

JEAVINI

OF

BHAI JASBIR SINGH KHALSA

(1944-2006)



ਬਾਹੀ ਜਸਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਖਾਲਸਾ



## B h a i

**Sahib**, Bhai Jasbir Singh Ji Khalsa a popularly known

as "Veerji" was born in the early morning on August 16<sup>th</sup> 1944 at his mother's village of *Chakri* (presently in Tehsil and District Rawalpindi, in Pakistan). His father, **Sardar Inder Singh**, was a businessman in the Village Billol (now In Pakistan ). His mother's name was Jagjit Kaur also known as **Parbati Kaur**. Veerji has only one sibling : a sister, **Pritam Kaur** who is eight years older to him and who lives with her family in Khanna, Punjab.

Before Veerji was born, Veerji's mother made it a practise to complete one *Sehaj Path da bhog* every month. When he was forty days old, Veerji's parents took him to Gurdwara Panja Sahib (in Pakistan) to receive the

blessing of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. He was less than three years of age when the partition of India and Pakistan took place in 1947. Like everyone else, his family went through a great deal of ordeal during the partition. They initially spent some time during that period in the care of Sant Mansa Singh at the village of Hardawal in Pakistan. After that, they found their way to Amritsar with the assistance of the military.

After they got to India, Veerji's mother maternal uncle, (*mama ji*), **Gurmukh Singh Musafir**, managed to arrange for a job for Veerji's father as a Custodian in Sangrur. The whole family then moved to Sangrur.

At the age of five, he was enrolled in a school in Sangrur. Veerji studied here till he finished his *Matric* (Grade 10).

When he was fourteen, Veerji's father passed away. As a result of this, the family's responsibilities fell on his shoulders and he moved to Ludhiana. In Ludhiana, Veerji

worked extremely hard to support the family and amongst other things, he completed a four years course as an *Overseer* at the Ramgariah College in Ludhiana.

Right from childhood, Veerji had an inclination towards spirituality. He developed a passion for poetry. He had a gift for writing poetry. He was able to write verses on any subject without any effort. The words would simply flow by themselves. And he used to read poetry with such vigour, fervour and passion that he soon came to be known as "**Joshi Ji**" (*meaning the "fervent" one*).

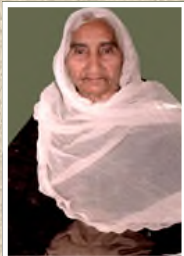
Veerji was a gifted poet. Before he began the practise of *singing Gurbani* in kirtan style, Veerji made

his mark as a poet when he used to recite poetry at Sikh Gurdwaras during Gurburabs and on other important occasions.

Veerji grew up in an extremely religious and spiritual



atmosphere. Both his parents were highly religious: his father Inder Singh was able to sing *shabad kirtan*; he was an accomplished paathi (able to recite the Sri Guru Granth Sahib fluently) and was very well versed



in other religious texts including the *Suraj Parkash*.

### Sant Nehchal Singh

Veerji received his blessing to deliver sermons (*katha*) from **Sant Nehchal Singh** of Jamna Nagar. This happened quite spontaneously when on one occasion, Veerji had gone to meet Sant Nirmal Singh with some friends of his. After all his other friends had left the company of Sant Nirmal Singh, Veerji remained seated. When asked by Sant Ji as to why he had not left, Veerji said that he had stayed back as he had not received anything from Sant Ji.

Sant Ji then asked him what was it that he wanted. Veerji

responded by saying that “you can give me whatever you please”. Sant Ji then patted him heavily on his back a couple of times and asked him whether he had a feeling of having received something. Veerji responded in



the negative. Sant Ji then gave him one really hard pat (*thapda*) and told him “from now on, your mission is to go and serve the sangat by

doing *katha* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib”.

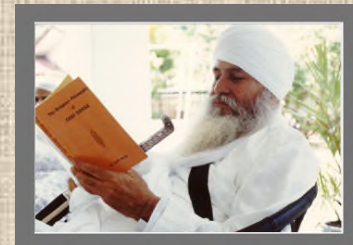
Veerji purely did *katha* (without kirtan) for a period of twelve years from then on.

