

Amrit Prachar for Youth

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IT IS WELL KNOWN THROUGHOUT the world that the children generally have the same religion as that of their parents. For example, a child born to Christian parents becomes a Christian. Similarly, Sikh parents have Sikh children. It is evident from the fact that Sikhs having "Singh" or "Kaur" in their names are Sikh by birth. Such definition is applied for numerical, comparative religious study throughout the world.

Accordingly, I calculated in 1998 that Sikhism is the fifth largest religion in the world (The Sikh Review, May, 1998, p. 54). In addition, I also wrote to Fresno Bee Newspaper in Fresno, CA. This idea has spread like wild fire in the last five years and people throughout the world now know that Sikhism is fifth largest religion of the world. The Sikhs should work hard to keep this pace with the changing religious world.

Guru Gobind Singh started Amrit for all the people. Prof. Taran Singh, Prof. of Divinity at Khalsa College, Amritsar, used to say that we (The Sikh students) already know and follow *rahit* and *kurahits*. It is very easy for the Sikhs to take and follow Amrit. The only deficiency is that the Gurdwaras and Granthis have not informed and encouraged the general Sikh population. If somebody has broken Amrit, that person can accept forgiveness from Guru Granth Sahib and retake Amrit. By breaking Amrit, nobody has been cursed because cursing does not exist in the Sikh religion.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji started an easy way to follow Sikh religion consisting of recitation of God's name (*Nam Japna*), earning livelihood by hard and honest work (*Dharm di Kirt*), and sharing with others (*Vand chhakna*). Guru Gobind Singh Ji provided Sikhs with uniform (*Banna*) consisting of sword (*Kirpan*), special underwear (*Kachha*), iron bracelet (*Kara*), uncut hair (*kes*), and comb (*Kangha*). Guru prohibited Sikh from cutting hair, engaging in sexual activity with another person's spouse, using tobacco, and eating meat prepared by Islamic religious rites.

Anybody committing one or more of the four prohibited acts can retake Amrit by confessing in front of the Guru Granth Sahib. The person is never cursed. Misplacing and recovering *kara*, *kanga*, or *kirpan* is not breaking Amrit. People who fights over chairs in the *langar* areas in the gurdwaras, using *kirpan* in offerings before or after the *ardas*, keeping *kachha* on one foot while changing from wet garments to dry ones are being misled. Instead, all Sikhs should help each other follow Amrit.



Guru Granth Sahib - A Philatelic Celebration

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THE COLONISATION OF THE INDIA begun when Mahmud of Ghazni (Afghan invader) established his rule at Lahore in 1023 AD and returned to Ghazni after each invasion. Mohammed of Ghor invaded India and conquered larger territories from

1175 AD – until his death in 1206 AD. In between the death of Mohammad Ghor in 1206 AD and birth of Guru Nanak Dev on Saturday 21st October 1469 AD in Talwandi, known as Nankana Sahib, India witnessed more bloodier events than in the preceding years. Which prompted Nanak to create a new faith as *Sikhism*.

SIKHISM means the path of discipline and discipleship as shown by Sikh Gurus. It is a practical religion – a faith of hope and optimism. The word Sikh is derived from the Sanskrit word **SHISHYA** (A disciple) who follows the **SEEKH** (teachings) of **GURU GRANTH SAHIB**. The Holy Scripture is the teachings of God by the sermons of Sikh Gurus. Compiled in the form of book. First compiled by 5th Guru Arjun Devji and Finally by Last Guru Gobind Singhji.

GURU NANAK DEV JI (India S.G. No. 602) gave new hope to the down-trodden mankind to join his fraternity as equal, teaches uniquely through three basic principles (a) Nam Japo (b) Kirt Karo (C) Vand-ke-chakkoo and also traveled from 1507-1521 as far as Mecca in the west and Bangladesh in the East, Tibet in the north & Sri Lanka in the South to spread the message of God.

There are 97 Compositions of Hymns under 19 (musical) ragas in Guru Granth Sahib.

GURU ANGAD DEV – propagated the message of God with emphasis to avoid gossip, stealing, forgery & lust, Guru preached that God is omnipresent and we could be one with him only through love, honesty and loyalty by composing 63 hymns suffixing 'Nanak' identifying that author of hymns is a Sikh Guru. Guruji also introduced the use of Gurumukhi script & developed Punjabi grammar.

GURU AMAR DAS (India S.G. No. 953) – The third Nanak in succession instituted PANGAT dining together in the Guru-ka-Langar (the free community kitchen) and SANGAT – mixed congregation, where his disciple meet as brother in faith. Composed 907 Hymens, Pauris & Shlokas under 29 Raags in Guru Granth Sahib.

