NINE

Guru Teg Bahadur

(1621-1675)

Like a dream is the play of this world without the Lord;
All things shall forsake thee.
Four things alone are eternal:
Naam, Sadh, Guru and God.
Very dear to my heart do I hold the Naam;
In remembering which all sufferings vanish, and Thy Sight is obtained.

SLOKAS 54-56 M.9

MEKHAN SHAH, a successful merchant and devout disciple, was enroute to Bombay when a storm struck and his ship began to sink. He prayed that the living Master should save him and his vessel, and in return he would give an offering of five hundred gold coins. No sooner had he finished his prayer than did the waters calm and the boat set itself aright. Reaching port, he sold his cargo and hastened for Hari Krishan's darshan; only to find that Hari Krishan had left His body and was succeeded by one living in Bakala. But his arrival in Bakala was a source of further consternation: Hari Krishan had not named his successor but only the place where He was to be found; and twenty-two men all claimed themselves to be the Guru's successor. To solve the problem, Mekhan Shah went to each and made an offering of five coins, knowing that the true Master would demand the full amount promised. When all twenty-two gladly accepted his offering and made

no additional request, the merchant became very heavy of heart. Throughout the village he made inquiries—was there any other holy man in Bakala? Finally an old woman came to him with the most heartening news: There was one other holy man—Teg Bahadur. But he had no desire to be called a guru nor to have a large following. He spent most of his days in meditation and rarely saw anyone. Undeterred by such reports, Mekhan Shah sought His audience and on receiving it, offered the usual amount. "Brother, where is your honesty, when in your desperation you had offered *five hundred* gold coins?" Before the merchant could reply, Teg Bahadur took off his shirt and showed the scars he had received from saving the ship. Mekhan Shah was overjoyed: he had found the true Master! He paid his humble obeisance and the remaining gold coins and then quickly ran to the roof top from where he waved his turban, proclaiming the true Guru: Teg Bahadur.

The news spread quickly and the imposters were put to shame. Most hid themselves but Dhir Mal—Teg Bahadur's nephew—who was prompted by an ambitious servant named Shikan, sought vengeance. An assassination plot was made: if there were no rival, it was reasoned, Dhir Mal could maintain a position of authority. Shikan led a party of armed men, at the back of which rode Dhir Mal, to the Guru's house. They broke into the house; Teg was shot and the party ran off with stolen belongings. The wound was small and the entire incident did not affect His composure—except when He saw Dhir Mal involved in such a vile act: "You, Dhir Mal, son of my noble brother Gurditta[1]; may God bless you!" When they found their own Master wounded and his house ransacked, a party of

1. Teg Bahadur had two brothers: Baba Atal and Baba Gurditta. All three were very devoted children and disciples of Guru Har Gobind.

disciples chased after the culprit and looted his home. They were able to regain the Master's property as well as other objects—including the original copy of the *Granth Sahib*—which rightfully belonged to the Guru. Shikan was also captured, punished and brought before the Master. When he saw Him, Shikan begged forgiveness and Teg Bahadur glanced compassionately at him and then ordered his release. But when He addressed His followers, He was all but pleased with their behavior. "Anger befouls a man's every deed, turning righteousness into evil. It makes one turn his back even on his own Guru. Though the source of strife and misery, yet man too easily becomes its slave and ruins his life. Now you have stooped to the same level as those seeking power, wealth and worldly recognition. What has been taken from Dhir Mal is to be returned and you are to bear him no enmity. Those who wish to follow me should value only the gift which the Saints confer. That no man can steal nor time ruin. In forgiveness, not in hatred, will that gift be preserved."

II

Whosoever searches for joy eternal,
Let him seek that in the All-pervading Spirit (Naam).

Though earlier, under his father's command, Teg Bahadur had proved himself as a valiant soldier, he preferred a life of quiet. He was also known as Tyag Mal or one who re-

According to legend, both Atal and Gurditta (at different times) revived the dead (Atal, a young playmate and Gurditta, a cow) and for this, the Guru turned his back on them. "I am not pleased when one sets himself up as a rival to God's Will, restoring the dead back to life," He remonstrated. Feeling the pain of His displeasure, they both restored the balance in nature which they had upset, by entering into samadhi and giving up their own earthly lives. Atal died while still in childhood and Gurditta while in his twenties.

nounces. (Teg Bahadur means "Brave Sword.") As a child, he was a source of worry to his mother as he rarely ever saw others, but spent hour after hour in spiritual practices. She found comfort only when Har Gobind assured her that his devotions pleased the Lord, and he would one day be the spiritual solace of mankind. And yet before taking on this duty, he—under Har Gobind's orders—settled in Bakala with his wife and mother, and here for twenty years lived a life of solitude and meditation. Daily he would give but a few hours to rest or physical activities and for a few more hours he might discourse on spiritual matters to sincere seekers after Truth. He generally spent the rest of the time in deep meditation. When Hari Krishan left his body and twenty-two claimants for Guruship fought for the recognition of that position, Teg Bahadur remained apart and simply continued his spiritual practices. Even before he was discovered by Mekhan Shah, certain advanced disciples—including Baba Gurditta, Bhai Budha's son—had found the same Light shining in Teg Bahadur as was in the preceding Masters. They begged that they should be allowed to announce the true successor to the people at large, but—though he had already received from within the commission to carry on the spiritual work and the Power had already been transferred to him—he was too humble for this: "I am just a poor servant, not fit for this task, but the command has been received from within. Thus if you take me as Guru, I give you my first order: 'Do not proclaim me to the crowds who are judging gurus by material values.' Still you should have no fear; can the Guru's Light be stolen by imposters? They have tried in the past and have failed, and in the times yet to come they will try again, and again they will fail. How long can false masters pretend to bear a Light which they do not have?" As such, He continued liv-

ing quietly and virtually unknown to the Sangat until Mekhan Shah revealed him as the Living Master and that great torch of Light was made known to the world.

III

The Guru's love and mercy are for all to enjoy.
I do not wish to disturb anyone.
Under Guru Nanak's order will I make the True Name (Sat Naam) be repeated across the world.

Teg Bahadur began traveling to answer the prayers of those gripped by the mystery of life and death. But almost everywhere he went, he met with antagonism; yet he remained calm and centered in the Divine Will, quietly giving to the seeking few and then continuing on his way. During these travels, he learned that his followers had retained the *Granth* stolen from Dhir Mal. With displeasure, he ordered it to be returned. Though the sikhs claimed that the Granth was rightfully the Master's—as Dhir Mal had gained it by his false claim to guruship—Teg Bahadur would not accept this: "If he has gained it by deceit as you say, you have now also gotten it by theft—which makes your actions no better. Though it may be sacred or of historical value, it is stolen and must be returned. We have other copies of the Granth and they shall serve our needs. There is no reason to make a cult of or to deify this particular copy." It was left on the banks of the Beas River and Dhir Mal was informed accordingly. Shortly thereafter, he was able to find it and had it preserved within his family.

Teg Bahadur passed through many villages and rejoiced in the simple and innocent country people who so deeply gave their hearts in devotion. But when He reached Amritsar, He found a different scene. Guru Har Gobind had shifted His seat from Amritsar to Kirtapur and at that time

most disciples also moved. The Golden Temple then came into the hands of men seeking wealth and power, and as Teg Bahadur went to enter it, the doors were shut and barred before his face. Some disciples wanted to enter the Temple by force but He would not allow this, and sat quietly under a tree for some hours. As the priests wielded much power, the men of the area were afraid to take any action. Finally a woman from a nearby village came forward and, bowing before the Master, offered her simple home to Him. And then following suit, the other women came out and welcomed the Master. Only when they were put to shame by the women's love and courage, did the men of Amritsar come forth and seek the Guru's pardon. From Amritsar, Teg went to Kirtapur and from Kirtapur he moved to a plot of land a few miles away—where He began the construction of the city of Anandpur. But Dhir Mal continued to pursue the Master and He again continued his journeying. Wherever pious and sincere hearts were, He appeared to give his blessings; and to hearts plagued with the world's cravings, He gave rest in the coooling Light of Naam.

As Teg Bahadur's influence began to grow, it came to the emperor's notice; and fearing His power, Aurangzeb ordered His arrest. Fortunately a Rajput general, Ram Singh, intervened on the Master's behalf and the order was, for the time, dismissed. Soon the favor was repaid. The emperor ordered Ram Singh to lead an army against the feared king of Kamrup. Many expeditions had gone before but none returned, and the land had become associated with the mysterious and dreadful. Thus Ram Singh desperately sought the Guru's aid. Teg Bahadur accompanied the general on his campaign—and while refusing to give active support to either side—He was eventually able to bring about a peaceful reconciliation.

At this time, in Patna, the Master's wife gave birth to a son, Gobind Rai. It was three years later however, before He was able to return to His family and first see His child; and even then, His stay was brief. After making the necessary arrangements for His son's welfare and education, the Master resumed His travels—which were to take him through the Punjab, to Kashmir; and on to Anandpur and Agra. Wherever He went, He found terror: religious oppression was again on the increase and Aurangzeb threatened execution to those who refused to embrace Islam. Innocent people were imprisoned—the weaker, or those to whom Hinduism had little to offer (the low caste Hindus), saved their lives by changing their religion. But many others chose death over a breach of their faith. The emperor then directed his attention towards converting the Brahmins, for if he succeeded in this, others would more easily follow their example. The Brahmins became desperate, and secret meetings were held with the hope of finding a way out of this terrible plight. In Amarnath (a holy place in Kashmir) a small group of Brahmins met to invoke the grace of Lord Shiva. Here one of the Pundits had a vision: Lord Shiva appeared to him and directed him to the Living Master, Guru Teg Bahadur. Taking with him a group of five hundred pundits, this Brahmin, Kirpal Ram, went to Anandpur. Then coming before the Divine Master, he—with tears in his eyes—begged His mercy: "Our holy books are being burned, our shrines desecrated, and now our lives are threatened if we do not convert to Islam. In our utter helplessness, we turn to you."

"The House of Guru Nanak," replied the Guru, "has ever upheld men's fundamental rights of worship. You may now be at ease for I will not rest until something is done."