### Sant Naranjan Singh

Sometime in **January of 1981**, Veerji went to seek the *darshan* of **Saint Scholar Sant Naranjan Singh** of Patiala. Veerji had met Sant Ji on previous occasions but it was after 1981 that they became close and Veerji used to

go regularly to Patiala to meet Sant Ji.

Although Veerji used to sing shabad kirtan without the use of any musical instruments even before meeting Sant Ji, it was in Guru Nanak Ashram in Patiala that he received his blessing from Sant Ji to do kirtan with the use of the harmonium.



During one of his meetings with Veerji, Sant Ji told Veerji that he would require him to go to Manimajare in two days to perform the kirtan-seva in place of Sant Ji.

Without any hesitation, Veerji immediately in all humility agreed to undertake the seva. However, upon reflection he realised that he would not be able to perform the kirtan-seva and he informed Sant Ji that as he had never sung any

shabads and that as did not know how to do kirtan with the waja. He beseeched Sant Ji that he would only be able to carry out this seva with his (Sant Ji's) blessings.

Sant Ji responded that there was no human being who would be able to teach him kirtan within such a short period of time and that he should take his (Sant Ji's) harmonium to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji as it was only Guru Ji who would be able to teach him.

Veerji complied and brought the harmonium to the *Sachkhand Asthaan* where Sri Guru Granth Sahib's *sukhasan* was done at the Guru Nanak Ashram at Patiala. It was here that Guru Ji blessed Veerji with the melody, comprising of just a few notes. Veerji was ecstatic when he received this blessing from Guru

Ji and shouted uncontrollably, "Aya Gya. Ay Gya" ("I got it, I got it")

It was melody that Veerji used successfully for many years and which totally captivated the sangat for years to come. Veerji used this tune for his Simran and kirtan parhaar for many years all over

the country during his kirtan and simran sessions.

He then began to do nishkaam (*free, without monetary gain*) kirtan in a small group of Sikhs. Given the melodious and soulful nature of his singing, the circle quickly grew by leaps and bounds.

It grew so rapidly that within just a few years, sometime in 1984, Veerji purchased a small hall in Sohana which he used for his kirtan and simran sangat.

Veerji made it a practise to concentrate on only one topic during each of his kirtan and katha sessions.



*Guru Nanak Ashram, Patiala*

### Move to Khanna, marriage

For economic as well as family reasons, Veerji later moved from Ludhiana to Khanna, where his elder sister, **Pritam Kaur** was living with her family. His sister is

married to Swinder Singh Kohli. In Khanna, he started his own business known as "**Joshi Tent House**" along GT Road in Khanna, Punjab. His partner Meva Singh Gill used to trim his beard but when he came to know about veerji, he became amritdhari although Veerji had never told to stop trimming his beard.

Veerji transferred his interest in the business to Meva Singh Gill without any cost many years ago. Mr. Meva

Singh Gill is still running this business in Khanna.



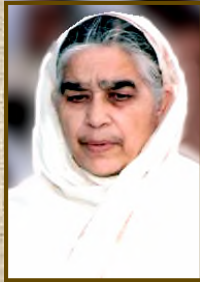
Once Veerji gave saropa to a man who used to trim his beard and some people objected to

this. Soon after, that person became an amritdhari Sikh.

### Veerji's Family:

At the age of 23, Veerji got married on **April 13<sup>th</sup> 1967** to **Daljit Kaur**, who is the daughter of Avtar Singh of Kalanor. They got married at Naarnul, Mahindgarh, Haryana.

Daljit Kaur is a well educated person. In addition to successfully undertaking and fulfilling her responsibilities as a wife and a mother, she has also been a successful



educator. She used to be a teacher and then rose to be become a Vice Principal in a government school. She now lives with her eldest son in Mohali and is a writer.

Veerji had two sons: **Jagmohan Singh** (known lovingly as "Happy") who was born on July 25<sup>th</sup> 1971 at Patiala and **Jatinder Mohan Singh**

(known lovingly as "Vicky") who was born on February 2<sup>nd</sup> 1973 at Khanna.

The elder son, Jagmohan is married to Harmeet Kaur. They got married on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1993 at Jalandhar. Jagmohan lives in Mohali where he runs a medical pharmacy known as "Veerji Medicos". Veerji used to live with him.

