



Progressive THOUGHTS

Dr. Harjinder Singh

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Aao Baniye Gursikh Pyara
New Delhi

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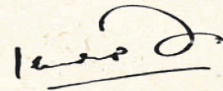
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Message



It gives me immense pleasure to present *Progressive Thoughts*, a heartfelt and thought-provoking work by Dr. Harjinder Singh. This book is a reflection of a mind committed to progress, truth, and the betterment of society. Through his words, author invites readers to reflect, question, and grow—a journey that resonates with the spirit of thoughtful transformation. May *Progressive Thoughts* inspire minds, stir conversations, and contribute meaningfully to the world of ideas.



- Kuldip Singh Bagga
M.D., Simco

Message

In the fast-paced and often distracted world we live in, initiatives like the Aao Baniye Gursikh Pyara show are not just relevant—they are essential. This platform has consistently acted as a bridge between the timeless wisdom of Gurbani and the modern Sikh consciousness. I have closely followed the evolution of this show and the profound impact it has had on viewers across the globe. It is both heartening and intellectually satisfying to see how this initiative has been transformed into a series of thought-provoking books. Dr. Harjinder Singh's literary contributions reflect a rare blend of spiritual insight, historical awareness, and contemporary relevance. The upcoming publication of *Progressive Thoughts* is yet another testament to his ongoing commitment to Gurmat-inspired intellectual engagement.



This book, much like the show itself, offers more than information—it offers reflection. It challenges us not only to admire the legacy of Guru Sahib's but to internalize his teachings in our homes, our dialogues, and our everyday actions. I am confident that *Progressive Thoughts* will become a valuable resource for seekers, scholars, and spiritual enthusiasts alike.

May this work continue to illuminate minds and inspire hearts around the world.

- **Gajinder Singh**, New York, USA

Preface

First and foremost, it is essential to explain the mission and vision of the Aao Baniye Gursikh Pyara show because, without a clear goal, any task remains incomplete despite being accomplished. The primary objective of this show is to present Gurbani and Sikh history in a unique way and make them accessible to the general public. Additionally, it aims to turn every Sikh into a preacher of Guru Nanak Sahib's mission. This preaching can be done through various means, such as through the show, social media, personal efforts, and written works. On the one hand, we are continuously striving to fulfil the objectives of Aao Baniye Gursikh Pyara show, and on the other, in 2022 we published *21st Century: Navi Soch*, in 2023, we published a book based on this show, titled as *Agaha Ku Traagh*, followed by *Gyaan Da Saagar* in 2024. Encouraged by the overwhelming response from the Sangat, we decided to publish the fourth book, "*Progressive Thoughts*". Similar to *Agaha Ku Traagh*, this book has also taken shape after refining and organizing thoughts shared on the show.

We hope that this book will be beneficial for readers of all the backgrounds and ages, as it includes not only thoughtful insights but also beautiful excerpts from Gurbani, accompanied by elegant writing and visuals. With the wisdom received from Gurmat, I am now presenting *Progressive Thoughts* to the readers.

- Dr. Harjinder Singh



Dedication and Gratitude

I humbly dedicate this book to the sacred memory of my beloved father, Sardar Lehna Singh Ji, and to my revered mother, Mata Kulwant Kaur Ji, whose unwavering guidance and nurturing introduced me to the divine path of Gurbani from an early age.

With deep gratitude, I extend my heartfelt thanks to my respected elder brother, Sardar Bhupinder Singh Ji, and gracious sister-in-law, Bibi Gursharan Kaur Ji, whose blessings and encouragement have always uplifted me.

I am profoundly thankful to my life partner, Sardarni Amarjeet Kaur, my sons, Harsimran Singh and Harman Singh, and my daughters-in-law, Gulsheen Kaur and Harleen Kaur, for their unwavering support and motivation in my literary pursuits.

I also sincerely acknowledge the invaluable friendship of Sardar Gujinder Singh Ji (USA), and express my warm appreciation to the dedicated team of Aao Baniye Gursikh Pyara, whose collective efforts and unwavering support have been instrumental in bringing this endeavour to fruition.

Index

1. Preserving Sikh Heritage	11
2. A Path to Spiritual Awakening	13
3. Guru Nanak's Revolutionary Vision for Gender Equality	15
4. Living in the Present	17
5. Sikhism – A Religion of the 21st Century	19
6. From Ignorance to Enlightenment	21
7. The Eternal Source of Spiritual Enlightenment	23
8. Understanding the True Legacy of the Sikh Gurus	25
9. The Need to Reinstate the Mool Nanakshahi Calendar	27
10. Making Spirituality Relevant for Today's Youth	29
11. A High Position	31
12. Move Forward with Awareness	32
13. Knowledge Must Be Put into Practice	33
14. Deserving Praise	34
15. The Passage of Kartarpur Sahib's Ideology	35
16. Kheda (True Happiness)	36

17. Connection with the Guru	37
18. Earn Honestly and Share with Others	38
19. Wisdom Comes from True Understanding	39
20. Desire for Success	40
21. Freedom from Ego	41
22. The Art of Living	42
23. Overcoming Conflicts	43
24. All Power in One Hand	44
25. Serve Only One	45
26. God is Omnipresent	46
27. Deep Connection	47
28. The Path to Chardi Kala	48
29. Naam Without Understanding	49
30. From Comparison to Gratitude	50
31. The Futility of Rituals	51
32. Body and Mind	52
33. Celebrating Sikh Centenaries	53
34. Small Lives, Great Sacrifices	54

35. The Capable Being	55
36. Being Misguided is Turning Away from Guru	56
37. The Bibeki (Wise) Sikh	57
38. Profound Understanding	58
39. Liberation from Superstitions	59
40. United Nations & Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji	60
41. Following Traditions	61
42. The Need to Live by Teachings	62
43. From Present to Future	63
44. Conflict Resolves in the Company of the Wise	64
45. Enhancing One's Personality	65
46. Gurbani's Profound Teachings for a Blissful Life	66
47. Freedom from Sorrow	68
48. The Need for Research	69
49. Fulfilling Our Responsibility	70
50. Recognizing the Divine Play	71
About the Author	72

ਰਿਅਦਹਕਾਗ
॥ ਰਚਛਾਨਵਠਡ
॥ ਤਦਪਨਪਫਦੀ
ਭਮਾਨੀਲਵ

Preserving Sikh Heritage

The glorious history of Sikhism is built upon countless sacrifices—brave souls who endured unimaginable torture yet never wavered in their faith. Some were made to sit on burning hot plates, others were beheaded, entombed alive, or had their bodies cut limb by limb, and many had their skulls scalped. Despite these brutalities, one principle remained unwavering—no one abandoned their faith. However, today, in the 21st century, we are facing a dire challenge: religious conversions. It is time for deep reflection and self-examination to understand why Sikh families are drifting away from their roots. What has changed? Where have we faltered? If we fail to address this crisis now, the coming generations will never forgive us.

There are three fundamental reasons behind this issue. First, we must acknowledge that true spirituality knows no caste. Unfortunately, caste-based divisions still exist within our community, weakening the very foundation of Sikhism, which was built on equality and oneness. We must rise above these man-made barriers and embrace the universal brotherhood that Guru Nanak Sahib Ji preached. Secondly, we need to reconsider how we utilize our resources. Sikh institutions often spend excessive amounts on grand displays, such as lavish *Langars* and extravagant *Nagar Kirtans*.

While these traditions hold significance, their purpose should not be overshadowed by unnecessary extravagance. Instead, we must redirect our resources towards meaningful efforts, such as education, community welfare, and spiritual growth. Thirdly, and most importantly, we need to reconnect our families with the priceless wisdom of Gurbani. The teachings of Guru Granth Sahib Ji are not just meant to be read but to be lived.

The solution to this crisis lies within us. We must lead by examples, live according to Sikh principles, and ensure that our children understand and embrace the depth of our faith. If we act now with wisdom and determination, we can preserve our rich heritage and keep the flame of Sikhism burning brightly for generations to come. The choice is ours—either we rise and safeguard our identity, or we allow history to hold us accountable for our negligence.



