



SIKH  
Research Institute

# *Dan* Sikhi, Nonprofits & Giving

*State of the Panth, Report 8*

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# State of the Panth

State of the Panth series is a report on Sikh matters presented by the Sikh Research Institute to the global Sikh community. The series reports on matters affecting either a large section of the Sikh Nation or a perspective on critical issues facing the human race at large. It surveys the self-identified Sikhs on their stances. It outlines a Sikh perspective based on Gurmat (the Guru's Way) traditions of Bani (wisdom), Tavarikh (history), and Rahit (lifestyle). It offers recommendations for the individual Sikhs and Sikh institutions in best practice approach to strengthen the bonds within the community.

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# Summary

As the world becomes more interconnected, we understand how some have an abundance of monetary wealth, and others do not, and the more we understand the various needs unaddressed in our backyards and abroad. People want to give. People need to give. But do we understand *what it means to give*?

This report aims to understand and explore what it means to give in a Sikh context, how giving is conceptualized and understood through Sikh history, and how it is understood and practiced today. The report analyzes ideas conveyed in the Nam-Dan-Isnan (Identifying-Giving-Cleansing) doctrine from a Gurmat (or Guru's Way) perspective, as inferred from *Bani* (wisdom), *Tavarikh* (history), and *Rahit* (lifestyle).

The Bani section explores Nam-Dan-Isnan as it is found in primary and secondary texts. The Tavarikh section traces and analyzes conceptions of giving, both charity and philanthropy, from their beginnings with Guru Nanak Sahib through their development, institutionalization, and application through time and context over 553 years – covering the Guru Period, the Khalsa Raj, the Sikh Empire, the Sikhs and the Crown, and the Sikhs and the Indian State. The Rahit section explores present-day understandings and application of Nam-Dan-Isnan doctrine in Sikh institutions and organizations across India and the diaspora. It explores the following questions: *How are Sikh organizations spending their money? Is there more of an emphasis on short-term charity or long-term philanthropy and institution-building? What is the relationship between homeland and diaspora in the context of giving?*

A global survey, included in the report, was responded to by more than 700 self-identified Sikhs from 23 different countries. Its purpose was to gain insight into Sikh understandings of giving, especially regarding its application in the current realities and needs of the *Panth* (Sikh collective). The majority of respondents (59%) said that impact and outcomes most inform their perspective on the effectiveness of Sikh nonprofits, followed by public relations and social media, and transparency. The majority of respondents (56%) said that Sikh nonprofits do not do enough to stay accountable to the Panth and expressed a desire to see philanthropic projects that address the long-term needs of the community.

This report makes recommendations based on Gurmat to help individuals and institutions better understand giving within the Nam-Dan-Isnan doctrine. It also provides criteria that individuals and institutions can use to evaluate nonprofit organizations from a Gurmat perspective.



# Dan: Sikhi, Nonprofits & Giving

The more globalized the world gets and the more interconnected we are as a human species, the more understanding we have of how some people possess an abundance of monetary wealth and others do not. The more interconnected we become, the more we understand the various needs unaddressed in our backyards and abroad. People want to give. People need to give. But in our fierce desire to help somehow, are we giving thoughtfully? Are we examining the material realities that have led us to such a point? Do we understand what it means to address the immediate and long-term needs of the Sikh community? The global community? Do we understand *what it means to give*?

A survey of 726 self-identified Sikhs from 23 countries was conducted to gain insight into Sikh understandings of giving, especially regarding its application in the current realities and needs of the Panth. Responses included three areas of emphasis:

1. Importance placed on the transparency and public image of an organization in evaluating its effectiveness
2. The belief that Sikh nonprofits do not do enough to stay accountable to the Panth
3. Desire to see philanthropic projects that address the long-term needs of the community

This report makes recommendations based on Gurmat (the Guru's Way) as inferred from Bani (wisdom), Tavarikh (history), and Rahit (lifestyle) that can be used by individuals and institutions to understand how best to evaluate nonprofit organizations from a Gurmat perspective.

Vintage globe with Europe in focus  
Photo by Christian Lue

# Bani *Wisdom*

Sikhs often invoke the principle of service through key terms like *dasvandh* and *seva*, and key phrases like *Nam Japna*, *Kirat Karni*, and *Vand Chakna*. But what do these terms mean, and how are they related to our ideas about giving? How are they invoked in Bani, and how do we understand them today?

Before we can explore these terms, the word *Dan* must first be understood, which informs our larger understanding of giving. In Sanskrit, *Dan* means giving, granting, or teaching. In Pali, it means gift, charity, alms, or almsgiving. In the Buddhist context, it refers to a special offering to the Sangha (communion). Today, in global parlance, it has come to denote a gift or donation for charitable purposes.

In Sikhi, *Dan* is about cultivating a behavior to become like the Generous One, *IkOankar* (One Universal Integrative Force, 1Force). Generosity may take the form of giving to a person or institution addressing specific distress or need. It may also take the form of philanthropic public projects that empower and help many within the Panth or *Sarbat* (Humanity). It refers to a giving or generosity that is always vast and diverse: time, mind, body, energy, money, food, clothing, gifts, prayers, attitude, or appreciation. So, what is the greatest gift one can receive? The gift of connection with *IkOankar*, the 1Force. *Towards that is the commonly known phrase: Nam, Dan, Isnan. Exploring these terms in relation to one another will further clarify what "giving" means in the Sikh paradigm.*

## Nam, Dan, Isnan

### *Nam: Active and Dynamic Identification*

*Nam* is rooted in the Persian *Nam*, and the Sanskrit *Naman*, both meaning "name." Its connotations include name, fame, honor, repute, the Divine Name, and the totality of Divine attributes. *Nam* as it is invoked in Bani can refer to how we as human beings "identify or identify with" the One, or, alternatively, to *The* Divine Name, the real essence of the One. In the former case, it is used in reference to divine attributes that we can name, which help us to further identify with the unfathomable and Vast 1Force:



*Tongue utters Your Nam based on virtues.  
Satinamu — Eternal Nam — is Yours from time immemorial.  
Nanak says: Devotees are in Your sanctuary,  
grant the vision, so their mind remains colored with love.'*



– Guru Granth Sahib 1083

As the Guru explains, we coined terms, and they became IkOankar's name, IkOankar's Nam, or Identity. But IkOankar existed *before* any name and any of the identities we carved of IkOankar. That eternal name, Nam, or Identity is what the seekers long for.

In the latter case, it is used in reference to that Name which we do not know, the Essence of 1Force:



*It is eventually learned Nam is the essence of everything.  
Without Nam, the pain and the fear of death cause grief.  
When the essence of all essences is found, the mind accepts it.  
Then, duality departs, and one enters the home of the One.  
So even when the wind howls and the sky thunders,  
The steady mind meets the One naturally, O Nanak! <sup>ii</sup>*



– Guru Granth Sahib 943

Nam is understood as deep introspection and Identification with IkOankar. It is not a dead and passive identification or remembrance, but instead an active, dynamic, real, authentic, and inspirational culture one aspires to live in. Nam is the Principle, the supporting and sustaining power of all beings, universes, texts, and knowledges. Even amid noises and distractions, it is Nam that unites the being with the Being. As Professor Puran Singh writes:

*Nam is inspiration, not a mechanical sadhana, or an effort to be what one cannot be without inspiration. Yoga and its process may yield some strange accomplishment, but accomplishments, however extraordinary, do not belong to the essential beauty of the soul ... Thus the Guru's "Nam" is the supernaturally natural function of a poetical genius who, though in body, is at all times of day and night under the influence of the higher Soul-worlds of Freedom ... The dull academic unity of all things does not interest him; it matters little to a living man, whether the ultimate reality is one or many. The man of Nam and Simrin does not concern Himself with metaphysical speculation. He thinks his brief life is cut still shorter by idle mental abstractions. This occasion of life is for learning the divine music of life; it means hard labour, it means some kind of artistic perfection.<sup>1</sup>*

– Puran Singh, "Nam & Simrin," Spirit of the Sikh

Nam is inseparable from IkOankar, beyond deception and description, within the human potential (mind/heart), realized through the Guru's Grace, and practiced through Remembrance.

## *Dan: Vast Giving*

As introduced above, Dan is understood as a spirit of giving. In Sikhi, Dan is about cultivating a behavior to become like the Generous One, IkOankar. It refers to a giving or generosity that is always vast and diverse. It is invoked in Bani in various ways, both in reference to IkOankar's giving and to human giving.

*The One who created it, watches over it, and assigns tasks in the world.  
With Your Dan, the heart illuminates and the body shines like a moon.  
With the 1-Light's Dan, when the body shines like a moon,  
the darkness and the pain leave.  
The marriage party of virtues with Divine Groom looks beautiful,  
the enticing human bride appraises and accepts.  
The wedding occurs with splendor, the One comes with five celestial sounds.  
The One who created it, watches over it, and assigns tasks in the world.<sup>iii</sup>*

– Guru Granth Sahib 765

Here, Guru Nanak in Rag *Suhi*, the musical mode of deep divine love, explores the greatest gift of all, given by the Giver, IkOankar. With this gift, the heart becomes illuminated, and the body shines like the moon, reflecting the virtues of the One. Darkness and pain leave, and the Divine Spouse becomes beautiful. The marriage party of virtues makes us beautiful within and without. The introspection for us is whether we are able to receive this gift and recognize that this connection with the Giver is the greatest gift of all. Guru Arjan also references this gift as the gift of Nam:

*The One places a hand on the forehead and establishes, gives Dan of Nam.  
The service of the Supreme Being is successful; it is never a failure.<sup>iv</sup>*

– Guru Granth Sahib 817

Placing the hand on the forehead is a personal gesture and evokes a sense of grace. This is grace that all have access to. Serving the Supreme Being is to serve creation selflessly. This is the kind of giving and serving that Sikhs aspire to, further exemplified by the Guru:

*[Guru Arjan:]*

*Embodies patience as the principle, has profound Wisdom-thought,  
and alleviates others' pains.*

*Possesses the Word's essence, is vast like Hari, and dissolves the ego.*

*Is the great giver, has deep knowledge of Eternal-Wisdom,  
and his mind's excitement doesn't diminish.*

*Is the truth-exemplar, and the never reducing nine treasures for him  
are the rooting himself in Hari's Nam.*

*From the body of Guru Ramdas, is like the Omnipresent, naturally erected the canopy.*

*Kal utters: Guru Arjan, you know and taste the Rule-Connection.<sup>v</sup>*

– Guru Granth Sahib 1407

The bard Kal emphasizes the example of Guru Arjan's life as aspirational for seekers who are looking to see their behaviors transformed. This is how Guru Arjan lives; this is how those who want his mentoring ought to live. Hari is the Light, the All-Pervasive, the Fear-eliminator, the 1Force. Mantra is what one repeats for a particular end result; nine-treasures are an Indic classification of great fortunes. Hari's Nam is Guru Arjan's mantra. For Guru Arjan, Identifying with Hari is all there is. This rootedness in Nam and thus the resulting embodiment of patience, alleviation of the pains of others, dissolving of ego, and great giving in excitement is what becomes aspirational for the seekers. To give in a way that emulates the Guru is to give with excitement, prioritize patience and empathy, and alleviate other people's pains. This is what we can do to enjoy the Rule-Connection of the Gurus. Guru Nanak elaborates on those who can do this:

*In whose heart remains the One, they possess the thought, the honor, and the wealth.*

*How can they be praised? Who else is beautiful like them?*

*Nanak: Those outside of grace cannot be immersed in Dan and Nam.<sup>vi</sup>*

– Guru Granth Sahib 15

The ones connected with the One, the ones who feel the grace of the One, are the ones who know Nam-Identification and Dan-Giving. Unless the One dwells within, a person will not have the thought, the honor, or the wealth. If one does not feel the Grace, one will not be able to fully comprehend and live Nam or Dan. The Guru continues, playing with notions of outward garbs as symbols for behavior:

*To color one's mind red is wearing red;  
to live a life of truth and giving is wearing white.  
To remove the filth is wearing blue;  
to contemplate on 1's feet in humility is wearing a long robe.  
To be content is wearing a weapon's waistband;  
Your Nam is the wealth and the youth.<sup>vii</sup>*

– Guru Granth Sahib 16

The Guru notes that giving ought not to emanate from a goal of status, nor with an eye toward rewards in the afterlife. Here, the Guru uses the cultural context of various outward garbs used to signify virtues. People wear red to display romance and love, white to display spirituality and piety, blue to display bravery and difficulty, long robes to display authority and simplicity, and waistbands to display machismo and combat. All of these colors have Indic or Hindu orders and global symbolism. The outward garbs used by “holy” people to denote certain things are deliberate in communicating a particular accomplishment or level of spirituality. The Guru plays on these things, and within this play, giving is listed. The Guru emphasizes the importance of internalizing these qualities instead of displaying them – to behave with piety is to live a life of truth and make a habit of giving. It is not to emphasize other people seeing that one is living piously; it is not to place importance on other people seeing one give.

### *Dan: Purposeful Giving*

Guru Nanak later distinguishes between the different kinds of giving:

*Even if I donate gold castles, even if I donate many horses and elephants,  
Even if I donate land and a lot of cows, the pride and the arrogance remain within.  
The mind is pierced by Ram's Nam; the Guru gives the eternal Dan.<sup>viii</sup>*

– Guru Granth Sahib 62

Like mantras, there are giving levels in various cultures and religions to get to a certain level of comfort, attain a spot in heaven, or be rewarded in the afterlife. All of that is being challenged, as the Guru points out that this kind of giving creates a sort of hell in this life via arrogance, pride, and ego. In this life, Identification with the Beautiful is what Wisdom donates to a seeker. We, as human beings, are not donors, ultimately. What we give is not ours to give, to begin with. The Guru is showing us that we are supposed to practice and learn to receive by giving. Instead, we tend to create more trouble for ourselves because of the flaws in our intentions. It is receiving the gift of Nam by giving in the culture of Nam in humility and

knowing that what is being given is not ours to “give.” Therefore, the “I” is not giving, but “1Force” is the Giver through us. That is when the “giver” (I) and the “Giver” (1Force) become One. Later in this same composition, Guru Nanak’s oft-quoted line is uttered:



*Many mind-stubborn intellects; many literary thoughts.  
Many entanglements of the being; the doorway to freedom is Wisdom-centeredness.  
Everything is short of the Truth; above all is the conduct of Truth.<sup>ix</sup>*



– Guru Granth Sahib 62

In this world, there are numerous schools of thought, rituals, knowledges, and shackles. However, none of these matter except the one school of thought taught by Wisdom, for *that* frees us, mortals. The last line gets quoted in mistranslation as “truth is high, but higher still is truthful living.” However, Guru Nanak says that everything else is something short of the Truth, something less than the Eternal, so the best thing to do is fashion our behavior to be more like the Eternal via Wisdom. This happens when we receive the great gift of the Giver, become rooted in the principle of Nam, and shift our intention and understanding of what it means to give.

The picture that emerges through this exploration is that Nam is the greatest gift and that Nam *qualifies* Dan, that Nam-Dan is one – they are one idea, one unit. This idea is repeated many times: charity, goodwill, or any act of kindness is nothing if it is not done in awareness. This is not to say that giving itself is bad, but that giving for the giver goes through its own evolution. Giving in a Sikh context is not done in one’s own name but in the One’s Name. Dan as a standalone idea or action is not a uniquely Sikh thing. Dan that is qualified by Nam, giving that is done in the *culture* of Nam, is giving within the Sikh paradigm. Praise, Remembrance, and Identification with the One are repeatedly referred to as the greatest forms of giving. It is in these lines that we see an elaboration on what *real* giving is in the Sikh context:



*The time spent on remembering 1-Light’s glory and virtues  
is equivalent to taking tens of millions of cleansing dips at pilgrimages,  
The tongue that utters the virtues, no giving can match that.  
Compassionate Graceful Being bestows glance, resides in that mind and body.  
The being, the body, and the wealth is of that One; I forever and forever adore the One.<sup>x</sup>*



– Guru Granth Sahib 49

Human life is an opportunity to become like Hari, the 1-Light, and not to take holy baths. Human beings start with recalling and emulating Hari's virtues to become like Hari. This is the Dan or the giving in Sikhi. Then, when one mentally and physically adopts the virtues in their lifestyle, this is how one can feel the grace and give in a way that aspires to be like the Giver. Therefore, those who feel it adore the One and are willing to do anything and everything for that connection.