Jagmohan Singh has two daughters, Jagseerat Kaur born on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1994 and Harnaindeep Kaur, born on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2001. They are students in Chandigarh. Jagseerat Kaur has a good voice and is also getting training in kirtan and the harmonium

Jatinder Mohan Singh is married to Chanjot Kaur. They got married on 24<sup>th</sup> Dec 1995 at Jalandhar.

Jatinder Mohan Singh has two children: a son and a daughter. Their son, Sanjampreet Singh was born on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1997 and is



studying at the Guru Nanak Public School in Ludhiana. He is also receiving training kirtan and harmonium from Bhai Sukhwant Singh of Jawadi Taksal.

Sanjampreet Singh accompanied Veerji on the stage at several kirtan

programs during his lifetime. At his last samagams in Ludhiana at Gurduwara Dukhniwaran Sahib, Sanjampreet did Kirtan with Veerji. The cassette "Jan Paropkari Aaye" has a recording of a shabad "Soi Soi Deve" by Sanjampreet.

JatinderMohan's daughter Harnoor Kaur was born on 17<sup>th</sup> Dec 2002. She is studying in a convent school in Ludhiana.

JatinderMohan Singh lives in Ludhiana where he has a garment showroom retailing gents garments known as "KOUTONS".



Veerji was a devoted and loving father, brother and husband. He fulfilled all his worldly duties to his family to the best of his ability. He took great care of his wife and sister. And he was amazing son too. He took extra ordinary care of

his mother. He used to give her medicine every evening. When people used to ask him that why he did not travel abroad he would say that he was not prepared to leave his mother.

### **Practising Sikh:**

During his life, Veerji practiced and lived by the basic principles of Sikhism, namely to earn one's livelihood, share one's earnings and remember the Name of the Lord. For forty years of his life, he was an active participant in Sikh religious affairs. He never accepted or took any money for his kirtan services. He never undertook the singing of the Guru's hymns as a business, a profession or a means of a livelihood. He undertook it purely as a form of a *seva*.



***Akaal Ashram at Sohana***

During the course of his business, Veerji was visited by many religious

individuals and saints from various organizations. Veerji always took the opportunity to provide selfless service to all such individuals. It was as if Veerji had received the gift of *seva* from the divine. During this period, Veerji met several Gurmukhs. He received their blessings. In particular he was close to **Sant Baba Shyam Singh**.

When Veerji used to be at Jyoshi Tent House, Baba Shyam Singh came to his shop and the moment he entered the shop he slapped Veerji. Veerji's worker, who was sitting next to him was about to stand up to stop Baba Shyam Singh. Veerji however prevented the worker. Baba Ji told him the reason for slapping him was to check whether he himself practised restraint and self control i.e. the attributes that he preached to the *sangat* during his *katha*. He told Veerji that he was testing him.

As a young man Veerji used to spend, long hours absorbed in meditation and in a religious discussions with holy men who used to come into his contact. Veerji though worked during the day but in the early morning he used to meditate and recite Kirtan and make all the *Sangat* pray to God by singing

and reciting Gurbani.

For twelve consecutive years, Veerji undertook and provided the **seva for Guru Ka Langar** at **Gurdwara Sehra Sahib** during the *Hola Mahla* festival which takes place in March or April every year. During those days, there used to be a water shortage for *langar* and the *sangat* had to fetch the water from distant places. Veerji tirelessly undertook the task of providing for a water supply to that area. To facilitate this, he even arranged for the construction of a Hindu *Mandhir* in a village in order to secure their agreement to allow the flow of water through their village.

Due to his commitment to provide selfless service without financial reward for his kirtan services as well as his voluntary religious activities, there were times when Veerji had to go through very tumultuous financial times.

But he never wavered in his commitment.

### **Sri Guru Har Krishan Hospital**

In 1983, with the support of the *sangat*, he purchased a piece of land at Village Sohana and laid the foundation stone for the Akaal

Ashram over there. It was here that initially a beautiful Gurdwara was set up.



Subsequently with the support of the sangat, and most notably **Dr. Harinderjit Singh**, a prominent specialist in Ophthalmology, from Georgia, USA, the Sri Guru Har Krishan Hospital was established. The Sohana hospital was established in 1995 with an ophthalmology wing.

Dr Harinderjit Singh was highly supportive of Veerji both in terms of fund raising for the Sohana hospital as well as the supply of medical equipment.

The hospital was later expanded into a multi-specialty hospital known for providing treatment at a reasonable cost.