A Path to Spiritual Awakening

Guru Nanak Sahib's divine message to humanity transcends time and stands as the pinnacle of true spirituality. He illuminated the path of fearlessness, inner bliss, and divine love, guiding souls toward liberation from worldly anxieties. He taught that true wealth lies not in material possessions but in contentment, patience, and gratitude, freeing individuals from the cycle of dependence and endless desires. By breaking the chains of meaningless rituals and hypocrisy, he directed seekers toward wisdom, self-awareness, and a deeper connection with the Divine. Guru Nanak Sahib rejected the notion of superstitions and miracles as means of salvation, instead emphasizing complete surrender to the Divine Will (*Hukam*), where one finds true peace and fulfilment.

He instilled the principle of self-responsibility and direct devotion, encouraging individuals to stand before the Guru with their own heartfelt prayers rather than relying on intermediaries. His wisdom echoes in the eternal truth: **ਆਪਣ ਹਥੀ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਕਾਜੁ ਸਵਾਰੀਐ॥** (*One must take charge of their own spiritual journey*)(SGGS, Ang 474). This profound and innovative spirituality is not confined

to one faith or region but is a universal path for all of humanity. It is a call to awaken the divine light within, to live a life of truth, love, humility, and service, and to uplift not just ourselves but the entire world. Let us embrace the teachings of Guru Nanak Sahib in our lives and spread this spiritual light across the world, as this wisdom alone can lead us toward true spiritual elevation and liberation.



Guru Nanak's Revolutionary Vision for Gender Equality

Guru Nanak Sahib was not only a spiritual reformer but also a revolutionary advocate for gender equality at a time when patriarchal norms dominated society. Before his era, women were largely considered inferior, incapable of achieving spiritual liberation without being reborn as men. Many religious and social traditions viewed women as obstacles on the path to spirituality, restricting them to subordinate roles within both families and societies. However, Guru Nanak Sahib directly challenged these deeply ingrained prejudices through his teachings and actions. His assertion, *ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ॥* (*Why call her bad? From her, kings are born*) (SGGS, Ang 474) was not just a poetic statement but a radical declaration in favour of women's dignity and worth. He actively involved women in religious gatherings (*sangat*) and community service (*seva*), ensuring their participation in spiritual and social leadership. Unlike the prevailing belief that women needed to renounce their femininity to attain enlightenment, Guru Nanak Sahib emphasized that divine realization was equally accessible to all, regardless of gender.

His legacy laid the foundation for Sikh Gurus to institutionalize gender equality further, evident in practices such as the Langar system, where all—men and women—sat together as equals. In today's 21st century, where gender discrimination still persists in various forms, Guru Nanak's message remains as relevant as ever. It is imperative that we leverage modern platforms—social media, digital content, academic discussions, and community dialogues—to disseminate his revolutionary vision of gender equity. By doing so, we do not merely honor his teachings, but also work towards realizing the just and inclusive society he envisioned over five centuries ago.



Living in the Present

The central principle of Guru Granth Sahib's Bani is focused on "Now and Here"—living in the present moment with awareness and responsibility. Gurbani teaches us that a person must understand, refine, and fully embrace their present life rather than being preoccupied with past lives or future births. The verse ਸੁਣਿ ਮਨ ਮਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਪਿਆਰਿਆ ਮਿਲੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਹੈ ਏਹ॥ (*Listen, my dear friend, this is the moment to unite*) (SGGS, Ang 20) emphasizes that every moment of life is precious, and this very moment is the most important time for spiritual realization. Guru Sahib made it clear that liberation, happiness, and personal growth depends on one's own actions, virtues, and truthfulness, rather than on past life deeds or karmic influences. Unfortunately, even today, many preachers, religious leaders, intellectuals, and writers interpret Gurbani based on old concepts such as *Chitr-Gupt* (divine record keepers), past lives, future births, and fate, which diverts people's attention away from self-awareness, self-improvement, and spiritual progress.

Guru Granth Sahib does not teach us to dwell on the past or worry about the future, rather encourages us to focus on the present and understand the true essence

of life. If we approach Gurbani with a scientific and practical mindset, we realize that ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ॥ (*O mind, you are the embodiment of divine light, recognize your true essence*) (SGGS, Ang 20)—true peace is found within, not outside. Today, the need is to free our thinking from outdated religious constraints, understand Gurbani in its true context, and apply its core principles to our lives. Only by doing so we can truly comprehend the real message of Guru Sahib's Bani and integrate it into our spiritual, social, and personal lives.



Sikhism – A Religion of the 21st Century

Sikhism is a scientific and modern religion that stands out from others due to three fundamental characteristics that make it highly relevant to the 21st century. The first key feature is that it completely rejects superstitions. Gurbani encourages individuals to live with logic, wisdom, and knowledge, rather than being influenced by blind faith, ignorance, or baseless rituals. In today's era of science and education, one cannot rely on myths, superstitions, or outdated beliefs. The second characteristic is that Sikhism teaches love and care for nature and the environment. Guru Granth Sahib states, **ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਵਸਿਆ ॥ ਤੇਰਾ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਲਖਿਆ ॥** (*The Creator resides in the nature and every where, and He is limitless*) (SGGS, Ang 469), emphasizing the importance of nature in sustaining life. With increasing global warming and environmental destruction, Sikhism's teachings about respecting and preserving natural resources have become even more relevant today. The third key feature is that Sikhism is always in harmony with new ideas and advancements. The principles of Gurbani never contradict science or modern developments; instead, they promote self-awareness, spiritual growth, and a rational approach to life. No scientific discovery or technological advancement can

ever be against the core teachings of Gurbani, making Sikhism a progressive, future-oriented, and universally relevant way of life.

This is why Sikhism is not just a religious tradition but a complete way of life that advocates for human rights, freedom, and equality. Sikhism also strongly supports gender equality, education, and the rights of the working class, ensuring that its principles remain impactful and influential across all generations. It is essential that we convey the true teachings of Gurbani in today's language so that the world can understand the scientific and practical relevance of Sikhism.



From Ignorance to Enlightenment

In Gurbani, the concepts of *peke* (parental home) and *sohre* (in-laws' home) serve as profound metaphors representing different stages of spiritual evolution. The *peke* ghar symbolizes the state of spiritual ignorance, attachment, and self-centeredness, where an individual perceives the world through the lens of personal possession and ego. In this state, a person considers worldly achievements, relationships, and materialistic gains as his own, fostering a sense of separation from the divine and others. This attachment leads to suffering, as desires and expectations dominate one's mind. However, when one transitions to the *sohre* ghar, which represents the abode of wisdom and divine realization, their perspective shifts. This transition occurs through the guidance of the Guru, who imparts the wisdom that everything in this world is temporary and belongs to the Divine. In the *sohre* ghar, one recognizes the interconnectedness of all beings, fostering humility, love, and a spirit of selfless service. The transformation from *peke* to *sohre* is not just a change in perspective but a complete spiritual rebirth—where selfishness dissolves into selflessness, attachment into detachment, and ignorance into enlightenment.

Ultimately, Gurbani teaches that true liberation lies in moving from the ego-driven world of *peke* to the divine-consciousness of *sohre*, where love, unity, and the well-being of all become the guiding principles of life.



The Eternal Source of Spiritual Enlightenment

In Gurbani, *pavan* (air) and *pani* (water) are described as essential elements for sustaining life, but they are not considered our Guru. Guru Granth Sahib clearly states that *Shabad* (Divine Word) is the true Guru, and spiritual progress can be achieved through it. Just as *pavan* and *pani* are necessary for physical survival, *Gyaan* (spiritual wisdom) and Shabad are essential for the nourishment of the soul. The verse ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਚੇਲਾ॥ (SGGS, Ang 943) defines the Guru as the guiding light of wisdom that leads a person from darkness to enlightenment. Many people tend to revere natural elements like air, water, fire, and earth, considering them divine forces, but Gurmat does not support this belief. Guru Nanak Sahib Ji states, ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਪਿਤਾ ਤੂੰਹੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਾਤਾ॥ (SGGS, Ang 103), where Toon (You) refers to the Eternal Lord, not any physical element.

