. The rajas gave credit for the
victory to Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. They admitted that there was no way they could have
survived without the Guru Ji’s help.

The Nawab of Kanggra wanted to take revenge of the defeat at Nadon. He sent his
son with large army to attack Anand Pur Sahib as a surprise attack but Bhai Alam Chand, a
guru’s Sikh, found out about the attack and told the Guru Ji about it. When the mogul
army was about to attack, they found out that Guru Ji’s army was waiting for them. They
retreated without any confrontation. The fojdar of Kangra gave command to General Husan Khan and ordered him to attack the guru. Some of the rajas forgot their promise and participated against the Guru Ji’s forces. Husan Khan and Raja Kator were killed in that battle. There was another attempt made to conquer Anand Pur Sahib but that was also defeated by guru’s soldiers. There were many more attempts made against the Guru Ji but each of those tries failed. There was some quite around Anand Pur Sahib for a little while. Guru Ji took some time to study why some of the problems were occurring in the Sikh organizational process. There was a lot of miscommunication or delays in the messages reaching the Sikh centers away from Anand Pur Sahib. Guru Ji reached to this conclusion that some of the masands had become greedy and rebellious. He dismissed a lot of them and others were punished very severely and Guru Ji sent orders to all Sikh centers that no Sikh obey the masands in any way or form and stop giving them their donations.

Guru Ji was preparing to place his plans for the future of the Sikhs. These plans contained a process by which the Sikhs could go on till eternity and still would not have to change the process. The first part of his plan was to create an elite group of Sikhs that will be solely for the purpose of defending human rights as a birth right. They would be and forever dedicated to justice for all. They will serve without any regard of race, color, caste or religion. This unselfish service, even if it meant to give ones own life to protect the innocent and the weak. This was a tall order but that was what Guru Ji wanted to create. With this in mind, Guru Ji sent his order to all Sikh centers that there was going to be a special and the most important basakhi mela for the Sikh nation. He wanted every Sikh to
be present there. This was the basakhi of 1699 and this became the most important day in Sikh history.

Everyone in the country, Sikhs and non Sikhs, who heard about the guru’s order, was curious and wandering what Guru Ji was going to do or say. Many of the Sikhs and non Sikhs used to attend the celebration of basakhi at Anand Pur Sahib each year.

In the year 1699, because of guru’s personal order to all the Sikhs to be there, there were more than twice the people than any previous basakhi celebration according to the Muslim historians of the time. Guru Ji had a small tent put up next to the main stage where Guru Ji used to sit and preach; the overflowing crowd had settled down and were anxiously waiting for the Guru Ji to appear on the stage. Finely Guru Ji appeared on the stage with naked sword in his hand. To see this, a total silence fell upon the crowd. Guru Ji asked if there was anyone who would give his head to his guru. For a few seconds terror fell upon the people present. Many started walking out. Then a Sikh named Daya Ram from Lahore stood up and said that he was ready to give his head to the guru unconditionally. Guru took him into the tent. People heard a noise like a thud coming from the tent. Then Guru Ji appeared in front of the gathering again with blood dripping from the sword and made the same request that if there was another Sikh who was ready to offer his head to the guru. A Sikh named Dharm Chand of Delhi rose and offered his head. Guru Ji took him to the tent and came back with the same demand, a need for another head. He repeated the same process three more times. The third Sikh to offer his head was Himmat Rai of Jagan Nath in Gujrat, the fourth Sikh to do the same was named Mohkam Chand of Dwarka and the
fifth Sikh to do this was Sahib Chand of Andhra. What ever the crowd that was still there, was waiting for the Guru Ji to come out and ask for another head but Guru Ji did not come out for a while. Eventually Guru Ji came out with the company of those five Sikhs, dressed in similar clothing. The people that were still there and who thought that their brethren were dead were shocked but very happy to see them alive.

Guru Ji had those five Sikhs sit on the stage and started preparing amrit in a steel bowl with water and sugar cakes. Guru Ji was stirring the contents of the bowl with a khanda, a double edged sword, and reciting gurbani. Guru Ji performed the ritual of khande di pauhl and called each of them Singh. He gave them the title of punj piaras. Afterwards Guru Ji asked those five piaras to give him khande di pauhl. This was the only time in history that a guru had asked his disciples to baptize him. Thus the ritual to become an amritdhari started. In Guru Ji’s time all the Sikh warriors became amritdharis. The prerequisite was to make a pledge under oath that his or her life belongs to Guru Ji, which meant that their first and utmost important duty was and is sewa of the needy without any regard to who they are but need help. The other criterion to live one’s life on this planet was the same as for other Sikhs, a righteous life. Every ordinary human being or even every Sikh could not live the life of an amritdhari then or ever. That’s why Guru Ji performed this ritual in front of everyone.

The Sikhs who fought under Siri Guru Har Gobind Ji and the one’s who had fought many battles prior to the basakhi of 1699, were just as brave as the Sikh warriors post 1699. The difference was that no Sikh was tested like Guru Ji tested on that day. Not only the
one’s who gave their heads to show the Guru Ji and the world that their commitment was total. It became unquestionably clear to the Sikh world that to join the elite Sikh group called Khalsa, one had to be totally dedicated to sewa and service.

From 1699 to 1704 Guru Ji fought many battles. These were fought around Anand Pur Sahib and these were all won by the Guru Ji’s army. There was no battle that Guru Ji fought that was initiated by the Sikhs. The mountain rajas alone or nawabs and rajas together were the culprits to start every one of those battles and got defeated by the superior soldiers of Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji’s army. Guru Ji’s enemies were getting afraid and frustrated by power and popularity of Guru Ji. They wanted Guru Ji to move out of Anand Garh. After loosing four battles they called upon the Delhi government and consulted the top battle strategists and asked them to develop a battle plan for them, so they could get Guru Ji out of Anand Garh. Under their guidance they blockaded the area surrounding Anand Pur Sahib. They cut off all the supply routs leading to the fort and no one could come in or go out. During those days, trained elephants were used to break down the fort gates. They tried that but a gursikh named Bachitter Singh went out side the fort and put a nagany, a weapon with couple feet of serrated top end joined to a longer metal pipe which tears going in and tears coming out, through the steel plates tied to the elephants forehead into his brain. The elephant turned around and trampled lot of the enemy soldiers. There were many promises made and then broken but Guru Ji’s forces came on top each time.
The supplies inside the fort were dwindling and the Sikhs were getting weary. A group of them wanted to leave and Guru Ji let them go, but only on one condition. He asked them to write down on a piece of paper that he was not their guru and they were not his Sikhs. Their leader Bhai Mahan Singh wrote the letter, signed it and gave it to the guru. During the dark of the night these Sikhs escaped the enemy and headed home. On arriving home they had a surprise waiting for them. Their wives and other towns’ women were cursing them for leaving Guru Ji when they were needed the most by him. They told them to sit home to cook and take care of the children and they would go to help Guru Ji to fight the enemy. The men became very ashamed for what they had done and wished they had not left. They turned around and started back. Mata Bhago Ji led a group of women who wanted to go and fight the enemy. Along the way they heard that Guru Ji had left the fort and did not know where Guru Ji and the remainder of the Sikh soldiers were. They waited to get some kind of news of the Guru Ji’s where about.

The Sikhs practically ordered the Guru Ji to leave the Anand Gharh fort. The news reached the enemy camp and their forces started tracking the Guru Ji’s soldiers. By the time Guru Ji reached Chamkor Sahib. Mata Gujri Ji and the younger sahibzades, Fateh Singh and Zorawar Singh along with Gangoo Pundit, were separated from Guru Ji. They ended up in Gangoo’s town Kheri. Gangoo stole the money that Mata Ji had with her. When Mata Ji asked him where the money went, he became angry. Mata Ji tried to tell him that money was not important but saving her grandchildren was. Saving Guru Ji’s two younger sons was the priority for Mata Ji. Greed had taken over Gangoo. He reported
them to the Nawab of Sarhind and collected prize for betraying Mata Ji, where he was employed as a cook for twenty two years. The Nawab tried to convert the sahibzadas to Islam but guru’s children of seven and nine years of age would not have any of it. He did his best but failed. He tried the bribe, threats and anything else he and his allies could think of, but to no avail; Mata Ji had instilled the spirit of the Guru Ji into both of the sahibzadas. They were told never to be afraid of any one by Mata Gujri Ji. When Wazir Khan’s bribery plan and the threats did not work, he became very angry. He wanted to end their lives. Some of his advisors were telling him that the sahibzades were just children. He should stop torturing them. He would not hear of it. He planned to make them suffer as much as he could through torture. He decided to brick them in a wall. Some of the masons refused but with the threat of death they agreed. Both were made to stand and a brick wall started to be constructed around them. Every so often Wazir Khan would ask the sahibzadas if they wanted to be spared and accept Islam. They would shout back no and kept reciting gurbani. When the wall reached above the shoulders of the younger sahibzada Wazir Khan asked them the last time if they wanted to accept his proposal. He received the same reply, no. He ordered the sahibzadas to be beheaded and it was done. Upon hearing the news of her grandchildren’s murder Mata Ji let go of her life also.

Guru Ji and the remaining Sikhs were fighting out of Chamkor Sahib Fort. They were going out one by one to achieve martyrdom after killing many of the enemy soldiers. When the elder sahibzada Baba Ajit Singh saw all of this, that the Sikhs were being slaughtered by the enemy that was in the thousands in comparison to a handful of Sikhs he
asked Guru Ji to let him go to the battlefield and fight the enemy. Guru Ji tried to
discourage him because he was only thirteen years old, but he was very strong and expert
in martial arts and would not take no for an answer. Guru Ji gave him permission with his
blessings and said the last good bye to his son. He fought the enemy like no one else could.
He killed lots of the enemy soldiers, but eventually he got surrounded by many soldiers and
gave his life fighting for the honor of Sikhi. Upon watching his older brother achieve
martyrdom, sahibzada Baba Jhujar Singh came forward and requested to go into the
battlefield and fight the enemy. Guru Ji tried to persuade him also, because he was only
eleven years old. He was also very strong and expert in martial arts. Guru Ji gave him
permission with his blessings to go and fight and said the last goodbye to his second son
also. The news of the younger sahibzadas and Mata Ji had not reached Guru Ji yet. The
remaining few Sikhs asked Guru Ji to leave the fort but Guru Ji refused to leave them. The
Sikhs begged him for the sake of Sikhi and to complete his mission before parting from this
world. Eventually they made Guru Ji to leave. Two of the five piaras left with him. The
fort was surrounded from all sides by the enemy. There were two Musalman named Navi
Khan and Gani Khan who helped Guru Ji’s escape. They presented him as their high
priest, Uchh Da Pir. And walked out of the over crowded lines of the enemy.

Guru Ji kept ahead of the pursuit of the enemy forces and kept on informing village
Sikhs through which he was passing, to unite and not to give up hope. He kept his journey
through the rugged passage of the forest called the jungle of Machiwara. Guru Ji headed
towards Mukatsar, stopping and preaching along the way. During this travel Guru Ji
received the news of the fate of Mata Ji and the younger sahizadas. The last battle of Guru Ji was fought at Mukhtsar. Many of the Sikhs had joined Guru Ji in fighting this battle. The fighting was fierce and the Sikhs were outnumbered by hundreds to one as usual but inflicted the casualties by the same ratio in reverse. After the battle was over, Guru Ji went to see if any of the fighters were alive. It did not matter whether they were Sikhs or the enemy soldiers, but Guru Ji was not finding any who was still breathing. Two of the five piaras were gone too. When Guru Ji was about to leave in sadness he heard a moaning sound calling Guru Ji. When he turned around the wounded body he saw was that of the leader of the Sikhs who left the Guru Ji in Anand Garh by giving the Guru Ji a written note disclaiming any ties to the guru. Guru Ji got his handkerchief out of his pocket and wiped the Sikh’s face. The Sikh named Mahan Singh begged guru’s pardon for leaving him and asked forgiveness for all of them. Every one of them gave their lives in that battle. Guru Ji asked him if he could do anything for him. Bhai Mahan Singh asked Guru Ji if he had the paper that he gave him at the time of leaving Guru Ji denouncing any ties between them. Guru Ji got the paper called wadawa out of his pocket and asked him if that was the one he meant. He begged Guru Ji that his last request was to please tear that paper. Guru Ji tore the paper and the Sikh took his last breath with a smiling face. From there Guru Ji started toward Nader making stops along the way encouraging and preaching Sikhi to the throngs that came to see the Guru Ji while he was passing through their town. Eventually Guru Ji reached Nader and stayed there till leaving this earth.
When Guru Arjan Dev Ji compiled Addi Granth, it was his intention that no one other than the Sikh guru can add any bani to this. Four gurus after Guru Arjan Dev Ji did not add any bani in Adi Granth. Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji added Siri Guru Teg Buhadar Ji’s bani and completed the Sikh scriptures forever. Guru Ji did not add any of his own bani. Why? No human can tell us that. Only Guru Ji knew what the reason was. He did what he wanted to do. We can not and we should not ever question the Guru Ji’s intentions and just take it as he ordered us to do.

During that time a bairagi named Madho Das moved to an area near Nader. He was the son of a prominent Rajput. He was well educated and physically strong person. He was taught martial arts by his father. Madho Das was very kind hearted. He never wanted to hurt anyone. He was looking for a teacher who could put him on the right path of righteousness. He traveled far and near but did not find what he was looking for. Finely he met a bairagi and decided to become his disciple. He still did not feel fulfilled. He was still yearning for learning to achieve peace of mind. After going from place to place and meeting some of the holymen. No one was able to give him what he wanted. Finely he decided to settle by himself and try to find his answer. He meditated a lot. He developed a habit of playing magical tricks on people who would come to see him. His place was not too far from Nader. One day Guru Ji was traveling by his place and decided to visit him. He welcomed Guru Ji and then tried to play tricks on him but none of his tricks worked. He was surprised and became ashamed when he learned that Guru Ji knew so much about him that he thought no one else knew about him. He knew he did not tell anyone. He
started begging Guru Ji for forgiveness and asked him to make him his Banda. Guru Ji accepted his wish and made him an amritdhari. From that day he became known as Banda Singh and most of the time as Banda Buhadar. Because he was very brave and strong, he wanted to do something special. He wanted to go to Punjab and fight against the enemies of the guru. Guru Ji was telling him about patience and forgiveness. He still wanted permission to go to Punjab as guru’s representative. Eventually Guru Ji gave him permission to go as in charge of the Sikh affairs in Punjab. Guru Ji sent letters to that effect to the sangat of Punjab.

When Banda Singh arrived in Punjab the rajas and the regional Nawabs did not like it. For couple of years they did not feel any threat from Guru Ji to oppose their crooked ways. They started harassing the Sikhs with aim at Banda Singh. He organized the Sikhs and started killing the ones who had done harm to Mata Guri Ji, younger sahibzadas and the culprits of battle of Chamkor Sahib. He practically killed everyone who had a hand in atrocities against Guru Ji and the Sikhs. Delhi government got so scared. They started planning to stop Banda Singh Buhadar. If they did not stop him, Banda Singh was going to push them out of the country. They made the biggest and well prepared plan to go all out after Banda Singh. They carefully went after him and his fighters. Eventually they captured him and killed him with some of his Sikh soldiers. This took place around 1710, couple years after Guru Ji had left this world.

Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji was preparing for the future of the Sikhs. He wanted them to be organized and well advanced in their chosen professions. He wanted to set up a
system where people would not have to be complacent regarding the Sikh religion. He knew that his time on earth was short and task of wrapping everything was a big load. Guru Ji had to tell the Sikhs who his successor was going to be. In the mean time jealous Muslim rulers could not stand the resurgence of the Sikhs even after all the struggle that they went through, trying to complete the genocide of the Sikhs. They were amazed by the insurgency of the Sikhs so soon after loosing so many Sikh soldiers in so many battles. They wanted Guru Ji killed. They hired two brothers who were pathans. They acted as Guru Ji’s admirers and went to Guru Ji’s quarters unnoticed. One of them stabbed Guru Ji. This attack turned out to be a fatal blow. The Sikhs killed both of them before they could get away. This incident happened after the evening diwan of October forth, seventeen hundred and eight. The next day Guru Ji asked the Sikhs to gather in Nader. All the Sikhs from the neighboring towns came to see Guru Ji. He told them that the end of human Sikh gurus had come to close upon his passing. After he is gone, Adi Granth will be Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Every Sikh on this planet should not accept any human as his or her guru. Nothing else should be considered a Sikh scripture or take an equal seat to Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji will be the only Sikh guru till eternity. This was the last hukamnama that Siri Gobind Singh Ji issued to all the Sikhs of that time and the times to come for ever. Guru Ji passed away on October seventh, seventeen hundred and eight. Like the other gurus before him Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji left us in the most capable hands. This is the guru who preached the word for two hundred and thirty-nine years on this earth and will keep on preaching till eternity. Guru Ji left it to us how well we
understand the guru’s order and the orders with advice of the eternal Guru Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji did not enter any gurbani of his own into Siri Guru Granth Sahib. We don’t even know for sure that Guru Ji uttered any bani at all, because there is no bani that would tell us that this is his bani as was done by the gurus who uttered gurbani. When we recite jap sahib or swayye or akal usted, it gives us the feeling and impression of gurbani, but we can not be sure. The only thing we have to go by is Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji’s word. He ordered us that we should not go outside of Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. No one and nothing else can be equal and we should not try to make anything equal to Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. If we do then we are not obeying Guru Ji. All of the rahetnamas and other literature that our preachers try to convince us with were written thirty to fifty years after Guru Ji had left this earth. All of these rahetnamas were written by poets and not by our Guru Ji. Some day all of us, who think that we are Sikhs, we have to come to our guru given senses and start obeying and practicing what Guru Ji has ordered us to do, which is to believe and follow the word of Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji only and nothing and nobody else.
Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (1708-eternity)

Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji ordained Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as our eternal guru and ordered us that we should never seek an other guru till eternity. Why Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji ended the guruship in human form? Why one of the other gurus did not do this? No human being can answer these questions. We as Sikhs and for that matter every human being on this earth should know that gurus were divine powers. They came to this earth with a mission and they completed it. All we are to do is to accept it and follow it as told by our gurus. To grasp the message of the guru we have to understand the message. The best path to understanding it is to be able to read it ourselves, because many times the message looses all or part of the truth through interpretation of someone else. It is not that difficult to read Punjabi because we speak it all the time. Today we can get one translated into many of the world languages and almost have no excuse not to read it ourselves. Next best thing to reading it ourselves is to hear it from someone who is not trying to convince us that he knows what no one else knows about the guru’s message but tell us fables. The Sikh religion was never meant to have priests only care takers.

What is Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji?

Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is a unique, incomparable and unmatched Sikh scripture that no other religion has. The prophets of all other religions were able to preach their message only for a few years and their message was not written by them. All other
religious scriptures (other than Sikh religion) were written by some one else other than
their prophet. In some religions, centuries after prophet had left this world. Some have
been changed many times. Sikh scripture, Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, is the only scripture
uttered and written by the guru who was speaking the bani. This is the only religion that
was guided by the gurus for two hundred and thirty nine years on this earth and there is no
other example that can come even close to this.

The spirit of Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji traveled through nine more gurus and now
resides in Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Guru Nanak Dev Ji collected bhagat bani during his
travels. These were those bhagats who preached equality of mankind under one god.

Today when we bow or pray to our guru we are doing it in front of the guru where the spirit
of our gurus and bhagats reside as one. This is the reason that Sikh guru is and always will
be a universal guru. One of the Christian scholars of comparative study of world religions,
Sir Bernard Russel, writes in his report that if the world would want to prepare a universal
scriptures, one does not have to go too far, because it already exists and it is Siri Guru
Granth Sahib Ji. We the so called Sikhs have come to grips that we are so lucky to have
this as our guru and we should start following it with our mind and soul.

Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji teaches us the same principals that gurus taught us during
their time on earth. The only difference is that we don’t have to walk miles and miles to
find the Guru Ji to ask him a question. We have him in our homes or in our gurdwaras and
we can consult him anytime we are in need of his advice, which should be all the time.

Gurbani was written under different circumstances to preach different kind of people
because their problems, questions and the faith were different. Guru Ji had to teach them
the universality of god and had to explain to them according to their beliefs what god really
is. When Guru Nanak Dev Ji went to Mecca he had to show them in their way that god is
everywhere and not confined to one place or one direction. When Guru Ji met sadhs or
jogis or sidhs or bairagis or brahmins or thieves or any one else from different cults, Guru
Ji had to explain to them in a way that they could understand. They wrote down the same
message in their bani so the world, particularly us the Sikhs, could learn from it. The
situations under which the advice was given, some preachers knowingly mislead and
confuse us, so they would seem well versed and knowledgeable, more than they really are.

Guru Ji never, in human form or in scriptures, said to anyone that he or she as a
person was bad. Only our individual deeds make us good or bad in the eyes of our guru
and only he knows this. Guru Ji never said to anyone that he was not his or her guru. From
this, we should be able to understand that no human has the right to tell someone else that
he or she is not a Sikh. One can be a good Sikh or bad Sikh and Guru Ji is the only one
who knows for sure. According to the guru, the one who judges others without looking
inside one’s own heart cannot be a good person and this is interchangeable, as from good to
bad and bad to good, depending upon the individual’s own deeds.

Guru Ji tells us that it is our deeds and not our garbs that determine the kind of
persons we are in the guru’s eyes. Fake rituals and fables are prohibited. Guru Ji reminds
us that he knows what is in our hearts without saying it out loud. He says that, who are you
praying to in loud voice? He knows what’s in our mind without us saying it. Guru Ji tells
us that it is not how much gurbani we read or listen to; it is what we do after reading it or listening to it. To understand what Guru Ji is saying we have to read or listen to the whole shabad and not one verse. Most preachers read their chosen verse to impress us and we don’t know it that it was taken out of context, we stay quite even when we know that it was wrong, while Guru Ji intended it to be the opposite what they are telling us. If the preachers really want to preach guru’s shabad, they should never misguide the sangat knowingly because the guru forbids making fools of the sangat.

Each verse is a tested advice (example) for us. Guru Ji had spoken this to set someone straight and it will always teach us to keep straight. The reason for repeating the same kind of advice is that there were too many situations that were different but needed the similar advice. Guru Ji teaches us that gurbani is not a magic but an instruction to follow. Many people object to the word instruction but have no basis to think it otherwise.

In short Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is our living guru because it has the same advice that Guru Ji gave us during the two hundred and thirty nine years. No side of humanity was left out. These are the only scriptures that give us the instructions for how to keep body, mind and spirit in tip top shape. It tells us how to avoid all sorts of troubles that we get into. It tells us that gurbani is not a magic. It instructs us against fake rituals, such as to start touching the door mats with our foreheads or doing the same thing time and time again till reaching to the front of the Guru Ji. Some people go around the seat where Guru Granth Sahib Ji is present and start wiping the sides with their hands and touching the foreheads with them, then touching the platform behind the granthi’s rear, then coming
back to the front and kneeling again. This is called manmat. Having more than one path is also called manmat. Doing kirtan, during the path, whether, akhand path or sahej path, is manmat. Putting water, coconut, lighting jotes or any of the many other fake rituals are manmat. Guru Ji freed us from fake rituals and we should not fall back into them again.

Guru Ji tells us that we should preach only what we do ourselves. We should never judge others. Any deed that seems bad to our conscious, it is bad. We should not do such a deed. We can hide from fellow beings but we can never hide from our Guru Ji. Guru Ji is telling us that to live honorably we have to feel ashamed for doing bad deeds of any kind and learn a lesson and refrain from repeating it again, and consciously avoid doing bad deeds ever.

Everyone with average intelligence knows what bad deeds are.
Chapter Thirteen

What is the Sikh Religion?

When we speak or talk about Sikh religion, it is synonymous with when we say Guru Nanak Dev Ji given universal religion. Anyone, a Sikh or a non Sikh who learns about the history of the Sikh gurus and concludes it with reading and understanding the Sikh scriptures Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji with open and analytical mind will come to the same conclusion that we Sikhs come to. This is like the phrase, what you see what you get, which means, it has no secrets. Sikh religion is what ten gurus preached for two hundred and thirty nine years on this earth. Everyone, who studies Sikh religion comes to the same conclusion, if there is any religion that can be called a universal religion, it is Sikh religion. Each verse is an instruction for every human being living on the planet earth. It is not just for the Sikhs. Sikh religion is the newest, practical, aimed at the entire human race and a common sense religion. No one can find any other religion in the world that can compare with our own Sikh religion. One would truly know that Sikh religion is a universal religion if one tries to learn about Sikhism with an open mind.

When Guru Nanak Dev Ji came to this earth there was so much corruption in this world that the rulers of the time were like wolf guarding the chicken coup. The religious leaders, such as pundits and qazis, were like the fence eating the crops. The rulers were looting the public by force and the religious leaders were robbing them by creating superstitions and curses, Guru Nanak Dev Ji preached to Hindus and Muslims alike. He
did not set different rules for Hindus than for the Muslims. No other religion teaches this philosophy of equality of religions like gurus did. During all of his travels Guru Nanak Dev Ji preached about equality of mankind. There is one god who created everything including us the human beings. By birthright, there is no one superior or inferior to anyone else. He taught the world through setting practical examples. He proved to the pundits at Hardwar that throwing water toward the sun is not going to reach the next world. He had them say it that it only goes a few feet in the air before it falls back into the river. He showed to the qazis that god does not live at only one place or in one direction, he is everywhere and in every direction. In fact he is in all of us.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji wrote the constitution of the world. It has everything spelled out for us and we can find it in Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji whatever and whenever we want to know. It applies to every person on earth equally. No other religion has this in its teachings. Guru Nanak Dev Ji not only preached but he set up models for each situation. Guru Ji set up the free kitchen system to feed the hungry and told the rich and the affluent to donate for such services to help the poor. Guru Ji was the first one who preached the three phases of health have to be in synch for a person to be healthy, which are body, mind and spirit. To day it is taught in medical schools all over the world. Getting up before sunrise, taking bath the first thing in the morning and remembering god before setting up to do the daily chores. All these activities contribute to happy, healthy life.
Every Sikh, for that matter every human being on earth can benefit by following the teachings of Sikh religion which are ingrained in our eternal Guru Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Guru Ji established three main rules of Sikhi, which we as Sikhs call, the golden rules of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. As we can see these rules would make life a happy one, whether we are Sikhs or non Sikhs. These rules also appeal to our common sense. These are, a: to remember Waheguru or creator at all times; b. we should earn our living through honest means; c. we should set aside and donate a part of it for the care of the needy or the ones who are less fortunate than we are. No one can deny the universality of these rules to live our lives by.