For some time, Teg Bahadur sat alone, his eyes brimming with compassion as he reflected upon the suffering of his fellow man. Just then, Gobind Rai entered the room. Moved by the sorrowful look on his father's face, he touched his feet and asked him what it was that weighed so heavily upon him. Teg Bahadur told him of the Brahmins' plea, adding, "Some brave and holy man must be ready to sacrifice his life for this cause." Spontaneously the divine child replied: "Who is there that is greater than thee, Father, and who is more holy or brave? In this dark age, who is equal to such a task but thine own self?" Hearing this the worry lifted from the Master's face. He called the leader of the Brahmins to his room and told him: "Don't be afraid nor allow others to be so either. I will lay down my life rather than allow harm to come to you. You may tell Aurangzeb's governor that if he can convert me, only then will you follow suit." When the Brahmins heard this, hope was reborn, for they had seen the Master's greatness and trusted in his courage. But within His own following, there was deep sorrow: all knew that when the choice between conversion and death was offered, their beloved Master would choose death.

When Aurangzeb received word of the Guru's declaration, he was also filled with happiness. He thought that surely he could convert this one man and then thousands would follow His example. Feeling greatly self-assured, the emperor dispatched the order that violent means against the Brahmins should be withheld until after his meeting with Teg Bahadur.

O madman, thou hast forgotten the jewel of the Lord's Name;
Thou rememberest Him not and thy precious life passeth in vain.

Saith Nanak: Man wanders forever in error;
O Lord, may I think only of Thy forgiving grace.

The time passed and the Master had not arrived in the imperial court. Aurangzeb dispatched an order for His arrest and though on his way to the court, Teg was captured and brought before the emperor under guard. When they met, the emperor tried every means to persuade the Master to follow the path of the Prophet—but if not this, then to perform a miracle. After many an appeal and many demands, the Master finally tired of the emperor's schemes: "When your Prophet could not unite all men into one religion, how do you think that you can!" With this, the emperor became enraged and had Teg Bahadur and His five accompanying disciples imprisoned. And then after some days, tortures began but the Guru and His disciples remained steadfast and unmoved. To the emperor's many demands, Teg only replied that God, as the Master over all, would hold each man accountable for his deeds.

Certain sikhs approached the Guru, informing him that they had arranged for his escape. One begged that he might use his spiritual powers to destroy the Mohammedan world. Far from pleased, Teg Bahadur reminded them that he had espoused this cause of his own will and was ready to face its consequences. And that to use the little power that one has gained to perform a miracle was more than foolish. ". . .The whole world is caught in the play of its own desires, but it behooves a disciple to be content with God's Will. I must sacrifice my body so that many more may be free." Saying this, the Guru looked into the disciple's eyes and, to save him from wasting all his meditations, He took his powers away from him.

All other methods had failed and the emperor's patience

grew short. He ordered that before the Guru's eyes, His disciples should be tortured to death. As they were led to their execution, each disciple was offered an alternative: they could embrace Islam and hold high imperial offices, thus gaining wealth and power, or they could meet a painful death. All scoffed at the emperor's offer. Amidst whatever hardships a man must face in life, they whose hearts the Master's words and presence had deeply penetrated found a joyful and abiding peace. And so it was that each disciple was reassured and established in the fullness of faith. Mati Das was chained to pillars and sawn in half but he silently and unaffectedly underwent this torture. Before his execution, he was granted a final request: "I ask only this, that my face be turned so that I can see the Beloved Master with my dying breath." Then his brother, Sati Das, was brought forth to meet his death. But like his brother, he remained fearless, proclaiming that death was welcomed when it came for the sake of Dharma and Truth. It was the emperor, he continued, who should fear the death that hovered over his head.

My strength is exhausted, I am bound and without resource.
Saith Nanak, the Lord is now my refuge: He will save me as He did the elephant.[2]

SLOK 53 M.9

The tortures continued but the Master's gentle and joyful spirit was ever with him. When left alone, he spent much of

2. In the Srimad Bhagavatam, the story is told of an elephant battling a crocodile. When the elephant was exhausted and had lost all hope, he remembered the Lord and began calling His Name. He appeared to the elephant in his time of hopelessness and saved him from death, and for his remembrance, bestowed salvation upon him.

his time writing hymns or in meditation. To his plea of refuge, his son Gobind Rai replied:

> *Strength is thine own; Thy fetters are loosed.*
> *All things are in thy power; Even thou art thine own helper.*
>
> DHORA M.10

Teg Bahadur was pleased with the reply and he knew that his son was ready to carry on the spiritual work.

The remaining disciples were brought before the executioner and tortured to death as the Master was made to look on. Aurangzeb would wait no longer. If the Guru would neither convert to Islam nor perform a miracle, then the time of his execution had come. Teg Bahadur had long awaited this appointed hour and so when the final message came, he remained undaunted.

At this time, Gurditta, the son of Bhai Budha, gained a final visit with the Master. But when left alone, Teg Bahadur turned to him and told him to leave. "O sir," replied the sikh, "there is nothing I desire more than to die at the feet of the One I love." "Do as I tell you but do not fear. Where your father once grazed the horses of my father, outside the walls of Gwalior, there will you leave this body and meet me in the Beyond."

The guards entered Teg's cell and led Him before the executioner's block. From the balcony, the emperor shouted: "A miracle! A miracle!" but to this the Guru replied, "You will see a miracle when my head is cut off: the miracle of a man sacrificing his life so others may be free to pray as they choose. But I have no respect for the cheap tricks of magic that you are shouting for. I pray for you that you may realize what you have done against man and against your

own self. But I shall not change my way: I shall sacrifice my head but not my faith."

The order for the execution came and the Master fearlessly met His death. He entered samadhi as the sword struck His neck . . . and then cries and screams were to be heard everywhere. A terrible dust storm began and covered the city, and Gurditta made his escape—first to Anandpur where he related to Gobind Rai what had happened. He gave the Master's message to the Sangat: that Gobind was to be the succeeding Guru, and then bowing before Him, begged His permission to leave. Hastening to Gwalior, he sat down in meditation and entered his final samadhi, to unite forever with the Radiant Master within.

In Delhi, Teg Bahadur's severed head was seized by a faithful sikh, Bhai Jaitha, and carried to Gobind Rai, where it was cremated. But when the storm lifted, the body remained where it was and Aurangzeb ordered that no one should touch it, under penalty of death. Some time passed before another disciple, Bhai Lakhi, quietly lifted it into his cart in the dark of night and brought it to his house. There he cremated it with full respect, burning his own house as well to escape notice. Bhai Lakhi then went before Guru Gobind to relate to him what had happened. The Master replied that he would create a body of men so powerful that none would need ever to hide themselves nor their beliefs again.

TEN

Guru Gobind Singh

(1666-1708)

Upon the Mountain of Hemkunt, high in the Himalayas
There I underwent great penances—great meditations
And ultimately I realized that God was in me and I in Him.

Then God ordered me: "Take birth in this Kali Yug."
I did not want to come for my attention was on God's Feet
But He remonstrated me and sent me with this command:
"Go! I make you my son to guide the child humanity.
Lead the people from their folly and spread the True Religion:
To Worship God and God alone."

With folded hands, I bowed my head and spake thus meekly:
"Thy religion shall prevail, O Lord, when Thou extendeth Thy help in its prevailing!"

For this purpose God sent me and so I took birth in this world.
. . .And as He spoke unto me, so shall I speak unto man:
Fearlessly shall I proclaim His Truth
But with enmity to no man.
Whosoever calls me God will fall into the pits of hell.

I am but His lowly servant—and of this, have not the least of doubts.
I am the slave of the Almighty Lord
And have come to behold the wonder of His creation.

FROM BACHITAR NATAK, vs. 1 to 33

IT WAS the hours of prayer, the winter of 1666, when Mata Gujari gave birth to a son. The news quickly spread and there was great rejoicing among the following of the Divine Gurus—for all knew the child was he whom Guru Har Gobind had prophesied of: a great saint and warrior who would free men from a reign of oppression. Far outside the crowded city of Patna, a pious faqir received this message through divine perceptions. He bowed to the east, where Patna lay, rather than toward Mecca, and exclaimed his vision to his following, and then began the journey to behold the new-born savior. Weary and thin from fasting and travel, the faqir finally gained the infant's presence. He bowed in obeisance and placed two vessels before the saintly child, both of which He took into His hands. The faqir smiled as though relieved and then explained: "One vessel belonged to a Hindu, the other to a Muslim. Had he taken only one or the other, then he would have favored that people only. But when he took them both, he declared that he had come for all mankind alike."

Very early, the child began to resemble his grandfather—Guru Har Gobind—after whom he was named. Hardly beyond the first days of walking, Gobind Rai (as he was then called; in some accounts, he is called Gobind Das) displayed a remarkable strength; and not long afterward the first blossoms of military genius appeared. In character, though not without the saintly garland of humility and compassion, he was yet bold and self-assured. He had come

with the mission of both a saint and an avatar: to lead men on the path of love and to expose hypocrisy and uphold righteousness.

He had received instruction in the use of weapons and enjoyed the sport of engaging his peers in small skirmishes. But when alone, he would sit for long hours of meditation or enjoy the natural beauty along the banks of the Ganges. Here also, many a cross-legged yogi became the target of young Gobind's mischief: He would sneak up behind them and flood them with splashes of water. When they took to flight, the child teased them for not being so detached from the world as they pretended. On the fields, Gobind Rai's favorite pastime was his toy catapult, and it took little time before the water-carrying women knew of his expert marksmanship. One day, however, he missed the earthen pitcher balanced on a Muslim woman's head and hit her on the forehead. She ran to the boy's mother and threatened to take her case to the emperor's courts. The Emperor Aurangzeb's fanaticism had long been a cause of great fear to the non-Muslim India under his rule and Mata Gujari was not an exception. Finally she calmed the affronted woman with an offering of sweets and chased after her son; but Gobind's quick little legs carried him to safety and his mother could only scold from a distance: "Such foolish things for a child to do in these times. Do you have no fear of the emperor?!" Gobind looked at her boldly and retorted: "I fear none but the One God!"