In Gurbani, air (*pavan*) and water are depicted as fundamental elements of life, but they are not our Guru. Sri Guru Granth Sahib clearly states that “Shabad itself is the Guru,” and for spiritual progress, it is the Shabad that is essential. Gurbani teaches

us that we should nurture our spiritual well-being just as we care for our physical health. As we recognize the necessity of air and water for bodily sustenance, we must also acknowledge the importance of divine wisdom for spiritual growth. ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸੇਵੇ ਜਗਤੁ ਮੁਆ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਗਵਾਇ ॥ (SGGS, Ang 591) & ਬਾਝੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਡੁਬਾ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥ (SGGS, Ang 138) clearly states that without serving the True Guru, the world is spiritually dead, and without the Guru's guidance, humanity remains drowned in ignorance. Hence, we must understand that the Guru is not a natural element or force, but the eternal wisdom that provides true peace and spiritual enlightenment.



Understanding the True Legacy of the Sikh Gurus

It is very clear that many miraculous stories have been added to the history of Guru Nanak Sahib to Guru Gobind Singh Ji, which has no connection with Gurmat. These stories were written by authors who did not have a deep understanding of Gurmat and were unaware of the true essence of the Guru Sahibans' teachings and Gurbani. According to Gurmat, the Gurus always taught us to live in divine will (*Hukam Rajai Chalna*) and to accept the command of *Akal Purakh* rather than relying on supernatural powers or miracles. It is unfortunate that certain pre-1469 traditions were merged into Sikh history, thereby pushing the original Gurmat principles into the background.

The greatest “miracle” of the Guru Sahibans was their spiritual contribution, their tireless efforts, and their dedication to spreading the truth. Guru Nanak Sahib travelled over 23,000 miles in extremely challenging conditions—without modern means of transport, passports, or easy travel facilities. This is considered one of the longest spiritual journeys undertaken by any religious leader, during which he spread

the message of truth and the principles of Gurmat worldwide. However, the greatest “miracle” was the compilation of Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Gobind Singh Ji ensured that this divine wisdom remained eternal and unaltered so that it could continue guiding humanity forever. Unfortunately, instead of understanding this true spiritual legacy, we have become entangled in fabricated stories and miraculous tales. Such false narratives not only distort our religious identity, but also obscure the real teachings of the Guru Sahibans. Today’s need is that we attain a deep understanding of Gurbani, incorporate the true wisdom and teachings of Guru Granth Sahib into our lives, rather than accepting and spreading beliefs based on blind faith and false narratives.



The Need to Reinstate the Mool Nanakshahi Calendar

The Sikh calendar has been a subject of extensive debate for many years, particularly regarding the transition from the traditional *Bikrami* Calendar to the scientifically formulated *Mool Nanakshahi* Calendar. Historically, the Sikh community followed the *Bikrami* system, which is lunar-based and often led to inconsistencies in Gurburab dates, shifting them across different years. To resolve this issue, extensive research was undertaken, leading to the creation of the *Mool Nanakshahi* Calendar, which aligns with solar calculations and maintains fixed dates for Sikh historical events.

Professor Pal Singh Purewal dedicated 40 years of hard work to developing the *Mool Nanakshahi* Calendar, which was scientifically accurate, historically correct, and aligned with the sovereignty of the Sikh Panth. The Sikh community had officially adopted it and even implemented it for several years. However, for unknown reasons, we have once again reverted to the *Bikrami* Calendar, which has harmed our religious self-reliance (independent identity). The *Mool Nanakshahi* Calendar ensured that Gurburabs always fell on the same date, preserving historical accuracy. For example,

Guru Gobind Singh Ji's Gurburab was meant to be observed on January 5th every year, rather than on different dates each year.

This is a crucial issue that requires serious attention from *Panthak* organizations and responsible Sikh institutions. Across the world, many Gurdwaras continue to follow the *Mool Nanakshahi* Calendar, acknowledging its authenticity. The Sikh Panth must now take a decisive step towards reinstating it, considering its scientific precision and historical accuracy, ensuring that future generations receive the correct timeline of Sikh history. It is hoped that Panthak institutions will deliberate on this matter and once again implement the *Mool Nanakshahi* Calendar, reaffirming Sikh sovereignty and independent identity.



Making Spirituality Relevant for Today's Youth

Connecting Sikh youth with the spirituality of Guru Nanak Sahib in today's world requires a fresh and relatable approach. When we discussed this topic with our team (Aao baniye Gursikh Pyara), an interesting analogy came to mind—just as people eagerly anticipate the release of a new iPhone. Every year, Apple CEO Tim Cook and his team work tirelessly to bring new features, making the phone more advanced and appealing. This constant innovation creates excitement among people, and they are willing to invest in the latest version. However, Guru Nanak Sahib's message of spirituality is never outdated; rather, it is always timeless and relevant. Unlike, a phone that needs update every year, Guru Nanak's message is a complete and eternal package of truth, wisdom, and righteousness. He provided a way of life that remains universally applicable, whether at the workplace, in personal relationships, or in society. His emphasis on truth (*Sach*), honesty, and selfless service is what keeps spirituality real and practical.

To connect today's youth with spirituality, we must present it in a way that resonates with their modern experiences. Just as they value technological advancements, they should realize that Guru Nanak's teachings are the ultimate upgrade for the soul, offering clarity, purpose, and a deeper connection with reality. If we can communicate spirituality in this logical, relatable, and experiential manner, young minds will naturally be drawn to it—not as a ritualistic practice but as a practical and fulfilling way of life.



A High Position

Every human being wants to be successful in life and aspires to achieve a high position, whether it is spiritual or worldly. However, attaining either of these positions depends on certain virtues. The first is **punctuality**—a person who does not value time is not accepted by society, and this lack of discipline becomes a major obstacle to success. The second is **consistency**—every task can only be accomplished when practiced continuously. The third is **loyalty**—one is not truly successful in the eyes of the Guru unless they embody the virtue of loyalty. The fourth is **hard work**—to reach any milestone, one must undergo hardships, which is impossible without effort. The fifth and most important is the **Guru and Gurbani**—without them, reaching any position is unimaginable. Sri Guru Granth Sahib instils these virtues in us, making life truly meaningful.

Move Forward with Awareness

Today's youth are inquisitive and ask questions positively. They show great interest in learning about religion. Therefore, we must answer their questions. Somewhere along the way, we have been misled into believing that one should not question religion. However, Guru Nanak Sahib encouraged us to ask questions. On the very first page of Guru Granth Sahib, there is a question: **ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲਿ॥** (*How can one become truthful? How can the wall of falsehood be broken?*) The answer is provided in the very next line: **ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ॥** (*By walking in accordance with divine command, O Nanak, this is preordained.*) (SGGS, Ang 1)

This means that the wall of falsehood will collapse when we live in harmony with the divine will. Asking such questions elevates one's intellectual level and provides the ability to choose the right path in life. Therefore, misleading people into thinking that questioning religion is forbidden leads the community astray, fostering superstition. Let us ask questions together, seek their answers, and understand the deeper meaning of **ਆਗਾਹਾ ਕੂ ਤ੍ਰਾਪਿ**—which means to move forward with wisdom and clarity.

Knowledge Must Be Put into Practice

Sikhi begins with a way of life, but today's Sikh generation seems to be drifting away from this ideal way of living. There may be several reasons for this, but one key issue is that many who identify as Sikhs lack the fragrance of Gurbani's virtues and values in their lives. Instead, they appear to be influenced by self-centred and materialistic tendencies. The freshness of Gurbani has faded from their daily lives. Despite being wealthy, possessing academic degrees and diplomas, many are unaware of even the basic teachings of Gurbani, such as the *Mool Mantar*. They claim to be followers of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji*, and the world perceives them as such, yet they do not embody the essence of Guru Nanak Sahib's teachings.

Today, there is a dire need not only to gain knowledge of the Guru's teachings but also to put them into practice. By applying Guru Sahib's invaluable wisdom in our personal lives and in society, we can truly uphold and live by the principles of Sikhi.