Praise of IkOankar is not only verbal praise or remembrance and identification that is passive and stagnant. Praise of IkOankar is also something that happens in one's behavior and actions. When one is rooted in Nam and engaging in praise in all ways, one is called to give and serve others. When rooted in Nam, Dan is a sharing that benefits others and empowers those in need. It is a spirit of abundance and security rather than one of scarcity and anxiety-driven calculation and hoarding. Guru Arjan continues on the theme of overcoming an attitude of lack by emphasizing the abundance of IkOankar:



*The showers of rain-grace start in Command,  
When the truth-exemplar friends recount Nam.  
They feel serenity, silence, and steadiness, the Divine-Self infuses calmness,  
dearest-revered! The One produces a lot of everything, a lot;  
The Divine graciously satisfies everyone.  
O my Giver, You give to satisfy all beings and creatures, dearest-revered!<sup>xi</sup>*

– Guru Granth Sahib 104

The Giver, IkOankar, has an abundance. The receivers do not. The receivers only feel satisfied once they are at a certain level of existence. This level of existence does not involve physical satisfaction from monetary gains or material comforts – it involves purposeful satisfaction when individuals display truth in their conduct. As the crops grow when it rains, so do the *sant-sajan* (truth-exemplar friends) with the rain of Nam. They are then satisfied. As the people are satisfied due to the food-rain effect, the *sants* are satisfied with the Nam effect. These lines are really asking mortals to move from physical satisfaction to purposeful satisfaction. This is what allows individuals to become vast in their giving.

Dan, when rooted in Nam, is a giving with the aspiration of emulating the One's giving. It is a giving that is vast and abundant.

### *Dan: Honest Labor*

However, it is not just the giving that is important. It is also the nature of the labor that is done to earn that which one is giving. Honest labor is emphasized along with sharing. Giving from a pool of resources accumulated dishonestly, oppressively, and immorally is not the kind of giving that the Guru is asking

us to do. The types of work we do and how we earn are important factors in what it means to give. The implication is that some might give or present themselves as givers, but they do not perform honest work and instead perform piety. Guru Nanak Sahib elaborates on this:

*Disgraceful is their living; they write and sell 1-Identification.  
Their crop is destroyed; what can be placed for threshing?  
Outside of genuine effort, they will not receive endorsement ahead.  
This is not to be proclaimed an intellect; if intellect is wasted in arguments.  
Through intellect serve the Sovereign; through intellect receive honor.  
Through intellect read and resolve; through intellect allocate donation.  
Nanak proclaims this is the way; other talks are by the satanic ones.<sup>xii</sup>*

– Guru Granth Sahib 1245

Religious experts who write prescriptions (mantra/ta'wiz) and charge money for it are like the ones who have nothing to harvest. This selling of Nam is classified as satanic, devilish, or mischievous human behavior. The Guru urges people to use the mind and its sharpened intellect to decipher what to give, how to give, and why to give – not to give because some religious figures told us to. Again, a further elaboration of what it means to give within the Sikh worldview is presented. Intellect is to be used for many things, including how one decides to give.

Guru Nanak Sahib later continues:

*Sings songs without deep knowledge.  
Hungry becomes a Mullah by making his home a mosque.  
Remains a non-earner and pierces ear.  
Being a beggar loses status further.  
Labels himself a Guru or a Pir yet roams as a mendicant.  
Do not fall on their feet at any cost.  
Consume from earnest effort, give some from the hands.  
Nanak: That one recognizes the way.<sup>xiii</sup>*

– Guru Granth Sahib 1245

The first four lines of this excerpt refer to those seemingly religious figures: the Pandit, the Mullah, and the Yogi, who may have “religious uniforms” such as pierced ears. Due to their status, these hold religious authority and power, who aspire to become *the* religious heads. Yet, they do not earn and instead are entirely dependent on everyday people to survive. The Guru warns the people not to fall prey to these religious figures, not to bow at their feet, or be deceived by their performance. The Guru’s way is to earn and share ethically before consuming all that one has, to continue to walk on the path to One. One cannot distribute if one does not earn. Again, the emphasis that it is not enough to simply give for altruistic reasons is present here. Giving motivated by feel-good reasons brings one recognition, but not the realization of the One or connection with the One.

### *Isnan: Cleansing through Reflection*

Isnan is understood as clarity in purpose and actions. It is invoked in Bani to be contrasted with classical understandings of Isnan as a physical cleansing at a particular sacred site. It is often mentioned along with Dan, as, together, giving and cleansing are two important tasks for those seeking connection to the Divine. Just as the Guru redefines Dan into something more expansive than just “charity” or “giving,” the Guru’s redefinition of Isnan encompasses a kind of cleansing that happens through reflection and absorption in the Guru’s message and practice of the Guru’s teaching. Guru Teghbahadar emphasizes this redefinition:



*Having visited pilgrimage sites, observed fasts, and made charities,  
if one takes pride in the mind;  
Nanak: The deeds of that being go in vain, just like the bath of an elephant.<sup>xiv</sup>*



– Guru Granth Sahib 1428

Guru Teghbahadar says, having bathed at pilgrimage sites, observing fasts, and giving alms, if someone takes pride in these deeds, their deeds go in vain like an elephant's bath: because after bathing, the elephant blows dirt back onto its body and becomes soiled again.

In attempts to practice Remembrance and feel the presence of the One, people do various things that they have understood to be helpful. One might go to all the pilgrimages; one might partake in many fasts; one might make gestures of charity. However, if one does these things and takes pride in them, it is as if one did not do them at all. If one is doing these things to prove their piety or display their religious merits, then these things were all done in vain. The Guru asks seekers to reflect on why they are doing these deeds and whether devotion, love, and Remembrance are present in their actions. Remembrance looks like understanding who the Giver is:

*Salok*

*Devoted see the One who is the giver of everything.*

*Nanak: In every breath, they remain in remembrance to make 1's vision their support.*

*Pauri*

*'D' is for the One 'Data'-Giver who gives to all.*

*Never a scarcity in giving, storages are countless and full.*

*Giver is always full of life.*

*Why has the foolish mind forgotten that One?*

*This is no one's fault, friends!*

*Divine entangled all in the attachment of illusion.*

*1-Self removes the pains for us.*

*Nanak, they become content with wisdom-centeredness.<sup>xv</sup>*

– Guru Granth Sahib 257

The Guru says that IkOankar, the One, is the only Giver. If we are unable to recognize this, it is because we are caught in the deception of *Maya* (worldly illusion). If we are caught up in *Maya*, this means that our donations and our giving are all made with the false understanding that it is we who are giving and not the One giving *through* us. This outlook changes and a new understanding and attitude develops when Guru enters our minds and behaviors. This transformation will lead us to giving without a sense of transaction, and with a sense of abundance rather than scarcity.

Notably, the Guru also urges us not to blame anyone for their forgetfulness or lack of understanding. This is no one's fault. Giving, in and of itself, does not create understanding and contentment. There is an ongoing process in which we strive to become like the Giver, IkOankar. If we want to develop that attitude, our giving becomes of this nature. We become vast in our giving and our attitudes of giving. This is not to say that the Guru is absolving people of accountability or responsibility. In this understanding, when someone misuses collective funds, misappropriates, or embezzles, there needs to be an effort to create accountability by using the intellect to move beyond simple condemnation. This is how, in the Sikh paradigm, wisdom-centeredness brings contentful "giving." The Guru explains that this type of giving goes beyond simple condemnations, carries within it the Vastness of IkOankar, and exists as an attitude and act and a sense of accountability. If we cannot yet understand that all things are happening in the Command, if we cannot see the One as the only and greatest Giver, and we as the instruments of that giving, then we cannot develop this perspective of vastness.

In Guru Nanak's *Asa Ki Var* (Song of Hope), an exploration of Dan and Isnan is done, set in the larger context of how people understand giving, pilgrimage, and cleansing within the dominant culture. The Guru recontextualizes these commonly understood ideas into the Sikh paradigm:

*To the Muslims, praise of Sharia is appealing; having read repeatedly, they reflect on it.  
 Servants are they alone, who remain in its restriction, to see a Vision.  
 Hindus praise the Praiseworthy, who is boundless on account of visibility and form.  
 At pilgrimage site, they bathe, worship, spread the scent and fragrance of joss-wood.  
 Yogis meditate, in a state of void, on the Creator of unperceivable Nam.  
 [They imagine] the subtle Being, whose Nam is Niranjan, in the form of a body.  
 With the thought of giving, satisfaction arises in the charity-givers' minds.  
 Having given, they ask for a thousand times more; the world praises them.  
 Thieves, adulterers, liars, wicked and the vice-filled;  
     *many having consumed here all that they have, depart;  
     is their action of any worth?*  
 In the water, on the land, in the regions and realms,  
     *whatever shapes and forms of creatures.*  
 Whatever they speak, only You know; they are also in Your care.  
 Nanak: For the devotees, Your praise itself is the hunger;  
     *the eternal Nam is their support.*  
 They always remain in bliss, day and night, (being) dust of the feet of the virtuous.<sup>xvi</sup>*

– Guru Granth Sahib 466

Guru Nanak begins this ballad with observations on Muslims, Hindus, and other major religions and schools of thought of the time period. The listings explore the degeneration of these religions and schools of thought. This is an exploration of the dominant cultural and religious paradigms of the time and a statement on the similarities between what might at first be classified as diametrical schools of thought. The reality is that their degeneration is rooted in the same things, though it manifests in different ways. Guru Nanak observes what particular religiosities have been reduced to, looking at how peoples' behaviors do not align with the religions or schools of thought they claim to be a part of. Importantly, the Guru discusses the flaws in those charity-givers who are satisfied even with the *thought* of giving, but who, once having given, ask for a thousand times more in return. Giving with the expectation of reward or praise is not giving as it is outlined in the Sikh paradigm.

### *A Community founded on Nam-Dan-Isnan*

Guru Nanak then discusses the behaviors of those who are lovers of the 1Force. They are busy glorifying 1-Identification, or Nam – the ways in which we identify with, connect to, and experience the One. This is their life support. Those lovers of the One are the ones who praise the One, the ones who are in bliss and joy, day and night, who consider themselves to be the dust of people of virtues. These devotees can be from any walk of life, from any practicing or non-practicing traditions. They are always so excited to be praising the One, and they are humble in the way they live, looking for mentoring in the three qualities:

Identification with the One, praise of the One, and practicing good virtues. These are the people who understand Nam-Dan-Isnan.

Guru Arjan elaborates on building a community of these people:



*Remember, remember, perfect Divine; all tasks will be completed.  
Creator lives in Kartarpur (Creator-ville), amongst the Truth-Exemplars. Pause-reflect.  
No obstacle persists, supplicate to the Infinite-Wisdom.  
Earth-Force is the protector, the wealth of the devotees.  
No deficiency ever enters at all; treasures are full.  
Divine, Transcendent, Infinite's lotus-feet (humility) lives in mind and body.  
All live, earn, are comfortable; no shortage is seen-experienced.  
With Truth-Exemplar's grace, find-meet Perfect, World-Owner, Divine.  
Everyone praises; beautiful, eternal space.  
Nanak: Recite Nam-Identification, treasure of comforts,  
attain perfect Infinite-Wisdom.<sup>xviii</sup>*

– Guru Granth Sahib 816

These communities are examples of how a society can function without lack when people share without a sense of transaction and only with a sense of vastness. This happens when the collective lives out Nam-Dan-Isnan. To paraphrase how Bhai Vir Singh elucidates, Nam is the relationship of the Wisdom-oriented with 1Force, Dan is the relationship of the Wisdom-oriented with the world, and Isnan is the relationship of the Wisdom-oriented with the self. When these three things come together, one experiences freedom while alive. Isnan is what gives one cleansing and reflection, keeping the body clean and healthy, protecting the mind from negativity, and protecting the conscience so that virtues dominate. Dan is giving and donating: using the physical body to provide tangible services like food, medicine, and shelter; using the mind to share knowledge and insights; using the consciousness to recognize that nothing is “ours” to give. Nam is naming and Identification. It is using the body to recite the Divine Name and bring Remembrance into the heart, using the mind to practice Remembrance and slow down negative thoughts, and using the consciousness to bring about a higher awareness. Nam distances us from our ego and sense of self and instead connects us to the Nami, or the Giver. This connection with the Giver is the purpose of Nam.

Communities made up of those who can live out Nam-Dan-Isnan are described as achievable utopias. In the spiritual domain of these places, the incessant Divine presence for lasting peace is felt by all who visit, such that travelers become not only citizens but friends. The political state is stable because of steady government – a system of leadership that is only possible when no citizen is deemed second or third class but rather enjoys equal status with no suffering or fear. The economic arena of this state is excellent and

famous for levying no unfair taxes. Consequently, all of the residents are wealthy and content. This is the vision each Sikh is to make an integral part of their awareness and then forge such a connection with these ideals as to realize them as realities for universal good, beyond borders and beliefs.

Nam-Dan-Isnan forms the foundation of many terms and phrases used by Sikhs to talk about giving and service: Seva (service); Degh-Tegh Fatih (Economics-Political-Victory), Panth Ki Jit (Victory to the Sikhs); Sarbat da Bhala (Welfare of the Humanity); Nam Japo, Kirat Karo, Vand Chako (Recite Nam, Earn ethically, Share then consume). Seva as it is commonly understood today reduces itself to simply service and charity.

The vastness of giving as explored in the Guru Granth Sahib is not as commonly understood, and is instead limited to only encapsulating volunteering and giving to charity. There is mention of Gur Ki Seva, serving the Wisdom and its personalities, and this is where we get ideas of Panth Ki Jit, serving the Panth. There is mention of Har Ki Seva, serving the creation of the Creator, from which we get Sarbat Da Bhala. Without an understanding of the principles in which these ideas are rooted, without an understanding of Remembrance and Identification, the tangible living out of these ideas will not make sense.

# Tavarikh *History*

Where did money and efforts historically go throughout different periods of Sikh history, and where did that money come from? Who was accountable for these projects? Did donors have a say in how their money was used?

## The Ten Nanaks (1469–1708)

*Where did money and efforts historically go during the Guru period? What was the nature of the charitable or philanthropic work of this period?*

In addition to charity work such as *Langar* (distribution; free community kitchen serving all), the Guru period saw significant philanthropic work, institutional development, and community empowerment. This began with Guru Nanak, who disrupted the hierarchical structure of society and addressed the political and social realities of that time. Guru Nanak “called for social responsibility in public administration and introduction of the concept of the welfare state.” When the Guru established the city of Kartarpur, or “Creator-ville,” he did so with a land donation of 100 acres from the then Governor of Kalanaur, about 14 kilometers from where Kartarpur was established. This donation was not on behalf of the state, but a gift from an individual out of devotion to the Guru. The donation was not a political move – politically motivated gifting was always rejected by the Gurus, who understood the gifting of state land as being in direct conflict with the Guru’s sovereignty and could result in being beholden to state powers. There are debates on whether the name of this governor was Karori Mal or Duni Chand, but, regardless, one thing is clear: he was devoted to the Guru and donated the land on the bank of river Ravi on which Guru founded Kartarpur. It was in Kartarpur that Guru Nanak established a community rooted in Sikh paradigms and principles, with an emphasis on *Nam*, *Dan*, and *Isnan* (Identifying, Giving, Cleansing). This was where “One Nam-Identification was voiced.” As the *Puratan Janam Sakhi* (accounts of Guru Nanak Sahib’s life) further elaborate:

*Much praise started, and much repute began. Hindus, Muslims, yogis, anchorites, celibates, ascetics, Digambars (Jains), Vaishnavites, renunciates, householders, recluses, chieftains, nobles, kings, queens, courtiers, peasants, landlords, who ever came, tested [the Guru]. All people rendered praise [to the Guru].<sup>4</sup>*

– Puratan Janam Sakhi, #40

Kartarpur is where the Panth's vision, mission, and values were institutionalized. Bhai Gurdas emphatically records that these governing mechanisms were for time immemorial:

*Kartarpur as Principle-Sanctuary,  
[the Guru] populated the Eternal-Realm with Sage-Companions.  
Imparted the perfect Infinite-Wisdom of Vahiguru — Awe-Perfection!<sup>5</sup>*

– Bhai Gurdas, Var 24, Pauri 1

Kartarpur Sahib, 2009  
Photo by Umar Saud



Kartarpur was a city unlike any other city. It was a city that embodied the IkOankar paradigm, consciously constructed and organized with the purpose of mutual upliftment, service, community, and equality.