II

The dawn of Heaven's Light makes one a worshiper of Truth alone,

The blossoming of loving devotion makes one forget lifeless objects of adoration,
The knowledge of Him shows the futility of all rites and rituals,
The manifestation of the holy light within, distinguishes the pure from the impure.[1]

GURU GOBIND SINGH

By the age of eleven, Gobind Rai had fully known the joys of the inner life and the cruelties of the world. He had already been made fatherless by Teg Bahadur's execution and had long borne witness to the fear under which his people lived. But these circumstances also drew more and more men to the Guru's side, and as Gobind Rai perfected himself in the martial arts, so did he train his following. And under his expert training and divine presence, a group of farmers, traders and workmen soon became a fierce and powerful army. Men who had earlier looked on helplessly as their wives were raped or dragged into slavery along with their children; who feared to practice their religious beliefs openly, now found a place among the most courageous soldiers in history.

But with all the military fanfare, the spiritual welfare of his following was in no way neglected. The early mornings and evenings were set aside for meditation and religious gatherings. Here the Master would often meet with his disciples and tell them of their true purpose in life, both within and without: "He who ponders the mystery, 'Who am I?' and 'What am I?' will one day know himself and obtain salvation. But to worship God for the sake of worldly gain is like sowing seeds in the dust."

When Gobind was married to a disciple's daughter, he

1. As quoted by Kirpal Singh in *Prayer*, p. 9.

moved on to Patna, under the advice of his uncle, Kirpal Chand. The young Guru was very pleased with the natural sceneries here in the Himalayas and would spend long hours in seclusion along the River Jumna. It was here that he wrote most of his verse and translated the Hindu epics. Like his predecessors, he praised the One God and acclaimed the virtues of His devotees; but his writings also contained a new spirit of the battle.

Sword, striking in a flash,
Scatterer of the armies of the wicked
On the Great battlefield of Life
Thou art the symbol of the brave.
All-powerful is thine Arm. Thy splendor dazzles like the sun.
Sword, Thou art the protector of the saints; the scourge of the evil doers
And destroyer of sinners, I come to Thy refuge.
Glory to the Creator of the world, the Savior.
My Beloved, Glory to Thee: Supreme Sword.

BACHITAR NATAK, VS. 29-35

These works were later incorporated into a volume called the *Dasm Granth* (The Granth of the Tenth Guru) by a devoted follower, Bhai Mani Singh. Guru Gobind also mastered the languages of Hindi, Sanskrit, Persian and the Gurmukhi characters at this time and studied the various religious texts and mythologies. Here too the military training continued and his forces increased. His growing power brought fear to several Hindu rajas, and his abolishing of caste distinctions made them jealous. Under the command of Fateh Shah, they combined forces and marched against the Master. On the eve of battle, a large segment of the Master's army deserted him and all might have lost hope

had it not been for the Master's own unshakable faith. Gobind himself described the battle in his autobiography, "Bachitar Natak":

> *God protected His servant and I was not harmed. I let loose arrows that covered the sky like clouds, making the hillmen flee for their lives. By the grace of God, did we gain victory. Blessings were showered upon my men.*
>
> BACHITAR NATAK, CHAP. 8

With victory, the Guru ordered his men to tend to the wounded and the dead and not to pursue the fleeing hillmen.

After the battle, he returned to Anandpur and in the following years became the father of four sons.[2] Meanwhile, the same rajas who had just been defeated refused to pay an imperial tax and turned to the Guru for aid. Whatever they had done against him was forgiven and the Master granted their plea, by which victory was gained. Alarmed by this, Aurangzeb sent his son with great forces and while not molesting the Guru, crushed the Hindu chieftains.

III

> *Those who wish to play the Game of Love,*
> *Let them come forward with their heads upon their palms as an offering.*
>
> GOBIND SINGH

2. It is often stated that Gobind Singh had three wives. However, He had only one wife, as He lived a life of high ideals and great worldly detachment. He was betrothed to one Jito Ji, whose name was changed to Sundri after her marriage. Later, a disciple vowed he would marry his daughter to none but the Guru, but He refused this proposition. As there was much intervention from the following, He proclaimed her as "The Mother of the Khalsa"—but not his wife. (Baba Kirpal Singh gave me

Moved by the pitiable conditions of the time, Gobind Rai vowed to establish a community which would dedicate itself to the abolishing of social hierarchy and iconoclastic practices and which would fight for the birthrights of all men. In 1699 in Anandpur, the first step toward this was taken. The Guru came to the front of a large congregation with a gleam in his eyes and a brandished sword in his hand. He stood before the people and called out: "I am looking for true disciples; for ones that are willing to sacrifice their heads for the Supreme Cause!" There was a long silence, filled with fear and hesitation, but then one sikh, Daya Ram, came forward. The Guru took him into a tent and after a few moments, returned to the platform with blood dripping from his sword. Again he asked if there were any who wished to be his disciples. Many became horrified and ran off, but soon another came forward and yet another and another, until five had thus offered their lives. When no others would come forward, it was disclosed that the blood was from a goat, and the five disciples were brought out from the tent. "He did not take their lives but gave them His own Light," and annointed them as the "Five Beloveds." He gave them charged sugared water from His own hands, and stirred by the blade of his dagger. Then He had them call out: "The pure are of God and the victory is to God!" Then in turn, he bade them to baptise him and showed that the Guru would be the disciple and the true disciple, the Guru[3]. At this time, the Guru changed from "Gobind Rai" to "Gobind Singh" (Gobind the Lion) and had his Five Beloveds do likewise. As the following expand-

the basis of this information. See also, *Guru Gobind Singh: A Study* by K. Jagjit Singh.)

3. Gobind Singh as quoted by Kirpal Singh, *The Night Is a Jungle,* p. 338.

ed, all sikhs suffixed "Singh" to their names. It was only a short time before thousands were initiated into his folds, and those who truly followed the Way discarded any thoughts which divided men and cultivated instead a faith in the Guru and a willingness to defend the beliefs of all man: "Among my sikhs, there shall be no difference between Hindu and Muslim, touchable and untouchable, high and low. All shall be as one family of man, under the Fatherhood of God."

But as the Guru's dream materialized, the Hindu chiefs again felt the threat of His power. They had gained imperial aid and marched against him a second time. When they approached, the Master first showered his assailants with cannon blasts, and then the charge of his soldiers, led by the Five Beloveds. When the Master himself entered the fields, he slew the enemy's general and victory was theirs. But subsequent battles followed and—broken only by short term peace treaties—the Battle of Anandpur dragged on for years. Despite heavy loss of lives through fighting and starvation, Gobind Singh—by the presence of his own confidence and determination—was long able to uphold a high morale among his following. And amid the stresses of warfare, the spiritual practices continued and an inner solace was granted. It was during this time that one sikh was brought before the Master, being charged with administering aid, not only to wounded sikhs, but to the wounded of the enemy as well. The disciple was undisturbed by the charges: "Master, I see the same Light in all men—whether of one side or the other—as I see within the Guru. How then can I but do what I am doing?" Far from displeased with such an attitude, Gobind embraced him and encouraged such a selfless and spiritual love.

The battles continued under severe hardships for the

sikhs, and finally the stress became too heavy: the winters were cold; the hardships, prolonged; and rations, scarce. Men approached the Guru and begged that they be allowed to leave. "Those who will deny me in writing may go!" he replied, and forty did so. Time passed and the hardships continued. Again His disciples pressed him for relief and when the enemy promised them a safe flight from Anandpur, they urged that the Master take the opportunity. Gobind Singh, seeing through the deceit of this promise, refused; but after repeated demands, he relented. No sooner had they come out of the fort than they were attacked and scattered by the enemy.

Beloved Lord, lend Thine ear to the condition of Thy servant.
When Thou art not near, the comforts of home are like a nest of serpents
And fine food and drink are like a noose around the neck.
When Thou turnest Thy face, man suffers as the beast suffers from the slaughterer.
Happily shall I be with Thee amidst hardships and trouble
But apart from Thee, comforts and ease would become like Hell.

SABAD HAZAR (GOBIND SINGH)

The Guru himself was separated from his family—save his two elder sons—under these attacks. In Chamkaur, he met his mother, and later reunited with the rest of his family. But hard times continued to bear against him. A servant betrayed him and had his younger sons killed. His mother died of shock from this. A battle then ensued in which his other sons were killed. Now childless, his wife asked him how much longer could this go on; how could he continue

fighting when all his children had been killed? To this the Guru replied, "For the heads of these sons (the followers), have I sacrificed the four."

When battles seized Chamkaur and there seemed little hope for their victory, the Guru was prepared to die fighting at the side of his devoted disciples. But the disciples would not allow such a fate for their Beloved Master and held him to his vow: whenever five or more devotees gathered, He would be there as their servant. Whatever was their wish, whatever their words, He would take that as His order. Therefore, they commanded him to escape while safety remained. Touched to the heart, the Master embraced them as tears filled his eyes—but he was bound by his word.

Gobind Singh traveled to Jathpura where he wrote a letter to the emperor—the *Zafarnama* (Epistle of Victory). He boldly charged Aurangzeb with cowardly and unreligious actions and justified his own fighting against him.

> *When the affairs had passed all remedies*
> *It became righteous to draw the sword.*

He continued that if Aurangzeb wished peace, he should meet with Him; but if he refused, he would be crushed.

