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ਸਿੱਖ ਬੁਲੇਟਨ

# The Sikh Bulletin

A Voice of Concerned Sikhs World Wide



ਪੰਥ ਕੀ ਜੀਤ

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[editor@sikhbulletin.com](mailto:editor@sikhbulletin.com)

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[editor@sikhbulletin.com](mailto:editor@sikhbulletin.com)

**Our Website:** [www.sikhbulletin.com](http://www.sikhbulletin.com)

## EDITORIAL [I]

### OAK CREEK, WISCONSIN

August 5, 2012

This issue of the Sikh Bulletin was and is going to be about our family in North America, Canada and The United States of America, a case study in Diaspora Sikh Family, because there are many more like us and with whom I wish to establish empathy. An editorial pertaining to that had already been written but then came 8/5/2012 in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. Now this issue is going to have two editorials.

I had come to this country by a rather unusual mode of travel, hitchhiking, from New Delhi to University of Washington, Seattle, June 24<sup>th</sup> 1960 – September 21<sup>st</sup> 1960. During this sojourn, in many countries of the Middle East and Europe and six states of the USA, I met a multitude of very kind people but also a few that were not so nice. I had kept detailed journals of my travel and they had continued during my stay here although with less regularity.

It was during the research of those travels for this issue, two days after the carnage in Wisconsin that I came across the following:

### September 7, 1960, Monahans, Texas:

*"...I crossed over to the other side of the road to buy some tomatoes from a roadside vegetable stall. The old proprietor was a strange character. The first thing he asked me was how the hell I was there? How did I get the passport to get to the USA? And finally grumbled and cursed his government which lets foreigners come to the USA. I do not know why he grudged this. And the tomatoes he was selling at 20 cents a pound, I did not buy, thinking they were too costly and when I asked him did he know for how much we can buy them for in India (which was my way of politely educating him as to where I was from), with contempt in his eyes he said, for nothing. I walked away before I could lose my temper at that sad silly man..."*

**A deputy sheriff of Monahans even checked my papers. I guess his ignorance, or pride of authority, would not allow him to distinguish between me and an illegal Mexican. In this sense he was no different than the Pakistani Police ASI who, on June 28<sup>th</sup> 1960 at the Khanewal Railway Station, sent a policeman to bring me out to him to show my passport. He leafed through my passport and gave it back to me. Our contempt for each other was so obvious that no words were exchanged.**

Today, on August 7<sup>th</sup> 2012, as I transcribe this from my diary, even after more than half a century of this experience of mine, after Oak Creek, Wisconsin, Gurdwara tragedy on Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> August that saw six innocent lives snuffed and many injured, including a policeman, there is no shortage in this country of senseless hate mongers, including the Republican law makers, one of whom even aspired to become the President of this only super power in the world, who are directly responsible for creating an environment for this hate filled crime with their ignorant and obsessive hatred for **all** the Muslims, their four years long effort to label Obama as a Muslim and spineless and cowardly legislators who have sold their souls to the National Rifle Association.

**To that bunch you can add** the Republican legislator who shouted ‘you lie’ to the President of the United States during his State of the Union address; a Republican Supreme Court Justice who showed his intelligence, or lack of it, by mouthing something similar; Republican Supreme Court that decided for us dummies who our President ought to be and pushed down our throats that ‘Corporations are People’ ruling; the Republican leader of the Senate whose primary goal is not to help the economy to turn around and help people find jobs but to make Obama a one term President; a party that insulted the American electorate and the world by nominating a Vice-Presidential candidate a person who did not even possess a passport. Did the party ever think what that meant? It meant that the world could face as a leader a

person whose vision was no larger than a frog in a well.

And what do we have now? A shameless flip flopper Republican Presidential candidate who lies and shows not even an iota of ethics, who has spent his entire life making money at the expense of the less fortunate, milked the system for every penny in tax avoidance, likes firing people and not concerned about the very poor, naming his Vice-Presidential candidate a person, the only Republican who has put in black and white his budget ideas that consist of further lowering taxes for the very rich, increasing or maintaining the current expenditures on military, reduce, modify or eliminate Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, Food Stamps and Welfare programmes, in other words turn this country into a Banana Republic of 1% filthy rich and 99% peons. Republican should be a derogatory word in this country’s lexicon.

As if the Republican Party was not doing enough damage, there is the Right Wing Media Machine, including the Fox News. In its lexicon ‘Liberal’ is a bad word and main stream media is also vilified. The strategy works. They control plenty of television but a lot of radio. Of the radio hosts two foul mouths that I get to listen in Sacramento, California, one claims to be using only half of his brain to vilify Democrats. He learned nothing from Bill Clinton completing his two full terms even though he would start counting the number of days left in his presidency on the day of inauguration. Nor did he learn anything from Obama’s victory. I think that he got to sleep at the White House during Bush Jr’s presidency, whose biggest accomplishment was the gift of Iraq to Ayatollahs of Iran at an exorbitant cost to the American tax payer and wasted life of brave men and women of Armed Forces. He also played Santa Claus to the very rich by reducing their taxes while engaging in two costly wars fought by poor and middle class Americans. Another radio host calls himself Savage. I do not know whether that is his real name or he just likes the label.

Republican Party is not alone in this matter. There are a bunch of DINOs, Democrats In Name Only, rightly called DOGS of a certain hue who are just like their Republican cousins. I rather have RINOs, Republicans In Name Only, running the show. If Abraham Lincoln or Dwight Eisenhower, who warned this nation about the Military-Industrial complex, were the Republican leaders today, I will be a Republican.

We are waging a ruthless war against the terrorists around the globe, including some who are US citizens. Why not wage the same war with the same intensity against the home grown terrorists, **“white supremacist skinheads” and “frustrated neo-Nazi”?**

The world also needs to know that even though the last Republican President went to war in Iraq to bring Democracy to the Middle East, among other excuses, practically every state in the Union that has a Republican Governor, is actively engaged in passing legislation to deny the legitimacy of some voters. Their targets are the poor, the elderly, and the minorities and even students, all a traditional constituency of Democrats, all under the pretext of suppressing voter fraud which is not even occurring.

Neither of the two Presidential candidates deserves my vote but vote I shall for Obama. I am not a whole hearted supporter of Obama because he missed an opportunity to use the first two years of his term when both Houses of Congress had Democrat majority. His problem was the Blue Dog Democrats, if they deserve to be called Democrats.

He should have whipped them in line, and a single payer system for health insurance, or at least an option for one, should have been an important part of his health reform. The only way to reduce cost of health insurance is to take profit motive out of it and US manufacturers and businesses should be relieved of the burden to provide health insurance to their workers. It should be federal and portable across State lines like Medicare and Social

Security. His stimulus package was weak and he played too cozy towards the financial interests who were given loads of money with no strings attached.

With Paul Ryan as his V-P candidate, Romney's vague statements about what he will do to improve the economy are now very explicit thanks to Ryan's budget proposal that Republicans have already passed. There is no wiggle room. This is an opportunity for the American electorate to redeem itself from the goofs of Bush Jr's two terms. They can earn the respect of the entire world by giving President Obama a fifty state victory.

That would also be a sweet victory over the right wing Republican Supreme Court that declared corporations as people. Perhaps that will also trigger the resurrection of a Republican Party that is truly compassionate conservative and not the farce that Bush Jr. gave us. Hardev S Shergill

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## EDITORIAL [II]

### GURBANI & SIKH REHT MARYADA SOME CONTRADICTIONS

#### Quotes from Guru Granth Sahib:

ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੂ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਹਾਈ ॥

*The One God is our father; we are the children of the One God. You are our Guru. GGS Page 611*

ਨਾ ਕੇ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਬਨਿ ਆਈ

॥੧॥

*No one is my enemy, and no one is a stranger. I get along with everyone. GGS Page 1299*

**Both quotes above are from the Bani of Fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan Dev Ji. Guru Ji is stressing**

**that whole Human Race is one big Family. Guru Nanak preached the same thing to his Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Muslim audiences in India and the Middle East and to the Christian and Jewish audiences whom he must have come across during his visit to Mecca, Medina and Baghdad. Scientific research on human origins confirms the same thing. In fact it even pin points the origin of the human race to an 'African Mother'.**

**Quotes from  
'Sikh Reht Maryada:  
The Code of Sikh Conduct & Conventions',  
Published by  
Dharam Parchar Committee  
Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee  
December 2000 (English version)**

*"Only a Sikh may perform kirtan in a congregation".  
(Chapter V Article VI c) p.15*

*"A Sikh daughter must be married to a Sikh".  
(Chapter XI Article XVIII b) p.26*

**Two questions arise:**

- 1. Why the distinction between daughter and son when Gurbani gives both sexes an equal status?**
- 2. If all of humanity is the child of one God then why discriminate in the name of religion, which is man-made?**

It is logical to assume from the above quotes that a Sikh can be recognized by his appearance alone. A key determinant of that is unshorn hair. Yet there is no mention of the requirement for a Sikh to keep unshorn hair in Guru Granth Sahib. If anything, it says that it makes no difference to the creator whether we keep long hair or a bald head; what counts are our deeds, our conduct in our daily lives.

**ਕਬੀਰ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਏਕ ਸਿਉਂ ਕੀਏ ਆਨ ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਜਾਇ॥  
ਭਾਵੈ ਲਾਬੇ ਕੇਸ ਕਰੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਘਰਿ ਮੁਡਾਇ॥ GGS ਪ। 1365।**

If the Gurus kept unshorn hair, covered with a turban, they were simply following one of the then prevalent Indian customs that also included completely shorn and partially shorn hair. It was Hindus and Muslims, in various forms of appearance, who came to listen to the Gurus and none was barred based on their appearance or for any other reason.

Mardana, a Muslim, perhaps should be considered first among Guru Nanak's Sikhs because he spent his entire adult life in Guru's company and provided music for Guru's hymns. Today his descendants are not allowed to perform kirtan at Darbar Sahib or any other Gurdwara.

The requirement of keeping unshorn hair started with the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, but only for those who volunteered to partake 'khande-di-pahul' and alongwith unshorn hair they were also required to carry four more articles of faith. At no time were the non-pahuldhari Sikhs considered any lesser.

In time the children of pahuldhari Sikhs, and many others, started keeping long hair without taking pahul, and now we are at a point where non-kesadhari Sikh is not just looked down upon but not even considered a Sikh. There is one kesadhari and pahuldhari sect among us that does not consider as Sikhs even those kesadhari and pahuldhari Sikhs who have not been baptized by their ritual and do not agree with their interpretation of Gurbani. Members of this group have resorted to violence in UK, Canada and USA to stop missionaries trained in Gurmat Gian Colleges from performing katha in our gurdwaras.

It is an interesting coincidence that both terms, **Sikh** and **Taliban**, literally mean the same thing, 'the student'. Unfortunately, we have seen the emergence of Sikh Taliban in the Diaspora. **We should never forget that a Sikh is one who lives by the teachings enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib that embodies the philosophy of Guru Nanak. Gurus lived their lives as they**

preached. There was no difference in their *kathani* and *karni* and they did not expect anything less from their Sikhs.

It would be appropriate here to quote from my May-June 2012 Sikh Bulletin editorial:

*“Here I would like to confess to my personal belief that might be considered a blasphemy and offend most people, even those who know me well. That is that Guru Nanak did not initiate another religion. There were too many religions and divisions among them in his time as is the case today. Today he will surely say that ‘I am neither a Hindu nor a Muslim; neither a Sikh nor a Christian’. He showed mankind a path to life and living. The tragedy is that ‘well meaning people’, which would be 99.9% of us all, have turned it into yet another divisive and suffocating faith.”*

Several days after this issue of the Sikh Bulletin was released on the internet, Dr. Harbans Lal sent me an article for publications about the findings of **Syed Mushtaq Hussain Mirpuri**, a Kashmiri Muslim, during his stay at a madrassa in Mecca from 1927-1930. The following quote is from that article to be published in the September-October 2012 issue of the Sikh Bulletin:

*“Siyah-to Baba Nanak Shah Faqir, by **Haji Tajjudin Naqshbandhi**, who had met Guru Nanak during the hajj. Tajjudin caught up with Guru Nanak in the town of Undlas located between Erar and Bagdad and travelled thereafter with him as a member of his entourage. He thus remained with Guru Nanak during the years of 1504-06.*

*During Guru Nanak's visit to Mecca, **Qazi Ruknuddin** was among the first batch of Muslims who had extensive dialogue with him. After the incident in which Nanak was found sleeping with his feet pointing in the "wrong" direction, several Hajjis or pilgrims to Mecca-Medina gathered around Guru Nanak, seeking a dialogue.*

*Qazi Ruknuddin then asked Nanak: “Fala Allah mazabo”? (What is your religion?)*

*To that Guru Nanak responded:*

*“Abdulla Allah la mazaboo” (I am a man of God and belong to no religion.)*

*This was one of some 360 questions and answers from Guru Nanak's dialogues during his Middle-East Visit.”*

This response by Guru Nanak reminded me of a similar utterance I heard in a scene of a play, ‘Bulleshah’ (1680-1757) performed in Chandigarh by a Pakistani group, about ten years ago. Two of his disciples were accosted by the religious police while eating during daylight during the month of Ramadan. When asked what religion they belonged to they responded that they were Muslims. Bulleshah told them that with their response they asked for that treatment because a Muslim is not supposed to eat during the day time during the month of Ramadan fasting; that their answer should have been ‘we are men of God’.

The Guru period and The Mughal period were contemporary. There should be a wealth of original information in the archives of the Mogul Empire in Persian, the official language of the court. We need to train future researchers, proficient in Panjabi, Persian and English.

Hardev S. Shergill

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### A SIKH FAMILY IN THE DIASPORA

[This special issue of The Sikh Bulletin is dedicated to my sister Guddi, Surinder Brar, sibling # 8, whose perseverance has finally paid off.]

Based on what has been said above in the Editorial, according to the strict application of Sikh Reht Maryada our family would not meet its definition of being a Sikh family, but by any

standard that is based on the touchstone of Gurbani our family is just as good a Sikh family as any other. I say this not only on behalf of my family but countless other Diaspora families that have shared the same experience as our family. I want them to take comfort and support from our experience.

This issue of the Sikh Bulletin is going to be about our family, a family of ten siblings, five brothers and five sisters settled in Canada and United States, half in Calgary, Alberta and half within a 50 mile radius of Sacramento, California with no family patriarch. I had no idea that I will ever be writing about our family, not until now and definitely not on October 19, 2011 when my younger sister, the 8<sup>th</sup> child, nick named Guddi, sent me an email that led to the following exchange:

*“Hello Bhaji, tell me about your first 12 years of life.”*

I was surprised by that simple question that I never expected any one to ask, nor did I have a response for it. So I wrote back:

*Why? I would not remember the first 6 years anyway.*

Eight hours after her first question her response was:

*I am just curious. What shaped your life? Why did you take care of all of us when you did not have to? What made you so determined to do what you did? Sometimes I think if I was not sent to school my life would have been so different. We all are so lucky to be living in North America. It is because of your sacrifices we are enjoying this life. I never knew our mother. I have no memories of her at all. I just want to know more about it.*

That put me in a quandary. She was five years old when our mother died and remembers nothing

about her. So I was right when I told her I would not remember the first six years of my life. That leaves only six years up to my 12<sup>th</sup> birthday. What could have happened in those six years of my life that made her think I would have an answer for what transpired among us siblings? My answer to her was to buy some time and hope that somewhere down the road I might attempt an answer, although not knowing at all how I will arrive at that answer:

*Sister I need some time to answer that but answer I will. Thank you for asking. Bhaji*

Then on **June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012** I received an email, **‘Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies’**, from my nephew, **Aneel Brar**, who for the past year has been closely supervising the operation and construction of Mata Kartar Kaur Pre-natal Clinic and Mata Jai Kaur Hospital in our village, **35BB**. This village, **35BB**, and another about 30 miles away were founded by our grandfather and his two younger brothers in **August 1927**, after the completion of Gang Canal in that year. **The first party to arrive consisted of five men, our grandmother and her toddler child, our aunt.** They traveled in two ox carts to make home in a desolate, barren and sand dune covered land that had no buildings and no water, initially. Drinking water had to be brought in from an old neighbouring village that had a large depression to store rain water. **Aneel** also happens to be the only son of my sister who asked me the question, *“Hello Bhaji, tell me about your first 12 years of life”*.

This project was started by **Baldev Singh Shergill**, the youngest of us siblings, who was less than five months old when our mother died and was raised by our grandmother until he was thirteen and moved to Canada to join his older siblings. At that moment the doors that I had been trying to open to answer my sister’s question parted a bit and I started to penetrate the mysteries of my life experience of 78 years, especially the last six years of my childhood, between my 6<sup>th</sup>

and 12<sup>th</sup> birthdays.

**Once that period of six years came into focus I was flabbergasted to realize that in my life experience I missed out on teenage years completely.** Twelfth year was the last year of my childhood and thirteenth was the first year of my adulthood. During the next fourteen years I would earn my B.A., M.A. and B.Ed. degrees; teach for three years and find myself on the opposite end of the globe from India. Some memories came back of what I had heard from my grandfather and internalized without being conscious of it.

What struck me at the very outset was the thought process and actions of my grandfather and his brothers, which is, that **if the whole family succeeds then everyone succeeds.** They were their brothers' keepers. Once I came to that realization it was clear to me why I did what I did.

**I am what my Grandfather and my mother made me. This is how the story unfolds:**

The British presence in India began in **1600** with the Royal grant of monopoly of all English trade to Asia to the East India Company. By **1750**, the East India Company had established its trading presence along the east coast. India during this period was partly part of the Mughal Empire (**1526-1757**) and partly a hodge-podge of princely states, big and small. Mughals were Muslims and direct descendants of Genghis Khan (**1162-1227**) of Mongolia. In the second half of the **18<sup>th</sup> century** the British started exercising political control starting in the east and southeast and encroaching north and west towards Delhi and Punjab's Sikh Empire (**1799-1849**), conquering the latter in **1849** after the death of Sikh Raja, Maharaja Ranjit Singh (**1780-1839**). British control over India was now complete, most of it part of the Royal Colony and the rest princely states that accepted British suzerainty but were allowed to maintain domestic sovereignty.

The British had come to stay. By **1885** they started to build the finest irrigation system in the world, a

grand plan to bring perennial canals to the arid plains of what is now Pakistan Panjab that would turn Panjab into a granary for both Pakistan and India. Adjoining the Sutlej-Beas Doaba of Panjab, where my family lived and farmed, was the princely state of Bikaner (**1485-1947**) that was ruled by a very progressive Raja. Bikaner was at the eastern end of the great desert that begins along the shores of North Atlantic and spans North Africa, the Middle East, and Southern Pakistan and ends up as **Thar Desert** in now Rajasthan state of India.

**Maharaja Ganga Singh of Bikaner (1880-1943)** saw the miracle wrought by the British to the arid plains of Panjab and he too wanted a part of the action. His Kingdom had experienced a devastating drought in **1899-1900**. He persuaded the British to sell him some of the water of the Land of Five Rivers that they controlled and in two short years, **1925-1927, 89 miles of this big canal were constructed** and the life giving water of **Gang Canal**, named after him, started flowing into his realm. But just as the native populations in now Pakistani Panjab were not accustomed to irrigation farming, same was the case for the subjects of Maharaja Ganga Singh. For both places the colonizers came from the farming belt of East Panjab, now part of India.

Population of Doaba where my family lived had increased but farming land was scarce. According to my grandfather, his father, who passed away at a rather young age, had left enough land for his three sons and for their sons but prospects for the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation were not good. So when the opportunity came to acquire farms in the new colonies of west Panjab, they took it and also the opportunities offered by Maharaja Ganga Singh in his District of Ganga Nagar by the waters of Gang Canal, soon after its completion in **1927**.

The oldest two grandfathers were close in age; the third much younger. The older two were the decision makers. They initially acquired the entire land allotted to two adjoining villages, **35BB** and

**2BBA.** Both of these villages were less than four miles from the site of village **40BB** which was to become the train station and business center of **Gaj Singh Pur**. But when **BB canal** was found to be inadequate for water needs of what was going to become a growing city, **BB canal** was terminated at **38BB** and **Gaj Singh Pur** received water from another canal they relinquished claim to **2BBA** which was on a minor tributary of **BB canal** and replaced it with village **1V**.

The two oldest made their homes in one each, the youngest in the same village as his oldest brother. At the same time each of the two oldest brothers held title to land in each other's village to make sure the families stayed close. Since each village had an administrative head both elder grand fathers became Heads of their respective village. **1V** had been carved out of an existing village that was much older. There they kept the entire land parcels for themselves but **35BB** was a brand new settlement with its allotment of normal size village land. There they sold out some parcels to friends and family back in Doaba.

#### **My grandfather's influence, direct, forceful, verbal and exemplary:**

My grandfather built himself a raised platform, about three feet high and size of a large living room, just in front of his residence, in the village square. In the evenings as the sun went down, the villagers of his age, anyone else and the village *kotwal*, resident courier between him and the Tehsildar and Patwari, two civil servants that he frequently had to contact, would gather together to chat, socialize and if need be to discuss anything important. It was the duty of my cousin, three years older than me, and me to serve dinner to our grandfather every evening on that platform.

I did not know it at that time but those were teaching moments from him to me. My cousin learned nothing.

Looking back to the years 6-11, from my admission to **Pre-School class at the village Primary School to age 11 when I graduated from 4<sup>th</sup> grade and was sent to a boarding school two train stations away, were my most formative years. That is when my grandfather, not obvious to me then, taught me the family responsibilities and self-discipline. And that is the period during which he drilled in me his philosophy that if the whole family succeeds then everyone succeeds.**

#### **How 35BB got its school:**

I wish I had asked my grandfather what year they had moved to 35BB and how. Trains were already operating between Ganganagar District and Doaba in Panjab. Our train station was four miles walking. Men women and children surely would have taken the trains but since they moved lock, stock and barrel, there would have been a caravan of bullock-driven carts much the same way as the Pioneers headed west in horse drawn wagons in North America.

**It has been confirmed through tax records that they moved in August 1927; the opening ceremony for completion of Gang Canal was performed on 26 October 1927 by Lord Irwin, the then Viceroy of India.**

I was born on **January 3<sup>rd</sup> 1934** and spent my first two years entirely in Sakruli, my *nanke*, where I was born. Sandstorms and unreliable water supply were not deemed suitable for a young child. I was told that my grandmother used to bring water in an earthen pitcher on her head from a very old settlement two miles away where they stored rainwater in a large depression.

In **1936**, Maharaja Ganga Singh, during his Special Train ride through Ganganagar District, the brand new irrigated portion of his realm, announced the gift of two elementary schools for our Tehsil of **247 villages** and towns.



When my grandfathers acquired the farm land, Tehsildar had inquired of my grandfather if there was anyone in his family who was schooled, as he badly needed educated people. There was none but it planted in my grandfather's mind a seed of the importance of education in a world that was rapidly changing. I am sure of that from what he told me when I visited India in **1968**, my first visit after 8 years. His advice to me was to get into manufacturing because the farm land is a limited resource. He was thinking of my children's children...

Tehsildar had informed my grandfather, whom he must have liked, about the plans for two schools. My grandfather correctly guessed that one of those schools will go to Tehsil Administrative Head Quarter at Padampur. For the other there were two possibilities, **Gaj Singh Pur** which was a railway station and also the largest business, commercial and grain market center where farmers brought their produce to sell.

The other possibility was the large ancient village from where our grandmother used to fetch water. He left the village aside but found out that in **Gaj Singh Pur** there was only one young man who had done his **4<sup>th</sup> grade** education somewhere. His father was a grain commission agent. My grandfather made him an offer he could not refuse.

The offer was that **35BB** was **getting** a Primary School where his son will have a teaching job. He probably did not even know about the school's option but even if anyone found out my Grandfather had the only teacher available. And just in case Tehsildar had informed anyone else about the schools he sealed that deal by assuring Tehsildar that it won't cost the state a penny for the building, just supply the books and teacher's salary. All the village plans had already set aside sites for the school, gurdwara/temple, kotwal and water carrier. Mud bricks will be manufactured by the village pond where all the other bricks for the village buildings came from and any job that

villagers could not voluntarily do will be done by hired artisans but that would not be much.

On **September 1<sup>st</sup> 1936** the village primary school up to **4<sup>th</sup> grade**, with an enrollment of **18 students**, opened in our cattle room that was spruced up for the purpose. The school building was completed before the onset of winter when the cattle reclaimed their quarters. I attended the school but was not officially enrolled until I was six. Today it is a **High School**. After one year of pre-school and four years through grade 4, I was sent to a boarding school in **Karan Pur** in **1945**. My first year there was not in the **5<sup>th</sup> grade** but in '**Special Class**', as was the case for all village school graduates.

#### **My mother's influence, indirect, gentle, subtle and full of confidence:**

Official and spoken language of the inhabitants of Bikaner State was Hindi. Punjabis who migrated to District Ganganagar spoke Panjabi at home. Since the languages are so close one could understand the other in casual conversations. My mother and father both knew how to read and write Panjabi, she by going to school and he by running away from home after a quarrel with his father and settling down in a gurdwara in Panjab for a while where he partook *khande-di-pahul*. While there my father also learned to read Guru Granth Sahib and perform Kirtan. After that he forever acquired the title '**Giani Ji**' and performed all the Sangrands, Gurpurabs and weddings in the village. He also had a collection of many granths and kissas, including **Bale-dian-Sakhian**.

I must have been eight and in **2<sup>nd</sup> grade** when my mother started teaching me Panjabi at home after school. At school we learned the Hindi alphabet and practiced writing it in a sequence and then we started combining letters to make words. Hindi and Panjabi alphabets are very much the same but they are pronounced differently and the characters look different. Mother's teaching method was

unique. She skipped the sequence step completely. Instead she wrote down the names of all the family members, complete with vowels, and that is how I learned Panjabi alphabet. To practice reading I had all those granths and kissas my father had collected. Only formal Panjabi classes I took were first two years at **Khalsa College Mahalpur** where I had to take it as a second language.

By the time I entered seventh grade we were six siblings, three boys and three girls. My grandmother's concerns grew over the cost of schooling with just one boy in boarding school. Every year the cost was going up and there were two more boys following in my footsteps. My grandmother started putting pressure on my mother to stop my schooling and put me to work on the family farm. My mother was equally adamant for me to get as much schooling as I wanted. Her short and sweet reply to my grandmother's harangues was, '**He is my banker**'.

At that time I did not understand what she meant but she must have known something; her faith in me was so very strong. Time would tell. As it turned out, my two **brothers, # 5&6** became a **Medical Doctor from Medical College, Patiala** and a **Mechanical Engineer from University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada**, respectively. Our fourth brother brought delight to our grandmother's heart. He did not go to boarding school, after graduating from the village Primary School up to fourth grade. Our grandmother found someone to carry on the family farm.

I was not able to do anything about schooling for my two younger sisters, **siblings #2&3**; only five years separated us. But I made sure our **sibling #4**, a sister, started school when I turned 15 and passed Panjab University entrance examination. She was then eight years old. Her schooling was ended after 3<sup>rd</sup> grade but that gave her enough writing skill that we were able to communicate through letters after I left India for North America.

Our **fifth brother**, of course, is **Baldev**, whom we call **Deep**, in the family, whose project in **35BB** inspired this special issue of the Sikh Bulletin. Grandfather would never know but he is fulfilling our grandfather's wish by manufacturing. He manufactures homes in Calgary, Canada and I do not mean the factory built kind.

Perhaps I will do more justice to our mother's memory by repeating what I wrote to Deep in response to his observations on my brief narrative about my hitchhiking travel to USA in **1960** that I sent out to my siblings, nieces and nephews on **July 12, 2011** upon insistence by the same sister who would later ask me the question about my first twelve years of life.

*"Deepani you make us all proud, the living and the dead. It is really sad that you, and perhaps Bholi too, never got to know our mother. She made no distinction whether her child was a boy or a girl. Her love, caring and concern was always the same for all of us. I do not remember our mother ever being angry or talking loud or engaged in gossip; she never showed being upset at father's absence; she always had polite answers to Dadi Ma's comments about too many children and too much money being spent on me. Her answer always was, '**he is my bank**'.*

*Tears of joy came after reading sherry's comments because I am so glad that I succeeded in proving our mother right for her faith and trust in me that I will look after my siblings just as she looked after all of us. I wish I had been able to send **Bholi** to Pilani with Guddi but I only had enough money in my superannuation fund I received from the Indian Air Force after two years of teaching, for Guddi's one year there.*

*For my first year at the University in the States **Baba Ji** gave me **\$1200.00**. At that time one way fare from Delhi to Seattle was also **\$1200.00** but I wanted to hitchhike any way. I was not able to save anything during my two years of teaching there. My salary was Rs. 190.00 per month. After*

*paying rent for the room and Rs.18.00 a month in salary to my cook there was not much left. In fact **Taya Gurbax Singh** had paid about Rs 200.00 for a clothes closet for my room. He had also paid for my B. Ed year at Dalhousie.*

*I wanted **Raja** to continue his schooling but Dadi Ma's refrain that somebody should stay home to take care of the farm won the day. **Bholi's** schooling was interrupted by mother's death and **Biro** was withdrawn from school by Baba Ji after 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. It was a tossup. I will come home for vacation and enroll her and Baba Ji will have her removed. But over all we did alright. Every sibling helped out as the opportunity arose and circumstances permitted. **Harbhajan and Jeet** were able to take over in assisting and now brother you are making history; your siblings do not need help but there are so many others who do and our mother will be so proud of you.*

*When I left home after 4<sup>th</sup> grade to live in boarding house in Karan Pur I used to come home every weekend. That is when I got exposed to beggars at the railway station. I remember telling mother about it and my desire to give them some money out of my monthly allowance. She understood my feelings as natural and did not discourage me. She just smiled and I took that as approval. I kept on giving what I could afford. Monthly allowance was tight. I remember skipping meals in order to rent a bike to learn to ride it at two annas (1/8<sup>th</sup> of a rupee) an hour or for eating kulfi. There were 22 kids in the hostel. We had one cook and the House Master kept a record of Grocery expenses and meals taken by us kids. At the end of the month per meal cost was worked out and we were billed for the month.*

*Had our mother lived I do not think I would have left India and under those circumstances I am not sure what good I would have been able to do for my siblings.*

*Love, Bhaji July 22, 2011*

I would like to conclude my comments about our Diaspora Sikh Family by quoting our youngest sibling, Deep, who thought of and acted upon providing for the women, of what once was our home, much needed medical care that was not available to our mother and grandmother.