*The fraternity coming into being at Kartarpur was marked by faith, charity, equality, affirmation, trust, mutual help and service. It was no monastic order, but a fellowship of ordinary men engaged in ordinary occupations who believed in the Guru and made his word the support of their lives. They came to Kartarpur and then returned to their homes filled with ardour and hope and devoted to the practice which they had witnessed and shared. Devotion was laicized and the rewards of the religious way were shown to be accessible equally to all. Kartarpur signified a complete rule of life based not on any elaborate code of conduct, but on a living moral ideal informed by deep faith in the God and Guru. Thus was exemplified in practice what the Guru had taught through the years.<sup>6</sup>*

– Harbans Singh, Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith

It was at Kartarpur that “Nanak started the Raj.” Here, radical positions via IkOankar and Nam were realized; caste, status, and gender inequalities were dismantled; the priestly class was eliminated; and every person was considered to be divine. There was an emphasis on sovereignty and self-reliance via *Sabad* (Word; wisdom flowing from the verses) and *Langar* (distribution; free community kitchen serving all). But self-reliance did not mean individualism – collective self-reliance was a reality through the operation of *sangats* (communities), *kirtan* (singing of Sabads), *katha* (exposition of Sabads), and initiation. Authority was centralized by establishing leaders of sangats and continued with the anointed successor of Guru Angad, further ensuring a unified Panth.



Langar Hall at Harimandar Sahib, Amritsar

**Guru Angad's** efforts were towards the difficult task of unifying devotees of the Guru in terms of understanding and practice. After the Guru left Kartarpur for Khadur, a city along the River Beas near present-day Tarn Taran which he founded, he addressed this task through keeping the daily chore of *sangat* and *pangat* (row; where all sit and gather as equals) at Khadur, recitation and singing of Sabads, Guru's discourses, and Langar. He also addressed the physical well-being of the community by ordaining a wrestling ground, including sports for children, a step towards instilling *Miri-Piri* (Political-Spiritual) doctrine in the Sikhs. Guru Angad also organized and propagated the Gurmukhi alphabet in his drive for literacy among the Sikhs. Scribes made copies of Guru Nanak's Sabads for distribution to various centers, along with Guru Nanak's biography, which served as a guideline for Sikhs.<sup>7</sup>

**Guru Amardas** addressed the needs of the growing community by establishing 22 *Manjis* (seats of authority; administrative units), each with a head responsible for leading charan-amrit or chara`n-pahul (initiation ceremony that would later become khande-ki-pahul) or admitting new seekers within the Sikh fold. The Manjis covered areas from Kabul in Afghanistan to Bengal and their heads included women. There were also 52 *Pirhas*, smaller centers under the manjis, to cater to local congregations.<sup>8</sup>

To address the growing need for drinking water and bathing, Guru Amardas had a *Baoli*, a large oblong well, constructed in 1556, together with covered chambers at Goindwal. In addition to being important to the material needs of residents at the time, the collective bathing of people of different castes in the same Baoli was a manifestation of the foundational principle of IkOankar – the conscious shedding of caste prejudices and popularly-ingrained ideas of purity and pollution.<sup>9</sup>

**Guru Ramdas** continued to further the Sikh concepts of giving. According to some sources, the Guru obtained a grant of the site for Chak Guru, or Ramdaspur, from Emperor Akbar in 1577, on payment of Rs.700 Akbari to the Zamindar of Tung, who owned the land. Others state that Guru Amardas actually acquired the land, and Guru Ramdas began the construction. Once again, it is important to note that these gifts, even when given by those with political power, were given as individual acts of devotion. Gifts were never accepted if they were being given on behalf of the state, as that would be in direct conflict with the sovereignty of the Guru, which includes not conceding to the authority of the state as well as state exercising control over the Sikhs. Most likely, Chak (township) was established between 1564 and 1572. It came to be known as Chak Guru, Guru ka Chak, Chak Guru Ramdas, or Ramdaspora.



The 84 steps to the Baoli at Goindwal Sahib, 2008.  
Photo by Jasleen Kaur

Where the Guru resided was known as Guru ke Mahal. Baba Buddha (1506-1631) was in charge of operations and finances. The first digging was of a pool, later named Santokh-sar (Content-Pool). Before it was completed, digging of the second pool was started named Ramsar or Ammrit-sar (Immortal-Pool). Township development continued simultaneously. Guru ka Bazar as well as Chaunk Passian markets were established. The Guru Sahibs envisioned and led; hired laborers and volunteers performed the physical and creative labor in love.<sup>10</sup>

Dr. Madanjit Kaur in *The Golden Temple: Past and Present* examines the evidence presented by many sources and concludes:

Whether the land was granted by Emperor Akbar or it was acquired by the Guru before the grant was actually obtained or, still, was purchased by the Guru from the zamindars of Tung at the instance of Emperor Akbar, or, alternatively, was presented by the residents of Sultanwind out of reverence for the Guru – are versions, each one of which is based on tradition, there being no contemporary or near-contemporary record or document bearing testimony to them. Whatever the source of the manner of acquisition, it is certain that the selection of the site was planned and not accidental; it was the choice of the Gurus themselves. It was clear that the land of the Harimandir was revenue-free. The land settlement records of Amritsar made by the British rulers in 1865 note “the land of Darbar Sahib of Guru Ram Das as revenue-free grant.” Even the original name of the city, Chak Guru or Guru Ka Chak, bears testimony to the nature of the land as revenue-free. The conclusion, therefore, cannot escape that the Chak had, at some time, obtained exemption from the payment of land revenue from Emperor Akbar whose policy of granting waqf (religious properties), even to the people of non-Muslim faiths, is well-known.<sup>11</sup>

The foundation of Chak Guru or Ramdaspur and Ramdas Sarovar (Amritsar) required financial resources and increased participation of sangat in *kar seva*, or voluntary labor. The people responded to the Guru’s call for this participation accordingly. Guru Ramdas introduced the system of *Masands* (representatives and donation collectors) to collect funds from Sikhs. The overwhelming response led to a rise in status of sangat, and of esteem for the status of women who contributed to a large measure to the voluntary labor force.<sup>12</sup> It was through this collective effort that a sense of community and respect toward all members of the community was strengthened.



Akal Takht Sahib and Sri Harimandar Sahib  
Photo by Omkar Jadhav

**Guru Arjan** founded the towns of Sri Gobindpur on Beas, Tarn Taran, and Kartarpur, apart from the city of Amritsar for which he invited people of all trades and professions. The religious centers established at these places became centers for consolidation of the Guru's following – communities of people with a strong commitment to equity, with the goal of establishing cities and economies rooted in equity. Tarn Taran had the biggest *sarovar* (pool) and emerged as the center for cure of leprosy victims. The Lieutenant Governor of Jalandhar Doab, Syed Azim Khan, who became Guru Arjan's disciple, played a large and leading role in the establishment of a Sikh center at Kartarpur. Outside of Kartarpur, Guru Arjan had other projects that addressed the common need for access to water. The Guru had a Baoli dug at Dabbi Bazar Lahore, paid for by Wazir Khan, Governor of Lahore. He also commissioned the construction of a couple of wells at Tarn Taran, a Gangsar well at Kartarpur, a well with six wheels at Chhaharta near Amritsar, and another well with three wheels at Amritsar.<sup>13</sup>

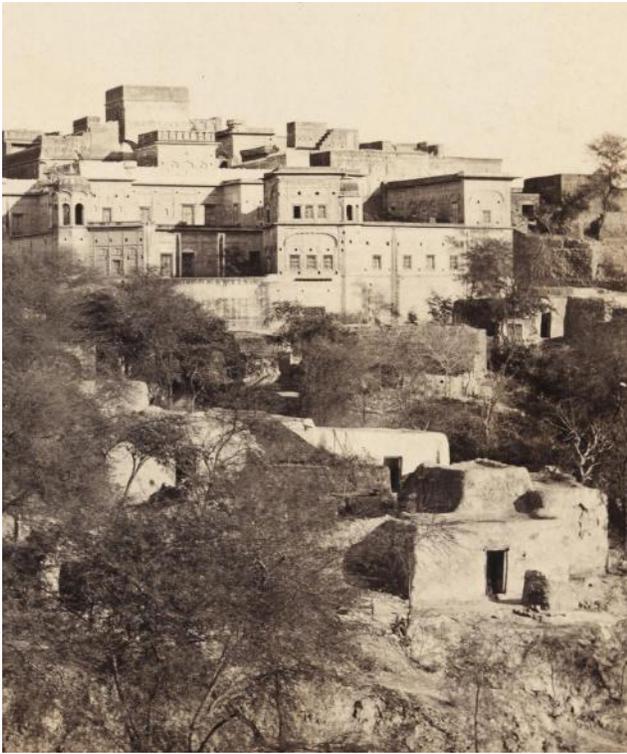
The widespread building and infrastructure focus was indicative of a sharp increase in the number of Sikhs, and it was this community growth that invited a reorganization of the Masand system to channel increased funds for construction work. With the *consent of the Sikhs*, *dasvand* (one-tenth of their earnings) was fixed to go toward funding these projects. It was carried by Masands to the Guru on Vaisakhi day.<sup>14</sup>

**Guru Harigobind** also addressed the need for water access by getting a well dug at Daroli. Guru Harigobind had about seven hundred horses in his stable as part of the maintenance of a militia of men and horses. He maintained the militia from the community's funds.<sup>15</sup> The Manjis, as well as Masands (representatives and tax collectors) were used to collect funds for various projects, battles, and for the construction of Akal Takht Sahib. These projects, battles, and institutional developments were all carried out with the guiding principles of justice and egalitarianism, a means to fighting for those immiserated by unjust and unequal systems.

**Guru Harirai** expanded the institution of Langar, which continued to flourish under him. The Guru maintained battle-readiness with 2,200 men and established a herbal medicine hospital and research center at Kiratpur Sahib. It was there that he also maintained an animal sanctuary.<sup>16</sup>

**Guru Harikrishan** addressed the immediate and pressing needs of the community during a smallpox outbreak by tending to the sick.<sup>17</sup>

**Guru Teghbahadar** laid the foundation of Anandpur (Bliss-ville) in 1665, on a piece of land covering the ruins of an older village, Makhoyal, which the Guru had purchased from the Rajput hill state of Kahlur (Bilaspur). India's records of land transfer done by *Patwaris* (village accountants or administrative officers) indicate that he named the land Chakk Nanaki after his mother and moved here with his family from Kiratpur.



Anandpur Sahib, circa 1850-1870.  
Photo by Francis Frith



Anandpur Sahib, 2011  
Photo by Hari Singh

**Guru Gobind Singh** took on ownership of the land, after which he established forts, held *darbar* (court), and trained poets, musicians, scholars, and warriors, among others. The Guru transferred everything to the Khalsa post-Vaisakhi 1699 – including a big land transfer that the Gurus had been preparing for, with a vision of the Khalsa not just as public stakeholders but as *owners* of the land. It was not that everyone was donating or funding the land ownership, but everyone was benefitting from that funding through the ownership of the Panth. Now, Anandpur is government property, with joint ownership between the government and the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC). In the time since this transfer of ownership, government projects have been carried out in which the original structures and forts of Anandpur Sahib were demolished. The 2017-2021 president of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee and a leading candidate for Chief Ministership of Indian Panjab state from the Indian National Congress party Sunik Jakhar<sup>18</sup> is the son of Balram Jakhar, a speaker of the Indian Parliament who in Sikh Genocide year of 1984 said, “to preserve the unity of India, if we have to eradicate 20 million Sikhs, we will do so.”<sup>19</sup> This is the state of the land on which the Guru declared the Khalsa Panth sovereign and granted Sikhs their sovereignty. This is the state of the land which the Khalsa once owned. There are no systems in place for philanthropic accountability, no process through which the State might be made to return the land to its rightful owners, the Khalsa Panth.

The Guru’s “projects” were both short-term and long-term; they ranged from Langar (distribution) to Raj (rule), from funding poets to founding new cities to establishing markets to building armies to creating self-sufficiency through economics. The Guru period saw a clear emphasis on building Panthic power

through the contributions of Dan. This period saw ongoing processes of institutionalization, even as initial projects did not seem to be geared towards long-term goals at first. Gurmukhi was an invention that would later be organized and institutionalized, and it was through this that scholars and artists were able to cultivate communities of thinkers and activists. It was through this that Sikhs were able to organize. Langar was initially a way of solving immediate needs, but in the long-term, it became about distributing Sabad, and expanding the practice in perpetuity, contributing to long-term trans-caste Panthic power. In time, philanthropic Panthic power projects demanded more strategic planning. These projects required a philanthropic approach, with thorough planning and sustainable funding. Funding was voluntary and purposeful, given by those who *could* give, rooted in Nam-Dan-Isnan, with the goal of changing the social and political realities of South Asia, for the benefit of all. The funders understood that ownership rested with Guru Nanaks I-X, and the later, the Guru Khalsa Panth.

## The Khalsa Raj (1709–1716)

*Where did money and efforts historically go during the Khalsa Raj? What was the nature of giving and charity during this period?*

Banda Singh Bahadar was commissioned by Guru Gobind Singh Sahib to initiate a process of political change and reform, continuing the Sikh Revolution.<sup>20</sup> Banda Singh called for radical unity and revolution of the oppressed. It was a proclamation calling upon all those who suffered at the hands of oppressive Zamindars or were tormented by anti-social elements, bullies, and despots to join him to get justice. It evoked an overwhelming response from people of all faiths, including Hindus and Muslims – to create a vision for a people’s revolution.<sup>21</sup> He ensured that places of religious worship were not allowed to be touched in any endeavors to build up the Khalsa Raj in an effort to prevent the struggle from being reduced to a sectarian strife.

