

A Son's Tribute to His Father*

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* Among the most respected longtime representatives of this journal, Sr. Jaswinder Singh Chadha who passed away in London, last February, was a many-splendoured Sikh whose scientific accomplishments only enhanced his faith in Gurbani and the Gurmat tradition.

I WOULD LIKE TO SAY A FEW WORDS about my father, Sardar Jaswinder Singh Chadha. He was a man of great principles, and high ideals, which he exemplified in his own life. He taught us the importance of education.

As a child I used to struggle at school to the point where I needed extra reading classes as I was behind the rest of the class.

With Dad's help and encouragement I got over this, and worked my way to near the top of the class. He infused in us our precious Sikh identity. He never had to formally tell us to keep our hair, but his faith was so strong it made a profound impression on us. I remember when I was about five years old we suffered a number of racist attacks, including a brick through our window. At school I was teased and mocked, but never once did I want to lose my Sikh form, and I owe this entirely to my father.

He taught us not to lust after money, but to earn your wage honestly and ethically. He was a great family man, and loved his children and grandchildren dearly.

He cared little for social popularity and standing in society, family being his priority. He had the gift of both understanding *Gurbani*, and being able to convey it's meaning in simple English.

He regularly helped us in *Gurbani* workshops, the knowledge we gained was invaluable, and will stay with me always.

This gift is also preserved for all in his three books, '*Sikh Gurus: a Poetic Appreciation*,' '*Guru Nanak's Jap Ji - A rendering in English Verse*', and '*India's Guru-Martyr Guru Tegh Bahadur*.'

This last book he completed in very difficult circumstances, as his health was failing. However, with true determination and Guru's grace he finished this labour of love.

One night a young boy visited our house with his parents. He had received Dad's *Japji Sahib* book a number of years ago, and his parents told us he reads *Japji Sahib* from it everyday. Little things like this make his effort fruitful and his life meaningful.

He lived his life according to the principles of Guru Nanak: *Naam Japna, Kirt Karna, Wand Chhakna*, an example of a true Sikh in this modern day, and he inspired others to be.

I could not have asked for more in a father and I thank *Satguru* for giving me birth in his household. If I am 10% of the father he was to me, I'll be grateful.

There are many words you can use to describe my father: a loving family man, a scientist, a businessman, a poet, a scholar, a mentor. But the word which does most justice is *Gurmukh*, a man of God. And when a *Gurmukh* passes away we mourn for

our own loss but not for the departed soul as they are united with their true companion, *Waheguru*.

My brother Harpreet and I would like to thank you all for your love and support in these difficult days.

I've lost count of the amount of people who have offered their help through this period. Sometimes when you see what goes on in the world around you, you can lose faith in mankind.

But the love and warmth we have felt in the last weeks has been immense and helped ease our loss. Loving families have traveled from India, Canada, and the US at a moments notice, to be here and share our grief. Their love is instrumental in our healing, and has helped these last seven days pass.

I would like to thank our dear mother, Sardarni Amrit Kaur Chadha. For the last two years she nursed Dad through a debilitating illness, caring for his every need 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Her love and dedication in these difficult days was unparalleled, and went beyond the duty of a wife. Again I thank *Satguru* for gracing us with such a mother.

My dear Sister-in-law Binu, and wife Kulmeen, loved Dad as their own father. Many daughters-in-law might have thought it a burden to have a sick, housebound father-in-law, but these two were pillars of strength in a time of need.

Also we would like to thank Dad's four wonderful grandchildren, Diva, Ria, Jeeya, and Giaan, who brought so much joy even in hardship, and made him smile to his last day.

I hope we can all learn something from the life of our father, a life in which he achieved so much.