*"While we have all enjoyed financial success in North America, none of this would have been possible without the efforts of our forefathers. Our own true success is going to be from making sure that we leave our children a legacy and a sense of belonging.*

*We have given them wings to soar, but it is also our responsibility to give them roots to keep them humble. Our ancestors were not wealthy but they were rich. They were rich with ideals and principles, that is what ours' and our children's inheritance truly is.*

*Thank you Bhaji for getting the family to where it is today."Love, Deep.*

Hardev Singh Shergill,  
Bhaji, Tayaji, Mamaji, Grandpa

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### **HEALTHY MOTHERS, HEALTHY BABIES**

by [prominenthomescharity](#)

*[Here's a guest post about our project written by Sadhna, an intern at the Canadian High Commission in Delhi. The article was originally published on the High Commission's "Canada in India" [Facebook page](#). Project was started by Baldev Singh Shergill, youngest of ten siblings, in memory of his mother, who passed away four months after his birth, not recovering after his birth for lack of proper medical care, and his grandmother who raised him for twelve years until he joined his older siblings in Canada.*

*His daughter Sherry Shergill and nephew Aneel Brar are intimately involved in the development and evolution of this medical facility for women*

*and children of their ancestral village, 35BB, and surrounding villages within a radius of 25 kms.]*

### **HEALTHY MOTHERS, HEALTHY BABIES: CALGARY YOUTH'S DREAM PROJECT**

by [Canada in India \(High Commission of Canada\)](#)

on Tuesday, 5 June 2012 at 17:46 ·

*A Canadian youth has launched a hospital project in an economically-challenged village of Rajasthan that will provide excellent pre and post natal healthcare to local women. The project aims to address high infant and mortality rates, the skewed sex ratio and lack of access to medical facilities for poor patients.*

An infant mortality rate of 65 deaths per 1000 live births... A maternal mortality rate of 388 deaths for 100,000 live births... a sex ratio of 861 girls to 1000 boys... deliveries conducted in unhygienic conditions... inadequate facilities for pre and post natal check-ups. These are some of the statistics from the Ganganagar district of Rajasthan. But instead of shaking his head at this challenging reality, a Canadian youth decided to take some concrete steps to improve these conditions.

Mr. Aneel Brar, a post-graduate in political science from McGill University, alongwith his cousin Sherri Shergill, set up a clinic in village 35BB of Ganganagar district. The clinic provides modern and hygienic conditions for treatment and check-ups of expectant mothers and new born babies. The clinic is a precursor to Mata Jai Kaur Hospital (MJKH), named in memory of Mr. Brar's great-grandmother.

Mr. Brar's grandmother passed away while giving birth to her tenth child. This child, Baldev Shergill, who is also Mr. Brar's uncle, later migrated to Canada with his brothers and sisters but never forgot the need for medical facilities in his hometown. Mr. Shergill set up the Prominent Homes Charitable Organisation which has provided initial funding for MJKH. Armed with this initial investment from his uncle, Mr. Brar has

set out on a mission to improve the maternal and child healthcare facilities in Ganganagar district.

"I have visited a number of hospitals in Ganganagar, and noticed that the treatment meted out to poor patients is different from that received by the rich patients." This pained Mr. Brar as the poor were left with no access to good healthcare. He is determined to address this issue at MJKH. "We are trying to come up with a fee structure where treatment can be subsidized for poor patients," says Mr. Brar.

At present, the clinic caters to about 80 patients a week and is manned by Dr. Renu Makker, Nurse Balkeesh Banu and chemist Rajesh Kumar. All three share Mr. Brar's vision and are passionate about their work.

The hospital's reputation is slowly spreading by word of mouth as patients who come here are assured quality care. The number of patients has almost doubled since the hospital started in 2010.

There are big plans for the hospital's expansion. Mr. Brar aims to have a permanent team of doctors and other allied staff at the hospital. He also plans to invite specialists from Canada who will bring with them the latest know-how from the medical world. Recently, Dr. Hillary Lawson, a Canadian physician currently living and practising in Delhi, spent a day at MJKH, treating patients.

Mr. Brar also plans to educate the local people about the necessity of pre and post natal care, the importance of hygiene and hospital deliveries. He also aims to improve the sex ratio in the district by educating parents and spreading awareness. His aim is to assist the Government of Rajasthan in its goal of health for all.

"My goal is to make quality healthcare accessible to all. The required technology is available in India and we plan to use it for everyone's benefit", says Mr. Brar.

By the end of next year, he plans to expand the hospital so that all facilities are provided at one place.

Here's wishing Mr. Brar every success in his healthcare mission.

Courtesy "Canada Connect, High Commission of Canada, New Delhi"

Read more about Mata Jai Kaur Hospital:

<http://prominenthomescharity.wordpress.com/>  
[www.matajaikaur.com](http://www.matajaikaur.com)  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N\\_scDeitgF8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_scDeitgF8)

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### MAKING THE DREAMS CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION AT 35BB

by prominenthomescharity



Brick by brick

The most satisfying part of my job is seeing women come in to our Mata Kartar Kaur Prenatal Clinic every Sunday.

While my weeks are spent writing, researching and planning the expansion of the Mata Jai Kaur Maternal and Child Health Centre, Sundays are when what we're doing becomes tangible. Women who'd otherwise not receive quality antenatal care

are getting it and it feels really good to be there and see it happen.

Over the last year there's been another aspect of the project that's been very satisfying to witness – the construction of new buildings on our compound. Bricks and mortar are literally making our dreams become a reality (and most of the time I don't have to get my hands dirty).

Construction in Rajasthan is very different than in Canada. Everything is much simpler here – walls are made of a single layer of bricks, support beams are made of concrete and iron rods, and electrical wiring and plumbing are easily fitted after most of the structure is completed. Since Rajasthan is a desert there's no need for insulated walls and low precipitation (outside of the monsoon) means roofs can be flat.

Simple construction, however, does not mean fast construction. As I've come to learn (frustratingly at first) labour can be hard to find in rural Rajasthan. At harvest time – of which there are at least three in a calendar year – most people are busy working in the fields.

Otherwise they're occupied doing other jobs; including toiling on public works projects that are part of a controversial guaranteed-employment program set up by the central government.

When our contractor is finally able to round up enough workers – usually young men from 35BB or surrounding villages – things move fast. The lag time in between, however, can be excruciating!

Having said that, things are moving along. Below are some pictures and captions of our progress so far.



Back in September, 2011, when I first got to India, this is what the MJK grounds looked like. The white building at the right is the Mata Kartar Kaur Prenatal Clinic where we see our patients every Sunday. The stone building in the back is the main on-site residence.



All the bricks we use are handmade at one of the many factories that dot the countryside. The woman in the background lives and works at the factory.



Back in December and January work began on the lower-level of the second major building on the compound – our future doctor’s residence and parking garage.



A brick factory down the road from 35BB.



Here workers are preparing to cement the roof of the garage as seen from the balcony of the main residence.



Jinder, a resident of 35BB works on doors and window frames. All the money spent on construction is being spent locally –materials (except the finishing stones), labour, carpenters and contractors all come from the area.



The doctor's residence will be finished using the same stone as the main residence building, as will every building on the compound. The masons and artisans and the stones themselves come in specially ordered from Jaisalmer in western Rajasthan. When everything's done it'll look like an old-time Rajasthani [haveli](#). It'll be a nice place for our patients to come and get care.



The staff residences run along the southern wall of the compound. Currently we are building six. Here you can see our Managing Director, Balwant Klair (aka Bant Bhaji) keeping an eye on things.



Young guys hauling cement from the mixer to the brick-layers.



Setting the foundation for our staff residences.



After laying the foundation of the staff residences, tractors haul in dirt to fill in area. The dirt-movers came at dusk and worked some hours in the dark

before coming again in the morning. This shot was taken at 5am.



Dhian Singh, our contractor (in white) and his workers building up the walls of our new staff residences.



Here Bant Bhaji, with a scarf over his face to shield his asthmatic lungs from the dirt (not to look like a bandit) lets the dirt-movers know who's boss. He then takes his turn on the tractor before getting stuck on a mound of dirt. Bant Bhaji wears many hats on this job, and when things don't go as planned, he's able to laugh it off. The rest of us help him with the laughing part!





Here's a wide shot of how the compound looks now. To the right you can see the nearly-completed doctor's residence and garage and the staff residence coming up against the southern wall to the left. The open area in the middle is where, eventually, our main maternal hospital building will stand.



In May 2012, we started building our staff residences



Our nearly completed staff residences. The next steps will include installing the plumbing and electrical wiring and putting up the final stones imported from Jaisalmer.



A major step in construction is finishing the roof. Here you see the cemented roof covered with a layer of water. Ironically, because Rajasthan is so hot, the cemented roof needs to be covered with water as it dries to prevent cracking.

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## MATA JAI KAUR MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH CENTRE ANNUAL REPORT - 2009-2012

### Our challenge

#### **Mothers in Ganganagar, Rajasthan, India**

- 343 maternal deaths per 100 000 live births  
India – 212 per 100 000 live births  
(ranks 116 out of 172 countries)
- Only 13% of women receive adequate antenatal care
- Less than two-thirds of pregnant women get a tetanus vaccine
- Only 55.2% of pregnant women receive adequate iron and folic acid supplementation
- 40.8% of pregnant women deliver in a medical facility
- Less than half of pregnant women have safe deliveries
- 28.5% of rural women in Rajasthan do not deliver in institutions because it costs too much
- Only a third of women in rural Rajasthan get post-delivery medical care
- India ranks 73 out of 77 on the Save the Children's Mother's Index 2010

#### **Children in Ganganagar, Rajasthan, India**

- Infant mortality: 60 deaths per 1000 children under 1 years-old  
India – 48 per 1000 children (ranks 172 out of 222 countries and regions)
- Under Age Five Mortality: 79 deaths per 1000 children under 5 years-old  
India – 66 per 1000 in India (ranks 148 out of 196 countries)
- Neo-Natal mortality: 39 deaths per 1000 infants in first 28 days of life  
India – 32 per 1000 (ranks 165 out of 194)

- Child Sex ratio – 854 girls per 1000 boys, age 0-6

### Mata Jai Kaur Maternal and Child Health Centre

- Thousands of women treated from across Ganganagar since 2010
- Over 230 healthy babies delivered
- 80-100 women treated every week at our prenatal clinic
- 100% of our mothers receive pre-natal tetanus vaccinations, medicine and nutritional supplementation (including iron and folic acid)
- All services provided free of charge

### President's Message

Nothing worth having ever comes easy. Now that our journey has begun, I can reflect on how far we've come and where God has put us. One of my brother-in-laws once asked me, "Who among Mata Kartar Kaur's ten children is the luckiest?" Without hesitation I told him it was me.

I was the most fortunate because my mother died when I was 4 months-old and there is no reason why I should have survived. I was the last of ten children in an era when families were getting smaller. I had to be taken in by my 85 year-old grandmother and I was allergic to cow's milk. In 1956 rural India, that should have been the end of me – it was not. Surviving infancy preceded a lifetime of events that has put me where I am today. I believe this is more than just dumb luck.

Throughout my childhood my uncles told me and my siblings to remember our ancestral home in Chak Bilgan, district Jalandhar, Punjab. They asked us why we never went there and why we didn't care to keep in touch with our roots. They told us this, yet no one took the time or cared to take us there.

Now, at 56 years of age, I have never been to Chak and it remains a place that holds but little place in my mind and heart. My memories are of Rajasthan and my heart is in village 35BB – where I grew up and was cared for by Ma and Baba (my paternal grandparents, Mata Jai Kaur and Baba Ram Jas). Nevertheless, after immigrating to Canada in 1969 and eventually having children of my own, I've come to understand my uncles' desires of maintaining a connection to an ancestral village. But I knew I had to do something to maintain this connection. I didn't know then what I wanted to accomplish, but I knew I wanted to keep 35BB close to the hearts and minds of the next generation of the Shergill family for whom Canada and the United States would be home.

When I was finally in a position to do something, I began to reflect on the lives of my mother and grandmother. Life for women in Rajasthan in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was difficult, and many of the challenges they faced then remain unchanged today.

I decided that the best way to honour my mother and grandmother was to help other women in the region that are still struggling through the same issues. That is how the dream of the Mata Jai Kaur Maternal and Child Health Centre was born. But to get it off the ground I needed other's to buy into it and to take ownership of it.

A friend of mine told me that "if you can't get others to believe in what you are doing, you are going to be doing it alone." I am fortunate that my wife believed in it, my children believed in it and now several of my nieces and nephews believe in it. It was not easy and it is still not easy. We are constantly met with new challenges, but we are 3 years into it and, with the grace of God, we're still going strong. My faith in it continues to grow, and the memory of my mother and grandmother spurs on.

I remember my grandmother saying that in raising me she felt she was nurturing a mango tree. She

knew she would never live long enough to enjoy its fruits or sit in its shade, yet she watered it and fed it hoping that it would be a good source of comfort to others. In raising ten children, my mother and grandmother nurtured a mango orchard that has provided comfort and shade to the next generation of our family. With the children born through the MJK-MCHC, we hope to see our mango orchard grow into a forest to be enjoyed for many generations to come.

Deep Shergill  
President, Prominent Homes Charitable  
Organization Ltd.

### **Our vision and mission statements**

#### **Our vision**

We envision a healthy society where women are empowered as agents of change and children are free to achieve their highest potential in life. Such a society is free of unnecessary and preventable deaths of women and children due to a lack of quality reproductive and child health services.

#### **Our mission**

Our mission is to improve the health of mothers and children in the district of Ganganagar, Rajasthan through the provision of high-quality reproductive and child health services in a safe, hygienic and women-centered environment. We strive for the highest attainable level of care that reflects local needs and is informed by evidence and empathy.

### **Introduction**

The Mata Jai Kaur Maternal and Child Health Centre (MJK-MCHC) is a privately run organization dedicated to providing quality, accessible healthcare to women and children in the district of Ganganagar, Rajasthan, India. We are a project of the Prominent Homes Charitable Organization (PHCO) based in Calgary, Canada.

Our aim is to improve maternal and child health outcomes among poor urban and rural families that would otherwise not have access to quality care. **Our broader vision is of a society where women are empowered as agents of change and children are free to achieve their highest potential in life. Such a society is free of unnecessary and preventable deaths of women and children due to a lack of quality reproductive and child health services.**

We believe that improving the health of women and children is a fundamental step towards overcoming intergenerational cycles of poverty. In our view, health is not just the absence of disease; rather, it is a state of wholeness unifying physical, mental and social wellbeing.

We have a long way to go. Rajasthan is one of India's least-developed states and has among the world's worst maternal and child health indicators. The maternal mortality ratio (MMR) for the district of Ganganagar is 343 deaths per 100 000 live births. Infant mortality is 66 deaths per 1000 births. Both of these indicators are worse than the state and national averages. Comparatively, Canada's MMR and infant mortality rates are 8/100 000 and 5/1000, respectively.

The need for quality maternal and child health services in Ganganagar is immense. Part of the reason maternal and child health indicators are so bad is because quality medical care is not easily accessible to many families in the district. Only 13 percent of women receive adequate antenatal care during pregnancy and 76 percent do not get any routine medical care after their child is born.

The MJK-MCHC is located in the heart of rural Ganganagar in the village 35BB, accessible to hundreds of thousands of mothers and children in the surrounding service area. Since January, 2010 we have been operating the Mata Kartar Kaur Prenatal Clinic which provides obstetric and gynaecological care for expecting mothers and other women and girls. At our weekly clinic we

routinely see upwards of 100 patients of all ages and backgrounds. To date we have cared for over 230 expecting mothers and have provided them with safe delivery services – all for free.

### Moving forward

The MJK-MCHC project is in its infancy and we are currently in the process of expanding our facilities and the services we offer. Work has begun on the Mata Jai Kaur Memorial Charitable Hospital which will provide a full range of maternal and child health services on-site at 35BB.

We are also in the beginning stages of developing innovative, comprehensive and culturally appropriate interventions to address the many issues that adversely affect maternal and child health and the health of society, such as female sex-selection and malnutrition. These interventions will be informed by evidence and research. Our organization will be strengthened by transparency and accountability. To achieve this level of effectiveness we will seek to collaborate nationally and internationally with like-minded individuals and organizations.

We also strive to support the Government of Rajasthan's important efforts to improve health outcomes in the state. We firmly believe that in order to have an overall positive effect on society our organization should work with the local health system and not parallel to it. All of our future programming will be conceived of with this in mind. For example, we plan on supporting Ganganagar's network of village health-workers and midwives with training, education and employment opportunities.

Our most important partners are in the community we serve. The MJK-MCHC is ultimately in the hands of locals. While it is supported from Canada, it is managed and run by passionate members of the community in Ganganagar. By building on existing linkages between Canada and India, the MJK-MCHC is a true expression of the

value that can be created through grassroots, community action and global engagement.

Our work at MJK-MCHC contributes to the international efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 set forth by the United Nations.

MDG 4 – Reduce child mortality

MDG 5 – Improve maternal health

5a. Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio

5b. Achieve universal access to reproductive health

### **Our motivation; our agents of change**

The motivating force behind our project comes from two women – **Mata Kartar Kaur and Mata Jai Kaur** (“Mata” is a respectful term meaning “mother”). Their story epitomizes the struggle that many women in Ganganagar still endure. Their triumph through tragedy has traversed oceans and continents and has now returned to where their story began. In our family’s history, these two women stand out as our agents of change.

### **Mata Kartar Kaur**

Mata Kartar Kaur, after whom our prenatal clinic is named, gave birth to nine of her ten children in a small, mud-walled house on the very spot that our clinic now stands. Due to unhygienic conditions and unsafe delivery techniques she contracted puerperal fever, or childbirth fever, and died soon after giving birth to her last child, Baldev (Deep) Shergill, founder and President of Prominent Homes Ltd. (a home builder in Calgary, AB, Canada) and the Prominent Homes Charitable Organization (PHCO).

Although Kartar Kaur died young, her influence on her children’s future was tremendous. At a time when literacy and education were not highly valued, especially for girls, Kartar Kaur ensured

that her children could read and write. The value for education she instilled in her family paved the way for brighter futures in Canada and United States.

Through her strength and independence of spirit, Kartar Kaur also resisted significant social pressures for sex-selection. In a society that greatly valued boys over girls, Kartar Kaur ensured that all five of her daughters survived childhood to become loving and supportive mothers themselves.

Kartar Kaur died at the age of 40 in 1956 from a preventable condition. Indeed, many of the risks that Kartar Kaur faced while giving birth to her ten children continue to threaten the well-being of mothers in Ganganagar and across the developing world.

The major causes of maternal death are severe bleeding and hemorrhage, infections, unsafe abortions, eclampsia (seizures or coma that occur during pregnancy) and other complicating issues like anemia and malaria (both of which are common in Rajasthan). All of these risks are avoidable and any deaths they cause are unnecessary.

Our project is a reflection of Kartar Kaur’s love and sacrifice and is dedicated to the health and wellbeing of the women of Ganganagar.

### **Mata Jai Kaur**

After Kartar Kaur’s death the responsibility for caring for her new-born child passed to her mother-in-law – Deep’s grandmother – Mata Jai Kaur. Jai Kaur was 85 years-old at the time and dutifully continued working in the cotton and wheat fields, preparing food and managing other household chores while caring for her new-born grandchild.

In many ways, Mata Jai Kaur’s life reflects the struggles that women continue to face in many

parts of India and the developing world. She was forced to marry young, denied opportunities for education and lived a life of servitude. Her responsibilities as a young woman included hauling drinking water over long distances through Rajasthan's scorching summers and freezing winters.

Like Kartar Kaur, Jai Kaur faced the many health-risks associated with early pregnancy in an environment that lacked reproductive healthcare services. Many poor families in Ganganagar still marry their children young, which increases the likelihood of early pregnancy and its associated health risks.

Fortunately, Jai Kaur survived to live a long time. She passed away in 1976 at the age of 105 and in the process had a direct and profound influence on three generations of her family.

For her children, grandchildren and the great-grandchildren Jai Kaur remains an everlasting spring of inspiration and love that makes the Mata Jai Kaur Maternal and Child Health Centre possible.

In development discourse it is well established that women can play a central role in lifting their families out of poverty. Together, Mata Kartar Kaur and Mata Jai Kaur embodied this notion of women as agents of change. They planted a seed that bloomed around the world and that has come back to Ganganagar through MJK-MCHC.

### **Our operations – Where we work**

Ganganagar is the northernmost district of Rajasthan. To the north and west it borders Pakistan; to the east are the district of Hanumangarh and the state of Punjab.

Through pioneering spirit and ingenuity Ganganagar was transformed from a largely uninhabited desert frontier to a thriving agricultural community.

It is a vibrant, multi-ethnic district dominated by Bagri and Punjabi cultures. The villages and towns are a resplendent mix of colour, music and festivals. Bright turbans and impossibly red shawls (usually hiding women's faces) garnish a colourful backdrop of ever-changing crops.

In autumn white cotton fields give way to yellow mustard; then green wheat and barley fields turn golden before the spring harvest.

The indomitable desert – asserting itself with sky-blackening sandstorms – re-emerges in the early summer before the Monsoons, and the replenished canals, put it back to rest.

### **Graphics:**

Pictures of Mata Jai Kaur and Mata Kartar Kaur



The lifeblood of Ganganagar is the canals. The transformation of the landscape began when Maharaja Ganga Singh of Bikaner commissioned engineers of the British Raj to construct the canal system bringing in water from the Sutlej River.

The foundation stone of the Gang Canal was laid at Ferozepur, Punjab on December 5, 1925; it was completed on October 26, 1927. The city of Sri Ganganagar was built where the Gang Canal enters Rajasthan in the north-east corner of the district.

The Maharaja envisioned the project after a terrible famine at the turn of the century. Pioneering immigrant farmers helped achieve his vision by turning the district into what is today referred to as the “breadbasket of Rajasthan.” Mata Jai Kaur and her husband, Ram Jas, along with his two brothers were among the initial settlers of the district in 1927. They settled in the village of 35BB (referred to as “*Pen thee bee*”) – the 35<sup>th</sup> village on the “BB” canal – on the very spot where the Mata Jai Kaur Maternal and Child Health Centre now stands.

The people who ventured to Ganganagar to make a better life for themselves embodied a pioneering spirit that can still be felt in the district. We hope to harness this spirit for our Centre.

### **Facts - Ganganagar**

#### Population (2011)

Total: 1 969 520

Males: 1,043,730

Females: 925,790

Child sex-ratio: 854 girls per 1000 boys (age 0-6)

Literacy rate: 70.25

Males: 79.33

Females: 60.07

Languages – Punjabi and Bagri (a dialect of Rajasthani) are the two most common languages. Hindi and English are the official languages of the state.

Weather – up to 50 degrees Celsius (122F) in the summer; down to 0 degrees (32F) Celsius in the Winter

Precipitation – 20cm average annual rainfall (7.87”)

### Economy

The economy of Ganganagar is based on agriculture. Major crops are wheat, cotton and mustard.

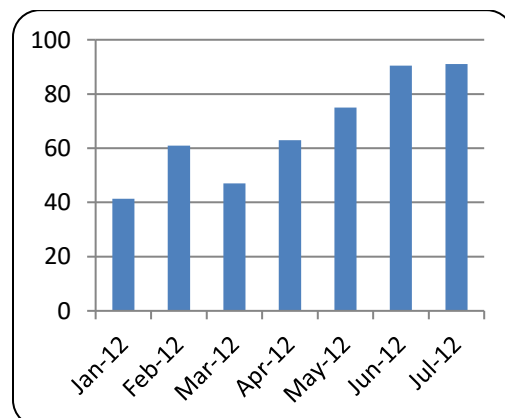
### Important dates over the past 3 years

- **Spring 2009** – Construction of the main residence and the Mata Kartar Kaur Prenatal Clinic begins
- **December 13, 2009** – Mata Kartar Kaur Prenatal clinic welcomes its first patients
- **January 13, 2010** – The first baby delivered by the MJK-MCHC is born
- **November 5, 2010** – The MJK-MCHC has its first Diwali celebration
- **December 2011** – Construction begins on the second major structure of the compound – the doctor’s residence and garage
- **March - April 2012** – MJK-MCHC’s first major patient survey is conducted
- **May 2012** – Construction begins on the MJK-MCHC staff residence complex

### The transformation of a rural village house to a medical centre

#### To date we have

- Treated over 3000 women at our Mata Kartar Kaur Prenatal Clinic
- Delivered over 230 healthy babies
- Seen the number of patients at our weekly clinic steadily rise
- Provided tetanus immunizations to eligible women



**1 Average number of women attending our weekly clinic since January 2012**

## Explaining our vision and mission

### Our vision

*We envision a healthy society where women are empowered as agents of change and children are free to achieve their highest potential in life. Such a society is free of unnecessary and preventable deaths of women and children due to a lack of quality reproductive and child health services.*

Our vision statement encapsulates the core of our philosophy which is based on two main ideas:

#### **1. Empowering women as agents of change:**

Human and economic development are intricately linked with the empowerment of women. Evidence shows that healthy, educated women lead to healthy, educated children. Such children can more readily achieve their fullest potential and contribute to creating a healthy, more productive society. Women, in other words, are vitally important agents of change. We aim to empower our women not only by providing them with quality, accessible medical care, but also with education, information and the freedom of choice.

*“Women should no longer be seen merely as the beneficiaries of development but must themselves become the agents of change” Dr. Amartya Sen*

#### **2. Preventing unnecessary deaths:** The second idea underpinning our vision is the recognition that the majority of maternal and child deaths are unnecessary. Renowned anthropologist and physician Dr. Paul Farmer, calls these “stupid deaths” – deaths that could easily be prevented with safe, effective and affordable treatments readily available in rich countries. We consider it ethically wrong that such deaths persist and a moral obligation to do all we can to prevent them.

## Our mission

*Our mission is to improve the health of mothers and children in the district of Ganganagar, Rajasthan through the provision of high-quality reproductive and child health services in a safe, hygienic and women-centered environment. We strive for the highest attainable level of care that reflects local needs and is informed by evidence and empathy.*

Our mission conveys how we will achieve our objective of improving the health of women and children in Ganganagar. Our approach is based on five interrelated pillars:

**1. Providing quality medical services:** Our primary aim is to provide the best quality medical services possible. This includes building well-designed facilities that are hygienic and are equipped with all the necessary equipment, staff and resources essential to achieve a high level of care.

**2. Creating a women-centered environment:** Often, women are not informed of their options and prevented from making important decisions regarding their health. The MJK-MCHC will strive to maintain our patient’s comfort, privacy and agency in the care they receive. Beyond providing medical and clinical services, this means we will approach health holistically. We see health not just as the absence of disease, but as a state of complete physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

*“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” (Preamble to the WHO constitution)*

**3. A human rights-based approach to health:** We operate under the assumption



that access to the highest attainable standard of health is a fundamental right of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief or economic condition. At the MJK-MCHC this means ensuring that low-caste and poor families have equal access to quality health services. Adopting a rights-based approach is an acknowledgment that social conditions are important determinants of health, and that equality and justice are fundamental imperatives to hold to.

4. **Evidence:** Our organization will be guided by evidence and research. This means providing medical interventions that are based on the best available scientific evidence. It also means continuously learning, monitoring ourselves and critically reflecting on our impact. To help us achieve these aims we will seek to collaborate with other organizations – such as non-governmental organizations and universities – and health experts both within India and internationally.
5. **Empathy:** Our aim is to inform all of our efforts with empathy and understanding. Too often, externally-funded projects impose solutions to local problems without consulting the local community – usually to detrimental long-term effect. We will inform our programs and decision-making with local voices to ensure that what we are providing is needed and desired by the people of Ganganagar. This principle is reflected in our efforts to put the operation of the MJK-MCHC primarily in local hands. At the individual patient level we will operationalize this principle with a simple motto: *we consider our patients as our sisters, mothers and children.*

### The MJK-MCHC mother's survey

In March and April of 2012 we conducted a survey of the mothers we cared for and children we delivered over the last two-and-a-half years. We had several objectives in mind. First, we wanted to follow-up on our patients' health. Second, we wanted to gather qualitative and quantitative data to help us plan our Centre's programming over the next several years. Third, we wanted to use the results to start a database that will be used for monitoring and research purposes.

Last, we wanted to use the opportunity for outreach and to spread awareness of the services we offer. We see the survey as an essential part of our due diligence – to make sure that what we are doing is benefitting the community and that local voices inform our decision-making. It is our first major initiative aimed at informing our efforts with evidence.

We travelled to the far reaches of Ganganagar to meet our patients in their homes. We visited remote villages near the Pakistan border, desert areas in the east and south that are barely touched by the district's canals, and urban dwellings in Sri Ganganagar and other small towns. Everywhere we went families were happy to receive us and grateful at our efforts to follow-up on their health.

Analysis of the survey results is on-going. Nevertheless, in this section we briefly offer some preliminary results and their implications for our work moving forward.

### **The MJK-MCHC 2012 mother's survey**

- Over 50 villages and urban communities visited
- 78 interviews conducted (36% of our patients)
- Survey design based on previous national surveys conducted by India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) (The National Family Health Survey 2005-

06 (NFHS-3); and the District Level Household and Facility Survey 2007-08 (DLHS-3))

### **The need for more postnatal care**

Currently, MJK-MCHC is providing antenatal care and safe delivery services, both of which are vital for preventing maternal and child death. Medical care during pregnancy is, however, only half the battle. Postnatal care, especially in the few weeks after delivery, is equally important. The World Health Organization recognizes several 'crucial moments when contact with the health system or informed caregiver could be instrumental in identifying and responding to needs and complications'.

The most important postnatal check-ups should be immediately after delivery as the majority of maternal and neonatal deaths occur in the first 48 hours. Currently, MJK-MCHC does monitor our patients at our partner hospital in Sri Ganganagar (Sihag Hospital) for several days after delivery.

The second 'crucial moment of contact' is 42 days (six weeks) after delivery. In our survey we wanted to see how many of our patients continued getting regular medical check-ups up to six months after delivery. The results indicate that the vast majority of mothers (83%) do *not* get any medical check-ups after they leave our care.