Under Banda Singh, new government positions were appointed to the administration of the Khalsa Raj, the Zamindari system was abolished, land was returned to its original tillers in a land revolution, and lower classes were appointed as Thanedars and Tehsildars.<sup>22</sup> This was a land revolution where the old model of revenue was reversed. Formerly structured as one part to the tiller and three parts to the government, Banda Singh created a system that accorded three parts to the tiller and one part to the government. Even Banda Singh’s enemies wrote that he “ruthlessly annihilated social inequalities born out of caste prejudices, enforced rigid abstinence of the Sikhs from adultery, and otherwise adopted codes of conduct for his forces.”<sup>23</sup> The Khalsa Raj showed that “oppressors were liable to be called upon to account for their sins of omission and commission ... [unleashed] dynamic forces in the body politic and ... instilled irrepressible confidence in the community.”<sup>24</sup>

The philanthropy and charity of this time was rooted in a people’s revolution, land-back, and equal stakes in the community and its projects. This spoke to those traditionally marginalized members of society, who rallied around Banda Singh as a result. As observed by Muhammad Hadi Kamwar Khan in 1724:

*“A large number of persons belonging to the class of sweepers and tanners, and the community of banjaras and others of base and lowly castes, assembled around him and became his disciples.”*

– Tazkirat Salatin Chaghatai of Muhammad Hadi Kamwar Khan (1724)

And Muhammad Sahfi Warid:

*“If a lowly sweeper or cobber (chamar), more impure than any other caste (qaum) in Hindustan, went to attend on that rebel, he would be appointed to govern his own town and would return with an order (sanad) of office of government in his hand. The moment he stepped into the territory, or town, or village, all the gentry or notables went out to receive him, and after his alighting at his house, stood with folded hands before him.”*

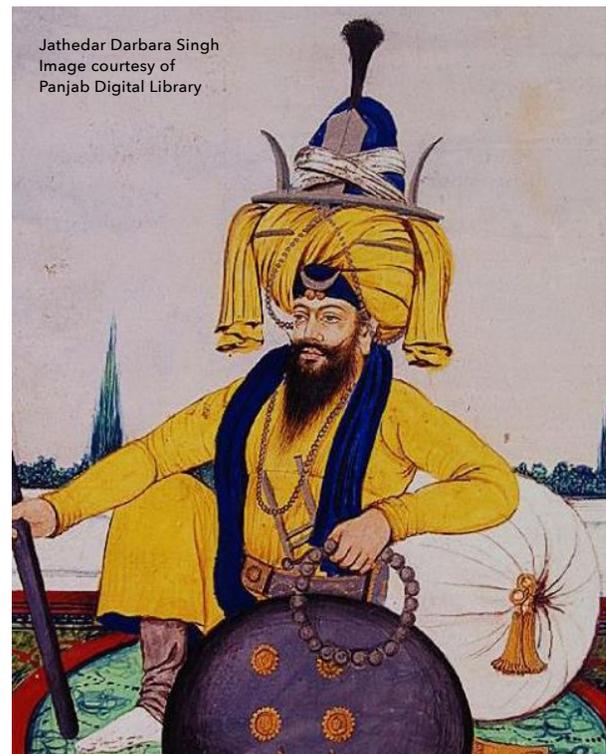
– Mir-at-i Waridat, Muhammad Shafi Warid

The Khalsa Raj period saw an emphasis on building towards self-reliance while surviving day to day. Where already existing systems failed, the Raj moved to respond, continuing to fight for a just and egalitarian society. Banda Singh’s proclamation calling upon all those who had suffered at the hands of oppressive Zamindars or systems of inequality to join him to get justice evoked an overwhelming response from people of all faiths and created an opening for a people’s revolution.<sup>25</sup>

## The Misls (1716–1799)

*Where did money and efforts historically go during the Misl period? What was the nature of philanthropic work?*

After the land revolution of Khalsa Raj period, the Misl period saw two major genocides and a generally turbulent political landscape. Inhumanity and injustice continued, yet the Sikhs remained on the frontlines in the fight for creating a just society. Sikh guerrillas during the 1720s were led by Jathedar Darbara Singh. Their main operations consisted of raids on government treasuries, despoiling small parties carrying cash revenue, horses and armaments, extracting money from caravans and interfering



in their free flow, and stealing from the houses of rich Zamindars. By the early 1730s, the Sikhs had developed sufficient resources by seizing wealth from the government and from individuals in class positions.<sup>26</sup>

Zakaria Khan, governor of Lahore, wanted to co-opt them into the system. He offered them the title of Nawab and a *Jagir* (a grant of a district's public revenues to a person with power to collect and enjoy them and to administer the government in the district) consisting of the parganas (typically 1/24 of a district) of Divalpur, Kanganwal, and Jhabal, and yielding a revenue of one hundred thousand rupees.

Kapur Singh was the first and last Sikh Nawab. He created *Budha Dal* (war veterans of over 40 years old to manage shrines and teach) and *Taruna Dal* (people under 40 to fight in times of emergency). Soon, Taruna Dal grew to a strength of 12,000 and had to be organized into five parts, each having its own center.<sup>27</sup>

It was during this time that Sikhs were exiled to the jungles due to constant persecution, unable to work, and if all went according to Zakaria Khan's plan, they would eventually starve to death. But all was not going according to plan. Khan asked government informer Harbhagat Niranjania, "From where do the Sikhs obtain their nourishment? I have debarred them from all occupations. They realize no taxes. They do not farm, nor are they allowed to do business or join public employment. I have stopped all offerings to their Gurduaras. No provisions or supplies are accessible to them. Why do they not die of sheer starvation?" Harbhagat replied, "There are Sikhs in this world who would not eat until they have fed their brethren. They may themselves go without food and clothing but cannot bear their comrades' distress. They would pass the winter by the fireside and send them their own clothes. They would sweat to grind corn and have it sent to them. They would do the roughest chore to earn a small wage for their sake. They migrate to distant places to eke out money for their brothers in exile. In the village of Puhia in Majha lives one Taru Singh. He tills his land and pays the revenue to the officials. He eats but little and sends what he saves to his brothers in the jungle. His mother and sister both toil and grind to make a living. They eat sparingly and wear the coarsest homespun. Whatever they save, they pass on to the Sikhs." It was because of this that Taru Singh was arrested, imprisoned, and tortured. When presented before the governor and charged with sedition, Bhai Taru Singh stated: "If we till your land, we pay the revenue. If we engage in commerce, we pay taxes. What is left after our payments to you is for our bellies. What we save from our mouths, we give to our brethren. We take nothing from you. Why then do you punish us?"<sup>28</sup> It was this collective responsibility to and for one another, the selfless sharing even when there was so little, that sustained the Sikhs even through such a tumultuous time.

On Vaisakhi, March 29, 1748, the Sikhs, by a Gurmata (resolution in the name of the Guru), decided to form the Dal Khalsa by reorganizing over 60 *jathas* (bands) into 12 *misls* (associations) under the leadership of Jassa Singh Ahluvalia. The cumulative forces of the misls were termed Sarbat Khalsa, the entire Panth, and formed a commonwealth or confederacy without any regular constitution. The *misl* as a means of organizing was crucial. The *Misl* itself administered the internal affairs of each *Misl*, and each *Misl* was self-funded and independently budgeted.

The *Misl* chief had full authority within his domain. His rule was based on the goodwill of all classes of people. Each village functioned as a sort of small republic, administering its affairs through a *panchayat* (generally a council of five elders representing the collective will of the people in the village). The village headman exercised general superintendence over all the village's affairs on behalf of the *panchayat* and on behalf of the government.<sup>29</sup>

When it came to crime, fines were imposed not according to the gravity of the crime but in accordance with the financial position of the culprit. The *panchayats* did their best to maintain equity and justice in the village, and their decisions were not carried out through any physical force. Social pressure was the strongest sanction, as defiance by any member of the community could lead to excommunication.<sup>29</sup>

The *Misl* Period saw institution-building in addition to immediate relief works, as well as community-building through common goals and just administration.



Jassa Singh Ahluvalia  
Image courtesy of Panjab Digital Library

# The Sikh Empire (1799–1849)

*Where did money and efforts historically go in the Sikh Empire? What was the nature of philanthropic work?*

In the last part of the 18th century, the Sikh Empire arose under the reign of Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh put money and efforts towards giving, both charitable and philanthropic projects during his reign. In 1833, despite a severe famine, the governor of Kashmir brought back large sums of money as revenue. Ranjit Singh was displeased and ordered thousands of sacks of wheat and provisions to be sent to Kashmir for the starving people, to be distributed from mosques or temples. He also had soldiers from four regiments give out flour, blankets, and money.<sup>30</sup>



Maharaja Ranjit Singh by Emily Eden, 1844  
From the Kapany Collection

Ranjit Singh was fond of planting gardens and trees, as seen in the establishment of the Ram Bagh park in Amritsar, completed in 1831. During his brief reign, his son, Kharak Singh, continued the tradition. He ordered trees to be planted along either side of the fifteen-mile stretch of road from Amritsar to the Tarn Taran, a tank of healing waters around a Gurduara built by Ranjit Singh.<sup>31</sup>

Ranjit Singh allocated one tenth of his state revenue for charity and philanthropy, led by the principle of Dasvandh. He focused funds and efforts on education and maintenance of historical and religious structures. He had several Sanskrit, English, and French works translated into Panjabi or Persian prose, and their translators were well-paid.<sup>32</sup> He had several of his sardars trained by Europeans in surgery, engineering, and arms manufacturing. He also assigned land in lieu of cash to chiefs and military leaders who fought on his side and conferred jagirs on various people as a form of payment. The other type of land grant that was bestowed upon people by Ranjit Singh was religious and charity-related, revenue-free, and non-conditional. These *Dharamarth Jagirs* were given on religious and humanitarian grounds to religious people and institutions as well as the poor. Ranjit Singh made a number of donations to Gurduaras, Mandirs, Dharamsalas, Deras, and *Takias* (holy place of Muslim saints). They were given to these types of religious institutions to ensure a regular source of income that could be used to provide shelter and food to travellers and pilgrims.<sup>33</sup> The managers of these religious institutions were not supposed to use the income of the Jagir for personal use. Religious grants given to individuals instead of institutions

were intended to support missionary work. Some Jagirs were given to caretakers of religious institutions as a reward for their service. Assignees of Dharmarth Jagirs were under no obligation to render any service or pay the State. The number of people and institutions that enjoyed revenue-free land was quite large.<sup>34</sup>

The following are examples of grantees of Dharmarth grants under the Sikh Empire<sup>35</sup> from 1750 to 1850 summarized as provided by Balwinderjit Kaur Bhatti:

- Harimandir Sahib – enjoyed land free of revenue worth 45,000 rupees a year and cash worth 1,700 rupees a year
- Bhagat Ram – given a village
- Mahal Singh Granthi – given grant from a Lambardar (revenue collector)
- Dya Singh – given 34 rupees a year by Maharaja Kharak Singh
- Fateh Singh – given 45 rupees a year by Maharaja Ranjit Singh
- Udasis – out of all the Sikh groups, received the most grants. Leaders of the Udasis managed more than 200 institutions and 150 of those enjoyed state patronage under Ranjit Singh. The grants of the partonized institutions were about 2 lakhs a year.
- Other Sikh groups like the Sodhis, Bedis, Granthis, Ragis, Rababis, Nirmalas, and Nihangs also received these grants.
- Sodhis and Bedis – Kishan Singh – jagir of 3,000 rupees, Roop Kaur – 3,000 a year; Govind Bux, Har Bux, and Ram Bux – 40,000 a year
- Granthis – Kahn Singh – 900 rupees a year; Fateh Singh (Head Granthi) – jagir worth over 600 rupees
- Hindu Establishments – received extensive patronage – some given about 40,000 a year
- Muslims – Bahir Ali – 18 rupees a year; Mohammed Yar – land worth 18,000 a year; Ahmed Shah – 50 rupees a year

All Jagirs, regardless of size, were directly controlled by the State, but Dharmarth Jagirs were not adding to the State's funds. These were conferred in lieu of services, salaries, allowances, rewards, and donations. Those Jagirs that were not revenue-free were taxed and helped to pay for various projects.<sup>36</sup> Land revenue was Lahore Durbar's main source of income. The state took one-tenth to one-half of the produce in kind, not coin. The assessment depended on various factors: the condition of the soil, irrigation, and nearness to the marketplace. In the case of famines, floods, or any other natural disasters, the state gave up its share of the crop. In such cases, free seed, cattle, and money were distributed to the affected areas.

Estimates of the amount of revenue generated in Panjab under Ranjit Singh vary between 25,000,000 and 32,500,000 rupees yearly. It was through this revenue that urban development flourished under his rule, as did commerce, industry, and arts.<sup>37</sup> Funds went toward developing Panjab's crafts and exports, patronage to the arts, creating a unique coinage, sustaining Panjab's environment, giving the citizens a sense of security, and ensuring the safety of travellers on roads and highways.<sup>38</sup>

Ranjit Singh had many dilapidated Mughal buildings and gardens restored, and built new ones like the Baradari of Hazuri Bagh at Lahore. He endowed centers of learning to spread literacy. He funded

education in English and French, and the Persian school at Lahore had a large endowment. There were many Gurmukhi Schools in Amritsar that enjoyed public revenue grants and stipends from the Maharaja.<sup>39</sup> Panjab had nearly 4,000 schools, catering to the needs of each community. Religious education was free for all males and females separately. Every Masjid, Mandir, Dharamsala, and Gurduara had a corresponding school, and the land was rent-free.<sup>40</sup> There were different categories of Indigenous schools: *maktabs*, or Persian schools not only for the Muslims but for all the other sects as well; *madrassas*, Arabic schools from primary to higher education; *patshalas*, usually for Hindus to learn Sanskrit for religious purposes; Gurmukhi schools, for Sikh students; and *mahajani*, schools for the trading or economic community. Many of these schools received donations and land for their management. The Lahore District report for the years 1849-50 and 1850-51 records that, in Lahore alone, there were 576 schools with the strength of 4,225 students. Schools were also open in other parts of the province.<sup>41</sup>

The Sikh Empire saw a period in which the state did its best to model itself on the ideals of Nam-Dan-Isnan. Personal Sikh practices aside, Ranjit Singh's government placed emphasis on accessible education, maintenance of religious and historical structures, translation projects, the arts, and vocational training. Dr. GW Leitner, author of *History of Indigenous Education in Panjab*, writes that the Panjab, and especially Lahore, was better off educationally in the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh than during British rule, at least up until 1882, when his research was published. His research shows that total revenue collected by Ranjit Singh in his last years (1838-39) was approximately 1.85 million pounds. The British subsequently managed



Baradari of Hazuri Bagh and Lahore Fort, 1870  
Taken from *Historical Images of Pakistan* by F.S. Aijazuddin

to collect 1.45 million pounds. Leitner further reveals that “The Sikh ruler, as a percentage, spent more on education than the Company from the revenues collected.”<sup>42</sup>

## The Sikhs and The Crown (1849–1947)

*Where did money and efforts historically go during British rule? What was the nature of philanthropic work amongst the Sikhs?*

The seizing of political power by the British in 1849 led to the transformation of the world in which the Sikhs and other Panjabis had lived. British presence affected major changes in Panjabi society and culture, including in administrative structures and in the political orientation underlying those structures. The colonial power introduced a new bureaucratic system, complete with western style executive and judicial branches, necessitating western education. Considering the Sikhs as an important element in their colonial strategy, the Crown took special care to control central Sikh institutions. British officers headed management committees, appointed key officials, and provided grants and facilities to guarantee continued Sikh sympathy for the Crown. At the same time, the government patronized and assisted the rapid spread of Christian missionary activities. Thus, the immediate and long-term needs and concerns of Sikhs shifted.