GURU RAM DAS (India S.G. No. 224, 319) – The fourth Guru of Sikh faith marked the excavation work of Holy tank Amrit sarover on a land gifted by Moghul Emperor Akbar the Great, composed 679 Hymens, pauris & Shlokas at 29 Raags in Guru Granth Sahib. The Golden Temple (Darbar Sahib) constructed in early 15th century-nucleus of Sikhism, which is Sanctum Sanctorum for Sikh, keep its doors open to all persons irrespective of their faiths.

GURU ARJUN DEV (India S. G. No. – 1282) compiled Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh Scripture also known as Adi Granth) and added his Hymns, Pauris & Shlokas. First inaugurated in 16-8-1604. 400th year of Parkash Gurupurab of Sri Adi Granth Sahib is celebrating world wide in 2004.

While compiling the Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Arjun Dev ji also enshrined the Shlokas & chant of Bhagat and Sufis of other religion.

SHEIKH FARID – Faridkot the resting place of Sheikh Baba Farid 1175-1265. The immortal Sufi bard and father of Punjabi Literature. 4 Hymans & 112 Shloks in Adi Granth.

BHAI GURDAS – Born at Gurdaspur, was the son of Dadar Chand, younger brother of Guru Amardas. He was contemporary of third fifth & sixth Gurus. A brilliant

scholar and a great poet. He composed 39 (wars) Ballads in Punjabi, 556 (Kabits) Couplets in Braj and also Scribe of the Guru Granth Sahib.

SANT NAMDEO – (India S.G. No. 626), 1270-1350 A.D., was a celebrated saint, the son of Dam Seti, a tailor who resided at Narsi Bamni in the Satara district. His mother Gona Bai daughter of a tailor and his father possessed devotional enthusiasm. 62 of his hymns have been incorporated in the ADI GRANTH. The themes of these hymns are the varied spiritual experience of Namdev.

KABIR – (India S.G. No. 337) 1398-1495. Kabir was the most revolutionary saint of the Bhakti movement. He condemned social and religious abuses and emphasized the fundamental equality and fraternity of all mankind. He fought against all vicious influences and pulled up the Hindu pundits and Muslim mullas and inveighed against the Yogis and Sadhus. Kabir' Contribution to the Granth comprising 534 different verses arranged under 17 Ragas.

SURDAS – (India S.G. No.-340) 1478-1585, Bhagat Sur Das was a Brahmin family born, in addition to learning Sanskrit and Persian, he studied music and learn poetry.

RAVIDAS – (India S.G. No.) 1324-1414, The spiritual power of Ravidas was known far and wide. He inspired Meera Bai. The queen of Chittore became his disciple. Ravidas was a resident of Kanshi and came from a cobbler's family. In spite of his low caste, he rose to a position of great honour and respect through a life of simplicity and piety. 40 Shabad are included in Granth Sahib.

GURU TEGH BAHADUR – (India S.G. No.-793) 1621-1676, Stamp depicts Gurdwara Sri Sis Gang (Delhi) where his martyrdom took place. His martyrdom is history's supreme act in vindication of religion freedom and dignity and Guruji is remembered as HIND-KI-CHADAR the protector of the Honour of India.

USER: Gurudwara Sis Ganj, Delhi. BHAY KAHO KOW DET NAHIN NAHIN BHAY MANATAAN: Who doth not evoke fear in others nor accepteth fear from any one. 59 Hymns and 56 Shlokas in Guru Granth Sahib.

GURU GOBIND SINGH – (India S.G. No.-544) 1677-1708 Stamp issued on Birth tercentenary, depicting Sri Takht Harmandir jee, Patna Sahib – where Guruji was born on Saturday, 22nd Dec 1666 and spend 8 years of his child hood. Guruji initiated Sikh Baptism by creating New KHALSA PANTH and give distinctive identity to the Sikhs by Five 'K's.

TALWANDI SABO – Bhatinda-Fifth seat of authority of Sikhs. A magnificent Gurdwara was erected to perputete the memory of Guru Gobind Singh Stay in 1706. This place owes its importance to the Compilation of Guru Granth Sahib (Damdami Bir) By Guru Gobind Singh. Scriber was Bhai Mani Singhji.

NANDED – Guruji bestowed upon the Granth the Guruship (Gur Gaddi) at Nanded in 4.10.1707. "All community should recognise Guru Granth as the Guru. All obey the commandments enshrine therein. Recognise the Granth as the visible body of the Guru. The Sikh who wishes to meet me should find me there."

GURU GRANTH SAHIB – Which is known as ADI Granth, is the holy book of the Sikhs and the supreme authority. Total shabads salokas and chhant are 5894 under 31 RAGAS has 1339 out of 1430 pages.