- **83% of our patients did not have any medical check-ups 6 months after delivery**

Remarkably, among the mothers that experienced symptoms of post-delivery complications in the 6-weeks following delivery, an even higher percentage (87%) did not seek medical care.

### **Reported health complications within 6 weeks of after delivery**

- **Excessive vaginal bleeding – 63%**
- **Very high fever – 30%**
- **Lower abdominal pain – 40%**
- **Fowl smelling vaginal discharge (a sign of infection) – 17%**
- **Convulsions – 31%**
- **Severe headache – 47%**
- **87% of mothers who experienced post-delivery complications did not seek medical treatment**

### **Lessons**

While we suspected that some mothers were not getting adequate postnatal care we did not expect the numbers of those not getting care to be so high. The percentage of our patients that did not get postnatal care far exceeds what is indicated in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's survey of Ganganagar.

The MJK-MCHC's next phase of expansion will directly address this issue. The construction of the Mata Jai Kaur Memorial Charitable Hospital will provide an accessible place to get check-ups past the initial monitoring we provide. Besides the provision of services, we will also look to implement awareness and educational programs to inform mothers of the importance of postnatal care.

### **Preventing and treating childhood sickness**

Diarrhea, acute respiratory infection (ARI) and malaria are three of the leading causes of childhood mortality and morbidity in the world. Our survey suggests that a very high percentage of our children became afflicted with these ailments after birth.

According to our survey 48% of the children we delivered experienced diarrhea, most commonly in the first month of life. Of those who ever had diarrhea, 84% had it more than once and 11% had blood in their stool. Well over 60% of our children have had cough or fever or both.

To compound the problems related to childhood sickness, it appears that too many of our children (77%) are not getting any regular medical care. This is not surprising considering how few of their mothers get any care.

#### Childhood illnesses since birth

- **Diarrhea – 48%**
- **Fever and cough →60%**

#### Medical care for children

- **77% of children did not receive any medical care up to six months after delivery**

#### Lessons

While it is difficult to determine through a retroactive questionnaire whether a child's fever and cough were due to ARI or malaria, we are much more certain about the numbers on diarrhea. Regardless of what illnesses the children had, it is clear that too many are getting sick and too few are getting adequate medical care. Moving forward we can address these issues by providing education and awareness on preventive measures – such as hygiene and the use of mosquito nets – as well as the provision of quality, accessible treatment for those children that do get sick.

#### Access and travel

Providing accessible maternal and child health care is our *raison d'être*. We decided to use our survey to see how long it was taking patients to get to our prenatal clinic in 35BB and the method of transportation they used. There was a great variety in both of these:

#### Travel time from the patient's home to the MKK prenatal clinic

- **Ranged between 10min to 2 hours and 30 min.**
- **The average travel time was just under one hour**

#### How our patients travelled to our weekly clinic at 35BB during pregnancy

<b>On foot</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Bicycle</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Bus</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Auto-rickshaw</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Motorcycle/scooter</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Jeep/Car</b>	<b>25%</b>

#### Lessons

Even though it took on average one hour for patients to reach us for prenatal care, they readily made the difficult journey because we represented the most accessible quality care available to them. Given the risks involved with road travel in Ganganagar it is somewhat concerning that the majority of pregnant mothers come to us on a motorcycle or scooter. To reduce these risks we will think of ways to make transport safer – for example, by establishing a shuttle service or a mobile medical unit that will bring services to our patients. There are advantages and disadvantages to both of these options, and we will research and consider several other options as well.

#### Demographics – what our patients look like

One of the most interesting findings of the survey was the diversity of the people that come to us for care. Our patients varied widely in terms of wealth, education, religion and caste. Our patients tended towards the impoverished, less-educated and lower-caste, but we did have a number of wealthy families come to us and offer to pay for the services we were offering for free. That wealthier families are choosing to come to us may be an indication that they perceive the quality of our services to be as good as the best private facilities available in the region.

This is good news, but our focus remains the impoverished, less-educated and lower-caste sections of society that typically have much worse health outcomes than their richer counterparts. Moving forward, we will consider how to reach the most downtrodden in remote areas that still

have difficulty accessing our services.

Here's what our patients look like:

#### Age of mother

- Average age - 25
- Average age at marriage – 21

#### Education

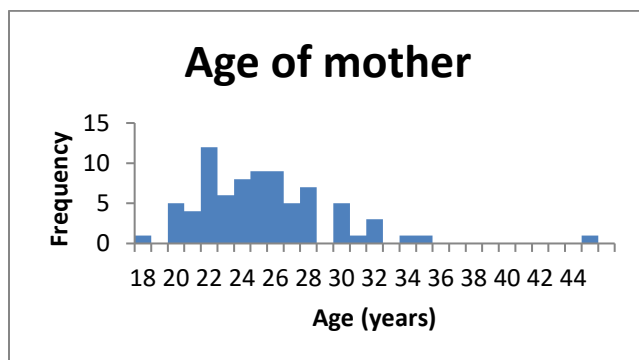
- 15% have never attended school
- 50% of our patients have studied at the primary-level (grades 1 to 8)
- 21% of our patients have a Masters or Bachelors degree

#### Religion

Hindu	51%
Muslim	4%
Sikh	45%

#### Caste or tribe

Scheduled Caste	26%
Scheduled Tribe	0%
Other Backwards Caste	53%
None	21%



Note: Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backwards Castes (OBC) are groupings of historically disadvantaged people as recognized in the Constitution of India.

#### Breastfeeding and birth weight

With almost half of its child population considered stunted and underweight, childhood malnutrition in India is a serious problem. Our babies also tended to be underweight. One of the simplest and most effective ways to improve the nutritional status of children, prevent infection and reduce overall mortality is to breastfeed properly. Breast milk, especially in the first days after delivery, significantly boosts children immune function. Giving anything other than breast milk – like cow milk – can lead to diarrhea and other illnesses. Health experts recommend starting breastfeeding immediately after delivery and to exclusively breastfeed for a minimum of six months.

While breastfeeding was almost universal among our patients (97%), as it is in India generally, our survey indicates that breastfeeding habits could be improved.

#### Breastfeeding habits

- 68% of our mothers did not breastfeed immediately after delivery
- 66% of our newborns were given something other than breast milk in the first three days of life

#### Lessons

To promote better nutrition and health of our babies it will be important for us to improve breastfeeding habits through education and awareness programs.

#### Safe deliveries – are we helping?

According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare only about half the women in India have 'safe' deliveries. A safe delivery is defined as either delivering in a medical facility or at home with a skilled birth attendant, such as a midwife or nurse, present.

Percentage of women in Ganganagar that have a safe delivery – 48.1%

To reduce maternal death and sickness it is important to increase the proportion of women that deliver in a medical facility. The Government of India has made this a priority objective. According to the MoHFW's latest health facility survey (DLHS-3) the reasons most cited among Rajasthani women for not going to a medical facility for delivery were:

**Reason for not going to a health facility for delivery among Rajasthan women (DLHS-3)**

- Costs too much – 29%
- Too far – 15%
- No time – 30%
- It is not necessary – 46%
- Better care at home – 18%

**\*Total percentage higher than 100 reflects multiple answers.**

The first two reasons – cost and distance – are socio-economic barriers to access that disproportionately affect the poor. The second two responses – that it is not necessary or that there was no time to go – suggests a lack of awareness about the health risks associated with unsafe delivery. The last response – better care at home – suggests the care available in health facilities is perceived to be of lower quality. In order to see if MJK-MCHC is addressing these issues we asked our patients why they came to our prenatal clinic and delivered their babies through us:

**Why our patients came to us for prenatal care and delivery**

Convenience	0%
Travel time	2%
Cost	41%
Better level of care/quality	48%
Family/spouse decision	1%
Recommended by health worker	3%
Recommendation by other	1%
Familiarity/comfort level	3%
Other	2%

The results suggest that our facility reduces the barriers to access related to cost. Travel time and convenience, however, were not given as major reasons for coming to us. The most significant reason our patients came to us was their perception of the quality of our care.

**Lessons**

Even though our facility is located in the heart of rural Ganganagar, the space between villages and the poor quality of roads means that travel time and convenience do not factor in as major reasons for patients to come to us (though we are much closer to communities in our service area than are the best private and government facilities located in Sri Ganganagar city). Rather, the quality of our care and that our services are free is what attracted people. To further increase Ganganagar's safe delivery rates, the most important thing we should do is continue to improve the quality of the care we are delivering.

**Local voices – meeting village midwives and frontline health workers**

In April, 2012, we invited 31 frontline village health workers – including midwives and village doctors – to visit the MJK-MCHC. Our objective was to introduce ourselves and explain our vision and mission. The response we received was overwhelmingly positive and many of the attendees expressed their keen interest in being involved with our efforts.

Village health workers are very important points of contact between rural populations and the health system. Often it is the village doctor or midwife that refers the patient to a hospital or clinic. Now that these workers knew of our presence and the services we offered they could start referring patients to us as a preferred alternative to crowded public facilities, expensive private facilities or unsafe home delivery.

This meeting was a preliminary foray into developing a system of integrating frontline medical practitioners into our operations. We feel this is an important way to strengthen Ganganagar's health system and a way to include local voices and perspectives in what we do.

After our team addressed the attendees we opened the floor to a discussion and question period. The meeting ended with us presenting decorative Mata Jai Kaur clocks (package in our trademark red bags!) to every attendee in appreciation for them having made the journey to 35BB.

### Clinic attendance trends – A lesson on publicity and negative incentives

#### Word-of-mouth publicity and nominal fees

Since our Mata Kartar Kaur Prenatal Clinic began in 2009 we have experienced a steady increase in the number of patients that visited us. By July, 2011, we had an average weekly attendance of 100 patients. Awareness of our services up to this point had spread almost exclusively by word-of-mouth. While the number of our obstetrical patients increased during this period we also began dealing with an increase in patients presenting with issues not related to gynecology or obstetrics. Many of these patients were mostly interested in collecting free medication (often pain relieving cream or anti-inflammatory pills).

Since our priority is obstetric and gynecological care we decided to try to quell the number of women that came for superficial issues by charging these patients a nominal fee for medicine (50% of the cost of the medicine, which by most standards is still very affordable). After instituting this policy, to our surprise, our patient numbers dropped off significantly in August, 2011 and continued to drop to until November, 2011.

After consulting with the local community it was determined that there were two reasons for this steep decrease:

1. False rumours. Rumours spread that there would be a charge for all our services including antenatal care and delivery. In this case, word-of-mouth publicity spread false information and reduced our patient numbers rapidly.
2. Negative group incentive. Many of the women who come to our clinic arrive in groups. Often, a trip to the clinic is a family event that includes husbands, grandparents and children. We would also get large groups of women who travelled together to 35BB from a specific village or town. Within these groups only a handful tended to be pregnant or sick. By charging a nominal fee for the few in those groups that did not really need care, we ended up reducing the chances of legitimately sick or pregnant women from coming to the clinic as well.

**If a pregnant or sick woman's sisters, mothers and friends have less incentive to come to the clinic, the likelihood of the pregnant woman getting antenatal care from us is reduced.**

This was obviously an undesired outcome because fewer women would get the care they needed. We decided to reverse the policy and remove the nominal fee, but our attendance continued to decline because false information continued to spread.

#### Publicity campaign

Our MJK mother's survey gave us the opportunity to engage in some publicity for our Centre. Through our village visits, many villagers learned of the MJK-MCHC for the first time and we were able to counter the spread of false information regarding the cost of our services.

Besides talking to villagers during our survey, our publicity campaign had three elements:

1. While conducting our surveys we dispatched a small team of handymen to put up billboards with information about our prenatal clinic in various public spaces in hundreds of villages in the region.
2. Before the survey, we handed out information flyers to our patients and at a large festival at outskirts of the town of Gaj Singh Pur.
3. We printed bright red “Mata Jai Kaur” bags with all our clinic’s information printed on it and gave them to every patient that came in.

It was not long after these measures were implemented that our patient numbers rapidly increased.

### **Lessons**

The main lesson we learned is that we need to be careful when trying to influence incentives. For us, the decrease in pregnant mothers and sick women and girls coming in was not worth the nominal fee we imposed on patients that did not need prenatal care. The fee was negligible for us and would not reduce our operational costs in any significant capacity.

We also learned that we need to proactively spread accurate information about what we are offering and not leave it to the whims of word-of-mouth publicity. Hopefully, what we have learned in spreading our message can help us develop effective health awareness and education programs moving forward.

### **Financial Information**

**Financial Summary 2011-2012 (provisional – summer 2012)**

The Mata Jai Kaur Maternal and Child Health Centre is committed to financial transparency and we continue our efforts to improve our financial accounting system. Since the inauguration of the Mata Kartar Kaur Prenatal Clinic in 2009 all our obstetric and gynecological services have been provided free of charge. On occasion, patients that could afford to pay for their own delivery were asked to make a donation to offset our costs. Most of our patients were not of this category, however, and everyone, regardless of their economic circumstances, was provided with the best level of care available.

To date, 100% of our operational and construction expenses have been provided by the Prominent Homes Charitable Organization Ltd., Calgary, Canada.

#### **Operational Expenses (July 2011 to May 2012)**

For the period of July, 2011 to May, 2012 our operational expenses totaled \$46,615.11 or an average of \$4,237.74 per month. These expenses can be divided into 5 categories: 1. Delivery and post-delivery hospital care (\$22,478.94); 2. Diagnostics and ultrasound (\$4,943.20); 3. MKK-Prenatal Clinic pharmaceuticals (\$7589.74); 4. MJK-MCHC wages (\$8464.00); and 5. Other clinic-related expenses (\$3139.23).

Since our project is in its infancy construction costs constitute the largest part of our expenses thus far. To facilitate the delivery of quality health care in a rural setting, we believe it is vitally important to construct the best facilities possible. To date we have built the MKK-Prenatal Clinic, staff residences and a parking garage. This has cost approximately \$250,000. In the coming years we will build our main hospital facility, diagnostic labs and a blood bank among other additions to the MJK-MCHC compound.

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**BALDEV SINGH SHERGILL**

## An Introduction

About Baldev Singh Shergill, our youngest sibling and inspiration for the hospital project in 35BB. A few words to introduce him:

Come to think of it, immediate three generations of our family, from our grandparents and parents, born in **Chak Bilgan in Jalandhar District of Doaba** (land between two rivers, Sutlej and Beas) and us siblings born in **35 BB Rajasthan**, except me, the oldest sibling, as per custom, born in Hoshiarpur District of Doaba in the same house where our mother was born, **have left the places of our birth, never to return to live.** Our grandparents and parents left Panjab for Rajasthan and we, all of the siblings, left India for North America.

Baldev, age 13 and our sister Jagjeet, age 15, travelled together and arrived in Toronto on Saturday July 26<sup>th</sup> **1969**. Come to think of it they were in their teenage years but they looked like children to me and I had become an adult at the age of twelve. Maybe the teenage concept is a western or wealthy society concept. After all so many eight and nine year olds are slaving in the mines of Africa, rug manufacturing sweatshops of Pakistan and garment factories of India and Bangladesh.

Whenever I would discipline Baldev he would say, 'I want to go back.' When asked to what? He would say 'to my farm that grandfather gave me.' We are all so pleased that he went back but not to his grandfather's farm but to something more valuable, to help the women and their newborns, in the memories of women in his young life, our mother who gave him birth and our grandmother who raised him from his age of not quite five months.

The project that our youngest sibling has started will have an added bonus for our children to have an incentive to stay connected to roots which we

know and their children and grandchildren will know, to be **35BB**. I wish I had asked my grandfather what he knew about family's roots. We will never know how many times our ancestors had to move for reasons of wars or weather. It could very well be they moved from Rajasthan during a severe drought sometime in the past to the forests of Panjab that they, just like the American pioneers, had to cut to clear the land for farming. And, of course, history tells us everybody in India came from the north-west thousands of years ago. Only the British came from the East. Only they did not come to settle. They came to exploit our resources for the Crown and their Mother country.

**Baldev** and his wife **Pinky** (Sukhwant) got involved in volunteer work when they were young parents. They started teaching kids Bhangra and Gidda in California and then continued that in Calgary, Canada, with the Young Sikhs Bhangra Club.

After doing that for several years, they got involved with the Sikh Association for Culture and Heritage (SACH) in Calgary for which they put on free Vaisakhi shows in Calgary for about 10 or 12 years. During that time Baldev was asked by COSO (Council of Sikh Organizations) to be their representative on the Calgary Folk Arts Council. This organization is responsible for putting on Heritage Day (first weekend in August, set aside by the Canadian Government as a civic holiday to celebrate the cultural and ethnic diversity of Canada). He was on that board during the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Khalsa, and the theme that year was the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Khalsa Panth.

After serving the Sikh community for all these years he decided that he needed to serve the home building industry since that is where he made his living and that is where his future generations might also be making their living. Being on the Calgary Folk Arts Council board of directors taught him that one has to broaden one's horizons



in order to bring positive changes and enrich the whole society in which one lives.

With that in mind he committed himself to the industry and got involved at the committee level first and moved up to the board level. In **2007/2008** he was the President of the Canadian Home Builders Association-Calgary Region. In **2008-2009** he became the President of the Canadian Home Builders Association Alberta and is currently the President Elect of the Canadian Home Builders Association at the National level. He will become the President in Lake Louise in March of 2013 and continue in that position for one year until he hands over the presidency to the next person in March of 2014 in Whistler, BC.

During his time with the association he has been presented a couple of Presidential Awards of Honour and Presidential Awards of Excellence.

His highest recognition came this past Feb. 2012 when an organization called "Immigrant Services Calgary" awarded him the Immigrant of Distinction in Business award. He was not there to accept the award in person but Harjyote\*, his daughter, accepted it on his behalf. He was nominated by one of Harjyote's friend's parents. This person had been after him for several years to let him nominate him. He finally consented this year.

He makes us all feel good, very happy, and proud and he is somebody to emulate.

With love, Bhaji, August 15, 2012

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**BALDEV's ACCEPTANCE SPEECH,  
READ BY HARJYOTE\***

Thank you is perhaps as good a place to start as any Thank you to friends like Henry Van Melson who thought me worthy of this distinction and felt strongly enough to put my name forward. Thanks to my daughter for believing that I deserved it,

although her being proud of me is a reward in itself that cannot be surpassed. But mostly thanks to God. All sitting here may call him by many names but as Sikhism teaches us there is only **one**, all names belong to the **one and only**.

Thanks to him for blessing me with so much. Thanks for giving me birth in India, in a family that was progressive; a family that taught me right from wrong. Thanks to him for letting me experience both the humility of not having much but enjoying everything that I could ever ask for. Thanks to him for giving me grandparents, who, in their late stages of life chose to raise a 4 month old rather than abandon him to his fate. Thanks for giving me brothers and sisters who cared. Thanks for giving me a life partner, without whose support, patience and sometimes prodding I would not have succeeded or sometimes even dared to try. She also gave me four children that have been my greatest supporters and cheerleaders over the years.

**No less thanks to his blessings for a life in Canada.**

It is this arrival and success in Canada that brings me this honour. I came to Canada when I was 13 years old. Like all immigrants from India, I left India with \$18.00. At thirteen I did not know any better and it did not matter. The success that I experienced in Canada is not unique; many born and raised during the 50s and 60s experienced the same.

Canada has been and will continue to be the greatest country in the world to grow up in. Some are lucky enough to be born here, some are lucky to arrive on her shores from other lands. The opportunity she offers is offered to all, regardless of what brought them here. As we celebrate the achievements and success of immigrants today let's not forget our forefathers (not from our places of birth but forefathers that created this great nation).

We celebrate the foresight of these pioneers in creating a tolerant society that welcomes all with open arms; a nation that sacrifices her children in defense of the undefended, stands up for peace and backs it up with a commitment to peacekeeping like no other nation on earth, a just society that looks after its weak, the poor and gives opportunity to people like myself to succeed.

As we head into an uncertain future, it is our responsibility as Canadians that Canada remains a nation that is strong; strong in its continuous commitments to what we have come to enjoy. May God bless us with the ability to continue to keep Canada the world's envy, a shining example for other nations to follow. We are not a perfect country, but as a whole we work hard to be as close to that as we can be.

The success that each of us has experienced is due to the parchment upon which God gave us a chance to draw our plans.

Thank you and GOD BLESS CANADA.

\*\*\*\*\*

### 1960 VOYAGE BY HITCH HIKING

Hardev Singh Shergill  
Itinerary

First sent out to the family on July 12, 2011 upon insistence by the same sister who would later ask me the question about my first twelve years of life. What follows are the comments I received.

Hi Guys:

Attached is something I received from Hardev Bhaji via Guddi Bhanji last week. Please take the time to read the attachments and perhaps you will have a better understanding of your Hardev Tayaji, our family and why he is such a larger than life figure in our lives.

Take a look at the dates on the **1960** Timeline doc. And remember he was **26** years old at the time, had

a turban and uncut hair. He was **22** when your Dadi Mama died and he found himself with responsibilities that I am sure not too many could have handled. This I am sure was not a small part in convincing your dad (**Jeet**) that he could take on the task of raising 3 teenagers when he was 24 and just starting his career as an engineer in Calgary.

Our grandparents left the comforts of an established home in Punjab to move to Rajasthan; Hardev Tayaji left the comforts of home to plant the roots of this family in North America. Take a look around you and see how many lives are changed with the butterfly effect of Tayaji's decision to make that journey.

Baldev (Deep) Shergill, July 22, 2011

\*

### Dear Taya Ji:

I have just been sent the email detailing your early life in your own words. While I have known much of this through my own prodding, it was nice to read and reaffirm what I have always known. When the whole family gets together it is usually during a large event and we never have much time to speak to each other. When my dad goes on one of his tangents and tells me stories of all of you, it most likely comes back to the point of your sacrifices and how hard you worked. My dad encourages me to share with you my thoughts. And so I am...

At Pal Bhaji's wedding reception last summer, Pal Bhaji got up and thanked everyone. I hope that you heard when he said "thank you to my 4 Taya Jis and all 5 brothers. Without you, nothing in all of our lives would be possible; everything in this room is because of you." It is something both my mom and dad instilled in us – we should never take for granted all the blessings in our own life. To be able to go to school, switch careers, depend upon my parents, to never need anything, to never want anything, to be accepted for any decision we have made, to grow up secure and well loved – it is so much due to your dedication to your family.

I do not think words can do justice to how I feel when I think about all 10 of the siblings – you are all miracles in your own right. How you strived and succeeded in life with little encouragement and support is beyond words. I do not know what it is about you, maybe it is purely that you had the strength to chase your dreams and bring each one of your siblings along with you – but you have created this family.

Very often, I think that what you went through and did at such a young age is overshadowed by the later years. We lose track and think that the lives we lead will never go away, that we deserve to have everything. Time passes so quickly, and I wanted to make sure that I got a chance to tell you thank you.

I complain daily about such trivial aspects of life. But not once do I think I am owed all the great things in my life. I am lucky to have it. I am lucky to have my dad and mom as parents; I am lucky that my dad shows such ambition and generosity and that he is able to do so.

I am lucky that you instilled those values in him and that you put him through school, that you brought him to Canada and that you and Jeet Taya Ji raised him into who he is today and that therefore he could raise me the way he did. I do not deserve anything, I am lucky to have it.

I just wanted to take the time to say thank you for everything you have done to create this life I live. I know it may not come across at times, but I am grateful for your sacrifices. I am humbled when I hear your story. I remember when I spent a week with you a few years ago learning about our history. You told me a story where our Dadi Ji referred to you as her bank. That story in particular has stayed with me since then. Then, this morning I read the passage you wrote below:

*“And may God grant me sense, will and strength to do my level best for the welfare of her loved ones – her off springs – my younger brothers and sisters,*

*so that I may do something which I could not do for her and which she hoped me to do for them, being the eldest in the family. Let me not betray her trust; and I know she was aggrieved and hurt due to me.”*

I don't think she could've even hoped for what you have provided her offspring. Whatever bank she made in you, you have increased her investment tenfold. I don't think even Dadi Ji could imagine the lives we are all leading now due to the small investment she made in her very own bank. Thank you so much.

Sherri, July 14, 2011

\*

**Hi Mamaji,**

Thank you for taking the time to put your experiences on paper. This means a lot to me and I have already put copies in both Aniya and Arin's baby books. It is so important to me they know where they come from and that none of us would be where we are if it weren't for the challenges you faced and risks you took. I am proud to call you Mamaji. Love, Simrit, July 14, 2011.

\*

**Hi Mamaji,**

Just wanted to thank you for putting your travels down on paper. The entry for August 30, 1960 is especially heart-wrenching. It's the first insight I've had into what your mom, my Naniji, meant to you and the others and your motivation for doing what you did for my mom. Your journal has also made Naniji more tangible for me - thanks!

I also realized that I must have gotten my wanderlust from you. I was in Istanbul last year, and hope to make it to Eastern Europe, Iran and Pakistan in the near future - I'm tracing your steps back!

Love, Aneel, July 15, 2011

\*

**Hello Bhaji;**

My only wish is I hope our Bebeji and Bebe Buri were alive today to see how far we have all come. Sherri is full of wisdom and we all love her dearly for the person that she is today. We all cannot thank you and Jeet Bhaji enough. Your sacrifices always remind us to be humble and remain grounded and true to ourselves. I think us siblings have a unique ability to give and not expect anything in return. I also thank Waheguru for all that he has given to our family. Will see you soon.

Love, Bholi, July 29, 2011

\*

**Family surnames into which the ten siblings, all born in India and moved to North America between 1960-1993, got married:**

Karter/Sandhu; Takhar; Sooch; Klair; Dhillon; Kullar; Sahota; Brar; Mangat/Pal; Dhindsa.

**Four siblings moved from India with their young children; children of the other six were born in North America, first generation Canadians and Americans. Family surnames into which the children of the ten siblings, got married:**

Hansmeyer;  
Shergill; Nahal;  
Dhana; Sandhu; Sandhu;  
Gurm; Bains; Syag; Dhanjal;  
Atwal; Trivedi; Bains; Banker;  
Saggu; Cheema; Bushulak;  
Dhillon;  
Ahmed;  
Grewal;

Our family is well on its way to becoming a truly global Sikh family based on the teachings of Guru Nanak.

**Our arrivals in North America:**

1. Eldest sibling September 5<sup>TH</sup> 1960
2. Sibling # 6, Sunday Nov. 29<sup>th</sup> 1964

3. Siblings # 9 & 10, Saturday, July 26, 1969
4. Sibling #8, Saturday, September 6, 1969
5. Sibling #5, Tuesday, September 29, 1970
6. Siblings #2,3,4&7, Saturday, April 3, 1993

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**HARDEV SINGH SHERGILL  
A BRIEF BIO**



**Hardev Singh Shergill 2011**

I was born on January 3, 1934 in a village called 'Sakruli', near Mahalpur, in District Hoshiarpur, Panjab, India. Panjab was annexed by the British to their Indian Colonies in 1849. But there remained several Princely States that avoided

annexation by simply becoming subservient to the British and paying tribute. **Bikaner**, adjoining Panjab, was one such state ruled by a Raja. It is now part of the state of **Rajasthan**, India. Geographically it is the eastern most extremity of the vast desert that starts as Sahara Desert on the Atlantic coast of Africa and extends through the Middle East, Iran, and Baluchistan in Pakistan and ends up being called **Thar** Desert in India.

In the 1920's Raja of Bikaner purchased rights to some irrigation water from the British and **Gang Canal** was completed in **1927**. But he soon found that his subjects did not know anything about irrigated farming. So he solicited immigration from neighboring Panjab. My family has been into farming since times immemorial, perhaps since farming was invented. That is how my grandfather along with his two younger brothers and all their families moved to District **Ganganagar of Bikaner State**.

Like all the first borns in Panjab, I was born in the same house where my mother was born and stayed there until I was two because the conditions in Bikaner state were far from ideal. Sand storms were frequent, irrigation channels were frequently blocked by shifting sand and water was scarce.

By the time I reached my 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday the village primary school up to 4<sup>th</sup> grade opened in a room in our own house until the school had its own building but no one bothered to enroll me until I was six. After one year of pre-school and four years through grade 4, I was sent to a boarding school in **1945**. My first year there was not in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade but in '**Special Class**'. In Bikaner state English was taught from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade but because village school teachers themselves did not know English, we were taught the City folks' 5<sup>th</sup> grade non English curriculum in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades and in the 'Special Class' we studied 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade English in the first half of the School year and 5<sup>th</sup> grade in English in the second half. In the 6<sup>th</sup> grade city and village students were pooled together. This school was Government school and only two

train stations away from home. As I grew older I was sent to the District Head Quarters, **Ganganagar**, six train stations away, to the High School operated by the Sikh Community, Khalsa High School, Sri Ganganagar.

English and Math curriculum in Bikaner state was two years ahead as compared to Panjab which we still called home (**Des**). So after 7<sup>th</sup> grade in Ganganagar in **1948** I headed to a private school for one year to a city in Panjab, **Hissar**, to prepare for the Panjab University College entrance exam. In doing so I was following in the footsteps of my uncle, son of the youngest of my three grandfathers. Panjabis know him as **Principal Gurbax Singh Shergill**, President of All India Sikh Students Federation during the turbulent years of 1940s and Principal of Sikh National College, Banga, founding Principal of Khalsa College Chandigarh and retiring as Principal of Khalsa College Amritsar.

There was only one University in Panjab at that time and one had to pass their entrance exam to qualify for admissions to one of its affiliated colleges. I passed the exams in **1949** and enrolled in First Year College at the age of 15 at a newly opened College, Khalsa College **Mahalpur**, only three miles from the place where I was born. I lived in the boarding house at the College but although my parents were 24 hours train ride away, my maternal uncle was one hour's walk and less than that by bicycle should I feel home sick.

After two years there I again had to take the University exam for admission to the next two years of College. That too I passed in **1951** and moved boldly away from my maternal uncle neighborhood to the Govt. College in the big City of **Ludhiana**. I spent four years there to get my B. A. degree in English and Economics and Master's Degree in Geography, graduating in **1955** at the ripe old age of 21. Graduating in **1957** with a Bachelor's Degree in Education from Govt. College in **Dharamsala** (The unofficial capital of Tibet where the Dalai Lama now resides) I was

ready to leave my own education behind and embark upon educating others.