From this arose the Singh Sabha movement (1873), which sought to “propagate the true Sikh religion and restore Sikhism to its pristine glory; to write and distribute historical and religious books of Sikhs, and to propagate Gurmukhi Panjabi through magazines and media.”<sup>43</sup>

The movement picked up momentum and Singh Sabhas appeared at many places not only in the Panjab but also in several other parts of India and abroad, from London in the west to Shanghai in the East. Singh Sabhas (some renamed Khalsa Diwan soon after) were set up in 1880, as a coordinating body at Amritsar. The Singh Sabha movement was eventually consolidated into two schools: the Lahore school and the Amritsar school. Raja Bikram Singh of Faridkot and the Lieutenant Governor of Panjab were patrons of the Amritsar Khalsa Diwan. The Diwans opened Khalsa schools for general education and distributed papers and periodicals to propagate Singh Sabha ideology as well as its religious activities.<sup>44</sup>

Khalsa College Amritsar  
By PL Tandon, 2018



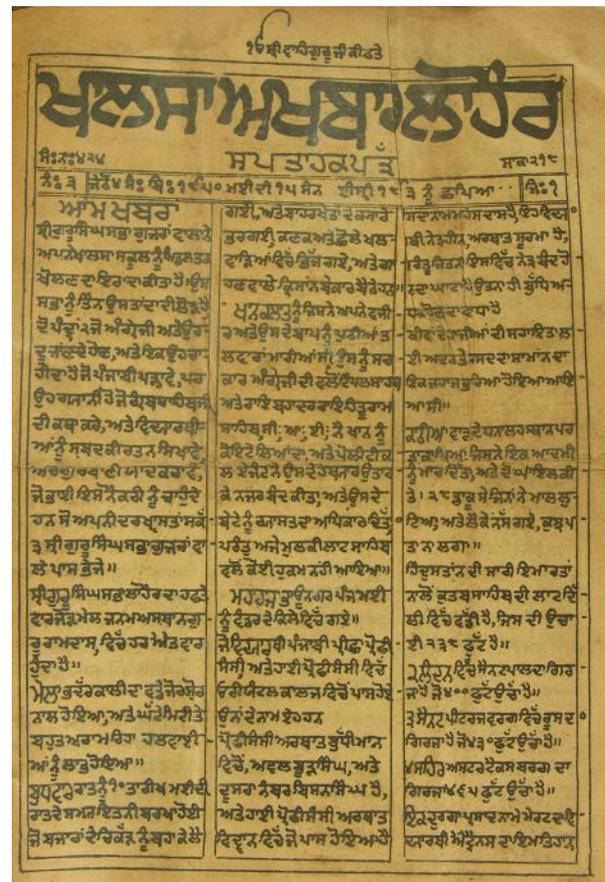
One of the outcomes of the Singh Sabha movement was later institutionalized in the form of a new organization, the Chief Khalsa Diwan (CKD), formally established at Amritsar in 1902. Membership was open to all *Amritdhari* (initiated) Sikhs. Members were also expected to contribute *dasvandh*, or one tenth of their annual income, for the common needs of the community. CKD continued with the aims of insistence on separate identity of the Khalsa Panth, spreading the teaching of the Gurus, making education accessible, disseminating information on traditional and current issues, and safeguarding the political rights of the Sikhs by maintaining good relations with the government and Sikh rulers. It carried out its mission with the help and cooperation of the local Singh Sabhas, and of eminent individuals such as Bhai Vir Singh, Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid, Bhai Takht Singh, Babu Teja Singh, Bhai Kahn Singh, and Bhai Jodh Singh.

CKD addressed the more immediate needs of removal of idols from the Harimandar Sahib complex in 1905. It also addressed long-term goals of education through the establishment of an annually-held Sikh Educational Conference in 1908, and the preparation of a common code of conduct and standards of religious practice for the Sikhs in 1916. For over a decade, CKD consolidated its position and had remarkable success at fostering Sikh identity and strengthening Sikh institutions.<sup>45</sup>

The earliest venture in Panjabi journalism was the Lahore Khalsa Diwan's Panjabi weekly Khalsa Akhbar. In 1899, the Khalsa Samachar was founded and soon became the leading theological journal of the community. Its circulation increased under the editorship of Bhai Vir Singh, who rose to prominence as a novelist, poet, and commentator of the Guru Granth Sahib. The Khalsa Advocate later became the spokesman of CKD. A large number of books on Sikhi, both in Gurmukhi and English, were published. Of the Gurmukhi works, Giani Gian Singh's *Panth Prakash* and *Twankh Guru Khalsa* as well as Kahn Singh's exhaustive encyclopedia of Sikh literature, *Gurusabad Ratanakar Mahan Kosh*, were of lasting significance. Max Arthur Macauliffe's work on the life and teachings of the Sikh Gurus and the Faridkot Tika, an exegesis of the Guru Granth Sahib, were also published during this time.<sup>46</sup>

Raja Bikram Singh, ruler of Faridkot (1842-98) and patron of the Amritsar Khalsa Diwan, commissioned a full-scale commentary in Panjabi

Khalsa Akhbar Lahore, 15 May 1893  
Image courtesy of Panjab Digital Library



on Guru Granth Sahib. The first draft was prepared by Giani Badan Singh of Sekhvari in 1883 and then revised by a group of Sikh scholars representing a wide variety of schools of thought among the Sikhs. A large number of the sets were given, free of cost, to Gurduaras and scholars. The rest were sold at an affordable price. Meanwhile, suggestions for further revisions and for the use of standard Panjabi instead of Braj in the exegesis had been pouring in from various Singh Sabhas and Khalsa Diwans. CKD was the main council of the Sikhs, controlling their religious and educational affairs and raising its voice on behalf of their political rights.<sup>47</sup>

Membership of CKD was open to all Amritdhari Sikhs, or those who had received the rites of Khalsa initiation and who could read and write Gurmukhi. Members contributed an obligatory dasvandh, or one-tenth of their annual income. CKD focused its efforts on the cultural, educational, spiritual, and intellectual life of the Sikhs, preaching the tenets of the Guru Granth Sahib, propagating Sikh history, and protecting the rights of the Sikhs by putting up memoranda and memorials. It placed efforts in establishing schools and institutions for the spread of education among men and women, publishing books on Sikh history, sacred texts, and doctrine, translating works into Panjabi, and opening institutions of community welfare.<sup>48</sup>

It was also through the funding of princely estates that entire bodies of work were produced for the betterment of the Panth. In 1898, Kahn Singh Nabha published *Ham Hindu Nahin*, which set forth forcefully the Singh Sabha position with regard to Sikh identity. *Gurmat Prabhakar*, his glossary of Sikh terminology, concepts, and institutions, was published in 1898, and *Gurmat Sudhakar*, his anthology of important Sikh texts, scriptural and historical, in 1899. His 1925 and 1926 works, *Guru Chhand Divakar* and *Gur Sabad Alankar*, primarily focus on the rhetoric and prose used in the Guru Granth Sahib and other Sikh texts. His *Guru Gird Kasauti* answers some of the questions raised by his student, Tikka Ripudaman Singh, about the meanings of certain sabads in the Guru Granth Sahib, and his *Sharab Nikhedh* (1907) is a didactic text, stressing the harmful effects of drinking.<sup>49</sup>

Sikhs were also addressing more immediate needs outside of the Panth; Bhagat Puran Singh being one such example. In 1924, Puran Singh founded Pingalwara in Panjab – a unique institution enlisting a wide variety of humanitarian work. Pingalwara, literally, an abode or asylum for people with physical disabilities, housed people suffering from different diseases and ailments. Puran Singh took great care in serving the residents of Pingalwara and, after Partition, he established a social service camp in Amritsar.<sup>50</sup>

In the diaspora, Sikhs like Baba Gurdit Singh addressed the needs of those not in the diaspora through the chartering of Guru Nanak Jahaz, or Komagata Maru, a ship that brought Panjabis to Canada, despite its racist immigrant exclusion laws. He, along with other Sikh individuals and sangats across the diaspora, also espoused the Ghadarite cause, a movement aimed at liberating India from British rule. Sikhs from Canada, Malaya, the USA, etc., donating and contributing towards Sikh, Panjab, and South Asian freedom causes. The period of British rule saw Sikhs all over the world working both as individuals and through



Komagata Maru  
Photo courtesy of before Simon Fraser University

their institutions to root themselves in the Nam-Dan-Isnan paradigm and give back both within Panth and Sarbat. Where the state fell short, Sikh movements did their best to fill the gaps both in addressing immediate needs and in long-term philanthropic projects meant to strengthen the Panth and its institutions.

## The Sikhs and The Indian State (1947–1984)

*Where did money and efforts historically go post-Partition? What was the nature of philanthropic work amongst the Sikhs?*

In July 1952, Bhagat Puran Singh shifted his organization to a building allotted by the Rehabilitation Department of the Panjab Government. Once Pingalwara became more widely known, public donations started flowing in. The state government and the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) also started giving financial assistance. Voluntary donations from private individuals as well as from civic bodies and charitable institutions multiplied. Paid fund collectors began to be employed to collect donations in small coins from rail and bus passengers. Pingalwara set up its own printing press, which produced materials for use by its employees. These measures helped to continue the flow of donations needed to meet the ever-increasing expenditure as a result of rising costs and expanding activities of the institution. From an expenditure of barely 100,000 rupees a year, it rose to over 2,100,000 rupees for the year 1976-77. There were more than 400 patients, permanently disabled persons, and impoverished women and

children staying at the Pingalwara in 1978. They were given free meals and clothing by the institution and free medical aid through local hospitals.<sup>51</sup>

The SGPC and the CKD both continued to raise funds and allocate them, although time-period specific projects are not recorded for the public. The Delhi Sikh Gurdwaras Management Committee (DSGMC) was founded in 1974 to control nine historic and five other Gurdwaras in Delhi. The goals of the DSGMC were: to manage the historic and other Gurdwaras of Delhi in such a way as to make them inspiring centers of the Sikh tradition, Sikh culture, and Sikh religion; to spread education, especially the knowledge of Punjabi language in Gurmukhi script; to maintain langar; to open free dispensaries and to perform other religious and charitable work; and to render all help in the cause of the uplift and welfare of the Sikh community. The sources of income of the DSGMC were *charhat* (offerings to the Guru Granth Sahib), *karahprasad* (sacramental offering), donations for langar, *paths* (readings of Guru Granth Sahib), rent from property, and occasional individual donations. The principal sources were charhat and prasad, which constituted nearly 80% of the total income. Between 1956 and 1986, the income of the DSGMC increased from Rs 13 lakhs to about Rs 3.5 crores a year.<sup>52</sup>

The 1980s and 1990s saw the Indian State doing nothing to ease the relations between Sikhs Diaspora and Panjab because of the issue of Khalistan. Ease of restrictions, later on, encouraged Sikhs to visit and invest money back into Panjab, which can be seen as a form of philanthropy.<sup>53</sup>

Gerald Barrier, historian of South Asia, argues that communication and transportation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries made it possible for Sikhs who migrated to not only return to Panjab, but to also remain connected to the social and political life that occurred there. Barrier focuses on connections and networks of resources, tools, and knowledge transmitted between Panjab and the rest of the diaspora, using periodical newspapers and archival material to explore connections across Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America. Barrier's work emphasizes that Sikh philanthropy at that time was focused around religious institutions, religious reform, female education, and political emancipation.

The wealth gap was and is growing in Panjab, with a rising middle class able to meet their needs versus the rural masses who depend on a State that was and is unwilling to commit to providing them basic services. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private voluntary organizations (PVOs) attempt to help fill this gap, but Panjab has few of these, and religious organizations have become the primary places to go for socio-economic change and impact.<sup>54</sup>

## *Ardas: Supplication*

The Panthic Ardas (collective supplication), as standardized in the 1945 *Rahit Maryada* (Sikh code of conduct), places emphasis on what the collective has historically given as well as what the collective is asking for. It is through Ardas that Sikhs understand the application of historical remembrance to current understandings of Dan. The following are excerpts from Sirdar Kapur Singh's translation of Ardas:

*Five Beloved Ones, Four Princes, Forty Saved Ones,  
those who have remained steadfast in suffering,  
those who have kept constant remembrance of God,  
those who renounced the sense pleasures,  
those who have constantly lived in the Divine Presence,  
those who have loved their neighbours by sharing their possessions with them,  
those who have turned a blind eye to the faults and failings of others,  
those who have assuaged the hunger and want of the hungry and the needy,  
those who have persevered in their fight in the cause of justice,  
concentrate your minds on the struggle and achievements of those,  
O revered members of the Order of the Khalsa, say, Glory be to God  
The congregation: Glory be to God*

*The Singhs of both the sexes, who courted martyrdom in the cause of religion and underwent  
unspeakable sufferings by being dismembered alive, broken on the wheel, sawed alive, and boiled  
alive, and those who made sacrifices in the service of the centres of the Sikh religion, the Gurduaras,  
but never wavered in their faith and remained steadfast in the cause of Sikhism to the last hair  
of their body and to their last breath, O, revered members of the Khalsa Order, concentrate your  
minds on the glorious deeds of those, and utter, Glory be to God.*

The Five Beloved Ones were the first five initiates, representative of mankind, the original members of the Order of the Khalsa, enthroned by the Guru. The Four Princes are the sons of Guru Gobind Singh, who laid down their lives in defense of Sikhi. It is for this reason that Guru Gobind Singh is referred to as *Sarbans Dani*, the one who gave the whole family as a gift. The Forty Sikhs are those who, after a momentary wavering, also laid down their lives in defense of Sikhi. This portion of the Ardas is all about the *Shahadat's* (martyrdom) Dan and urges the collective to remember what it is to die fighting, to give one's body and mind. The collective Panthic Ardas remembers those who gave all that they could. The Ardas later continues with what the collective asks for in the form of Dan from IkOankar:

*First, we pray on behalf of all the creatures of God:  
May the presence of God be progressively felt in the hearts of all the sentient creatures,  
and may the whole creation become happy and prosperous thereby.  
(Then) may God shower His blessings upon and grant protection to each  
and every member of the Order of the Khalsa, wherever he is.*

*May the supplies of the Khalsa ever remain replenished.*  
*May the Sword of the Khalsa be ever victorious.*  
*May the royal title of the Khalsa be universally recognized and honoured.*  
*May victory attend upon all just endeavours of the Panth, the Khalsa Commonwealth.*  
*May the arms and armaments be our constant ally.*  
*May the Order of the Khalsa achieve ever-expanding progress and supremacy.*  
*May God grant to the Sikhs, the gift of faith, the gift of the uncut hair, the gift of discipline,*  
*the gift of discrimination, the gift of mutual trust, the gift of self-confidence and*  
*the supreme gift of all gifts, the gift of communion with God, the Name, and may*  
*the Sikhs freely centre around the dip in the holy.*

The Panthic Ardas emphasizes how Sikhs throughout history gave, outside of the everyday monetary or material understanding of Dan. Giving is not limited only to monetary giving, it is expanded in collective history as giving mind and body, laying down one's life if needed, for the purpose of defending and uplifting the Panth. This constant remembering allows for an understanding of the application of historical remembrance to the current practices of Dan.

# Rahit *Lifestyle*

## What do Sikh codes of conduct say about giving? How does the code translate into action?

### *Dasvandh in Codes of Conduct*

Dasvandh is the commonly invoked *rahit* (lifestyle, code, law) that is rooted in the principles of Nam-Dan-Isnan. Bhai Nand Lal (1613-1713), a poet in Guru Gobind Singh Sahib's court, is the first to articulate:

*Dohra (couplet)*

*Nand Lal asked a question, Guru ji tell me:*

*Which deeds are authentic, which deeds are not? 1.*

*Dohra (couplet)*

*Nand Lal, you listen to the precept, this is the Sikh deed:*

*Without Nam, Dan, Isnan, must not develop love for the food. 2.<sup>55</sup>*

– Bhai Nand Lal, *Tankhahnama*

Bhai Nand Lal asks the Guru which deeds are the real deeds, and the Guru responds by telling him what the *Sikh* deed is: Without Nam-Dan-Isnan, one cannot love the food. Some people live to eat, others eat to live. For a Sikh, the lifestyle encompasses the latter. Having done the work of understanding and living out the principles of Nam-Dan-Isnan, a Sikh will find that food becomes inconsequential in a way. Bhai Nand Lal in a later couplet writes:

*Doesn't give dasvandh to the Guru, speaks lies, consumes.*

*Dear [Nand] Lal, Gobind Singh says: that one can't be trusted a bit. 14.<sup>56</sup>*

– Bhai Nand Lal, *Tankhahnama*

Here, Guru Gobind Singh articulates the Khalsa lifestyle: If one has taken *Amrit* ("Immortal" initiation) and is not giving dasvandh to the Guru, then one is breaking their commitment to the Guru and is akin to "stealing" from the Guru. Giving to the Guru is what builds institutions and keeps them strong. Without that, the Panth loses its strength.