> *By the Grace of God, shall I vanquish the enemies of religion. You depend upon your wealth and mighty armies, but I upon the power of God; and when God is one's friend, no enemy can triumph against him. When one has taken the protection of a powerful tiger, what need he fear a goat, a buffalo or a deer?*

Finally, the Guru warned Aurangzeb not to be vain of his imperial powers:

Though thou sittest upon an imperial throne, how strange is thy justice, thy qualities and thy respect for religion. Promises not meant to be kept injure those that make them[4]*. Be not foolish; this world is but for a few days only. People leave it at all times.*

But before he received the emperor's reply, Gobind was yet to fight another battle. As his forces were limited and aid denied, he took refuge in a forest in the center of the Malwa desert. Here the forty men who had deserted him in Anandpur returned and begged his forgiveness. They fought valiantly and caused severe losses to the enemy forces, but in the end lost their own lives to the massive numbers of the Muslim army. Confident that the Guru lay among the dead, the Mughals left the desert. But Gobind Singh was only to reach the field later and as He looked upon the mutilated bodies of men that had died, tears welled in his eyes. Mahan Singh was breathing his last breaths of bodily life. The Guru bent at his side and wiped his face. "Mahan Singh, you have fought bravely in the Holy Cause. Whatever is your desire, that will be granted." Mahan Singh opened his eyes and looked deeply into the Master's strong and Godly gaze. "That the Guru's darshan is mine at my last hour, there remains but one desire still troubling my heart. O Sir, forgive myself and my comrades for our desertion at Anandpur. Tear the contract we had signed and once again make us as your disciples." "You wrote the contract and not I," replied the Guru. "The disciple may leave the Master but the Master cannot leave the disciple." Then to satisfy Mahan Singh, the contract was torn and Gobind Singh asked him to request another boon. "Having that, there is

4. Refers to the promise given at Anandpur, regarding Gobind Singh's disciples safely being allowed to leave their fortifications. Aurangzeb is said to have given this oath on the Koran to Gobind Singh.

naught else that I wish." And so saying, Mahan Singh left his body to join the 39 other soldiers—to be revered by all Sikhs in times to come; and to be blessed in the eyes of God, by the Grace of the Guru.

Gobind Singh proceeded to Talwandi Sahib where he received a reply from Aurangzeb, inviting him to the imperial court. But before the Master reached there, the emperor had died. He then went on to Agra, where he met the succeeding emperor, Bahadur Shah. The Master traveled south with him, camping near his encampments. In Nanded, the Guru was attacked by two Pathan assassins, and though the wounds healed temporarily, He reopened them as He strung a heavy bow. This time, they did not mend. The Guru called his disciples to his side and gave them his parting words: "Death is that thing most feared by men, but I have always looked it squarely in the face and so should any of you who claim to be my disciples. Do not grieve for me: I shall meet my death like a lover, rushing to embrace her Beloved." He paused in silence for some minutes and gazed upon His children with His Kingly eyes. "As the rain nourishes the seed, so shall my words nourish you, my Khalsa, and bear forth fruit. Through the Holy Word—the Shabda—can you maintain your link with the Lord. May God preserve you."

Then before sunrise on October 7, 1708, the Master gave up his body.

But another account says that the Guru did not die here but retired to a small village where he could support the poor and hungry and devote his last days of the earthly life to the service of God and humanity.

Leaving all other doors, Lord,
I am at Thy door.

As Thou once clasped my hand,
Must Thou not now make me Thine own?
I Gobind, Thy humble servant.
RAM AVATAR (GOBIND SINGH)

IV

Like his grandfather, Har Gobind, Gobind Singh did the work of both an avatar and a saint. He used the necessary means to restore the balance between good and evil—punishing the wicked and upholding the righteous as well as uplifting the conditions of man in general. He who proclaimed that the poor man's mouth was the Guru's treasury and elsewhere added: "He who earns but does not share; who enjoys but knows not self-sacrifice; who pursues the passing allurements of life rather than dedicating himself to God, forever and at all times, cannot claim the Guru as his own"—himself lived a life that exemplified this noble sacrifice for the upliftment of humanity. When the times demanded action, he gave up the joys of solitude, the beauty of nature and the long, unbroken meditations that the saints hold so dear; and instead, suffered toils and hardships so that the poor could be provided for; so that strength could be instilled into the weak and courage and self-respect into the cowardly. Men who were once laughed at and spat upon by their foreign rulers were now so uplifted that even their enemy could not help but hold a certain respect for them. Qazi Nur Mohammad witnessed men directly inspired by the great Guru as they fought off the invading army (1764-'65) that he accompanied. And while he at places slanders them (as with almost all Muslim accounts contemporary to the Guru) yet he cannot help but also extol their virtues:

Say not that the "dogs" are dogs; they are lions. For in the battlefield, they show the courage of a lion. When a hero roars like a lion in the field of battle, can he be called a dog? Who seeks to learn the skill of battle, let him come face to face with them in the battlefield. They will demonstrate it in such a way that all will praise them. Truly they are lions in battle, but in times of peace, they excel in kindness and mercy.

Leave aside their skill of battle and hear another point in which they surpass all other fighting people. Never would they slay a coward nor block the path of a fugitive. Neither do they loot the wealth and jewelry of a woman, be she wealthy or a maidservant; nor do these "dogs" know of adultery . . . or even befriend adulterers or housebreakers.

And yet simultaneous with his work as an avatar, he brought men back into the Kingdom of God. If to meet with the demands of the times the appearance of the spiritual work had changed—from the simple farmer's life of Guru Nanak to the princely reign of the warrior saint, Gobind Singh—yet the essence remained unchanged. The same God Power that had worked through Nanak now worked through Gobind Singh; and that same Power was likewise bestowed upon those who came to him for spiritual refuge. Even behind his fierce lion-like gaze, there was a love and compassion too great to be contained within the scope of the intellect. He used arrow heads made of gold to supply money to those wounded by them; and his presence, which brought awe to the beholder, overflowed with the essence of the divine. Once a simple farmer, Bhai Bela, came to serve the Guru. He was unskilled in the use of weapons and unlearned, and of the many tasks available, he knew only how to tend the horses. Thus he was given this service; and

day after day, he performed it with such love and diligence that it soon came to the Master's notice. Gobind Singh singled out Bela, telling him how pleased He was with his services. He invited him to come daily to learn and digest something from the scriptures. Each day Bela received his lesson, and then throughout the entire day he would repeat his lesson with full concentration on the Master. One day Gobind Singh was leaving early for urgent work when Bela stopped him and reminded him about the daily lesson. "Oh Brother Bela, do you not see the time or the opportunity?!" the Guru sharply answered, and then galloped off. Bela accepted these words as his daily lesson and with all sincerity began repeating them with deep concentration. Gobind Singh's attention was so fierce when he uttered these words that they were charged with the full force of his radiation. The result was that as Bela went on repeating them, he entered into a state of divine intoxication and then withdrew into deep meditation; something which even many of the Guru's long-standing disciples—who were very learned and had fought hard with Him—could not do successfully.

As with all other great saints, Guru Gobind Singh's love for his disciples knew no bounds. That Guru Power forever watched over them, giving forth all grace and protection until the soul was blended into the Spirit of God. Even if the disciple forgot the Master, the Master would not forget the disciple, but silently watched over him until he was brought back into the Way.

One story states that a devoted couple offered their son, Joga Singh, for the Guru's service. *Joga* means "for the sake of" and when they brought the young boy before Gobind Singh, He renamed him Guru Joga—"For the sake of the Guru." Many years passed and the boy's love and

devotion grew greater and greater.

When Joga Singh became of age, his parents arranged for his marriage and requested that he be sent back to Peshawar for the ceremony. Joga went to the Master to get his permission. Gobind Singh sent him with his blessings but added, "Should I send for you, come at once. Do not delay even for a moment." Joga readily agreed, and paying his respects, set out for Peshawar.

The day of the marriage arrived and all went well until only a few minutes before the ceremony was finished. Then suddenly a messenger rode up and gave Joga Singh the Guru's order: "Proceed to Anandpur without delay." Refusing to wait even the few minutes needed to complete his marriage, he mounted his horse and rode off.

But midway between Peshawar and Anandpur, his ego began to trick him. His Sweet Remembrance of God began to break off and his pride began to grow. "Very few disciples would leave their own wedding to obey the Guru's wish. When I reach Anandpur, He will be very pleased with me and proclaim me as an ideal disciple." Then the thought came to him, that devoted as he was, he could do as he liked. First he thought he would rest for the night; then seeing a charming prostitute, he decided that he would spend the night with her. But as he approached her house, Gobind Singh appeared in the form of the gatekeeper and would not allow him to enter: "A very important person is upstairs now. You must wait." Joga Singh left and after a few hours, he returned, but again the gatekeeper told him he must wait. Several times this happened until finally it was 3:00 in the morning. Then when Joga Singh came up, the gatekeeper told him: "You are a good sikh. You shouldn't be here for enjoying your body. It is the time that you should be meditating." Now Joga Singh realized his

mistake and repented. He meditated for the morning and then continued on to Anandpur.

When he arrived, he met with Gobind Singh but He was very tired and often dozed off to sleep.

"Sir, why are you so tired?"

The Guru replied, "Last night I didn't sleep because I was watching one of my disciples, keeping him from going astray."

Immediately it struck Joga that it was he whom the Master was talking about and that it was the Master who had appeared before him as the gatekeeper at the prostitute's house. Joga begged his forgiveness.

"The Guru was with you all along. But in your pride, you broke that contact and went astray. Then He had to suffer along with you and save you from falling."

V

History seems without dispute as to who was to carry on the holy work of the other nine Gurus, but little mention is made as to who was to carry on the work after Gobind Singh. Most state that he proclaimed the *Adi Granth* his successor; but would the same Master who taught his followers to worship life and not mere words (even though they may be holy words); who embraced a simple village boy who said he needed no more learning after learning but one line of the Granth: "Oh my mother, it is blissful for I have found the Living Master"—now leave them with no living guidance but only that of their holy writings?

Epilogue

The Gurus After the Ten Gurus

Only vague indications are given as to who Nanak's spiritual Master was; but in his discourses with the Siddhas he was asked who his Guru was and he replied, "Shabda is my Guru." The place where that Power is manifest is the Living Master of the time and it was for such company that Nanak and his successors repeatedly prayed.

That human pole, being composed of flesh and blood, lives on earth according to the laws of nature; and so it too must one day pass away. But the Power that works through it is eternal and its work on the earth continues for all times. Each of the Masters, as he lay on his deathbed, reassured his disciples that He Himself, being one with God, would remain ever with His disciples, even after His own physical death; and even on the earth plane, that power would continue, being passed through the eyes of the Guru to his chosen gurumukh disciple. That Shabd Power that Nanak passed on to Angad and Angad to Amardas, continued to manifest, and history records its presence to the time of Guru Gobind Singh.