Deserving Praise

Sikh institutions that are actively engaged in literary and constructive work have made significant contributions to the Sikh community. Traditionally, religious activities such as preaching, organizing Kirtan Darbars, and holding Nagar Kirtans have been conducted with great devotion in villages and cities across the world. However, in this modern era—an age of ideas and scientific thought—we must engage with the new generation in ways that resonate with them. We need to hold their hands, introduce them to Sikh history and values through literary activities and scholarships, and create more employment opportunities so that Sikh youth become self-reliant in every aspect.

Institutions like ‘Sikh Hope’ in Mohali, ‘Sikh Education Society’ in Dehradun, ‘Sikh Education Trust’ in Delhi, and ‘Gurdwara Singh Sabha, Rajouri Garden’ have been instrumental in this effort. These organizations provide free education to Sikh children in schools, colleges, and competitive exams while also helping them secure jobs. A humble request to those who are already engaged in such service: continue your efforts without interruption. And for those who have not yet stepped forward in this direction, take action as soon as possible to contribute to this noble cause.

The Passage of Kartarpur Sahib's Ideology

The Kartarpur Sahib corridor has opened, fulfilling the longing of countless Sikhs to visit this sacred site. In just a few days, millions of Sahibzade have visited, and many more are preparing to go. One important question that arises is this: while we deeply yearn to behold the Gurdwaras associated with Guru Sahib, do we equally yearn to embrace the teachings and commitments that Guru Sahiban bestowed in connection with those sacred places? At Kartarpur, Guru Nanak Sahib spread the message of a caste-free, superstition-free, and hardworking society. Do we bring that message back with us? Our pilgrimage will complete when we integrate these Kartarpur principles into our homes, workplaces, and communities. The real tribute to Guru Nanak Sahib lies not just in visiting these sites, but in walking the path he laid out. If the spirit of Kartarpur does not reflect in our character and conduct, then the journey remains incomplete. Let us ensure that each step we take towards Kartarpur also brings us a step closer to living like true Sikhs—guided by values, not just rituals.

Kheda (True Happiness)

At the worldly level, there are many measures of success—such as high-ranking positions, fame, wealth, luxury cars, and grand houses. However, at the spiritual level, there is only one measure of true success— *Kheda* (inner peace), happiness, and bliss. According to Gurbani, one may possess all the material wealth in the world, but if they are not connected with the Guru, they remain unsuccessful. On the other hand, even if one lives in a simple hut but accepts the divine will and experiences eternal contentment, they are truly successful in every way. Sorrow and joy, good and bad—these are the colours of life. We cannot deny them, but they offer experiences that help us grow and teach us to live fearlessly and free from enmity. Gurbani states: ਜਬ ਧਾਰੈ ਕੋਊ ਬੈਰੀ ਮੀਤੁ ॥ ਤਬ ਲਗੁ ਨਿਹਚਲੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਚੀਤੁ ॥ (*As long as one sees another as an enemy or a friend, their mind cannot remain stable.*) (SGGS, Ang 278)

By rising above hatred and enmity and embracing the concept of “ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ” (*One Father, and we are all His children*), we can surely immerse ourselves in eternal bliss. In today’s materialistic age, it is essential to accept the divine will and live according to the teachings of Gurbani to find true peace.

Connection with the Guru

In the coming times, we will continue to hear discussions about Kirtan Darbars, Khalsa marches, Katha-lectures, seminars, and Gurmat events. However, our attention often drifts away from the deeper wisdom within Sri Guru Granth Sahib—the manifestation of nature, divine beauty, and the eternal presence of the Creator in every verse. In this modern era, as humans chase material success, simplicity and harmony with nature are disappearing, and compassion is fading from society. Amidst these conditions, why are we not turning to Sri Guru Granth Sahib for guidance and support? The modern human, residing in grand stone houses, is rapidly severing their connection with nature. As a result, they are becoming more superstitious, greedy, materialistic, and short-tempered. However, even in this materialistic environment, Sri Guru Granth Sahib remains a source of eternal wisdom, where one can witness both the Creator and His Creation: ਸਭ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਤੂੰ ਕਾਦਿਰੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪਾਕੀ ਨਾਈ ਪਾਕੁ ॥ (*All of creation is Yours, O Creator. Your Name is the purest of all.*) (SGGS, Ang 464)

Let us return to the comforting lap of nature, internalize the Guru's message, and embrace the blissful connection with nature that Gurbani teaches us. In doing so, we can rediscover true happiness (*Kheda*) in our lives.

Earn Honestly and Share with Others

Like every year, we have once again welcomed the New Year with joy, celebrations, and prayers at Gurdwaras, seeking peace and happiness for all. However, an important question arises—while we all pray for the well-being of others, how many of us actively work towards it? Simply praying for *Sarbat da Bhala* (welfare of all) is not enough. True change can happen if we walk on the path shown by the Guru and practice His teachings. The New Year should not just bring external celebrations but also inner transformation. To achieve progress and prosperity, we need to embrace a constructive and forward-thinking approach. Guru Nanak Sahib Ji emphasizes: ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਇ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ॥ (*One who earns through honest labour and shares with others—Nanak says, such a person understands the true path.* (SGGS, Ang 1245) Through these words, Guru Sahib inspires us to work hard and serve humanity, warning against laziness and idleness.

Wisdom Comes from True Understanding

It is often said that our destiny is written by God, but Gurbani offers a different perspective: ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜੇ ਤੂ ਅਕਲਿ ਲਤੀਫੁ ਕਾਲੇ ਲਿਖੁ ਨ ਲੇਖ॥ (*Fareed, if you have true wisdom, do not inscribe bad deeds in your account.*) (SGGS, Ang 1378) From this, it becomes evident that we are responsible for our own destiny. The good or bad deeds we perform today are what shape our future. The concept of “Labor under correct knowledge” aligns with this idea—if knowledge is obtained from the right source in the right way, life becomes meaningful and fulfilling. Gurbani urges us to rise above confusion and take action: ਮੇਰਾ ਮਨੁ ਆਲਸੀਆ ਉਘਲਾਨਾ॥ (*My mind was lazy and unmotivated, but now it is awakened.*) (SGGS, Ang 697)

This means that laziness must be abandoned in favour of hard work and effort. Wrong actions only lead to suffering, whereas good deeds today will ensure a prosperous and joyful future. Therefore, we must make a firm resolution to walk the path of righteousness now, not later.

Desire for Success

God has blessed every human being with an invaluable gift—intelligence and wisdom. Gurbani states: **ਏਕਾ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਜੇਤੇ ਹੈ ਜੀਅ॥ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਵਿਹੂਣਾ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕੀਅ॥** (SGGS, Ang 24) This means that all living beings in the universe function through the wisdom and awareness bestowed by the Divine. There is no creature that has been created without intelligence. Each person walks the path of life according to the level of wisdom they possess. Now, it is up to us how and where we choose to utilize our intellect and the precious human life. If, instead of blaming God for our failures, we make proper use of our human life, then success is a blessing that Waheguru Himself bestows upon us. If we do so, then success is something that Waheguru Himself grants us.



Freedom from Ego

Gurbani not only guides us in spiritual matters but also helps us in various aspects of life, including relationships and social interactions. It teaches us to stay away from ego and embrace humility. The Sikh Gurus lived their lives with humility, but today's human beings are increasingly trapped in ego and self-pride, rejecting patience and divine will. Many achievements in life lead to arrogance, which distances us from *Akal Purakh* (the Eternal One) and brings suffering in this material world. Gurbani clearly explains this concept: ਹਉਮੈ ਦੀਰਘ ਰੋਗੁ ਹੈ ਦਾਰੂ ਭੀ ਇਸੁ ਮਾਹਿ॥ (SGGS, Ang 466)

This means ego is a chronic disease, but its cure also lies within. To free ourselves from arrogance, we must constantly observe our thoughts, avoid negative thinking, and cultivate a humble mindset. Over time, as we apply these principles, the remedy for ego starts to take effect, and we begin walking on the path of a meaningful and successful life.