A modern gynecology and obstetrics centre was inaugurated by the Jathedar of Takht Sri Patna Sahib, Giani Iqbal Singh in May

2002.

At the hospital, patients are treated at very nominal fees and for those who are unable to afford it, they are even treated at no cost.

It has all the specialties like Eye, Dental, General Surgery, Gynaecology & Obstetrics, Orthopaedics, Urology, Ear Nose and Throat Department, Skin, Medicine, Psychiatry, Intensive Care Unit, X-Ray, Chemotherapy and Computer lab. It has 24-hour emergency services and is



*Giani Iqbal Singh, Jathedar of Takht Patna Sahib, with Veerji surveying the operating theatre after the inauguration of the gynaecology wing of Sri Harkrishan Sahib Eye Hospital, May 5, 2002*

equipped with the latest equipment for doing complicated surgeries and every day about 500 to 600 patients visit the OPD.

Fully trained doctors proficient in different fields are always busy in assisting patients who require treatment at the hospital.

Also with the inspiration and blessing of Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and with the support of the sangat Veerji has also been instrumental in providing **ambulance facility** for accident cases, trauma cases/first aid facility at different highways. This also assists those living around the area as well as to attend to emergency situations for the injured.



To assist the needs of the nearby and distant villages, **free eye check up clinics** and camps are arranged on a rotational basis.

Branches of this hospital have also been opened at Khanna and Sarhind. Both of these are operating successfully.

In April 2006, the management of Guru Harkrishan Sahib Charitable Hospital, Sohana, in association with the **National Association for the Blind** announced the setting up of an institute where the visually impaired would be given training for different works to make them self-dependent.

Academic classes will also be started at the institute. The centre is to be named the 'B

### **Centre for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind'**

Amongst other things, hostel arrangements are being made to accommodate students from other cities or countries.

### **Sri Guru Har Krishan Sahib College of Nursing**

Veerji was also the driving force behind the setting up of the **Sri Guru Harikrishan Sahib College of Nursing at Sohana.**

This college offers quality training both in the classrooms and in the field to its students to enable them to Provide Quality Services

in the field of Nursing The School provides all the required facilities, training aids, material etc. and creates a healthy environment for students to benefit not only in their specific profession but in overall development.



Guru Harikrishan Sahib College of Nursing

It is equipped to provide quality nursing education and provides equipment to enable each student to have adequate training with various modalities for delivering healthcare services.

### **Simran**

Veerji never missed Simran in early hours every day regardless of any circumstances. It was his first priority to advise Sangat to attend the Simran sessions. In 1992/1993 Veerji encouraged the Sangat to assemble for Naam Simran as daily routine. Simran Samagams began to take place

regularly in Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Rajpura, Sohana, Patiala and Amritsar. The time for such Samagam was set at 4 am to 5 am at all the venues

In the pursuit of his main objective, which was the propagation of Naam Simran, a task which Veerji commenced right from his childhood, after the Gurdwara was built at Sohana, he started Simran sessions at the Gurdwara Akaal Ashram in Sohana. These Simran sadhana sessions as well as discourses in Gurbani Vichaar were carried on by him in the early hours of the morning (*amrit vela*) for many years.

At present, at this Gurdwara, at Amrit Vela, Nitnem of the five banis, Simran Sadhana, continuous katha of Gurbani, and in the evening Sodar di Chowki, Katha of Suraj Parkash and kirtan continues to be done daily. This has been going on ever since the Gurdwara was built.





For the benefit those pursuing their meditation practice, a **meditation centre** has also been established there. This is located in a very peaceful atmosphere and where the devotee remains for several days in a retreat setting where they meditate and recite the Gurbani. In this way they are able to uplift their spiritual level in a very positive setting.

Guru ka langar is served round the clock 24/7 at the Gurdwara Akaal Ashram.

### Healing the needy

There are numerous occasions where Veerji helped cure the sick and needy.

One of Veerji's helpers, Ravinder Singh became a victim of severe tuberculosis. He had undergone three separate surgeries and the leading medical practitioners were unable to help him any longer.