Sikh religion teaches us that we should live a simple and clean life. This can keep us from competing to gather all the worldly material things for us alone and trying to prevent everyone else from having any of it, if we can help it. This kind of greed leads to quarrels amongst the families, and fights in the community and the battles between the states. This also reminds us that we came to this world with nothing and we will leave this earth with nothing.

Guru Ji preached against superstition because this gives the corrupt people such as the preachers of all religions to create or devise methods to abstract material things from unsuspecting victims. This is and was done before Guru Nanak Dev Ji came to this earth by convincing their congregations the curses are the root of all evil things that happen to people and they are the only ones who knew the manter or magic to erase the curse. No one else could perform the needed pooja except them. It always cost the victim either
money or some other material things. These donations were used by these perpetrators to fulfill their own needs. A Sikh does not believe in such superstitions or curses.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji preached against using any drugs and smoking tobacco. He told the public that no one needs drugs to make them feel happy because these effects would wear out and the person would feel worse and the desire to have more drug put in his system. Eventually these drugs would ruin one’s health and bring all kinds of misery in his life. This advice was given during the last half of the fifteenth century by Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. It was not till the later part of the twentieth century or almost five hundred years after Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji told the world that intoxicating drugs such as alcohol and tobacco would harm the human body in more ways than one. Now we know it from research that more harm comes to ourselves, to our families and to our society from the use of alcohol. More family fights, more divorces, more car accidents and more traffic deaths are attributed to alcohol and this is more than the use of all other drugs combined.

Use of tobacco creates more health problems than any other single cause. This also took medicine five hundred years to learn the dangers of tobacco use since Guru Nanak Dev Ji had told the public to refrain from the use of tobacco. This became apparent when a ten year study done at various medical schools, including the one which belongs to a Christian denomination that prohibits the use of drugs such as alcohol and tobacco. In 1961 the findings of this research was published and became available to the general public. It established without any doubt that tobacco use was and is like playing roulette with a loaded gun. Its primary effect was on the lungs, because breathing is the function of
the lungs and every organ needs oxygen to survive, so it has bad effects on every organ in
the body. From bronchitis to lung cancer and every disease in between of the respiratory
system to heart diseases such as high blood pressure and heart failure to strokes and other
circulatory diseases. More people end up in the hospital with lung related diseases caused
by the use of tobacco than any other substance and it costs almost as much as alcohol
related problems. Guru Nanak Dev Ji told the world five hundred years before this and told
us, as his followers not to use tobacco in any shape or form

Guru Nanak Dev Ji, at the start of the Sikh religion, was the first to declare that
women were at least equal to men if not superior to men because they are the ones who
contribute more in shaping up the lives of future generations. In Sikhism the women
always had equal rights in a democratic society. As we know, the American women had no
voting right till 1921. There are many countries where women still don’t have any right as
to equality of both sexes regarding human rights. It was the sixth Sikh Guru Siri Guru Har
Gobind Ji who established the separation of state and the church by building a separate
place to conduct the civil or community matters from the religious ones, he named this Siri
Akal Takhat Sahib. This was almost two hundred years before any country in the world
declared the separation of church and state and that country is the United States of
America.

Another first of many was the start of Red Cross but it was not called as such.
During the seventeenth century, when Guru Gobind Ji’s Sikh warriors were fighting the
cruel rulers of the time, there was a man named Bhai Ghanya Ji. He was not a Sikh soldier
but he had the duty to give water to the wounded Sikh soldiers, because many of them were
dying from dehydration. He started giving water to the wounded enemy soldiers also. One
of the Sikh soldiers complained to the Guru Ji, that Bhai Ghanya was giving water to
enemy soldiers and some of them were getting up to fight against us. Guru summoned
Bhai Ghanya Ji to appear before him. When he came to the Guru Ji, he was asked why he
was giving water to the wounded enemy soldiers. Didn’t you know that those are our
enemies? Who was he that told him to do this? He said to the Guru Ji humbly, Guru Ji it
was you who ordered me to do this. You always say that no human being is our enemy
only their deeds are our enemy. All the wounded soldiers look the same to me when I look
at them and think what you have always said. Guru asked him to take extra ointments and
dressings and asked him to continue to his humanitarian work and admired him in front of
other Sikhs for his true humanitarian work. This is the first true predecessor to the modern
Red Cross.

    Judicial system: the Sikh religion tells us how to solve disputes in a civilized
manner. Guru Ji points out that the disputing parties should sit down together and discuss
the problem at hand by discussing it and not debating it. Find out the reason causing the
dispute and it should be easy to find a solution fair to both sides. Almost three hundred
years ago the tenth Guru Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji established a jury system. Any dispute
that could not be resolved in a peaceful manner that is acceptable to the disputing parties,
he devised a jury system to settle such cases and their verdict should be enforceable. When
a situation reaches to an impasse and no solution that is acceptable to both parties is
imminent, then a jury should be selected. The method by which it should be done, according to Sikh religion is, that five impartial god fearing people should be selected. No one should be a clannish or bias oriented person. These five people should hear the case intently from both sides. Then deliver in an unbiased opinion, to reach the fact based decision binding for both sides. This method was established three hundred years ago

Since President Kennedy established a separate physical fitness agenda to promote health under the health department, we have had a mushrooming of exercise programs and equipment that costs from hundred dollars to thousands of dollars for buying exercise equipment or for joining health clubs. Sikh religion has always recommended hard work and physical exercises beginning at early age. Almost every Sikh male child starts physical exercises at very early age. The exercises available to them were push ups and squats. Most of them would get up between three and four in the morning and finish with their physical exercises before going to school or to work. In modern times we do not believe in simple things, some of which are free or cost very little, so we go for expensive gadgets so these could do it for us as little or no effort on our part. In my personal opinion and experience, no machine can do any better than squats and push ups as means for physical exercises and it saves money and time. There were and are physical games as learning to defend one’s self and these are of various types according to one’s own interest. Sikhs in general try to be physically as fit as he or she can be.

As we all know that diet is the most important part along with exercise to become healthy and stay healthy. Sikh gurus recommended healthy, nutritious and fresh foods. In
olden times every body ate fresh vegetables and fruits because no means for preserving food were available. Depending upon where one was living and what culture and customs those people believed in. Each culture and religions have their own beliefs for eating or not eating certain foods. Muslims don’t eat pork and Hindus don’t eat beef. The Catholics don’t eat meat on Fridays but they do eat fish on Fridays, may be they believe that fish is not meat. Some people choose not eat certain foods on certain days of the week, like one kind of beans or they have taken an oath at some holy place while on pilgrimage, not to eat a particular kind of food for the rest of their lives. They feel that doing such thing will cleanse their soul. The Sikh religion forbids such superstitions but whole heartedly try to eat healthy and fresh fruits and vegetables. Fifty or so years ago we did not use commercial fertilizers or sprays in Punjab, so the foods that we ate were chemical free. Most Sikh women and lots of Sikh men do not eat meat or eggs. Most Sikhs believe that we should not eat meat at all and that belief comes from reading Sikh scriptures. To day many scientists in the health field are trying to find the best food to keep us healthy but they are confusing the public more than ever and don’t know who to believe. We as Sikhs always have a better way to choose what we eat. A few of the Sikhs, who do eat meat, don’t eat it every day. Why? There are many diseases that are caused with eating meat. We refrain from eating five or six times a day. If food is taken two or three times a day, the digestive system gets more time to properly process the food and less chance to create or cause disease. Rule of thumb for the quality and quantity of eating food should not cause pain or discomfort.
In summary the Sikh religion contains more than just to believe in god. Sikh religion had put forth so many principles with examples for the future of mankind. We have talked about some of them that our gurus started teaching us centuries ago that are being followed now by everyone to make life better, like red cross of today, the equal rights for everyone and voting rights and equality for women plus many more. Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji gave this world a simple, easy to follow practical, universal and common sense religion to create fellowship among men and give us individual peace of mind. He preached the solution to live happy and peaceful life on this planet. To achieve this, we have to control five vikars or five demons or five dragons or what ever else we want to call these, which are lust, anger, greed, attachment to material things and ego free mind. He teaches us and will keep on teaching us, through our eternal guru until eternity that believing in god and remembering him always will give us the control of these five vikars and our souls will achieve peace.
Chapter Fourteen

Sikhi at Sikh Centers vs. Sikhi at Homes (1469-1708)

The Sikh religion was born with the birth of Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. India was ruled by the mogul empire. Before the start of this rule there were no Muslims in India except a very few converts during the time of previous invaders who would invade, loot and go back. The mogul invaders came and set up there rule in India. Some of the rulers were not so cruel to non Muslims, like the emperor Akbar and others were very cruel and converted Hindus by force like Emperor Aurangzeb. Whether one rule was worse to the non Muslims or not, they all wanted to see everyone in India to accept the Islam faith. Of course there were no Sikhs in India either before Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s coming to this earth as the first Sikh guru and the founder of Sikh religion. The first real Sikh was Bibi Nanki Ji, the five year older sister of Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Maybe not written in the history of the Sikhs, but apparently the deeds show it as such. She was always treating Guru Ji as a special child. She would tell her parents that her brother was not an ordinary child. If their father got mad at her brother, which he did many times, because Guru Ji was doing things that were not expected of him, Bibi Nanaki would always plead with him for not to get mad at his brother because her brother was a gift from heaven for us all. As Guru Ji was growing and showing no signs of acting like other children of his age. He was always preaching to his age group or even adults who would like to listen about god. The next most obvious Guru’s Sikh was
his teacher the pundit, the qazi, Rai Bullar, a man in charge of that area and the farmer who saw his crops damaged by Kalu Ji’s cattle and then no damage was seen by anyone. They all realized that guru was a man of god. Many people started living their life according to the preaching’s of Guru Ji. During his travels or tours more and more Hindus and Muslims started converting. Guru Ji did not ask them to become his Sikhs, he only preached that all of us are created by one and the same god, the creator of everything and we should pray to him only and no one else. When he would leave one town, where he preached for a short time and go to the next town, there were always one or more Sikhs who would become well prepared for spreading the guru’s word and teach others guru’s bani. This started the system of Sikh centers. Guru Ji preached equality of men and women but the brahmanmat and the established culture of that time did not give women any rights in man’s society. They were not allowed to participate in religious or social functions. For these reasons most of the Sikhs were men. The only places where some women were participating was the kitchen. Throughout the guru history this concept held true except in the Sikh centers.

Each Guru Ji after Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji kept the tradition of preaching and establishing more Sikh centers far and near. As we know the message was the same throughout the period of human Sikh Gurus. There was always resistance to the spread of sikhī. First it was by the parents of young Sikhs, then from the Brahmins and the qazis. The rulers of the time were not too happy to see the spread of sikhī because it preached equal rights for everyone and for freedom of religion. The number of Sikhs kept growing despite the opposition. The first three gurus chose their successors from outside their
descendants because they did not see the total dedication to sewa in their own sons. This method of selection for the next guru created the same spirit but also created another group working against the spread of sikhi lead by the sons of the gurus. One of the most prominent of them all was Siri Chand, elder son of Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. He started a new cult called udasis. Narain Das was an udasi or follower of Siri Chand Ji, who committed atrocities of the extreme at Siri Nankana Sahib against the Sikhs. Despite the opposition from multiple sources the spread of sikhi continued resulting in the increasing numbers of Sikhs and also resulting in more and more Sikh centers.

In the homes the brahmanmat and qazimat were the prevailing rituals performed. The mothers were still doing pooja of idols or worship deities at home and teaching their children to believe in curses caused by angry deities resulting in all kinds of illnesses or other problems. The solution to get rid of those illnesses was to please those deities responsible for causing them and the only people who could do that were Brahmins or qazis. So sikhi at home had not taken hold yet. There were very few homes where sikhi was the religion exclusively. Most of the men coming home from the Sikh centers after listening to the Guru Ji or the representative of the center preaching sikhi, they would try to tell the wife and the children about the sermon they had heard at the center, the family would convey the feeling that they believed what they learned from them but in practice most of the women continued the practice of brahmanmat.

During the time of Jahangir and later under Aurangzeb's rule the force was used to convert people to Islam. They were specially targeting Sikhs because an increasing number
of Muslims were becoming Sikhs. It was difficult to pick out Sikhs from amongst others but there were informers who were pointing them out for bribe money. The Sikh centers were not advocating violence against anyone including the Muslim rule but the popularity of Sikh religion due to its humanitarian principles, was increasing. The public was attracted to it in increasing numbers and this was the reason that the rulers were feeling threatened. They were afraid that the Sikhs would become too strong a force to control. They wanted to nip it in the bud. No Sikh would convert to Islam was the reason that more Sikhs were murdered than any other people. As we all know that Siri Guru Teg Buhadar Ji gave his life to save Hindu religion and later on Hindu rajas became the allies of Aurangzeb with the hopes of destroying sikhi. This was one and the important reasons that Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, like his grandfather Siri Guru Har Gobind Ji, took up arms to defend and stop the slaughter of people because they believed in another religion than Islam. After 1699 most of the Sikhs in and around Anand Pur Sahib were amritdharis but in the rural areas the known Sikhs were being killed on site. In most other Sikh centers the masands were in charge of the Sikh centers and they had become so dishonest and greedy that their thievery started to affected guru’s golakh. This was causing the quality of service such as langar and other services to the poor started going down. As we know that Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji punished some of the masands and dismissed the others because of their greed.

All of the Sikh centers were not as elaborate for that time as Amritsar or Anand Pur Sahib was. Most of the Sikh centers away from the main centers were operated through the devotee’s homes or places called dharmsals that were built for that specific purpose. There
were arrangements made for travelers to have free lodging there. Religion or status did not prevent anyone in receiving services at these centers. Guru Gobind Singh Ji’s last few years were very trying and dangerous for the Sikhs, especially at the Sikh centers, because the enemy had started invading the Sikh centers. The Sikhs living at home and away from the Sikh centers did not have it any easier. They were pulled out of their homes and murdered, if they did not accept Islam, which no Sikh ever did. Some of the Sikhs in towns either went to Anand Pur sahib to fight the enemy alongside the Guru Ji, if it was possible; otherwise they had to hide in the jungle. These were the trying times at any place, home or at the Sikh centers. As always is the case in missionary centers of any religion, most of the people who are poor and their children are suffering from malnutrition, such places becomes a god sent. It always was and is in the case of Sikh centers. These were places to serve the poor. There were many people who lived at the Sikh centers or came there to do sewa during daytime and went home at night. There were some who came there just to have a free meal. No one could know for sure until the time for the final test which was to stand up for the defense of the weak. Last years of Guru Ji were those times. Whether the Sikhs who were true to the guru were living at home or at Anand Pur Sahib or any other Sikh center or living in towns, all of them passed Guru Ji given test. They did not yield their faith to the bribes or the threats on their lives by the Muslim tyrants of the times.

The Sikh centers that Guru Ji visited more often, were run and the rituals performed were according to the Guru Ji’s instructions. In most homes of the Sikhs the true Sikh
living was not practiced then or now. If we start looking at our daily routines of life we can realize that we are living a manmat life. We will discuss it later in this book.
Chapter Fifteen
Guru Given Amrit and Amritdhari

Amrit is something that makes one an immortal. Guru Ji many times refers to it as amrit bani. We can find bani compared to amrit at more than one place in Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. When people who are Sikhs or know the Sikh religion, hear the word amrit, they instantly think of the amrit that Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji prepared and delivered it to the punj piaras or five beloved ones. In all probability Guru Ji wanted to select an elite group of Sikhs who were head and shoulders above the average Sikh. He wanted this group to be totally dedicated to the service of humanity. Guru Ji invited every Sikh to Anand Pur sahib for basakhi mela of 1699. He conveyed the message of importance of that particular day. As we know from Sikh history that this basakhi became the most important day in the history of the Sikhs. More people came at that basakhi day than any other basakhi before this. Guru Ji requested for a Sikh who was willing to give his head to the guru. When Guru Ji was making this request for a head he had a naked sword in his hand. One could imagine what was going on in the minds of those people gathered there. A lull came over the crowd for a few moments until Bhai Daya Chand rose and offered his head. He had the idea that Guru Ji was going to cut his head off but he was not sure and was not afraid. One thing he was sure of was that he was going to achieve salvation and this was not a big price to pay for that. After Guru Ji came out of the tent everyone could see blood dripping from the sword while Guru Ji was requesting for another head. Then everyone knew what was going
to happen to that Sikh who would volunteer next. Dharm Chand, Himmat Rai, Mohkam Chand and Sahib Chand volunteered one by one. Guru Ji brought all five of them in a khalsa uniform and presented them to the gathering as his punj piaras. He prepared amrit by placing sugar cakes in water and stirring it with a double edged sword or khanda. While Guru Ji was doing this he was reciting some gurbani. He gave this amrit to those five devoted ones and gave them the name of Singh. Afterwards he requested the five to prepare amrit in the same manner and give it to him so he could join their group of amritdharis, which they did and Siri Guru Gobind Rai became Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

This process became a ritual of initiation for the Sikhs to join the fraternity of Singh’s or khalsa. Sikh history has it that every Sikh did not become amritdhari but the ones who did take amrit from Guru Ji, they were totally committed to the guru. You can never find an example of such initiation process, where the new member or the applicant to join a fraternity, had to go through such an extreme requirement. There are many contradicting stories about what Guru Ji did do in the tent or what he did not do. We will discuss this later in the chapter, right now it is suffice to say that Guru Ji could have done whatever he wanted to do and that’s what he did. Anyone who takes this amrit is called amritdhari and all those who took amrit from Guru Ji did become immortals. The world will remember them as martyrs and their names will always be remembered by us for ever.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji not only founded the Sikh religion but also set up a plan for the future of this unmatched and unparalleled and the only universal religion ever brought to this earth we as Sikhs know this from the teachings of each guru preaching the same
message that Guru Nanak Dev Ji preached. The basis for believing that Guru Nanak spirit traveled through all our gurus, is in each guru’s preaching’s and the contents of their message. He knew that there should be a religion that should have ever lasting or Akal philosophy and should apply, in all times to come till eternity. This is the reason, as we can think of, that Siri Guru Arjan Dev Ji compiled Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji so no one could ever change the message of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Guru Gobind Singh Ji was going to write the last chapter of Sikh gurus on earth as humans. He was going to create an elite group out of the Sikhs who would be totally dedicated to help the needy and the downtrodden. As we all know that guru performed the baptismal ritual of amrit. He put the toughest and unmatched price of amrit. Five Sikhs volunteered to pay the price to become amritdharis, their heads. Guru Ji gave this amrit or nectar of life, prepared from water and sugar cakes with double edged sword.

We all hear and say at times that if Guru Ji put some mild poison or something that could have changed the taste of amrit so it would have not been so tasty, then only the totally devoted Sikhs would have taken the amrit. People who take it for using it for their personal gains would not have been so quick to take it without any commitment. We forget one thing when we bring up such an erroneous view. Guru Ji put such a condition and the price which five Sikhs met that condition and paid the price with their heads, to take amrit. We can not find such a requirement of baptismation in any other religion or to join any fraternity in this world ever as Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji’s price for amrit to give one’s life or to pledge to give one’s life. The five piaras offered their heads before Guru Ji gave them
amrit and for the future candidates a pledge is to be made that from the day a Sikh becomes amritdhari, his life belongs to the guru and the rest of his life has to be dedicated for the service of mankind. If we keep thinking and keep saying to ourselves that gurus were divine powers. They did what they wanted to do and demarcated the path for us to walk on. We should never question the acts of the gurus except believe in them. Why? Because these are examples set by the gurus for us to follow.

We hear this phrase from time to time that sikhi is balon niki and khandion tikhi or smaller in diameter than hair, and sharper than double edged sword, which is not applicable to sikhi, because Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji gave this world a religion that is the easiest of them all. It’s practical and makes sense or appeals to common sense. The principles of sikhi apply to every human being on earth. This phrase applies to the elite group of Sikhs, the amritdharis and they know it from the day they pledged their lives in the presence of the guru to serve mankind at any cost.

Who is an amritdhari? Amritdhari is that Sikh who is following the teachings of Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. He or she not only recites or repeats what guru says, but lives his life according to guru’s teachings. He learns about the duties of an amritdhari and assures himself or herself that she or he is willing to spend the remaining days of their lives on this earth in the service of mankind. Then and only then he is worthy of becoming an amritdhari. The qualities of an amritdhari are many but some of the obvious ones are the same as for any other Sikh, remembers Waheguru all the time, earns living through honest means, never cheats anyone, gives part of his earnings for the care of the needy, never
speaks a lie, does not believe in magic or superstition, does not curse or use foul language ever, is egoless and humble, always willing to protect the needy and the helpless. Every Sikh cannot qualify to be an amritdhari, because everyone can not be as brave as is required to be an amritdhari. To be an amritdhari is the highest individual achievement in Sikh religion, because the price that was paid by the five beloved ones and now the pledge of a candidate to become an amritdhari is the same. One has to be prepared to pay the price at anytime. We should not try to prove ourselves right or some one else wrong by our own convictions or devising ways to portray that we know more than the other person. We all should read gurbani and guru history to draw our conclusions. We should always remember why Guru Nanak Dev Ji came to this earth. Why did he start the new, different and easy to follow religion with simple explanation that makes sense? Why Guru Gobind Singh Ji created Khalsa? Look at the history since 1699. Were all Sikhs amritdharis after that basakhi? What is the greatest percentage of amritdharis in India and abroad? How many of those who become amritdharis, stay amritdharis and follow it as they promised at the time of amrit ritual? First of all we should look at ourselves regarding our deeds. As the saying goes, “pahlan appni pirri heth sota phero,” which roughly means to go thoroughly under your chair with a stick, because there might be some skeletons in our own closet.

We are all Sikhs and we should always remember that the only one we answer to is our guru and never to any one else. If we have learned nothing else from Guru Ji’s teachings, we should learn this, that Guru Ji is going to judge us only what our deeds are and not by anyone else’s deeds. This thought should keep us on the right path in life. We
should swear to that we will not play guru as most of us are trying to do. We should try to be just the ordinary Sikhs of the guru, because in reality that’s what we are.

Guru Ji put the price of amrit a Sikh’s head. To day there is no such demand, instead, the promise of receiving anything and every thing in return if one takes amrit from this baba or that baba. No commitment even the appearance of the candidate does not matter, as long as one becomes a Sikh of that baba. I am sure we have all heard from the babas, who are delivering amrit, that they are registering these people or candidates for amrit ritual in the first grade. It is up to them, if they want to progress any further. This is the answer one gets if the question is asked. I know for sure that at least till the end of the forties these questions used to be asked of all the candidates to become amritdharis, if any one in the family was amritdhar, why the person wanted to be an amritdhar, had he or she ever cut his hair, if one can read and write Punjabi, if they are able to read Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, if they knew what the rahets of an amritdhar were, all this and more information was obtained before allowing them to participate in the ceremony. Some times people were asked to wait and be sure that they were ready. Today no such questions are asked and all the k’s are supplied free, except hair. Nature provides that.

In the first place it is very wrong for these babas to compare amrit with the grades in public schools. If they are going to continue the use of this comparison, then should learn what their comment means. In the opinion of most of the Sikhs that I have talked to believe that becoming an amritdhar should not be compared this way but if they insist then they should know that for a Sikh to become an amritdhar in Sikh religion is the same as some
one to get a doctor’s degree from a university, because this is the highest degree they offer at any university. Being an amritdhari is the highest stage a Sikh can achieve in Sikh religion. Being Sikhs we should learn not ever to argue or hold debate about our faith only discuss it. Why? Because during debate one tries to win over the other, no matter what methods one has to use. Winning is the goal and not the facts. In discussion the facts are everything and both parties plus the listeners learn from this, because both parties contribute by bringing in some facts the other party did not know before, thus broadening the knowledge of facts for everyone. No one comes out looser and everyone is a winner in this.
Chapter Sixteen
Sant Babas and Their Mushrooming

Until the nineteen hundred and twenties there were no sant babas. The historical Sikh centers were under the control of masands or the udasi sadhs. The smaller Sikh centers were called dharmsals and controlled by the person who was or could convince the others that he was the descendant of the gurus and as a birthright he was in charge there. Preaching of sikhi was at its lowest level. The controllers were corrupt and immoral. They gathered the donations and used these for their personal needs. Most of these places were dilapidated and no money was allocated for the maintenance of these shrines. There were a few Sikh organizations formed, such as Singh Sabah, nrankari movement, namdharis, kukas and some others. These organizations started to advocate the rightful ownership of the shrines should be under the management of the Sikhs and not the mahants. The main purpose of these organizations was that Sikhs in general should have the possession of these places so the proper maintenance could be kept and the teachings of the gurus should start emanating from there, as it suppose to have been. They made some progress but not enough. They were unable to achieve what they wanted, a full control of the gurughars.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there were some places built by philanthropists in some of the towns and were called inns. The purpose of these was to have a place for the travelers to spend the night during their journey to distant places. There was no rent charged. There was a man hired for the upkeep and management of these
places. Some of them became Sikhs and changed the names from dharamsal to ashrams or deras. In other small towns the Sikhs either started building dharmsals or the Sikh preachers started using their homes for the purpose of holding morning and evening kirtans. In time they started calling themselves sant or the Sikhs gave them the title of a sant but just the same this process became the beginning of sant smaj or sant babas. Until after the morcha of nankana sahib they were hidden in small towns and performed the duty of caretakers of those places.