Chandra Sain Sainapati, contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh, wrote *Sri Gur Sobha*, a life sketch of Guru Gobind Singh describing his major battles, the creation of the Khalsa, and events following the evacuation of Anandpur in verse. During the time when Guru Gobind Singh replaced the corrupt Masands with the Khalsa, Sainapati wrote the following:

*Prayer-wish, donation-box, and dasvandh,  
Keep them in the house, discard masands.  
Any offering for the Satiguru,  
Go and give them in his presence.<sup>57</sup>*

– Chandra Sain Sainapati, *Sri Gur Sobha*, 1711

The Guru refers to *mannat*, *golak*, and *dasvandh*. These are personal ways of giving, a deliberate choice as this is a time when fund collectors are proving to be corrupt. The Guru urges people to keep their personal gifts safe until they can be given to the Guru. Until the Panth has non-corrupt and transparent institutions, the Sikhs ought to do the best they can at a personal level.

We see mention of *dasvandh* in later *rahitname* (writings on the code of conduct or lifestyle of a Sikh) as well:

*From the principled and earnest gain, gives dasvandh to the Guru. Towards the Guru's import or economy. Feeds to satisfy fully.<sup>58</sup>*

– Bhai Chaupa Singh Chibbar, *Rahitname*, 1723

The emphasis on Guru's economy promotes the understanding that institution-building includes building systems of self-reliance.

*Wake up in the morning and take a bath or shower; then their mouth recites Japo and Jap.  
As per their ability, they give some Dan; that Singh is the best known. 11  
Nam, Dan, Isnan in the morning; those who feel Guru's grace, they realize this.  
Those who earn with their ten-fingernails (earnestly and ethically);  
by doing so, the wealth that is brought home. 12  
From that, the Dasvandh is given to the Guru; that Singh gains great fame in the world.<sup>59</sup>*

– Bhai Desa Singh, *Rahitname*, 1780

“Singh” is referring to the collective, the active Sikhs, the Khalsa. There were times when people were not giving as much to institution-building efforts. The emphasis then became on giving dasvandh from ethically earned money and not comparing one’s ability to give with others.

*From whatever one earns on their own, makes contribution to the dasvandh of the Guru.*<sup>60</sup>

– Mahakavi Santokh Singh, *Guru Pratap Suraj Granth*, 1843

This was an instruction by Guru Angad Sahib to the Sikh named Gujjar. It is important because it goes back to the early Guru period.

*To take out Dasaundh (one-tenth part) for the Guru’s import or economy from one’s earning and offer it to the service of the Panth for the development of the Panth.*<sup>61</sup>

– Kahn Singh Nabha, *Gurmat Martand*, 1962

Finally, we see dasvandh in the Sikh Rahit Maryada:

*Perform all tasks in accordance with Gurmat (Guru’s Way): Ready to serve the Panth and aid the Gurduaras, giving the dasvandh of the Guru from one’s own earning, and so on.*<sup>62</sup>

– Kahn Singh Nabha, *Gurmat Martand*, 1962

On Dasvandh, rahitname are very consistent and have clear injunction – their statements are on belief and behavior norms. Bhai Nand Lal Goya, Chandra Sain Sainapati, Bhai Chaupa Singh, Bhai Desa Singh, Mahakavi Santokh Singh, and Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha captured this. The Sikh Rahit Maryada captured all this in the twentieth century code of conduct, which includes the collective *Ardas* (supplication), invoking Dan. It is important to note that for most people money was not in currency till the late nineteenth century. For most Sikhs it was grains and crops; for some it was cattle, horses, or weapons. They shared or offered what they had to the Guru, and the institutions decided how they would utilize those assets.

## *Dasvandh in Action*

So where are Sikhs spending our money now? On what projects, and addressing what needs? Who ought to determine our needs? How ought our money to be used?

21st-century diaspora Sikhs continue to send money to Panjab – around \$200-300 million per year.<sup>63</sup> Sikh diaspora philanthropy is concentrated in three western countries where Sikhs have become well-situated: The US, Canada, and the UK. Overseas Sikhs have become involved in economic, political, and cultural matters through patronage, financial assistance, and new social practices. But diaspora philanthropy has its issues.

There is a major issue of complex motivations with concepts of *izzat* (honor) playing a large part in philanthropy constituting a new arena for competition and status, often resulting in vanity projects. Additionally, diaspora philanthropy involves ideas about the short and long-term needs of Sikhs in Panjab and elsewhere in the subcontinent as determined by wealthy, more often than not high-caste donors who are removed from the day-to-day realities for Sikhs in South Asia. Early givers and donors lead the way in highlighting key issues that other donors start to follow. This can be useful for understanding key needs, but it can also cause an overemphasis on addressing a particular need while other projects are ignored. There is often a difference in priorities between diaspora philanthropists and the local population they are giving to. Historical priority in private giving in rural Panjab includes religious places, schools, and hospitals. But Panjabis without family abroad tend to have different priorities, with a higher percentage of their own giving going to schools, hospitals and roads, lights, water, lighting, and infrastructure projects.

In a study conducted in 2006 exploring motivations behind diaspora philanthropy, there was a range of responses for why Sikhs give in the first place – some mixed and overlapping, some at odds with one another. These motivations included Panjabi competitive individualism versus Sikh religiosity, Self Interest versus Altruism, and the Impersonal versus the Personal.<sup>64</sup> There is also a division between productive versus nonproductive giving. Productive giving may be seen as supporting schools and hospitals, while nonproductive giving may be seen as giving a Gurduara a facelift. There are always differing opinions on what projects and initiatives are worth funding. Organization's missions are often not designed by the stakeholders most affected, and high-level direction from external funders can often cause organizations to stray from their stated missions in favor of focusing only on areas and causes with more funding.

There are issues regarding the creation of sustainable organizational structures for giving. There is a lack of formally-registered charities and NGOs in Panjab (for both state regulations and governance reasons). Those that do exist, require a long-term plan and the collaboration and cooperation of their recipients and stakeholders.

There are issues of equity and social inclusion, as certain regions and areas have become overrepresented while others have been ignored or forgotten. Villages in central Panjab tend to have more of an impact from the diaspora than the peripheral districts. Importantly, those who are less likely to go abroad and thus have been historically excluded from philanthropic projects include Dalits, peasants, artisans, and migrant laborers. Diaspora giving is mainly done by the middle and upper classes. Despite the Sikh emphasis on helping the poorest and needy, current Sikh Philanthropy is not always formatted in this way.

There are issues of partnering with the State and other development agents, which Sikhs have become wary of. There is skepticism about whether the State can actually help. Alternative partners include NGOs, international development agencies, and private philanthropies. Government outreach has focused on diaspora investment rather than philanthropy.

## How much money are Sikh organizations raising and spending?

**Note:** P/C denotes whether the organization does philanthropic or charitable work. The following financials are from the public records for the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Gross Income</i>	<i>Gross Expenditure</i>	<i>P/C</i>
Everythings 13 (UK)	407,550 GBP	394,480 GBP	C
Jakara Movement (US)	1,025,288 USD	749,200 USD	P/C
Khalsa Aid (UK/US)	3,475,131 GBP	1,544,081 GBP	C
National Sikh Campaign (US)	191,789 USD	147,330 USD	C
SALDEF (US)	473,012 USD	424,757 USD	C
Sikh Coalition (US)	2,041,187 USD	2,177,182 USD	P/C
Sikh Council on Religion and Education (US)	535,343 USD *2017-2018 financials (most recent)	574,187 USD *2017-2018 financials (most recent)	C
Sikh Human Development Fund (US)	457,358 USD	331,014 USD	C
SikhNet (US)	739,637 USD	686,266 USD	P/C
Sikh Naujawan Sabha (Malaysia)	*Annual reports available, financials unavailable	*Annual reports available, financials unavailable	P/C
Sikh Research Institute (US/CA)	1,069,447 USD	936,084 USD	P
Sikhs Serving Canada Association (CA)	1,051,381 CAD	920,518 CAD	C
Sikh Welfare Council (Singapore)	794,863 USD	639,883 USD	P/C
Sikh Youth Australia (AU)	177,988 AUD	155,994 AUD	C
Singapore Khalsa Association	1,181,192 USD	2,317,565 USD	P/C
The Sikh Foundation (US)	142,535 USD	114,509 USD	P
United Sikhs (US)	863,620 USD	607,328 USD	C
World Sikh Organization (CA)	*nonprofit but not charity, info not available	*nonprofit but not charity, info not available	C

The distinction made between nonprofits and philanthropies is necessary in surveying 553 years of Sikh history, especially as nonprofits did not exist in the Guru period. A majority of the diaspora Sikh nonprofits tend to gear themselves more toward short-term charitable projects rather than longer-term philanthropic projects.

It is important to recall the Sikh conceptions of giving, both charity and philanthropy rooted in Bani and Tavarikh, and understand that Western notions of philanthropy are fundamentally different from those original Sikh conceptions. In Western countries especially, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations tend to reinforce the colonial division of Us vs. Them, Haves vs. Have Nots, and mostly white saviors and white experts vs. poor, needy, urban, disadvantaged, marginalized, at-risk subjects. Understanding that philanthropic projects are more often than not funded by wealthy donors must also come with the understanding that certain groups have more access to money or have an easier time accumulating money, white men in particular (or in the Sikh context, upper-caste men in particular). The emphasis in Bani and various rahitname on earning honestly must not be ignored. There are Sikhs who make their money off the backs of unpaid labor by investing in major corporations that might be responsible for the immiseration of those who are already vulnerable. These Sikhs may make their money by participating in the U.S. military-industrial complex, tobacco, alcohol, or contraband businesses, and pornography. Does this money constitute honest earnings? What is ethical? If we return to Bani's Nam-Dan-Isnan giving paradigm and how it has been understood throughout history, we will see that these same questions raised today were raised during the Guru period, only their outer manifestations have evolved.

Many nonprofit and philanthropic institutions have been revealed to be public relations moves for powerful families who have exploited vulnerable people for monetary gain (for example, the Sackler family, owners of Purdue Pharma, responsible for the US opioid epidemic) or, worse, active efforts to preserve the wealth and privilege of a few. This needs to be seen in the current network of Sikh wealth today, where some powerful ones may dictate nonprofit agendas and projects rather than the actual community needs.

It is important to consider the structural conditions that make charity and philanthropy possible and necessary. It is important to return to the foundational principles of Nam-Dan-Isnan to understand the danger of a wealthy philanthropist class determining what constitutes immediate needs and structural issues, while also understanding the role large estates played throughout Sikh history in funding arts, literature, and exegesis. We can look to Sikh history for land and wealth reallocation methods and the importance of communal visions of mutual aid, especially in the Guru and Khalsa Raj periods. We can also look to Sikh history to see how wealthy donors were not envisioning projects or deciding which needs to address, but instead existed solely as funders. We can also look to Sikh history for visions of long-term institutional development far beyond ideas we may have about charities today.

## *SGPC, DSGMC, CKD — Largest Budgets*

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Delhi Sikh Gurdwaras Management Committee (DSGMC), and Chief Khalsa Diwan (CKD) do not publicly list their yearly revenue and expenses on their websites. The following are records of their 2019 budgets:

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>P/C</i>
CKD	20,277,035 USD	P/C
DSGMC	17,457,050 USD	P/C
SGPC	161,813,545 USD	P/C

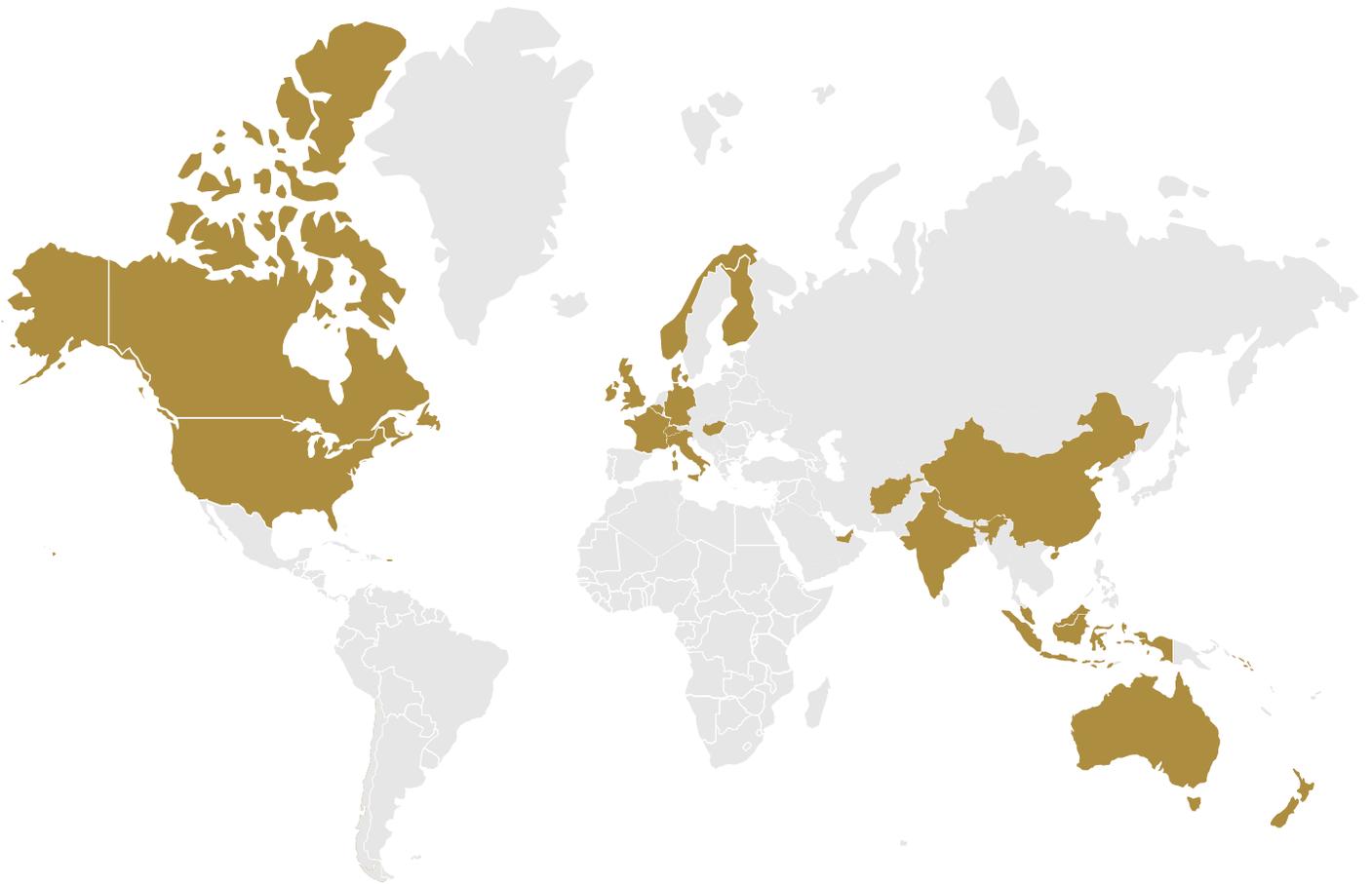
The SGPC's 2019 budget was split into four parts – SGPC (14%), Dharam Parchar (6.5%), educational institutions (19.5%), and Gurduaras (60%). The funds allocated to the SGPC were further divided into four areas – general board fund (43%), trust fund (30%), education (22%), and printing press (4%). Additionally, 0.03% of the total funds were allocated for Guru Granth Sahib Mission, Shahpur.<sup>65</sup>

Although constituted as a purely religious body for the management of Gurduaras, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee with its vast resources (its 2020-21 budget was Rs. 981 crore, or roughly 131.1 million USD) has a variety of functions. Besides propagation of religion including running of free kitchens, it runs a large number of schools and colleges, manages agricultural farms on Gurduara lands, encourages research, printing, and publication of works on Sikh religion and history, and helps victims of political repression as well as of natural calamities. It arranges visits of Sikh pilgrims to Gurduaras in Pakistan and liaises with Sikh organizations in other Indian states and abroad. It takes up with the government matters of Sikh interests or grievances. In this it collaborates with the Shiromani Akali Dal, a political party representing the Sikh masses.<sup>66</sup>