When Veerji came to know about this, he commented very seriously to Ravinder Singh that from now on, he would be treated and cured by Guru Ji. From that day itself, a Sehaj Path of Sri Guru Granth Sahib was commenced. Arrangements were made for Harvinder Singh to be able to listen to the entire recitation of the path. Veerji made him commit himself to continually recite the verse "***Dukh rog santaap utre, suni sacchi baani***".

As Harvinder Singh progressively heard the recitation of the Gurbani, his pain started to lessen. Only after the recitation of the first three hundred pages, the doctors took samples and found that the infection had disappeared. Within a few days, he was cured completely.



Veerji with his jatha at Crescent Beach

All of this was due to Veerji's total

and absolute faith and conviction in the truth of the Guru's word.

Ravinder Singh has now undertaken the katha duty at the Gurdwara Akaal Ashram,

Another incident concerned **Jaswinder Singh Khalsa** head of the Guru Nanak Trust, Manchester, UK, who was infected with cancer and the doctors had told him that he would only be able to survive for a few days. Veerji lovingly encouraged and guided him to listen to Gurbani with faith. Khalsa Ji made arrangements to have a paath at his own residence and upon being tested after that, the cancer had totally disappeared.

There are numerous other instances of other people who were cured through Veerji's intervention and assistance after they had placed their total faith and devotion in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

### Amritvela

Veerji stressed on the

importance of getting up at amritwela. He narrated several personal experiences that he had at amritwela which got him out of bed. One morning, when he was sleeping at home, all utensils in the house began banging against one another. Veerji got up suddenly and he thought that it was his mother in the kitchen who was making the noise. When he saw the time it was amritwela and there was no one in the kitchen. On another occasion, he was sleeping and he heard someone shouting loudly but when he woke up, there was none there. It was amritwela and time to rise.

He remained above all political frays and retained a completely untarnished image.

His unconditional surrender and dedication to Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the promotion of the concept of "*shabad Guru*" touched a nerve amongst the Sikhi masses who are under a constant barrage by self-proclaimed sants, dehras and babas who themselves are forever eager to become the

subject to worship

### Nishkaam

Veerji was exceptional in that he did *nishkaam* kirtan and katha i.e. purely for the love and joy of it and to spread the word of the Shabad Guru - without any expectation of financial rewards or other material gains. Money was never the motive nor the purpose for which Veerji did kirtan and katha. It was purely to spread the word of the Guru.

And that is why when Veerji sung, he did so with passion and with fervour.

### Amrit Sanchaar

Veerji placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of becoming a baptised Sikh by accepting Khade Ki Pahul from the panj pyare. He was deeply upset by the large numbers of Sikhs who were becoming *patit*. Veerji delegated duties to Sewadars in various cities to identify patit youth, educate them the Sikh values in order to bring them back to the Sikhi fold.

He took every opportunity in all

his programs both within India as well as abroad to encourage the sangat to discard intoxicants, lead a pure life and take Khande Di Pahul.

In **1999**, during the tri centennial anniversary of the Khalsa, Veerji got 12,000 Sikhs to partake Khande di Pahul at **Anandpur Sahib**. He did this at a time when all the other Sikh leaders were busy with their political infighting.

In 2005, Veerji got another 2500 Sikhs to become baptised Sikhs.

During his samagams he would always ask the members of the sangat to indicate their readiness to be baptised by a show of hands.

Veerji, during his meetings with Gursikhs during his travels, identified suitable Gurmukhs in the various towns and cities that he went to. He spoke to such individuals at a personal level and arranged for them to act as part of the panj pyare during any *amrit sanchaar* ceremony in their respective towns or cities.

Veerji's goal, amongst other things was to have suitable qualified Gurmukhs in the various cities who were ready, willing and able to perform this duty of baptising any Sikh who was ready to be baptised.

At Akal Ashram Sohana, Amrit ceremony is conducted **every Sunday** whereas at Gurdwara *Nouve Patshahi* at Central Town Jalandhar, it is done every second Sunday of the month. The Kakars are provided free of cost.

### Sehaj Paath

Veerji encouraged the sangat to do sehaj paths. He began a system in Jalandhar from 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2006 in which he encouraged the members of the sangat to participate in the recitation of the entire Sri Guru Granth Sahib at designated residences. Within a period of three months one Sehaj Path was completed. The path would be done for one hour in the evening in different homes where Sikh Sangat would attend to listen.