Until nineteen twenty Sikh groups were acting like cults. Each had their own code of ethics and it differed in their interpretation of guru’s teachings. Some of them continued to believe in a living guru and still are doing this. After seeing the intolerable conditions of the Sikh shrines and what was going on in these places, the true Sikhs of the guru started to plan on protests. The controllers of these places were using these shrines for the entertainment and un-Sikh activities. Women pilgrims were raped there and men pilgrims insulted and even murdered. They had hired thugs as their personal bodyguards and also had a mafia type organization to quell any attempt of opposition. They had also bought police and judges incase the complaints ended up in courts. Local people knew what was going on inside those shrines but they were afraid to complain because of the threat of retaliation. Most of those places were not receiving large donations but enough to take care of the financial needs of the place. The shrine that was getting the most income of them all was Nankana Sahib. The income came from the largest parcel of land owned by the shrine and also through the large donations from the devotees who would come from far and near
for pilgrimage especially at Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s birthday. This place had advantages that no other shrine could match. One thing was that this was the richest of all the Sikh centers and it was controlled by the most notorious, unethical and immoral mahant named Narain Das. He was a descendant of udasi cult started by Siri Chand the elder son of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

All of us have heard about the slaughter at Nankana Sahib but I would like to present a summary of that tragic time in Sikh history. It symbolizes the spirit of the dedicated Sikhs who never think of their own lives or what it would do to their families. They only knew what the guru has told them and is telling us all now, to stand up against oppression to protect the sanctity of the gurughar, the dignity of sikhi and taking a stand to protect the weak, even if it means to give up our own life. This is what those brave Sikhs did in 1921. This tyrant Mahant was so sure of his power and his association with the high officials of that time, he started killing the local Sikhs who complained about blasphemous deeds at the sacred shrine of the Sikhs. He was proud of his mafia guards and local thugs plus his bought out local police, district officials including judges and some of the British officers. He knew that no one amongst the Sikhs could touch him. When the Sikhs could not negotiate with him, they planned a non violent protest to bring back the sacred honor to this shrine. He started committing atrocities and murdering the protesters. Just before the one fateful day he tried to deceive the Sikhs by luring their leaders to a meeting to discuss the matter of Nankana sahib and this meeting was to be held in Lahore. His deceptive plan was to lure the leaders to come to Lahore and slaughter the innocent but dedicated
protestors arriving at Nankana Sahib and murder the leaders at Lahore. He had a fool proof plan so no one would be able to get out alive. A jatha led by Bhai Lashman Singh was marching on to reach Nankana Sahib. A day before reaching Nankana Sahib, the jathedar drew a line and asked his fellow protesters that those willing to accept death to save the honor of our guru Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s birth place should step across that line. Every one of them crossed the line. He performed the ardas to receive guru’s blessings for courage and fulfillment of their goal to free the shrine from the clutches of that notorious Mahant Narain Das. They received the news of the negotiations and advice for them, not to enter Nankana Sahib, before they had entered Nankana Sahib. They held a meeting to decide whether to stop there or try to enter the shrine. They unanimously agreed that they could not stop because they had already said the final ardas. As they entered the gates, they learned that meeting call was a deception of the Mahant. Narain Das had his militia placed at strategic places so no one could escape death and that’s what happened. All of them became martyrs.

After all of this Narain Das was still trying to hold the control of the gurdwara with the help of his allies in the government. Even the British officers were blaming the Sikhs for trespassing. Finely the British government realized that it was in their best interest to make some kind of deal with the Sikhs. Eventually the control of the gurdwara was given to the recently formed Sikh shiromani committee and some of the murderers were arrested including the Mahant Narain Das and charged with the murders. Only a handful of them were convicted and sentenced to death including the Mahant. All of this was done to pacify
the Sikhs and the public in general. Every one including Hindus and Muslims were hurting by the deeds of Narain Das because every god fearing people in India, Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji was their prophet as Hindus called him Guru and the Muslims called him Pir. After the liberation of Guru Ji’s birth place, everyone was relieved. The trial of the murderers was not a real justice. Only about five actually were hanged and the others were sentenced to a few years in prison to life in prison. Mahant got life in prison, not because he deserved the punishment but because for his safety so the Sikhs would not kill him.

This was the beginning of naming of all the Sikh centers as gurdwaras. The struggle to get control of all the historic gurdwaras under the control of the Shiromani Gurdwara Purbandak committee, continued until 1925, when gurdwara act was passed. There were many or all of the other gurdwaras were under the control of similar Mahant's like Narain Das but no one was as corrupt as him. They had to give up these gurdwaras and the control of these places was handed over to gurdwara committee. The British government reciprocated these Mahant’s with property and funds to build their own places. The British did not do this vainly. They created a faction that became their ally against the akali movement of the time. They were the informers and this was the beginning of the sant smaj or sant babas.

Before we discuss the sant babas let us find out how Guru Ji had described a sant. A sant has to live by the golden rules of sikhi described by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, which are naam japna, kirt karni and vaand shakana. After this a sant is not greedy, never lies, has no enemies, respects everyone, no reaction to joy or sorrow, no reaction to pain or comfort,
never a foul mouth, frightens no one and afraid of none. A person having these qualities can be called a sant.

With the help of the government they built their own places and called them by their given names as so and so sants ashram or dera. They never called these places gurdwaras. Some of the old places in small towns were run by the same Mahant’s as before. The new deras were competing with each other to increase the number of their followers. They started preaching sikhi and holding amrit sanchars to lure Sikhs into their fold. They were also adding their own rahets and making sure that their followers consider their amrit was better than any other sant’s amrit. The government was very friendly with them but the Sikhs in general considered them spies of the British government. The more vocal the sant the larger following and stronger bodyguards became richer and more popular. More and more sants started cropping up. Some of them leave one dera to go to join another dera and eventually become a sant himself. They were all preaching from gurbani but they were adding more manmat rituals reciting their own or some one else’s poems along with the guru shabad. Due to the lack of ability to read gurbani themselves, people were flocking in great numbers to the deras. They were making up new sakhies every day. Many or almost all of those newly created sakhies have their own names or the names of their predecessors mentioned in these sakhies. People started treating them as guru’s equal and this was what they were striving for. Most of them started removing curses through their mystic powers. They created a mythical world in their deras. It has become just as bad, if not worse, as the
Brahmins during pre Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s era. We all know how deception was used to lure public into their deras.

I would like to talk about what goes on in a typical dera. How do these sant babas get to those places where they become sants? If you are in your seventies and eighties then you may have witnessed the process in action. As we know that there is no priesthood in Sikhism. The people who justify by saying, that Baba Budha Ji was a granthi, which is not true. No one ever called him granthi. He had the title of caretaker or sewadar. Every Sikh was and is suppose to be able to read gurubani. The same thing is true about Bhai Mani Singh Ji when he became the care taker at Siri Amritsar after Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji left this world. In local gurdwaras children were taught Punjabi. Most of those children were not going to regular schools. The ones who continued became pathis which means that they could read Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. If one of these stayed there long enough then he would become the head or the sant some day. During the nineteen twenties some people who had committed crime and they were on the run, they found refuge in these gurdwaras and eventually became famous sant babas. The third category was that some children from the poor families were sent to the gurdwaras that acted as ashrams, to become pathis. A few of them found this to be their permanent home, where later on they became in charge and were called sants. There were also some educated and belonging to prestigious families who wanted to spend there lives away from the rigors of life. Such people found that the deras were the places where they could find peace, food and no hard work, that’s what they were looking for. Some of these eventually became sants.
Almost all of them have lived years and years at these deras. They become very fluent in doing path and some of them become very good orators by listening to the main sant twice a day preaching to his followers. Lucky and selfish amongst them become the head sants one day. They usually are extroverts and quick thinkers to defend themselves. They have their bodyguards ready to take care of the critics. Their disciples are either trained or self learners in public relations for their sant babas. They tell people. The mystic stories relating to the sant, such as how many sick people he had cured through his mystic powers, how many thousands of Sikhs he made amritdharis, how many times he foretold the happenings of disasters, to how many strangers he told their lives curses, and how many disasters he prevented or attenuated them. They tell their followers to recite one bani that they pick for them for so many times a day and they will be protected from curses. They start the reading of one bani by everyone because they see bad things to come to all of us and reading this bani so many times is going to help us and protect us from the clutches of the evil that is being forced upon us through curses. This is an eyewitness story of June 1984. A Sant Baba was visiting a gurdwara in California and doing kirtin twice daily for weeks. As a custom of their predecessors they do akhandpath ceremony on full moon night (pooranamasi) which was about two weeks hence. This was when the Indian army destroyed Akal Takhat Sahib and killed thousands of innocent children, men and women who were there to pay homage to Siri Guru Arjan Dev Ji on his martyrdom day. An akhandpath was started the next day after the news of the attack. After the bhog the sant was asked to say a few words about the attack. Instead he sang the shabad that saint has no
enemy or stranger. Moments after diwan, he started his preparations to leave to go back to his place in another country. His followers along with some other people tried to remind him that he was going to do the akhandpath in a few days. Why not go back after that. In three days he and his companions left. After they were back in there country, his servers started telling his congregation that Baba Ji had premonition that something bad was going to happen at the golden temple complex in Amritsar. This was the reason the Sant Baba decided to come back to his own place to hold akhand paths and offer prayers, so that, the blow of the tragedy could be lessoned or completely prevented. Six days latter the tragedy occurred, the Indian army attacked the shrine killing thousands of innocent children, women and men who were there to pay homage to the guru. A year later one of Sant’s musicians was telling a local devotee in the presence of a visitor from America that Sant Baba had foretold the tragedy because he possessed mystic powers and explained that this was the reason that he came back to their base six days before the Indian government attack on Darbar Sahib complex. The visitor from California asked him if he was sure that they got back six days before the attack. His reply was a definite yes. The Californian asked him to count the days as he traces the events of those days. The attack occurred on Monday, the akhand path started on Tuesday and ended on Thursday. Three days after the akhand path you left California and that comes to seven days after the attack when you left California on Sunday and according to what you are saying there are thirteen days that are unaccounted for. Where had those days gone, because you were in California until seven days after the attack on Akal Takhat? All he could say was really we were in California. He thought that
they had come back before the attack. All the people believed all that bull that they dished out. This is the way the path of deception is paved by these sant babas.

All the fake rituals, which we call pakhands, Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji extricated from brahmanmat. These sant babas have brought these back into Sikh life. Until the early nineteen hundred twenties it was unheard of any akhand paths was being done any place, which is a reading of the entire Siri Guru Granth Sahib continuously. A sant named Baba Nand Singh of Nanaksar Thaat started this ritual in 1920. About two years latter he asked his followers to start reading pothy or jap ji sahib, along with the akhand path. Someone asked him why he wanted the reading of the pothi with the akhand path. He explained that if you miss a word or a part of the word or misread the word, the guru will transfer a correct word from the pothi reader to the akhand pathi. Later on he proclaimed that an akhand path without the pothi path was not acceptable to the guru and it was just a waist. Many a Sikhs have fallen into this misguided fake ritual, because Guru Ji tells us, over and over again, against fake rituals. During 1924 he started a lari path, doing akhand paths continuously one after the others. The first time he had one hundred and five akhand paths done in succession. These were done one at a time. Soon after this, he started lari paths with five akhand paths starting at the same time and ending at the same time. Manny times it went on for months. Now at Nanaksar and other places they start as many as one can say, up to hundreds beginning and ending at the same time.

.while all this was going on he would set a number from one hundred thousand to a million pothi paths to expel curses collectively and ask his followers to do pothi or jap ji
sahib paths or readings as many times as they could and report it to him so he could keep track. This is also against the teachings of our gurus. During the late nineteen thirties he started his followers to recite sukhmani sahib every day. Someone asked him about this, about why he was putting so much emphasis on one bani. He stated that he did not want to tell them this before but now he was compelled to tell the whole story. He said that he was doing bhagti or meditation in the desert of Bikaner state. One evening at sunset he came out of his trance and went for a walk. All of a sudden he saw a fourteen feet tall giant standing in front of him at a distance of fourteen feet. At first he got scared but then he realized that he had to die some day and why not to day. He said to the giant to come and kill him. The giant replied that he wanted to kill him but he had done too many sukhmani sahib paths and they had created a shield around him and the shield was not letting him move any closer to him. This myth of reciting sukhmani sahib makes a Sikh so powerful that no harm can come to him. His followers believe this and forget what our gurus told us and what he went through himself who uttered this bani. One of his successors started reemphasizing this point and made it a ritual that has become so popular that in many gurdwaras this ritual is performed once a week even at times when this interrupts the akhand path. There were many who started more fake rituals but nanak sar is the leader in this field.

To day there are countless sant babas, it is almost as true as the saying goes “that under every brick there is a sant baba”. Until the nineteen seventies there were almost no sants in foreign countries. By 1972 there were sants visiting every country. As they were returning back to Punjab with lot of riches the others started coming and becoming wealthy
through all kinds of their deceptive plans as to either building schools, colleges, building new gurdwaras, adding rooms for foreigners to stay while pilgrimaging and building medical schools and hospitals. You see and hear a ragi doing kirtan this year and in two years he will come back as sant baba followed by a disciple with a loata filled with water or you will see him slipping shoes on his master’s feet.

If we want to keep sikhi as it was given to us by our gurus we have to learn the simple rules of sikhi. The important rules are not to do fake rituals. The only guru we have is Siri Guru Granth Sahib. We should only follow him and not the fake ones.

There are sants who are more apt in selling themselves than others. They have politicians as their sponsors. The natural process of symbiosis works here so well that both sides get huge rewards. The sant becomes famous because a famous politician is his chela or follower and the politician is assured of a big block of votes. This world is full of greedy people and the sants are on the top of the list. We are gullible due to lack of understanding of guru’s message because most of us can not read bani and these preachers tell us the way they could create confusion in our minds so we would go to them to find solutions. This is how they get us on the barrel and at their mercy. This is not my opinion alone, most people I have talked to and I have talked to a lot of them during the last few years, feel the same as I do. The biggest enemies of sikhi, who are destroying it or changing this most universal religion of them all to a cult like, are the sant babas and the Sikh politicians. This can not be stopped or slowed down unless we can learn what our Guru Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji teaches us. Only we as Sikhs can save sikhi from being sold for money or votes.
I believe it was January twenty sixth nineteen hundred and fifty one when an Indian council from San Francisco was attending an Indian Independence Day celebration in Yuba City. After the celebration he was invited to some one's house for a small party because some people wanted to tell him about some of the grievances the community had in private. There were fifty or so people present. Many questions were asked but one of the questions asked was specific. The question was regarding the increasing influence of sant babas. It was suggested to him that he should tell the Indian government to do some thing about them. He laughed and asked who was responsible for creating sants. You created them and now you are the ones who have to stop them. The reason sants are there because you cater to them. If you stop catering them there won’t be any sants left, until then you will have to suffer because of them. The sant babas are your own creation one hundred percent.
Chapter Seventeen
Kirtan Performers and Kathakars

Kirtan or shabad singing is to recite gurbani aloud. It is usually done in the morning and evening at most of the gurdwaras and also at most of the other gurdwara functions. Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji started this melodious singing twice a day to bring peace to the soul and give energy to the body and mind. Where ever Guru Ji went on his travels, he sang newly uttered bani or shabads recited previously while Bhai Mardana Ji played rabab, a musical instrument. People use to gather in great numbers to listen to Guru Ji every morning and evening. Whenever he met a group of people, who believed in performing fake rituals, to please their idols, Guru Ji would advise them through his bani to teach them that fake rituals did not please Waheguru. Each person has to live a truthful life to please him and not by performing fake rituals called pakhands. Guru Nanak Dev Ji continued this routine throughout his time on this earth. The next nine gurus continued this routine throughout their time on earth. In a Sikhs life reciting guru’s word or guru bani is the most important ritual in life.

Why is it so important to do the same routine everyday? Why not do it once a day, or once a week or once a month? If we put our guru given common sense to use, then we can find the answer to this question ourselves. Guru Ji prohibits us from deeds or even our daily routines that affects our body, mind or soul in a negative way and always starts the day with something that is going to lift our soul, refresh our body and cleans our mind. We
are asked to get out of bed before daybreak. This is the time when the air we breathe is most fresh and you feel the joy when you hear the little birds singing. It almost feels like that we are surrounded by wonderful environment because it seems so peaceful. When we finish our bath we feel the outward cleanliness of our body. When we start singing or reciting the praises of our god, the gurbani, our mind and soul get uplift which we can not imagine unless we are in it ourselves. By the time we are finished reciting bani or morning prayer we feel fresh. This routine before starting our duty as bread earners, we have reminded ourselves from the lessons of our Guru Ji through repeating Guru Ji’s instructions, because that’s what gurbani is, we are more than prepared to tackle anything during the day to perform our daily duty in honest way and to behave in an honorable way all day. By the time we are through with our daily chores and feel little bit exhausted or tired from physical or mental work, it is time again for us to refresh our body, mind and soul with our evening routine to uplift ourselves through guru’s blessings by reciting the evening routine of a Sikh, which is to recite evening prayers. In many towns the Sikhs go to the gurdwara to attend the morning diwans or meetings before going to work and the others do it at home. One thing that we learn from Guru Ji’s teachings is that every thing Guru Ji has asked us to do have practical applications in life to make it a happy and healthy life.

Until most of khalsa high schools were taken over by the government through deceptive ways, because they wanted to eliminate all and every source where Sikh children could build a foundation of sikhi. This was the routine in a khalsa school. Every morning the school would start with singing or kirtan of one shabad and ardas, a prayer. This was
performed by two students from each class one day of the week, as fifth grade on Mondays, sixth grade on Tuesday and continues this way to the tenth grade on Saturday, because the school week ran from Monday through Saturday. The first four grades did not participate.

On gupurbs the students would perform kirtan at school in the morning and join the Sikh parade sponsored by the town. They would also join in the evening diwan in these celebrations.

There were no professional kirtin jathas until nineteen hundred thirties or forties. The bhais living in town gurdwaras would perform kirtan twice a day but very few people attended these diwans routinely because of their work. On sangrand or first day of our month and on certain gurpurbs, there use to be extended programs where kirtan, katha and reciting guru history through guru sakhies was a routine for such celebrations. The whole sangat used to repeat the verses after the granthi or some one from the congregation. The instruments of music were dholki or a drum and chimta, made up of two folded thin metal plates about two inches wide with tings held on to both bars with bolts. The shabads were sung in sidhi dharna or simple tunes. Every one in the congregation would repeat after kirtinias or singers. In the bigger and historic gurdwaras there were professional jathas hired by the managing committees for this purpose, which performed daily kirtans twice daily. As the time went on the tunes changed, the musical instruments became sophisticated and ears of the sangat became accustomed to the tunes of cinema song tunes. The number of these jathas increased and the business of singing gurbani became lucrative and in
demand. So mushrooming of the kirtini jathas started. The music schools in this field were started for interested candidates to become gurbani singers.

Toward the end of forties and early fifties that no one or at least most people stopped going to places where there were no professional singers of gurbani doing the kirtin. Such places as Darbar Sahib it was a custom to hire the best kirtini jathas to sing gurbani at all times. The other gurdwaras did not have the policy of continuous kirtin all day. Radios and television started blasting movie songs and the public’s ears and taste of music gotten used to the movie tunes and the modern shabad singers started mimicking those tunes. The main kirtinia or the leader of the group was expected to have a melodious voice and sweet tune. This was the kind of singers the public wanted to hear and hire at their private functions and were willing to pay a higher price. When this practice became lucrative, more and more people started to learn kirtin. More schools of music started opening up. There were more jathas than the availability of gurdwaras or the public to hire them. The good singers had no problem in earning big money but the mediocre could barely make living. There were not too many gurdwaras in foreign countries yet. In America there was only one until 1950, when a second gurdwara was built in imperial brawly gurdwara. Only local sangat used to attend services at this place. Stockton was still the only one where everyone used to attend and that was about four to five times a year. There was no kirtini jatha at either place. Sangat used to repeat the verses after the granthi.

During 1969 a third gurdwara was built in Yuba City because of the increasing number of Sikh families immigrating to the Yuba Sutter area. This was the largest Sikh
Canada and UK were sponsoring kirtini jathas before, but in the United States it started in full swing in 1972. It became known that a gurdwara could legally sponsor the missionaries to come here and get permanent or legal resident status. The Punjab was also getting saturated with the sant babas population. The deras were becoming over crowded because where there was one baba, he had four or five junior babas waiting in the wings for him to die so they could register their claim on the dera throne. This always ended up in struggle between the heirs. The most influential, powerful and the most devious would win and the others either had to submit themselves to the winner or leave the dera. Most of them would leave the dera and establish one of their own in an other town. Around 1972 they started coming to America. Most of them had diplomatic or state sponsored passports. When it became known to their kind in Punjab that there was an open field in America they started coming abroad. The leaders of the gurdwaras also became aware of that they could get their relatives, friends and if they were greedy enough, they could sell the sponsorships for a lot of money. This became a practice, which sponsored jathas had to bring with them the relatives or friends or the others for cash, as the members of the group. The American consulates were not as critical as they are now to check if they are really musicians. All they needed was a sponsorship from a registered religious institute. Everyone knows the giving nature of the Sikhs. No matter what the person is regarding his character or other qualities, anyone who gets on the stage and starts singing gurbani, the congregation lines up to put dollars in front of him. They become so greedy that they don’t want to leave the area, even
though there are more jathas waiting in line to take their place. Now every place in the
country is filled with these jathas and more are coming everyday. In Punjab some of the big
name kirtinias are the richest people there. There fees for kirtin are astronomical. The rich
people brag about sponsoring such jathas to their personal functions.

Some members of these jathas are also kathakars and they try to explain the meaning
of gurbani that they are singing and there are those who only do katha, which means that
they try to translate what a particular shabad tells us, plus the true and the made up sakhies
or stories related to the shabad. We don’t have the knowledge to know for sure if the sakh is
ture or not. Each one of them try’s to convince us that no one else on the planet earth
knows more about gurbani than they do. Most of the time we don’t even know what they
are saying or singing but we are lined up to place the dollar in front of them. Today there
are so many books written for the professionals. All they have to do is to read these and
memorize these stories. Just from memorizing these, a person can become an effective
professional preacher. Our undocumented code is that we can not question these people.
The authenticity of their subject matter during the diwan or even outside is prohibited. Due
to our ignorance about the truth many of the audience believe that anything the man on the
stage is telling us is a gospel’s truth. This makes these professionals fearless because no
one can criticize them. If some one question’s the validity of their statements then he is
labeled as not a Sikh or he is against sikhi.

As we know that the words like always, never, nobody or everybody can not be or
should not be taken as definitive or absolute, because there are always exception to the rule.
Therefore we can not label every kirtinia, every kathakar, every preacher, and every politician are dishonest, liar, deceitful, greedy, cruel, and unethical and without shame or conscious, because of the natural law that there is always an exception to the rule. So we can rule out that everyone who sells gurbani is not a nice person, because there are some who dedicate their entire life in spreading the word of the Guru Ji. All the people that I have discussed the question of so many sant babas and the others, so called missionaries coming abroad to preach. The consensus is that they are not here to make us better Sikhs because they themselves probably are lacking that qualification themselves. The only reason they come here is either to get permanent residency abroad or get rich and go back to Punjab and live like a king, so to speak. Another thing that the smart ones of them do, especially the sant babas, is they divide us. We are so gullible and ignorant that we take their bait. The one’s who follow them usually feel great, because they are being praised so much by these babas and others that they are the only one’s who are real fundamental Sikhs. In reality they do not know what Guru Ji is telling us, and the only thing they know is what is told to them by these money hungry and corrupt people.

How can we recognize them that they are selfish and greedy? We all have the answer which is fool proof and the whole truth and nothing but the truth, that is to think what we came here ourselves for. The answer is universal, to get rich. The second thing we have to consider is that if these people are so saintly and their sole purpose of coming here is to teach us how to achieve salvation for all of us. The question for us to ponder about is have they salvaged everyone in Punjab or any other place, where ever they have come from.
and we, the residents of Yuba City or whatever town we live in, are the only Sikh sinners left in this world, to be salvaged and that’s their sole reason for coming here. Don’t start calling me names, just think about what I am saying then read or listen to Guru Ji, then try to understand what Guru Ji is telling us. If we all do this then we will know the truth that they are here to get rich.

Why are these people so successful in making fools of all of us? Explanation is very simple. All human beings want every comfort on this earth and salvation in the next one, if there is one. This is not only a Sikh thinking or Hindu, Muslim or Christian thinking. This is a universal thinking. Because of this we forget the teachings of our Guru Ji about how we can accomplish this goal of achieving salvation. These very selfish and self-centered extroverts show us a simple path. They give us as a manter which can be a verse, a shabad or one entire bani to recite and tell us that by doing this we will become immortals. Right a way we forget what we have learned from our Guru Ji that by reading, listening or going to teerths is not going to do us a bit of good, unless we live our life according to what Guru Ji is telling us everyday. They are so clever that they take a verse out of a shabad and put the guilt trip on us, because this makes it easier for them to get us under their control and for us to accept them as our saviors. We forget all about the lessons that Guru Ji has given us, which is fake rituals are not going to get us anywhere. We should read gurbani or listen to gurbani and then walk the path that gurbani is setting for us.
Chapter Eighteen
Historic Sikh Centers and Small Town Gurdwaras Anyplace

When we think of historic gurdwaras the pictures of each guru’s birth place pops up right in front of our mind’s eyes. We start thinking of the times as to the conditions, environment, the behavior of the government of that time towards the public and the way they treated the public and also it comes to mind how common people like us treated each other. Then we think about how our gurus were different from their age group. How people started noticing that gurus were not ordinary children but they were special god sent people to bring social change with equal rights for everyone. Our gurus were the only prophets who preached religious color blindness, which means that each person has equal right to pursue his or her belief without any interference from anyone whether it is the government or any opposing religion. Then we think of how they started preaching the basic principles of this unmatched religion the world call sikhi. One of the most important tenets of sikhi is the sewa. The sewa became the main virtue of each successor of a guru beginning with Bhai Lehna Ji, who became Siri Guru Angad Dev Ji because of his total dedication to sewa. Even when guruship became a family affair, sewa was still the most important, in fact it was the most important and the only quality, Guru Ji used in one of their children to select the future guru.

When we visit or learn about the history of those gurdwaras that were built at those places, such as Nankana Sahib or at Siri Guru Arjan Dev Ji’s and Siri Guru Teg Buhadar
Ji’s martyrdom place, the degree of cruelty of the rulers of those times comes to mind. We also learn that if we stop and think a little, why Guru Arjan Dev Ji had to suffer so much. He was a divine power. He could have avoided all that with his god given powers. This leaves only one explanation for us to remember, he went through all this to teach us as his Sikhs of all times that no sacrifice is greater than to protect your principles and faith. When we visit the place where Guru Teg Buhadar Ji gave his martyrdom, we learn the lesson of sacrifice for others. These were the same people who were jealous of Guru Ji’s popularity but Guru Ji did not hold that against them and gave his life to save their religion. Every thing we can think of when we visit these shrines or just think of them, we learn that everything Guru Ji did and every word of advice Guru Ji uttered was and is a lesson for us to remember and live it through out our lives. They were not doing it for themselves they did it so we would have an example to follow.