But Gobind Singh was only the last of a line singled out by history—the Ten Sikh Gurus—and he did not leave the earth without first appointing one to carry on the divine mission. He in fact had at least two gurmukh disciples: one, Bhai Nandlal, and the other, Ratnagar Rao.[1] The former was a well-known poet of the Persian language whose

1. Kirpal Singh, *Baba Jaimal Singh*

works and devotion Gobind Singh oft-times publicly acclaimed. Ratnagar Rao, on the other hand, is virtually unknown. He had no public ministry but was commissioned to pass on the sacred treasure to a very small and select group. Within his own family was one Sham Rao Peshwa, the crown prince of Poona and Sitara, who showed strong spiritual aptitudes. On the day before he was to be crowned he left his palace to dedicate himself to the finding of God. He went south to Hathras, where he continued the work of his Guru. He changed his name to Tulsi Sahib and it was here he wrote his famous *Ghat Ramayana.*

Of his followers, Tulsi had one family that was particularly devoted and he prophesied a great saint would be born to them. The child, Shiv Dayal Singh, proved the truth of these words. He was an ardent student of the *Granth Sahib* even in his youth and soon began his divine ministry under the Master's orders. On his worldly departure, he in turn conferred the Guru-sonship to one Baba Jaimal Singh.[2]

Jaimal Singh's life was one of great precocity and intense spiritual searching. His parents had prayed for a saintly child and his mother-to-be soon dreamed that their prayers had been answered. Ten months later, Jaimal Singh was born. As it turned out, the boy showed remarkable abilities as a student of the scriptures. When his father tried to take him away from his studies and put him to work, tending the goats, the young boy would let them out to graze while he spent his time in study and meditation. At night, he continued to visit his teacher. More and more, his parents regretted their prayer, as the boy neglected all else in his search for spiritual knowledge. Several times he trekked

2. For details, see *Baba Jaimal Singh*

across India in search of the Master who could reveal the "Five Shabdas" discussed in the *Granth*. After years of searching, he found the blessings of such a Master in Shiv Dayal Singh. When Jaimal left the earth plane in 1903, he passed the spiritual throne to Hazur Sawan Singh.

Sawan Singh[3] spread the holy gift of Naam not only throughout India and into Africa, but extended the Path into the West as well (Europe and America). His following reached great numbers, as he freely gave of the divine treasure to whosoever truly sought it, claiming that Truth was man's birthright, as were nature's gifts of air, water, etc.

In this materialistic age, that Power came to earth in all its glory, extending the fullness of its mercy through the Beloved Satguru Kirpal Singh. And even now that same Power works in the world through His gurmukh son, Sant Ajaib Singh.

3. For details, see *Hazur Baba Sawan Singh, A Brief Life Sketch.*

The Sikhs After The Gurus

During his travels in India, Guru Gobind Singh heard of a powerful ascetic living in the caves of Decca. On their first meeting, Gobind Singh offended the renunciate who in turn exerted his supernatural powers against the Guru. But when he found them of no avail, the sadhu recognized Gobind Singh as an Enlightened One and fell at his feet—becoming his disciple and slave: His "Banda." The Guru remonstrated this new disciple for hiding in caves when his fellow men were being persecuted; He dressed him in a warrior's garb, gave him His own arrows and sent him on the mission of freeing the people from tyranny.

Among Banda's victories is included the fulfillment of a prophecy of Gobind Singh's: that the town in which His sons were cruelly murdered—Sirhind—would be razed to the ground (except for a small section where a disciple of the Guru's lived) and that the town's governor who had killed them would also meet his death at this time. Banda launched two heavy and successful attacks against Sirhind and then passed up opportunities for important victories in favor of capturing and executing the guilty governor. As his power increased, Banda was able for a time to establish a small independent kingdom. But repeated imperial attacks soon forced Banda and his following into hiding until ultimately he was captured and killed by tearing his flesh apart with red-hot pincers.

With Banda's death, the emperor continued a strong

persecution of the Sikh people, offering a reward to anyone who brought him the head of a Sikh. Thus some of the following changed their religion, while most others took to hiding in the jungles and deserts and there took to guerrilla warfare.

The Sikhs took advantage of the weakening of the Mughal Empire; of internal strifes—mostly from Marathans—and of the devastating Afghanistan invasions—first by Nadir Shah (1739) and then by Ahmed Shah Abdali (1750 and 1751)—to ultimately establish themselves as an independent nation.

However the courage and perseverance which they had shown would have lost its value—as they became a divided people, often fighting amongst themselves—had not a figure arisen who was able to unite the Sikhs into one body. This man was Ranjit Singh (1780-1839). Ranjit Singh extended the borders of the Sikh Kingdom, repulsed foreign invasion both by his military genius (particularly against further Afghanistan invasions) and by his diplomatic abilities (i.e. with the British). But above all, he united his people under one independent rule which remained till their land became part of the British dominion in 1849.

Related Persons

Bhai Nandlal (Goya)

A famous poet and follower of the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh.

At the age of nineteen, Nandlal was orphaned. Finding no suitable means of employment, he left his native land of Persia and traveled to India. Here he married, and in Delhi he came to the notice of Prince Munzzan (later, Emperor Bahadur Shah I) who employed him for his writing skills. His genius brought him much acclaim; but when Nandlal, a Hindu, gave a masterful interpretation of a selection of the Koran which even the Muslim priests could not understand, the emperor Aurangzeb was dismayed. He felt a man of such abilities should be converted to Islam.

Nandlal's wife's family were disciples of the Gurus and she was often singing their hymns. Nandlal was also spiritually inclined; he often sang the Guru's hymns and had learned the Gurmukhi script. He was further aware of Gobind Singh's being a great saint; and consequently, when he heard of the emperor's intentions, he decided to secretly leave Delhi for Anandpur.

When he arrived there, Nandlal felt he should test Gobind Singh before accepting him as Guru. Nandlal told no one in Anandpur his name but would not go to the Master till he was invited personally and by name. The time passed but to his secret desire he received no reply. With each day Nandlal felt the deep pain of separation grow within his

heart and the waiting became unbearable. Finally he sent a poem to the Guru:

How long shall I patiently await Thee?
My heart has become restless desiring to behold Thy Form.
Saith Goya, Mine eyes have become flooded with tears flowing in streams of love.

The Guru gave no reply to his poem and then a second one was written:

My heart burns in the fire of separation
I am so much consumed in this flame
That whoever sees me, he too catches afire.

Receiving this poem, the Guru invited him to his darbar; and on seeing him, Nandlal spontaneously uttered:

O Lord of heaven, King of the Beautiful Ones! Do not become more beautiful for I would not then have the strength to behold Thee. I sacrifice myself unto Thee.

And at this time, it is said he composed the following poem:

My life and faith are enslaved by His sweet, angelic face.
For one hair of my beloved Satguru, I will sacrifice both worlds (this and the next).

From that time onward, he became one of the Guru's most devoted disciples, born to bear testimony to the Guru's glory. He himself claimed to have taken birth in this world "only to see the beautiful form of the Beloved."

Once he wrote a book of prayers which he offered in dedication to Gobind Singh. When the Master received it, He retitled it from *Bandgi Nama* [Book of Prayer] to Zindgi

Nama [The Giver of Life], as He uttered the following:

Filled with the immortal nectar
The cup was named Zindgi Nama.

(Of this book, Master Kirpal Singh has said, "If you have the opportunity to read it, you will become thoroughly awakened to the true teachings.")

True to his pen-name, Goya—which means "One who is not afraid to speak out"—he declared the greatness of his Master and His Teachings in no uncertain terms. When he heard a hymn of a Persian poet which said one should leave everything and go to the jungles to find God, he pointed to his Guru and exclaimed, "Why go to the jungles when God is here standing before you!" And in a clarion voice, he spoke of the path to God realization:

> *Get hold of a perfect Master and follow his instructions fully, then shalt thou gain salvation even while engaged in worldly duties. God is with thee from eternity but thou hast to turn thy face unto Him.*

Dhanna
(15th Century)

Dhanna—or Dhanna Jat—was a poor, hard-working farmer born in Rajputana (now Rajasthan). From his childhood, he had an unshakable faith in God. Throughout his life he remained illiterate, but by the grace of Ramananda he became a perfect saint. Like many other of the Bhaktas, Dhanna first worshiped idols but later practiced the inner yoga of the Sound Current.

From within, Dhanna was directed to Swami Ramanand. The Swami was pleased to see such a pure heart and readily

initiated him. Dhanna, in turn, cultivated his Guru's gift and attained to sainthood.

Once when still young, Dhanna went to Trilochan asking for one of the idols which he worshiped. Trilochan was proud of his higher caste and held the illiterate farmer boy in contempt. Finally he consented to give Dhanna one of his cheaper idols in exchange for a milk cow. When he got home, Dhanna put the idol aside. When he next saw Trilochan he asked him if his idols ever spoke to him. "How can stone idols speak?" he replied. "But the idol which you gave me speaks with me and is doing all my work: he is plowing my fields, looking after my cows and doing every job for me." Trilochan was startled to hear this and wanted to see for himself. When they reached the field, Dhanna told him, "Look there, he is plowing my field. Look there, he is taking care of my cows." And he showed him many places where work was being done. Trilochan couldn't see the god working and when he told Dhanna this he was rebuked: "You have the dirt of lust, anger, greed and attachment within you; how can you see that pure and high God? First you have to remove this dirt from within and then you can develop in such a way as to see God." Trilochan made up his mind then and there to purify his mind. When he succeeded, he returned to Dhanna and Dhanna gave him his attention and Trilochan rose up to see God.[1]

Another time as Dhanna prepared to plant his fields, some holy men approached him for alms. All the poor jat had was the seed he was about to plant—yet without hesitation, he gave up that food to feed the sadhus. It is said that seeing this God thought, "A man who plants these seeds in

1. "O Man, Why Are You Afraid", *Sant Bani* Magazine, July/August 1977, pp. 5 & 6.

his field expects a return several times greater. Should not one who has planted in the mouths of my devotees receive several thousand times more?" Accordingly to Dhanna's own great surprise, he reaped a very great harvest from his field.

Three of his verses are included in the Guru Granth Sahib.

Farid
(1175-1265)

Farid was a great Sufi mystic, many of whose hymns are included in the *Guru Granth Sahib.* His family traces back through kings and princes while one of his spiritual instructors, Khwaja Qutub-ul-Din Bakhtiyar Ushi, is said to be a successor in the line of Mohammed.