### Help to the unfortunate

Every year Veerji helped needy

children from various areas in many ways: he would distribute shoes to those children who went barefoot to schools; clothes and blankets to those who did not have them; and school fees for expenses to those who could not afford to pay and financial assistance to widows.

### Anti Patit Campaigns

Veerji was very hurt and concerned about the growing trend amongst Sikh youth who were cutting their hair. In order to discourage Sikh children and youth from cutting their hair and to inspire them to adopt the Sikh way of life, Veerji started the "Ghar Vapasi" (*Back Home*) campaign. This helped to convince thousands of Sikhs to retain their Sikh identity.

Veerji was convinced once a Sikh lost connection with Gurbani, he would not only discard the bana but would end up becoming a *patit* and rejecting the Sikh identity altogether.

To prevent this, he began a "Gurcharni Laun" campaign as a result of which thousand of children began appreciating

Gurbani and the value of Sikh identity.

With the assistance of the Jalandhar Sangat, in particular Dr. Paramjit Singh and Bhai Amarjit Singh Anand of the Sikh Missionary College and Guru Shabad Parchar Sabha (Jalandhar Branch), Veerji launched the "**Bhai Vir Singh Academy**" in Jalandhar. The opening of the classes at this Academy took place in May 2007 after a kirtan darbar that was attended by Veer Daviinder Singh Ji.

In August 2006, Veerji conducted programs on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> at the Gurdwara Dukh Niwaran Sahib in Ludhiana at which he took the opportunity to inform the sangat about the setting up of the **Sukrit Trust**. This was done in conjunction with Jaswinder Singh Khalsa (Kohli, Bawa Ji) of UK and with the assistance of the sangat in which **Prof. Sarabjeet Singh**, played a leading role.

The Sukrit Trust was set up to instill a spirit of competitiveness amongst Sikh youth by getting them to participate in Akhand Path and kirtan competitions. They also received career guidance and training.

### Art Of Sikh Living:

Veerji was very conscious and motivated to get the youth to live their ways according to Gurmat. He initiated the "Gurmat Jeevan Jugt" or the "Art of Sikh Living". To commemorate and publicise this event, a march was held in Jalandhar in which thousand of Sikh children and youth participated: all of them in scooters or motorcycles dressed in white with blue turbans and dupateys.

This was indeed a memorable event.

### Personal Openness:

Veerji was always open and accessible to everyone. Never did keep himself aloof or make himself inaccessible to anyone who wanted to speak to him or meet him.

Despite his very busy schedule in travelling all over India and his his duties in the establishment, operation and supervision of the various organizations, on a personal level, he always made time to meet with the members of

the sangat and the visitors to the Gurdwara. And he made use of every opportunity to encourage them to connect with the Guru, with Gurbani, with Guru Shabad and to start doing simran.

Never at any time in his life did he use the prefix "Sant", "Baba" or any other honorary title to glorify himself. On the contrary, he was pleased just by being called "Veerji".

Because of his total, unflinching commitment, dedication and faith in Gurbani, he found all his desires and wishes fulfilled by Guru Ji.

### Awards:

Veerji received various awards during his lifetime. Most notably, he was awarded the "**Nishkam Kirtan**" award on April 24<sup>th</sup> 1996 by Akal Takhat Sahib.

During his talks, he always spoke about the drug de-addiction and always inspired the people for de-addiction, aids control, eye donation, environmental pollution etc. He was also instrumental in spreading the message of Shri

Guru Gobind Singh Ji for Amrit sanchar and undertook encouraged Sikhs wherever he went to commit themselves for Amrit Sanchar. Thousands of people were baptized as a result of his encouragement. On the occasion of 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of formation fo the Khalsa, Veerji inspired more than 12,000 people for Amrit and got them baptized at Shri Anandpur Sahib.

In October 2003, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee constituted a 21-member **Religious Advisory Board (RAB)**, to frame rules for the appointment and removal of Sikh high



of Sikh high priests. Veerji was the leading member of this 21-member Religious Advisory Board whose mandate also included the authority to scrutinise the complaints being received by Akal Takht before they are taken up by the Sikh clergy. The

committee was also empowered to initiate talks with other Panthic organisations to resolve various Panthic matters.

Veerji also encouraged, inspired and blessed many others to do likewise, including, most notably, Bhai Tejinder Singh of Simla. Bhai Tejinder Singh, although not a professional ragi, is presently a *nishkaam kirtanea* at Sachkhand Harminder Sahib.