We have other historic places where Guru Ji did some special things such as Punja Sahib where Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji taught Wali Ghandhari a lesson how he could be helpful to the people and in turn earn their respect which could bring a lot of happiness to his mind. In reality it was a lesson for the world to remember and follow. All the places where Guru Ji lived, visited and preached, remind us about the path of sikhi.

The two historic shrines we visit the most are Siri Darbar Sahib and Siri Anand Pur Sahib. Going there or thinking of Darbar Sahib automatically refreshes our minds with all the early Sikh history. This is the place where Siri Guru Ram Das Ji laid the foundation of a new town which we now know as Amritsar. This is the place where the Guru Ji established
a srover where we feel our sins get washed away, not just taking a dip in this srover but making a pledge to the Guru Ji to change our lives for the service of mankind. There is so much of guru history and Sikh history attached to this. This is one of the most or the most sacred shrines of Sikh religion. This is where Guru Arjan Dev Ji asked Mian Mir Ji to lay down the foundation stone to build the most sacred shrines of Sikh religion and Bhai Gurdas Ji to compile all the guru bani and the bhagat bani that was mostly collected by Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji during his travels. In 1604 Guru Arjan Dev Ji placed Adi Granth at his equal place the first time and from then on gurbani from the granth was read every day.

This is the complex where Siri Guru Hargobind Ji separated religion from temporal affairs. He built the Akal Takhat. This reminds us that Guru Hargobind Ji made Sikhs a martial race and not just the nonviolent preachers. When we think of the separation of power and the duties of each, we can appreciate the wisdom of our sixth Guru Nanak, because it took over hundred years before the first democracy of modern world passed a resolution that the powers of state and religion should be separated. When we think of such things related to our historic places, it boggles our mind, how our Guru Ji’s were shaping the future of the world long before it was put to practice. This is the place where Guru Ji told the world that facing the tyrants with force to protect one’s own rights is acceptable. This was the base from which Guru Ji fought four battles to protect the rights of all and taught lessons to the cruel rulers. This place reminds us of all those brave Sikh martyrs who gave their lives to protect the sanctity of this sacred shrine.
The other most important Sikh historic place is Anand Pur Sahib. This reminds us that our last human guru Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji grew up at this place. This reminds us how Guru Ji was so different from his age group. How he taught the martial arts and the tactics of battle field. All this comes fresh into our minds just upon thinking of this place. This reminds us how a nine year old son assured his father that there was no one else other than him to save Hindu religion and he also assured that he was fully capable of managing the Sikh affairs. This reminds us of all the battles Guru Ji fought to protect Waheguru given rights of everyone, without any boundaries. This place reminds us a very special basakhi day when Guru Gobind Singh Ji gave birth to an elite group of Sikhs called khalsa. He gave amrit to those five who gave their heads on his demand without asking a question. It also reminds us how our Guru Ji became Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji from Guru Gobind Rai Ji. This is where four sahibzadas grew up learning the lessons of self sacrifice. They learned to be fearless and face the tyrants head on. All four of them did what they had learned at such an early age. Siri Ajit Singh and Siri Jhujar Singh attained martyrdom fighting the outnumbered enemy in the battlefield and Siri Zorawar Singh and Siri Fateh Singh Ji became martyrs in Sirhind, where they were placed in the brick wall and finely beheaded at the age of nine and seven. Our hearts quiver when we think of atrocities these tender bodies had to suffer through at the hands of the cruel government officials, and never yielding to their demands of relinquishing the Sikh faith. This also brings the chilling effect of that cold place called Thanda Burge, where Mata Gujri Ji used to wait for her younger grand children to be brought back at night after being tortured all day. We can hear the advice of Mata Ji
to her grandchildren that they should never be afraid of anything or anyone, after soothing their bodies and mental wounds inflicted by the mad butchers of Sirhind. We can see Mata Gujri Ji’s martyrdom after hearing the death of both sahibzadas.

All the historic shrines tell us how Sikh religion exclusively enshrined in each of these places. When we indulge our minds to thinking, we can only come to one conclusion that there is no other religion of this world that has given so much for the cause of protecting human rights of everyone and not just of the Sikhs. Look at the sacrifices that Sikhs made during different morchas where the Sikhs gave their lives to gain human rights for everyone. When we visit Siri Nankana Sahib, we not only think about that, this is where our guru Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji was born and this is where sikhi started from, but also see the spirits of those brave Sikhs who gave their lives to free this historic gurdwara from the clutches of a corrupt and immoral Mahant named Narain Das. I don’t believe, that even today, we comprehend the magnitude of the importance of their sacrifices of a fateful day in 1921. Without their sacrifices our historic Sikh centers would have been under the control of the corrupt, cruel and immoral Mahants. Every historic place has a history of its own. Each one holds a lesson for us to learn and apply that lesson to our lives. We do not have enough to pay a debt of gratitude to these Sikh martyrs, because without their sacrifices we would have no Sikh gurdwaras only mahant ashrams.

We have five takhats now but there was only one takhat that Guru Ji left for us to recognize as our capital building. The five takhats are Siri Akal Takhat Sahib located in Amritsar, Takhat Siri Kesgarh Sahib located in Anand Pur, Takhat Siri Putna Sahib, Takhat
Siri Hazoor Sahib in Nander and Takhat Siri Damdama Sahib in Talwandi Sabo. Siri Akal Takhat was built by Siri Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji straight in front of Siri Harmandar Sahib Ji, just a few hundred yards from there. Most Sikhs I have talked to feel that they do not understand the validity of calling other four places as takhats. There should be only one takhat of the Sikhs and we had one. The real Sikh takhat was built by our Guru Ji and this is the only one that all the Sikhs should recognize as a Sikh takhat. All the other takhats came to being after the gurdwaras were liberated from the Mahant’s and the gurdwara act was passed. The other takhats are the result of leadership expansion as it happens in politics. For politicians there is nothing sacred, their creation of takhats and akali dals are the examples of the mockery our leaders are making of our religion to control for personal gains. We have forgotten what sacrifices were made by the brave dedicated Sikhs to free our gurdwaras from the clutches of corrupt Mahants. If you talk to some of the knowledgeable Sikhs they tell us that none of the takhats practice what Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji ordered us to do and even what the rahet myriada written and passed to be enforced by Akal Takhat in 1935 and amended in 1945. If we check it, we can find out that even Akal Takhat does not adhere to following it to the law, then how can we expect any other place to follow it. Two of the five takhats, takhat hazoor sahib and takhat patna sahib have dasam granth placed side by side with Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. If there is any blasphemy of our religion and our eternal Guru Ji and traitor ship to Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, this is it, by making the writings of Veda Poojaries equal to our Guru Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, who was coroneted as Sikh guru till eternity by our last human Guru Siri Guru Gobind
Singh Ji. We are so lucky that our eternal guru has two hundred and thirty nine years of continued preaching of our gurus on this earth then ordering us that their teachings or shabad is our eternal guru till doomsday. At the same time we are the most ignorant people on this earth that we can not see or feel that our gurus gave us a gem of a religion. We are doing exactly what one of the old sayings about people like us goes (a donkey owner found a jewel in the road and he put that around his donkey’s neck). If we have an ounce of guru given wisdom left in us we should unite through discussion and not debate. Before anything else we should visit our historic places to trace the history of our guru made examples for us, and then extract their message pointed at us. Then and only then we can get back on the path of true Sikh religion.
Chapter Nineteen
Sikhs Living Abroad

If we look at the history of mankind a small number of people always wanted to venture in to finding some other place to live where they can make a better living for themselves and their families, whether it is in the same country or it is in a foreign country. Then there were invaders or rulers and still are, who wanted to expand their territory within or into the neighboring countries. Some of the reasons why people move to other countries are to avoid religious or governmental persecution. The mixture of different races is the result of migration that we see today. Sikhs moving to other countries is no different. During the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century is, when people started moving to western countries to make better living and make better life for their families. Most of the people who moved from India were Punjabis and most of most those people who moved were Sikhs. During those days it was comparatively easier to go to England and Canada than to come to the United States of America. The early arrivals had to face extreme difficulties that we can’t even comprehend today. Almost none of them could speak English. The customs were strange and the prejudice and discrimination was at its peak. In addition the immigration was always at their heels. It was difficult if not impossible to find employment.

Despite all the odds against them to succeed, patience, hard work and work ethics helped them gain and keep their employment. A handful of people arrived in the United
States during last couple of years of the nineteenth century, but it was the first decade of the twentieth century when more people started coming to America through Canada. If we look at the history even in the UK and Canada some of the East Indians were beaten and even killed by the mob, which was blaming them of stealing jobs from them. Some of the first arrivals to the U.S.A. crossed over from Canada as employees of the railroad company to build the rail line crossing the canyons in California. This company recruited them in Vancouver. There were not too many people, the Canadians that is, who wanted to work on that stretch of rail line because of the news of accidents in the canyon areas. One of the first arrivals in 1906 was my father Thakar (Tuly) Singh Johl, Munshi Singh Johl, Nand Singh Johl and Puran Singh Johl. They worked there until the rail line was completed over the canyon and there signed contract was expired. They had been visiting Yuba Sutter area on their off days. They liked it very much because of the similar climate and the farming community. All of them were farmers and they found employment in the tree farms. The first farm they gain their employment in was located on eager road and owned by Mr. Bill Eager which later became Poole Ranch. My father Thakar Singh Johl and Munshi Singh Johl worked at the same orchard till they retired to their own orchard. My father was foreman for the orchard for thirty two years. The others changed their employment to other farms. Thakar Singh and Nand Singh’s families are still residents of this area for the last hundred years. This year is our family’s centennial anniversary here.

By the year 1910 there were a few hundred to thousand people have arrived in California and most of them lived in the valley. A few who were educated found jobs in
San Francisco and Sacramento. Everybody wanted to have a place where they could all meet to discuss their problems and to find solutions to those problems. That is when they decided to have a gurdwara in Stockton in 1912, because this was located centrally. They bought a house on S. Grant Ave. in Stockton and converted it to gurdwara. And this became the center for all East Indians. This also became a place where the idea of forming gadar party was born and became official in 1913. A mansion was bought at Five Wood Street in San Francisco for gadar party office and stayed as such until it was handed over to the Indian government after the Indian independence. We know the history of the gadary babas who gave their lives and everything else for the liberation of India from under the British rule.

The history of the immigrants to other countries is the same. All of them were true patriots, honest, caring and hard working people. Everywhere they went they built gurdwaras. They did not have as many self centered, egotistic, Greedy and corrupt leaders as we find today. In every country they faced discrimination and prejudice. The only way they were able to overcome this was their work ethics. Any employer who hired them once, he did not want to let them go. The employers started helping them with immigration problems and steady employment. The numbers of East Indian immigrants increased especially in England and Canada and to less extent in America. By the nineteen twenties and thirties the numbers grew to thousands and they were all across America, but California and Sacramento valley in California remained the favorite place for the new comers because of the ease of getting employment. The immigration laws were stricter in u.s.a. But still
they came. Main route was through Canada and Mexico till the nineteen fifties and sixties. There were some who came on student visas for higher learning but it was a small number. It was during the nineteen forties when more students started coming here. Some of them got their degrees and went back and the others got visas to stay here because of their education.

It was really the immigration law changes during the presidency of John F. Kennedy which opened up the migration of our people. Before this it was the quota system that brought some families to this country beginning with nineteen forty eight. In nineteen sixty three when thousands came each year. During the late sixties and the early seventies a great number of Indians entered the United States through Europe and later in the eighties, got their status changed through the amnesty law of 1986 and also through asylum.

Our religious history in the United States started with the first Sikh arriving into this land of opportunity but it really began in 1912 with the establishment of the Stockton gurdwara.

There was no other gurdwara, mosque or Hindu temple in the United States. Everyone from India used to attend services there. About four or five times a year, a gurpurb used to be celebrated. There were chairs in the prayer hall and everybody used to sit on these during the service. Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji was placed on a platform about five feet higher above the floor. In 1935 some members of the congregation thought about removing the chairs from the prayer hall but there was a great opposition to that idea. Some of the wise people suggested that they should write to Akal Takhat and get their opinion,
which was done by the then secretary Bhai Balwant Singh Sidhu. He wrote about the customs and the desires of the sangat to keep the chairs in the hall. Five Singh sahibs gathered in Amritsar and discussed the matter on hand about the request to sit on the chairs during the service. They unanimously approved their request. This system continued in the future gurdwaras also. Congregation used to walk into the prayer hall with the shoes on, the hat in hand, bow in front of the guru and sit down in a chair. In 1950 another gurdwara was built in El Centro which was used mostly for the local sangat. During the fifties many more Indians arrived under the quota system and settled in other states also but California remained the one with the greater population of Indians. At the beginning of the sixties influx of Indians reached to very high numbers because the relatives could sponsor other relatives. The relative could bring his spouse and children with him. During the late sixties the Stockton gurdwara was not big enough to hold the entire sangat. Yuba Sutter area had the largest Sikh population and Stockton was over hundred miles away. So an other gurdwara was built in Yuba City in 1969 at Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s 500th anniversary, this was the time when professional ragis and granthis started coming to America as missionaries. It was a common practice in the UK and Canada to sponsor professional missionaries. By 1980 there were two more gurdwaras built in Yuba Sutter area, one in live oak and the other one in Yuba City about four miles south of the other gurdwara. Two more were built in the bay area. This was the beginning of the new gurdwara constructions all over the United States. The other countries were way ahead in the number of gurdwaras. One denominator was and is common in having more than one gurdwara built in the same
town was and is the split in the leadership and the desire to stay the headman. This would split the congregation. The pushed away people would build their own gurdwara. In the new gurdwara the leaders would try to make sure to have the by laws in a way that it would guaranty them the control of that particular gurdwara for life.

The first three gurdwaras in California were built by necessity. El Centro was at great distance so they built a small gurdwara to have weekly diwans there. The Yuba City gurdwara located on Tierra Buena Road was built because of more than one reason. One the Punjabi population was the heaviest in Yuba City. The second reason was that it was difficult to travel with the extended families to Stockton which was at that time close to three hours drive. The third and most compelling reason was the space. Stockton gurdwara could not hold the sangat that desired to attend the services there and there was not much room to expand in those days. After the Yuba City gurdwara was built in 1969, all the other gurdwaras are the products of disunity, ego to hold on to the control of the gurdwara, false pride in thinking for themselves as officers rather than sewadars and various varieties of personal gains. The world knows that individually the average Sikh is the most generous of them all and these egotists and selfish leaders take advantage of this in starting a new gurdwaras.

Before I go any further with the negative things we are doing and trying to find ways to change these, I would like to talk about the achievements of our people who set their goals to make their own lives and the lives of their families better. Most of them have achieved that goal. Every Punjabi, big majority of them Sikhs, who has put his foot in the
united states or anywhere else, found a way to make his living through honest and hard work. The early comers had to face the difficulties that we can’t even imagine. They looked strange to the people because they had never seen a Sikh. The language barrier, color, religion, customs, being different, threat of stealing jobs from them was the reasons for the natives not to like them. The immigration was always on their tails to make life more miserable for the new comers. With blood and the sweat of their brows, they were able to find employment, whether it was building rail line or working sun up to sunset in the farms for a few pennies a day. They always saved some of their earnings, no matter how small the pay was. They did the work that no one else was willing to do, unless one was dying of hunger. The day they would start work, they would overwhelmed the employer with their work ethics and their stamina to do hard work. Those employers did not want them to leave their employment. Many of them worked for the same employer all of their lives. Around 1910 and 1914 some of them moved to bigger cities and found employment in other fields such as warehouses and manufacturing. In 1912 they built the Stockton gurdwara which became the center for meeting place for all Indians and not just for the Sikhs.

Forming a gadar party shows us how dedicated patriots they were. Every one of the Indians, living in California, became a member of the party and most of them donated to the last penny they had to the party. After world war one the number of immigrants from India increased and there were some educated people amongst them. All of them had their first priority to save money and to send it to India for the support of their families. To some it
was an equal priority but to most it was the second to support the gadar party, because each one of them had the burning desire to see free India during their life time. During the thirties some students started coming to the United States and England to receive higher education. Some of them went back and joined the political parties that were fighting to free India. Later on, after the Indian independence, a few of the foreign educated became legislators and heads of the country and some became heads of state governments. After the Indian independence a lot of people started coming to the United States for business, as visitors and as students. Most of them later on decided to stay in this country. Educated immigrants started getting some higher paying jobs in cities and business minded people started opening their own stores. At the beginning it was Indian groceries and liquor stores and later into all types of businesses

From here on I would like to write exclusively about the Sikh immigrants to the United States and what they had accomplished and what we have lost as Sikhs. It is not because Hindus and Muslims from India did not contribute to what we have today and how we got here. They have a vital role and equal contribution for our success, that all of us are enjoying. Because I am trying to put on paper what our gurus gave us, which was universality of human race and rights for all and what we are doing to propagate those teachings. I would also like to bring out our achievements and deficiencies shared by the countless wise Sikhs that I have talked to during the last eight decades.

Some of the Sikh students, who came to the United States during the thirties, received higher degrees from the universities. I came to know some of them, when I came
to this country in 1948; I also came here to go to school. Balwant Singh Brar (Sidhu) who graduated with bachelor of science in electrical engineering at the time when dean of electrical engineering school at UC Berkley possessed the same degree, Dr. Dalip Singh Saund got his PhD in mathematics, also from Berkley and another Sikh student of that time named dr. Harkishan Singh Dhesi DDS, a dental surgeon who received his degree in dental medicine from California Dental School. There were others who received their education later and enhanced the prestige of Punjabis living here. Balwant Singh Brar and Dr. Dalip Singh Saund never worked in their profession but both became prominent community leaders and long time main sewadars at the Stockton gurdwara. Mr. Brar joined the army during world war two and became combat wounded soldier. He survived his wounds and got honorable discharge from the service, retiring as disabled veteran. He lived and grew peaches in Yuba City, playing a leadership role in the community and the peach industry all his life. Dr. Saund farmed in El Centro and in the early fifties he ran for a superior court judge and won. After his second term as a judge, he ran for a seat in congress as a democrat against a very popular and wealthy opponent and won as the first Sikh ever in the U.S. History. After two terms in the United States congress, he suffered a stroke and never recovered from it. Dr. Dhesi was also in the service before starting his private practice in dentistry and shared along with the other two in community and gurdwara leadership. He was also a peach grower.

By law Indians could not buy or own land in the country until 1946. When the law was changed, that allowed any or every person living here could buy real estate. Before this
law, there were some men who were married to women citizens. Their friends bought land in silent partnerships with them. There were some men who became citizens because of their service in the United States armed services, during World War Two as Mr. Brar was. There were six partners with him who had bought over two hundred acres deeded in his name. After the passage of the law in 1946, that gave Indians and other Asians the right to buy and own real property, the deed holders, some of them in name only, started transferring the land to their rightful buyers. The people, who held the deeds in their names legally, did not have to give it back any part of these properties but the honesty prevailed. There was not even one case of dishonesty known.

During 1949 and onward the families started arriving. There were only four families living here at the time. Most of the family influx occurred during the period of nineteen sixties and seventies. The number of non documented men from Punjab and other places increased by ten fold or more. The old timers or older people, as they were called, were the most honest, hard working, unselfish and helpful to each other. Many times if one’s family back in Punjab was in wind and needed money but he did not have enough, the friends would loan the money to him without any written agreement or a promissory note. Try that to day, when even written in legal ways does not means any thing. This is the difference between the old times and today.

The difference of immigrants from other countries and from India, mostly Punjabis, was that our ancestors had a goal to work hard and save, so their coming generations would have better lives. On the average they did better than an average American. Most of them
bought their own homes. As the educated young people started to enter this country they engaged in their professions as doctors, dentists, engineers, teachers, nurses and many other specialty fields. Our younger generation is involved in every phase and type of business and profession as it exists in the world. Most of the young people are interested in their chosen professions in schools and universities. Any field of business or profession you can think of, our younger generation is in it.

The immigrants almost always do better than the people living there for generations but the Sikhs do better than most when the environment is not so conducive for success and that’s how it was when they started landing in foreign lands. They made it easier for their coming generations to succeed. In America they are doing better than average American does professionally and otherwise. The only problem with our community is that we can not reach a point of agreement or compromise. The only thing that is good for us is, what I am telling you, and everything that you are telling me is all wrong. This is the main and only problem that is plaguing our community. We have been listening to this phrase for so long that we have started to believe it as god’s truth, ek is equal to sava lakh or one is equivalent to one hundred twenty-five thousand. This is what’s keeping us from uniting because we are taking the complement given to the Sikhs for their bravery and not to boost our ego which is already out of control. A Sikh should be a humble person and not an egotist. Why do we have this problem? This is because we have not learned how to follow our guru’s advice. We will discuss this in the next chapter to some extent.
Chapter Twenty

Paths (Akhand Path --- Sahej Path)

For us, paath means reciting gurbani. We can do this silently to keep it to ourselves or we can recite gurban little louder so people around us can hear it too. Guru Nanak Dev Ji started this ritual and preached this where ever he went. Every morning and evening he used to sing his bani. His followers started doing this at home or in a dharmsals after Guru Ji would move to another place. Guru Ji emphasized the importance of getting up early and after taking bath one should do paath before beginning to do the daily chores. That order was for ever. All of us suppose to get out of bed before day break, take bath before starting our days work. Most of us do this ritual but still there are lots of Sikhs who do not do this routinely. Some of those who don’t do it are because of circumstances. Another reason for not reciting gurbani is because ninety percent of the Sikhs can not read gurban. Most of such Sikhs meditate on naam. The purpose is the same. We concentrate on soothing our soul and clearing our mind before starting the day off. This ritual seem to remind us again and again that Waheguru is watching us all the time and we have promised him that we will do honest work all day and we have promised him to think the best for everyone at the conclusion of our morning ardas (prayer). If we have taken full advantage of our morning paath, we will feel happy and content during and after our work. We have discussed the advantages of getting up early and doing at least some paath after taking a bath. We will talk about that some more in the next chapter.
Akhand path is reading the entire Siri Guru Granth Sahib continuously without any break. It takes about forty eight hours to complete. There should be no disruption of any kind which includes talking, reading of any other bani such as doing kirtan or katha or giving lectures. These are the rules that were incorporated in rahetnama or rahet maryada also. It appeals to our common sense. Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji does not tell us how much paath we have to do, because when our gurus were here on earth they did not make any ritual that would become like a manter or magic. We suppose to remember Waheguru all the time. A lot of the rahet maryada makes a very good sense but some of it does not. I will quote some of the rules for the paath. Before doing this I would like to go over the process by which the rahet maryada was compiled. Right after the gurdwara liberation from the clutches of the cruel, greedy, corrupt and immoral Mahant’s, the Shromini Gurdwara Parbandak committee started thinking to formulate some rules by which the Sikh maryada would apply uniformly on Sikh conduct. Around 1926 or 1927 they formed a committee comprising of more than hundred people involved one way or another to come up with some uniform rules. They worked hard but could not settle on any workable plan. About nine out of ten quit attending meetings. The remaining ten to twelve members wrote the final draft and were passed in 1935 as the first published rahet maryada. Immediately, there were arguments against this document. Most of the argument was that many of the rules were contradicting the guru’s teachings. With these rules the universality of Sikh religion was compromised. There contention was that how the Sikh religion can be universal when the definition of a Sikh is so narrow minded. The discussion to amend this document
started in 1936 with a great number of Sikh scholars as committee members with open
invitation to groups and individuals to contribute by sending their suggestions or presenting
these in person. By 1945, about ten or so remaining members wrote the final script, which
became the official conduct manual for the Sikhs to follow. The following is what it says
about sadharan path and akhand path.

Sadharan Paath (intermittent reading of Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji to its entirety).

Article Eight:

A. Every Sikh should, as far as possible, maintain a separate and exclusive place for the
installation of guru granth sahib, in his home.

B. Every Sikh, man, woman, boy or girl, should learn gurmukhi to be able to read the guru
granth sahib.

C. Every Sikh should take the hukam (command) of the guru granth in the ambrosial
(early) hours of the morning before taking a meal. If he or she fails to do that, he or she
should read or listen to the reading from the guru granth some time during the day. If he or
she can not do that either, during travel, etc., or owing to any other impediment, he or she
should not give in to any feeling of guilt.

D. It is desirable that every Sikh should carry on a continuous reading of the guru granth
and complete a full reading in one or two months or over a longer period.

E. While undertaking a full reading of Guru Granth, one should recite the Anand Sahib (the
first five and the last stanza) and perform the ardas. One should, thereafter, read japji.
Akhand paath (uninterrupted- non-stop- completion of the reading of the guru granth sahib)

Article Nine:
A. The nonstop reading of the guru granth is carried on at hard times or on occasions of elation or joy. It takes approximately forty eight hours. The non stop reading implies continuous, uninterrupted reading. The reading must be clear and correct. Reading too fast, so that the person listening in to it can not follow the contents, amounts to irreverence to the scriptures. The reading should be correct and clear, due care being bestowed on consonant and vowel, even though that takes a little longer to complete.
B. Whichever family or congregation undertakes the non stop reading should carry it out itself through its members, relatives, friends, etc., all together. The number of reciters is not prescribed. If a person himself can not read, he should listen in to the reading by some competent reader. However, it should never be allowed to happen that the reader carries on the reading by himself or herself and no member of the congregation or the family is listening in to the reading. The reader should be served with food and clothing to the best of the host’s means.
C. Placing a pitcher of water, ceremonial clarified butter fed lamp, coconut, etc., around, during the course of the uninterrupted or any other reading of guru granth sahib, or reading of other scriptural texts side by side with or in the course of such reading is contrary to gurmat (guru’s way).
Commencing the non stop reading

Article Ten:

A. While undertaking the intermittent reading of the whole guru granth sahib, the sacred pudding (karah parshad) for offering should be brought and after reciting the anand sahib (six stanzas) and offering the ardas, hukam should be taken.

B. While beginning the unbroken reading, the sacred pudding first is laid. There reciting anand sahib (six stanzas), offering the ardas and taking the hukam, the reading should be commenced.