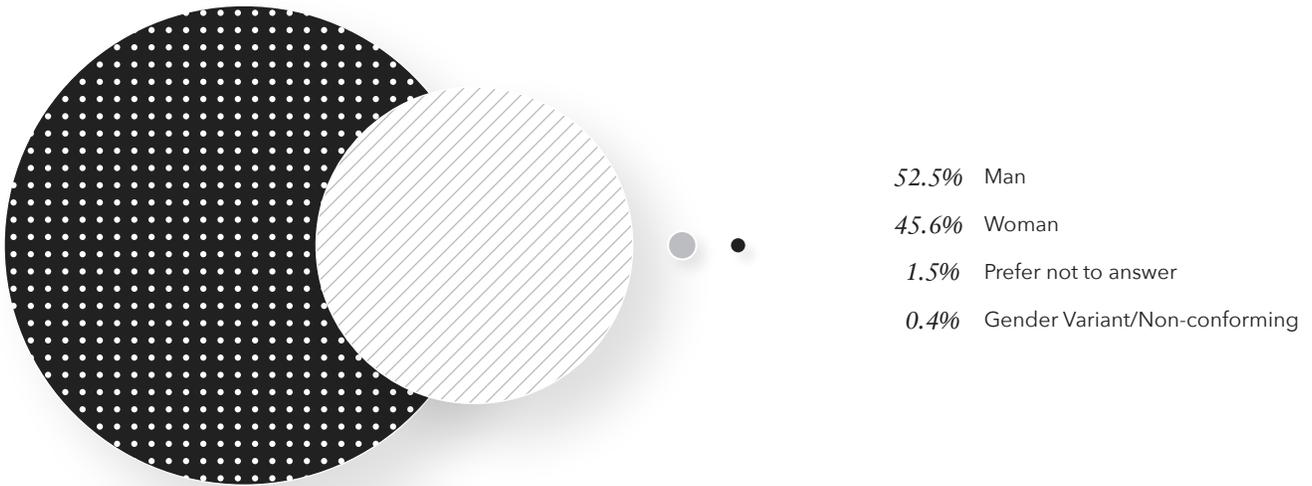
The SGPC has amassed a lot of resources, but have they used them effectively? Budgeting and spending is largely lacking in transparency given the sheer volume of funds that cycle through the organization every year. Local Gurduaras and other religious institutions have been the main place for social welfare, but amongst caste-oppressed people in Panjab, there has not been much effective organization and mobilization of diaspora philanthropy or of local funds from the SGPC.<sup>67</sup> The CKD and DSGMC also lack transparency regarding budget allocation and active projects. All three organizations have multi-million dollar yearly budgets and were formed to serve the Panth and the general public, but there is little accountability to those they serve. Accountability and long-term sustained philanthropic efforts go hand-in-hand. Without accountability, channels of giving close up.

## Survey / Opinion

An online survey was conducted, asking the global Sikh community about their understanding of Sikhi & Philanthropy. A total of 726 respondents from 23 different countries participated in the survey. For the purpose of this research into the Sikh community, only respondents who identified as Sikhs were considered. The purpose of this survey was to gain insight into how Sikhs around the world conceive of philanthropy and charity within Sikh frameworks.

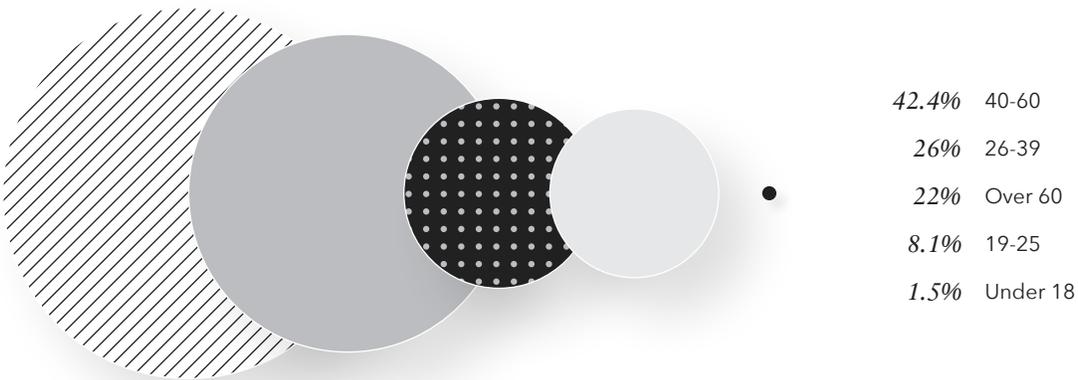


*What gender do you most identify with?*



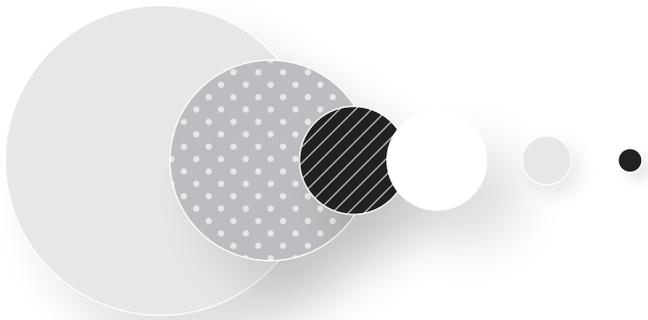
*The majority of the responses were from Sikhs who identify as men.*

*What is your age group?*



*The majority of respondents were over 40 years old (64%), while the next largest percentage of respondents were between 26-39 (26%). This trend was similar even along gender-identification lines. Results may more accurately reflect an older Sikh generation perspective. The lack of response from the younger age range may point to a lack of interest or understanding in Sikh philanthropy or, alternatively, a lack of trust in organizations due to limited transparency and accountability.*

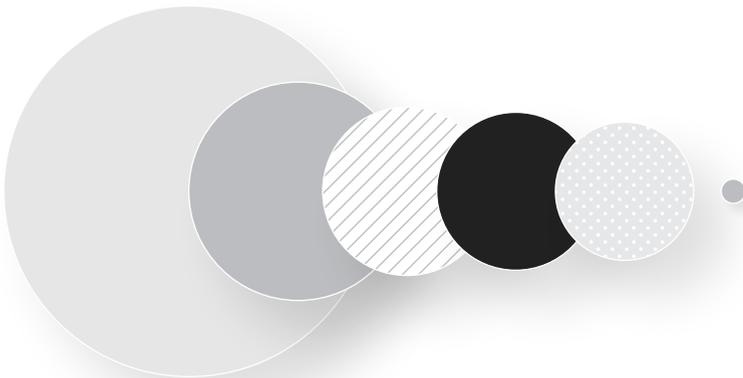
## Where is your residence?



29.5%	United States
27.4%	United Kingdom
23.8%	Canada
11.4%	India
4.3%	Australia
3.4%	Malaysia

There were 23 unique countries represented amongst Sikh respondents. Half of the responses come from North America (United States and Canada, 50%). Thus results may more accurately reflect a specifically North American Sikh perspective. All other countries had between 1-3 respondents per country.

## What most informs your perspective on the effectiveness of Sikh nonprofits?



491	Impact/Outcomes
409	Transparency
318	Public Relations/Social Media
281	Events/Programming
118	Budget Allocation
17	Other

### Summary of Other responses:

- Documentaries, literature, and the internet
- Gurmat, Sikhi
- Political stance
- Print media
- Relevance and resonance of initiatives with the current world environment
- The intent to give without expecting in return

Respondents were allowed multiple selections. For those that chose multiple options, the top 3 combinations were:

Impact/Outcomes, Events Programming, Transparency

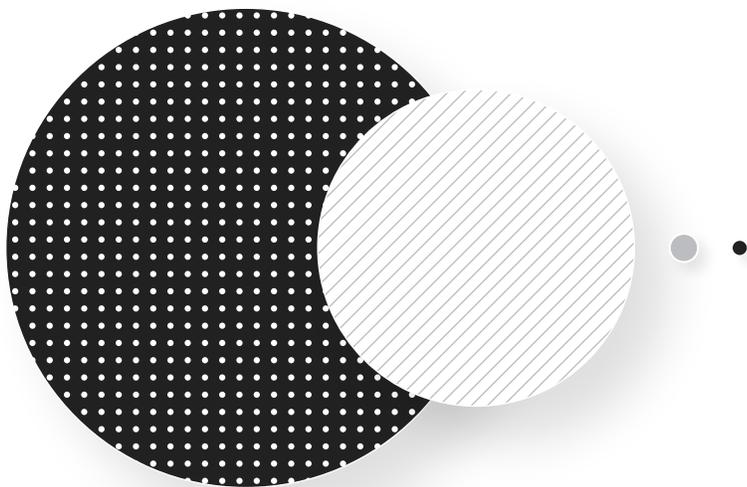
Impact/Outcomes, Public Relations/Social Media

Impact/Outcomes, Events Programming, Public Relations/Social Media

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Interestingly, among survey respondents, PR and social media is a large indicator of the effectiveness of Sikh nonprofits, while events and programming played less of a role. This gives insight into how people quickly evaluate organizations and indicates that people might not have time to research Sikh nonprofits in depth and thus rely on what is easily visible.

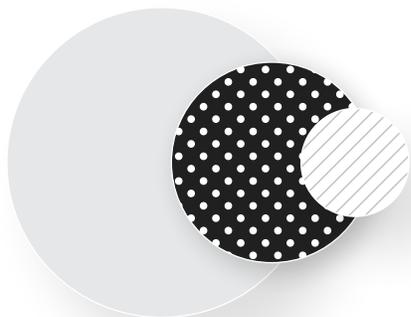
### *What do you understand to be the difference between philanthropy and charity?*



- 355 Philanthropy addresses long-term needs, charity addresses immediate needs
- 170 Philanthropy is private, charity is public
- 164 There is no difference between philanthropy and charity
- 37 Philanthropy addresses immediate needs, charity addresses long-term needs

**Note:** This question is not ideal. While the purpose of the question was to gauge how people understand these two terms, as it is a premise of the survey itself, the terms “philanthropy” and “charity” ought to have been defined initially. The question that follows provides a preferred definition, and respondents could have gone back to change their answers.

*Are you more likely to monetarily support charity (addressing immediate needs such as food, shelter, and health) or philanthropy (addressing long-term needs such as education, infrastructure, and policy) projects?*



380 Philanthropy

319 Charity

27 Neither

A majority of respondents (54%) stated that they were more likely to support long-term philanthropic projects monetarily. This was surprising given that long-term projects do not offer the instant gratification that charity work does. The material reality is that donations are not funding philanthropic projects as much as they are funding charity projects. When divided along the lines of age, 56% of respondents aged 19-25 said they were more likely to donate to charity rather than philanthropy. This may be due to having less money to give and thus prioritizing immediate needs via charity over longer-term philanthropic projects. Larger funders tend to engage in philanthropy, even historically among Sikhs (see Tavarikh section on princely estates and Ranjit Singh).

*Assume the global Sikh nonprofit budget is \$300 million USD. What percentage of that money ought to go to philanthropy?*

As this was a fill-in option, the following were the top 3 responses in order of most common to least common:

- 50%
- 60%
- 40%

Currently, not even 40% of our budgets are going toward philanthropic projects (see table in the Rahit section), as most Sikh nonprofits place more emphasis and more funding into charitable projects.

*In your opinion, what needs are not being addressed (or not being addressed enough) by Sikh nonprofits?*

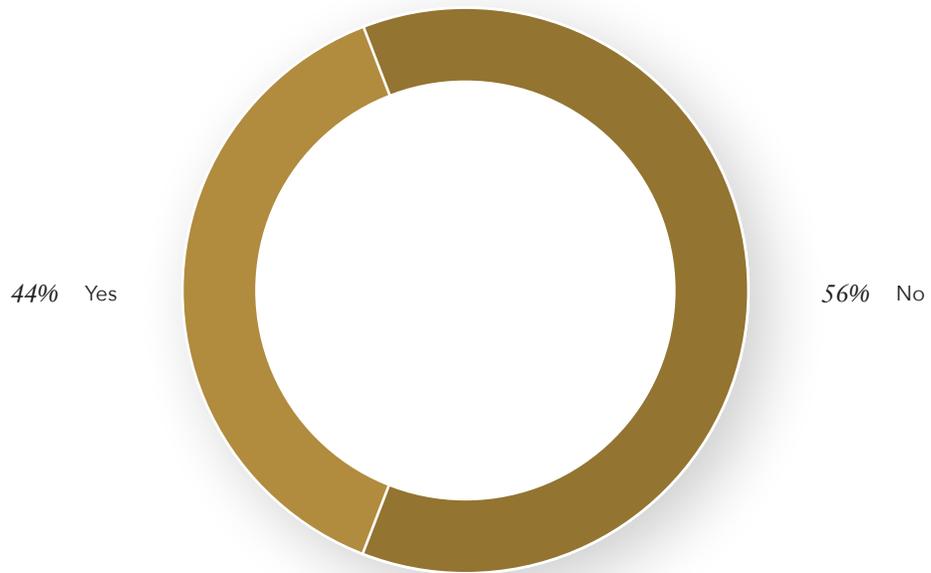
*Top phrases included:*

- Sikhi education: covers comments on educating Sikhs about Sikhi
- Women's issues: equality, domestic violence, girls education
- Sikhi awareness: covers comments on educating others about Sikhi, representation
- Education: general education
  - a. Note: many references to within our "own" community
- Youth issues
- Mental health
- Poverty/basic human needs
- Us

*There is a clear disconnect as most of the unaddressed needs listed are encompassed in philanthropy; however, philanthropic work is not what is largely funded within the Sikh community. This may be because individuals do not feel they can help fund long-term projects that require large donations. Individuals also may not understand the intermediary steps necessary for long-term impact.*

*There was mention of the phrase "us" in relation to both the diasporic-homeland divide (Sikhs in Panjab wanting more diaspora organizations to do projects in Panjab) and in relation to the difference between Gur ki Seva versus Har ki Seva as discussed in the Bani section. Many feel that too much emphasis is placed on Har ki Seva, serving all of creation, and not enough is placed on Gur ki Seva, serving the Panth. Both are needed, but serving the Panth strengthens the Sikh collective's ability to serve all of creation.*

*In your opinion, do Sikh nonprofits do enough to stay accountable to the Panth? This question is required.*



Unsurprisingly, the majority of respondents did not believe that Sikh nonprofits do enough to stay accountable to the Panth. That sentiment needs serious attention to demonstrate a series of actions to become an ethically and Panthically high-impact nonprofit.

# Recommendations

## *Individual*

1. Seek guidance from Bani to understand the Sikh model of giving as it is found in primary and secondary texts. Understand the relationship between Identifying, Giving, and Cleansing as outlining a way of thinking and behaving beyond more commonly understood notions of giving, philanthropy, and charity. Recognize that Identification and Remembrance become foundational to how one ought to give within the Sikh paradigm.
2. Locate precedents from Sikh history for guidance on how to live out principles of giving. Recognize how one can give vastly, without a sense of lack or scorekeeping, led by principles of egalitarianism and revolution. Recognize the consistent monetary emphasis on education, crafts, the arts, and long-term infrastructure and institution-building projects.
3. Interpret the codes from Rahit to adapt them to local regulations and realities. Recognize that unless there are strong Sikh nonprofit institutions that serve the Panth, there cannot really be strong Sikh nonprofit institutions that can serve the Sarbat effectively beyond PR. Power the Panth strategically!
4. Understand that cultivating a behavior of principle-centered giving is part of living out Sikh ideals. Give thoughtfully and regularly to causes that you feel are important. Know the mission and intended audience of the organizations to whom you are donating. Hold the organizations you are giving to accountable by asking for transparency and accessible annual reporting. Look beyond surface-level social media presence when researching organizations to give to. Are you able to clearly gauge their impact?