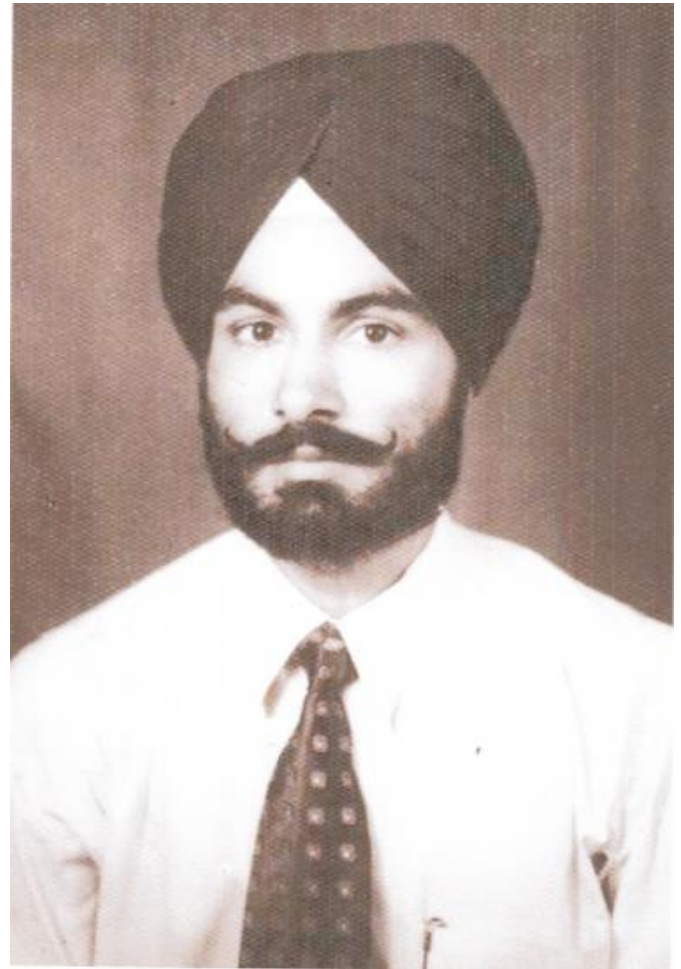
As soon as the University results were declared I was offered a teaching job at Khalsa Teacher Training College in **Muktsar**, Panjab, to train teachers. Within two months I was appointed **Vice-Principal** of the College when their then V-P moved to another college. But all along the wanderlust had been getting strong hold on me and I was ready now to take steps that will free me from the 100 or so mile radius of my confinement that had been my familiar territory. There was a big world out there to see and I was already 23 years old.

My plan was two pronged. One to take steps to join the **Indian Foreign** service to which end I applied for the job of teacher trainer in what was then called **North-East Frontier Agency**. This is in the far corner of India where India, China and Burma come together. It was then administered by the Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. An assignment with them would have opened an opportunity for me to go on to UNESCO assignments to English speaking countries that had just come out of British Colonialism. About the same time I had also gone for an interview in New Delhi to teach Geography for the Indian Air Force. New Delhi would have brought me close to the United States Embassy and contacts to move there for studies and then roam the world teaching on few years' assignments in former British Colonies in Central America, the Caribbean, Africa and South-East Asia.

Before I could hear the results of the interview for the Indian Air Force job I received a telegram from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to report to their local headquarters about a thousand miles and a different world away in Assam, all without an interview. I was thrilled and submitted my resignation at the college but I found that my Principal and the Chairman of the College Board were afraid for my safety in that place and tried to dissuade me. You see, the natives were fighting for

self-determination against Indian control with bows and poisoned arrows. When they failed to convince me, they were so certain that I will not like it there, they offered to receive my resignation but not accept it until the College starts the new teaching year three months from then in order to give me a choice to come back.

I took the night train to **New Delhi**, arriving there in the morning, from there to catch a train for **Calcutta** the same evening. My first thought was to do a day of sightseeing in **Delhi** but then, I do not know why, I decided to call the Principal at the **Air Force Central School**, New Delhi, where I had come for an interview a week before.



Hardev Singh Shergill 1960 Passport Picture

The principal was surprised to hear that I was in Delhi because he had just sent a telegram to me offering the position. When I told him what my destination was he was just as surprised and concerned as the Principal and the Chairman at the college. India is more diverse than the whole of Europe, racially, linguistically and culturally. Travelling to Assam is like going to a foreign country and not a very friendly one at that. He insisted that I show up right away at his office and sign the contract. In my own mind I had felt that this New Delhi job was to be preferred to the one in unfamiliar territory, so my call would have been a last minute effort to find out the result of that interview.

I spent two wonderful years teaching **Geography** there. The American Embassy was close by. It had an unusual Attaché, a **Geography Attaché**. I made friends with him and not only used his audio-visual resources but also any and all topographic maps of India that were classified and out of reach even for me while teaching in the Indian Air Force School. He had each and every one of them. He also got me admission to the **University of Washington in Seattle**. I chose Seattle because that was the farthest spot from India and the Pacific Northwest had a climate which was the opposite of hot, dry and dust stormy that I grew up in.

Those days India had very strict controls on foreign exchange. Students wanting to study abroad were required to submit a letter from their admitting university itemizing all the expenses including fees, books, board and room costs etc on annual basis and foreign funds were made available two weeks before students' departure from India. My plans were different. Although I had never been on an airplane, I did not wish to waste money on flying because I would not be able to see anything of God's wide world on the way. During my two years of stay in **New Delhi** I had made a point to visit the **Youth Hostel** where visiting European, Australian and New Zealanders used to stay. Being a student of Geography I knew

the routes available to me but I needed to ferret out information on best routes and worst routes and where to stay in the Middle East and East European Communist countries since they will not have youth hostels.

All my salary of three years was spent on living expenses. I had no savings. My father had put me through schools and colleges and now my Grandfather came to the rescue by giving me Rupees equivalent of \$1200.00 needed for one year's expenses at the University of Washington in Seattle. Coincidentally, those days one way airfare from New Delhi to Seattle was also \$1200.00. Today you can get a return ticket for the same amount.

My hitchhiking journey began in New Delhi on **June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1960**. **On June 25, 1960 I crossed over from India to Pakistan by train** that plies for 34 miles between Amritsar (India) and Lahore (Pakistan). I had written letters to the family and friends about my mode of travel, hitch hiking from New Delhi to Seattle, and had handed them over to an acquaintance at the Amritsar railway station. No one in the family and no friends, other than two, had any clue what crazy journey I was on because they all would have tried to dissuade me.

My journey had taken me from New Delhi to Amritsar (India); Lahore and Quetta (Pakistan); Zahidan, Mashhad, Tehran, Maragheh, Tabriz, Marand, Khoy, Maku, Bazargan (Iran); Dogubayazit, Taslicay, Agri, Erzurum, Trabzon, Samsun (On the shores of Black Sea), Ankara (*Where the Indian Ambassador opened the guest house for me*), Istanbul, Edirne (Turkey); Kastanekai, Alexandroupoli, Thessaloniki, and Evzoni (Greece); Skopje, Nis, Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana (Former Yugoslavia); Salzburg (Austria); Munich, Augsburg, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe (W. Germany); Strasbourg, Nancy, Paris, Boulogne (France); and Dover, London (England).



Hardev S. Shergill 1960 hitch hiking, location unknown  
But could be Turkey near Greek border.



Hardev S. Shergill, Paris, Aug. 5<sup>th</sup> 1960, in borrowed clothes

**On the midnight of August 8, 1960 I found myself on British shores at Dover. New Delhi to London in six weeks hitchhiking was not shabby!**

From August 9<sup>th</sup> to August 17<sup>th</sup> I totally and absolutely rested at a friend's house in Brentford, Middlesex (London). Daily, there was a clock-like routine, preparing a cup of tea, reading a little, dressing up (in borrowed clothes, of course), walking through the residential area with interspersed shops for about an hour, sitting in the public library or sitting on its lawn just across the road in front of the house where I was staying, cooking and eating lunch, having a nap, reading and going to the pub in the evening before going to bed after eating a self-cooked dinner. Oh yes, I wrote three dozen letters also. This big dose of rest got to me by the 18<sup>th</sup> and I set out on my mission to proceed to USA. It was not going to be easy. I not only could not work my way across the Atlantic, as I had been told by some British and European youth hostellers in New Delhi, but also there were no available berths for me to pay for. Same was true for air travel, solidly booked.

But, miracle of miracles, by the time the day was over I was on a train heading west to Bristol to board a small oil tanker, '**M. T. Merchant Knight**' headed for Galveston, Texas, a 17 day sail and all for free, courtesy the **Seamen's Welfare Officer** in the Indian Embassy and the shipping company. You see, so many British shipping companies employed Indians as crews and cooks on their ships that India maintained a whole officer corps to look after their interests.

The ship was sailing diagonally across the Atlantic which was a blessing because that way we faced the westerly North Atlantic drift and choppy seas, and the accompanying sea sickness for a first time sailor, only for three days. Rest of the trip was peaceful like gliding on a smooth surface. In the middle of the North Atlantic the waters were so calm that one could see the wake of a ship from horizon to horizon and not see the



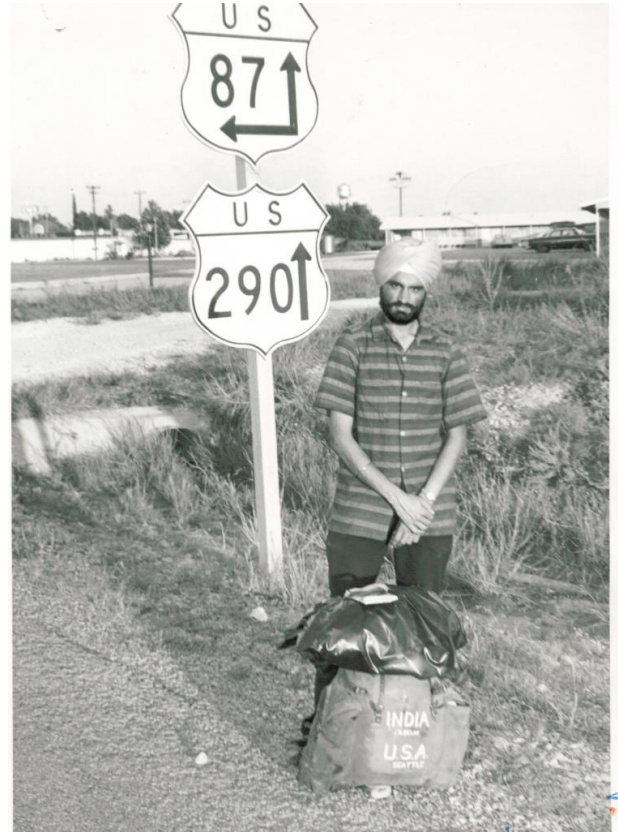
ship that made it.

The ship carried three English officers, the entire crew and cooks were Indian, except that the cooks did not consider themselves Indian. They were from the tiny Portuguese colony on the west coast of India and it irked the rest of the crew only one of whom was Panjabi from Amritsar. But that made it obligatory for the cooks to cook Panjabi food which was a blessing for me. A case of beer purchased from the ship's store house also made the journey pleasant.

**Early morning of September 5<sup>th</sup> we docked at Bay Town, near Galveston and Houston. I was on solid ground again. One Continent and one Ocean in ten weeks, not shabby at all!**

**From landfall in Texas to University fall in Seattle took only 16 days and the entire journey from New Delhi (June 25<sup>th</sup>) to Seattle (September 21<sup>st</sup>) only 4 days shy of three months and just in time for the start of school, not bad planning at all.**

Those **16 days hitchhiking** across this vast country, United States of America, took me through Galveston, Austin, Fredericksburg, Mason, Midland, Odessa, Pecos, Sierra Blanca, Fabens, and El Paso in Texas; Tucson, Casa Grande and Yuma in Arizona; El Centro, Brawley, San Bernardino, Cajon Junction, Kramer Junction, Mojave, Tehachapi, Bakersfield, Fresno, Chowchilla, Modesto, Stockton, Lodi, Sacramento, Roseville, Yuba City, Gridley, Chico, Redding, Dunsmuir and Yreka in California; Ashland, Medford, Grants Pass, Roseburg, Goshen, Eugene, Albany, Salem and Portland in Oregon; Vancouver, Olympia, Tacoma and Seattle in Washington State, where I reached my destination, the University of Washington, on **September 21, 1960**, in time to join the Fall semester in the Department of Geography.



Hardev S. Shergill Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> 1960, Fredericksburg, Texas.  
1<sup>st</sup> day in USA

Picture from *The Radio Post* same issue as below.



Lady Bird and Linda Johnson in the Stonewall Centennial Parade at Wimberly, Texas. On Nov. 22, 1963 Lady Bird Johnson became the First Lady of the United States when her husband, Lyndon Johnson succeeded President Kennedy upon the latter's assassination.

**Just as my first night in the United States was spent among bushes outside a bread warehouse in Fredericksberg, Texas, the last night, before getting to the University, was also spent in the Oregon woods near Albany in what looked like an abandoned saw mill.** I had asked my last ride of the day to drop me at the Police Station in Albany hoping to enjoy the hospitality that I had received in Faben, Texas 23 miles short of El Paso in Deputy Sheriff's Office on my second night in the country. But Oregon police refused me shelter and I requested the driver to put me back on the main highway. It was getting dark fast and very cold. At 9:30 pm I decided to walk away from the city to find a gas station to spend the night. Half a mile away found two gas stations but both had unfriendly and unhelpful attendants. Way back I had spotted a shack besides what looked like an abandoned saw mill and a warehouse type of building. Upon approaching it I spotted a watchman. At first he denied me permission to spend the night in that shack but after listening to my story he melted because he too had done some hitchhiking in his youth. It was 10:30 pm and very cold even with layers of all the clothes I was carrying, almost as cold as my first night in England in a public park bus shelter in Dover. There too the person incharge of the local Youth Hostel had denied me accommodation even though I had arrived ten minutes before the closing time stated in the Youth Hostel book and he had room to spare. According to his rules for me I was late. Dover police, a block away from the Youth Hostel had denied me shelter but had graciously allowed me to spend the night at the open bus stop shelter by the park. That night my late night meal was Pistachios bought in Iran and Slivovitz brandy bought in Belgrade. This night my meal was two boiled eggs brought from Yuba City and of course the Slivovitz, perfect drink for cold nights. I dozed off in sitting position with my head on my knees. It was 10:30 pm.

**At 4:30 am I was back on the road but it would be 1962 before I would find out that Oregon was no place for blacks to spend the night.**

*This is what the last passage in my diary of September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1960 reads:*

*“This is the end of my 3 months’ adventures and my mission fulfilled. It has cost me only \$18.00 from New Delhi to here. \$15.00 up to London; free across the Atlantic; \$3.00 up to Yuba City; and nothing up to here and a distance of:*

*New Delhi to London 6,800 miles*

*Bristol to Houston 5,400 miles*

*Houston to Seattle 3,000 miles*

*Total of 15,200 miles*

*Miraculous!*

*Received \$1152.00 from home and plus what I have with me (\$60.00), I am starting my living in States with roughly \$1200.00.”*

This trip was dream come true. In Pakistan and Iran I stayed with Muslim and Sikh families, respectively, whose addresses I had brought from their family members living in New Delhi.

**Upon entering Turkey I was left to my own devices, all the way to England.**

Variously I stayed in people's homes; police stations; hotels arranged by police in Turkey; the Indian Embassy guest house in Ankara and with Indian embassy personnel in Istanbul and Paris; a straw hut in a field in a road side village the first night in Yugoslavia; youth hostels in Yugoslavia, Germany and France; a public park in Dover; outdoors in the bush first night in the United States outside Fredericksburg, Texas; the Sheriff's office in Fabens, 30 miles west of El Paso, Texas; the guest house of the richest cotton farmer in Casa Grande, Arizona whose father was a Sikh like me from Panjab but mother was Mexican because during first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Indians could not reenter the country so they married Mexican women; one week at a farm house in Yuba City shelling almonds where my cousin who had left India six months earlier was working during summer break.

Minimum wage at that time was \$1.25 an hour; I put in 56 hrs, \$70.00 worth but got paid only \$45.00 because the Panjabi farmer could get away with it; in my last sprint from **California to Seattle** I spent the only night outside **Albany, Oregon**, sitting in a ramshackle shed beside a dilapidated saw mill, exposed to the cold and wet weather.

**The most coincidental thing that I remember is the watermelon. That was the first food served to me by the persons who gave me my first ride in USA from Bay Town to Houston and the last ride to Seattle.**

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**Seattle Post - Intelligencer**

**The Great News Paper of the Great Northwest**

Seattle, Friday, September 23, 1960

**WITH THUMB HE TRAVELED FAR**

**H. Sheik (sic) Shergill Shows How He Hitchhiked  
6,800 Miles**

(Post-Intelligencer Photo by Harvey Davis)

**Finds 'Friendly People All The Way'**

H. Sheik (sic) Shergill, 26, a tan, turbaned "tightwad" from New Delhi, India, arrived in Seattle yesterday—winner of some sort of championship for stretching a dollar.

He had just completed a journey of 6,800 miles, three-quarters of the distance around the world, on just \$18. He left New Delhi last June 24 (1960) for a remarkable parsimonious pilgrimage to his classes at the University of Washington where he is a graduate student in geography.

**FROM INDIA TO LONDON**, he frittered away \$15, something like a nickel every hundred miles. But he tightened up the purse-strings between Jolly Old London and Seattle and made it on \$3. How did he do it?

"Very friendly people all the way," Shergill explained through a coal-black beard. First, he went to Pakistan where Sikhs have been none too

popular since partition more than a decade ago. The fires of hate must now be burning low since Shergill was made welcome.

Shergill free loaded on the friendly Pakistanis, then joined a pilgrimage of Mohammedans (no charge, friend) and in Turkey met a German smuggler. By their very calling, smugglers do not pay their way and Shergill made another 200 miles without opening his wallet.



All the way through Yugoslavia, Austria, Germany, France and Great Britain, friendly people — mostly fellow Sikhs — helped him along. In England he found another friend who got him passage on a steamer heading for Texas. "I had to sleep in a crew member's berth but I accepted as I wasn't required to do any work," Shergill said.

**HIS FLASHING SMILE** won him more friends (onward to Arizona) and he bumped into another Sikh who described himself as a millionaire. Although he refused an offer of cold cash, Shergill turned the friendship into a payless trip to Seattle. Still clutching his wallet, Shergill announced yesterday he was looking for a part-time job. His special talent? Traveling on air.

\*

**The Seattle Times**  
 FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1960.  
**Sikh Here Finds Travel Inexpensive**  
 H. S. Shergill



Who said travel is expensive? It isn't if you do it the way H. S. Shergill, 26, of *New Delhi*, India, did it on his journey from New Delhi to Seattle.

Shergill, who will be a graduate student at the University of Washington, made the trip half the way around the world for exactly \$18. **The method: Hitch-hiking**, a friendly smile, free train rides, overnight stops at police stations and a free ride across the Atlantic on an oil tanker.

Shergill, tall, turbaned, well-educated member of the Sikh religious sect, reached Seattle Wednesday (September 21, 1960) after being on the road since June 24, 1960.

A graduate of the University of Punjab and with three years of teaching experience, Shergill plans to work for an advanced degree in the Department of Geography. But there may be nothing in the geography books as educational as his recent journey.

Shergill is staying with Prof. Donald Treadgold of the University's Far Eastern Department until he can find a job for room and board.

\*

**WESTERN WASHINGTON STATE  
 COLLEGE:  
 BELLINGHAM**

After three months in Seattle, upon the advice of the Foreign Students Advisor, Mr. Porter, I switched to Western Washington State College, **Bellingham**, now **Western Washington State University**, to study for **Master's Degree in Audio-visual education**, a brand new field because that would have suited best my goal of teaching all over the English speaking world.

But that was not to be because all the former British Colonies were getting their teachers free through UNESCO. United States was sending teachers abroad but that was for U. S. citizens. I

was on a student visa. After graduating in **1962** I was working at the **Seattle World's Fair**, managing the audio-visual equipment being used in various exhibits for the **Rarig Motion Picture Company**, when **Canada** opened up immigration for qualified people it needed. They had a severe teacher shortage. Within three months I had a job and **Immigration Minister's letter** to show at the **Blaine, Washington** border. "**They must have liked you up there in Ottawa very much**" were the words greeting me from the Immigration Officer at the Blaine, WA border. This change in Canada's immigration policy was so new that the border authorities were incredulous to see the Minister's letter instead of a regular Visa stamped in the passport. A friend, **Chuck Bailey**, offered to drive me to **Vancouver** in his car. **On August 11, 1962 at 3:30 PM** I became a Canadian. **I made Canada my home from 1962 to 1976.**



**Hardev (black-and-white) Russ Cliff  
Bellingham, Washington  
Best Men's Portrait**

**The National Professional Photographer, Oct. 1961**

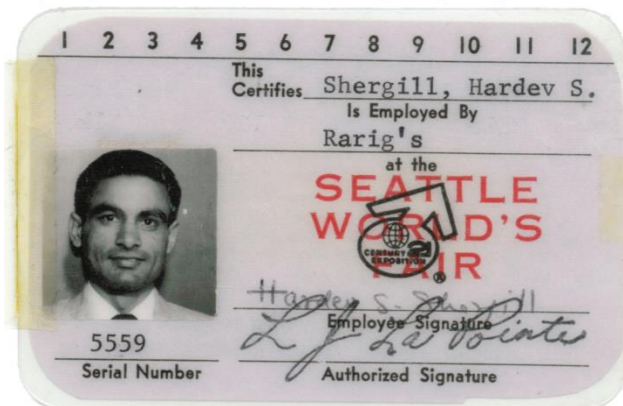
During that period I taught High School English and Social Studies in **British Columbia** for four years and **District Librarian and Adult Education Director** for two years; **Geography in Ontario** for three years; **Geography at a College in British Columbia** for two years; got appointed to a **Task Force on Community Colleges in British Columbia** by the **Minister of Education** and spent three years on that including establishment of **North Island College in Campbell River**, one of our recommendations for an area where I had previously spent two years as **District Librarian and Adult Education Director**.



**Hardev S. Shergill Dec 14<sup>th</sup> 1961,  
Christmas holidays operating elevators at Macy's,  
Bellingham**

**I made nine moves in those 16 years because that was the only way for me to get ahead. Canada needed teachers but discriminated against me and others like me when it came to administrative positions. In 1962 when I**

entered Canada, in entire British Columbia, and perhaps in the country of Canada, I was the only one with M. Ed in Audio-visual Education, a brand new field. That year the University of British Columbia started sending one of its Professors in the Faculty of Education to summer school in Portland, Oregon to get the Master's degree in Audio-visual education that I already had.



Hardev S. Shergill, April 21-Aug. 10, 1962  
Seattle World's Fair A-V support

Just to cite one example of discrimination I had to face: British Columbia School Districts filled their vacancies during Easter break. All the School Superintendents and job seekers descended into the Lower Mainland. I applied for the advertised position of District Librarian and Audio-visual Director for the Squamish School Board. The Superintendent praised my qualifications (B.A., M.A., B.Ed., and M.Ed.) experience (three years in India and four years in B. C.) and personality, to high heaven, but declined to offer me the position and that too as a favor to me. He explained it this way: Squamish was a lumber town and the Indian people working there were illiterate unskilled laborers of whom I will be ashamed.

I was shocked and surprised at the way he concealed his bigotry and insulted me and my community. I let him have it, verbally, and stormed out of the interview.

I was restless to accomplish the most I could in the least possible time and I had to overcome prejudice. Another Superintendent had advertised two positions, one for the **District Librarian** and the other for **Adult Education Director**. His primary District was **Campbell River Courtenay** area on **Vancouver Island** but he also administered five communities on the north end of the island outside his district. Those communities were **Port Hardy**, a fishing center; **Port McNeill**, a lumber and administrative center; **Alert Bay**, an Indian village and fishing center; **Port Alice**, a pulp mill town; and **Holberg, Canadian Air Force** base. It was to serve these five small and scattered communities, separated by water or unpaved logging roads, that he needed these two positions. He was a gentleman as compared to the Squamish scoundrel. My proposal to him was that his district, although big in geographic area, was too small in population for two positions; I will do both. For that he had to go back to the School Board members of these five communities with my recommendation. **They agreed and I had broken the barrier of prejudice.**

During my span of **14 years** in the education field of Canada I felt a strong need for assimilation in the Canadian community. I chose the **Lions Clubs International** to accomplish that goal. Joining them in **Langley, B.C. in 1963** I ended up **chartering six Lions Clubs** within a span of two years between **1965 and 1967** in **Revelstoke, Port Hardy, Port Alice, Port McNeill, Holberg and Alert Bay** and becoming **Charter President** of two of them, **Revelstoke and Port Hardy.**

By **1976** I had been an educator for **17 years**, three years in India and fourteen years in Canada. I needed a change, not only in the way I earned my living but also in climate. Pacific North-West that I looked forward to in 1960 seemed too wet. I missed the sun. California appealed to me like a second home. In many respects it was Panjab. Since **1976** Central California has been my home. I chose the **Sacramento** area to settle because it is the Capital

of world's eighth or ninth largest economy and has educational opportunities that my children could avail without having to live in boarding houses as I had to. Sacramento was also a short distance from the sea and the mountains and its climate and agriculture were similar to that of my ancestral home, Panjab, to boot.

**I always dreamed about settling down not in a big city but within 30 miles of a moderate size city, at an elevation with wide horizons.**

**Since 1983 I have lived in this house at an elevation of 1000 ft, looking down at the city of Sacramento and 100 mile radius view of the great Central Valley of California surrounded by gold rush history. I am home.**

Hardev Singh Shergill

July 2012

El Dorado Hills, California

Life has been good to me but like most of us there have been bumps along the way. **Three experiences**, one in my **student life at Western Washington State College, Bellingham** where I received my M.Ed Degree in Audio-Visual Education, one in my **working life as a Professor in British Columbia, Canada** and one in my **personal life**, at the hands of one of the **scoundrel Sant Babas** that plague every village in Panjab would sum up how my life experiences and my thought processes had prepared me to successfully overcome these challenges that had initially seemed to be insurmountable.

## **ADDENDA TO HARDEV SINGH SHERGILL BIO**

### **Addendum I:**

I have very fond memories of Bellingham, Washington State that I called home from January 1961 to April 1962. That is where I got my first airplane ride in a two seater Cessna owned by a **retired veteran**; learned to **water ski** on **lake Whatcom** courtesy and friendship of **Mr & Mrs. Aaron Markham** who also attended my

graduation ceremony on June 8<sup>th</sup> 1962; **snow ski** on the slopes of **Mt Baker** as chaperone for the **Jaycee Ski School kids**, courtesy and friendship of **Charles and Helen Sandra Choate**, whom we unfortunately lost **in an auto accident soon after at a very young age of 32 and 28**; camped in **Mt. Baker's** shadows during summer using wild blue berries on pan cakes when we forgot to bring syrup and got my first glimpse in the clear starry night of the **Russian Sputnik** while sleeping out in the open without a tent; met **Bruce Keppel** a reporter for **Bellingham Herald** who interviewed me, published my **Lertters to the Editor** and was responsible for me obtaining the summer job in the **Kelly Ferquhar Freezing plant in Ferndale, WA**, running the pea tendrometer at \$1.70 an hour; made friends with **Charles (Chuck) Werley** of Rt 2, **Lynden, WA** and spent many an evenings at Shakey's Pizza down the street from the College with friends and visited friends at the campus almost every weekend during two years while I was teaching in Langley, B. C. 1963 to 1965.

I graduated from **Western Washington State College Bellingham, now called Western Washington State University – in 1962 with M. Ed. degree**. When I asked the Head of my Department, **Dr. McDonald**, for a letter of recommendation to pursue PhD degree he refused because he wanted me to return directly to India. He did not like any foreign students at the campus from Asian countries. **USINS** allowed students to work during summer vacations upon the recommendation of the College Administration. Same Head of my Department also refused that permission to me as well. I had to go over his head to the Dean who signed a letter authorizing me to work at the job that had been offered to me, managing the Audio Visual Equipment and supplies warehouse at the Seattle World's Fair where I worked from April 21 to Aug. 10, 1962, leaving for British Columbia on August 11, 1962 to teach for next fourteen years. A fellow student who was native of Bellingham told me that the Department Head was a long standing member of

very active **Ku Klux Klan** and even then, in 1962, a black man could not spend a night in that town. For the State of **Oregon** it was even worse. No black man could find a shelter anywhere in the entire state.

While I was in Bellingham in 1961-62 I had no knowledge about what transpired in the lives of what I would call ‘my people’ half a century earlier. **Following appeared in the Sikh Bulletin of September-October 2007 marking the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sikh Pogrom in Bellingham:**

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### **BELLINGHAM RACE RIOTS – HINDUS EXPELLED FROM THE CITY**

Inder Singh

[From The Sikh Bulletin September-October 2007]

A brief history of early immigration to the United States reveals prejudice, hostility and blatant discrimination against the people of Asia. At the turn of the twentieth century, when Indians started coming to the United States, Americans had already developed hatred and hostility against the Chinese and Japanese.

In 1907, the number of Indians in the Pacific Coast states was very small, but they became victims of the prevalent anti-Asian sentiment of the American people. There were barely 250 Indians in the city of Bellingham in the state of Washington, yet American lumber mill workers committed unforgivable atrocities and expelled all the Hindus from the city in what is known as Bellingham Hindu Race Riots. On the 100th anniversary of the Hindu Race Riots, the Indian American community remembers the pioneers who patiently suffered physically, psychologically and economically but stayed calm under provocation, remained law abiding under lawlessness and observed non-violence under threat of violence, practicing what Gandhi Ji was preaching in South Africa at that time.

Chinese were the first among Asians to come to the United States in search of economic opportunities. The lure of gold in the 1850s induced them to migrate and by 1880, the number of Chinese in the United States had reached 322,000, almost all in the Pacific Coast states.