Conducting the reading

Article Eleven:

A. The reading of the whole guru granth sahib (intermittent or non stop) may be concluded with the reading of the mundawani or the rag mala according to the convention traditionally observed at the concerned place. (since there is a difference of opinion with in the panth on this issue, no body should dare to write or print a copy of the guru granth sahib excluding the rag mala). Thereafter, after reciting the anand sahib, the ardas of the conclusion of the reading should be offered and sacred pudding (karah parshad) be distributed.
B. On the conclusion of the reading, offering of the draperies. Flywhisk and awning, having regard to the requirements of the guru granth sahib, and other things, for panthic causes, should be made to the best of means.

Article twelve is regarding the preparing and distribution of krah parshad or sacred pudding. The main instructions given here are that everyone should be treated equally. No discrimination should be allowed. No other system except equality should be practiced in distributing the sacred pudding.

These rules are very straightforward. I do not think that there is anything that a reader can misinterpret. We may feel that parts of it are sort of brahmanicle. Who were the contributors to this committee? Most of them were dedicated Sikhs, some were sant babas and some of them were fundamentalist and this was the reason that about ninety percent of the original members had quit long before it was finalized by less than ten percent of them. Let us consider this to be our duty to follow these rules. Anyone who does not follow this is a selfish, manmattia or a guilty one. With this thought in mind and guru given common sense let us discuss and not debate some of these rules.

It tells us that a Sikh should do the paath himself or herself. How is this practical, when ninety percent of the world's Sikhs cannot read Guru Granth Sahib? This figure has not changed during the last eighty years at least.

The other rule is that the family that is sponsoring the paath should at least listen if they cannot do it themselves. Have we ever done these ourselves? No, at the most one spends four to eight hours out of forty eight hours listening to the reader. The women folks
do all the sewa and most men sit around on the outside of the gurdwara or the house and
gossip. There is exception to the rule. There are a few Sikhs who whole heartedly do the
sewa even when it is not their own family affair.

Guru Ji tells us the rahet maryada and he orders us also, that reading or listening alone
is not going to benefit us at all unless we follow it through our deeds. To day akhand paaths
are very popular. It is seldom that we hear that there is a sadharan paath going on in the
gurdwara or at some one’s residence. We all know that akhand paaths are being sold every
where and you do not have to be there to listen to it. The biggest dealer in this business is
shiromani committee. Three or four years ago they were asking for donations to build three
hundred more akhand paath rooms because they could not fill the orders for akhand paaths
due the shortage of the availability of rooms to do the paaths in. This makes us wonder if
anyone in the shromani committee has ever read the rahet maryada, if not someone should
tell them to do so.

Two years ago someone prepared a CD of akhand paath and he advertised the sale of
his product. The price was seventy two dollars for the recording. I heard a debate going on
about this at one of the gurdwaras amongst some people sitting outside the gurdwara
passing time. Some people were saying that this was blasphemy of our guru; the others
were saying that this was no worse than tapes of gurbani being sold every where, and to
some it was no different than the tapes. One man said that paath should be done by a person
and not a tape. The person sitting next to him asked if it was not the person whose voice
was recorded on that CD. Another person said that rahet maryada states that you should at
least listen to the paath, if you can not read it yourself, but when you buy it from the
shromani committee in Amritsar, which is over eight thousand miles from here, how do you
manage to hear that. At least your own ears can listen to the tape.

I personally asked a friend of mine, who had bought an akhandpath from Amritsar,
why he had done that. Why didn’t he sponsor it in our own gurdwara? He said that it was
cheaper there. He reiterated that the total cost including all the fees of readers and hired
sewadars plus the cost of langar comes to about two thousand dollars and it costs less than
two hundred American dollars there and the akhand paath at Darbar Sahib has to be superior
to the one in America.

Couple of years ago Hazoor Sahib was soliciting sponsors for the akhand paaths of
dasam granth (there was no dasam granth when Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji left this world).
They had reduced the price and had it brought down to the level that was charged for the
akhand path of Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The original cost of the akhand paath of dasam
granth was one and one half times more than Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. We can easily ask
the people in charge of shiromani committee and the jathedar of akal takhat for their
negligence to let such brahminical fake rituals and poojas being performed at our sacred
places.

We are prohibited by our rahet maryada not to place coconut, water gallons or any other
fake ritual during any paath, sadharan or akhand path. Have you seen one akhand path
anywhere without these fake rituals? Some time the sponsors of these paaths bring five
gallon bottles of water and place them behind or around the Guru Ji. After the akhand path
this water is given to relatives and friends to be used to cure diseases and for getting rid of
curses, which we should not even believe in. They also call this water amrit, because sant
babas had told them that the magical influence of gurbani through akhand paath changes
this ordinary water to amrit which bestows unlimited powers to the person who drinks it.

This document prohibits us from doing any other activity during the paath that
interferes with the reader’s concentration. As we know it, there did not use to be any
akhand paaths performed and only sahej paaths were done and that was also a rarity. Why
akhand paaths have become so popular these days. Some of the reasons are that it has
become a fashion. People have money and it puts a feather in our ego cap. We are brain
washed by sant babas that more akhand paaths you pay for the more of your wishes are
going to be granted by the guru, such as material wealth, power over others, will never get
sick or not so seriously, if a dear one is dying will recover and nothing and no one can ever
harm us. We use to celebrate gurus birthdays or other anniversaries of the gurus. Now the
most popular is the child is one, five, eighteen or twenty one years old. The next one is
father’s seventieth birthday or the parent’s death anniversaries. Why, because this is the in
thing so to speak. I am not against this but this should be sponsored at a Guru’s
anniversary, as it used to be done. If we know gurbani then we can realize that these are
fake rituals. If we are proud of something as seeing our children grow or something else
that brings us joy, we should become humble and thank Waheguru for his blessings instead
of feeding our egos. Guru bani is to make us realize that every life is mortal and
everything on earth is perishable. The only thing immortal is Waheguru. We are here on
earth to please him and that can only be achieved by living our lives as guru bani tells us to do. We are responsible for our own deeds and no one else’s. Whether we do paath one hour a day or twenty fours hours a day, if we don’t live it, it’s not going do us any good. We should always remember this that we can not buy the guru with any kind of material world. Guru Nanak Dev Ji has left us with the sakhi of Bhai Lalo and Malik Bhago, which teaches us the lesson that we should remember it till we die.
Chapter Twenty One

The Sikhs of Our Times and Our Faith the Sikhi

Before we talk about what we are doing and the way we are living as Sikhs, we have to have some guidelines to compare our individual and community behavior with what Guru Ji tells us to do. Let us repeat some of those rules that our gurus made for us to follow.

1. Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s golden rules of sikhi tell us how we can build a solid foundation for a Sikh life. Naam japna, kirt karni and vand shakna, which means remember Waheguru at all times, earn our living through honest means and give some of our honest earnings for the care of those who need help because they are less fortunate than we are. If we use our guru given common sense then we can realize that anyone who lives by these rules can never cheat anyone, harm anyone, can never lie or do anything that is morally wrong.

2. We should not do fake rituals or pakhand, not to believe in magic or janter manter and superstition.

3. A Sikh should never smoke, drink alcohol or use any other drugs that affect our body, mind and spirit.

4. A Sikh should lead a simple life and live with in his or her means when doing ones obligatory duties of his family.

5. Six gurus showed us how to stand up for our own rights and the rights of those who can not do it themselves in a non violent manner. One guru the fifth Guru Nanak
Siri Guru Arjan Dev Ji showed us how far we may have to go to protect our rights and convictions in nonviolent manner even if we have to become martyr. The ninth Guru Nanak Siri Guru Teg Buhadar Ji showed us how to become a martyr not only to protect our own religion but also to save some one else’s religion nonviolently. Our sixth and tenth Guru Nanaks, Siri Guru Hargobind Ji and Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji told us that if every thing else fails to protect our guru given human rights, it is alright to pick up arms to defeat the demons of tyranny.

6. We have to remember what Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji did on Baisakhi Day of 1699. He established an elite group of Sikhs called khalsa panth. This group was selected through an initiation process that will always be the only one ever performed in this manner. This group showed absolutely no fear of death due to their absolute faith in their Guru Ji. These Sikhs were the five beloved ones Bhai Daya Singh Ji, Bhai Dharam Singh Ji, Bhai Himmat Singh Ji, Bhai Mohkam Singh Ji and Bhai Sahib Singh Ji. They paid their initiation fee with their heads.

7. On October eight 1708 Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji coronated Granth Sahib Ji as the eternal Sikh guru to be known as Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. This was the day when Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji ended the line of human Sikh guruships and installed shabad as the Sikh guru for ever.

8. Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji told us on that day that we should not bow to anyone or anything other than Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and nothing should sit alongside or on the same level or higher than the eternal guru. As Sikhs we should only take
instructions from the guru. No other book, scripture or any other document should
be used in preaching sikhi.

9. According to most of the learned men that I have talked to has told me that some of
the most important and easiest points that we should remember and follow are to
know that Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji brought from Waheguru and blessed us with a
simple, easy to follow, practical, free of fake rituals. Common sense and universal
religion called sikhi. Our religion forbids us to judge others because we do not have
that authority. Our own deeds are the ones that we are going to be judged by and not
by someone else’s deeds.

10. Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji did not order or forced anyone to take amrit. He gave
amrit to those who volunteered on their own volition. They knew the price that they
had to pay for it. It was their heads.

General consensus and statistics

1. During the later years Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji had to fight many battles against
Hindu rajas and the Muslim rulers to prevent Auranzeb from doing his thing. He
swore to see everyone converted to Islam. It was difficult for the Sikhs to live in
towns away from Anand Pur Sahib. No Sikh would convert to Islam and this was
making them more determined to wipe out Sikhism. After Guru Ji, Baba Banda
Singh Buhadar acted as leader of the Sikhs. He practically killed all the officials
who had tortured younger sahizadas and Mata Gujri Ji. Then moved to take revenge
for other atrocities they committed against the Sikhs living in villages. After a few years he was martyred and the Sikhs were left without a staunch leader. This made it impossible for the Sikhs to live in towns and they moved to the jungle areas and operated against the invaders from there. For these reasons sikhi was not practiced in homes. Even in the Sikh homes Brahmin mat was prevalent and it continues to day in Sikh homes everywhere. If we observe it carefully, we can see that we are doing more fake rituals even in our gurdwaras along with some gurmat rituals.

2. If we go over the guru history, we do not find that any guru ever asked his Sikhs to look in a certain way. They preached the world to live a righteous life while raising their families. Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji did not force any Sikh to take amrit. It was voluntary, but the price was very high. It was the pledge of total dedication to sacrifice one’s own life to save own and of those person’s rights who can not protect their own. We are afraid to say this because of the criticism from others. Every Sikh even among the one’s who were fighting along side of Guru Ji were not all amritdharis. In the towns, you could not find amritdharis because they were being killed on site.

3. Statistics of the twentieth century show that there have never been more than ten percent of Sikhs who took amrit. During the last decade of the twentieth century there were less than four percent amritdhari Sikhs abroad. I would like to answer the question in advance that I am going to be asked on this for sure. How do you know or where did you get this? It is very simple and you can check it yourself. For
the over all percentage, if you were fifteen to twenty years or older, before you moved to a foreign country, count the number of Sikhs, men, women and children living in your part of the town. Then count the number of amritdharis amongst them. If you are living back home then it should be no problem to figure out the percentage. To figure out the percentage here in the U.S.A., we counted members of fifty families attending the same gurdwara and counted the total number of the members of those families. Then we counted how many of them are amritdharis. This is where we got the figure of four percent amongst our gurdwara congregation, and ten percent in Punjab.

4. The next thing I want us all to keep in mind is that before criticizing anyone, we should do our best to check out the facts. If we still don’t agree then ask the writer to explain this to us. Anything that I am writing in this book I have checked and rechecked.

5. At least for the last seventy years I have noticed that there are more Sikhs, percentage wise, who drink alcoholic beverages such as moonshine, whiskey, wine and beer. This number is given at ninety percent or more Sikhs use alcoholic drinks daily or on special occasions. This includes amritdharis and non amritdharis alike. Sikh women were the only Sikhs who did not drink any kind of alcoholic drinks. Sikh leaders in Punjab or abroad are not immune to this habit either. In fact they are worse.
6. Until the late nineteen sixties I never saw a Sikh woman take a drink, but it changed after that and more so now, because our younger generation is growing up in this culture and feeling liberated. It is not common in small towns that you will see women having a glass of cocktail in their hands along with the men folks, but it is a different scene in big cities at party times. It is estimated that around ten percent of our younger female population is using some kind of alcoholic drinks habitually or socially. This does not take much to confirm this.

7. Whether we are amritdhari s or not, as Sikhs we have to refrain from bad habits and we are obligated to follow the common sense rules of sikhi. We should remember that all rules apply to Sikh men and women alike. Anything and everything that Guru Ji preaches for us to do or not to do have its affect on our body, mind and soul.

8. No Sikh can or should try to deny the importance of amrit in a Sikh’s life. Every Sikh who becomes or wants to become amritdhari, he or she has to qualify to be an amritdhari before becoming one. Amritdhari stage in a Sikh’s life is the utmost achievement and it should be thought of as such. Taking amrit is the easiest thing to do but keeping the pledge of amritdhari is the most difficult to keep.

9. We should remember that all of us, who believe we are Sikhs, should be treated as a Sikh, whether one is amritdhari or non-amritdhari. Through the centuries most of the Sikhs were not amritdharis neither are now. We know why it is so. First of all it is the most difficult pledge to keep. The other reason which is even worse, that we don’t have enough examples amongst our communities to look up to. There are
examples of brave and true amritdharis but that is rare. Ninety percent, who are non amritdharis, use this as an excuse for not taking amrit. Most of the non amritdharis truly feel that they are not fit to be amritdharis and they don’t want to desecrate one of the most sacred blessings of the Guru Ji, the amrit.

10. We should never forget that we are not guru. We are only ordinary Sikhs of the guru. For this reason we can not judge anyone else. Only Guru Ji has the authority to judge us and during the last five hundred and thirty eight years he has never said to anyone that you are not my Sikh or that you are a bad person. What Guru Ji has said over and over again, that it is an individual’s deeds that make one a good Sikh or a bad Sikh. The authority to judge solely rests with our guru. I like to tell to all of us, let us not act as guru but stay as humble Sikhs of the eternal Guru Ji.

If we glance through the Sikh history since Banda Singh Buhader’s martyrdom in 1716, we find that Sikhs of old used to unite to face the enemy but always had problems with intra group and inter-groups relations. The Sikhs had to hide in the hills and conducted their guerilla warfare to cause great harm to the cruel ruler’s armies and the treasury. They come out from their hidings and attack when the invaders would be returning home with the loot and captured men, women and children to be sold for slavery. Sikhs would inflict great harm and free the captured men women and children. Many of these freed people would not go home but become Sikhs and join the ranks to fight the enemy. This went on until the early seventeen thirties, when the rulers admitted to themselves that they were not going to
be able to wipe out the Sikhs altogether. They tried to make peace with the Sikhs. To show their sincerity, they offered jagirs or blocks of land to the Sikhs. In 1733 they conferred the title of nawab on the Sikh leader named Sardar Kapur Singh. This gave the Sikhs time for peace and an opportunity to organize in case they were persecuted again. In 1734 they organized their forces into two groups. One called Buddha Dal or the army of the elders and Taruna Dal or the army of the young. Nawab Kapur Singh was the supreme commander of both factions. The peace did not last very long. By 1738 they took the jagirs back and started killing the Sikhs again. The same year Bhai Mani Singh was martyred. The Sikhs had to go into hiding again and organize their attacks from their hideouts in the jungle areas and from the desert areas of Rajputan. Many of the leaders like Bhai Taru Singh, Bhai Mehtab Singh, Baba Bota Singh, Bhai Subeg Singh, Bhai Shahbaz Singh and many others were martyred during the ten years or so, when wholesale slaughter of the Sikhs took place. Many battles were fought where countless Sikhs died but not in vain. They inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy and took away their loot in the process.

During 1748 the Sikhs reunited under the umbrella of Dal Khalsa. They chose Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia as the supreme commander of Dal Khalsa to lead them. They declared the territory under their control as Sikh state. They organized the area into eleven regions called misals with a leader of its own. Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was the supreme commander of them all.

Every invader did more damage of property and life in Punjab because its location was a gateway to India. The Sikhs were the only one’s who could fight back. This was the
reason that Sikhs were targeted as the enemy of all of them who invaded India to loot and took slaves back home to sell in open human markets. The misals fought back collectively and had success against the enemy. Then the same problem arose, the greed of the rich and the powerful. They started fighting against each other to gain more territory and elevate their prestige. They fought against the enemy as a united front but in peace they were fighting and plotting against each other. Mahanraja Ranjit Singh became the leader of Sukhchakia Misal in 1792 after the death of his father the raja of this misal. He was well trained from early childhood to be a leader. This duty fell upon him when he was only twelve years old. His father had taught him from the beginning that the responsibility of running his state could fall upon him at any moment and it did. Mahanraja was strong and very wise in making critical decisions. In a short time he was regarded as the supreme leader of all the misals. He fought against the tyrant Muslim rulers of some territories still under their rule, until they were driven out. There were times when the Sikh armies had to abandon their positions or had to revert back to guerilla warfare as attacking the enemy at night. Eventually Mahanraja Ranjit Singh became the sole ruler of Punjab. He established equal rights for everyone without prejudice or discrimination.

After the death of Mahanraja, the Sikh rule started deteriorating. In fights, murders and the traitors brought the end of the Sikh rule. On March twentieth eighteen hundred forty nine, the last word of the last treaty between the British and the Sikhs was written, as the last treaty of Lahore. The Sikhs abandoned any and all rights they had on Punjab government. Mahanraja Dalip Singh ended up in exile and sent to England until he died.
There was a man named Baba Dyal Das who became very popular Sikh preacher. He became a well versed scholar of gurbani during the eighteen thirty’s. He saw that many Sikhs were not adhering to the Sikh maryada. He had moved from Kabul, where he was born and studied under the guidance of Bhai Joga Singh of Kabul Gurdwara, and settled in Rawal Pindi. He started a cult of sikhi called nirankaris. Their greetings were dhan nirankar instead of sat siri akal. In later years he became known as Guru Ji. This started the line of nirankari gurus. After Baba Dyal’s death Baba Darbara Singh became the second leader or the guru of nirankaris. He was chosen by Baba Dyal Das to succeed him. He had written the code or hukam nama for the nirankaris to follow. The other nirankari leaders, who followed him, are Baba Ratta Singh, Baba Hara Singh and more followed them.

Another cult came into being called namdhari or kuka movement, started by Baba Balak Singh of Hazro. They had their own code of ethics or hukam nama. One of the most prominent leaders of the kuka movement was Baba Ram Singh. He was in the Sikh army of Prince Nau Nihal Singh. After he left the army he met Baba Balak Singh at Hazro and became his disciple. When Baba Balak Singh died in 1862 Baba Ram Singh became the leader of the namdhari cult. Some of their rules are anti Sikh, as it relates to morals and self discipline. They did a great job of preaching sikhi and stopping some of the brahmanicle rituals being done by the Sikhs. Baba Ram Singh made great effort to get rid of the British rule from India. The British slaughtered many of the namdharis, either by shooting or hanging them. The British government kept them under keen surveillance and watched
their every movement. Baba Ram Singh was exiled to Rangoon where he was kept until his death.

They departed from the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Guru Gobind Singh Ji in many ways. They practiced a closed society. Outsiders were treated as inferiors. The food they ate had to be prepared by them, they would use only their own utensils to cook and eat in. It was almost like, that they were the superior class of Sikhs, which goes against the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. They started indulging in drugs such as marijuana. They built their own gurdwaras. If they went to the other gurdwaras they would not accept krah pashad there nor eat in the common kitchen, along with the rest of the sangat. They do not say the same ardas as we do. When one takes amrit it is his or her personal container of amrit, that he or she drinks out of and not like the usual custom to drink amrit from the same pot, circulated more than once, so that each candidate to become amritdhari, drinks from the common pot that everyone else has used. Their ardas is not the same. They believe in continuous succession of human guruship. They had sided with the government against the Sikhs during many confrontations. They were the ones’ who took charge to rebuild the akal takhat after the Indian government demolished through bombardment, during the 1984 attack on the most revered Sikh center in the world, at the request of the Indian government, while the Sikhs were against it. The Sikhs ended up demolishing that and rebuilding it with their own money. They have drifted away from following the teachings of the Sikh gurus as the nirankaris have done. After Baba Ram Singh died in Rangoon in 1872, his brother Baba Hari Singh took over the leadership. He was not allowed to move out of Bhaini, the main
center of the kukas, at any time while he was the supreme leader of kukas. He died there in
1906. After his death his son Baba Partap Singh accepted the leadership. After 1920 the
restraining order against the kuka leadership was cancelled and Baba Partap Singh was
allowed to move about. He tried to bring the kuka’s code of ethics to coincide with the Sikh
code but he was unable to do that, due to heavy opposition. In 1947, after the partition of
India, he moved the headquarters from Bhaini to a new Kuka colony called Jiwan Nagar
near Sarsa, district Hissar in Haryana. After his death his son, Baba Jagjit Singh became the
leader of the Kuka sect.

Nirankaris made some improvements to re-establish Sikh Maryada but later fell
backward. The namdhari or kuka movement was also short lived. Their prosperous
beginning made British suspicious and they started putting restrictions on their activities. In
1872 they executed, imprisoned and deported some of the namdharis. This is when they
exiled Baba Ram Singh to Rangoon. They also started doing some rituals that many Sikhs
took these as antisikh maryada. There were other forces working against the spread of sikhi
and that was the increase of Christian missionaries and creation of a militant Hindu
organization called aryasmaj. For these and many other reasons Siri Guru Singh Sabha
came into being during 1873 at Amritsar. Three of its prominent leaders were Kanwar
Bikram Singh, Baba Khem Singh Bedi and Sardar Thakar Singh Sandhwalia. Professor
Gurmukh Singh convinced the members of the Amritsar Singh Sabha that there was a
greater need for Singh Sabha in Lahore. On November 26, 1879 an affiliate Singh Sabha of
Amritsar was created as Lahore Singh Sabha. Its first president was Diwan Buta Singh and Professor Gurmukh Singh was secretary.

The secretary being an educator understood the value of education and wanted to promote this amongst the Sikhs. This stood at the same level of importance as was to promote guru given Sikh Maryada. Soon after, to centralize the sabhas, khalsa diwan and the chief khalsa diwan societies were created by the same people with the addition of some more prominent and dedicated Sikhs. They made strides religiously and also laid the foundation for khalsa college Amritsar which became reality after a few years. The education movement started many primary, middle and khalsa high schools in villages and small towns.

Before 1920 akali movement was started. Soon after akali dal became the political wing of the Sikhs. Later on the Sikhs got divided into two groups one led by Master Taara Singh and the other led by Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia. 1920 to 1925 was the period, when gurdwara liberation movement became successful in bringing the gurdwaras under the control of the Sikhs instead of the Mahant’s. This did not come cheap. Thousands and thousands of brave Sikhs were martyred during this struggle. There were many morchas or protests for civil rights for everyone, not just for the Sikhs, but Sikhs were the one’s paying the price, with their properties and their heads. Eventually the gurdwara act of 1925 created S.G.P.C. took control over most of the gurdwaras. The Sikh struggle did not end there but it created a base for the Sikhs to launch their grievances from. Universal code of ethics for the Sikhs, the Sikh rahet nama was created in 1935 and revised in 1945. This document is
far from being perfect and nowhere close to portraying the true teachings of the Guru Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Why do we say this? Because there were over one hundred Sikh scholars assigned to this committee plus many more volunteers designated for this mammoth task. They were to create guidelines that every Sikh could gladly follow. Only ten percent of these were left to write the final document. All others quit because of a lack of compromise by the remaining ten percent. Sikh history is unmatched just like Sikh religion and Sikh scriptures are unmatchable. Alas, we are not even following that code of Sikh ethics.

I would like to say something about the Sikhs living in foreign lands and the Sikhs of today in general. At the beginning of exodus of Indians, most of them were Punjabi Sikhs, who left to migrated to foreign countries, we can conservatively give a figure of over ninety percent of all the people who left India during the last decade of the nineteenth century were Sikhs. They ended up in almost every country that was known to be prosperous countries and needing honest, hard working laborers. Many of them went to the countries under British control. The others ended up in European and South American countries. Next to England, Canada was more popular country and it was the first stop to enter the United States of America. They had to face great prejudice and discrimination. The biggest obstacle was their lack of education and not being able to communicate. If we can put ourselves in their shoes, most of us would not have made it. They are our pioneers. Because of their sacrifices we are enjoying the fruits of their labors.
The reason for most of them being Punjabi Sikhs was that they were farmers and no one works harder than a farmer and no one can be more honest than a farmer. They wanted to venture when some countries opened their doors for the immigrants. In Canada they worked in lumber mills and farms and in America it was farms. We all know how hard it was for them to find a job, if we don’t we can easily imagine how hard it would have been.

A very few people came to America during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Mostly they started entering the United States through Canada and some through Mexico beginning with 1906 and settling in California. It was illegal immigration. They had to hide from the immigration and find a job to accomplish what they had come here for. Almost all of them who migrated were successful. Even though they were illegal and did not know the language, the first thing they thought of was to have a gurdwara where they could worship the guru and have a place to meet, and to keep up with the whereabouts of everyone else. In Canada they built a gurdwara during eighteen nineties at Vancouver and in America they built the first gurdwara in 1912 at Stockton, California. In both countries Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims attended the meetings to gather. The Canadian immigration laws kept changing often along with amnesties, which helped the increase of Sikh population there. In America it was always difficult to enter and then get a legal resident status. It was around 1939 when people living here for ten years or more and had jobs were given the resident status, but they could not own property, which came later in 1946. That was the first time that the Asians were allowed to purchase real property ever. Not many young people came to the U.S.A., until the 1950’s. Only a few students came in 1948 and
1949 to go to college. Under the quota system some Punjabi families started arriving in California. It was not until 1963 that families started coming in great numbers because of the immigration law change, which allowed the family members of the legal residents to receive visas.