The Art of Living

A human being is complete with both mind and body. Both the body and mind have their own respective needs. While living in this world, a person can achieve whatever they desire through hard work and effort because the modern materialistic age is filled with all kinds of resources. But can inner peace be bought in the same way? The answer is no—because the happiness of the mind requires a different kind of effort. According to Sri Guru Granth Sahib, one must understand the true way of life: ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਭਾਣੈ ਜੋ ਚਲੈ ਦੁਖੁ ਨ ਪਾਵੈ ਕੋਇ॥ (*One who walks in accordance with the Guru's Will attains the highest state of life.*) (SGGS, Ang 31)

This opens the path to spiritual bliss. Such bliss cannot be attained by renouncing the world and meditating in the wilderness. True happiness is found by the one who learns to live gracefully even through life's challenges.



Overcoming Conflicts

Differences in thoughts and opinions are natural. Even in a family, members often disagree, yet they continue to live together. A fundamental weakness of human nature is the expectation that others should think like us and agree with us. A person who insists on always being right ends up closing the doors to new perspectives. Another major flaw is the belief that “what I understand is the absolute truth.” Bhagat Kabir Ji offers a valuable insight: ਬੰਦੇ ਖੋਜੁ ਦਿਲ ਹਰ ਰੋਜ ਨਾ ਫਿਰੁ ਪਰੇਸਾਨੀ ਮਾਹਿ॥ (*O man, search within yourself every day, and you will not remain troubled.*) (SGGS, Ang 727)

This means that if a person engages in self-reflection daily, they can overcome obstacles and progress in life. However, many Sikhs today are caught in internal conflicts, trying to prove each other wrong instead of embracing the wisdom of: ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੇ ਸੇਵਕ ਦੁਖ ਨ ਝੂਰਨ॥ (*The servants of God do not suffer in vain.*) (SGGS, Ang 395) By letting go of envy and unnecessary arguments, we can illuminate our inner selves with true spiritual wisdom.

All Power in One Hand

During the time of Guru Nanak Sahib Ji's arrival, society was plagued by deception, trickery, exploitation, and dishonesty. Corruption was rampant, and rulers—who were supposed to protect humanity—had turned into oppressors. Ritualistic practices had eroded self-respect and integrity, while blind faith misled the masses. In such dark times, Guru Nanak Sahib laid the foundation of a just society: ਨਾਨਕਿ ਰਾਜੁ ਚਲਾਇਆ ਸਚੁ ਕੋਟੁ ਸਤਾਣੀ ਨੀਵੈ ਦੈ॥ (*Guru Nanak established the reign of truth on strong foundations.*) (SGGS, Ang 966)

This society was built on self-sovereignty, human rights, and moral courage. It embodied fearlessness, unity, patience, tolerance, and mutual respect—values essential for a righteous and harmonious world. Everything unfolds according to the divine will, as Guru Arjan Sahib states: ਵਾ ਕੈ ਹਾਥਿ ਸਮਰਥ ਤੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਕਰਨੈ ਜੋਗ॥ (*The Almighty holds all power and is the doer of all deeds.*) (SGGS, Ang 255) However, divine wisdom is present within every individual, and to make this world a better place, we must act upon the Guru's guidance: ਆਪਣ ਹਥੀ ਆਪਣਾ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਕਾਜੁ ਸਵਾਰੀਐ॥ (*One must take responsibility for their own deeds and uplift themselves.*) (SGGS, Ang 473)

Serve Only One

The long queues at religious places indicate that devotees still exist in large numbers today. At times, especially during special Gurburabs at historical Gurdwaras, one even has to stand in line for hours just to bow before Guru Granth Sahib. In doing so, some devotees even mistakenly bow to the back of the Granthi sitting there. In fact, some go so far as to consider themselves fortunate to bow at a spot where a Granthi or Paathi Singh places their feet. It is worth pondering—can merely visiting Gurdwaras lead to our salvation? Can we truly free ourselves from vices just by bowing before Guru Sahib or having His *darshan*? Guru Sahib teaches: ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨੋ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਵੇਖਦਾ ਜੇਤਾ ਜਗਤੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ॥ ਡਿਠੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜਿਚਰੁ ਸਬਦਿ ਨ ਕਰੇ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ॥ (SGGS, Ang 594)

This means that while the whole world bows before Guru Sahib, it does not necessarily attain liberation. One cannot be freed from worldly bonds until they engage in contemplation of the divine word (Shabad). Thus, beyond merely bowing before Guru Granth Sahib, it is essential to embrace His teachings and focus on reflecting upon the Shabad. As Guru Sahib further instructs: ਟਹਲ ਕਰਹੁ ਤਉ ਏਕ ਕੀ ਜਾ ਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਿਥਾ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥ (*Offer your devotion to the One, so that nothing goes in vain.*) (SGGS, Ang 255)

God is Omnipresent

Gurbani explains the relationship between the Creator (*Kaadar*) and Creation (*Kudrat*). While they are expressed as two separate terms, their essence is one: **ਆਪੇ ਸਭ ਘਟ ਅੰਦਰੇ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਬਾਹਰਿ॥ ਆਪੇ ਗੁਪਤੁ ਵਰਤਦਾ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਜਾਹਰਿ॥** (*The Divine dwells within every heart and pervades beyond as well.*) (SGGS, Ang 555) Guru Sahib guides us to respect and preserve the Creator's creation: **ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਵਸਿਆ॥ ਤੇਰਾ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੀ ਲਖਿਆ॥** (*I am in awe of Your creation, O Lord; Your limits cannot be comprehended.*) (SGGS, Ang 469) Yet, in our misplaced devotion, we pluck priceless flowers to decorate Gurdwaras, harming nature and disobeying the Guru's teachings. Instead of wasting resources, Guru Sahib instructs us to use the community's wealth for the welfare of the needy: *Garib ka muh Guru ki golak.* (The mouth of the poor is the treasury of the Guru.) For true spiritual and communal progress, we must prioritize the upliftment of society and act with wisdom and responsibility.

Deep Connection

People often say that relationships and connections are not what they used to be. With changing times, individuals barely have time to sit together and share their joys and sorrows. This lack of meaningful interaction is leading to negative consequences for humanity. In such a tense situation, we need to learn from honeybees because even they must stay united and work together to produce sweet honey. Similarly, whether it is blood relationships or deep friendships, they can only last long if we stay together in harmony. After all, even a lone tree cannot withstand strong winds. Most importantly, national unity can be achieved by drawing inspiration from Guru Sahib and Guru Granth Sahib. Every Sikh must live by Sikh principles because without principles, unity is unimaginable.



The Path to Chardi Kala

The 21st century is the age of science, and while it has greatly contributed to human progress, it has also led to spiritual decline. Despite advancements on a material level, many people feel lost and spiritually weak. To free the mind from doubt and maintain Chardi Kala, Guru Sahib teaches: ਜਿਸੁ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਮਨਿ ਹੋਇ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਸੋ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਕਹੀਐ॥ ਮਨ ਕੀ ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਜਾਇ ਹਰਿ ਪਰਮ ਪਦੁ ਲਹੀਐ॥ (*The True Guru is the one whose company brings joy to the mind. When doubt is removed, the highest spiritual state is attained.*) (SGGS, Ang 168)

Only upon uniting with the Divine does true bliss emerge, and duality and instability dissolve. Guru Nanak Sahib sowed the seed of this spiritual awakening, and Sikhism continues to guide humanity along this path today. Sri Guru Granth Sahib not only addresses spiritual well-being but also provides wisdom on every aspect of life. In today's challenging times, we can reach our destination by following the path shown by the Guru. What we need now is to set aside blind faith, rituals, and miracles, and instead adopt an enlightened and thoughtful approach. Only then can Sikhi truly flourish and progress towards *Chardikala* (eternal optimism and high spirits).

