

GANGA SAGAR – A symbol of Unity and Goodwill

** A complete article on the subject has already been published in April 2006 issue of **The Sikh Review**.*

In 1705 Guru Gobind Singh Ji went to Machiwara after leaving Anandpur Sahib, during those days of severe hardship some Rajas refused even to offer help to Guru Sahib due to the fear of death as Aurangzeb was after the life of Guru Sahib and his family. When Guru Sahib reached Raikot state, the Muslim Chief Rai Kalha welcomed him and felt honoured in offering his services to Guru Sahib as his guest for 'as long as he wanted to stay.' Guru Ji Spent a few days with Rai Kalha.

It was in Raikot that Guru Sahib got the most tragic news of the death of his two minor sons, Sahebzada Zorawar Singh, aged 9 years, and Sahebzada Fateh Singh, 7 years old, and his mother Mata Gujri Ji. Noora Mahi who was deputed by Rai Kalha for the seva of Guru Sahib brought the news from Sarhind. Guru Sahib during his stay asked Noora Mahi to serve him milk in 'Ganga Sagar', a metallic pitcher, which was a part of his personal belongings. Noora Mahi said that his buffalo did not give milk and even if it did, the milk will not stay in Ganga Sagar as it had holes in it. Guru Sahib told him to utter the name of God and start milking the buffalo. To the surprise and amazement of Noora Mahi, the buffalo gave milk and it did not leak out from the Ganga Sagar. **Before leaving Raikot, in recognition and in appreciation of the services and hospitality extended by Rai Kalha, a Muslim Chief, who risked his own and his family's lives, Guru Gobind Singh Ji presented Ganga Sagar and a sword to Rai Kalha as personal gifts.**

Till 1947 the Ganga Sagar was displayed for darshan in Raikot, Distt Ludhiana by Khan Bahadur Rai Inayat Khan.

The present owner of Ganga Sagar, Rai Azizullah, is grandson of Khan Bahadur Rai Inayat Khan, and heir of the Rai family, who have kept this sacred gift of Guru Gobind Singh Ji with great respect and care for some 300 years. Rai Azizullah Khan has displayed the Ganga Sagar to the Sikh devotees all over the world on various occasions. Rai Sahib and his family throughout the generations have shown devotion love and respect for the Guru, even at the obvious risk of serious reprisals from the rulers of the day.

In present times the importance of this unique symbol of love, unity and brotherhood has become more relevant than ever before, especially when both India and Pakistan are trying to rebuild their relationship. On our request a young well wisher and a friend from Lahore, Farhan Wilayat Butt has taken the trouble to contact the Rai Sahib in person to obtain the brief script and the picture of this symbol of love and brotherhood for publication in this Journal.

With this friendly gesture and generosity, both Rai Sahib and Mr. Farhan have re-defined the old tradition of brotherhood between the two communities, in particular, and among nations in general. We extend our special thanks and gratitude for their valuable co-operation. Let us pray that this symbol of unity helps us to come closer and the year 2007 become a historic year of friendship for the two nations.

- Publisher, SR