The Sikhs of old were very easy going, friendly and helpful people. They got along very well and had a very few problems within the community. They were happy to have, at least one gurdwara in Stockton until 1969, when the population of Yuba Sutter area Punjabis increased many folds. The need for local gurdwara was felt. For the first time there were Punjabi children here in great numbers. It was felt that the only way we could keep the children tuned into our culture and the Sikh religion was, to have a local place of worship. The gurdwara was built in Yuba City and also the seed of disunity was sowed. It was not that every one disagreed on every thing but this was a different kind of disunity. Quarreling parties started thinking of having their own separate gurdwaras so they could become the head leaders. Some people never had a chance to be leader and the gurdwara gave them that chance. Some families brought a load of inferiority complex with them and becoming a leader in the gurdwara gave their ego a big boost. Beginning in the eighties, the gurdwaras were being built everywhere in the states. Most of these gurdwara were built because of split amongst the leaders. There was always one person with some followers or it was a family that did not want to let the control go. Some of them found out that they sponsor their family relatives to come to the states without going through the legal channels. There were other illegal activities which had monetary outcomes through the gurdwaras.
Before I start telling too many shame full things that we are doing to day and most of them are connected to our gurdwaras. I would like to say that we have made a very good place here in Yuba Sutter area, for ourselves and for our future generations. Our forefathers did all the work and we are reaping the fruits of their labor. We have our hand in every kind of business and profession, and all of us are doing very well in our chosen occupations. The only problem we have is our lack of unity and that is caused solely by the leadership of our gurdwaras. Any one who gets hold on the gurdwara through group or family or family plus a group; they don’t want anyone else in the role of a leader in the gurdwara. The congregation is beginning to believe that a lot of hanky panky is going on in the gurdwaras here, the same way as is going on in the S.G.P.C. in Punjab.

I would like to bring out some of the causes that are dividing us in our gurdwaras. If we look at the problems at one gurdwara we don’t have to go any further, because it is the same problem in Punjab, as is in foreign countries. Guru Ji made the Sikhs so self sufficient and so independent that we forget to take Guru Ji’s advice on reconciliation when things are not smooth intra community wise. Bodily we are told to be as healthy and strong as we can possibly be, through simple living, eating natural foods and exercising, keeping our minds free of vulgar and corrupt thoughts and keeping our spirits high by meditating on naam. He teaches us that we are responsible for our own deeds individually. This has made us so independent that we forget to realize that we can not achieve our goal without being united, which is to become better Sikhs ourselves and persuade others to do the same. Sikhs have always been taken advantage of and used by others. This also is the result of our ignorance
for not learning our guru’s message ourselves, instead we take the words of others who manipulate us for their personal gain. It is late but not too late for all of us to wake up and begin to learn gurbani and practice what it tells us to do.

Again I would like to emphasize that this is not my opinion alone, this is what I have learned from others over the years, especially over the last fifteen years, since I started thinking to put our thoughts on paper. First I would like to state what we suppose to do or how we should live our Sikh lives, then I would like to describe what goes on in a typical gurdwara any where.

I can not repeat this enough times, even if I state this at the beginning of each paragraph, that there never was, there is none at present and there never will be in the future, any religion that can compare with the religion that Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji gave to this world and it is Sikh religion. Everyone who has studied the Sikh religion says that the Sikh faith is a universal religion and none other ever existed to match it. These statements are made by non Sikhs, who took upon themselves to do comparative study of world religions. To know this and arrive to this conclusion one has to study it, understand it and then analyze it. One can not know the true value of this unmatched religion by listening to the self centered preachers including sant babas because they do this for their material gains.

Before I write what kind of Sikhs most of us are, I like to state our religion has produced countless martyrs who set examples for the world and for us specially. We should live by what we believe in and preach others. The following are some of the examples that explain why sikhi is unmatched
1. Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji was the first prophet or guru who preached equality with equal rights to pursue one’s life. Not only preached but stood up for the rights of everyone. Taught the world how to protest nonviolently. Siri Guru Arjan Dev Ji and Siri Guru Teg Buhadar Ji made themselves the extreme examples of nonviolent protests at the expense of their lives.

2. To liberate India from the yolk of British, beginning with 1857 and ending in 1947, it was over ninety percent Sikhs, amongst the martyrs who gave their lives through hanging, shot to death or murdered by beating in nonviolent protests.

3. Ninety percent of the property belonged to the Sikhs that was confiscated by the British because of taking part in those protests to free India.

4. Over seventy five percent of those were Sikhs who went to jail because of the protests against the British rule.

There is lot more of the sacrifices that the Sikhs made during the struggle for independence, but what did the Sikhs got in return for being two percent of the population and having ninety percent of the share in sacrifices. What happened to the promises that Sikhs would have autonomy in Punjab and the sanctity of sikhi would be protected? We got the opposite. Our most sacred shrine Darbar Sahib Complex was blown out by bombs and tanks by an arrogant and tyrant Prime Minister Indra Gandhi, because she wanted to finish the Sikhs. When she was killed by her own bodyguard her son Rajib Gandhi ordered the genocide of the Sikhs, which was carried out with the help of police and elected tyrants. None of those criminals has been brought to justice yet.
We should remember all those martyrs because what ever honor we have left, it is because of their unselfish sacrifices.

We have some true Sikhs today and there always will be true Sikhs until eternity, but we don’t see them amongst us too often. The following is about us, the majority that has become egotistic society of braggers. All of us are saying that Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji ordered the closure of the guruship in human form and coronated Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as our eternal guru. We suppose to regard shabad as guru forever, because it is what all the gurus preached when they were walking on this earth in person. He also told us that nothing should be treated or respected or worshipped equal to Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. This last order of our tenth Guru Nanak Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji does not seem too difficult or complicated for us to understand, but not any of us, including the religious leaders including the takhat caretakers, preachers and the one’s who have become authority in our religion are following this order. To begin with, we are told that every Sikh should recite five banis every day. The same five banis are recited during the amrit ceremony. Only two of these banis are from Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. This is a very simple and factual example. The only way we can justify this, is through our manmat because it is not gurmat. We can say that Guru Gobind Singh Ji ordered us to read only Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, but we have changed this order or we can say that he never ordered us to follow Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as our guru, we just made this up. Can you accept this explanation? I asked for an explanation from over a hundred Sikhs about, why we recite five banis when three out
of five are not in our Guru Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. More than half of them said that ardas was not in our Guru Granth Sahib Ji. I was unable to convince them that my question was not about ardas, it is about going against the order of our last guru in human form.

No book should be placed alongside or worshipped as equal to our guru. Two so-called Sikh takhats, Hazoor sahib and Putna sahib have a book called dasam granth alongside of Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and treated equal in every manner such as taking hukam and doing akhand paths. The only difference is that one has to pay higher price for having the dasam granth read continuously or akhand path of this book, in comparison to having akhand path of Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. We are so naïve and gullible that we are accepting this book as it was written by our tenth master. This book did not exist in 1708. It was written at least fifty years after Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji left his Sikhs for ever. Most of the book is so vulgar and immoral, that we can not read this to our children or even to read it in any moral society. It is full of filthy language and porn.

The highest authority of Sikhs is supposed to be the caretaker or jathedar, as we call him, of akal takhat. A few years back he re-introduced a book that was supposedly banned by the Sikhs, under his name. This book called gurbilas patshahi sixth was written by an unknown author and at an unknown period. It probably was written by a porn specialist. As a jathedar of akal takhat, he is the protector of Sikh honor. How can he even think of reissuing a book that blasphemises our guru and the Sikh doctrine of
Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. I can not describe the pain it causes to an average Sikh’s heart. Nothing can match the disgrace that this book brings upon the religion that is so pure in its teachings. Bhai Gurbabakhas Singh Kala Afgana wrote some books to prove that this book rain’s disgrace upon our religion. What happened to Bhai Kala Afgana? Jathedar Vedanti kicked him out of the Sikh panth and was unwilling to discuss it according to the advice of our eternal Guru Ji. How can this religion survive when the fence erected to save the crops from predators, is destroying the crop that it suppose to protect. All the big Sikh leaders have admired Joginder Singh Vedanti in writing about monumental work of disgracing the Sikh religion by reintroducing this filthy book. Some of the names are Gurcharn S. Tohra who reigned over S.G.P.C. for over twenty five years, Parkash Singh Badal we all know who he is, ex Jathedar Ranjit Singh who thinks that sikhi is limited to eating by sitting on the floor, Manjit Singh Granthi, many of the other head granthis and jathedars of other takhats. It is so sad that we don’t have anyone of them who really knows what Sikh religion stand’s for.

Any Sikh of an average intelligence can tell at a glance that the three books, dasam granth, gurbilas patshahi sixth and gurbilas patshahi tenth, could not have been authored by our guru or any of guru’s Sikhs could write such a thing about our gurus. Guru Ji preached against such things as are portrayed in these books. Let alone our gurus, even no Sikh could or can write such books which are disgrace to our religion and our gurus. If you read these books yourself, then you can find out first hand how filthy these are. You can not read these in the presence of family and children. These books are not fit to
be of any religion, let alone Sikh religion, which is the purest of them all. If our leaders
don’t change their course or gotten out of leadership or we, as ordinary Sikhs don’t
wake up and learn for ourselves, what guru given sikhi is, then only the prayers to
Waheguru can help us to save this unmatched religion of the world. We should take an
oath that all of us will try to learn our religion by reading gurbani and guru history
ourselves. We can not have any excuse for not doing this because it is available in
many of the word’s languages. If we can not partake this, then at least we should stop
learning sikhi from slick sant babas, greedy preachers and corrupt leaders.

Now I would like to talk about what goes on in a typical gurdwara in India or
abroad. Please don’t read between the lines. My purpose is to bring out our near
sightedness in managing the gurdwaras that exist and the ones that we are about to
construct. I am not alone who holds these views. This whole book is derived through
consultation with thousands of Sikhs, majority of them are well versed in our religion
and the others are like me, who know enough to convince ourselves but not enough to
be true preachers. My sole purpose of writing this book is to bring out the inequities,
deficiencies and misinterpretations of our guru’s message by using our guru given
common sense. We start how a gurdwara becomes reality from the thought of needing
one in a community. When the Sikhs arrived in any foreign land and they became
enough in numbers, that they can afford to build a gurdwara, they built one. This is
inherent amongst the Sikhs that we have to have a gurughar, otherwise our lives are
incomplete. We feel that some energy giving source is missing. The other thing that
plague’s all societies is the clicks and we are not immune to that. Probably we are little worse. This happens even before we think about building a gurdwara. We create one society with a patriotic name. Before we know it there is another opposing society with a more appealing name. A few years later we all get together and build the first gurdwara in our adopted country. Soon after or a long time after in some countries, like in America, more people came followed by the families with children. Because of the distance that families have to travel or the overcrowding of the existing gurdwara or because of not having enough space. We start thinking and eventually build a local gurdwara. Sometimes it follows another one built for a smaller community somewhere else. The first gurdwara almost always follow a split in the local community in two societies. Both societies co-operate in building the first gurdwara locally. Before the building is completed each society wants to have a bigger authority in its operation. Within the first year one society manages to take over the control and the other one is left to complain. This control comes with some legitimate reasons, as majority of directors belonging to one party but mostly comes from the hunger for leadership and also for personal gains for the leadership of the controlling party. The end result is another gurdwara, not because it is needed but because the ego is bruised on one side and it is swelled to disproportion on the other side. Both parties forget what they had built the gurdwara in the first place, which always begins with solemn oath that we need the gurughar so our children will not forget our religion and our culture. This pledge gets lost by the time the gurdwara opens its doors the first time.
One person out of the controlling group always has the biggest ego and designs to become a dictator like. He is usually illiterate with modern standards, can’t read gurbani, does not know what Sikh religion really is, is rich or a relative of a rich man and is most selfish with no shame or conscious. Through his manipulating nature he starts acting like the sole decision maker. The others don’t even know what he is doing or how deceptive that person is. He takes advantage of the old Sikh belief that no Sikh will ever use the gurughar for personal gain of any kind. He is always able to find new allies if disagreements arise. Most members or directors even admire him for his sewa. Over the years he becomes like a con artist. He knows how to pacify everyone. The meantime he gains so much power that most of the congregation can’t even imagine, financially and prestige wise. Non Sikhs start looking at him as the only spokesperson of the entire Sikh community. His ego becomes so big that an elephant can easily stroll through it without any difficulty. People living abroad can easily figure out the financial gains he can make, without stealing a penny from the gurdwara treasury through fake receipts of fake donations and by not paying all the pledges.

The second stage of these corrupt gurdwara leaders starts with giving money to visiting preachers, whether they are ragis, kathakars or sant babas. These people sell their souls to this man and become his PR men where ever they go for the rest of their lives. If they ever stray from their job, the culprit defames them with fables about their character, not that they are really clean or moral people to begin with. Anyone who is employed by the gurdwara has to live as his personal slave. By this time he gathers
enough support from gullible persons. Usually he is a rich man and many of his supporters feel indebted to him for one favor or another. During this period he starts doling out some leadership to his family members, such as making his relatives secretaries, treasures, vice’s or even presidents. He makes sure that the kursi or the control stays in his family or group. By then it has become a disease for them and termites to the gurughar, figuratively speaking.

Their third stage start when they become invincible, not in reality. The congregation becomes deaf and blind and don’t hear or see the misdeeds of those leaders. During the election time they pick their backers without an election and they take the shape of a dictator. They start registering religious and political organizations, which start giving them publicity. They may or may not have any respect or credibility locally but they become famous where people don’t know them. It is not that there are not any sensible or dedicated people in such congregations, but because they feel that the gurdwara is our god’s house and most people don’t want to go to court or to have fights in the gurdwaras. So these self centered and selfish people stay in power. They use these religious places fully for their personal gains. As we all know that Sikhs are the most charitable people and they keep giving to the gurdwaras in the hopes their hard earned money will be spent in the name of the guru. The sangat of these places know fully well that these kinds of leaders use their donated money to advance themselves in political and religious circles. An average Sikh does not care where his donations go. They think that their self made pledge is paid. They care less if someone steals it, spends it
for personal use or pay ones own debts or uses it in his own business. Even if they know that their hard earned money is not used what it was intended for. It is difficult for most of us to think that knowingly giving money that is used to promote one’s self or unrelated expenses is a crime against our religion by these leaders. It is also a sin to be a co-conspirator by continuing to give them money without knowing, where it is going. Otherwise we are going to end up in the same hell, where they are going to end up. It is a sin to help or promote sin. They knowingly create disunity in our places of worship because this is one ingredient that keeps them in business. They become the arbitrators after creating disunity themselves. Corrupt leaders thrive on this method. They shout slogans and start movements in the name of freedom for the Sikhs in India. They start protests against the government in front of their embassies or consulates. Hundreds of Sikhs gather to shout slogans for freedom. Where do you think you are going to find these instigators? You will find them sitting inside the embassy, sitting next to the ambassador drinking coffee and telling him, those are crazy people. They don’t know what they are doing. It appears that they do this knowingly and a well planned manner and seem to be on the side of the enemy of the Sikhs. Take it post 1984 or check their activities of to day. Most of these leaders are veda poojaries.

By the time they reach the fourth stage, they have created two factions in their respective gurdwara and have made sure that there is no chance these groups can unite. The leader keeps his kursi intact. Usually these leaders have their families involved in the gurdwara management. Long before this, he has them convinced that if he looses
the control of the gurdwara no one is going to let them go inside the place and they believe him. He gets them in believing that their family is the only one that deserves the control of the gurdwara. If they don’t follow him, he joins with the other group but one thing he makes sure of is, that every child of his family who has attained the age of eighteen years, becomes a director trustee or something else of the gurdwara. His family can not go against him because he has them brainwashed in believing, that without him they are nothing. They have only one solution. They try to take him away from the other group and pledge their support if he comes back home. After lashing out his anger and dishing out enough insults to them that they will never think of leaving him again. He breaks up with the non family group and blames them for all the rotten things he has done in the name of religion. The coast is clear to do what ever he wants to do in “his” gurdwara.

The leader has the full control of the gurdwara for years but he wants more. The greed is the most notorious and untreatable disease. That’s what this type of leaders of god’s houses are inflicted with. Now they want to make one’s authority a permanent dynasty. They violate all the bylaws of the religious corporations and start using the bylaws of non religious corporations. Some members of the group have practical experience of such entities. There are many co-ops that has gone belly up but made the management rich and saved them from bankruptcy, while the members either went bankrupt, or reached at the brink of bankruptcy. They hire high-power attorneys to guide them to make the take over permanent. They threaten people who dare to stand
up against them. With the help of their attorneys, they make new rules to shut the
congregation’s mouth. All this is done under the protection of security guards placed
inside and outside the meeting rooms, backed by the police on demand. No elections for
years when gurdwara bylaws demand annual elections and annual dues paid. Who
could ask them? They become the kings of deception and owners of the gurdwara.

How can we, as ordinary and simple Sikhs, can stop and prevent such things in the
future from happening? There is not anything that is fool proof, but understanding
guru’s message and unity to face such evil is the only solution to remedy this incurable
disease. Each one of us has to become unselfish first, then unite and proceed to go the
full distance until this disease is fully cured.

We will discuss most of the things we are doing wrong and some of the ways we can
adapt for not to let our religion being used by anyone for their personal gains. May be
we can make converts out of these fakes, if we unite to show them that they are not only
hurting our glorious religion, but they are also hurting their own dignity. In the next
chapter I would like to discuss why it is crucial for us to keep our pledge to our younger
generation, when we build our gurdwaras, also how we can help our youth, because they
are our future.
Chapter Twenty Two

Our Duty Towards Our Younger Generations

Throughout the history of mankind on this earth people have tried to do things that would make life easier, better and more comfortable for their future generations than their own in every respect. This idea is universal. Each nation, race and religion wants their future generations more informed and better people than any other entity. They start educating their young ones at home, in schools, through community workshops and through religious institutions. Religion is considered one of the most important lessons to be taught to the children from the early beginnings in every community on the planet earth. We, as Sikhs, are no different. Our gurus paved the righteous path for us to follow, but did not force us to walk on it. They only stressed that this is the right path, and you, individually, have to decide whether to walk on it or not. The fruits of your labor are going to be yours only. No one else’s good deeds are going to help you. Only your own deeds will decide your fate in Waheguru’s court.

What can we do to put our future generation on the right path? The answer to this question solely rests upon us. Most all of the children copy their elders, there are exceptions to every rule, and we watch these examples every day. The children start learning from the day they are born, according to the psycho-biologists babies start their learning while they are still in their mother’s womb. One thing is for certain, that what the mother eats, drinks and the abusive behavior of the parents towards each other have
effect on children later on in their lives. We as Sikhs suppose to have fewer problems with the above mentioned items, because Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji was the first prophet who declared the equality of men and women. There is no superiority or inferiority due to the gender of a person. Guru Ji also forbade us from using tobacco, alcohol or any other mind altering drugs. All we have to remember is the teachings of our gurus, and also remember that our deeds or habits are not only going to affect us but these are going to have influence on our children. Most of their traits are going to be what ours are. This should be our first lesson, which we should not only talk about but to live it. If we want our next generation to be better and have more, then this is not asking too much from ourselves to shape the future of our children.

One of the most important rules of treating boys and girls equally, is not practiced by almost any of us. If any of us doubt this then check it yourself. How many times, the Sikh parents take their newborn daughters, from the hospital to the gurdwara before taking them home the first time. Not too often, do we? How many times do you see the parents celebrate their daughter’s first, fifth, eighteenth, twenty first or any other birthday by having akhandpath at the gurdwara and inviting the whole town to join in. We have seen only the boy’s birthdays being celebrated. Even though it is over five hundred and thirty eight years, when Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji told us to treat boys and girls equally, it is not too late for us to start now. If we really pay attention, Guru Ji said that women should be regarded better than men.
Another important thing we have to remember is that our children are going to learn from the examples we set for them ourselves. If we are abusive, drink alcohol, smoke or do any other forbidden practices, the children are going to grow up thinking that it is all right to do these, because their parents were doing that. No sacrifice should be too high to pay, if it makes our future generations better than we are, in our case better Sikhs.

Most of us, in the old generation in particular, are uneducated. In most instances it is not our fault. In my time education was not important. A college graduate could only get fourteen rupees a month, if he was lucky enough to get a job. Most of our families were farmers or small family business people, where education was not important. In those days there were three important ingredients necessary for a child to get education. The first one was that the parents had to want their children to go to school. Every parent wanted that the same way as we want it today. The second condition was that the child had to want to go to school. Most of us did not want to go to school. The third part was that the child had to have the capacity to learn and there was a lot of memory involved in receiving education during those days. If one did not do the home work and could not give the right answer to the teacher’s question, he was beaten with a stick. Because of lack of one of these three, only eight to ten percent of all the children even started school. There were very few girls’ schools. To day there is no reason for anyone not to get education. This is our duty to talk to our children the importance of education and to start teaching them the principles of our religion. It is never too early to talk about sikhi to our children but we have to try to live by what we are teaching
them. How can we tell them that drinking is bad, when we have a glass of whisky in our hand and telling our children to refrain from drinking? And abstain from other bad deeds. We should start taking them to the gurdwara from very first month of their lives and whisper in their ears the rules of behavior while in the presence of the guru. We should continue this throughout their early years.

The utmost responsibility of teaching the principles of our religion to our children rests with us, the parents and grandparents. We can not put this on someone else’s shoulders. The next in importance are our gurdwaras. This is where most problems lie. There are some gurdwaras that have Punjabi classes once or twice a week and some don’t have any. The one’s that have classes are not as organized as they should be. I remember a dedicated Sikh born to be a teacher, started teaching Punjabi in one of the gurdwaras during the seventies. He was the teacher, transporter and supplier of most of the supplies for the classroom. His students progressed in learning to read Punjabi and do path in a very short time. The number of students reached around one hundred and fifty. He had some able and willing co-workers. Even some of his students became teachers to assist him in teaching other children. Over the years the sangat started appreciating the value of his tireless effort to make our children better Sikhs. Every member of the congregation started admiring his dedication to put the children first on the priority list, for which the gurdwara was built in the first place. This did not set well with the ego filled leaders. They were not getting any credit for this good thing. The reason they did not get credit was, because they played no part in this. The leaders
started harassing him, criticizing him and putting road blocks for him to do his duty without their interference. They wanted the granthies to take over the school, because they said that the granthies are more qualified to teach gurbani to children, even though they knew different. There was no one more qualified than him. Eventually he got fed up and quit. The gurdwara never had such program since. There are people who want to teach but the leaders don’t like them, because they know everything more about our religion than the leaders.

The teacher that I have written about has not quit teaching. He taught the children in many other gurdwaras and some of them as far as Selma, about 250 miles from Yuba City. He taught over hundred children there to do path. Now teaches close to hundred children at his home without any kind of compensation. He spends his own money for school supplies. His name is Subedar Jagroop Singh Atwal. We need such people, if we want our children to follow sikhi and have respect for us. The only way we can achieve this is for our leaders to drop their egos, or we get rid of them from the leadership role.

When our children reach the sixth, seventh or higher grades they become sensitive to their environment. They have already gained more knowledge than most of us have learned in our whole life time. If our gurdwara leaders don’t learn what sikhi really is and follow it, then we are not going to be able to teach our religion to our children.

We don’t have any other choice to fulfill our obligation to our children, except treat them with respect and relay our message with humility. The way our leaders are acting,
their behavior is intolerable for an average intelligent child or adult. These children have been born in different era than us. On the average they are more intelligent in every respect than we are, because they learn with the push of a button in five minutes that took us years to learn. Their analytical minds are sharper than ours. When the leader tells them from the stage that they are not Sikhs because their appearance does not match with an appearance of a Sikh, they feel insulted. They don’t like it. This is one of the reasons, why they don’t come to the gurdwaras. They know what kind of Sikh, the leader is. If they know the guru history they would never use such demeaning words, because our Guru Ji teaches us the opposite. He never said that you are not my Sikh because you don’t look in a certain way. If each one of us remembers that our deeds are going to make us good or bad Sikhs and not our appearance, then no one would tell the other that you are not a Sikh. Guru is the only one who will judge us.

Why don’t the young people jump back at the egotist leader to tell him off, because they feel sorry for such people for having such a low esteem of themselves and the only way they can feel good is when they say that some one else is not good. Please read gurbani and learn.

Unless the leaders come down from the ego trip and let the able and intelligent people run our gurdwaras who can cater to the whole sangat and not just their group or their families. There are lots of young people who understand our religion better than some of the leaders do. Let them contribute. They have wealth of ideas to make us all
better Sikhs. We have to learn and teach guru given sikhi to our children and not the
fables told by sant babas.

I am going to add a letter to its entirety that a young man wrote to me in November
1997 in response to my comments on the radio. For about eight months I would cover
ten minute segment on Punjabi radio program talking about problems in the gurdwaras,
our future generation and our responsibility to them and about the deaf ears of our
gurdwara leaders. This was the very first program in Punjabi and did this service for
almost half a century. This program was hosted by Harbhajan S. Johl and Nirmal Singh
Shergill. The hosts invited the gurdwara leaders to discuss our problems and find
solutions together along with the sangat of the gurdwara. They refused then and they
refuse now to discuss anything in front of the congregation about the misdeeds in the
management of the gurdwara and the insults towards our younger generation. This is
the letter that I received in November 1997.

Nov. 24, 1997

Dr. Gulzar S. Johl

Yuba City, CA. 95991

Dear Dr. Johl

I have been listening to your comments regarding Sikh youth with great interest. I
feel I have come to a point where I would like to express my comments concerning this
subject.
First, I wish to commend you on your honest and straightforward views. Few people have the strength and determination to say what is on their minds without fear and inhibition. Thank you for expressing the feelings of so many other silent followers.

I am a second generation Sikh youth who has been brought up in America. I have been with a basic understanding of the Sikh religion, and am thankful that I ventured on my own to learn more about our proud and vast history. To my understanding, Sikhs are supposed to be an extremely resourceful group of people who offer help to those that are weak. My pride and respect for those who follow the teachings of the gurus holds no bounds. However, it is sad commentary that the so called “leaders” of our community are not worthy of being called true Sikhs. They are so busy fighting amongst one another, that their ignorance does not allow them to help anyone, much less the Sikh youth.