Code of Conduct – Directive doctrines of Sikhism. A Sikh Believes in ONE GOD and never Shaves or trimmers the HAIR. As per teachings of Guru Granth Sahib a Sikh always keeps himself in code of Conduct and Should never Consume. Never indulge in ADULTRY.

The main theme of Guru Granth Sahib is 1. Search of God 2. Means to communicate with God 3. Method to realise God 4. Religious Commandments 5. Rules of Morality 6. The Sikh Theology.

ADMIREES of Guru Granth Sahib: Pearl Buck – Nobel Prize Winner (India S.G. No.) Sri Guru Granth Sahib is a source book, an expression of man's loneliness, his aspiration, his longings, his cry to God and his hunger for communication with that being. I have studied the scriptures of other great, religions, but I do find elsewhere the same power of appeal to the heart and mind as I find here.

Dr. S Radha Krishnan - President of India (India S.G. No. 509). We find in the Guru Granth, a wide range of mystical emotions, intimate expressions of the personal realization of God and rapturous Hymns of Devine love.

Sadhu Vaswani – (India S.G. No. 560). The living spirit of the Gurus speaketh today in the words of this ever-living book, the inspired testament of the saint, which the Tenth Nanak (Guru Gobind Singh) with the last benediction of his earthly life, left to his disciples as their Enlightener.

Reference

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2. *Golden Temple* by Patwant Singh.
3. *The Sikh Review* - Socio Cultural & Religious Journal.
4. *World Stamp Catalogue* by Stainley Gibbons.

Sufism among Punjabi Youth An Interview with Rabbi Singh Shergill

SARAH SALVADORE

- **For years people have wanted you to do playback but you declined. Is there something that you have against playback singing?**

I never wanted to be a playback singer. As a singer, playback does not give me the stimulation which any artiste craves for. I just did one song for a film out of sheer boredom. The song flopped miserably but I don't care.

- **Your song is number one on the charts these days. How des it feel to attain success so late?**

It comes to me as a shocker that the common man is appreciating my song, *Bulla*. I expected it to be niche. Sometime back I met Amitabh Bachchan at a party and he told me that he hears my songs everyday. It was an extremely gratifying feeling. But then that kind of adulation did not change my beliefs and philosophy. I did not let that praise get to my head.

- **Why is there a Sufi influence in your songs?**

If you hear my album you will notice that only one song is Sufi. At that time, the song completely matched my state of mind. I was in search of something, but

could not consciously figure out what it was. *Bulla Ki Jaana Main Kaun* was exactly what expressed my state of mind then.

- **Now that your first album is a hit, will you revert to the same pattern of songs in your next one?**

The first and foremost thing is that I do not want to be a victim of my own success. What most singers do these days is fall back on a formula. If one album succeeds, then the next one follows the same line. I completely identify with what I sing. I want to please myself first before I cater to the audience. I'm not a master in the art of appeasement.

- **So is there any strategy that you want to follow while penning your next songs?**

I will not fall into any trap. *Bulla* is doing well no doubt, but then people will expect me do something bigger than *Bulla*. You don't write to win a Booker, but in the process if you achieve that then that is great. That is exactly what has happened. I did the songs with complete sincerity and they just clicked.

(Courtesy: *The Times of India*)

RABBI SINGH Shergill, the newest sensation of Indian music, along with Fuzon and Josh were in Calcutta for the musical extravaganza at the Science City auditorium. The event was marked by Rabbi's tete-a-tete with the media, where he turned philosophical with "**survival alone cannot be the means of existence**," transcending the peripheral constraints of the set notion about Indian music and culture.

With a high dose of Springsteen in him, Rabbi demystifies the flick by saying "when you do not experience your environment, you cannot reproduce...in many songs, I talk about my immediate surroundings." Drawing from a rich Punjabi tradition, Rabbi, uses the guitar to squeeze his mind out. Naturally, guitar riffs and a rhythm driven tune is predominant in his numbers.

With signature songs like *Bulla Ki Jana* riding the charts, his songs are an example of 'visceral rock', where the symbiosis between traditional and modern elements are superbly executed.

Rabbi made a foray into pop using poetry. Radical in many ways indeed. In *Bulla Ki Jana*, he says "...I know not who I am, Neither am I the believer in a mosque, Nor am I in idol-worshipper...Bulla! I know not what I am." Similarly, in *jugni*, he grapples "Jugni blazed into Kashmir, where 10 or 20 die everyday." The guttural, rhythmic tones in these captivating scores reawaken the Sufi strains. "It is the unremarkability of my childhood that helped me to shape myself in this fashion," explained Rabbi owing much more to the family members who gave him all the support he needed.

Rabbi, being the latest happening in Indian music, is all set with his reincarnated poetry to reflect the 'angst' of the new generation.

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(Courtesy: *The Statesmen*)