**Inder Singh**

The rapid growth of Chinese population provoked resentment against the immigration of “cheap” labor. The employers welcomed the Asian laborers and employed them in their lumber mills, railroad construction and farms while the white laborers vehemently opposed them. The labor unions agitated bitterly against the employment of Chinese workers and wanted to bar their immigration to the United States. Some politicians perpetually starved for campaign money and



union endorsement, willingly and openly backed the union demand. In 1862, Congress passed a law forbidding American vessels to transport Chinese immigrants to the United States. The Naturalization Act of 1870 denied Asians the right to become naturalized citizens. The unions kept pressuring members of the Congress for more stringent laws. In 1882, America passed the Chinese Exclusion Act which virtually ended the source of cheap labor for American business.

Following the passage of the Chinese exclusionary law, labor organizations launched a virulent campaign of intimidation against those who employed Chinese servants or workers. The American press continued to give the 'Yellow Peril' a high profile by depicting the Chinese as depraved opium smoking, alien looking, and diseased coolies." Anti-Chinese sentiment in the Northwest region sometimes exploded into violence at various places, forcing some Chinese workers in the fields, mines, fisheries, lumberyards and laundries to flee the area.

However, the labor need of the American employers for their businesses did not end with the enactment of the new law. They encouraged Japanese workers to migrate to bridge a labor supply gap. Japanese laborers had been coming to Hawaii but in 1900, their labor contracts became invalid on Hawaii becoming part of the United States. So, many Japanese workers also started migrating to the Pacific Coast states in the mainland. Thus, the number of Japanese workers rapidly increased to meet labor shortage. But the labor unions found them a new threat to white workers, blaming the Japanese for lowering wages of American laborers and branding them as the new 'Yellow Peril'. In 1905, with the formation of Asiatic Exclusion League, the anti-Japanese movement was launched. But the movement had little immediate impact on the number of immigrants from Japan, as close to 31,000 Japanese laborers, largest ever in a single year, came to America in 1907. However, under constant and relentless pressure by the Asiatic

Exclusion League, President Roosevelt, in 1907, signed the Gentlemen's Agreement with Japan ending immigration of Japanese laborers to the United States and issued an executive order stopping the secondary migration of Japanese from Hawaii to the mainland.

The first trickle of Indians in search of economic opportunities came to California at the end of the nineteenth century. On April 5, 1899, four Punjabis who had worked in the British Royal Artillery in Hong Kong, landed in San Francisco and were allowed to stay in the United States by the US Immigration Service. The grant of permission gave an encouraging signal for other to Indians to follow those four pioneers. There was abundance of jobs in the lumber industry in Washington and Oregon states and plenty of land to farm throughout the Sacramento, San Joaquin and Imperial valleys of California. On hearing about the economic opportunities in America, many more Punjabis headed towards the far away land. The new immigrants found jobs which the white workers would not do, usually menial jobs, in factories, lumber mills, farms, etc. They were needy workers who accepted low wages, poor working conditions and very often traveled from place to place in search of work. The employers preferred Indians to the whites for their willingness to do any and all kinds of work. The labor unions despised the Hindu laborers for fear of competition for jobs and wages. As the number of Indian workers increased within a span of few years, they too started facing discrimination and hostility, in the same manner as the other Asians who had come before.

Indian immigrants in Canada had been facing similar problems as those in the United States. Since India and Canada were British dominions, it was easier for the Indians to migrate to Canada where they had started coming at the beginning of the twentieth century. The majority of the new immigrants were Punjabi veterans or peasants who were physically well built, strong and muscular. They were eager to obtain work and

found jobs in lumber mills in British Columbia. They were hard working and proved more productive than the white workers. Some Canadian companies sought more of similar laborers and publicized availability of job opportunities in Canada to entice more cheap labor from India. For the first few years, about 2000 immigrants were permitted to come to Canada annually.

As per the 1904 Census, there were only 258 Indian nationals in British Columbia but that number increased rapidly during the two-year period of 1906-1907 when about 5000 Indians migrated to Canada, thereby causing unease for the local whites. There was already a backlash against the Chinese and Japanese from the white laborers and their unions. Fear of labor competition from the newcomers, led to racial antagonism and demands for exclusionary laws against Indian workers. The Asian Expulsion League in British Columbia actively lobbied against the importation of cheap labor from India.

The local press carried many scare stories against the "Hindu Invasion." In 1908, the Canadian government required Indian immigrants to have \$200 in their possession on landing. Also, the Indian immigrants were denied entry if they had not come by "continuous journey" from India. Since there was no direct shipping between Indian and Canadian ports, legal immigration of Indians to Canada virtually ended. As the Indian immigrants saw the doors closing on them in Canada, many started filtering to the United States where they found jobs in the lumber mills in Bellingham and other towns in the state of Washington which borders the state of British Columbia in Canada.

The Indians in the United States and Canada were commonly called "Hindoos", ("Hindus") irrespective of their faith. The overwhelming majority of the arrivals from India were Sikhs who preserved their religious beliefs and practices by keeping beard, long hair on their head and wore turban. They were easily distinguishable from the

rest of the immigrants, but unfortunately, they were called "Rag heads", a derogatory term used for the "Hindus" at that time.

In the United States, Indians legally admitted from 1899-1907, numbered only 1967. The total number of Indians in the country, however, was slightly larger as some Indians had come directly from Canada, Hong Kong and other countries. However, Hindu concentration in a few small communities in the Pacific Coast states, particularly several with turbans, drew high level of visibility on their presence and provoked hostility from the Asiatic Exclusion League which carried propaganda against the "The Tide of Turbans" and "Hindu Invasion of America".

In the early 1890s, three railroad lines connected the small cities which became Bellingham on November 4, 1903, thus enabling area businessmen to market their products, salmon, timber and coal to the outside world. After the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, lumber was needed for rebuilding of San Francisco. In time, lumber and shingle mills sprang up in the area to meet the surge in demand. These industries were labor intensive and needed cheap manual labor which was filled by the new arrivals – the Hindu workers.

Bellingham had a history of strained race relations. In the 1880s the Chinese had been driven from the town by a mob. A few years later, the Japanese faced similar hostility. Labor unions and their members had resorted to lawlessness and violation as a means of achieving their objectives. A similar situation could prompt mob action in violent persecution of the Asian workers.

Hindu workers had come as sojourners and without spouses, were paid low wages and could afford to live only in the poor squalid part of the town or in shanty structures provided by the mill owners. They lived frugally, subsisted on income that was prohibitive for whites to survive on, maintained low standard of living and many

shared crowded lodging to save money to pay off their debt or meet family obligations back home. They were willing to do any kind of manual job but the unskilled white laboring men feared that competition from Hindu workers would displace them from their jobs and bring wages down. Their festering hostility and pent-up frustrations manifested in violence against Hindus, vandalism of Hindu belongings and hatred of their religion, lifestyle and living.

At the time of the riot, Bellingham's lumber mills employed about 250 unskilled Indian contract workers. Punjabi laborers accepted jobs which white laborers had refused to do. They would perform work which could be in violation of labor laws but would not complain for fear of employer retaliation. The union leaders wanted to maintain higher wage levels for their members but had failed to convince the mill owners to fire the Indian workers and discontinue their hiring. One mill owner in particular, Whatcom Falls Mill Company provoked resentment at the rumored replacement of white laid-off workers with Indians. The racial prejudice and bitterness, born out of job loss of white laborers, erupted into violence against Indians who had the least social or political power in the city of Bellingham or even in the country.

The American Federation of Labor (AFL) had more than 800 members in Bellingham and was an affiliate of the Asiatic Exclusion League. **On Labor Day, September 2nd, 1907, more than a thousand union members and others paraded through the town to demonstrate their unity and show their strength. There was a beating of several Hindus which nearly resulted in a general disturbance. The union warned the mill owners that no Indians should be employed in the lumber mills or anywhere in Bellingham after Labor Day.**

**The Indian workers nonetheless appeared at their jobs on the following day, Tuesday, September 3. At night, at least five instances of violence to Hindus were reported to police, and**

**a gang of boys and young men smashed windows of two of the Hindu homes. In the afternoon, on September 4, 1907, two Hindus walking on C Street were chased and beaten. In the evening, a mob of 400-500 white men, predominantly members of the Asian Exclusion League, attacked Hindu dwellings, smashed windows and pulled the Indians from their beds. Panicked, some Hindus escaped from their quarters in night clothes while others jumped out of the buildings, some hurting themselves in the process. The rioting mob rushed to C Street to the biggest domicile where thirty Hindus were lodged. The crashing of window panes and the loud humiliating yells of the rioters for the Hindus to come out, apprised neighbors that a riot was in progress. Then, the rioters went on a rampage from mill to mill, finding as many Indian workers as they could while others ransacked the homes of the Hindus, and pocketed money, jewelry, bank passbooks and other valuables. They eventually rounded up about two hundred Indian workers, brandishing clubs triumphantly, herded them to the City Hall basement where the Hindus stayed during the night for their alleged safety. Some rioters addressed the impromptu audiences on the street corners, fanned their indignation and incited them to "help drive out the cheap labor." The purpose of the racial attack was to "scare them so badly that they will not crowd white labor out of the mills."**

Indians became victims of prejudice, hostility and violence. Some were injured, several lost their belongings, and all experienced bigotry and suffered humiliation. The nightmares of fright, brutality and vindictiveness forced traumatized Indian workers to leave Bellingham in search of safe haven. An area newspaper reported, **"Frightened Hindus numbering 135, or approximately half the Indian colony, left Bellingham on September 5, one day after the riots. Twenty-five of the dusky Singhs had left at noon and seventy in the evening by Great**

**Northern for Vancouver and approximately forty left by the 4 O'clock train for Northern California".** Although Hindu crews were assured of protection by special police officers at the mills of the B. B. L. Company, the E. K. Wood Lumber Company and the Morrison Mill Company, but those who got paid at the mills, cashed their checks at the banks and headed to the train station. However, some mill owners took advantage of the situation and refused to pay the Hindu workers. Several stayed nervously for one extra day in deadly fear of their lives to draw their pay and get their checks cashed. Within a few days, all Hindus left the unfriendly city, denouncing the lack of police protection. Many of the departing Hindus expressed their disappointment for they had heard of America as a good place for laboring men, yet they were paid no better wages and became victims of violence and lawlessness in the presence of law enforcement officials.

The town police failed to provide any protection to the Indian immigrants from the angry mob. As reported by the Bellingham Herald of September 5, mobs controlled the city without interference from authorities. When the terror stricken Hindus were in the basement of City Hall, police made no effort to stop mob outrages. The public at the time believed that a "little nerve on the part of officers would have checked the riot."

**Mayor Alfred L. Black** called a special meeting of the city council on September 5, and stated that Hindus were British subjects and had every right to be in the city and engage in such occupations as they desired. The mayor assured the **Hindu interpreters, Nand Singh, Attar Singh and Sergeant Singh**, who were present at the council meeting, that they were entitled to protection of the laws of the country, state and city. The mayor directed the police chief "to swear in fifty deputies to prevent any further rioting or the breach of the laws." The mayor also instructed the chief to arrest and prosecute any and all persons to a final determination any man engaged in the riot. The Bellingham Herald reported about the meeting on

the front page under '**Mayor Declares that Rights of Hindus Must be Protected" on September 5, 1907.**

Despite assurances from the mayor, Indians had no hope of any protection from the city police. They faced death threats and continued violence if they stayed in Bellingham. The racist rioters also intimidated the mill owners and asked them to fire the Indian workers. Panicked by the intensity of the hatred and fearful for their safety, Hindus left to find work elsewhere.

Some of the Indian mill workers went to Everett, another town, sixty miles south of Bellingham, to work in the sawmills there. Two months later, on November 5th, 1907, over five hundred armed men attacked and beat the Indians, robbed them and destroyed their belongings. The result was similar to the incidents that occurred in Bellingham. The Asiatic Exclusion League and other similar groups reveled in victory, became emboldened and wanted to prevent further immigration from India and to force those already in the country to go back. Members of the League wrote to President Theodore Roosevelt, "warning him that massacres were sure to result if he didn't do something to curb Asian immigration into the Northwest."

Indians were British subjects but the British Indian ambassador did not care to ask the American government for compensation for injuries or loss of property of the Indian workers. Since the media reported about the riots worldwide, the British Consul in Seattle visited Bellingham. He did not care to meet or sympathize with the Indian nationals who suffered at the worst racial attack against them in America, but he met instead with the mill owners to obtain a list of names of Hindu workers for his official report to his government. The number of Hindus employed by various mills was given as 145 as per Gerald N. Hallberg in his article on Bellingham, Washington's Anti-Hindu Riot. However, on Thursday, September 5, 2007 the

Bellingham Herald reported the number as 186 under the heading "Hindus March Back to Mills under Guard". The actual number of Hindus forced out from the city was substantially more.

**Union leaders, churches and the media denounced the riots. The Bellingham Herald in its editorial titled 'A Public Disgrace' condemned the action of the rioters.** "No amount of argument will justify the acts of the mobs. Exhibition of man's inhumanity to man as that of last night shall not be tolerated. Such lawlessness is an outrage upon American decency. The Hindus were there in response to a demand created by the scarcity of labor. In filing the jobs, the Hindus were contributing to the prosperity of the community. A mob of hoodlums has disgraced the city." Rev. J.W. Fiesher of the First Methodist church said, "Mob violence cannot be justified under any circumstances. Orientals are hired here not from choice but rather from necessity. And this not because there are not white laboring men but because there is a large class of white laborers so irresponsible that they cannot be depended upon. The outbreak of riots was to say the least unpatriotic, un-American, cowardly and uncharitable." Rev. William Orr Wark, pastor of the First Congregational Church criticized the Police Chief Thomas saying, "The police lacked moral courage and that a man acting as Chief Thomas did is not fit to be the head of the police department." Rev. Cheatham of the St. Paul's Episcopal Church said, "As civilized people we should be heartily ashamed of it." The unions were against the employment of Asian labor, yet the Industrial Workers of the World strongly condemned the mob violence of Wednesday night and adopted a resolution declaring that "the action against the Oriental colony was not in accordance with the principles of organized labor for the peaceful and lawful settlement of labor difficulties." The Central Labor Council also issued a statement condemning the action as "wholly unlawful and contrary to the principles of true unionism."

**Despite widespread condemnation of the race riots in Bellingham, similar assaults in California took place in Marysville, Live Oak, and other communities where the immigrants had settled.** The Asiatic Exclusion League and the labor unions used violence and riots, presumably as an effective method of excluding the Hindu workers from jobs and residential communities. They also kept incessant pressure on elected officials and politicians who, in 1917, succeeded in getting an immigration law passed by the United States Congress over the veto of President Woodrow Wilson. The new law prohibited immigration from virtually all of Asia except Japan.

The race riots had a devastating impact on the Indian community in the Pacific Coast. Indians had come in search of a chance for a better life for themselves and their families and worked even at menial laboring jobs. They could never have anticipated that America – considered the best among civil societies – had people full of meanness, malice and ill-will against different looking people. Indians did not attempt to take away jobs from the unskilled white workers; they simply filled a portion of the deficit in human resources. The white laborers, excited by the labor unions, perpetrated unparalleled, heinous crimes against innocent and law abiding Hindus who had come from a distant land with a dream of a better life, but unfortunately, Bellingham became the burial place for their dreams.

*Inder Singh regularly writes and speaks on the Global Indian diaspora. He is president of Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) and chairman of Indian American Heritage Foundation. He was president of National Federation of Indian American Associations (NFIA) from 1988-92 and chairman from 1992-96. He was founding president of Federation of Indian Associations in Southern California. He can be reached at [indersingh-usa@hotmail.com](mailto:indersingh-usa@hotmail.com). For more info, visit [www.GOPIO.net](http://www.GOPIO.net) 818 708-3885 [GOPIO-Intl@sbcglobal.net](mailto:GOPIO-Intl@sbcglobal.net)*

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**Addendum II:  
Douglas College, New Westminster,  
B. C. Canada Experience:**

**From 1962 – 1968** I served in the British Columbia School system where Geography as a discipline was not taught but in Ontario it was and that is where I went in **1968**. In 1970 **Douglas College** opened in **New Westminster** and in **1971** they brought me back to British Columbia to teach Physical Geography.

There were three other teachers who had been hired the first year, two Canadian men and one woman from England.

One of the men instructors was a Meteorologist, the other a Human Geographer and the woman I do not recall her specialty. Their personalities were no backbone, bully and insecurity, respectively. They had developed their own curricula independent of each other and when I joined I had to do the same in my field, **Physical Geography**.

We had a very collegial though cool but conflict-free first year. The policy at the college was to hire faculty on probation the first year and then renew the contracts for three years at a time. They received their three year contracts in 1971 and I mine in **1972**.

I had been a **union** guy during my teaching career, both in **British Columbia** and **Ontario**. At the college I found the faculty association but it had no rights whatsoever. It was entirely at the mercy of the College Principal. There was wide spread mistrust about the first President of the **Douglas College Faculty Association** within the Faculty as well as within the College Faculties Federation which was not getting his cooperation in demanding legislative remedies and due process for the teaching faculty.

In **1972** this outgoing President proposed my name to succeed him and I got elected by acclamation. The same evening I and the outgoing President

were invited by the Principal of the College, **George Wootton**, to dinner. There and then it became crystal clear to me why so few of the faculty members had joined the Association and why no one else wanted to preside over it.

The Principal of the College and the President of the Faculty were in cahoots. At the very first meeting of the **College Faculties Federation**, where I represented my Association, I told them that things are going to be different from now on and **Douglas College Faculty** is going to be in the lead to secure legal rights for the faculty, similar to those enjoyed by the School Teachers of British Columbia and I reported the same back to my college **Faculty Association**.

Past President and one other member of the executive committee were informants for the Principal of the college who felt threatened by my actions. To stop me he started an intimidation process by soliciting a baseless complaint against me from the woman from England, the insecure, egged on by the Human Geographer, the bully, who had 'promised' my job to a friend of his but was overruled by the Dean who wanted to balance the department by hiring a Physical Geographer and I was told all this by the Meteorologist, the one without backbone, when he was trying to assure me that he had nothing to do with the complaint.

As I refused to be intimidated and the faculty members saw what was happening, the faculty association membership grew. **George Wootton** tried to snare me through multitudes of committees and boards that he had handpicked but none did his bidding.

Then I got appointed to the **College Task Force** as a nominee of the **College Faculties Federation** and all hell broke loose. George had my teaching schedule so arranged that I will teach early morning class in **Surrey** and late night class in **Richmond**. The main campus and my residence were in **New Westminster**. That allowed me no

time to participate in the work of the **Task Force**.

**For the rest of the story please read “Does Star Chamber exist at Douglas College?” an investigative reporting that even I could not have done a better job of. In fact I learned more about what was happening to me after reading this write up in the Wednesday, May 8, 1974 issue of The Columbian by Jacke Wolf, Columbian City Editor.**

Justice was served when as founding **Administrative Director (Acting Principal) of North Island College** I attended monthly Principals' meetings sitting across the table from **George**. All but one member of the **North Island College Council** were English immigrants or ancestry; only one was east European. Only the latter wanted me to have the title as Principal, as was the case with other colleges but he got ruled out by the English and I became '**Administrative Director**'.

A year later they chose an Englishman, a relative or an acquaintance of one of the Council members, to be their Principal. The new Principal wanted me to stay to carry on the work I had started but I had had enough of the British Columbia teaching experience.

I wanted to terminate it while I was at the top, but I left for the new Principal an operating college with faculty and students and liaison with University of Edmonton, Alberta, for Adult Education on our campus.

I had accumulated three months of paid leave; submitted my resignation effective the day the new Principal was going to take over; took my family to India for those three months and upon return relocated to California to work for myself.

Just in case I might need it I did obtain **California Community Colleges credentials** as Community College **Instructor** in Geography and Community

College Supervisor. I never felt the need to use them.

\*

## DOES STAR CHAMBER EXIST AT DOUGLAS COLLEGE?

As published in **The Columbian**, New Westminister, B. C. Canada Wednesday, May 8, 1974

By **Jacke Wolf**, Columbian City Editor

Education, philosophers through the ages have held, is one of mankind's purer pursuits. As Confucius said, it is a simple process: when you know a thing, to hold that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it.

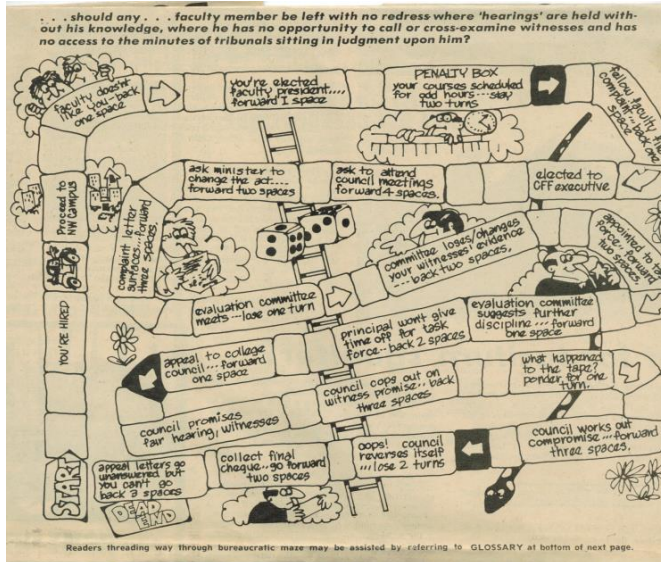
It follows, logically, that educational institutions similarly should be concerned with such purity - with practising and promulgating all that is good in man.

But sometimes it doesn't work out that way. Personalities, circumstances and political issues get in the way. And, often, those elements become so intertwined that black and white merge to grey, and important issues become clouded because the emotional impact of a situation is dissipated through a lengthy bureaucratic process.

The kind of murkiness the philosophers deplored certainly pervades the case of **Hardev S. Shergill**.

His teaching position in the geography department at Douglas College was "terminated" last January after nearly 18 months of evaluations, memos and counter-memos, hearings before boards of reference and the college council, and disputes over testimony (and the lack of it).

While on the surface the firing of Dev Shergill may seem to be a purely internal college matter, its importance extends to the public realm.



Many of the procedures used, and the motives suspected, have a direct bearing on the work undertaken by the **Task Force on the Community College, appointed last fall by Education Minister Eileen Daily.**

The task force - of which, incidentally, **Dev Shergill is a member** - is shortly due to begin public hearings on its working paper, and the questions Mr. Shergill's case raises have a direct bearing on how community colleges should be run in this province:

1. What powers should a college council have, and what recourse should there be for those it affected? Present legislation, primarily Sections 257 and 258 of the Public Schools Act, gives councils virtually unlimited power. The Minister of Education has no effective control over councils, and there is no recourse to the courts against their decisions.

In short, councils now enjoy powers unequalled by most public bodies, even though its members are either appointed or only indirectly elected.

2. Even accepting the failings in the present legislation, should Mr Shergill - or any other faculty member - be left with no redress where "hearings" are held without his knowledge, where he has no opportunity to call or cross-examine

witnesses and has no access to the minutes of tribunals sitting in judgment upon him?

3. When such a situation exists, what moral responsibilities does the education minister have to call a public inquiry?

4. Should college councils, considering their increasing scope in the community, be directly elected or, appointed? Is the present situation realistic: that councils are composed of people whose primary responsibilities lie elsewhere (school district trustees and officials, local political figures?)

Community colleges involve a large segment of the adult population and spend millions of dollars. Should their governance be left to persons who, by definition, must consider college affairs a peripheral concern and therefore are inclined to let administrators run the whole show, to develop empires of their own?

To illustrate the importance of these questions, a closer look at the involved and intricate Shergill affair is necessary.

**Mr Shergill, 40, came to Douglas College in 1971 after heading the geography department at Ridgetown District High School in Kent, Ontario. Previously he had taught in Thornhill, Ontario and in Port Hardy, Revelstoke, Langley and Salmo, B.C.**

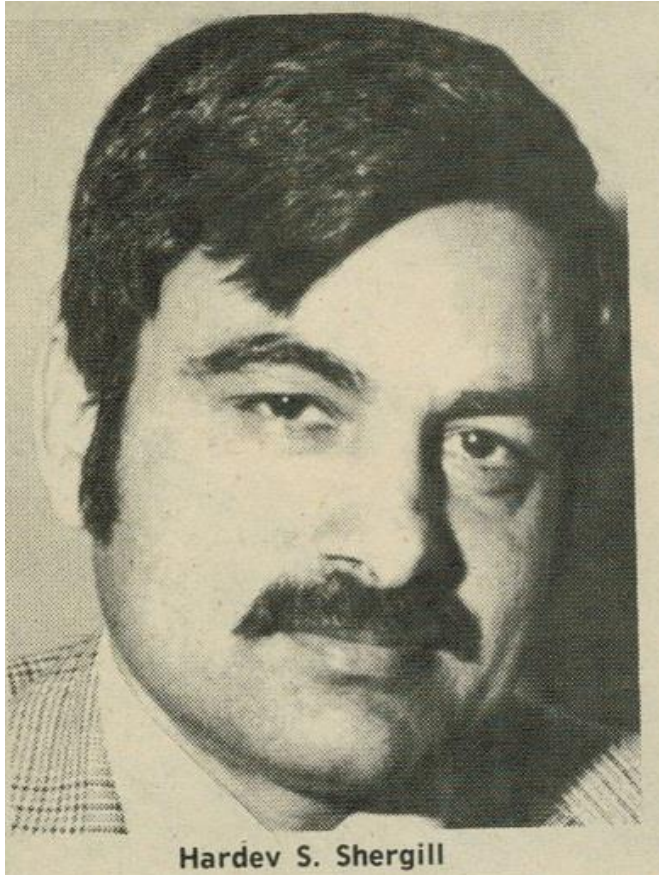
He has Bachelor's and Master's degrees in English, Economics, Geography and Audiovisual Education. He was active in the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, the Canadian Adult Education Association, the Educational Media Association of Canada, and the Canadian Council for International Cooperation.

**Beyond education, Mr Shergill has served as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Canadian Armed Forces, worked with the Boy Scouts, and has received five extension awards from Lions**



## International.

In person, Mr Shergill matches his credentials. He is articulate, genial, has a very keen mind and is precise, methodical and organized.



Hardev S. Shergill

When Mr. Shergill was hired as the fourth full time geographer at Douglas, he had an initial disadvantage. In the words of Bill Day, Dean of Continuing Education (who later served as trustee of the geography department during its troubles), "Dev Shergill entered a hostile environment"

The college was still young and hiring procedures had not been ironed out. At least two persons, with widely differing personalities, were hiring. And the three existing geographers were unhappy because they felt a UBC graduate - preferably a human or

social geographer - should have been hired instead of Mr Shergill.

Shortly after coming to Douglas, Mr Shergill, consistent with his past record of involvements, joined the fledgling Douglas Faculty Association. In 1972 he was elected its president, at a time when about 50 of the 125 faculty belonged (membership grew substantially during his tenure).

Coincidentally, it was about the same time as his election to the presidency that his troubles really began. In January, 1972, a fellow geography teacher, Elizabeth Peerless, filed a complaint against Mr. Shergill with the head of the Geography Department, Don McEachern. She alleged that Mr. Shergill was "uncompromising and uncooperative" in his work with the other geographers.

At the time Ms. Peerless wrote her letter provisions for handling internal faculty disputes at the college were rather primitive. A Faculty Handbook existed, which had been prepared by the administration and - back at the college's beginning - given rather cursory approval by the newly-formed faculty association. The handbook provided for no grievance procedure, only what were called "evaluation" and "summary dismissal" measures.

The handbook continues in use. Basically complaint or a charge on unspecified grounds can be laid by any person in the geographic area covered by the college against any faculty member. The departmental chairman is required to attempt to reconcile differences. Failing resolution, a peer group departmental evaluation committee studies the charge and makes commendation to the principal. If still unresolved, the principal of the college can call a board of reference, which would make recommendations to the principal.

The handbook language was - and remains

singularly ambiguous. On the one hand, it says "faculty members are protected against arbitrary or capricious decisions," and on the other hand it says anyone can lay any kind of charge and the faculty member will be judged, with no right of appeal, or guarantee of an open hearing. The language mentions that there should be differences between serious and minor complaints but fails to define either.

Throughout the handbook, as well as in these two sections, all power is cyclical. It rests, with the principal, who may, if he chooses, farm out jobs to committees of his own choosing. But those committees, while giving an appearance of collegial decision making, are only empowered to make recommendations to the principal.

Such a state of affairs would not be nearly so serious if, as was pointed out earlier, aggrieved persons had access to the courts for redress. But poorly written legislation does not give them that option.

In a brief to the college council last December, faculty association vice-president Stephen Sharpe called the evaluation system scandalous, tragic, dismal, and autocratic."

"I'm ashamed to say that I am as much at fault as any other faculty member for the system we have," Mr. Sharpe wrote, "because I did not protest when the thing was presented for approval.

"In those early days of the college we were all pretty idealistic, terribly busy and always ready to 'let George do it'," he said. ... "I might add that it's a case like this (Shergill's) that turns a naive idealist into a pretty hard realist in a matter of three or four months."

Ms. Peerless' letter of complaint, dated **Jan. 27, 1972** was discussed at a departmental meeting the following day, she later told a board of reference. She said Mr. Shergill had been given "hints" of the dissatisfaction of his colleagues but chose to ignore

them. Mr. Shergill claims he did not receive a copy of her letter until the following **Aug. 29**, after it had been delayed, then acted upon, by Mr. McEachern.

Mr. Shergill said he received the letter then because he was scheduled to appear before a departmental evaluation committee the following day to answer the charges.

**Why the long delay in acting upon a complaint?** It is unclear from the evidence contained in committee minutes and reports. However, it could be significant that Mr. Shergill's views regarding the future of the faculty association he headed became well-known earlier that summer. **He indicated publicly that he favored enlarging its membership, registering under the Societies Act and working toward its certification under the Trade Unions Act.**

It should be noted that college **Principal Dr. George Wootton**, according to several faculty members, frequently has made his own views known to faculty: that the association's work could better be done through departmental working committees and that he **vehemently opposed collective bargaining rights for the faculty.**

The departmental evaluation committee did not make its report (determined at a meeting of which Mr. Shergill was not aware) until **Nov. 2, 1972**. This was about **a week after the faculty association wrote to Eileen Daily advocating establishment of a Community Colleges' Act** (which Dr. Wootton also publicly has opposed) and urging her to establish a committee with faculty representation to advise on the content of such an act.

The evaluation committee recommended that the principal should convene a board of reference, which Dr. Wootton did in December. Dr. Wootton chose the board members and informed Mr. Shergill by memo that he intended to chair the

board himself, on an ex-officio basis.