His mother had some spiritual awakening and encouraged Farid to begin meditating at a very young age. The child questioned her as to what he would get from meditating and she replied that God would give him sweets. Happy to hear this, the boy began sitting every day for five or ten minutes. While his eyes were closed, his mother put a piece of candy under his prayer mat. This went on for some time but when his mother saw that he was ready for true meditation, she put her attention on him and the child began to rise into the spiritual realms. When he returned to normal consciousness, he composed the following little poem:

Sugar is sweet
Honey is sweet
And sweet is the milk of buffaloes
But none are as sweet as Thy Naam

After this, Farid became nicknamed *Shakar Ganj* or the Treasury of Sugar.

When he became older, Farid went into the jungles to perfect his meditations. But rather than advancing spiritually, he became caught in the net of rigid asceticism.

For twelve years he hung by a chain upside down inside a well. When a simple farmer passed by, he questioned the ascetic about the purpose of this austerity. "I am hanging like this to find God," Farid replied. Overjoyed to hear of a path to God, the poor peasant made a flimsy twine and began hanging inside another well. Within minutes his unwavering faith was rewarded and he was awakened to a vision of God. When he told Farid of his experience, Farid was wonderstruck: someone had found in minutes what he had spent years searching for. Time passed before he realized that it was the peasant's child-like faith—his throwing his life into his quest for God and not caring that a flimsy rope might not hold him—that gave him his vision of God.

One day after he had gained powers from these meditations, Farid was sitting in the fields when he saw a flock of sparrows. He looked at them and thought: "Fall dead," whereupon the whole flock died. "Revive!" he thought and they did. Several times he tested this newly found power and though at first he was struck with surprise, he soon became filled with pride. He walked away from the fields till he came to a well where a woman was drawing water. He was very thirsty and asked for water. But the woman ignored him and poured water on her feet. He got angry and threatened to curse her, but the woman replied, "I am not like those sparrows. My house is on fire. When I have extinguished the fire, then I will give you water to drink." Farid was shocked; an ordinary woman had the power to withstand his curse and to read his mind, as well as extinguish a fire from a distance. "How did you gain this power?" he asked. "Through devotion to my husband,"

replied the woman. Farid then realized the value of devotion and faithfulness.

Ultimately these and similar incidents must have awakened within Farid the awareness of the uselessness of rigid austerities and how much more effective were the simple ways of pure faith and loving devotion. Thus after many years of severe penances, he renounced these also and came unto the true path to God.

Kabir

According to the *Anurag Sagar,* Kabir was the first saint, incarnating in all the four yugas to guide souls back to God. In this age, he revived Sant Mat or the Path of the Masters which offered a direct way back to God—free of all artifice and strenuous practices. Among his following, he abolished religious and caste distinctions and taught only of the One God, Whose same Light shines within all.

He was born in this world as a low-caste Muslim weaver but challenged the knowledge and position of the high-caste Brahmins:

> *O Brahmin, you also were born of woman! How can you be called "Brahmin" when you came into the world the same way as we outcastes? Blood runs in our veins; does that mean that milk flows in yours?*

And elsewhere he wrote:

> *O wearer of the Sacred Thread*[2]
> *Know that it is spun in my house*
> *While you recite the Vedas and the Gayatri*
> *On my lips is the Lord's Remembrance.*

2. At a Hindu confirmation ceremony, the higher caste men are given a "sacred thread" to wear. This is the ritualistic remains of a one-time meaningful mystical experience.

You are a Brahmin and I am but a lowly weaver
But how did I find this knowledge?
You seek the blessings of princes
But my mind is set upon the Lord.

The Name of God is on my lips
He shines in my eyes and has His abode in my heart.
O Brahmin, what about you?
What will be your fate when death comes?

He further denounced idol worship, pilgrimage and other outer ritualistic means of finding God; claiming that he himself had tried all these ways but could not gain God's pleasure through them:

The idols are all lifeless
I know: I have cried aloud to them.

And when he started out on pilgrimage for Mecca, "God stopped me on the way and rebuked me: 'Who told you I am there? I am within you.' "

Never hesitating to speak the Truth—though it often wrought havoc within the temples and mosques—Kabir found himself a target of condemnation of both Hindu and Moslem priests. A case against him was brought before the ruler of the time and Kabir was sentenced to death. But all attempts failed—the ocean would not drown him nor would a rogue elephant trample him—and finally he was released.

Kabir was born in this world already spiritually perfected; but for the sake of form, he took on Swami Ramanand as his guru. Ultimately, however, it was Kabir who enlightened Ramanand and the disciple gave grace to the Master.

Having shed the darkness of dogma and ritualism, Kabir revived the Yoga of the Sound Current, which is made audi-

ble through the Guru. Kabir stressed that once one has gained the favor of a true spiritual guide, he needs to follow the cornerstones of a pure life and an unwavering love and devotion—which follows when one is ready to sacrifice his all.

Love grows not in the fields
And is not sold in the markets
Whosoever would have it, whether king or beggar must pay with his life.
Carry your head upon your palm as an offering,
If you would step into the wonderland of love.[3]

When it was time for Kabir to die, with the same wit as he had exposed many other hypocrisies, he gathered a few belongings and left the holy city of Kashi (Benares) where he had lived all his life and set out for Maghar. (It was believed that if one died in Kashi, he would go straightway to heaven; but one who died in Maghar was supposed to receive the curse of the gods and return to the earth as an ass.) Certain followers pleaded with him not to do this, but fearlessly he followed through with his intention.

Men say Kabir has gone mad; only a few know the truth —man sees a rope and believes it to be a snake. The Lord sustains all, just as the water sustains the fish.

The world will die but I will not die for I have found the Giver of Life. Will God forget His devotees's love though he leaves this world in Maghar? Or will the Lord of Judgment forget a man's sins if he should die in Kashi? This is not the truth.

At the age of 120, Kabir left this world; and both Hindus and Muslims wept for the saint who had taught them that

3. Kabir as translated by Kirpal Singh, *Crown of Life,* p. 183.

Allah and Ram were different names for the same Power.

Kabir's recognized successor was one Dharam Das—a one-time wealthy businessman who spent all his fortunes seeking the saint who appeared to him on various occasions, counseled him and then mysteriously disappeared. When he found him penniless and without hope—on the brink of suicide—Kabir appeared to Dharam Das and initiated him into the mystery of Surat Shabd Yoga.

Other men also reached to spiritual perfection through Kabir's intercession, but foremost of all disciples was Guru Nanak, who, alongside Kabir, was most responsible for rekindling the forgotten science of true spirituality. In this modern age, these two Saints first revealed the truth of Kabir's words: "In this world, there is no giver so great as the Guru." and gave freely to the common man what was once revealed only to a very select few.

Of all the Bhaktas in the *Granth*, Kabir's hymns are the most numerous.

How can the love between Thee and me sever?
As the leaf of the lotus abides in the water,
so dost Thou in Thy servant;
As the night-bird, Chakor, gazes at the moon all the night o'er,
So do I my Lord, thy servant;
From the beginning of time until the ending of time,
there is love between Thee and me,
How can such a love be extinguished?
Kabir therefore says, As the river plunges into the ocean, so doth my heart in Thee.[4]

4. Kabir as quoted by Kirpal Singh, *Prayer*, p. 102.

Mardana

A low-caste Muslim rebeck player and close friend of Guru Nanak's from childhood. Before Mardana's birth, his parents had lost their other children and in utter despair, they named this child "Marjana"—one who is soon to die.

Marjana's father was a village Bard of Talwandi and his son soon began to accompany him as he sang from house to house and collected alms—usually in the form of some kind of food. One house which they frequented was that of Metha Kalu and perhaps they sang there the day of Nanak's birth. (Mardana was ten years his senior.) Nanak was drawn to the young minstrel's music from an early age and formed a close friendship with this witty, blunt-mannered bard.

Perhaps more than any other person, Marjana stayed in the personal company of the Guru—and as his name did not prove prophetic, the Guru renamed him more aptly "Mardana" (or Brave One). When Nanak's parents sent him to Sultanpur, Mardana was asked to join him. Together the two would pass the night singing hymns to the Lord and enrapt in meditation. For seven years passers-by would tearfully remember their devotion to God as they stopped to hear the two devotees singing hymns of saints like Ravidas, Dhanna, or Kabir, as well as their own compositions.

When Guru Nanak received the inner command to trek across Asia, again he called his faithful companion and first disciple to his side. Throughout these journeys, Mardana faced hunger, weariness and even tortures; but as steadfast as his love was, so was the unfailing grace of the Guru over his head and time and again he was saved—ultimately to be raised from "the low one" to the highest status.

The Guru's closest worldly companion left his body while with Him in Afghanistan on the banks of the River Khuram. Head bowed before his Beloved, Mardana uttered his dying words: "Please grant me only this: Take me to the other side of the Ocean of Life, for the sake of Thy Word." With his own hands, Nanak performed the funeral rights of the disciple whom He affectionately addressed as "Bhai" (Brother).

Mardana himself wrote several hymns, three of which are included in the Guru Granth Sahib. He is the only poet other than the succeeding Gurus to write under the pen name Nanak (a probable indication of elevated spiritual status. Guru Angad also referred to him as Nanak the Second).

Let good deeds be the pitcher and Truth thy sweets
And drink the wine of the True Name
Have the bread of virtue, buttered with good conduct
And let modesty be thy meat.
O Nanak, when one finds this food,
Through the Guru it will consume all one's sins.

Namdev
(1269-1344)

Namdev was born in a low-caste family of cloth dyers in Maharashtra, India. From his very early years he had the yearning to realize God—first by worshiping the idols as his family did, but later through devotion to the Naam.

Namdev's grandfather was a devotee of idols and would daily take milk as an offering. Everyone was familiar with his daily journey to the temple with the milk and he would say, "I am going to take milk for the gods to drink." One

day he had some affairs in another town, and he called Namdev and told him, "You do the *puja* (worship), and take the milk while I am away." The child knew that his grandfather took the milk for the gods, but he did not know that his grandfather himself drank the milk, according to the custom. So the following day, Namdev performed the puja and then placed the milk before the idols. He closed his eyes and prayed that they might accept the offering of milk, but when he opened his eyes the milk was still there. Again he prayed but the milk remained. He wondered why they were not drinking it. Namdev then said to the idols, "Every day you have been drinking the milk. What has happened today?" On receiving no reply, he became very unhappy and bothered and cried, "If you don't come and drink the milk, then I am going to cut my throat!" and he took out his dagger. At once the Lord appeared and drank his milk.[5] It was with this innocent but unwavering determination that Namdev continued to seek God, until he became one with Him.