Naam Without Understanding

Our viewers often ask about the concept of Naam Simran. With my humble understanding, I would like to share few thoughts on this subject. The word Naam refers to divine wisdom, and Simran means understanding and internalizing that wisdom. By comprehending this wisdom, one can live a life of patience, contentment, and stability, as guided by Guru Granth Sahib. This path does not involve falling into superficial displays or illusions. Guru Arjan Sahib states in Gurbani: ਪਾਠੁ ਪੜਿਓ ਅਰੁ ਬੇਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਿਓ ਨਿਵਲਿ ਭੁਅੰਗਮ ਸਾਧੇ॥ ਪੰਚ ਜਨਾ ਸਿਉ ਸੰਗੁ ਨ ਛੁਟਕਿਓ ਅਧਿਕ ਅਹੰਬੁਧਿ ਬਾਧੇ॥ (SGGS, Ang 641)

This means that merely reading scriptures, contemplating the *Vedas*, or practicing physical austerities like yogic postures does not necessarily detach one from the influence of the five vices (lust, anger, greed, attachment, and ego). Instead, it may even increase one's ego-driven intellect. Thus, *Naam Simran* is not about mindless repetition of words or external rituals, it is about aligning oneself with God's will, gaining wisdom from Gurbani, and implementing it in life.

From Comparison to Gratitude

In today's modern life, people are increasingly suffering from mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and loneliness. A major reason behind this is that individuals, caught in the materialistic race, feel a sense of inequality in society. They compare their possessions and status with others, and when they find themselves lacking, they become mentally distressed. The only way out of this mindset is the wisdom of Gurbani, which does not prohibit comparison but teaches the right way to compare. Instead of looking at those who have more, Guru Sahib instructs us to compare ourselves with those who have less—those who struggle even for two meals a day. When we realize how blessed we already are, a sense of gratitude naturally develops within us. Gratitude holds immense importance in Sikh philosophy. Let us, through the guidance of Guru Granth Sahib, move beyond unnecessary comparisons and cultivate a state of thankfulness.

The Futility of Rituals

India is a land of diverse religions, languages, and traditions. Over time, religious priests gained control and convinced people that their success depends on rituals, prayers, and offerings. They instilled fear, making people believe that without these rituals, they would face divine wrath. In their ignorance, people began subjecting themselves to physical hardships, thinking that suffering would please the Divine. However, Guru Sahib clarifies: ਮਨਹਠਿ ਕਿਨੈ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਸਭ ਥਕੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ॥ ਮਨਹਠਿ ਭੇਖ ਕਰਿ ਭਰਮਦੇ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਦੂਜੈ ਭਾਇ॥

(No one has attained the Divine through stubborn rituals; all who tried have failed. Those who practice outward rituals wander in delusion and suffer in duality.) (SGGS, Ang 593)

Unfortunately, even within the Sikh community, meaningless rituals have started taking root. Instead of spiritual and intellectual progress, such practices are leading to stagnation. In this age of science and reasoning, we must understand that physical hardships do not lead to spiritual bliss. True peace comes through hard work, patience, and contentment—values that Gurbani imparts as practical wisdom. A simple and content life can be attained through the wisdom of Gurbani, and it is through this wisdom that one can develop religious and social understanding.

Body and Mind

We joyfully celebrate birthdays with family and friends, gathering to share our happiness. However, such celebrations are meaningful only when we are physically and mentally healthy. Just as we maintain our physical health through exercise, walking, and a balanced diet, we must also take care of our mental well-being. For that, it is essential to connect with Shabad Guru—Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Understanding and implementing Gurbani in daily life is as necessary for the mind as exercise is for the body. Let us all make a commitment to nurture both our body and soul through spiritual wisdom.



Celebrating Sikh Centenaries

We are truly fortunate to celebrate the centenaries of Guru Sahiban. These events deepen the Sikh community's connection with Sikh history and Gurbani. Centenary celebrations also serve as reminders that the Sikh Panth, which has drifted in some ways, must return to its spiritual roots through Sri Guru Granth Sahib's teachings. Since 1966, the Sikh community has commemorated many centenaries, with the core objective of spreading Guru's message to all humanity. Today's era is an age of ideas, where books, research publications, and university chairs dedicated to Sikh studies are far more impactful. These initiatives enhance the global standing of Sikhs. Now, more than ever, Sikh institutions and individuals must come together to ensure that future centenaries are celebrated in their true spirit, guiding the next generation towards a deeper connection with Guru and Sikhi.



Young Lives, Great Sacrifices

Sikh history is filled with immense sacrifices. The Gurus and their Sikhs laid down their lives step by step for the sake of humanity. In the history of martyrdom, December 20 to 26 (from 6 to 13 Poh) marks the days when the four Sahibzada's of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, Mata Gujri Ji, the three beloved Sikhs (*3 out of Panj Piara's*), and many other Sikhs attained martyrdom. In the Sikh community, this period is known as *Shaheedi Hafta* (Martyrdom Week). This Shaheedi Hafta serves as a powerful reminder that we need to draw inspiration from the firm and faithful Sikhs of Guru Sahib in today's time. By placing our trust in Guru Sahib and surrendering ourselves before the Almighty, we can experience the presence of the Divine in every particle around us: **ਸਿਦਕੁ ਕਰਿ ਜਿਜਦਾ ਮਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਖਸੂਦੁ ॥ ਜਿਹ ਧਿਰਿ ਦੇਖਾ ਤਿਹ ਧਿਰਿ ਮਉਜੂਦੁ ॥** (*Have faith and bow down, Recognizing the Divine presence everywhere.*) (SGGS, Ang 83)

But in today's time, reasoning, logic, and discernment guide our decisions. In this context, with firm faith in Gurbani's wisdom, we must draw inspiration from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and history to uphold the principles of human progress and extend them to all of humanity. This will be the true tribute to the martyrdom of the Sahibzade and the Singhs.

The Capable Being

Human beings are the most intelligent and powerful creation of the Almighty. Across the entire earth, no other creature matches the capabilities of a human. The level of supremacy that humanity has achieved is unattainable for any other living being. Therefore, those whom the Almighty has lifted from the cycle of lesser creatures and blessed with human form should never consider themselves powerless. What we need today is to recognize our origin, our purpose, and our Creator. Guru Sahib commands: ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ॥ ਮਨ ਹਰਿ ਜੀ ਤੇਰੈ ਨਾਲਿ ਹੈ ਗੁਰਮਤੀ ਰੰਗੁ ਮਾਣੁ॥ (*O mind, you are the embodiment of Divine light, recognize your origin. The Lord is always with you, enjoy His grace through the Guru's wisdom.*) (SGGS, Ang 440)

If we truly understand this, we will realize that after receiving the human form, our actions should align with our humanity, not with the instincts of lower beings. Once we do this, the upliftment of the entire human race will not take long. We can transform this world into a paradise only when we connect with our origin and engage in selfless service for the welfare of all.

Being Misguided is Turning Away from Guru

We are all living in the 21st century, an era dominated by logic, thought, science, and reasoning. Among all religions, Sikhism is the one that fully embraces these concepts because its foundation itself is built on logic and reason. Sri Guru Granth Sahib examines every aspect of life in a highly rational and logical manner. However, it is concerning that within Sikhism, some deceitful individuals and self-proclaimed saints (*Babas*) have created a new path that leads Sikhs away from their faith. This path is filled with superstitions, rituals, and blind faith in human gurus. Falling into these rituals is equivalent to turning away from Guru Sahib because the Sikh Gurus devoted their lives to freeing people from such ignorance through their travels, teachings, and ultimate sacrifices. Yet, despite their efforts, many Sikhs today have strayed from the true path. Let us seek forgiveness for our mistakes, return to the Guru's path, and receive the true blessings of Guru Sahib.