**After hearings during which Mr. Shergill was not allowed to hear the evidence presented against him or to question that evidence** - and to which he was allowed to only call two character witnesses in addition to his own testimony - the board still was not able to assess unilateral blame for lack of "collegiality" in the geography department.

In fact, the board said it was unable to deal with the charge "because its wording implies that harmonious relationships could be established unilaterally." Board members concluded that every member of the geography department had made inadequate attempts to get along.

The board recommended that the department be placed in **trusteeship** for one semester (**spring, 1973**). The trustee was to be required to submit a written monthly report to the principal, each geographer and the - social sciences chairman. At the end of the semester, it would be at Dr. Wootton's discretion to reconvene the board for reassessment and final decision.

On **May 28, 1973**, the trustee appointed by Dr. Wootton - **Bill Day** - made his report. He said he felt the situation basically was unchanged during his trusteeship and cited personality differences as a major factor in the problem. **He emphasized - as did everyone with whom The Columbian discussed the case — that Mr Shergill was an extremely competent teacher, a view upheld by student course evaluations, published in the Douglas College Anti-Calendar.**

Nevertheless, Mr. Day recommended that Mr. Shergill be removed from his departmental, non-teaching functions and placed under the direct supervision of the social sciences chairman, and, that his contract not be renewed when it expired in **August, 1975.**

On **Aug. 30, 1973** Dr. Wootton issued a memo to those concerned concurring with Mr. Day 'that fault was shared and that Mr. Shergill would henceforth work under the social sciences chairman. The memo was to be published in the faculty newsletter, The Mad Hatter, at the request of the faculty ombudsman, in order to clear Mr. Shergill's name, but it was never published.

The board of reference, reconvened, formally received the trustee's report and the principal's decision was discussed among Dr. Wootton, Mr. Shergill, and Howard Eaton, the faculty ombudsman.

The trustee's recommendation that Mr. Shergill's contract not be renewed, according to Mr. Eaton's later report to the faculty association, was not acted upon.

"The experimental nature of Mr. Shergill's new position was made clear but he was to be offered a new contract if the experiment was successful," Mr' Eaton wrote, adding that he had a later conversation with Dr. Wootton to confirm that impression.

However, on **Oct. 11, 1973**, after the new arrangement had been in effect only about a month, Dr. Wootton wrote to Mr. Shergill saying the experiment, "Since this model of operation is outside of our present organizational framework", would continue only to the end of his present contract.

The letter continued: "In discussion, I did indicate that this action did not preclude the possibility of your being offered a new contract. . . but whether or not this happened would depend upon whether or not the organizational model in effect could accept this kind of staff relationship."

In other words, unless the college was totally reorganized - an unlikely prospect - Mr. Shergill's contract would not be renewed.

On **Oct. 19, 1973**, then **Education Commissioner John Bremer** informed **Mr. Shergill** that he had been appointed to the new community **college task force**. Mr. Bremer contacted Dr. Wootton and claims the principal verbally did not indicate any dissatisfaction with the appointment. However, later, Dr. Wootton refused to grant Mr. Shergill time release to work on the commission, saying that Mr. Bremer told him all work would be done on weekends - a claim that Mr. Bremer denies.

On **Nov. 8**, unknown to Mr. Shergill, Dr. Wootton told college council that his contract would not be renewed. Indirect word of this, in addition to the denial of time release to work on the task force, made Mr. Shergill appeal to college council directly for intervention in his case.

Following a long talk with then council chairman **Dr. Pat Brown**, Mr. Shergill was told council would hear the case, and Mr. Shergill and Mr. Sharpe appeared before council, primarily stressing the general problems encountered by faculty because of unclear, and what they felt were unfair, procedural regulations.

That **Dec. 13, 1973** hearing before council was rather confusing, judging by the transcript. Council members were unclear whether they were actually prepared to hear Mr. Shergill's case in total or whether they were prepared only to rule as to the fairness of the procedures followed by the college administration in dealing with the case.

The transcript shows that at the beginning of that meeting Dr. Brown assured Messrs. Sharpe and Shergill that witnesses would be called at some later time before council made any decision. This never happened, despite the fact that the transcript indicates council clearly understood the seriousness of charges being made. For example, charges that minutes of the departmental evaluation committee were never shown to Mr. Shergill, but **that a witness on his behalf - Dr. Okon Udokang - later discovered his favorable**

**testimony had been deleted from the committee's records**

Messrs. Sharpe and Shergill also indicated that the testimony of another witness before the board of reference - George. Porges - had substantive points omitted in the minutes of that hearing.

At the following meeting of council, the administration's viewpoint was heard - although Messrs. Sharpe and Shergill were not allowed to be present and to this day, despite requests from Mr. Shergill's lawyer, do not know what was said.

At this **Dec. 20, 1973** meeting, minutes indicate some **council members were upset because they understood a transcript of Messrs. Sharpe and Shergill's testimony had been given to college administration prior to their appearance that evening.**

The minutes are inconclusive as to how that problem was resolved since confidentiality allegedly had been promised the two faculty members. However, two council members now recall that after some fumbling and hurried conferences, with the administrators present, Dr. Brown denied such a leak had occurred.

A college council committee, however, was appointed **Dec. 20, 1973** to make recommendations to council as a whole. At a special meeting **Jan. 17, 1974**, this committee recommended that council meet with college administration to discuss "the handling of this and future grievance procedures," and that council also arrange a meeting with Mr. Shergill, the other three geographers and the department chairman to work out some conditions under which all should operate in future.

Finally, the committee recommended transferring the geographers from the social sciences department to the liberal arts department with monthly reviews to be made by the liberal arts dean for at least 12 months.

Those recommendations were adopted by council. On **Jan. 24, 1974**, however, another special meeting of council was called. According to **Dr. Brown, the meeting was "to resolve the problem before the end of 1973 council's term (Jan. 31, 1974)."**

Council member **Ed Murphy** said he felt passage of the committee's recommendations of the previous week were questionable because some members of council were absent, and because the recommendations were a departure from council's policy of delegating all responsibilities to the Principal and staff.

The council member, who had presented the committee's recommendations, **Jean- Pierre Dame**, said he felt it was reasonable to reconsider if Mr. Murphy felt some council members had not had their say.

Personally convinced of the value of the committee recommendations, Mr. Daem recently told The Columbian he had no qualms about reconsideration because the seven council members who had supported them also were present at the **Jan 24, 1974** meeting.

**During the intervening week, however, events had been moving behind the scenes. Five of those previous supporters changed their votes without explanation and passed a new resolution proposed by Mr. Murphy and council member Jack Campbell.**

The new motion read that council "unanimously" felt the administration's action was "reasonable and practical", that procedures in the faculty handbook had been followed "fairly and in good faith," and that "any solution required be left in the hands of the principal." **Only two council members opposed the motion.**

**After a coffee break, council members returned and voted for the immediate termination of Mr Shergill's contract with full salary through Aug 31, 1975 (College Solicitor Skip Cassady later**

**revised this to full salary at present rate, so no increments and extra superannuation were realized)**

Finally, council members passed a resolution freezing all documents related to the case and forwarding them to the college solicitor, who was asked to advise Mr. Shergill all requests for information should be channeled through him (although in fact this letter did not happen until **April 4, 1974**)

**Mr. Shergill was not advised of council's decision to terminate until 10 days later**, and later he also discovered a confidential memo from college bursar Bill Morfey directing all faculty, staff and students concerned to refrain from discussing the case.

Since that time, the Shergill case has languished. **Bill Deverell, Mr. Shergill's lawyer**, has been unable to obtain any information from the college. **The faculty association which, at long last, has become certified and is bargaining for its first contract, has met with equally little success in its requests.**

Needless to say, high on the association's negotiating list are provisions dealing with working conditions, grievances, and hiring and firing procedures.

**The faculty association, its ombudsman and a few college council members are convinced that Mr. Shergill did not receive a fair hearing and that a good portion of his alleged sins against collegiality would have been overlooked had he not been so active in pursuing bargaining rights for the Faculty Association. But that kind of assumption about motive is impossible to prove.**

Procedural violations, however, are not - particularly when those procedures were never established by free mutual consent between faculty and staff and were, in fact, under review

during the Shergill case.

The new college council is adopting a hands-off attitude because the case has become so complex and most members would be coming into it cold.

When The Columbian began inquiring into the case, at **least 15-20 faculty members were contacted.** Those few who agreed to talk would do so only with guarantees of confidentiality in order to protect their jobs.

The response from college administration - Dr. Wootton never personally returned calls - also had unanimity: "I can't comment: it's in the hands of the college solicitor" - with the implication that litigation was pending.

That position, however, is patently evasive. The Solicitor, Mr. Cassidy, expressed surprise that interest in the case was still present.

I never delved into it too deeply because it was straight-forward at the time (in January 1974) and I was only concerned with procedures, like the release form on Mr. Shergill's final pay cheque," he said.

Certainly he had no indication that the college planned anything further, he said. In fact, he had written to Mr. Shergill in March 1974 saying the college considered the matter fully closed.

Mr. Shergill was not planning litigation for the obvious reason - legislation governing college councils does not permit him redress in the courts.

The old "**in the hands of the solicitor**" line has its uses for the administration, however, particularly when, as happened last week, the minister requests a meeting on the issue.

**Ms. Dailly and Langley Socred MLA Bob McClelland** became involved in the case recently when contacted by Mr. Shergill. Mr. McClelland says he had known Mr. Shergill "for years" and

knows him to be "honest, a fine gentleman of integrity and community spirit".

Both the minister and **Hazel L'Estrange**, head of the community college task force, are happy with Mr. Shergill's work on the task force.

**"I have a good relationship with Dev, and so do most of the other members; he has been a conscientious worker," Mrs. L'Estrange said.**

**Ms. Dailly**, who admits she has no real power because of the legislation, said she only wanted to discuss the situation with Dr. Wootton.

"But when he said it was in the hands of the solicitor, implying something might be pending well there's no way I could get involved in that," she told The Columbian.

In short, there are two major issues in the Shergill case. First, the broad implications regarding college governance. The college Task Force offers a vehicle for changing current inequities if the public is vociferous enough at the May public hearings that college councils should be subject to the same controls as other governmental bodies.

Secondly there is the specific case of Mr. Shergill. While all agree that he is "an excellent teacher", his professional reputation has been permanently damaged by this incident, which contains some serious administrative oversights and legal shortcomings.

Circumstances have closed all avenues of appeal to him - the courts, the Labor Relations Board (i.e. the difficulty of proving an unfair labour practice charge), and internal measures (as council has washed its hands and the administration is ducking behind a blank legal letterhead).

All that is left is a plea for a public inquiry by the minister. Are charges of tampering with evidence, closed tribunal meetings, violations of even unilaterally-enacted procedures sufficient to justify a public inquiry? Inquiries have been

called in the past on far flimsier grounds.

This week the College Faculties' Federation of B.C. is holding its annual convention. This group of community college teachers has a direct stake in the Shergill case beyond the fact that he is a director of that federation. The call for an inquiry - if they are interested in self-preservation - should be a major agenda item.

### **GLOSSARY**

De-mystifying the jargon is always a problem in writing about institutional affairs. The maze of committees and boards referred to in the Shergill case require some commonplace definitions:

Departmental Evaluation Committee - Composed of social science and geography members, the committee also included the chairman of the social sciences department, Don McEachern. If this committee is not able to resolve a dispute, as it considered itself unable to do in the Shergill case, the matter is referred to the college principal who may convene a ...

Board of Reference - This committee, chosen by the principal - "randomly" according to the Faculty Handbook - is comprised of two faculty members, two administrative faculty members and two students, with the power to invite witnesses and receive evidence. On reaching a "unanimous" decision, the board must prepare a "confidential" report for submission to the principal, with a recommendation for action.

College Council - The governing body of any community college in B. C. The number of council members (15 at Douglas) is flexible, but must include two members appointed by the provincial government, one district superintendent of schools appointed by the education minister, and a number of school trustees from the college area and non-political community representatives appointed by the cabinet.

\*

## **ADDENDA TO HARDEV SINGH SHERGILL BIO**

### **ADDENDUM III:**

#### **EXPERIENCE WITH A SCOUNDREL SANT BABA**

##### **MY INTRODUCTION TO SIKHISM**

Although born in Panjab at my *nanke* home, being the first born, I grew up in Hindi speaking Bikaner state. I learned to write and read Panjabi during my 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades at home from my mother and practiced reading on various granths my father had. One of those granths was '*Bale-dian-Sakhian*'.

From 5<sup>th</sup> grade I was sent to a boarding school. A novel feature, and a good one, of Bikaner State's education system was called 'Special Class' in the 5<sup>th</sup> year where in the Middle Schools children from village schools were placed. They were taught only English, grades 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> level in the first half of the school year and grade 5<sup>th</sup> in the second half. In the sixth grade village and city students were brought together. Village students had completed math, geography, history and other subject of 5<sup>th</sup> grade city students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades in the village school.

So, in this special class I had plenty of spare time and used that to read Hindu granths, including Ramayan and Mahabharat. I found similar myths in them as I had found in *Bale-dian-Sakhian*. Besides all the Rishi Munis were males and every time they were succeeding in their tapasya, God would send an *apasra* (heavenly prostitute) and the inevitable outcome would be tapasvee's fall from grace.

That experience turned me into a confirmed agnostic before I turned thirteen. It remained that way until late 1990's when I acquired ownership of a Gurdwara building through court order. In this case a Nanaksaria thug Sant and World Class Con-Artist, 'Sant Baba' Amar Singh Barundi, had reneged on returning a large sum of loan which he

now claimed was a donation. Building was awarded to me by the court in lieu of what he owed me plus the attorney fees and court costs. For three years I operated this Gurdwara at my expense hoping that the community would buy it from me but that did not materialize. Three years into it I decided to start learning about Sikhism. It was then that I distributed one thousand copies of the following letter:

### Khalsa Tricentennial Foundation Of N.A.

Inc.

201 Berkeley Ave, Roseville, Ca 95678

ਮਈ 29, 1998

ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਪੰਜਵੀਂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ ਦਿਵਸ ਤੇ ਉੱਤਰੀ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਪਰਦੇਸਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਨੂੰ ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹੀ ਚਿੱਠੀ

[This article was later published in February 2001 Sikh Bulletin]

### ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਤਲਾਸ਼

ਇਹ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਤਲਾਸ਼ ਹੈ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਪੰਜਵੀਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਇੱਕ ਅਸੂਲ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਜਾਨ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਰਤਾਜ ਬਣੇ। ਸਿੱਖ ਵੀਰੋ ਤੇ ਭੈਣੋ:

ਇਸ ਚਿੱਠੀ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜੇ ਗਏ ਦਾਸ ਦੇ ਲਿਖੇ ਹੋਏ ਕੁਝ ਸਫੇ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਗਾਈਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਕੁਝ ਹੋਰ ਖਬਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਲਿਖਤਾਂ ਆਦਿ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗ ਹੀ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਕੀ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਏ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ। ਇਸ ਚਿੱਠੀ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਤਦ ਪਈ ਜਦ ਕੋਈ ਅਖਬਾਰ ਇਹ ਸੁਨੇਹਾ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਆਪ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਣ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਆਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਇਆ। ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਹ ਚਿੱਠੀ ਹਰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਜੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕਾਂ ਅੱਗੇ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਕਾਪੀਆਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੰਡਣ ਅਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੰਡਣ। ਜੇ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕਰ ਲਵੇ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਵੰਡਣੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਲੋਂ ਹਿੰਮਤ ਕਰੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਰ ਲੈਣ ਦੇਣ। ਅੱਗੇ ਜਿਸ ਵੀਰ ਜਾਂ ਭੈਣ ਪਾਸ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਕਾਪੀ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਜਾਵੇ, ਉਸ ਅੱਗੇ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇੱਕ, ਦੋ, ਪੰਜ, ਦਸ ਜਿੰਨੀਆਂ ਵੀ ਕਾਪੀਆਂ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਗੁੰਜਾਇਸ਼ ਹੋਵੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਵਾ ਕੇ ਵੰਡਣ ਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਲਤਾ ਕਰਨ। ਆਪ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਸੇਵਾ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਪੰਥ ਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਸੰਗਤ ਦੀ ਬੇਅੰਤ ਭਲਾਈ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ।

ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਂ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਖਤਮ ਹੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਉੱਥੇ ਰਹਿ ਗਏ ਹਨ, ਰਾਧਾਸੁਆਮੀ, ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੀ, ਫੈਡਰੇਸ਼ਨ, ਨਾਨਕਸਰੀਏ, ਦੋਧੜੇ, ਨਾਮਧਾਰੀਏ, ਅਖੰਡਕੀਰਤਨੀਏ, ਬੱਬਰ,

ਹੋਮਕੁੰਟੀਏ, ਟਕਸਾਲੀਏ ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਆਦਿ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਸਾਧਾਰੀ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੇ ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਦੇ ਵਿਧਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਕੀ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਹੱਕ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਪਾਕੇ ਮੰਗ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਕਾਪੀ ਭੇਜੋ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਉਤਨਾਂ ਹੀ ਗਲਤ ਹੈ ਜਿੰਨਾਂ ਨਾਨਕਸਰ ਦੇ ਠਾਠਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਸਮਝਣਾ। ਜੇ ਹਾਲ ਬੁੱਧ ਧਰਮ ਨਾਲ ਹੋਇਆ ਉਹੀ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨਾਲ ਬੀਤ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣਵਾਦ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਖਾ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ। ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਵੇਲੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਆਹ ਅਨੰਦਕਾਰਜ ਐਕਟ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ, ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਦ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੈਰਿਜ ਐਕਟ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ। ਮੰਦਰਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਬੁੱਤ ਪ੍ਰਸਤੀ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਘਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਵੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਅੱਗੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਸੰਤ ਜਾਂ ਬਾਬੇ ਦੀ ਫੋਟੋ ਰੱਖੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਵੀ ਤਸਵੀਰਾਂ ਬਣਾਈਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ। ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ। ਅਗਰ ਸਾਡੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਰੂਪ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਛੱਡਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਕੀ ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਚਿੱਤਰਕਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਬਣਵਾ ਕੇ ਅਸਲੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਛੱਡ ਸਕਦੇ? ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਚੀਜ਼ ਦਾ ਖੰਡਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਛੱਡ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਆਪਣੇ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਨਹੀਂ? ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਦੀ ਦੇਹ ਹਨ, ਆਤਮਕ ਸਰੂਪ ਹਨ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਘਰੀਂ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਨਕਲੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ।

ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਸਿਰਫ ਉੱਥੇ ਦੇ ਬਸਿੰਦੇ ਹੀ ਬਚਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਜਿੰਨਾਂ ਚਿਰ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਦਲਦੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਚਿਰ ਉੱਥੇ ਕੋਈ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਣੀ। ਬੁੱਧ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਹਰਲੇ ਮੁਲਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਬਚਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਉਸ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਆਪਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪ ਉਪਰਾਲਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਵੇਗਾ। ਜੇ ਆਪਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵੱਲ ਹੀ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਤਾਂ ਉੱਥੋਂ ਤਾਂ ਆਪਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੜਾਈ ਝਗੜਿਆਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਹੀ ਹੁਕਮਨਾਮੇ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਰਹਿਣਗੇ। ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਦੇ ਵਿਧਾਨ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਤਾਂ ਹੈ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਆਪਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਸਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਆਪਣੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਮੰਗ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਆਰਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ, ਉਲਟਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ "ਲੰਗਰ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਬੈਠ ਕੇ ਖਾਈਏ" ਵੱਲ ਲੱਗਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਬਾਹਰਲੇ ਮੁਲਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਉਹੀ ਛੁੱਟਾ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹਨ। ਪਰ "ਲੰਗਰ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਬੈਠ ਕੇ ਖਾਈਏ" ਦਾ ਅਸਰ ਸਿਰਫ ਬਾਹਰਲੇ ਮੁਲਕਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਹੀ ਪਵੇਗਾ। ਜੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਏਕਤਾ ਲਿਆਉਣੀ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਨੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਸੀ। ਇਜ਼ਰਾਈਲ ਦਾ ਮੁਲਕ ਬਾਹਰਲੇ ਮੁਲਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠੇ ਯਹੂਦੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਹਿੰਮਤ ਨਾਲ ਬਣਿਆ ਸੀ। ਜੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੌਮੀ ਹੱਕ



ਮਿਲਣਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਵੀ ਬਾਹਰਲੇ ਮੁਲਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਤਾਂ ਹੀ ਮਿਲੇਗਾ ਜੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਵਿਚ ਏਕਤਾ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ।

ਦਾਸ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਪਰ ਉਸਦੇ ਮਾਇਕ ਦਾਤੇ ਨਾਨਕਸਰੀਏ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਹੈ। ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਬੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਹਨ (ਮਿਸਾਲ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋ: ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ), ਪਰ ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਾਰਨਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਖਾਮੋਸ਼ ਹਨ। ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ 1993 ਵਿਚ ਮੇਰੇ ਪਾਸੋਂ ਇੱਕ ਸਕੂਲ ਖੋਲ੍ਹਣ ਦਾ ਪਖੰਡ ਕਰਕੇ ਦੋ ਲੱਖ ਅਮਰੀਕਨ ਡਾਲਰ ਉਧਾਰ ਲੈ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਮਈ 1995 ਵਿਚ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਉਸਦੇ ਮੁਕੱਦਮਾਂ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਿਆ। ਮੁਕੱਦਮੇ ਦੇ ਜਵਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਕਹਿਣ ਲੱਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਰਕਮ ਮੇਰੇ ਵਲੋਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਟਾ ਸੀ। ਫਿਰ ਕਹਿਣ ਲੱਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਨਾ ਇਹ ਭੇਟਾ ਸੀ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਉਧਾਰ। ਪੈਸੇ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ ਤੋਂ ਆਏ ਸਨ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਉਹ ਸਬੂਤ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰੇਗਾ। ਸਬੂਤ ਕਦੀਂ ਪੇਸ਼ ਹੋਏ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਉਸਨੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਦਿਨ ਮੇਰੇ, ਮੇਰੇ ਵਕੀਲ ਦੇ, ਟੀਕਾਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਅਦਾਲਤੀ ਨਾਜ਼ਮ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਬੈਠ ਕੇ, ਅਕਤੂਬਰ 11, ਨਵੰਬਰ 13, 14 1995 ਵਾਲੇ ਬਿਆਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਸਹੀ ਖਾ ਕੇ ਖੂਬ ਝੂਠ ਬੋਲਿਆ। ਮੁਕੱਦਮੇ ਵਿਚ ਪੇਸ਼ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ ਤੋਂ ਇੰਡੀਆ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਅਹਿਮਦਗੜ੍ਹ ਮੰਡੀ ਦੇ ਇੱਕ ਡਾ: ਗੁਰਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਾਸੋਂ ਬੀਮਾਰ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ (Rotational Vertigo-ਚੱਕਰ ਆਉਣੇ) ਫੈਕਸ ਭੇਜ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਜੱਜ ਨੇ ਉਸਦੀ ਚਲ ਸਮਝ ਲਈ। ਮੁਕੱਦਮਾਂ ਮੁਲਤਵੀ ਨਾ ਹੋਇਆ। ਜਿਹੜੇ, ਚੱਕਰ ਆਉਣ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਤਿੰਨ ਹਫ਼ਤੇ ਦਾ ਡਾ: ਗੁਰਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਘਰ ਬੈਠ ਕੇ ਅਰਾਮ ਕਰੋ, ਉਸ ਅਰਸੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਨੇ ਰੋਜ਼ਵਿਲ ਦੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਘਰ ਦੀ ਜਾਇਦਾਦ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਤਿਆਗਣ ਦੇ ਕਾਗਜ਼ਾਤ ਤੇ ਦਸਖਤ ਲੈਚਵਰਥ, ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ ਬੈਠੇ ਨੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਮੁਕੱਦਮੇ ਦੇ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਕਈ ਮੁਕੱਦਮਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਗੁਜ਼ਰੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ (ਇਸ ਦੇ ਭੂਤਕਾਲ ਵਿਚ) ਹੋਈਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਭੇਤ ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹੇ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਐਸੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ਨੂੰ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦਾ 13ਵਾਂ ਸਰੂਪ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਪੋਪ ਅਖਾਵਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਘਰ ਬੁਲਾ ਕੇ, ਉਸ ਤੋਂ 51,000 ਰੁਪਏ ਦਾ ਸਰੋਪਾ ਲੈ ਕੇ, ਅਤੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਵਾ ਕੇ, ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਕੌਮ ਨਾਲ ਐਸਾ ਹੀ ਧੋਖਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਜੈਸਾ ਕਿ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਦੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਅਰੂੜ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਜਲ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਬਾਗ ਦੇ ਕਾਤਲ ਜਰਨਲ ਡਾਇਰ ਨੂੰ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਵਿਚ ਸਰੋਪਾ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ।

ਇੱਕ ਛੋਟੇ ਮੋਟੇ ਡਿਗਿਆਣਾਂ ਆਸ਼ਰਮ ਦੇ ਮਹੰਤ ਮਨਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜਾਂ ਨਾਨਕਸਰ ਦੇ ਗੁਟਕੇ ਛਪਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਤਨਖਾਹੀਆ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਭੱਜਕੇ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਮਹੰਤ ਤੋਂ ਕਈ ਗੁਣੇ ਮਾੜੇ ਹਨ ਜਾਂ ਗੁਟਕੇ ਛਪਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਹੁਕਮ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਛਾਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਲਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਜਿਸ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਰਾਖੇ ਐਸੇ ਹੋਣ ਉਸ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਰਾਖੇ ਤਾਂ ਰੱਬ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣਨਾ।

ਸਾਡੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਦੇ ਗਏ ਸਨ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਵੀ ਗਲਤੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਮਿਲੇ। ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜਥੇਦਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਕਾਬਲ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਇੱਕੋ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਜਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਆਪ ਅਸਤੀਫਾ ਦੇਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਮੌਕੂਫ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ। ਕੁਝ ਵਾਰਦਾਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਤਾਂ ਐਸਾ ਜਾਪਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਛੱਡਿਆ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਧ ਕੇ ਫੁੱਟ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ:

1) ਬੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਨਾਨਕਸਰੀਏ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਰਸਾਲੇ "ਕੌਮੀ ਦਰਦ ਜਨਵਰੀ-ਮਾਰਚ, 1997 ਦੇ 32ਵੇਂ ਪੰਨੇ ਤੇ ਇਹ ਲਿਖਣ ਦੀ ਕੀ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ, ਕਿ "ਉਹ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਪੰਥਕ ਭਲੇ ਲਈ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਵੀ ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਆਵੇਗਾ, ਉਹ ਪੂਰੀ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਕਰਨਗੇ।" ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਦੇ ਦੋਨਾਂ ਹੁਕਮਨਾਮਿਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਮੰਨਣਾ ਇੱਕ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਸੇਵਾਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਆਹ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਹੋਟਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਮਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿਰ ਤੇ ਹੱਥ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਤੇ ਪੰਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠ ਕੇ ਤਾਂ ਇੱਕ ਪਾਸੇ ਰਿਹਾ, ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦਾ ਲੰਗਰ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਛਕਦਾ। ਇਸ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਖਾਸ ਭੋਜਨ ਬਣਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸੇਵਾਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਲੂਆਂ ਦੇ ਘਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਬੈਡਰੂਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠਕੇ ਖਾਸ ਬਣਿਆ ਭੋਜਨ ਛਕਣ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਪਰੰਤ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਸੇਵਾਦਾਰ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਜੂਠ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਦ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਵਰਤਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਬਣਨ ਦੀ ਦੇਰ, ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਉਸ ਪਾਸ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

2) ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਸੰਤ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਕਹਿਣ ਦੀ ਕੀ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਥੱਲੇ ਚੱਲਣਗੇ ਅਤੇ ਵਰਲਡ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਦਾ ਸਾਥ ਦੇਣਗੇ। (ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਿੰਨੀ ਵਾਰ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਸੰਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਭੁੰਨੇ ਬੈਠ ਕੇ ਲੰਗਰ ਛਕਦਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ?)

3) ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਕਹਿਣ ਦੀ ਕੀ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਸਾਰੇ "ਸੰਤ ਮਾੜੇ ਨਹੀਂ। ਸਿਰਫ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਚੇਲੇ ਹੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਖੁਦਗਰਜ਼ੀ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਪੈਸਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਲਾਲਚ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਰਤਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸੰਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਬਾਈਕਾਟ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਚੰਗਾ ਹੈ।"

ਸੰਤ ਸਮਾਜ ਹੈ ਕੀ? ਇਹ ਕੀ ਬਲਾ ਹੈ? ਇਸ ਦਾ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨਾਲ ਕੀ ਸਬੰਧ ਹੈ? ਕੀ ਇਹ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਾਸ਼੍ਰਮੀ ਬਣਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ?