Recently, we have been provided with an excellent example of the leadership that these individuals pretend to provide. It seems the floods at the beginning of 1997 were a true test of faith. Where were our leaders at that time? They turned backs on the entire Sikh community and ran without looking back. How great it would have been to have to have a Sikh presence along the levees that protect our city and people. These cowards expect us to follow them. We were instead proud of our American neighbors who risked their own well-being to save the lives of not only of humans, but animals as well. A life is a life and each is precious regardless of color and religion. Americans obviously understood this because it was only their congregation that gathered to help
those who lost everything. My question to our “leaders” is this: where were you the self proclaimed, holy, and brave Sikhs? Why did you not organize a committee to help those poor people in need? My friends and I would have been more than happy to volunteer our time and energy for doing something that our gurus have taught us: help everyone and anyone in time of need. That is the example our community leaders should have set for us. Instead, they were thankful that the levee did not break towards Yuba City. Is the pain of our neighbors not our pain as well? I thought our gurus have taught us as such. I am aware that Sikhs are very generous in their donations. Yet, it seems they are blind to the next crook that comes along. Why were there no donations for flood victims? I ask why the youth would follow such an example. Do the elders of our community seriously expect cooperation from the youth at this late a stage? This concern for the youth should have been a priority years ago. At this point it is the blind leading the blind.

This leads us to wonder who these really are. These are the same individuals known for buying their way into the gurdwara. The blame for this also goes on the sangat. We are perceived as mere goats that do not have a say in the goings on of our own place of worship. God’s house is being robbed and disgraced by these people. They stand before us at the temples and talk of how we should improve our lives through their various ignorant ideas. However, never have these hypocrites paused to look at their own personal lives. I cannot think of a single one whose own family follows his preaching. Their daughters, I have seen in shorts and skirts, hardly a favorable thing for
Sikh daughters of so called “holy” men. Their own sons cut their hair and consume meat, liquor, and other drugs, what is worse. These leaders are also culprits of their own making. To my understanding, Sikhs who have taken amrit are not to eat meat or drink alcohol—among other things. Why then parties hosted by them, do we see alcohol flowing and a meat leg in everyone’s mouth? Their daughters provide the entertainment by dancing for the drunken men. Their attempts at being big shots is seriously impairing their holy preaching’s that obviously easier said than done. I would like that we are not a generation of idiots. We observe what is going on around us. May be the peers of these leaders, the generation before us, is still susceptible to their influence, but we, to be frank, do not care who they are. My friends and I discuss the community problems at times and this is the same indication that they give. Many a times we have opened the local paper and those massive amounts of money owed by these leaders in the form of liens are filed against them. Is that the kind of example they want my generation to follow? They cause us a lot of embarrassment in this community. It is truly a shame that these crooks are trying to represent us in this community.

The ignorance of those in our community that follow these pathetic individuals is also apparent. Take for example the sitting on the ground fiasco. Does this really bring you closer to god? Does god not love us equally? I am sorry, but I believe that we are judged for our actions that may be good or bad rather than by the number of times we sit on the ground to eat. Personally, I feel that these people are giving way to ignorance. The way I have been brought up, every meal we eat is earned through hard work and
given to us by god. Why then do we sit at the chair and table at home? God is present there too. God is also there when we do wrong things such as gossip and degrade others. Yet, these same people come to the gurdwara and put on a “holier than thou” attitude. Sitting on the ground will not erase all of the wrong, only your actions will. I am not in any way saying that sitting on the ground is a bad thing. I only feel that people should do it for the right reasons, not because someone came and told them to. I have learned that Guru Gobind Singh Ji was a leader on all points. He always intended for his Sikhs to also lead instead of follow. I have always thought that as Sikhs, we are to do well and have good things to show for our efforts. We go to such extents to have nice vehicles, homes, and clothes until these leaders come along and tell us to be primitive. I refuse to follow such ignorance because I follow the leadership of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. He said to be the best and through hard work, that is what I intend to do. I, along with every Sikh, represent our respected guru. I for one will not disappoint and disrespect their sacrifices for everyone. I plan to live by the teachings of our gurus and evolve, not the ignorance of these crooked leaders and regress. As a side point, what qualifies these men to be our representatives? Just because they bought the votes to be called president, or whatever of some gurdwara, does not make them my representatives. I, in fact, have some advice for them: pay your bills gentleman, reform your own personal lives in compliance with Sikh religious rules and above all practice what you preach. Do not stand up on at social functions, and bore other people with
your false egos. The length of your beard does not make up for your ignorance. Tame your egos. We can see right through it.

Recently, I have noticed the surge of self appointed “holy men” coming to our community only to insult us and claim to be better than us. These “sadhs” and “sants” are total fanatics who love our parents’ money no matter that there is no beard present on the dollar bill. They put down our way of life but never say no to the dollar that our parents worked so hard for. I watch as my father ventures out in the cold morning to earn money for his family. How can I ignore my mother’s hard working hands as she goes to work and sacrifices so much to supplement our family income to provide us a good education? These crooks come along rested and criticize my parents for not living according to the rules of religion. Under pressure my parents in turn are compelled to give money to these freeloader sadhs in order to pacify them. The problem is that the money that they so readily take is money that I could have used on a computer or new clothes. I have to sacrifice so that these outside crooks remain happy. This causes considerable friction between my parents and us, the children. How are we supposed to respect these fanatics for this? We simply can not do this. What irritates me the most about this are the ignorant and uneducated people who bow their heads to these mere mortals. Our gurus did not want us to bow to anyone or anything other than guru granth sahib. Shame on those despicable people who fail to follow what Guru Gobind Singh Ji taught us. They are not worthy of being called Sikhs. This also relates to another money making scheme of the local “leaders” who frequently beg for money. Recently I
have been hearing of an eighth wonder of the world. Really, I can not believe that anything could ever top the only true wonder of the world for Sikhs. The golden temple is and should be the only inspiration for Sikhs worldwide. It is a real tragedy that anyone would try to top Darbar Sahib. Even I understand that.

Inclosing, I commend Dr. Johl for his fearless approach to this complex subject. He has reached out to knowledge that there is truly a problem regarding us – the youth. On a second thought, perhaps we are lucky to be aloof to the point that we do not care about the hypocritical, self consumed leaders who obviously do not care about the youth. They are too busy promoting their own names. Their thirst for power is robbing the temples of prestige and respect that they forever deserve. Ignorance is truly costly and unfortunately it reflects on all Sikhs. I do not claim any association with these people. They speak of helping the youth? I believe that in turn it is the youth who may be able to help them. At least we are receiving an education and have a chance of doing good things for humanity. These leaders are beyond help. Greed and ego has consumed them. It is too late. A word of advice to them: please do not pretend to help the youth; we cannot follow your lessons of deceit, and how to cheat the next person that comes along. At least there is hope for us.

In closing I feel it is a great service you are doing on the radio. Your efforts are very much appreciated and in fact needed. It is not my intention to be so negative in this letter, and I understand that you may or may not agree with my views. However, I would like to hear you address all or some of these issues.
Also I do not have a problem with you sharing this letter with others. For I feel that the key to unlocking ignorance is information and that is what you are asking for, from the youth. If I can provide an insight into our views then the letter it is for everyone. Just consider me the next youth that you run across for I speak for the hundreds of voiceless individuals in this community. Once again, thanks for the efforts.

Sincerely,

A second generation Sikh.

This is the kind of feedback I have been receiving from our future generation. I can not write all of these, but there is one more cry from our youth that I would like to talk about, because it adds more to what we have learned from the above letter. I am sure that this true story, as it folded about four years ago, will touch you the same way as it did me. This involves three young people, who are well educated professionals. What they asked and what they got is a further proof of our ignorance, denial and knowingly ignoring our youth. I do not believe that it can be presented any better than these three young Sikhs did. They put up a question for the speakers to answer. Their sincere desire to learn about true sikhi and the stupid and arrogant answers they got. It pains us all who believe that our youth is our future and they are better equipped than we are to make our religion flourish amongst their peers. The following is not just a story it happened and lots of us witnessed it that day. We can not get a better message from the youth, about their desires and demands from us, the self-centered generation who are full of ego and empty on vision. We should feel lucky that we have such youth as you
read the letter and the following lesson filled story. You will agree with me, that all we have to do is make the youth of today our partner in our religious institutions. They should represent the entire community and not just one family or one group.

About four years ago two siblings graduated from professional schools with the highest degrees in their chosen fields. Their parents sponsored an akhand path in the local gurdwara, because this is what we suppose to do when guru blesses us with great gifts and there is no greater gift than our children becoming professionals in their chosen fields. This does two things for us. One it puts us in appreciation mood to thank Waheguru because without his blessings we can not achieve these goals. The second thing is that this keeps our ego at the minimal and don’t burst out of our clothes, so to speak with false ego. As per custom they invited every relative friend and then some. The siblings have a cousin, who was going to the university at that time for higher education and now he is also a professional. Three of them decided to take advantage of this opportunity and to make the best of this opportunity. They had a burning desire to learn the truth about their religion. They wanted to know what sikh really is. They asked the family that every speaker should limit their talks to the subject of Sikh youth, what they want and what the Sikh community is doing to meet their needs. The father had already lined up about a dozen speakers for the event. After the children or young Sikhs informed them about their desire, the father called each speaker and asked them to limit their talks to the need and solutions to their needs. This was done. After the bhoge there was kirtan and katha. The first speaker was one of the
these three cousins. He asked if we the elders know what they need and trying desperately to learn what real sikh was. He went on to say that they try to ask this question from their elders but don’t get any satisfactory answer. If they continue to pursue this any further then they are told in a tone that we should stop asking these nonsense questions and just believe what we have told you. He stated that they can not accept this answer and don’t know who to ask and this is the reason that we want you to concentrate on giving some answers to our questions. He said that they had listened to the speakers and preachers talking about not being greedy, dishonest, cheat anyone, lie or deceive anyone and don’t drink alcohol or use any other drugs. When we see the same people in the real world, we find them doing the opposite from what they preached in the gurdwara, and this leaves us confused. We are going to be parents soon and our children are going to ask us the same questions about our religion that we are asking you. How do you think that we will be able to fulfill their obligations when you have not been unable to fulfill our needs to learn true sikh? He begged the speakers to enlighten them about the true sikh. Then the speakers started telling their opinions about what Sikh youth wanted to know about their needs. Some spoke about the golden rules of sikh, naam japna (reciting or remembering Waheguru at all times), kirit karny (to earn living through honest means), and vandshakna (give some of the earnings for care of the needy). Some talked more about the teachings of the gurus and what they perceived as to what the Sikh youth should know. Some speakers said that only way one can be a Sikh, he or she has to take amrit and without this, one is not a real Sikh.
Someone went on to say that if you take amrit then you can do whatever you want and the guru will forgive you (which we know is manmat and not gurmat). One of the speakers quoted from Siri Guru Granth Sahib that Guru Ji is telling us that if you do not take amrit then you are dog, a monkey, a pig, a donkey and a snake. This is where the day ended.

This is the true picture of what our youth wants us to explain to them about the true teachings of our gurus and this is a sample how we answer their questions. If we or he had known what Siri Guru Arjan Dev Ji was trying to teach us, then the speaker could not have made that statement. Guru Ji is telling us that if we are without the guru’s name then our life is like the life of animals mentioned in the shabad. Gurus have never compared a human to animal only the deeds. They have stressed the point that human life is the only one that is capable of differentiation between right and wrong and animals don’t have that sense. All of guru’s teaching is about our deeds on this earth. Only our deeds affects us and not some one else’s.

Should we feel proud of our knowledge of sikhi? I should say not and I am sure that you are saying the same. We are fortunate that we have educated youth and they are yearning to know about our unmatched religion of the world. We should be ashamed of ourselves for not grasping and taking advantage of this opportunity to teach our youth, which is eager to learn, about the sikhi that Guru Nanak Dev Ji gave us and not the one that is sold by the sant babas.
How can we fulfill our obligation? All the people that I have asked this question to, their answer is that we have to learn for ourselves what real sikh is? It is very simple to figure out that if we don’t know what sikh is then how can we explain this to our children. Our youth is just as smart as any other youth in the world and they have more knowledge of the world around us that we do. So we should treat them as equal. Let them learn for themselves and only help them as much as we can. Ninety percent of the preaching’s going on in our gurdwaras are created by the fables of late eighteenth century Sikh writers. These are used to impress the sangat of the preacher’s knowledge. It does not take much to impress us, because we do not know ourselves about what is true and what is false. All this is due to illiteracy, not only academically but also not knowing what gurbani really teaches us.

If we want to see our religion flourish in the world we have to admit to ourselves that we lack the knowledge of true teachings of our gurus. Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji has made it so easy for us to learn by making Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as our eternal guru. Our eternal guru is the compilation of teachings of all our gurus plus bhagat bani. This covers 239 years of gurus preaching in person on this earth, which no other religion can ever match. If we are able to pass this first step, then we can Make our youth equal partner in learning our religion the first time together. Gurus have made us unique people, whose duty is to treat everyone as equal and help the needy regardless of race, religion, color or caste. In other words the Sikh has no prejudice or discrimination against anyone.
In order to do something for faith we have to know what our faith really is. To do this we have to go back to the basics of Sikh religion as Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji laid the foundation of Sikh religion. This was a simple, practical, common sense and universal religion. Can we say this to day about Guru Nanak given religion? We have to say resounding ‘no’. The priesthood is not recognized in Sikh religion, because every one of us suppose to be able to read gurbani ourselves, so we can understand the message of the guru. Each bani and each guru repeats over and over again the instructions of our guru. If we can only memorize Jap Ji Sahib and recite it everyday, we can learn every thing that Guru Ji wanted us to follow. If we can do more, it’s that much better.

Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji not just laid the foundation of sikhi but completed the palace of sikhi. The next Guru Nanaks added amenities to make it the best there is. The first thing Guru Ji told the world was that there is only one god and he is the creator of everything. God resides everywhere and in every one of us. For this reason we are all equal and have equal rights. There is no higher or lower class of people. We should treat everyone as our equal and always help the needy and the weak. He showed the world how to protest for our rights and the rights of those who can not do this for themselves, peacefully in nonviolent way.
The fundamentals of Sikh religion laid down by Guru Nanak Dev Ji are so simple and so easy to remember because they cater to our common sense. He asked us to do good deeds and shy away from bad deeds. Common sense can easily make us recognize the difference between good and bad deeds. Each human’s deeds are going to affect only doer and no one else. Guru Ji repeat’s this time and time again. Three golden rules of sikhi are also of common sense, remembering Waheguru all the time, earning living through honest means and sharing our earnings with less fortunate than we are. Anyone in the world can not do anything bad or harm anyone if he or she follows these three golden rules of sikhi. They can not lie, cheat, steal, be dishonest or mislead anyone.

Guru Ji tells us not to believe in magic, jantar, mantar, superstition, fake rituals, idol worship, or moorti pooja, saradhs and other such rituals and the blessed things such as dhaga- tabeet. Worshipping anything other than Waheguru (one god) is prohibited. Our fate is decided by Waheguru before we are born. We have to endure what is allotted to us by the creator. According to the guru we can only live on this earth for the duration of time given to us by the creator and not a second more or less. No one can prolong our time here by any means, no matter what they are. Guru Ji tells us that life is not pleasant and we do not know our fate. What we are trying to achieve on this earth is salvation of our soul and not a trouble free life, because the life is full of troubles. All we have to do is look at the lives of our gurus. Guru Arjan Dev Ji went through tortures, so did Siri Guru Teg Buhadar Ji. Mata Gujri and four sahibzadas faced inhumane torture in the hands of the enemy. Then, we can see that what Bhais Mati
Das, Sati Das, Mani Singh, Taru Singh, Dyala and the list goes on and on. If the fate could have been changed, couldn’t gurus have done that? If we believe and we should, those gurus were divine beings and they could have done whatever they wanted. Why they did not do this, is because they wanted to leave examples for us to follow for ever. The lesson they taught us is that gurbani is not to make us rich or invincible, save us from death or injury or bad luck of any kind or for anything else that has to do with material things, but it is to give us piece of mind, console our soul and for our salvation from life and death.

Above mentioned rules are some of the directives for us to follow in our life on earth. We have learned these from gurbani and guru history. All the people that I have talked to are in agreement that these are some of the essential rules to follow. If we want to do some thing for our faith called sikhi, we have to live with these rules as our guideline and not just talk about it. Guru Nanak Dev Ji has told us that we should do the same ourselves what we preach two others. If not, then we will stay stuck in the circle of death. If we go through some of the most important guide lines set by the gurus for us to follow and see if we are doing what we suppose to be doing, then and then only we can compare, if our deeds show that we are truly living our lives as Guru Ji advises us to live.

1. After preaching sikhi for 239 years by our gurus on this earth, the most important sakhi of our gurus was revealed by our tenth Guru Nanak Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. He ended the need of guru in human form. He declared that after he was gone, guru
shabad would be our guru for ever. He gave guru ship to Adi Granth and it became Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji for us. We all believe that, as Sikhs, this is our living guru. We do not suppose to bow to anyone or anything else, except our eternal guru. There should be nothing that equal’s Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and sits along side of it. We can not believe or follow anything else. This is the only Sikh guru for ever and we are to follow this order of our guru. There are no ifs and what’s.

Let us see if we really believe this way as Guru Ji wants us to believe. All the people I have discussed this subject with agree that we are far from it. Let us look at our local gurdwaras. We find so many fake rituals that beat all the rituals of pre Guru Nanak Dev Ji era. The way we can confirm this individually is, that we spend some time observing the practices at our gurdwaras for about a week.

Let us look at our places of authority, such as our takhats and Darbar Sahib. The same fake rituals are practiced, that Guru Ji forbids us to do. Two of the five takhats, patna sahib and hazoor sahib, have another granth sitting next to our Guru Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and is respected equally. Doing akhand paths of the same, but charge a lot more money for that, because it is harder to read. Can we still say that we are following Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji’s order of only believing in Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as our only guru?

2. There is no way that we should believe that Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji compiled this book called dasam granth, because this was written twenty to fifty years after Guru Ji had left this world. How could it be? Guru Gobind Singh Ji dictated the entire Siri
Guru Granth Sahib Ji, almost one hundred years after Siri Guru Arjan Dev Ji compiled Granth Sahib Ji. The reason for this was that the only copy of Guru Granth Sahib Ji was taken from Amritsar to Kartar Pur by the guru’s relatives, after Siri Guru Har Gobind Sahib Ji moved to Kirat Pur Sahib. The custodians of the granth sahib refused to part with it. That’s why, Guru Gobind Singh Ji dictated and Bhai Mani Singh Ji wrote the entire bier (the body of Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji). Guru Ji added Siri Guru Teg Buhadar Ji’s bani and completed the final pages of Guru Granth Sahib Ji. If we use our common sense, then we can see that, whether Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji had or did not have his own bani should not be our question, because he was a divine power, and he could have done what ever he wanted and he did just that by completing the final writing of our eternal guru, without any word of his own. He asked us to follow this guru for ever as our guru. Why are we acting so dumb? Why are we even considering if Guru Gobind Singh Ji wrote this or not? Without a doubt this is the work of those enemies of sikhi who want the Guru Nanak Dev Ji given religion to become just like a cult. Because of our ignorance shown by not following our guru’s order and not trying to understand gurbani ourselves.

3. There may or may not be any gurbani uttered by our tenth guru, but he did not put any of it in the final pages of Guru Granth Sahib Ji. He asked us to follow what he gave us, then why we are disobeying him. There are about fifty pages or so in the so called dasam granth that give the same kind of advice we find in the bani of other
gurus, but the ending of each shabad is not as it ends in the bani of other gurus, the name Nanak in the ending verse.

Some people believe that Guru Gobind Singh Ji had fifty two poets in his Darbar. If we read the history of that time, it is not true. Some of the poets of that time had moved to Anandpur Sahib town because they were being persecuted by the Auranzeb government. The emperor wanted to see everyone converted to Islam. He issued a new rule that chanting religious hymns or even writing and reciting poetry became illegal and punishable by execution. Most poets quit and the others moved to Anandpur Sahib. The reason for this move was due to the freedom of having kirtan twice a day in the guru Darbar. The rule did not apply to the Sikhs in Anandpur Sahib. The writers who wrote the dasam granth made this a paramount debate point to deceive true Sikhs and because our lack of first hand knowledge of guru bani and guru history we have become gullible to accept such fables. We forget that our Guru Ji put us in the hands of our eternal Guru Ji.

We should try to read at least a page or two for ourselves to find out that there is so much porn, that we can not read this with our family present. It is so degrading to women and it is immoral, that we as ordinary Sikhs can not utter such statements in public. There is no way that our guru could even think of approving it, let alone writing it. It’s first writings were less than three hundred pages. They kept on adding more and more as time went on, even some of it was written in the early twentieth century. Now it is fourteen hundred and twenty eight pages. Every guru showed humility and
preached for egoless life for their Sikhs. How can we accept such a veda-based brahmanical character book as guru’s bani?

The only way we are going to be the Sikhs of Guru Nanak Dev Ji if we follow his instructions and incorporate these in our daily life. We should analyze it objectively, based on the instructions of our eternal guru. We should not go by our emotions, we should try to find facts. We are so fortunate, because we have something that no other religion has. Our scriptures or guru bani is uttered by our gurus themselves and not written by some one else and in some cases hundreds of years after their prophet had died. We should never forget to get the answer from our eternal guru, anytime we can not decide otherwise.

3. Sikh rahet maryada or the Sikh code of conduct and conventions: right after the gurdwaras were liberated from the control of crooked and immoral mahants in 1921, the Sikhs started categorizing the Sikh conduct or behavior to find an acceptable code of ethics for the Sikhs. S.G.P.C. gained authority to represent the Sikhs and Sikh interests after the passage of the gurdwara act of 1925. Lots of sant babas who were the caretakers of small gurdwaras in villages took the place or similarity to the mahants. They got help from the British, because this way the Sikhs would stay divided. Some deras became more prominent than others, like Nanaksar Dera. It was almost the authority of sant baba culture. They added lots of fake rituals to the gurdwara functions and created so many fables about the guru history. Most Sikhs, being unable to read gurbani themselves, got accustomed to their stories and started believing those to be true gurus’
sakhis. When the committee to write rahet maryada was formed, there were many collateral advisors from all walks of life, including some sant babas. Unfortunately, only a handful of members were left to write the first document in 1935, because ninety percent of the members had quit the committee because of self-serving individuals. Immediately the objections were raised and through the resolution number one by the sarb hind Sikh mission board, and the resolution number fourteen of the S.G.P.C. Gave permission to prepare acceptable code of ethics, this document was prepared and approved on February third nineteen hundred forty five. I would like to discuss with you, some of the codes that are being ignored by akal takhat, S.G.P.C., the other takhats and all the gurdwaras in India and abroad. Some of the rituals we are doing even against the wishes of Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Everyone who thinks he or she is a Sikh, wholeheartedly believe that Guru Ji told us not to go outside of Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji for any thing. This document says that each of us should recite five banis every day. You can not find all of these five in Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Only two of these five are there. Anyone doubting this should do it himself or herself. It is very easy to do.

Other important things we do are performing paths. It recommends that we should always continue a sahej path ourselves, unless we don’t know how. Then we should look for help from friends to do the path, but we should be there to listen. It should not be the reader doing the path all by himself or herself.
Akhand path: (non stop reading of Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji), should be carried out at hard times or on occasions of elation or joy. It states that placing water pitcher, ceremonial clarified-butter-fed lamp, coconut, etc. Around, during the course of the uninterrupted or any other reading of Guru Granth Sahib Ji, the reading of any other scriptural texts side by side with or in the course of such reading is contrary to the gurmat (guru’s way).

It states that sponsoring party should always be present to listen to the path at all times along with the interested members of congregation. Only one path at a time should be done. Are these rules followed anywhere in the Sikh world? No, not anywhere. Akhand paths are being sold everywhere. For the people living abroad, the cheapest path is from Darbar sahib or from any other takhat, and the sponsor does not have to be there and cost less than the one from the local gurdwara. When I hear the words of the ardas, at the completion of the akhand path that the path has been completed without any interruption, my heart trembles because this is a white lie. The path was interrupted for the announcement that sponsoring family has sweets and tea and no one should leave without eating some, while the reader has to read quietly. At minimum, in the evening rahras path is done the same way by making the pathi read the bani quietly. This follows the kirtin for at least half an hour. The same thing is repeated the next morning. About half way (not exactly) into the path another interruption to do the ardas of madh is done by making the reader to read bani quietly. The circle repeated in the evening and again on the morning of bhog. How can we call it an akhandpath? I
have asked this question many times. A sant baba’s sewadar said that the kirtin and other things were also gurbani. Why the fuss I asked him that if he believed it was the same bani that the reader was reading then why do they feel the necessity of doing the kirtin. The reader is going to read at least five to ten shabads in the time that kirtini jatha is going to finish one shabad. He walked away.

Why our high places are not following these rules? How can they tell us, the ordinary Sikhs that we are not obeying Sikh Maryada while they themselves are expanding their trade of making money through selling akhand paths at home and abroad through mail at the whole sale level? This is our religion let us stop selling it to the highest bidder. Let us remember the sakhi of Bhai Lalo and Malik Bhago. We can not buy the guru.

Let us talk about the purpose of akhand path, because this ritual is almost getting out of hand. Gurdwaras are booked above its capacity to hold uninterrupted reading of the Guru Ji. Let us discuss why it has become so popular. A person who uses his common sense and try’s to learn the answer from the guru, is left shaking one’s head. In our gurus’ time there were no akhand paths done. In fact there was no bier of Guru Granth Sahib Ji was not available until Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji dictated to Bhai Mani Singh to complete the final bier. This made two biers altogether. Until the Sikh Raj, there were only two biers that were there. The first one did not contain Siri Guru Teg Buhadar Ji’s bani. It proves that there are fables told by sant babas about the origin of akhand paths. All the fake rituals started around the time, when gurdwaras were
liberated from the clutches of the mahants in 1921. The most popular dera of that time is nanaksar. All the fake rituals were created and are still being fabricated from there, although, with mushrooming of sant babas the fables with new fake rituals are cropping up every place where there is a dera.

Guru Ji specifically tells us, that no amount of reading or listening of bani is going to do us a bit of good, unless we put it to practice. Each verse of each shabad is an instruction and not a magic or manter. If anyone does not believe this, please read gurbani yourself. Lack of our understanding the word of our gurus is making us wanderers. A meaningful akhand path would be, if we do it ourselves or sit there and listen to it. What we are doing is acting like Malik Bhago who tried to buy Guru Nanak Dev Ji, but he could not. Now we have to save ourselves by remembering the example set by Siri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. I can keep on writing about the fake rituals we do during the akhand paths. But this is sufficed to point out that we learn the meaning of akhand path from our Guru Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and not the sant babas. One path at a time is more than enough. In fact having more than one path at a time is blasphemy of our guru.