Throughout his life, Namdev was taunted by his family —first his mother and brother, then his wife—for forgetting or ignoring worldly duties and instead spending his time in meditation. But because of his deep-seated faith, the Lord always came and did his work for him.

Namdev took initiation from Guru Giandev, perfected that gift, and spent his later years traveling in the Punjab. Legend holds that in the village of Ghuman, he once entered a temple to pray; but because he was an outcaste, the priests would not allow him within the temple's walls. Undeterred, he went and sat behind the back wall and was soon lost in samadhi. The Lord, unhappy at the insult of-

5. Kirpal Singh: "It Is A Noble Search", *Sat Sandesh*, Jan. 1971, pp. 6-7.

fered to His disciple, turned the face of the temple toward the place where Namdev sat, and all the priests and brahmins fell at his feet asking for forgiveness.[6]

Sixty-one of Namdev's hymns are in the Guru Granth Sahib.

Love for Him who filleth my heart shall never be sundered;
Nama has applied his heart to the True Name.
As the love between a child and his mother,
So is my soul imbued with God.[7]

Ravidas
(15th Century)

Ravidas (Hindi, Raidas) was born in a low-caste cobbler family, but when he became a disciple of Ramananda, he reached spiritual perfection.

Like his Gur-bhai (Guru brother) Kabir, Ravidas suffered abuse from the high-caste priests. Yet also like Kabir, his God-inspired wisdom towered above the bookish learning of his tormentors and drew people from all walks of life into his folds—including Jhati, the queen of Chitaur; Raja Pipa, and the princess Mirabai. Thus he sings of the transforming power of Naam:

Of low caste, I am a cobbler by trade.
In Benares I dragged the dead cattle.
But nobles and Brahmins bow before me,
Since the slave Ravidas has taken refuge in Thy Naam.

Once Mirabai, seeing the poverty he lived in, brought Ravidas a large ruby. The saint refused it but as she in-

6. Kirpal Singh: *Baba Jaimal Singh,* p. 19.
7. Namdev as translated by Kirpal Singh in *Baba Jaimal Singh,* p. 6.

sisted, Ravidas told her to leave it in a certain corner of his hut. Satisfied that her Master would now live more comfortably in this world, Mira went to her home to continue with her devotions. After several months she returned, only to find him living just as before. Surprised, she asked him about the jewel she had left. "Oh, it's probably in the same corner where you put it."

Having the wealth of God's Name, he cared for nothing else; and yet having this wealth, he remembered himself as a humble servant and supplicant to the Lord.

Day and night my companion is evil.
My deeds are corrupt
And my birth is low.

O my Lord, the very life of my life
Do not forsake me
As I am Thy servant.

Should my body perish
Even then I will cling to Thy Lotus Feet.

Saith Ravidas: As I have sought Thy shelter
Take me into Thy protection without delay.

GAURI RAVIDAS

Between Thee and me; me and Thee, where is the difference?
Like the bracelet and the gold; like the wave and the water (so am I to Thee.)
Were I not a sinner, O Lord
How could Thou be called the Purifier of sinners?

SRI RAG RAVIDAS

Sri Chand

One of Guru Nanak's two sons, Sri Chand, as a disciple of his father, was able to make some spiritual headway but became proud of his status. He took on more and more the outer habits of a renunciate and blocked his receptivity to the Guru Power within. When Guru Nanak left the body, Sri Chand began calling himself a guru and wandered in the forests as a naked ascetic. While his reputation is primarily that of a performer of miracles, he also mastered his meditations to a fairly high degree. Therefore he was able to give out spiritual experiences within the inner realms he had mastered. This caused at least some confusion among Guru Nanak's following. There is a recorded dialogue between two disciples in certain *Janam Sakhis* (biographies of Guru Nanak) where one disciple is questioning the other as to who the true successor was: Angad or Sri Chand (and where the questioner, at least for the time, believed Sri Chand to be the true successor). This point is of particular interest because throughout *Sant Mat* men have been confused by disciples of varying degrees of attainment, claiming the successorship to their own gurus (and often it has been a member of the Guru's family as with Sri Chand). Eventually Sri Chand realized how he had been misled by pride, and bowed before the fourth Guru, Ramdas.

There is still one branch of Sikhism modeled after his ascetic ways, the Udasi sect. Further there was a line of gurus following him who were able to initiate up to the first two spiritual planes—of which Bishan Das, the first guru of the present master, Sant Ajaib Singh, was one.

Other Persons

AKBAR

Grandson of the emperor Babar. Once established in power, he became one of the most enlightened rulers in history.

BABAR

A powerful Mughal conqueror and emperor who plundered Northern India during the life of Guru Nanak. He was the first of a long line of emperors whose reign began during the life of Guru Nanak and began to decline during the life of Gobind Singh, finally to be overthrown by the British. The succession was broken for a short time during the life of the second emperor, Humayun, who was defeated in battle by an Afghan soldier, Sher Khan. Humayun spent several years in exile (during which time he married Hamida Banu Begum who bore him his great son, Akbar) before he gained the aid of a Persian king and recaptured his kingdom.

The emperors contemporary to the Gurus ran in succession as follows: Babar, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, Aurangzeb and Bahadur Shah I. The line continued for almost another 150 years, during which time twelve more emperors ruled. However, no succeeding emperor could fully subjugate rivaling powers (the Sikhs, the Rajputs, the Mahathas and eventually the English) and thus none enjoyed a secure rule. The last few emperors acted more as figureheads over whom the British ruled. The line ended with Bahadur Shah II who was exiled by the British in 1857 and died seven years later at the age of 87.

BHAI BUDHA

A disciple of Guru Nanak who perfected the gift of the

Guru. He lived to serve the five succeeding Gurus after Nanak; served as the first caretaker of the *Granth* after its compilation and performed the ceremony of declaring each succeeding Guru as the true successor when they took on that role.

GORAKH OR GORAKH NATH (13th century)

The great yogi disciple of Machandra Nath who developed a new kind of yoga for achieving powers of concentration and performing miracles. A sect of yogis was formed after him. Nanak had encounters with followers of this sect and tried to lead them from their rigid formalism, ritualism and stress on supernatural powers.

BHAI GURDAS

A poet, historian and advanced disciple of Guru Arjan. He was instrumental in helping Guru Arjan compile the *Guru Granth Sahib* but declined the opportunity to include his own writings in the scripture, saying that his works were not fit to be compared with the other saints whose hymns were included. Arjan acceded to his wish but added that whoever read and digested Gurdas' writings would gain much from them spiritually. When Arjan left his body, Gurdas served the sixth Guru, Har Gobind.

A sage in his own right, his works include many important historical documents concerning the Sikhs; aphorisms (e.g., Be wise inwardly but simple outwardly); and poems, predominately in praise of the Gurus:

Like a herd of deer fleeing before a tiger
not looking back
not pausing for breath
So fled the Fog of Illusion
before the holy Nanak.

Glossary

Agam: The Inconceivable Region; seventh spiritual plane; the last spiritual region before the Absolute God.

Ahimsa: Nonviolence in thought, word, and deed. Includes abstaining from flesh diet.

Alakh: The Indescribable Region: sixth spiritual plane; the region beyond Sach Khand.

Amritsar: 1) The heavenly fount of nectar wherein the soul may cleanse itself of its past karmic impressions. 2) The pool of water surrounding the Golden Temple. 3) A large city in the Punjab where the Golden Temple is located.

Anaami: The Nameless Region. The absolute God; the formless, unmanifest God. The eighth and ultimate spiritual region.

Avatar: An incarnation of some spiritual advancement (but not necessarily perfected) who is commissioned by God to restore the balance of good and evil. The most famous of these are Rama and Krishna.

Baba: Father; a term of respectful affection.

Bhai: Brother; a term of affection.

Brahma: The creating power in the triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

Brahmcharya: The course of conduct necessary for realizing God. Control over all the sense organs, with special

reference to chastity. Declared by all true saints to be the foundation of both the physical body and the spiritual life. (While the Masters consider repression of desire as unnatural and unhealthy, they offer the means for overcoming it: the inner Light and Sound, which are more blissful and more fulfilling. The Sikh Masters taught that married life is no bar to spirituality if conducted according to the scriptures. Most of the Ten Gurus and their successors were married and lived the life of householders.)

Brahmin: lit., the Knower of God (Brahm). The highest caste of Hindu society: the priest caste.

Darshan: Seeing a holy figure and becoming absorbed in him through the eyes. Can also imply sitting in the presence of a holy man.

Dervish: Persian. Same as *Sadhu* or *Sant.*

Dharma: righteousness; also duty.

Durga: Hindu goddess; an aspect of the Divine Mother.

Faqir: (also fakir) Arabic. Same as *Sadhu* or *Sant.*

Gayatri Mantra: Basic Vedic mantra which refers to the "inner sun."

Gurbani: the words of the Masters as contained in the *Guru Granth Sahib.*

Gurdwara: a Sikh temple.

Gurmukh: Mouthpiece of the Guru. The disciple who has achieved such a high level of spiritual receptivity that the Guru works through him.

Guru: Dispeller of darkness. One who leads the soul from the darkness (of matter) to the Light (of God) by his example, by instruction and by uplifting the soul through his attention. Though one Power, the Guru manifests at three

levels to guide the soul: 1)Guru or Master at the physical level; 2) Gurudev or Radiant Form of the Guru which appears in the spiritual regions and guides the soul from there; 3) Satguru or Master of Truth where the Guru is revealed in all His glory and seen to be one with God. For details, see *Godman* by Kirpal Singh.

Guru Granth Sahib: The voluminous scripture of the Sikh Gurus compiled by the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan. It contains the writings of seven of the gurus as well as of several other holy men.

Gwalior: A prison where Guru Har Gobind was incarcerated.

Hindustan: the Persian name of the land across the Indus; i.e. India.