ਮੈਂ ਕੁਝ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹਸਤੀਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੁਝ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਕਰਨੇ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ। 8 ਅਪਰੈਲ 1998 ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਜਸਟਿਸ ਕੁਲਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਹੱਕਾਂ ਸਬੰਧੀ "ਲੋਕ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ" ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਐਲਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ। 13 ਅਪਰੈਲ 1998 ਨੂੰ ਬਾਦਲ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਇਹੀ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਅੰਤਮ ਚੇਤਾਵਨੀ ਖਤਮ ਹੋ ਗਈ। 26 ਅਪਰੈਲ 1998 ਨੂੰ ਜਸਟਿਸ ਨੇ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਬਣਾਨ ਦਾ ਐਲਾਨ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਉਸ ਤੋਂ 6 ਦਿਨ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ 20 ਅਪਰੈਲ 1998 ਨੂੰ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਤੇ ਬੈਠਕੇ ਲੰਗਰ ਛਕਣ ਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਜਸਟਿਸ ਕੁਲਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਐਲਾਨ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨੂੰ ਜੋੜਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਦਾ ਐਲਾਨ (ਹੁਕਮਨਾਮ) ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤੋੜਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਚੰਭੇ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਦਾ ਸਰਪ੍ਰਸਤ ਹੈ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਦਾ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ! ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵਿਚ ਬਣੀ ਹੋਈ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਂਸਲ-USA ਦਾ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਬਣਨ ਨੂੰ ਮੈਂ ਤਿਆਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਇਆ। ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਦੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਮਨਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਛਤਰ ਛਾਇਆ ਹੇਠ ਬਣਾਈ ਸੀ। ਜਿਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਦਾ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ, ਉਸਨੇ ਜਸਟਿਸ ਕੁਲਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਹ ਬੜੀ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਸਟਿਸ ਨੇ ਲੋਕ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਅਫਸੋਸ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਿਹੜੀ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ **Committee For Coordination on Disappearances in Punjab** ਬਣਾਈ ਹੈ, ਉਸ ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਵਕੀਲ ਦਰਬਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਗਿੱਲ ਹੈ। ਮਈ 1995 ਵਿਚ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਵਾਅਦਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ, ਕਿ ਜੇ ਵੀ ਉਸ ਪਾਸ ਨਾਨਕਸਰੀਏ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਕਈਆਂ ਲੜਕੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਪਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਬਿਆਨ ਹਨ ਉਹ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਭੇਜੇਗਾ। ਜਦ ਇੱਕ ਮਹੀਨਾ ਬੀਤ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਟਿੰਗਲੈਂਡ ਬੈਠੇ ਨੂੰ ਲੱਭਿਆ। ਉਸ ਦੀ ਸੁਰ ਬਦਲ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਸੀ। ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਕਹਿਣ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ, ਦਰਬਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਭੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਾੜਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਸੇਵਾਦਾਰ ਉਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਗਲਤ ਅਫਵਾਹਾਂ ਉਡਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ। ਜਸਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਖਾਲੜਾ (ਕੋਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਪੋਤਾ) ਵੀ ਬਾਦਲ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ ਦੇ **Human Rights Wing** ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਲਾਸ਼ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲ ਰਹੀ। ਜਿਹੜੇ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਮਹਿਕਮੇ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਕਤਲ ਦਾ ਇਲਜ਼ਾਮ ਲਗਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਉਹੀ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਦਰਬਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਗਿੱਲ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਹਰ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਇਜ਼ਾਜ਼ਤ ਦੇ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਜਦ ਚਾਹੇ ਪਾਸਪੋਰਟ ਬਣਾ ਲਵੇ ਅਤੇ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਮੁਲਕ ਦਾ ਵੀਜ਼ਾ ਚਾਹੇ ਉਹ ਲੈ ਲਵੇ। ਜਿੰਨਾਂ ਚਿਰ ਜਸਟਿਸ, ਕੁਲਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਰਬਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਗਿੱਲ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕੱਢ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਜਿੰਨਾਂ ਚਿਰ ਜਸਟਿਸ, ਕੌਂਸਲ ਨੂੰ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਦੇ

ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਦੀ ਛਤਰ ਛਾਇਆ ਤੋਂ ਕੱਢ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਚਿਰ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੁਝ ਸਵਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕੇਗੀ, ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਮੱਦਦ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ।

ਜਸਟਿਸ ਕੁਲਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਚਿੱਠੀ ਮੈਂ 23 ਮਾਰਚ, 1998 ਨੂੰ 279 ਸਫਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਲਿਖੀ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਦ ਕਈ ਵਾਰੀ ਫੈਕਸ ਭੇਜ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਹਾਂ। ਕੋਈ ਜਵਾਬ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਇਆ। ਜਵਾਬ ਦੀ ਉਡੀਕ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਹੈ।

ਬਾਦਲ ਨੂੰ 226 ਸਫੇ ਦੀ ਚਿੱਠੀ 17 ਅਪਰੈਲ 1997 ਦੀ ਭੇਜੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਅੱਜ ਤੱਕ ਕੋਈ ਜਵਾਬ ਨਹੀਂ। ਨਾ ਹੀ ਉਮੀਦ ਹੈ। ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਾਸਤੇ 326 ਸਫੇ ਦੀ ਚਿੱਠੀ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਮੇਰੀ ਲਿਖਤ ਦੇ 19 ਸਫੇ **Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh** ਵਾਲੇ ਡਾ: ਖੜਕ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਹੱਥੀਂ ਜਨਵਰੀ 1998 ਵਿਚ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਪੁਚਾ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਸਨ। ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਇੱਕ ਮਹੀਨਾ ਬਾਅਦ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਨਾਨਕਸਰੀਏ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਵਾ ਕੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿੱਥੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਉਂਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਮਨਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ। ਕੋਈ ਮੁਕਾਬਲਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਅਸਲੀ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਪੁਲੀਸ ਨੇ ਤੜਫਾ ਤੜਫਾ ਕੇ ਮਾਰਿਆ, ਨਕਲੀ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਖੂਨੀ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਰਿਹਾਅ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਬਣਾਇਆ। ਦੂਸਰੇ ਨਕਲੀ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਮਨਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਉਹੀ ਪੁਲੀਸ ਜਦ ਉਹ ਚਾਹੇ **Clearance** ਦੇ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਬਾਹਰਲੇ ਮੁਲਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਆ ਕੇ ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੰਗਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਬਲਕਿ ਦੋਸਤਾਂ ਮਿੱਤਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਵਾਪਸ ਚਲੇ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।

19 ਮਈ 1998 ਨੂੰ **Committee for Coordination in Disappearances in Punjab** ਦੇ **Press Release** ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ 5 ਜਨਵਰੀ 1993 ਨੂੰ ਜਦ ਬਾਦਲ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਉਂਕੇ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਅਫਸੋਸ ਕਰਨ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਰੋਕ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ। ਜੇ ਉਹ ਰੁਕਾਵਟ ਸੱਚੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਬਾਦਲ ਨੇ ਚੀਫ ਮਨਿਸਟਰ ਬਣਦੇ ਸਾਰ ਹੀ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਬਣਾਉਣੀ ਸੀ। ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਬਾਦਲ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚਮੁੱਚ ਰੋਕਿਆ ਸੀ ਦਿਖਾਵਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਮੰਨਣਾ ਪਵੇਗਾ:

1. ਕਿ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸੱਚ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਦੀਦਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੈਂਸ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਸੱਚੀਂ ਮੁੱਚੀਂ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਹਵਾਈ ਅੱਡੇ ਤੇ ਰੋਕਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਅਚੰਭੇ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਦੀ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਐਂਬੈਸੀ ਦੇ ਕੰਪਿਊਟਰ ਵਿਚ ਵੀਜ਼ਾ ਲੈਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਨਿਕਲਿਆ। ਪਰ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਕੰਪਿਊਟਰ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ

ਨਿਕਲ ਆਇਆ।

2. ਕਿ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸੱਚ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਿਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਦੀਦਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੈਂਸ ਨੇ WSO ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਖਾਲਿਸਤਾਨ ਦਾ ਨਾਚਰਾ ਲਾਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚੀਂ ਮੁੱਚੀਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਪਤਾ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਫਾਇਦਾ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਬਾਦਲ ਦੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਬਣਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਅਤੇ ਕਲਿੰਟਨ ਦੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਦੱਸੇ ਤੋਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਅਕਲ ਆਈ।

3. ਕਿ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸੱਚ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਡਾ: ਜਗਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੌਹਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਹਵਾਈ ਅੱਡੇ ਤੇ ਸੱਚੀਂ ਮੁੱਚੀਂ ਕੁੱਟ ਪਈ।

4. ਕਿ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸੱਚ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਮਲੇਸ਼ੀਆ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਤੋਂ ਮਲੇਸ਼ੀਆ ਵੜਨ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਭਰ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਮਨਾਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਈ। ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਇਸ "ਬ੍ਰਹਮਚਾਰੀ" ਨੂੰ ਸਿੰਘਪੁਰ ਠਾਠ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਮਨਾਹੀ ਕੀਤੀ।

5. ਕਿ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸੱਚ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਜਗਾਧਰੀ ਵਾਲਾ ਅਤੇ ਭਗਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਰਿਟਾਇਰਡ ਜੱਜ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਬਲਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਝੂਠ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਦ ਉਹ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਕਲੇਰਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਈਸ਼ਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਕੱਢ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ। ਭਗਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਭਰਾ ਗੁਰਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਰੱਸੀਆ ਅਤੇ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੱਚ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਕਲੇਰਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਈਸ਼ਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣਾ ਵਰੋਸਾਇਆ ਬਣਾ ਗਏ ਸੀ।

ਸਿਖੀ ਵਿਚ ਵੜ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣਵਾਦ ਦੀਆਂ ਦੋ ਮਸਾਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਚਿੱਠੀ ਦੀ ਸਮਾਪਤੀ ਹੈ।

1. ਨਾਨਕਸਰੀਏ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਲੋਂ ਛਪਵਾਏ ਹੋਏ ਇਸਤਿਹਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਦੇਖੋਗੇ ਕਿ ਕਲੇਰਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਈਸ਼ਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਅਖੰਡਪਾਠ ਕਰਵਾ ਕੇ ਬੋਦੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਤਾਰੇ (Comet) ਦੀ ਬੋਦੀ ਖਤਮ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਤੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਖਤਰਨਾਕ ਘਟਨਾ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾ ਲਿਆ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਕੁਰੂਕੁਸ਼ੇਤਰ ਸੂਰਜ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਸਾਖੀ ਤੋਂ ਆਪਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੀ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ?

2. ਹੋਮਕੁੰਟੀਏ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਦਿਲਵਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਜਾਮੇ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਪਰਬਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਤਪੱਸਿਆ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖਿਆ ਦੇ ਗਏ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਸਤੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਹਾੜਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਤਪੱਸਿਆ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਲਾਭ ਨਹੀਂ। ਦਸਵੇਂ ਜਾਮੇ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸਿੱਧਾਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਕੰਮ ਆਪ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਕਹੇ ਤੇ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਛੱਡਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ। ਇਸ ਹੋਮਕੁੰਟ ਫਾਊਂਡੇਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਹੁਣ ਤੱਕ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਸੀ (ਸਵਰਗਵਾਸੀ) ਜਗਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਾਨ (ਸਿਮਰਨਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਾਨ ਦਾ ਪਿਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਜਲਿਆਂ

ਵਾਲੇ ਬਾਗ ਦੇ ਕਾਤਲ ਜਨਰਲ ਡਾਇਰ ਨੂੰ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਵਿਚ ਸੱਦ ਕੇ ਸਿਰੋਪਾ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਅਰੁੜ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਜਵਾਈ)। ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਮਕੁੰਟੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਨੁਮਾਇੰਦਾ ਸ਼ਮਸ਼ੇਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਹੋਮਕੁੰਟ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਮਾਇਕ ਅਪੀਲ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੁਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ।

ਸਿੱਖੋ ਜਾਗੋ! ਤੁਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਦਸ਼ਮਣ ਆਪ ਹੋ। ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਸਹੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਨਿੰਦਕ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਝੂਠੇ ਹਨ, ਬੇਟੀਮਾਨ ਹਨ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੀਡਰ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਪਖੰਡੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਚੋ। ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪਖੰਡੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਣ ਹਨ। ਇੱਕ ਛੋਟੀ ਜਿਹੀ ਲਿਸਟ ਨਾਨਕਸਰੀਏ ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਆਪ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਅਖੀਰਲਾ ਪੰਨਾ ਦੇਖੋ। ਅਮਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਛਪਾਏ ਹੋਏ 20" X 30" ਇਸਤਿਹਾਰ ਨੂੰ 8" X 10" ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਉਮੈ ਨਾਲ ਭਰੇ ਪਖੰਡੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਬੋਲਣ ਦਾ ਮੌਕਾ ਨਾ ਦਿਉ। ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਬਾਬੇ ਨੂੰ, ਸੰਤ ਜਾਂ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਦੀ Human Rights Commission ਵਾਸਤੇ ਪੈਸੇ ਭੇਜਣ ਦੀ ਵਜਾਏ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵਿਚ ਪੈਸੇ ਇਕੱਠੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ੀ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਕੂਲ ਬਣਾਉ। ਹਰ ਇੱਕ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿਚ Khalsa Kindergarten (ਕੱਚੀ ਪੱਕੀ) ਸਕੂਲ ਜਾਂ Khalsa Montessori School ਖੋਲ੍ਹੋ ਅਤੇ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਜਮਾਤ ਤੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵਿਚ ਬਣਾਏ ਹੋਏ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ੀ ਸਕੂਲ ਵਿਚ ਭੇਜੋ। ਐਸੇ ਸਕੂਲ ਦੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਵਿਚ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਬਾਬਾ, ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਸੰਤ, ਨਾ ਕਥਾਕਾਰ, ਨਾ ਪਖੰਡੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੋਵੇ ਅਤੇ ਫੀਸ ਘੱਟ ਤੋਂ ਘੱਟ ਯਾ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ। ਜਿਹੜੇ ਮਨ ਅਤੇ ਧਨ ਨਾਲ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰ ਸਕਣ, ਮਾਇਆ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਾਸੋਂ ਆਵੇ। ਜੇ ਤਨ ਮਨ ਨਾਲ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰ ਸਕਣ, ਉਹ ਆਪਣਾ ਵਕਤ ਦੇਣ। ਜੇ ਤਨ ਮਨ ਧਨ ਨਾਲ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰ ਸਕਣ ਉਹ ਹਰ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਹਾਜ਼ਰੀ ਭਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ ਸੇਵਾ ਵਿਖੇ। ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਸੌ ਸਾਲ ਦੀ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਜੇ ਆਪਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਸੁਧਾਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਇਹ ਕਾਰਜ ਕਰ ਦੇਈਏ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੌਮ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਸੇਵਾ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ। ਆਪਣੇ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਬੱਚੇ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਅਸਥਾਨ ਤੇ ਵਿੱਦਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੇ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ, ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦਾ, ਆਪਣੀ ਬੋਲੀ ਦਾ, ਆਪਣੇ ਰੀਤੀ ਰਿਵਾਜਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਸੱਭਿਅਤਾ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਯੋਗ ਹੋਣਗੇ ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਮਹਾਨ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਦੀ ਪਵਿੱਤਰ ਧਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਅਸੂਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖਿਆਵਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾ ਬਣੀ ਰਹੇਗੀ।

ਜਿਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਪ੍ਰਦੇਸਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਏਕਤਾ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਵੈਟੀਕਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਪਦਵੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ। ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਇਹ ਮੰਗ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ ਕਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ

ਦੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਦੀ ਚੋਣ ਸਾਰੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਲਾਹ ਨਾਲ ਹੋਵੇ ਅਤੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਬਹੁਤ ਯੋਗਤਾ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੋਵੇ। ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਨਨਕਾਣਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਐਸੀਆਂ ਸਹੂਲਤਾਂ ਮੰਗੀਆਂ ਜਾਣ ਜੈਸੀਆਂ ਈਸਾ ਮਸੀਹ ਦੇ ਜਨਮ ਅਸਥਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲੀਆਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਹਨ।

ਜਿਹੜੇ ਸੱਜਣ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਗੂਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰੀਆਂ ਦੇਖਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਲੜਾਈ ਝਗੜੇ ਦੇਖਕੇ ਤੰਗ ਆ ਕੇ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਹਟਕੇ ਬੈਠ ਗਏ ਹਨ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਅੱਗੇ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਣ। ਜਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਦੀ ਤਵਾਰੀਖ ਦੱਸਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਬੇਅੰਤ ਫੌਜਾਂ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਤੇ ਹਮਲੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਲੁੱਟ ਲੁੱਟ ਕੇ ਲੈ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ, ਉਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੁਣ ਸਾਡੇ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਤੋਂ ਸੰਤਾਂ ਬਾਬਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਥੱਲੇ ਲੁਟੇਰੇ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਧਨ ਲੁੱਟ ਕੇ ਲੈ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜਿੰਨੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਖੂਹ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਈ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਨਾਲ ਹੁਣ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਥੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸੋਹਣਾ ਸਕੂਲ ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ, ਜਿੱਥੇ ਸਾਰੀ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਦਾ ਬੰਦੋਬਸਤ ਵੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਕੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੀ 300 ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਵਿਚ ਇੰਨਾਂ ਕੰਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ? ਆਪ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਤੇ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰ ਫਤਹਿ। ਦਾਸ।

ਹਰਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਸ਼ੇਰਗਿੱਲ

ਨੋਟ: ਜਿਸ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਦੱਸੇ ਨੁਕਤੇ ਦਾ ਸਬੂਤ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਲਿਖਕੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਮੰਗਵਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ। ਜੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਪਾਸ ਕਿਸੇ ਪਖੰਡੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਕੋਈ ਸਬੂਤ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਪੂਰਵਕ ਦਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਜ ਦੇਣਾ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਸਲੇ ਦੀ ਸਮੱਗਰੀ ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ।

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### In Search of Sikhs

[From Sikh Bulletin Feb. 2001]

### In Search of Sikhs

In May of 1998 I distributed over 500 copies of an article ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਤਲਾਸ਼ reproduced on page 10. Not only it proved prophetic but also, I am happy to report that I have found what I was searching. In fact I have found several of them in several countries. A small list appears on p. 30. I want to tell you about two of them at this time.

They are both in their seventies both were in North America on visits in June 1984, both could not go back and both are named Gurbakhsh Singh. One is from the village of Kala Afghana who spent his

working life as a Police Officer and started writing in Canada. Our Jathedars do not like his writings. But we at Roseville Sikh Center are helping to publish his books. If you can read Punjabi and want to know what our Gurus really preached you need to read his books. No Punjabi speaking household should be without them. Please see page 29 to order them. Also see page 4, "Ringing out the Old", and page 7, "Complaint against Mr. Kala Afghana Motivated by Malice".

The other Gurbakhsh Singh is from the village Gill. He is a born Teacher. From his 1984 visit to USA he could not go back to his position of Dean at the Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. He has spent his entire time since then teaching and writing about Sikhism. One of his books "Teaching Sikh Heritage to the Youth" should be in every home. We have a limited number of copies at Roseville Sikh Center. Single copy can be ordered from Roseville Sikh Center. Please see page 29 to order. We have included Dr. Kharak Singh's foreword to this book on p. 3. This book was published by the Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh.

*We need our Sikh youth in America to emulate our Gurbakhsh Singhs.*

Sikh community owes these two Gursikhs an immense debt of gratitude. Sikh universities should honor these two Gursikhs by conferring upon them degrees of D. Lit. in their life time.

We suggest that Satguru Ram Singh chair at Guru Nanak University in Amritsar be renamed Sardar Gurbakhsh Singh of village Kala Afghana chair. Agriculture University in Ludhiana should recognize one of its finest teachers in a similar way. If this does not happen in their and our life times, it will surely happen, provided Sikhi survives in India the latest onslaught, when more enlightened Sikh youth replaces the present leadership. Remember how long it took to rehabilitate Prof. Gurmukh Singh.

I will conclude this with one personal incident. Mr. Kuldip Singh Wadala visited with me for very few minutes at my request soon after he attended a conference in Fremont to honor Bhai Jarnail Singh Bindranwale as the Sikh of 20<sup>th</sup> century. When asked why would not they consider likes of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha or Dr. Sahib Singh or several others, his question was, “Who was Dr. Sahib Singh”? This, in nutshell, explains a lot about the state of affairs the Panth finds itself in.

(Hardev Singh Shergill)

By 1991 I was approaching the end of my 60 years of learning and working life and influenced as I was in some ways by Hindu philosophy that the golden years of one's life be devoted to service of the community at large and aware of the demographic changes in our community that had taken place during three decades of my life in North America, whereby our numbers had increased from a handful in 1960 to six figures now, and being mindful of the value of learning, I thought that every Gurdwara, of which there were many by now, should have a kindergartens where, in addition to giving young Sikh children a head start, teaching of Panjabi and Gurbani be undertaken.

But, unfortunately, the politics in Gurdwaras rendered that impractical. It was under such circumstances that in 1991 I was introduced by a family friend to Amar Singh Barundi as someone who does not build Gurdwaras but establishes schools where, along with the curriculum of the country, Panjabi and Gurbani are taught.

**Amar Singh turned out to be a world class con artist, a murderer, rapist, congenital liar, a sociopath and literally a ‘gunda’, all of which is amply proven by 100 odd exhibits in the Hardev Singh Shergill vs. Amar Singh law suit in the Superior Court of the State of California, Auburn, County of Placer #SCV – 3271.**

The law suit lasted one year and involved scores of depositions of his associates in crime as well as his

victims in **USA: Buffalo, NY; Baltimore, MD; Orlando, FL; Los Angeles and Yuba City, CA; Canada: Vancouver and Toronto; and UK (London)**, that created just about 100 exhibits. I accompanied my attorney to all but London. It cost me \$277,000.00 in attorney fees and court costs to recover my \$250,000.00 loan to him that he now claimed was a donation.

**That is his foolproof modusoperandi.**

It just so happened that he was introduced to me when I was struggling with the knowledge that by 1991 there were enough Sikh households in Sacramento – Yuba City area and several Gurdwaras but no effort at providing teaching either in Panjabi language or Gurbani.

I strongly felt that every Gurdwara should have kindergarten classes but I also knew that would be asking for the impossible. And here was a man, with a well funded worldwide organization, so I was lied to, who opens not just kindergartens but regular schools offering national curriculum where teaching of Panjabi and Gurbani were an integral part of the curriculum; and he had several schools operating in India, Australia and England.

**Rest of the story is amply documented in a dozen boxes of the entire court proceedings and several hundred pages long presentations I made to the heads of governments of Panjab, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, England and USA, countries where his victims reside. This man was never successfully sued before nor do I think any other Sant Baba.**

**I would very much like to consign this treasure trove to some Sikh Institution for future researchers to use it for the good of the community and to educate Gurdwara management committees not to commit sacrilege in Guru's abode by giving stage to scoundrels who go around as pious Sant Babas.**

When I won the case in **April 1996** I had gathered so much damaging evidence against him I

wondered how he will be able to show his face in public. I had no inkling how naive I was.

**Unlike other victims of this man who were too ashamed to admit of being victimized by him and whom I had to cajole to give depositions and provide evidence of his wrong doing, I wanted everyone to know my experience with him so no one else gets hurt.**

So, it was with high hopes that I took my information to **Tara Singh Hayre's 'Indo-Canadian Times'**. They were not interested. A person who had helped me with arranging depositions in Vancouver from Amar Singh's victims explained to me that there were so many people in the Lower Mainland from around Nanaksar area back in Panjab that it was a business decision on the part of the newspaper.

It was the same story with **England's 'Des Pardes'** whose publisher, **Tarsem Singh Purewal**, had just been murdered. That paper's Editor told me the family would not want to get involved because not only were Amar Singh and Tarsem Singh friends for many years, the murder had caused tension between the family and Amar Singh who did not even have the decency of calling in condolences nor showing up at the bhog.

I had parked documents about the case with private parties in all the countries where I had sent the dossiers to the heads of governments, just in case an opportunity arose. The first publication to report it was **'The Week' of October 25, 1998**, a weekly publication from Goa, India. Their reporter posted in Chandigarh got wind of it and called me to get permission for them to examine the documents. Much later I saw the posting of the same article on the internet by the same author but as **'The Sikh Times' October 25, 1998**. I think Sikh Times is a UK publication.

**It is to Tara Singh Hayre's credit that earlier in the day that he was killed, he had delivered to the printers his weekly's issue for the following week and in it had the translation in Panjabi of**

**'The Week' of October 25, 1998 article 'Swindler's List'.**

Not only did Amar Singh not hesitate from showing his face, he thrived. Later the same year convicted murderer, **Ranjit Singh**, got appointed Jathedar of Akal Takhat and within days Amar Singh was sipping tea with him and he was allowing Amar Singh to participate in children's programmes at Akal Takhat and accepting cash and new car gifts from him. Soon the high and mighty of the Sikh Panth, SGPC and Delhi Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee Presidents and Secretaries, five Takhat Jathedars, all the famous kirtanias and kathakars, like **Sant Singh Maskeen**, and even former Akal Takhat **Jathedar Darshan Singh** were making beeline to Amar Singh's Thath in England.

**Jathedar Ranjit Singh's embrace of Amar Singh cost him dearly. I had hand delivered to him my 18 page letter dated December 18, 1997 describing 330 pages of exhibits of the law suit that I had won against Amar Singh. He took no action. When reporters questioned him about his association with Amar Singh his response was standard Amar Singh, "people ask the Sant for illegal favours and when he declines they malign him".**

**When Ranjit Singh got the visa to visit USA in January 1999, I had his visa cancelled and he was escorted away from New Delhi airport at the last moment**

I got Amar Singh, his two children, children's mother and her fake husband green cards in **1994**. End of 1995 or beginning of 1996 when Congress government in India got defeated, **Amar Singh became British Citizen on March 29, 1996 with British Passport # V 170262** issued to him. He had been coming to England since 1970's as a visitor on six month visas and always had to go out of the country to get the visa extended.

Further investigation revealed that it was all done at the request of the then Indian Ambassador in

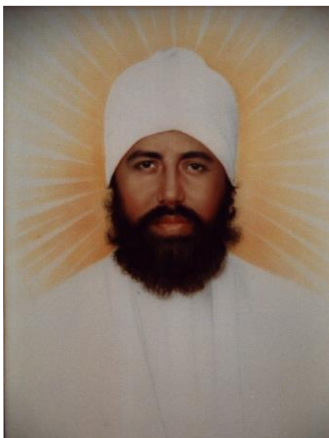
London and the Passport issued to him came from the lot kept just for such favours to foreign countries. That lent credibility to the rumors that most Sant Babas and this one in particular, are agents of the Indian Intelligence Agencies. What he accomplished and the fact that he circled the globe, at the very least, once a month, travelling in first class and kept getting away, literally, with murder, leaves no doubt in my mind.

**On February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012 I received an email announcing the opening of Guru Nanak Darbar in Dubai, the first and only Gurdwara in the Arab World and to my utter disgust found Amar Singh Barundi and his English mouthpiece, Sadhu Singh hovering around Mr. Surinder Singh Kandhari, the man single handedly responsible for this remarkable feat. Somebody who finds Surinder Singh Kandhari approachable should bring the following to his attention:**

\*

**‘SANT BABA’ AMAR SINGH BARUNDI  
NANAKSARIA  
THIS IS YOUR LIFE**

[From December 2000 Sikh Bulletin]



1965 Amar Singh Sidhu Barundi



1995

**YOUR NAMES ARE:**

Sarup Singh; AKA Amar Singh; AKA Amar Singh S/O Bakhtawar Singh; AKA Amar Singh Sidhu; AKA Sant Baba Amar Singh Ji; AKA Sant Baba

Amar Singh Barundi; AKA Baba A. Singh; and when you lost the Shergill vs. Amar Singh law suit in California in 1996 the Judge named you as the alter ego of ‘Nanaksar Thath Isher Darbar’.

You were born on **November 1, 1942** at village **Chakar** in District Ludhiana, Punjab, India. You have no education other than what you have learned in the school of hard knocks.

You have given two versions of your early childhood. One version appears in “A case study in Religious Thuggery” on p. 5 (SB December 2000). Second version appeared in your “Kaumi Dard” magazine of January – March 1997 p.21 reproduced on p.26 (SB December 2000).

Since both versions cannot be true, one of them is definitely a lie. Or they could both be lies and truth could be lost. Coming from you that should be no surprise since you can never speak the truth. You lie even when it has no benefit for you.

It is true that you ended up at Nanaksar and it is also true that before **Isher Singh (Kaleran)** died, under mysterious circumstances, in **1963**, he had expelled you from Nanaksar. I have that from **Principal Balbir Singh Hansra and Harbans Singh Jagadhari** who have personal knowledge of this event.

After Isher Singh’s death Mahabharat ensued at **Nanaksar** between **Narain Singh** and **Gurdev Singh**, resulting in several deaths. You hid out at Barundi and later wormed your way into some families in **Singapore and Malaysia**. Name **Barundi** stuck with you but you named your organization ‘**Nanaksar Thath Isher Darbar**’, combining the name of the one person who you felt humiliated you and the organization that he had created.

You were set on a course of sweet and lucrative revenge. **You swore to yourself to never tell the truth and deceive everybody and anybody.** You chased after Sikh families into every country

you could. You made some powerful friends but mostly you created victims.

**You never ask anybody for ‘bheta’ (donation) for ‘religious’ operations. You only ask for loans to be paid in a few days.** Days would stretch into months and years and if anyone insisted for return of the loan, then that loan became bheta. If they threatened a law suit, you threatened their families back in Panjab.

You hoodwinked simple village families to deliver to you their sons and daughters, with the promise of marriage and settlement in foreign countries, just as you were delivered to Nanaksar by your uncle, to abuse them. You did not even spare your own family.