The Bibeki (Wise) Sikh

History stands witness that Sikhs have never abandoned their faith due to poverty or fear of oppression. The reason behind this steadfastness is that they remained *Bibeki* Sikhs (those who follow Guru's wisdom with discernment) and stayed deeply connected with their Guru. The Guru of a Sikh is wise, and a Sikh must also develop wisdom and discernment; otherwise, they cannot truly be called a Sikh. A concerning trend in the community today is that many Sikhs seek Sikhism outside Sri Guru Granth Sahib. They are often led down a path where they are first taught to abandon reason and discernment in favour of blind faith and superstition. However, Guru Sahib instructs: **ਬੂਝੈ ਦੇਖੈ ਕਰੈ ਬਿਬੇਕ ॥** (*One who understands, sees, and acts with discernment.*) (SGGS, Ang 278)

This fundamental principle has been abandoned by many. When we move away from the Guru, we become vulnerable to deception and lose our way. One crucial law of nature we must remember is that if our immune system is strong, no disease can harm us. Similarly, if a Sikh has a deep understanding of Gurbani, no temptation can mislead them. Such a Sikh would remain unwavering in their faith, even in the face of death. There is still time—let us reconnect with the Guru and free ourselves from worldly distractions.

Profound Understanding

Our audience often asks an important question: Different preachers narrate various versions of the same historical event in Sikh history at their local Gurdwara Sahib, making it difficult to understand the true history. What can be done about this?

In this context, we humbly suggest to our audience that we must read and comprehend our history in the light of Gurbani. Only by analysing different perspectives can we make the right decision. Gurbani provides us with a vision, logic, and scientific insight, which should guide our understanding of history. Many aspects of history have been written down in a way that does not align with Gurbani. Superstitions, miracles, and fabricated stories must be completely rejected for the welfare of the Panth. Additionally, we request preachers to carefully examine any information before associating it with Guru Sahibaan. It is crucial to validate any historical accounts through the teachings of Sri Guru Granth Sahib before sharing them with the Sangat.

Liberation from Superstitions

Guru Nanak Sahib had a unique and exceptional way of enlightening humanity. During his *Udasis* (spiritual journeys), he engaged with scholars and sages from various religions and castes, exchanging profound discussions with them. For instance, on one hand, Guru Sahib refused to wear the sacred thread (*Janeu*) associated with a particular faith, but on the other hand, he also described what a true *Janeu* should be. He stated: ਦਇਆ ਕਪਾਹ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਸੂਤੁ ਜਤੁ ਗੰਢੀ ਸਤੁ ਵਟੁ॥ ਏਹੁ ਜਨੇਊ ਜੀਅ ਕਾ ਹਈ ਤ ਪਾਡੇ ਘਤੁ॥ (*Compassion as the cotton, contentment as the thread, self-restraint as the knot, and truth as the twist—this is the sacred thread of the soul; if you have it, then put it on me.*) (SGGS, Ang 471)

Similarly, at Haridwar, Guru Sahib challenged the blind faith of people offering water to their ancestors by throwing water in the opposite direction. This was to illustrate that if their water could reach their ancestors in the afterlife, then his water should also be able to reach his fields in Punjab. Through such examples, Guru Sahib shattered numerous superstitions, emphasizing that rituals, prayers, and donations performed for the dead do not benefit them. Instead, a person's righteous actions in this life determine their future. It is crucial to reflect—are Sikhs being led into the deep abyss of blind faith by the priestly class? There is an urgent need to awaken, take guidance from Guru Granth Sahib, and lead a meaningful life.

United Nations & Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji

After Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji travelled across India to revive the congregations established by the earlier Gurus. He inspired people to stand fearlessly against oppression and injustice. During a time when religious conversion was being forcefully imposed by political powers, Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji encouraged people to resist with courage. Eventually, he sacrificed his life to protect religious freedom, successfully halting the tyranny of the Mughal empire. It is noteworthy that Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's martyrdom for human rights was recognized by the United Nations Organisation (UNO) nearly 273 years later in its 1948 charter. Furthermore, Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji also played a significant role in mediating peace between two warring rulers at Dhubri (Assam), preventing bloodshed. This act remains one of the earliest recorded peacekeeping efforts in human history. By contrast, during World War I (1914), warfare ceased for only five days, and organizations like Amnesty International were established much later. As we commemorate Guru Sahib's martyrdom, it is our duty to educate the world about these historical truths.

Following Traditions

Sikhism is the major religion in the world whose core principles align entirely with all 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Guru Nanak Sahib Ji established *Dharamsalas* and, for the first time in human history, chose his successor, Bhai Lehna Ji (Guru Angad Sahib Ji), based on virtues rather than lineage. This set a precedent that later incorporated democratic practices such as *Langar* (community kitchen), the system of the Five Beloved Ones (*Panj Pyare*), and other governance traditions. The journey of human enlightenment, initiated by Guru Nanak Sahib Ji, reached its pinnacle when Guru Gobind Singh Ji established the Khalsa and further cemented this tradition by declaring Guru Granth Sahib Ji as the eternal Guru—a universal constitution for the guidance of all humanity. This was a groundbreaking step for the world.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Sikh empire was also built on these democratic values and principles. Today, as over 170 countries across the world follow democratic systems, it is essential that we draw inspiration from the divine wisdom of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. By doing so, democracy can continue to thrive on its rightful foundation, ensuring fair governance, organized progress, and holistic development for all.

The Need to Live by Teachings

If we deeply analyse the word Jeevan (Life), it signifies a divine rhythm of existence. In this context, Guru Sahib's message is: ਹਸੰਦਿਆ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੇ ਮੁਕਤਿ ॥ (SGGS, Ang 522) This means that when we receive the wisdom of true living from the Satguru (True Guru), we find the path to liberation while living in this world. There are no restrictions on laughing, playing, wearing clothes, or eating; rather, we can remain liberated even while engaging in these activities.

However, the key lies in fulfilling these bodily needs in alignment with Guru's command (*Hukam*)—without letting them turn into attachments or vices. Thus, we must strive to live every moment according to the Guru's guidance, adopt righteous living, constantly elevate the standard of our life, and stay away from worldly illusions, desires, and distractions.



From Present to Future

Remembering Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, we must reflect on his approach to nation-building, strategic warfare, decision-making for the Sikh *Panth*, the selection of Sikhs during the creation of the Khalsa, the bestowal of Guruship (*Gurgadi*) to Sri Guru Granth Sahib, and many other visionary actions. These qualities of innovation and leadership provide us with guidance to improve the present and future of the Sikh community in the 21st century.

Guru Sahib's life was filled with challenges. He fought many battles at *Bhangani*, *Nanded*, *Ropar*, *Anandpur*, *Nirmohgarh*, *Chamkaur*, *Sarsa*, *Muktsar*, and other places. Despite living in exile, he emerged victorious over his adversaries. Guru Sahib teaches us that life consists of both good and bad circumstances, and true wisdom lies in rising above them. We must walk on the path of truth, as laid by Guru Nanak Sahib. His teachings serve as a guiding light for the Sikh community, showing the way toward righteousness, resilience, and progress.

Conflict Resolves in the Company of the Wise

In human life, ideological differences often lead to conflicts. These conflicts are not only external but, over time, also take root within a person. The primary cause behind these clashes is one's ego and the lack of respect for others. Gurbani guides us by stating: **ੜਾੜਾ ੜਾੜਿ ਮਿਟੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਧੂ ॥** (*Conflict and discord are eliminated in the company of the wise.*) (SGGS, Ang 260) Here, the term *Sadhu* represents wisdom. This means When a person, with wisdom and understanding, grasps the true values of human life, they begin to embrace divine virtues and let go of their flaws. By adopting a mindset of welfare for all (*Sarbat Da Bhala*), all internal and external differences naturally dissolve. Guru Sahib specifically instructed humanity to free itself from the divisions of caste, creed, race, and color, emphasizing equality and unity for all.

Guru Sahib strived to free humanity from the divisions of caste, race, and colour, which is why he proclaimed: **“ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ”** (*One Father, and we are all His children.*) (SGGS, Ang 611) When we all share the same Divine Parent and walk on the same path, why should there be any differences among us? Let us not only read Gurbani but also deeply understand its meanings and apply them to our lives. By doing so, we can create a life free from jealousy, conflict, and division.