# Recommendations

## *Institutional*

1. Stay responsible and accountable to the community you are serving and to those who have donated. Make yearly reports accessible and transparent.
2. Make goals, metrics, and budget allocations available to the public, as well as audited financial statements. Inform your donors of short and long-term goals and projects, and visions for the future of the organization. Create a theory of change for your work so that donors can see the logical relationship of your short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes/goals.
3. Build relationships with donors with care and clarity that exhibit the Nam-Dan-Isnan (Identifying-Giving-Cleansing) paradigm.
4. Build relationships with large private foundations to inform the need and solicit funds for long-term philanthropic projects. Be clear in all of your communication with all donors what your mission is, what your vision is, and how you plan to achieve it within 5-10 years. Find donors that align with your mission rather than adjusting your mission to align with specific donors.

<i>Sikh Nonprofit Checklist</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are their mission, vision, and values clear?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are they inspired by the Nam-Dan-Isnan (Identifying-Giving-Cleansing) paradigm?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is their board of directors or trustees as well as leadership information accessible?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are their detailed budgets and audited financials accessible on their website?
<input type="checkbox"/>	What is the monetary health of the organization (yearly revenue versus expense)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do they allocate 20% of their budget to administration and 10% of their budget to fundraising?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are they consistent in their programming, outcomes, and impacts?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are they delivering on their yearly goals? Do they provide year-end reports?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are they serving the Panth and/or Sarbat?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do their donors influence their projects?

# References

We present the direct references from the Guru Granth Sahib in original Gurmukhi as follows:

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| <p>i. ਕਿਰਤਮ ਨਾਮ ਕਥੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਜਿਹਬਾ ॥<br/>ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਪਰਾ ਪੂਰਬਲਾ ॥<br/>ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਭਗਤ ਪਏ ਸਰਣਾਈ ਦੇਹੁ ਦਰਸੁ ਮਨਿ ਰੰਗੁ ਲਗਾ ॥੨੦॥</p> <p>ii. ਨਾਮ ਤਤੁ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਸਿਰਿ ਜਾਪੈ ॥<br/>ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਦੁਖੁ ਕਾਲੁ ਸੰਤਾਪੈ ॥<br/>ਤਤੇ ਤਤੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨੈ ॥<br/>ਦੂਜਾ ਜਾਇ ਇਕਤੁ ਘਰਿ ਆਨੈ ॥<br/>ਬੋਲੈ ਪਵਨਾ ਗਗਨੁ ਗਰਜੈ ॥<br/>ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਹਚਲੁ ਮਿਲਣੁ ਸਹਜੈ ॥੫੦॥</p> <p>iii. ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਆ ਤਿਨਿ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਜਗੁ ਧੰਧੜੈ ਲਾਇਆ ॥<br/>ਦਾਨਿ ਤੇਰੈ ਘਟਿ ਚਾਨਣਾ ਤਨਿ ਚੰਦੁ ਦੀਪਾਇਆ ॥<br/>ਚੰਦੇ ਦੀਪਾਇਆ ਦਾਨਿ ਹਰਿ ਕੈ ਦੁਖੁ ਅੰਧੇਰਾ ਉਠਿ ਗਇਆ ॥<br/>ਗੁਣ ਜੰਵ ਲਾੜੇ ਨਾਲਿ ਸੇਰੈ ਪਰਖਿ ਮੇਹਣੀਐ ਲਾਇਆ ॥<br/>ਵੀਵਾਹੁ ਹੋਆ ਸੇਭ ਸੇਤੀ ਪੰਚ ਸਬਦੀ ਆਇਆ ॥<br/>ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਆ ਤਿਨਿ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਜਗੁ ਧੰਧੜੈ ਲਾਇਆ ॥੧॥</p> <p>iv. ਕਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਮਸਤਕਿ ਥਾਪਿਆ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੀਨੈ ਦਾਨਿ ॥<br/>ਸਫਲ ਸੇਵਾ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕੀ ਤਾ ਕੀ ਨਹੀ ਹਾਨਿ ॥੧॥</p> <p>v. ਧ੍ਰੁੰਮ ਧੀਰੁ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਗਭੀਰੁ ਪਰ ਦੁਖ ਬਿਸਾਰਣੁ ॥<br/>ਸਬਦ ਸਾਰੁ ਹਰਿ ਸਮ ਉਦਾਰੁ ਅਹੰਮੇਵ ਨਿਵਾਰਣੁ ॥<br/>ਮਹਾ ਦਾਨਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਗਿਆਨਿ ਮਨਿ ਚਾਉ ਨ ਹੁਟੈ ॥<br/>ਸਤਿਵੰਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਨਵ ਨਿਧਿ ਨ ਨਿਖੁਟੈ ॥<br/>ਗੁਰ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਤਨੁ ਸਰਬ ਮੈ ਸਹਜਿ ਚੰਦੋਆ ਤਾਣਿਅਉ ॥<br/>ਗੁਰ ਅਰਜੁਨ ਕਲੁਚਰੈ ਤੈ ਰਾਜ ਜੋਗ ਰਸੁ ਜਾਣਿਅਉ ॥੭॥</p> <p>vi. ਤਿਨ ਮਤਿ ਤਿਨ ਪਤਿ ਤਿਨ ਧਨੁ ਪਲੈ ਜਿਨ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਇ ॥<br/>ਤਿਨ ਕਾ ਕਿਆ ਸਾਲਾਹਣਾ ਅਵਰ ਸੁਆਲਿਉ ਕਾਇ ॥<br/>ਨਾਨਕ ਨਦਰੀ ਬਾਹਰੇ ਰਾਚਹਿ ਦਾਨਿ ਨ ਨਾਇ ॥੪॥੪॥</p> <p>vii. ਰਤਾ ਪੈਨਣੁ ਮਨੁ ਰਤਾ ਸੁਪੇਦੀ ਸਤੁ ਦਾਨੁ ॥<br/>ਨੀਲੀ ਸਿਆਹੀ ਕਦਾ ਕਰਣੀ ਪਹਿਰਣੁ ਪੈਰ ਧਿਆਨੁ ॥<br/>ਕਮਰਬੰਦੁ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਕਾ ਧਨੁ ਜੋਬਨੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਮੁ ॥੨॥</p> | <p>viii. ਕੰਚਨ ਕੇ ਕੋਟ ਦਤੁ ਕਰੀ ਬਹੁ ਹੈਵਰ ਗੈਵਰ ਦਾਨੁ ॥<br/>ਭੂਮਿ ਦਾਨੁ ਗਊਆ ਘਣੀ ਭੀ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਗਰਬੁ ਗੁਮਾਨੁ ॥<br/>ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮਿ ਮਨੁ ਬੋਧਿਆ ਗੁਰਿ ਦੀਆ ਸਚੁ ਦਾਨੁ ॥੪॥</p> <p>ix. ਮਨਹਨ ਬੁਧੀ ਕੇਤੀਆ ਕੇਤੇ ਬੇਦ ਬੀਚਾਰ ॥<br/>ਕੇਤੇ ਬੰਧਨ ਜੀਅ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮੇਖ ਦੁਆਰ ॥<br/>ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥੫॥</p> <p>x. ਅਉਸਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਸੁ ਗੁਣ ਰਮਣ ਜਿਤੁ ਕੋਟਿ ਮਜਨ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ॥<br/>ਰਸਨਾ ਉਚਰੈ ਗੁਣਵਤੀ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਪੁਜੈ ਦਾਨੁ ॥<br/>ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਧਾਰਿ ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਵਸੈ ਦਇਆਲ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨੁ ॥<br/>ਜੀਉ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਧਨੁ ਤਿਸ ਦਾ ਹਉ ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੁ ॥੩॥</p> <p>xi. ਹੁਕਮੀ ਵਰਸਣ ਲਾਗੇ ਮੇਹਾ ॥<br/>ਸਾਜਨ ਸੰਤ ਮਿਲਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪੇਹਾ ॥<br/>ਸੀਤਲ ਸਾਂਤਿ ਸਹਜ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਠਾਢਿ ਪਾਈ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਆਪੇ ਜੀਉ ॥੧॥<br/>ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥<br/>ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਸਗਲ ਰਜਾਇਆ ॥<br/>ਦਾਤਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਦਾਤਾਰਾ ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਸਭਿ ਧ੍ਰੁਪੇ ਜੀਉ ॥੨॥</p> <p>xii. ਪ੍ਰਿਗੁ ਤਿਨਾ ਕਾ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਵੇਚਹਿ ਨਾਉ ॥<br/>ਖੇਤੀ ਜਿਨ ਕੀ ਉਜੜੈ ਖਲਵਾੜੇ ਕਿਆ ਥਾਉ ॥<br/>ਸਚੈ ਸਰਮੈ ਬਾਹਰੇ ਅਗੈ ਲਹਹਿ ਨ ਦਾਇ ॥<br/>ਅਕਲਿ ਏਹ ਨ ਆਖੀਐ ਅਕਲਿ ਗਵਾਈਐ ਬਾਇ ॥<br/>ਅਕਲੀ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸੇਵੀਐ ਅਕਲੀ ਪਾਈਐ ਮਾਨੁ ॥<br/>ਅਕਲੀ ਪੜਿ ਕੈ ਬੁਝੀਐ ਅਕਲੀ ਕੀਚੈ ਦਾਨੁ ॥<br/>ਨਾਨਕੁ ਆਖੈ ਰਾਹੁ ਏਹੁ ਹੋਰਿ ਗਲਾਂ ਸੈਤਾਨੁ ॥੧॥</p> <p>xiii. ਗਿਆਨ ਵਿਹੂਣਾ ਗਾਵੈ ਗੀਤ ॥<br/>ਭੁਖੇ ਮੁਲਾਂ ਘਰੇ ਮਸੀਤਿ ॥<br/>ਮਖਟੂ ਹੋਇ ਕੈ ਕੰਨ ਪੜਾਏ ॥<br/>ਫਕਰੁ ਕਰੇ ਹੋਰੁ ਜਾਤਿ ਗਵਾਏ ॥<br/>ਗੁਰੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਸਦਾਏ ਮੰਗਣ ਜਾਇ ॥<br/>ਤਾ ਕੈ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਲਗੀਐ ਪਾਇ ॥<br/>ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥੁ ਦੇਇ ॥<br/>ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ ॥੧॥</p> |
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xiv. ਤੀਰਥ ਬਰਤ ਅਰੁ ਦਾਨ ਕਰਿ ਮਨ ਮੈ ਧਰੈ ਗੁਮਾਨੁ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਹਫਲ ਜਾਤ ਤਿਹ ਜਿਉ ਕੁੰਚਰ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ॥੪੬॥

xv. ਸਲੋਕੁ ॥  
ਦਾਸਹ ਏਕੁ ਨਿਹਾਰਿਆ ਸਭੁ ਕਛੁ ਦੇਵਨਹਾਰ ॥  
ਸਾਸਿ ਸਾਸਿ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਰਹਹਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਦਰਸ ਅਧਾਰ ॥੧॥

ਪਉੜੀ ॥  
ਦਦਾ ਦਾਤਾ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਕਉ ਦੇਵਨਹਾਰ ॥  
ਦੇਦੇ ਤੇਟਿ ਨ ਆਵਈ ਅਗਨਤ ਭਰੇ ਭੰਡਾਰ ॥  
ਦੈਨਹਾਰੁ ਸਦ ਜੀਵਨਹਾਰਾ ॥  
ਮਨ ਮੂਰਖ ਕਿਉ ਤਾਹਿ ਬਿਸਾਰਾ ॥  
ਦੇਸੁ ਨਹੀ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਮੀਤਾ ॥  
ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹ ਬੰਧੁ ਪੁਭਿ ਕੀਤਾ ॥  
ਦਰਦ ਨਿਵਾਰਹਿ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਆਪੇ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਤੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਧ੍ਰਾਪੇ ॥੩੪॥

xvi. ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨਾ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਰੀਅਤਿ ਪੜਿ ਪੜਿ ਕਰਹਿ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥  
ਬੰਦੇ ਸੇ ਜਿ ਪਵਹਿ ਵਿਚਿ ਬੰਦੀ ਵੇਖਣ ਕਉ ਦੀਦਾਰੁ ॥  
ਹਿੰਦੂ ਸਾਲਾਹੀ ਸਾਲਾਹਨਿ ਦਰਸਨਿ ਰੂਪਿ ਅਪਾਰੁ ॥  
ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਵਹਿ ਅਰਚਾ ਪੂਜਾ ਅਗਰ ਵਾਸੁ ਬਹਕਾਰੁ ॥  
ਜੋਗੀ ਸੁੰਨਿ ਧਿਆਵਨਿ ਜੇਤੇ ਅਲਖ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾਰੁ ॥  
ਸੂਖਮ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਕਾਇਆ ਕਾ ਆਕਾਰੁ ॥  
ਸਤੀਆ ਮਨਿ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਦੇਣੈ ਕੈ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ॥  
ਦੇ ਦੇ ਮੰਗਹਿ ਸਹਸਾ ਗੁਣਾ ਸੇਭ ਕਰੇ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥  
ਚੇਰਾ ਜਾਰਾ ਤੈ ਕੁੜਿਆਰਾ ਖਾਰਾਬਾ ਵੇਕਾਰ ॥  
ਇਕਿ ਹੋਦਾ ਖਾਇ ਚਲਹਿ ਐਥਾਊ ਤਿਨਾ ਭਿ ਕਾਈ ਕਾਰ ॥  
ਜਲਿ ਥਲਿ ਜੀਆ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਲੋਆ ਆਕਾਰਾ ਆਕਾਰ ॥  
ਓਇ ਜਿ ਆਖਹਿ ਸੁ ਤੂੰਹੈ ਜਾਣਹਿ ਤਿਨਾ ਭਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਸਾਰ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਭਗਤਾ ਭੁਖ ਸਾਲਾਹਣੁ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਆਧਾਰੁ ॥  
ਸਦਾ ਅਨੰਦਿ ਰਹਹਿ ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤੀ ਗੁਣਵੰਤਿਆ ਪਾ ਛਾਰੁ ॥੧॥

*\*Transcreation adapted from The Guru Granth Sahib Project*

xvii. ਸਿਮਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਪੁਭੁ ਕਾਰਜ ਭਏ ਰਾਸਿ ॥  
ਕਰਤਾਰ ਪੁਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਵਸੈ ਸੰਤਨ ਕੈ ਪਾਸਿ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥  
ਬਿਘਨੁ ਨ ਕੋਊ ਲਾਗਤਾ ਗੁਰ ਪਹਿ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥  
ਰਖਵਾਲਾ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਰਾਇ ਭਗਤਨ ਕੀ ਰਾਸਿ ॥੧॥  
ਤੋਟਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਕਦੇ ਮੂਲਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਭੰਡਾਰ ॥  
ਚਰਨ ਕਮਲ ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਬਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਅਗਮ ਅਪਾਰ ॥੨॥  
ਬਸਤ ਕਮਾਵਤ ਸਭਿ ਸੁਖੀ ਕਿਛੁ ਊਨ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ॥  
ਸੰਤ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਭੇਟੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਪੂਰਨ ਜਗਦੀਸੈ ॥੩॥  
ਜੈ ਜੈਕਾਰੁ ਸਭੈ ਕਰਹਿ ਸਚੁ ਥਾਨੁ ਸੁਹਾਇਆ ॥  
ਜਪਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਧਾਨ ਸੁਖ ਪੂਰਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਪਾਇਆ ॥੪॥੩੩॥੬੩॥

*All transcreations are by Harinder Singh, unless otherwise indicated.*

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