

Lachman Chellaram: A man with a mission*

CONTRIBUTED

LACHMAN CHELLARAM, 66 IS NOT A turbaned Sikh, yet his life is dedicated to Sikhism and the spread of Gurbani. He is frequently invited to Gurdwaras, shrines and private homes for *Kirtans* and discourses on Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of the Sikhs.

A member of the Sindhi Community, known for generations to frequent Gurudwaras ever since they lived in Sindh prior to the partition, Lachman is known for his pre-eminence in keeping the love of *Gurbani* ablaze in the Sindhi Community, following in the footsteps of his legendary father who was a great devotional singer and scholar of Sikhism and Comparative religion.

Considered a Sikh missionary and disciple of Guru Nanak, he completed a five-year project of translation of the holy scripture containing 1430 pages and 5800 hymns therein into four languages – Sindhi, Hindi, English and Punjabi. His translation of the hymns with prose commentary runs into 4800 pages and has been further translated in nine Indian languages, including Bengali, Gujarati and Marathi.

“Knowledge is important, know your scriptures in real sense, do not just render lip service,” Lachman often urges his audience. He advocates less preaching and more practice and spreads the message of love, peace and universal brotherhood.

He says, “When you become a disciple (the literal meaning of the word Sikh), that is one who is desirous of knowing the real nature of the Supreme being, you form an intimate, sacred relationship with God, like that of a mother and child. Sikhism especially emphasizes this inseparable relationship, deepest of its kind.

Lachman has extensively toured abroad to disseminate the message of Sikhism.

Lachman has spiritually inherited the divine and enlightened inspiration from his beloved father, the legendary Dada Chellaramji. He has enhanced and glorified his name and fame by his wisdom, talent, devotion and scholarly research of *Guru Sikh Itihas*. He has exalted the life mission of Guru Sahiban and enlightened ideologies of Universal truth and brotherhood.

Says Lachman, “Guru Granth Sahib is a religious gospel that is truly universal. It has messages of not just Sikh Gurus, but also of Hindu Saints and Muslim fakirs. It does not speak just about Sikhs, but about mankind in general. It contains messages of peace and life. Words like Ram, Hari and Allah occur as many times, as Waheguru in the book.”

Very few people, he says, know what the text contains. “Almost everybody has heard about Guru Granth Sahib, but very few are aware of the treasure contained therein. It is a shame that even most Sikhs are not aware of the message within the book. They bow before it and go through all the rituals when they go to the Gurudwara, but very few know what they are bowing to.”

Not having reserved any copyrights for himself for the translation, Lachman Chellaram does not want to make any profit out of his work. He feels since the original author of Guru Granth Sahib had not written the book to make any profits what right do I have to make money out of the translations?

When Lachman began his translation works he got ample encouragement from his parents, sister and wife. Without their moral support, he could not have carried on with the work, he feels.