**You learned from your mistakes and perfected the Constitution and By Laws of your ‘Nanaksar Thath Isher Darbar Organization Worldwide’ from the one in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada, registered in July, 1974, where you suffered a major blow because you had no absolute control over it, to the one you had in Oakville, Ontario, Canada, where in 1994 you fired the entire Board of Directors because they disapproved of your removing the funds collected by the congregation for building a Gurdwara there.**

The judge presiding over the law suit No.SCV – 3271 in the Superior Court of the State of California, County of Placer, in 1996 had this to say about your relationship with your organization:

**“It is declared that Amar Singh is alter ego of Nanaksar Thath Isher Darbar Worldwide, Nanaksar Thath Isher Darbar Sacramento, and Bhai Daya Singh Khalsa Academy.”**

In plain English it means ‘a second self’. So when you tell people you own nothing because everything belongs to the organization that is concealing the truth. But you do own something in Amar Singh’s name as well. **On July 22, 1996**

**you transferred a piece of property in Florida from Nanaksar Thath Darbar Orlando to Amar Singh, A Single Man.** You yourself signed the transfer since you are Nanaksar Thath. Was this the property that you made me wire \$50,000 for on July 19, 1993?

**But truth has never been the watchword in your life. For three days in Sacramento, on Oct. 11, Nov. 13 & 14, 1995 you lied under oath.** It seemed as if you had sworn to yourself that you are not going to speak a single truth. We had wondered what you will say in front of the judge.

But you knew you were not going to show up before the judge. Instead you had a doctor **Gurjeet Singh of Ahmedgarh, Panjab** fax a letter to your attorneys on **April 13, 1996** saying, *“This is to certify that your client Mr. Amar Singh was seen by me in the clinic today. He was found to be complaining of severe rotational vertigo ... Mr. Amar Singh was also reassured and advised to have complete rest at home for a period of three weeks during which he will be reviewed again.”* Arithmetic would tell us that the three weeks rest period would end on **May 4, 1996**. But the **Quitclaim Deed** that you signed over to me for the Roseville property is dated **April 29, 1996** at Letchworth, England.

**Some examples of your lies in the depositions under oath follow:**

**I**

**Q Have you ever been prevented from visiting a country?**

A. No.

Q. Are you aware that the government of Malaysia has issued an order that you’re not permitted to visit the Federation of Malaysia?

A. I went there in 92 and 93.

Here you lied within a lie. The first time you ever went to Malaysia after your 1977 prohibition was in Dec 1993 (not in 1992). You slipped into Malaysia for two days, Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. It took



you from Dec. 11, 93 until Dec. 18, 93 to get the visa for yourself and Harjit Singh who was to tell everybody, “*Babaji is not prohibited from entering Malaysia because I was with him when he went there.*”

This exercise became necessary for you because of the Oct. 1993 article in ‘Charhdi Kala’ and perhaps other newspapers (see p. 25 SB December 2000). That third world country is no less corrupt than India and Attorney Jagjit Singh, who was primarily responsible for your prohibition, had died. We need more Jagjit Singhs in every country. For his service to the Sikh Panth we honor him by placing his name in the Sikh Hall of Fame.

After you received the U.S. Green Card through me by lying to me about establishing your headquarters in Roseville and do all those good deeds in the name of Sikhi, you stopped coming here but started getting easy visas for Malaysia from London (See p. 32 SB December 2000). In fact you got that visa on Oct. 24, 1995 to prove to us and the government of Malaysia wrong after we confronted you with a certified copy of the page from the Malaysian Government Gazette during your deposition on Oct. 11/95.

You have been trying since then to hoodwink some gullible prominent Sikhs in Malaysia to have the government reverse that order. You are telling them that you were wrongfully barred by alleging that you were critical of the religion of Islam. The truth, however, lies in the words, “...in the interest of public security...” and the Exhibit 17 (p. 27 SB December 2000). The events in Exhibit 17 and your subsequent prohibition had followed your signed apology of Nov. 7, 1976 (see p. 9 SB December 2000).

Q. Are you aware that the government of Malaysia has published an order prohibiting your visiting there now?

A. I have no orders such as this.

Q. Have you ever heard that they had done such an order?

A. No, I do not know.

Q. Have you ever investigated whether or not the government of Malaysia had issued such an order?

A. I did not. I go there on visa. Why do I have to do so?

Q. BY Mr. HARRIS: Ask you to take a look at What’s been marked Exhibit 35. Which is a publication from the government of Malaysia which says, “*In exercise of the powers conferred by section 9 (1) (a) of the Immigration Act of 1959/ 63, the Minister of Home Affairs, deeming it expedient in the interest of public security so to do, hereby orders that Sant Amar Singh, a citizen of India who was born in Ludhiana, India on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1942, be prohibited permanently from entering the Federation.*” Made this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of April 1977. (Sd) Minister of Home Affairs.

Q What is your birthday, sir?

A November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1942.

Q And where were you born?

A In Chekaur Village in Punjab.

Q Is that near Ludhiana.

A Yes.

Q Is the person described in this immigration order you?

A I do not know. I did not receive any letter, and I don’t have any knowledge of it.

## II.

**Q. Did you ever hire the law firm of N.S. Kang in Singapore to file articles of a religious organization?**

A. No.

Q Does he (Amar Singh) know who N.S. Kang is?

A No, I do not know. I never heard of them.

Q It’s not a solicitor that you employed in Singapore?

A No, I did not. I don’t even know this person. Never heard of him.

Amar Singh, to refresh your memory, we attach (see p. 24 SB December 2000) a copy of N.S. Kang’s Fax Transmission covering letter to you dated March 20, 1989. The apology was

demanded by you to withdraw the kidnapping charges against Kang's brother-in-law (ਸਾਲਾ) for 'kidnapping' his own sister from your dera in Wolverhampton, England, on March 18, 1989.

### III

**Q. This morning I asked you if you were ever a party to any other litigation and you said no; is that correct?**

A. Yes.

Q. You've never been sued by anybody?

A. No.

Q. And you've never sued anybody yourself as the plaintiff?

A. No.

At this stage following Exhibits were introduced:

Exhibit # 31. Complaint filed against you in the State of New York Supreme Court, County of Erie, Buffalo, by Dr. Amarjit Singh and eleven other families, on Oct. 26, 1988.

Exhibit # 32. A claim filed against you by your one time sewadar Mohan Singh and his family in Ontario Court (General Division), Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, on Nov. 1, 1990.

Exhibit # 33. A multimillion-dollar Case filed by you against Toronto Sun on June 14, 1994 and dismissed, without costs, on March 13, 1998. One of the affidavits you submitted to explain your non-pursuance of the case reads like this:

"I, Lakshman Doobay, law clerk, of the city of Mississauga, **make oath and say:**

*"The Babaji, or Holy Father, holds for many Sikhs a position similar to that of the **Pope**, in that he has 33 congregations located in countries around the world.*

*The Baba Ji normally resides in London, England, but regularly travels the world to preach and to lend support to his followers.*

*As a new tendency in Sikhism, the followers of the Baba Ji are constantly struggling to build new temples and in particular schools for second and third generation Sikhs growing up in a Diaspora.*

*The Baba Ji is a holy man who is deeply respected by many Sikhs but reviled by others who fear that as more and more mainstream Sikhs follow his teachings and join his congregations along with their families, they will lose their positions of authority.*

*Notwithstanding that his followers regard his word as law, the Baba Ji tries to consult his followers, listen to their concerns and make decisions after prayerful meditation."*

In spite of Mr. Doobay's sworn Affidavit and newspaper stories in 'Des Pardes', England; 'Daily Ajit', Jalandhar; your own 'Kaumi Dard' magazines and others, other than your Thath in Wolverhampton and Guru Nanak Sikh College in London, you have neither congregation nor schools anywhere in the Diaspora. Even in the case of Guru Nanak Sikh College in London it is the Council that is involved in its funding now.

### IV

**Whose wife is Swaran Kaur? Three people and three different answers:**

**1.** Answer by your cousin, Piara Singh Sidhu, during his deposition in Sacramento, California, on Sept. 08, 1995:

Q. Who is Jaswant (Singh) married to?

A. Swaran Kaur.

**2.** Your answer during your deposition in Sacramento, California, on Nov. 14, 1995:

Q. As I understand it, Swaran Kaur is married to Jaswant Singh?

A. This is something of their own family matters. Before I went to Malaysia. I do not want to say anything.

3. Answers by Jaswant Singh, during his deposition in London, England, on Jan. 25, 1996:

Q. Do you have any brothers?

A. Yeah.

Q. Who is your brother?

A. But why are you asking me all these questions?

Is there a reason? (Short Break)

Q. Okay. Who is your brother?

A. My brother is in India.

Q. What is his name?

A. Kartar Singh.

Q. You mentioned that Mohan Kaur is Amarjit's mother. Have you ever been married to anyone else?

A. No.

Q. Are you familiar with Swaran Kaur, do you know a person by the name of Swaran Kaur?

A. Yes, my sister-in-law.

Q. Is she married to Kartar Singh?

A. No.

Q. Who is she married to?

A. To Narinder Singh.

Q. What is your relationship to Narinder?

A. Who?

Q. Narinder is your brother?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you have other brothers?

A. Yeah, one, Paramjit Singh in Delhi.

Q. And Narinder Singh lives in India, too, in Delhi?

A. I don't know whether in Delhi. I haven't seen him for a long time but he's in India.

## V

### Petty thievery:

#### Your deposition in Sacramento, California on Oct. 11, 1995:

Q. Do you remember Kamaljit and Amarjit?

A. I don't know when they left.

Q. Do you remember their having been arrested for shoplifting?

A. We were not there. They did not steal anything.

Q. Did you know that they pleaded guilty to shoplifting?

A. That might have been misunderstanding, but it was told to me later on. I was not there at the time -- here at that time.

#### Deposition of Amarjit Singh in London, England, on Jan. 26, 1996:

Q. What is your wife's name?

A. Kamaljit Kaur.

Q. What is her family name?

A. The surname you want?

Q. Surname.

A. Sachdev.

Q. Who is Gurpreet Sidhu?

A. My daughter.

Q. It's your daughter?

A. Yes.

Q. Is that your wife's daughter as well?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you have any other children?

A. Why are you asking questions about my family? (Short Break)

Q. Why is your daughter's last name Sidhu?

(Mr. Rosen, Attorney: He doesn't want to answer).

Q. Are you familiar with Amar Singh, do you know Amar Singh?

A. Yes, my Baba Ji, he's a God to me.

Q. He's a God to you?

A. He's God to me.

Q. When did you leave Roseville?

A. I can't remember.

Q. Did you have any trouble with the police when you were in Roseville?

A. That's my private matter.

Q. Were you arrested in Roseville?

A. I'm not going to answer the question.

Q. Did you plead guilty to petty theft in Roseville?

A. I will not answer questions about my private life.

#### NOTE:

At the time of publication of the December 2000 issue of The Sikh Bulletin, Gill/Sidhu VS Amar Singh Sidhu case in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, was sometime in the future. Following is

from the judgment in that case, published in the **October 2002 issue of The Sikh Bulletin**, which illustrates the same point as made above i.e. Amar Singh's shameless propensity to lie under oath.

**From October 2002 issue of The Sikh Bulletin:**

**What we wish to present to our readers in this issue are some additional developments in the case of Vedanti's patron Saint, Nanaksaria 'Sant Baba' Amar Singh Sidhu Barundi. First part is an extract of 52 page judgment against him in Vancouver, B.C., Canada. Second part has portions of his deposition under oath in a California case. His statements in two case are contradictory, naturally!**

**"It seems to me to add to the stench of this transaction that Tage, the ultimate victim, was both underage and Amar Singh's own cousin."**  
*Hon. Mr. Justice Fraser, in the Supreme Court of British Columbia, Canada.*

**In the supreme court of British Columbia  
Docket# C975444, Date: June 28, 2002,  
Judgment of the court  
Gill/Sidhu VS Amar Singh Sidhu**

...set aside this transfer on the grounds of **fraud** and undue influence. In particular, they allege that, at a time when Surinder Kaur Sidhu was in an advanced stage of terminal breast cancer, **Amar Singh promised her that, if she gave him the land, her cancer would be cured and that a temple would be built on the land in her honor.** Surinder kaur Sidhu died and Amer Singh put the land up for sale instead of initiating a temple project on the land. This action resulted.

...The defence says that Amar Singh did not commit fraud or exercise undue influence, made neither of the promises alleged and was entitled to make whatever use of the land he saw fit. **The defence also alleges that the land was held in trust by Surinder Kaur Sidhu for Amar Singh between the mid 1970's and 1997, the date of the transfer.**

...There was British Columbia society at a material time in the narrative called **The Nanaksar Isher Darbar Gursikh Society.**

The evidence is and I find that various institutions around the world, including the defendant society, are controlled by Amar Singh ... For simplicity's sake, I will refer in these Reasons only to Amar Singh, because the **Ontario society is simply his alter ego** .... **Amar Singh testified that he did not own any property at all.**

Tradition of Nanaksar continues and its adherents regard **Nand Singh and Isher Singh as the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Gurus** ... Some, or many, of his followers regard him as the **13<sup>th</sup> Guru**, after **Nand Singh and Isher Singh** ... The premise on which Amar Singh carries on his work is that he is the successor to Nand Singh and Isher Singh, in the Nanaksar tradition.

**... I have set out Amar Singh's account of his early years, notwithstanding that I have found him not to be a credible witness.**

He testified that he did not have many specific memories of conversations with Surinder at the material times ... There were special reasons for Amar Singh to remember his association with her vividly. These have to do with the history of their relationship and incidents which occurred during the relationship, **including the notorious automobile trip from Seattle to Vancouver**, the choice of Amar Singh to marry Surinder to his first cousin, his visits to Surinder in British Columbia shortly before her death and his visits to the funeral home after her death.

**I reject the testimony of Amar Singh that he has no helpful memory of his conversations with Surinder in the last year of her life** ...  
*Answers to the Interrogatories ... by Sukhjinder Singh Grewal ... contradict the evidence of Amar Singh at trial.*

**My rejection of the evidence of Amar Singh is reinforced by my acceptance of the evidence of Tage, which conflicts with his ... her testimony**

**had the detail and spontaneity which are the hallmarks of truth ... There was no sense of calculation, no sense of an agenda.**

In March, 1973, she bought a five-acre parcel of land in Surrey, B.C.... It was not long after that acquisition that Amar Singh first came to Vancouver ... As early as 1969, some Sikhs began to call him "Sant". In cross-examination, he said, "I don't want that (i.e. being called a Sant). But the people who call me because of their belief, we cannot call them incorrect."

... He came to Vancouver in 1973 ... **White cloth would be placed on any chair he was to sit in; ... others would sit on the floor ... Food was served to him first ... what he did not eat was afterwards passed around to the faithful as blessed food.** He travelled with a retinue of young musicians, singers and servants, dressed in white, like himself. **He refers to himself as "we" or "us" ...** that is, in the plural form.

This was when Surinder and Amar Singh met. Her **marriage was in trouble and her mother took Surinder to Amar Singh for advice. Amar Singh encouraged Surinder to leave the marriage** and told her he could find a husband for her whom she could marry according to Sikh principle, before the Guru Granth Sahib

... in 1974 they formed a group to build a new temple at which he would be the guiding influence. Surinder offered to sell the property ... Amar Singh approved the location, the group decided to buy it and did, in July 1974. the B.C. society was incorporated the same month and became the registered owner of the land in August 1974 ...

Through a subordinate in California, Amar Singh sent a message to Surinder that he needed to be driven from Seattle, ... Surinder decided that she would drive ... **She left for Seattle, by herself, on a day in late december 1974 and returned the next day with Amar Singh ... When word of this reached the supporters of the temple project, the project collapsed.**

All we know is that Surinder drove down to Seattle one day and returned the next, with Amar Singh. Not matter. For the supporters of the temple project, what they knew Surinder had made the trip, stayed overnight, and returned in her car alone with Amar Singh ... This was not what a revered teacher, guru or Sant would allow to happen. **Such a person is to exemplify moral purity, including celibacy.**

**The episode destroyed the supporters' faith in Amar Singh and they abandoned the 168<sup>th</sup> Street temple project** ...

The group re-conveyed the land to Surinder in February 1975 on payment by her of the price they had paid her for it, ... Although the temple project had fallen through, and although Amar Singh was regarded as unworthy by most of those ... Surinder and some others in British Columbia remained loyal to him. **Amar Singh began to make quiet, unobtrusive trips to the Lower Mainland. Some of these occurred at the home of (Attorney) Sukhinder Grewal.**

In the latter half of the 1970s, Surinder travelled to India a number of times to visit Amar Singh ... on 13<sup>th</sup> July 1978, Surinder obtained a decree absolute of divorce from Sandarshi Sharma. **They had separated after Amar Singh had advised her to do so ... There was a pattern of Surinder transferring the land out of her name before she went on a trip to India** ... In June 1980 Surinder travelled to India to meet with Amar Singh....to provide her with a husband.

**Piara Singh Sidhu was Amar Singh's first cousin ...13 years younger than Surinder. He was short, ... one leg was shorter than the other and he walked with limp. This was not of concern to Surinder, because of her belief that Amar Singh could cure these deformities and make Piara taller.** It seems likely, although I could not find this as a fact, that it was Piara whom Amar Singh had in mind as a future husband when he advised Surinder in 1973 to abandon her marriage to Mr. Sharma. ...

The evidence is very cloudy whether there was, in India, a ceremony of marriage between Surinder and Piara. To her family, Surinder appeared embarrassed at the absence of any documentation evidencing a marriage. She began to call herself Surinder Kaur Sidhu. **Surinder and Piara travelled from India to England together in 1980 but Piara refused to accompany her from there when she returned to British Columbia.**

*Not long after her return to British Columbia in the autumn of 1980, Surinder learned that she was pregnant. Her daughter, Tage, was born in Vancouver on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1981. Surinder in the birth registration described herself as "married". Tage has never met Piara.*

... in 1994 or 1995, Surinder discovered that she had lumps in her breasts ... In February 1996, ... large carcinoma, ... large tumours. ... on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1996, ... Patient has adamantly decided not to seek any treatment for breast cancer. Tage was 14 ...She spent much of the following year caring for her mother ... Septemeber, 1996, ... open wounds on her breasts.

...February 1996 until her death, Surinder was talking to Amar Singh by telephone...Amar Singh testified that he told Surinder "many times" that she should read the scriptures and **"we will pray for her and she will get better"**. **In this statement, "we" is Amar Singh's reference to himself...**Surinder would ask Amar Singh when she was going to be cured; Amar Singh would reply "soon" or "fast"...Surinder also persuaded Tage to telephone Amar Singh herself, thinking that Amar Singh would pay attention to request of an innocent child and do what she asked.

Tage had a number of conversations with Amar Singh, ...**the answer of Amar Singh consistently was. "Fast." Don't worry; she will get "better"**. This happened a number of times between February 1996 and May 1997...**the evidence is also suggestive that Surinder was encouraged by Amar Singh to reject the validity of "western" medicine.** Surinder believed that

**Amar Singh had declared, "There was no such thing as cancer"...**

what is unmistakable is that Surinder, once the diagnosis of cancer had been made, pinned all her hopes on Amar Singh...A note from late November 1996 says..."*You tell me what I should do now so that the breast cancer would completely go away, so that I would completely recover*".

*At about this time, Amar Singh was asking Surinder for a donation of money for the benefit of the Ontario society, which operated the Nanaksar temple in Mississauga. He asked for \$40,000...Gill family managed to raise \$15,000 and donate it to the Ontario society...*

**As 1996 progressed, the conversations between Surinder and Amar Singh became more frequent...in the telephone bill submitted by the plaintiffs for the month of 27<sup>th</sup> October to 25<sup>th</sup> November 1996, there are 56 recorded long distance calls, as many as six in a single day, to various places around the world where Surinder thought Amar Singh might be. In the following month, 26<sup>th</sup> November, to 26<sup>th</sup> December 1996, there were 124 long distance calls. On 5<sup>th</sup> December 1996 alone, there were 14 long distance calls...**

*the defendants were asked to produce their own telephone records but did not do so; Amar Singh testified that they had been destroyed...it was toward the latter part of 1996 that Surinder began to associate her cancer and other problems...with her ownership of the land. This was described graphically by Tage...**you know why, why is that happening to her family...and he says that all these problems are due to this property, the property was in Nanaksar's name at one time and now it isn't, and that's why your family has so many problems...***

*Amar Singh came to Vancouver in January 1997 and visited Surinder twice, at her home...later the same day, Amar Singh came and met with Surinder alone...after these two visits, the*

telephone calls increasingly originated with Amar Singh...**Amar Singh would call and ask if a decision had been made regarding the land...**Surinder continued to ask Amar Singh about her health and asked him why she was not better...response of Amar Singh was..."Don't worry, you are going to get better. You are going to get better fast..."**it was Amar Singh who was placing the telephone calls ...**

**In February 1997, Surinder was mortally ill.** Surinder repeatedly asked them whether giving the land to Amar Singh was right thing to do.... believed that if she did so, she would be cured...Surinder told...that she was giving land to Amar Singh in order to survive..."The only way I can get better is through babaji. He is the only one who can make me better. We have to please him."...

Surinder believed that Amar Singh had it within his power to intercede with God on her behalf, so that she would be cured for cancer...According to the testimony of Amar Singh, Surinder's decision to give the land to him was much simpler, and shorter. He testified that Surinder had called him and said, "I want to give this property to Nanaksar", to which he replied, "It's belief, it's up to you."...

**...On 20<sup>th</sup> February 1997 ...executed the conveyance documents...Surinder died on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1997...the transfer was not registered until three days after her death (Transfer Deed and Mortgage, recorded the same day on May 06,1997, three days after her death. ED.) An agreement for sale was entered into between the Ontario Society and Parmjeet Singh Barn and nominees for the price of \$1,850,000. This agreement was signed by Amar Singh, personally....**

The Gill family learned of the pending sale in September 1997...filed a caveat...Minhas and Mr. Nijjar (Nominees) commenced an action against the plaintiff...C996849...against Ontario Society, C982517...Nor was the land ever held in trust by

Surinder for Amar Singh...The suggestion was advanced by the defense that there is a concept within Sikhism, or perhaps, within Nanaksar, that once land had been used as a temple, it should never be used afterwards for any other purpose...**it seems to me conclusively disproved by the fact that Amar Singh himself put the land up for sale...**

For the last quarter century of her life, Surinder had been in the thrall of Amar Singh. He was the most influential person in her life. She believed that he had powers which might be described as supernatural: she believed he was a Sant...Surinder believed that Amar Singh could intercede with God to cure her cancer. She believed that it was a condition of obtaining a cure that she transfer the land to him...Amar Singh knew that Surinder believed these things and he allowed her to entertain those beliefs...

**This was a tainted transaction procured by undue influence.** Surinder was terminally ill, afraid, with her mental faculties and independence undermined by her cancer. Especially in the last months of her life, her existence was completely dominated by Amar Singh, whom she saw as her only chance to be cured. She believed he could cure her, Amar Singh knew this and encouraged her belief...conversations with her; he linked her ownership of the land with her disease, and linked his ability to cure her to her willingness to transfer the land to him...

**: Amar Singh obtained an absolute conveyance or gift for a particular purpose and afterwards made use of it for another purpose. This is an additional ground for setting aside the conveyance, in this instance, on the ground of fraud...**

**It seems to me to add to the stench of this transaction that Tage, the ultimate victim, was both underage and Amar Singh's own cousin."**

*(Or as Amar Singh would say to Tage 'his own blood'. As of this writing, Amar Singh is appealing this judgment. ED)*

*(Amar Singh eventually lost the appeal.ED)*

**[Now compare Amar Singh's statements in the above case with his statements in the California case, below, both under oath, of course. ED]**

**Amar Singh's deposition November 13, 1995, Case # SCV-3271, California**

Q. Have you ever had a temple operate and then close?

A. No.

Q. Did you ever lose control of a temple you have helped establish?

A. No.

**Q. Did you ever have a temple in Vancouver?**

A. No.

**Q. Did you ever try to establish a temple in Vancouver?**

A. No.

Q. Did you ever solicit donations from anybody for a congregation in Vancouver?

A. No.

Q. Did you ever ask anybody to solicit for donations for anybody in Vancouver?

A. No. I never said anything about it.

Q. Did you ever ask anybody to borrow money for the establishment of a congregation in Vancouver?

A. No.

**Q. Did you ever have any ethical or moral problems in Vancouver in the 1970's?**

A. No. There was no problem there.

**Q. Were there any accusations that you had behaved immorally in any way in the 1970's in Vancouver?**

A. There was no accusations made.

Q. Are you familiar with the newspaper by the name of Navjivan, N-a-v-j-i-v-a-n, Singapore?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you recall the series of letters being published in that newspaper in 1975 concerning your activities in Vancouver?

A. I do not know about that.

Q. You don't know anything at all about that, or you don't remember about that?

A. I do not know.

Q. Have you ever sent a letter to that newspaper in Vancouver objecting or stating anything at all about the Vancouver congregation and your activities in Vancouver?

A. No.

Q. Did you know Mr. Jagjit Singh Ji?

A. Where do you mean?

Q. In Vancouver?

A. No.

Q. In Malaysia?

**A. I don't know anybody in Vancouver.** There are a lot of people I meet.

Q. Who signed that document under your signature attesting that he witnessed your writing the letter?

A. I believe it was Jagjit Singh.

Q. He was an attorney?

A. I don't know.

Q. You recall having your signature witnessed?

A. Yes.

**Q. Does that refresh your collection of who Jagjit Singh was?**

A. He was from Parnara (phonetic), I believe.

**Q. Do you recall ever writing him a letter concerning your activities in Vancouver?**

**A. I do not remember.**

Q. Do you recall his having written a letter to the Navjivan Singapore Newspaper?

A. No, I do not know.

Q. Is this the letter that expresses that you have stayed in motels many times, you did not write the letter?

A. Yes, I did not write that letter I do not know about that.

Q. Okay. Are you aware of receiving any letter from Jagjit Singh which is reprinted on page 1 on exhibit 40 and which is translated on page 11 of exhibit 40?

A. I do not remember.

Q. On page 3 of exhibit 40, there is a receipt that says received from the society \$500. The funds given to the society as donation for the development of the society's premises, and it's



signed by Raghbir S. Parmar.

A. I do not know about that.

**Q. Do you know of a 500 refund that was given to any donor to the Vancouver congregation?**

**A. No, I do not know about that.**

Q. Who is H.S. Kundar?

A. H.S Kundar?

Q. Directing your attention to page 4 of exhibit 40, do you see a treasurer, H.S. Kundar, President S.S. Demall-

A. Demall. It's hard to read that signature.

**Q. Do you know any of those people whose names appear on that?**

**A. No, I do not know.**

**Q. The Nanaksar Ishar Darbar GurSikh Temple society, are you familiar with that?**

**A. No, I do not know.**

**Q. Isn't that the society you formed in Canada to operate a temple there?**

**A. No. I made one in Toronto.**

**Q. But you never attempted to make one in Vancouver?**

**A. I do not remember.**

**Q. I'll ask you to think about that, Mr. Singh. I am going to ask you to recognize the fact that there are a number of people who are willing to come here to testify that you actively participated in the establishment of the temple in Vancouver.**

**A. They are most welcome to come, but I don't remember this.**

Q. So you don't remember that the congregation there borrowed \$5,840 and signed a promissory note for the same apparently from Mr. Surjit S. Gill? It's reflected on page 4 of exhibit 40.

A. I do not know.

Q. So you don't know anything at all that the congregation returned \$5000 to S.S. Gill as reflected on page 5 of that exhibit?

A. I do not know anything about that.

Q. So you also don't remember the congregation having borrowed \$10,000 from Hardev Kombe and signing a promissory note for the same attached as exhibit number 40, page 6?

A. I do not know about that.

Q. You-and you don't know about \$10,000 being returned to H.S. Kombe?

A. No.

Q. Do you know of any loans for \$1000 from S.S. Nikmal, a copy of which is contained in exhibit 40 on page 7?

A. No.

Q. Similarly, you don't have any recollection of a loan for \$1000 from a Gurdarshan Singh as shown on page 8 of exhibit number 40?

A. I do not know about that.

Q. You also don't know about these moneys having been turned to Gurdarshan Singh as shown on the bottom of page 8? You have no knowledge of that either, I suppose?

A. No, I do not know anything about that.

Q. And you don't know anything about at all about a loan then as shown on page 9 of exhibit 40 for \$1000 from Serjit S. Pannu?

A. I do not know.

Q. And refer to the same by the society?

A. I do not know about it.

**Q. Can you offer any explanation to me today why a Nanaksar Ishar Darbar Society might have come**

**into creation if you did not have to do anything with it?**

**A. I do not know anything about that.**

**Q. And you don't know any of the individuals whose names appear either signing on behalf of the society or signing as having received funds from the society?**

**A. No. I do not know the meaning.**

Hardev Singh Shergill

**For additional information go to:**

[www.sikhbulletin.com](http://www.sikhbulletin.com)

To find special issues of The Sikh Bulletin on Amar Singh mentioned in the above text and a link for more information.

Go to google and type Shergill VS Amar Singh

To find “shergill Swindled by Self-Styled Sikh Guru”

And a link at the bottom “Click Here” for more information.

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A message of condolence ... Wisconsin Gurdwara victims.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqx8rQ57CNU>

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### WHAT PROMPTED THIS ISSUE OF THE SIKH BULLETIN

**From:** Surinder Brar

[mailto:skbrar6@hotmail.com]

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 19, 2011 6:58 AM

**To:** Hardev shergill

**Subject:** Hello Bhaji,

Tell me about your first 12 years of life. Guddie.

---

From: editor@sikhbulletin.com

To: skbrar6@hotmail.com

Subject: RE: Date: Wed, 19 Oct 2011 09:45:22 - 0700

Why? I would not remember the first 6 years anyway.

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**From:** Surinder Brar

[mailto:skbrar6@hotmail.com]

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 19, 2011 3:09 PM

**To:** Hardev shergill

**Subject:** RE: I am just curious. What shaped your life? Why did you take care of all of us when you did not have to. What made you so determined to do what you did.

Some times I think if I was not sent to school my life would have been so different. We all are so lucky to be living in North America. It is because of your sacrifices we are enjoying this life. I never

knew our mother, I have no memories of her at all. I just want to know more about it. Guddie.

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**From:** Hardev Shergill

[mailto:editor@sikhbulletin.com]

**Sent:** Friday, October 21, 2011 11:08 AM

**To:** 'Surinder Brar' **Subject:** RE:

Sister I need some time to answer that but answer I will. Thank you for asking. BhaJi

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