Until about twenty five years ago we used to have intermittent or continuous reading of Guru Granth Sahib Ji to celebrate the anniversaries of our gurus and now, it is mostly like brahmanical pooja. Let us get back to the basics and quit the fakery.

4. We have so called five takhats. I tried to find out why do we have five takhats? As I know a takhat is synonymous with the capital or rajdhani. This is the place where
the highest authority of the country or government lives and operates from. It could not be more than one unless the ruler has one summer capital and the other a winter capital. We know that only one of our gurus, the sixth Guru Nanak, Siri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji built one takhat and named it Akal Takhat. Although we don’t have a Sikh government, but still none of us can object to recognizing Akal Takhat as a place of authority. Two out of five takhats are openly and defiantly disobeying the final order of Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, that Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is an eternal Sikh guru and nothing can sit at the same level with him. Hazoor sahib and Patna sahib have placed a book called dasam granth, which was not even written in Guru Ji’s time, placed along side the real Sikh guru and treated the same as our eternal Guru Ji is treated. If this does not insult or disgrace our real Guru Ji, then what does? Everyone that I have discussed this with over the last few years agree, that we should have only one place of authority and that should be Siri Akal Takhat Sahib Ji. The Sikh appointed as care taker or jathedar should be educated both academically and gurbani wise. He should be of high character, fair, practical nature and with vision and lots of common sense, to take this glorious religion to the heights of honor that it deserves and not the one that just sells hukamnamas.

5. Amrit and amrit dhari: amrit that Guru Gobind Singh Ji gave to his Sikhs had the power to make them alive again. It made the already fearless to even more fearless and brave if possible. The ones, who took amrit from Guru Ji, did become immortals. This is one of the most precious blessings of our tenth Guru Nanak and
the highest stage in Sikhs life, for the one who receives it. This is not magic water but it is pledge of a true Sikh to his guru. To abide by his rules and live only to serve the guru and to protect the weak and the innocent.

This stage of sikhi (an amritdhari) is called ballon niki – khandion tikhi, (which means that this path is smaller than the diameter of a hair and sharper than two edged sword). To take amrit is so easy. It is the sweetest thing you can ever find, and it does not cost anything, but one has to give a pledge to the guru that “every thing that I have, including my life, is at your disposal, without any reservation”. Every Sikh is prohibited from doing bad deeds but these rules doubly apply to the amritdhari, if it is possible. Drinking, smoking, use of drugs, foul mouth and any other body or mind harming foods are no, no’s to him.

We have to go back into to the history and develop a concept of what Guru Ji’s message is in the light of 1699 basakhi. We do believe that he did not order or forced anyone to take amrit. We also believe that Guru Ji asked for a head, while holding a naked sword in his hand. We believe five true Sikhs; one by one gave their heads to the guru without as much as asking the guru, why? History does not tell us that how many Sikhs became amritdharis that day or any other day. Probably, most of them living with the Guru Ji at Anand Pur sahib did take amrit at some point. History also tells us that all of those Sikhs became martyrs fighting the enemy or they were executed soon after Guru Ji. There were no Sikhs to be found in villages because the enemy was hunting for them everywhere. They had to hide in the jungle and did there task as sneak attacks at
night to liberate the innocent men and women, taken back for slavery, and also lighten their load of wealth some what.

Amritdhari Sikhs were, are and should be an elite group of Sikhs who take an oath at the initiation ceremony (amrit sanchar), to defend the weak and the innocent even at the cost of their own life. We know that there are not that many Sikhs like that amongst us. This is the reason that there never been more than ten percent of total Sikh population that becomes amritdharis. There may not be that many if it was not for the sant babas making amrit so cheap. First they tell fables, then they promise, that, after taking amrit, “you can do anything you want to do, it will not go against you in the court of Waheguru”. If you ask them a question about having some rules and values for the candidates, because some of them were drunk the night before or they shaved their beard a day before the sant baba made them amritdharis. Their answer always is “we have started them in the first grade and it is up to them to progress further or not”. Think about the amrit that cost the recipients their heads to get it, and now it is given free with lot more amenities. If we have to compare amrit with an education diploma, it is equivalent to the highest university degree, which is a doctor’s degree. To be an amritdhari is the highest stage in Sikh life and those sant babas either don’t know it or their main purpose is to disgrace our religion.

I myself along with all the Sikhs that I have talked to are in agreement that we do not understand the sanctity of amrit, which is taken very lightly. Today Sikhs are fooled by amrit parchar leaders, like most of the other religions use to lure converts into their
religions. Guru Nanak Ji given Sikh religion is not like that. Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji put a price on amrit, which is the highest for any other initiation ritual in the world, total dedication to the Guru Ji, including one’s life. This is the main thing missing from our memory. Anyone can be a Sikh and good one at that, if he follows the conditions set by our gurus and now our eternal Guru Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Amritdharis believe that all you have to do is, take amrit and do anything you want to do afterwards. Non amritdharis call it a fakery. Both are wrong. One thing is sure for certain, that every Sikh is not fit to be an amritdhari, because of the pre-requisite condition for becoming an amritdhari, as we know that this pre-requisite is the total dedication of one’s life to the guru.

During my entire life, I have never read or heard that even Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji ever said that you are not my Sikh, if you are not amritdhari. We know for sure that from guru history that Guru Ji had so many followers, who fought alongside of him, but many of them were from different religions. There is no rahetnama written by Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji anywhere, except some sant babas always spread rumors of finding one. Gurus never said that Sikh has to be of certain shape. Before you start calling me all kinds of names, let me explain some of the facts first.

Sant babas started and now most amritdharis repeat this, that Guru Ji used to initiate Sikhs by making them drink their feet washings, called charn-amrit. What an insult to our gurus. They preached and practiced equality. How can they say this, the most
degrading anti Sikh fake rituals were performed by our gurus? The proof for my using such strong words lies in the sakhies that same people recite everyday.

One saki is of Siri Guru Arjan Dev Ji, when Sikhs of Pashower set out for Amritsar to see the guru in person. They arrived in Amritsar very late at night. All the sewadars were gone home or went to bed in Darbar sahib complex. The Sikhs were tired and hungry. Guru Ji and Mata Ji personally served them, gave them warm water to wash up and then served them food. The next morning, they got up early. After taking bath in the sarover, they entered Darbar sahib to see the guru, but he was not there. They sat down and listened to the kirtin and waited anxiously for the Guru Ji to arrive, which did not happen. They became restless. Finely they asked Baba Budha Ji, where Guru Ji was, because their main purpose for the trip was to see the Guru Ji in person. Baba Budha Ji took them where Guru Ji was. We have heard this so many times that we automatically know where Guru Ji was, wiping their shoes. Can our guru given common sense allow us to believe in a fable like this, that our guru would order them to wash his feet and drink this charn-amrit before he could bless them as his Sikhs? There is no way. Just to think such thing is an insult to guru’s mission on this earth.

The second saki is of Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. When Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji finished the initiation ceremony of first amrit ritual to create punj piaras (five beloveds) he requested of the five to make him an amritdhari and they did. Guru became the only prophet in history of mankind who presented himself as guru and follower at the same time (waho-waho Gobind Singh ape gur chela). How can anyone say that this guru
would ask his disciples to drink the wash of his feet before he could enter them into his panth? Either all of this is a fable or what the sant babas are saying is a fable. Anyone who has some knowledge of gurbani and guru history knows without a doubt that sant babas are insulting gurus through their daily created new fables.

You never read or hear any examples given by the Sikh missionary societies throughout the world from our eternal guru about amrit or any such tenets. Isn’t this what Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji ordered us to do? “Find out what you are looking for, from the eternal Guru Ji”.

This is what we hear from these preachers, the poetry that was written by some Sikh poets long after Guru Ji was gone from this earth, but they start saying, that, the following are Guru Ji’s utterances. If this is not blasphemy of our guru then what is. “Raheny rahey soiyo Sikh mera oh sahib main uska chera”, this is written by Bhai Desa Singh, long after the Guru Ji. The other most quoted poems are from sarb loh granth, also written by a Sikh poet long after Guru Ji, and these preachers lie to us as saying that it is uttered by Guru Ji. The other most used quote is “khalsa mero roop hai khas-khalse main hoon karoon niwas” (an amritdhari is of my appearance and I live only in the amritdhari). These poets have written thousands of pages making it seem like Guru Gobind Singh Ji is saying this. I feel that this is enough for us to illustrate that either our preachers themselves are ignorant or liars or they just don’t want to find the facts. They could just be betting on us being stupid, that we will never know the truth. This is
not a debate this is a discussion which Guru Ji advises us to do, speak the truth and
don’t mislead anyone.

The only quote from our eternal Guru Ji, to convince us that non amritdhari is not a
Sikh, is a shabad that Guru Ji uttered to teach the Muslim clergy, that what the basics of
Islam tells them to follow. This was in an answer to the doubts they were casting upon
the guruship of our Guru Ji. According to Muslim’s, anyone who does not believe that
Allah is the only creator and only Muhammad is the only true prophet ever, is going to
end up in hell. Anyone who is not circumcised and does not recite five niwaz prayers
during each day could not be a guru. Guru Ji uttered this shabad and we find it on page
(panna) 1084 in Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. It tells them what the five niwas are teaching
as the first niwas asks you to admire god, the second niwas asks you to be content, the
third niwas tell you to be humble and egoless, the fourth niwas tell you to give to the
needy and fifth niwas asks you to control the five demons or vikars. It tells you to
refrain from cutting live flesh of an organ or circumcision. Guru Ji advises them about
the righteous deeds and says in the last verse that when you have fulfilled all the above,
then sabat surat dastar sira (the sign of dignity). The preachers forget to tell us when
Guru Ji said this. Who, he was addressing it to and why and what for. We should look
at ourselves before pointing finger at anyone in fact if we look at our selves and recount
our own deeds, we can find enough garbage of our own.

The following is of my own personal encounter with such people who feel like
almighty because they are amritdharis. I am sure you have plenty of experience of your
own in such situations. A little over three years ago I read a letter to the editor of a Sikh bulletin, with international circulation. The writer lived in Chandigarh, Punjab. He was commenting on previous letter to the editor by a doctor living in the mid west of U.S.A., who stated that, anyone who believes and follow the instructions of Siri Guru Granth Sahib, is a Sikh. The writer from Chandigarh called him ignorant and stupid. After reading his letter I wrote a letter to the editor and objected to such language and especially by an amritdhari. I wrote down the three golden rules of Guru Nanak given sikh and the importance of these rules in a Sikh’s life. I requested of him to find a complete shabad, not just one or two verses of a shabad, in Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji stating, what a Sikh should look like. He wrote back to the editor in which he called me the same as he did to Dr. Dhillon, an ignorant and stupid. He mentioned that Dr. Johl’s three golden rules of sikhi, and two sentences after that he admitted that yes, Guru Nanak Dev Ji had preached these rules. He said that I was so stupid to believe that Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the only Sikh guru. There are two gurus, one is Guru Granth Sahib Ji and the other guru is khalsa panth. Then he went on to tell a story that he had heard when he was a child. This was about the lost lion cub raised with the sheep herd and acted like a sheep. The moral of his story was that, anyone who is not an amritdhari is a sheep.

I wrote back to the writer who had called me names but there was no mention of the question I asked him. I pleaded for an answer to my question from him or some other reader. My objective was and is that if we can find a specific shabad confirming that all
Sikhs have to be amritdharis to be called Sikhs, and then most all of the Sikhs would abide by that. I also stated that his story was an insult to all Sikhs amritdharis or non amritdharis. We should not resort to such name calling. Because he started his story with words, that he had heard a story when he was a child, I went down to his level to assure him, that we all have known lots of such stories. Knowing that it was wrong of me, I still started with the words that I had heard that story about seventy five years before, and I wrote the story of donkeys running away to the jungle. We all have heard this story. The donkey wearing the lion’s skin was discovered to be a fellow donkey. The moral of the story suppose to be that a donkey is always a donkey even if he is wearing a lion’s skin. I apologized in advance but requested for an answer to my question. I have not heard from him since.

None of us have authority to tell anyone that she or he is not a Sikh or one himself is the only true Sikh, because only guru knows, who is a good Sikh and who is a bad Sikh. Guru has never said to anyone ever that “your are not my Sikh”, because only deeds make one a better Sikh or a bad Sikh. We should always remember this as we remember to get out of bed before daylight and do our guru stated ritual before eating or beginning our daily chores.
Chapter Twenty Four

Summary: Do’s and Don’ts

Before I start writing this chapter I would like to make a sincere request, please read this objectively. Don’t read this as a judgment or your interpretation of what I could have meant by this or that. The whole book is written on the basis of facts as I am able to find them and also the knowledge I gained by asking questions from lot of people over the years. If anyone has any disagreements we can discuss it in a public discussion or any other kind of forum. I love my religion, sikhi, very much and in my mind there is no doubt that there is a better religion, than yours and mine, that exists in this whole world. Keeping this thought in my mind and asking you to do the same, I start this chapter.

1. The first priority for all of us is to learn what gurbani is and what it tells us to do.

   We can only learn this by reading gurbani ourselves. If it is impossible to do then hear it from a family member and if this too is impossible then from a trusted friend or at a public discussion. We definitely can not learn guru’s sikhi from sant babas or our jathedars. We will discuss the facts about this statement later.

2. We should retire all our sant babas, political Sikh leaders and our jathedars in total.

   Why? Our leaders are selfish and know nothing about sikhi. Ordinary Sikhs like you and me are more familiar with sikhi than they are. I want to give you one example that can remove any misgivings about our leaders. You must have heard a controversy arising from a book re-introduced by our Akal Takhat Jathedar Joginder
Singh Vedanti under his name, called Gurbilas Patshahi Sixth. This book is a blasphemy against our Guru Ji and his Sikh religion. This was written by a vedpoojari during or after Guru Har Gobind Ji, because a similar book is called gurbilas patshahi tenth written by the same unnamed author and unknown month or year for the writing. This information is also not known even to this day. Every religious and political leader including such people as Parkash Singh Badal, Gurcharn Singh Tauhra, ex jathedar of Akal Takhat Ranjit Singh, all the other takhat jathedars and the high priests of historic gurdwaras praised the book and the author so much, that most knowledgeable Sikhs were disheartened to see this un-Sikh book re-introduced. One such dedicated Sikh is Gurbakhash Singh Kala Afgana. He wrote against Jathedar Vadanti’s book and dasam granth. Beyond any doubt he proved that gurbilas patshahi sixth is an insult to our guru and his sikhi. Dasam granth was not even written at the time of Guru Gobind Singh Ji’s departure and he gave guruship to Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji exclusively. He also proved through facts from gurbani that both of these, gurbilas patshahi sixth and dasam granth are fake, and are written to destroy Sikhism as a religion. Instead of being praised and commended for exposing the conspiracy of the writers to dilute the Sikh faith, he was kicked out of the panth by Jathedar Vadanti of Akal Takhat. He was asked to appear at Akal Takhat. Because of Bhai Kala Afgana’s health and rigors of travel from Canada, a teleconference was scheduled. One day before the scheduled conference, it was cancelled by the Akal Takhat without giving any reason for doing
so and Bhai Kala Afgana has not heard any word from the jathedar since. These are the reasons that should either teach our jathedars the principles of sikhi or replace them with learned and dedicated Sikhs.

3. What is a Sikh: as we read guru history we find that anyone following the guru’s advice was called guru’s Sikh. When Guru Gobind Singh Ji appointed Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as an eternal and unmatched Sikh guru, he ordered that a Sikh has to accept and obey this order. This is the prime qualification of a Sikh that he has to solely accept Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as his guru and only bow to him there is no human guru or any other granth for him to bow to. The rest is fables which are increasing by the day.

4. Amrit: we all know that our tenth Guru Ji created an elite group of Sikhs by initiating them through amrit ritual. The fee for this priceless blessing of the guru was one’s head, the highest initiation fee of any society membership ever. We also know that every Sikh was not willing or courageous enough to do it, because it requires complete faith and total dedication to the guru and to serve the needy. Every Sikh did not become amritdhari then or is now. Over ninety percent of the Sikhs never take amrit and at least nine out of ten who take amrit, do break the forbidden rules, such as drinking alcohol, use drugs, lie, cheat and do dishonest deeds. Before judging others we should judge our selves first. Amrit really makes one immortal, like dead can walk, only gurus could do that, if they desired, but it gives an amritdhari a new kind of life and direction. It makes him a true saint.
warrior, but one has to be true amritdhari to achieve this. If you doubt what I have just said, count this in your neighborhood yourself.

5. Our gurughars’ paths-rituals: gurdwara is the center of our religion. We should use it to celebrate guru anniversaries or special days of joy such as marriage. For other things we should always praise the guru and sponsor it to thank Waheguru for his blessings. It should not be a sarad. Every family that makes certain gurdwara their main place of worship, should be represented in the management and not managed by handful of land lords or Malik Bhagos or naraindasias. This term is used by the Sikhs to remind us the days of the notorious nankana sahib mahant Naraindas and we have talked about him before. I mean by all this is, that humble, knowledgeable, dedicated, honest and egoless Sikhs should be our leaders. We should always include the youth in all the functions and management because they are our tomorrow. Akhand path or any other path is for reciting or listening and not for sale to make profit. Gurubani should not be bought or sold. Guru Ji tells us, that no matter how much or how long we recite or listen to the bani, it is not going to do a thing for us, unless we live the life that it tells us to live. A simple and practical advice to understand. No bani can be more powerful than any other bani. All banis tell us or show us to walk straight on guru told path. No bani can save us from death, disease, pain or any other ailment or problem, but it can make it lot easier for us to accept Waheguru’s will or bhana. It is very easy for us to see that, if any bani can change the will of Waheguru, then why our fifth guru, Siri Guru Arjan Dev Ji,
had to sit on the hot iron plate and hot sand poured on his head. Why Siri Guru Teg Buhadar Ji had to give his life or the lives of sahibzadas, Mata Gujri Ji, and countless Sikh martyrs and Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji himself, who gave us the divine bani as our guru and asked us to follow it. It sure makes sense and proves to us that guru bani is to give us peace of mind in all situations and it is for the salvation of our soul. Everything that is told to us by our guru is true. Sant babas and some preachers tell us that reciting this bani or that bani, will make us disease free, problem free and will save us from death are all fables created by them so they could get rich with our hard earned money. Love and service of humanity is guru’s way. Material things do not enter in this picture of bani. Everyone, who goes to the hospital’ does not die whether akhand path was done or not. At the same time some people die when akhand path is going on to save his or her life. The paths do very important thing for us that are to become strong enough to wear the sorrow and joy equally. The reason is that we don’t know our fate but Waheguru does. That’s why we pray to him that outcome should be joyful and if it is not then bani gives us a crutch to lean on, which is to accept his will. No fake rituals should be performed in our gurdwaras. We all know what they are. No more than one path, no other talk, such as announcements, reading other banis as kirtan or katha during the akhand path and most important is that there should be people listening, not just the reader alone reciting the bani. Reciting sloaks during ardas or before commencing path or before hukam or ardas are all manmat. Bowing head or kneeling before the guru is
enough, because Guru Ji tells us that Waheguru knows what is in our mind without saying it a loud. So starting to touch the ground at the door, and four five more times before reaching the Guru Ji, is manmat. In short Guru Ji forbids us from doing fake rituals for show off. What is a fake ritual? It is a deed that we do, is without merit, as doing pooja, placing things at certain locations, thinking that it is going to help a love one get well or gain material things. To believe in reading certain bani so many times, will cure diseases, even save lives is manmat. Such beliefs are anti gurmat and are mere superstitious. Guru Ji forbids us to believe in such fake rituals (pakhands).

All gurdwaras should have Punjabi schools, if we want our children to be Sikhs and learn Punjabi, and especially Sikh culture. We should make sure to tell them that bhangra is not a Sikh culture, as it is being portrayed. In charge of such programs should be teachers and not the illiterate leaders. They should have a free hand in setting up a curriculum.

There should be public forum at least once a month where everyone who has something to offer to make our unity stronger and is dedicated to the service of the gurdwara of his or her choice, should be allowed to do so. Everything that we do in the gurdwara should be based on the order of our guru, the gurbani. Our youth is the future of our existence: the direction our religion is going and camouflaged enemies of sikhi are people who are disguised as Sikhs. They are within us. Our political and religious leaders are either part of that group or they are so naïve that they are falling pray to the
sophisticated schemes of Ved Poojari R.S.S. And the declared enemy of sikhi the bhartia junta and sant babas are almost their allies. We should wake up. The only way we can do this is to make our youth become our leaders, because they are more equipped and are more knowledgeable of modern intelligence and technology. Look around in the gurdwaras abroad. There are no educated young people in the management positions. If there are some, that is because their elders are controlling the gurdwara and have made every child of their family a director and none from all the other intelligent and educated young people who are kept out. Why? They are threat to the ruling family and their dynasty. Let us do the right thing. Let us help our educated youth with new solutions for new times. Unless we, the old guard put our religion first and push our selfishness, ego and greed out of our crooked ways, we are truly going to become a cult, if we are not already that.

6. We should have new rahetnama based on gurbani and not on fables. It should be of common sense and practical, based on facts and not on fake rituals, as the present one is mostly based on. We have to look very hard on our mistakes that we are making. Because of our total ignorance and belief in fables told to us by the sant babas, in understanding true gurbani. We do not have to forego even one tenet of sikhi, if we draw up rahetnama approved by the guru, Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. We are living in the twenty first century; we can not make our youth to live in the eighteenth century. It’s not going to work and it is not working. How are you going to convince any educated young person who is raised in modern world, that he or
she should do, what is told to him or her without explanation to why? How can we ask them not to do, when we the old generation is doing the opposite, such as drinking, tell lies, do dishonest deeds, cheating others, doing fake rituals at the gurdwaras and home, and knowingly giving wrong advice to others to cause harm? We are not answering their questions truthfully about our religion. The preachers tell them that they are not Sikhs because they are not amritdharis. It should be told first what amrit really is. What the pre and post amrit ritual conditions are and the preacher should be an example of that. For the people born sixty or more years ago, it has become an old story, that they don’t pay any attention to those, who say that one is not a Sikh, if he or she is not an amritdhari. They know that the person saying this does not know what guru given amrit was and is. How can you explain merely saying that you should be an amritdhari to be a Sikh? The only way to convince the youth is to show them by an example and explain the necessities of all things connected with amrit. Remember why Siri Guru Gobind Singh Ji asked for a head and taken it before giving amrit? Remember why Guru Ji asked the amritdhari to keep five kays (punj kakars)? Tell them why? In detail to the necessity of each. Today’s youth, no matter whether they are Sikhs or not, needs to know the reason and affect of each ritual. Not making it too lengthy, it is imperative to explain to the youth that, why only less than ten percent of the Sikhs take amrit and over ninety percent of them only look like amritdharis, but their life style or living is not of an amritdhari. There are more non amritdharis that are living the life of a Sikh than
most of the amritdharis. So fix it through the practical and matching the guru given instructions. Remember Guru Ji never told any one and never will, that there sewadar is not a Sikh or one is a bad Sikh. He contributed one’s evil nature to his deeds and it’s one’s own bad deeds that need to be changed or corrected and not the appearance. If you doubt this statement read gurbani and you will find this in there. My humble request is that we should make this our priority, to bring the youth of today in the fold of true sikh, instead of pushing them away by making ignorant and uninformed statements by the sikh illiterates, arrogant, self centered, greedy users of sikh for self gains and greedy egotistic political and religious leaders. If we don’t do this soon, unless it is too late already, then we are doomed as a group belonging to the best religion in the world ever.

My sole purpose of writing this book is to shake our ego filled mind tree to get rid of all the mummies off of it, so we could start clean. We do not have a true Sikh history, even true guru history. The only and the best thing that had happened to Sikh religion is that Guru Gobind Singh Ji left us with the scripture that is unmatchable. Anyone, who was or is a non Sikh and have read Siri Guru Granth Sahib, comes to the same conclusion, that this granth is for every person on earth and every religion on earth, and Guru Gobind Ji made this granth, Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, our eternal guru. No one can be as lucky as we are.

With all this in our past, present and future, why are we so ignorant that we can not see it or understand this? Our ego filled rahetnama states that non-Sikh can not do
kirtan or a non amritdhari Sikh can not go to certain places in our takhats. This makes this glorious religion just another cult. Let us understand our real guru and unite for a common cause, to get our religion on top and propagate it so it can reach everywhere.
Chapter Twenty Five

What We Should Pray For

The most important prayer we can say is, to ask Waheguru, that he give us all the wisdom to read gurbani, if we don’t know how, then listen to gurbani and understand gurbani. Give us the mind that can engrave this most important message of our Guru Ji’s order in our conscience, that reading or listening is not enough, so give us the strength to obey his instructions and live our lives according to those instructions, which is to live the truth, not just talk about the truth.

We should ask for a mind that can remember that Waheguru has written our fate before we are born and it is unchangeable. We do not know what is going to happen to us but he alone knows this. He also knows what we are saying, doing and even what we are thinking. We should not take the notion of trying to fool you by our fake rituals or trying to buy you by our false deeds. Make us understand that gurbani is not a magic (mantar) that doing such and such path or reading such and such bani is going to make us rich, powerful, make all our pains go away, or make us invincible. Remembering you (Waheguru) is for a peace of mind and salvation of our souls.

We should ask him to stop us from buying akhand paths or selling the same for money, instead give us the knowledge to do the akhand path, at least to listen to it and make us walk and obey what we are reading or listening. Give us mind filled with humility like Bhai Lalo and not a mind filled with arrogance like Malik Bhago. We
should ask him for the knowledge to know and the strength to expose and resist the
deceptive modern day sant babas and dishonest two faced religious and political leaders.
We should ask him to give our youth the wisdom to know the truth through learning
gurbani and not to believe in fake rituals as are being done in all our Sikh shrines, more
in our takhats than anywhere else. We should ask him to show us, actually force us on
the path to unity of all Sikhs and give us all, the wisdom and the knowledge to
differentiate between the Guru’s true message and the fables that are being told to us by
sant babas, most Sikh preachers and all the Sikh leaders. May politics totally disappear
from our Gurughars forever.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

Humble Sewadar,

Gulzar S. Johl, M.D.

Yuba City, CA.

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