Enhancing One's Personality

Nowadays, everyone needs to work on their personality development to secure a good job. To fulfil this need, various private institutions have been established, offering assistance in grooming individuals and making them job-ready. However, for every Gursikh, it is far more beneficial to derive this wisdom from their own rich heritage and tradition. Gurbani has the power to refine and perfect an individual in every aspect. The first and most important step towards self-improvement is self-awareness. Guru Amar Das Sahib emphasizes this by saying: ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥ (*O mind, you are the embodiment of Divine Light; recognize your true essence.*) (SGGS, Ang 440) Similarly, Bhagat Kabir Ji advises: ਬੰਦੇ ਖੋਜੁ ਦਿਲ ਹਰ ਰੋਜੁ ਨਾ ਫਿਰੁ ਪਰੇਸਾਨੀ ਮਾਹਿ ॥ (*O human, search your heart every day; do not remain lost in worries.*) (SGGS, Ang 727)

If one connects with the divine virtues explained in Gurbani, personality refinement is inevitable. These teachings serve as clear evidence that there is no better guide than Gurbani for self-improvement—no human and no institution can match its wisdom and effectiveness.

Gurbani's Profound Teachings for a Blissful & Contented Life

Sri Guru Granth Sahib offers profound wisdom for leading a blissful and content life, emphasizing the importance of overcoming inner negativity and aligning with divine consciousness. Jealousy, as described in Gurbani, arises from insecurity and negative comparison, leading one to waste the precious opportunity of human life by indulging in pride, quarrels, and attachment to materialism. Similarly, envy is discouraged, as seen in the verse by Baba Farid Ji - **ਫਰੀਦਾ ਦੇਖਿ ਪਰਾਈ ਚੋਪੜੀ ਨਾ ਤਰਸਾਏ ਜੀਉ॥** (SGGS, Ang 1378), which warns against coveting the possessions of others. While drawing inspiration from virtuous individuals is beneficial, adopting immoral means to acquire wealth or status leads to spiritual decline. Worry, another deeply consuming emotion, is likened to a fire that burns away peace of mind. Gurbani teaches that worrying about uncontrollable or unexpected events is futile, as the world is transient and ever-changing. Instead, hope should be firmly rooted in the Divine. Placing one's trust in the eternal *Shabad Guru* and Creator alone, rather than

in fleeting worldly supports, provides true emotional stability. Moreover, a key to inner joy lies in refraining from complaints. Rather than blaming others or lamenting life's challenges, one should surrender to the divine will with sweet acceptance, as expressed in the words. Through these teachings, Gurbani offers a spiritual blueprint for transforming the mind—turning jealousy into contentment, envy into inspiration, worry into trust, hope into faith, and complaints into gratitude—thus enabling one to experience true inner bliss.



Freedom from Sorrow

With the arrival of spring (*Basant*) season, nature flourishes, and greenery spreads everywhere. Guru Sahib refers to the Divine's presence in nature, stating: ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਵਸਿਆ॥ ਤੇਰਾ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਲਖਿਆ॥ (*I am a sacrifice to the Divine residing in nature; His limits cannot be known.*) (SGGS, Ang 469) Additionally, in *Raga Basant*, Guru Sahib and Bhāgats have composed hymns to inspire mankind to let go of ego and embrace joy: ਦੇਖੁ ਫੂਲ ਫੂਲ ਫੂਲੇ॥ ਅਹੰ ਤਿਆਗਿ ਤਿਆਗੇ॥ (*See the flowers blooming; abandon your ego.*) (SGGS, Ang 1185)

Here, it is important to understand that the spring season (*Basant Rutt*) arrives only for a short period each year, but Gurbani teaches us how to remain in a state of eternal joy and spiritual bliss at all times. By embracing divine virtues, one can free themselves from sorrow and always remain in a state of happiness, bliss, and spiritual fulfilment. Thus, there is a need for every individual to internalize the wisdom of Gurbani and experience *Basant* (spring) in their life—even while fulfilling worldly responsibilities and duties.

The Need for Research

Sikh history contains many fabrications and unverified stories that do not align with the teachings of Gurbani. When discussing this with historians and scholars, their response is often that these stories have been passed down through ancient scriptures or oral traditions, which is not a sufficient justification. It is a humble request to contemporary writers, researchers, scholars, and preachers that the authenticity of any story related to Guru Sahib should be measured against Sri Guru Granth Sahib, which serves as the ultimate benchmark for Sikhs. Therefore, any narrative or tale that contradicts the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib should be excluded from discourse.

Modern Sikh historians must take on the responsibility of distinguishing between truth and fiction so that the message of Sikhi is propagated in its purest form. Doing so is especially important because the coming generations will grow and flourish under the influence of this propagation and dissemination. If we present them with fabricated and misleading stories, they may begin to drift away from Sikhism rather than embracing it. Thus, it is essential to encourage scholars and preachers to engage in deeper research so that the public receives authentic, historically verified, and Gurbani-aligned narratives.

Fulfilling Our Responsibility

Sri Guru Granth Sahib contains the sacred wisdom of six Guru Sahibs, fifteen Bhagats, eleven Bhatts, and three Gursikhs, preserving the knowledge of six centuries for the guidance and well-being of humanity. Guru Gobind Singh Ji bestowed Guruship upon this divine scripture with the command: **Guru Maniyo Granth** (Recognize the Guru as the Granth.)

Every Sikh has a duty to not only study, understand, and implement the teachings of Sri Guru Granth Sahib but also to spread its message to people of all faiths. We must ensure that we preach the knowledge of Gurbani truthfully, without incorporating fictional stories that contradict natural laws. In today's modern world, people seek spiritual guidance, which can be found in the sacred teachings of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Every Sikh must take on the role of an ambassador of their faith, ensuring that the universal wisdom of Guru Granth Sahib illuminates the path of humanity in the 21st century.

Recognizing the Divine Play

Whatever we see, understand, and feel today is all part of God's unfathomable and unique play. This world is His divine dwelling, where He Himself resides, yet at the same time, it is also like a dream—both real and illusory. This world, filled with delusions and illusions, is like the scorching sands of a desert, where at times, the mirage of water appears real but ultimately proves to be false. Now, the real question to ponder is: How do we distinguish between truth and falsehood in this material world? How can we rise above illusion and reach the Guru? Guru Arjan Sahib provides the answer: ਨਾਨਕ ਸੇ ਅਖੜੀਆਂ ਬਿਅੰਨਿ ਜਿਨੀ ਡਿਸੰਦੇ ਮਾ ਪਿਰੀ॥ (*Blessed are those eyes that behold their Beloved everywhere.*) (SGGS, Ang 577)

Just as a keen eye is needed to differentiate a real diamond from a fake, similarly, in this illusory world, we require a special vision—the wisdom of Sri Guru Granth Sahib—to discern between right and wrong. The divine knowledge of Gurbani is an exceptional and extraordinary lens that enables a person to see beyond worldly distractions and connect with the One Creator. Therefore, we must hold firmly to the guidance of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, cultivate this special vision, and strive to eliminate falsehood and corrupt practices from the world.

About the Author:

A distinguished writer on Sikh theology, culture, and language, he had played a pivotal role in promoting Sikh principles and heritage through various platforms. With a deep commitment to community upliftment and education, he launched a groundbreaking quiz show on a prominent TV channel, dedicated to highlighting Sikh achievers and spreading awareness of Sikh values. This show, the only one of its kind in the history of Sikh media, has garnered a strong media presence and wide appreciation for its unique approach to engaging audiences and preserving Sikh identity through informative and inspiring content. Among his notable literary works are *21st Century: Navi Soch*, *Agaha Ku Traagh*, and *Gyaan Da Saagar*—each contributing significantly to contemporary Sikh thought and literature.

Progressive Thoughts is a profound and thought-provoking work that encourages readers to embrace wisdom, self-growth, and spiritual enlightenment. This book delves into the essence of progressive thinking, inspiring individuals to move forward with courage while staying rooted in their values and traditions. Through insightful reflections and deep philosophical musings, Progressive Thoughts serves as a beacon of guidance for those seeking personal and intellectual evolution. It ignites a passion for progressive ideas, urging readers to walk the path of knowledge, clarity, and higher consciousness.

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