Jap Ji: The prologue and essence of the Guru Granth Sahib. For translation see *The Jap Ji: The Message of Guru Nanak* by Kirpal Singh.

Ka'aba: a Muslim place of pilgrimage in Mecca. A small cubical building believed to have been the Biblical Abraham's dwelling and a place of worship during Mohammed's times.

Kal: Negative Power or that aspect of God which flows downward and outward, creating, maintaining and destroying the creation of the physical, astral and causal planes. See Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu.

Kali Yug: The Dark Age. The present cycle of time wherein moral and spiritual living are overshadowed by evil. The compensating factor is that true spirituality is offered more freely to those who will accept it than in any other time cycle.

Kalma: The Arabic equivalent of Naam or Word. Also an

Islamic recitation: There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His messenger.

Karma: Action; the Law of Action and Reaction where each soul gains the fruit of its own thoughts, words and deeds, either in this life or in future incarnations. The principle of the Negative Power which binds the soul to the Wheel of Transmigration—of Birth and Death; this principle is sustained by one's own desires—whether good or bad—which perpetuates "I-hood" and keeps one separated from God. See *The Wheel of Life* by Kirpal Singh.

Khalsa: 1) One in whom the full light is manifest. 2) the "Brotherhood" of Gobind Singh whose first members were five disciples ready to give their heads for the Holy Cause. It later extended to include the entire following and did away with rites and rituals and distinctions between one man and another.

Khurasan: Persia.

Koran: The major Islamic scripture revealed to the Prophet Mohammed by the Angel Gabriel.

Langar: Free kitchen. Established by the Sikh Gurus as a place where rich and poor alike could come for meals.

Mantra: Sacred syllables to be repeated rythmically which are given by the Guru at initiation. Also a holy chant.

Maya: The power of illusion which separates the soul from God.

Mughal: Arabic and Persian word for Mongol. Generally refers to the imperial dynasty begun by Babar (who was a direct descendant of the Mongol Gengis Khan.) The Great Mughal Emperors were those of this line beginning with Babar and ending with Aurangzeb. The last emperors are

generally called the Later Mughal Emperors, under whose rule the empire declined in both power and dominion.

Naam: Name. The primal manifestation of God; the Creative Principle. The Divine Light and Sound Principle (*Nada* or Music of the Spheres). From Naam, the entire creation—from the purely spiritual regions to the gross physical region—was created and by this same Power is all sustained. When the soul contacts this power, it finds its way back to God. Same as Word in the Bible. See *Naam or Word* by Kirpal Singh.

Panch Pyare: The Five Beloveds. Five disciples of Guru Gobind Singh who were ready to sacrifice their heads for Him. For their unwavering faith, He raised them to His own level and declared himself as their disciple. Their names were Daya Ram, Dharam Das, Sahib Chand, Himmat Chand Kahar, Mohkam Chand Chhimba. When the Khalsa was formed—of which they were the first disciples—"Singh" was suffixed to their names.

Panch Shabda: The Five-Sounded Word. The five strains of the One Shabda as heard on each of the five spiritual planes.

Pandit: A Hindu priest learned in the scriptures.

Parshad: Food blessed by a holy person.

Peshwa: Originally a chief minister's position under Shivaji's rule in Maharashtra. Later the power of this position increased until the Peshwa was the virtual ruler of the Marathas, leaving the king as a mere figurehead. Ratnagar Rao—who was commissioned to carry on the spiritual work after Gobind Singh—was one of the Peshwa family as was Sham Rao Peshwa (later Tulsi Sahib) who carried on the mission after him. (Peshwa should not be confused with

Peshawar, which is an important town in the North West Frontier Province of India, now in Pakistan.)

Punjab (also Panjab): Land of the five rivers (i.e. Jhelum, Ravi, Beas, Sutlej and Chinab—all tributaries of the Indus River). It is the land of the Ten Gurus and became an independent Sikh kingdom under Ranjit Singh, until it came under British dominion in 1849.

Qazi: A Muslim learned in both law and theology.

Rajputana (presently Rajasthan): A largely desert area which borders the Punjab. It is the homeland of many Saints including Dhanna, Mirabai and the living Master, Ajaib Singh, as well as the birthplace of the great Mughal emperor, Akbar. Many Sikhs took refuge in its deserts during the days of heavy Mughal persecution following Gobind Singh's death. It is also the land of the Rajputs, a brave and princely band of men who did much to defend the Hindu people against the onslaughts of Islamic invasions.

Sach Khand: The Region of Truth. The fifth spiritual region wherein the soul realizes "I and my Father are one". This is the stage of full liberation; of pure spirit and the ultimate stage to which the Guru leads the disciple (From here, the soul is reabsorbed into the Formless God by God Himself.)

Sadhu: A disciplined soul. One who rises above the three regions (physical, astral and causal) to the realm where Spirit predominates. Also refers to a wandering renunciate. *Faqir* and *Dervish* are Arabic and Persian terms with similiar meanings.

Samadhi: Absorption in God.

Sangat: The members of a Guru's Satsang.

Sant: One Who has reached the purely spiritual region of Sach Khand.

Sant Mat: The Path of the Masters. In this modern age, it was most notably revived by Kabir and Guru Nanak.

Satguru: The True Guru. A Master of the highest order, commissioned by God to take souls back to the "Father". See *Godman* by Kirpal Singh.

Sat Lok: Same as Sach Khand.

Satsang: The contacting of the Truth or the True One; either within in meditation or through the agency of one who is a full expression of that Power.

Seva: Service for the good of others or in a holy cause.

Sevadar: One who does seva.

Shabda: The Word. Same as Naam. The inner Sound Principle which one may hear for himself, when connected to it by a Living Master.

Shiva: The destroying power of the Hindu Triad, of Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu.

Sikh: A disciple. Generally refers to the religious sect formed in remembrance of the Ten Gurus.

Surat: The attention or the soul.

Surat Shabd Yoga: The joining of the soul with the Shabda. The Yoga of the Sound Current which bestows full liberation and is free of strenuous exercises involving pranas and ritualistic worship. It is the path taught by Kabir, Guru Nanak and their successors. See *The Crown of Life* by Kirpal Singh.

Tenth Door: (Daswand Dwar) 1) The spiritual egress through which the soul leaves the bodily coverings and

enters into the spiritual regions. 2) The Third Spiritual Region made up of pure spirit with some degree of subtle matter. The region of the heavenly pool Amritsar, where the soul is washed clean of all impurities.

Vedas: lit. Knowledge. The oldest of all scriptures and the most sacred to orthodox Hindus.

Vishnu: The sustaining aspect of the Negative Power.

Yama: The Lord of Death in Hindu mythology.

Yoga: Sanskrit *yuj*, to join. 1) The practice which aims at stilling the mind as a means to concentrated meditation for securing at-one-ment of the soul with the Universal Soul. 2) One of the six major Hindu systems of philosophy as expounded by the sage Patanjali (c. 300 A.D.) comprising Ashtang or an eight-fold path of reunion with the Divine. 3) Of all forms of yoga, the highest and the easiest is the Yoga of the Sound Current or Surat Shabd Yoga. It can be practiced alike by old and young; man or woman. See *Crown of Life* by Kirpal Singh.

Yuga: A cosmic time cycle. There are four yugas: Sat Yug, Treta Yug, Dwapar Yug and Kali Yug which correspond to the Golden Age, the Silver Age, the Copper Age and the Iron Age. Virtue and True Living decrease as well as the life span as the Yugas work in their downward cycle from Sat Yug to Kali Yug. After Kali Yug, the cycle begins at Sat Yug again and thus virtue begins again to increase. We are presently said to be in Kali Yug.

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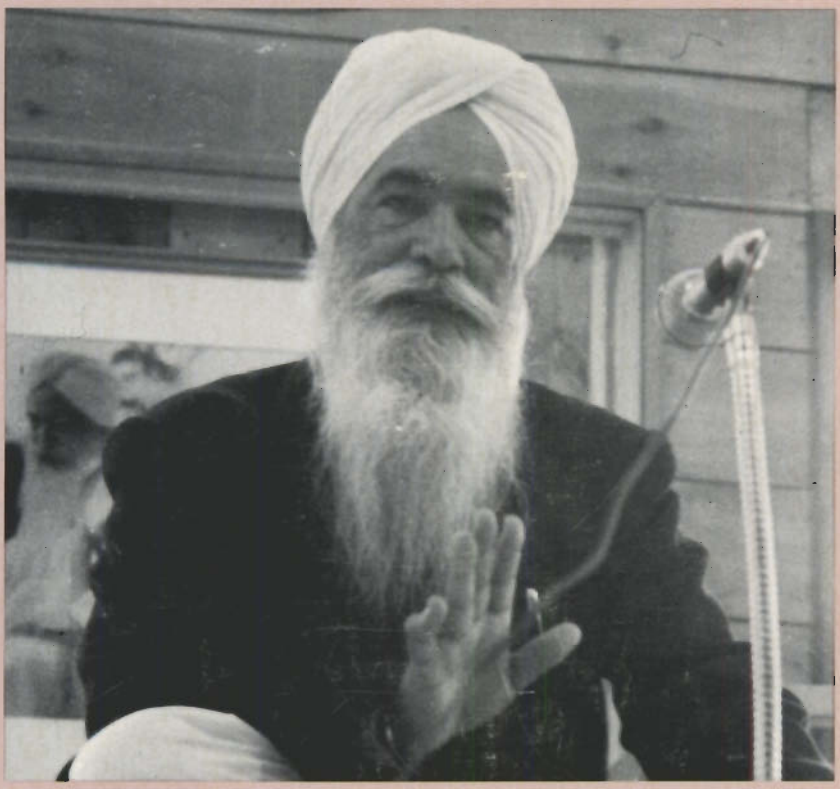

Sant Ajaib Singh Ji

about the author. . . .

Jon Engle was born in San Mateo, California in 1948, graduated from Goddard College—where he first began researching the lives of the Ten Sikh Gurus—and later went on to study education. He was initiated into Surat Shabd Yoga (the Path taught by Guru Nanak and his successors) by Sant Kirpal Singh in 1970 and has spent many months with him and his successor, Sant Ajaib Singh in India. He is presently teaching elementary school at Sant Bani Ashram in New Hampshire.

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