

Professor Harkishen Singh® - A Tribute

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Professor Harkishen Singh, a devout Sikh scholar and noted writer on Gurbani topics attained eternal bliss on December 1, 2002 at a ripe age of 89. Born on December 31, 1913 he received his M.A. degree in India and then went over to the Royal College of Science and Technology, Strathclyde University, Glasgow, for higher education. For fifteen years he worked as Head of the Industrial Management and Training in Delhi and for twelve years served as Senior Area Manager with the Tata and Sarabhai groups of industries. He showed his mettle as managerial expert when he trained officers of the National Productivity Centre in Malaysia, and then completed his assignment as an International expert under the Commonwealth in the same country. He wrote a number of books on management and produced several research papers thereby earning a high reputation.

From the very beginning he was known to be engrossed in religious thought, and keen on studying with utmost devotion the intrinsic meanings of *Shabad Gurbani*. He took to Punjabi writing and produced several books in the genre of philosophical analysis. The more important of his publications are *Meethe Har gun gao, jhalak majithe rang di and rasik rasik gun gavai*. He also penned a highly prized biography of Sardar Raghbir Singh Bir, the founder of Atam Science Trust and Gurmat Prachar Trust and also of a well-known public school at Dagshai in Himachal Pradesh. He wrote some other biographies too including that of Sardar Gurdit Singh Jolly, a noted freedom fighter, who put much at stake during the foreign rule. His autobiography entitled *Chitra Gupt di vahi* makes a highly interesting reading as it is a frank and honest portrayal of his own life. He has given a masterpiece to the world in the art of writing about one's own self.

Professor Harkishen Singh's books in English entitled '*Sikhism - Beliefs and Critical Challenges*' and '*The Sikhs: Tenets and Tremors*' are highly rated as serious studies of the Sikh problems. His thesis on Guru Nanak's approach to education included in the latter book is highly thought-provoking and serves as a mirror to his unbounded imagination. Ever enthusiastic and indefatigable in his efforts to spread the message of the Gurus and the spiritual content of Sri Guru Granth Sahib as he was, he authored a number of booklets in simple language for the benefit of the common man. He also produced a number of video cassettes for wider and more interesting dissemination of the sounds and sights of the objects connected with the Sikh faith. He carried out this task entirely on his own without much financial and moral support from others. His cassettes on the Gurdwaras of Delhi, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, *Aarti* and *Ardas* are captivating.

After his election as chairman of the Gurmat Prachar Trust, Professor Harkishen Singh embarked on the mission of convening monthly *goshtis* on *Gurbani* in various areas of the capital inviting erudite scholars and consummate speakers, in which many people participated. In this noble task he was willingly assisted by Sardar Jasbir Singh Bir and had always the counsel of Sardar Saran Singh, IAS (Retd.) and Honorary Editor of ***The Sikh Review*** of Calcutta. There was a close rapport between Professor Sahib and these personalities.

Professor Harkishen Singh was intimately connected with the Sikh Forum under the chairmanship of Lt. General Jagjit Singh Aurora, which had the patronage of Sardar Ranjit Singh Narula, the retired Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court. He rendered valuable service to the noble and urgent task of resettlement of the widows and orphans of the Sikh massacre in the capital after the assassination of the then Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi. Tirelessly he worked for collecting funds and amenities for the unfortunate victims of the communal wrath and never tired of rendering all help and assistance in extending educational facilities to the young orphans. He took keen interest in arranging training in devotional music to the girls amongst them. He was also a member of the Sikh Core Group organised by intellectuals and scholars, including highly valued jurists.

Professor Harkishen Singh was a man of nobility. Humility and sweet utterance were his highest qualities. Devotion to the Sikh thought, purity of soul and the desire to befriend everyone were his valuable assets. His works in Punjabi on devotional themes lay bare his ever thirsty soul trying to reach out to the Sikh Gurus. He was cast in the image of saints. Though a householder, his spirit was always in tune with the Almighty. He was secular to the core and loved the whole humanity as God's creation. His quest for perfection being a Gursikh was enduring. All his thoughts were focussed on the teachings of the holy scripture. Though he is no more in this mortal world, his *atma* must have gone in search of the Universal Lord and it is a justifiable hope that he has found his due place at the holy feet of the Gurus.

Antim ardas for the departed soul was performed at Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Greater Kailash-I in New Delhi on December 10, 2002. The congregation included a large number of people from various walks of life and all those present joined in prayer that Akal Purukh may grant eternal bliss to His humble and devoted servant.