Veer Davinder Singh who assumed Veerji's seva at Sohana after his passing was another individual who was inspired to do kirtan by Veerji.

Just like this, many Sikhs in various cities around India gained inspiration from Veerji and formed themselves into *nishkaam kirtani jathas* and are undertaking the seva of doing kirtan without any financial rewards or other material

gains.

Just as Veerji focussed on one topic



during his kirtan and katha sessions, it was his desire that other *kirteaneas* should likewise concentrate on only one topic during each of their own kirtan and katha sessions.

Many prominent Ragis drew inspiration from Veerji by having their own annual kirtan samagams in their own towns or residences. Included amongst them are Bhai Davinder Singh Sodhi who has been having an annual samagam (*the "Maha Pavitar Gurmat Samagam"*) in Ludhiana where Veerji was, for the sixteen years before his passing, the first and last person to do kirtan.

Veerji was honoured with the Bhai Nand Lal Award by Bhai Davinder

Singh Sodhi at the 16<sup>th</sup> annual *Maha Pavitar Gurmat Samagam* in Ludhiana. As Veerji was unwell to receive the award, Bhai Sahib went personally the following day to Sohana to hand it to him in person.

He was always humble and genuinely accepted his role as being the servant of Guru and the sangat. Veerji did not subscribe to the caste system and held strong beliefs in the fundamental principles of Gurbani.

He always preached the concept of Shabad Guru and repeatedly encouraged the sangat to connect with the shabad rather than physical beings. He provided practical illustrations during the course of his katha to explain Gurbani to the lay person.

### **BHAI DALIP SINGH**

Bhai Sahib first met Bhai Jasbir Singh Khalsa Khaney Waley in 1989 at Paonta Sahib. This was when Bhai Jasbir Singh Ji had gone there for a kirtan samagam.

They formed an instant attachment and developed an intense love and respect for each other that lasted for

the rest of their lives. After that first meeting, they continued to meet regularly at Paonta Sahib, as well as Sohana. They also travelled together to samagams at Delhi, Mansuri, Shimla, Dehra Dun and Rishikesh.

Bhai Jasbir Singh made between twenty five to thirty visits to Paonta Sahib to meet Bhai Sahib. The marriage ceremonies of Bhai sahib's elder son, Ratanjit Singh



as well as his elder daughter, Swarnjit Kaur were held at Sohana and the kirtan was sung by Bhai Jasbir Singh Ji.

Such was the love and closeness between the two of them that

Bhai Jasbir Singh Ji attended all the family functions of Bhai sahib at Paonta Sahib. Bhai sahib also used to visit Bhai Jasbir Singh at

Sohana every month or other month. They had a telepathic relationship and whenever one of them felt a longing to be with the other, one of them would find his way to meet the other.

Bhai Jasbir Singh was proud to state in the sangat on various occasions that he accepted Bhai Dalip Singh as his elder brother. He stated proudly that he received a gift from Paonta Sahib in the form of an elder brother

#### Travel:

As mentioned above, Veerji was extremely close and affectionate towards his mother. She passed away in January 2004. It was only after her death that Veerji made several trips outside of India.

During his lifetime he traveled extensively within India to spread the message of Sikh Gurus. Most notably he made several trips to **Bombay** where he is extremely popular. He held samagams at various Gurdwaras from March 4<sup>th</sup> to March 9<sup>th</sup> of every year which were attended by the sangat in the thousands.

He also visited Panipat as well as

the campus Akal Academy of the Kalgidhar Society at Baru Sahib which is located at District Sirmore, in Himachal Pradesh.



Veerji  
at Baru Sahib : May 2004

Because of his association with Sant Naranjan Singh of Patiala, who was a sewak of **Sant Attar**

**Singh**, Veerji had a very close particular attachment to the mission of Sant Attar Singh and the Akal

Academy of the Kalgidhar Society at Baru Sahib. He visited **Baru Sahib** in **May 2004**.

Veerji regularly held samagams in Sohana in the memory of Sant Attar Singh, an eminent Sikh spiritual leader.

## Trips Abroad

After the death of his mother, Veerji made three trips to **England**, in 2004, 2005 and again in 2006; one to **Ireland**, in 2006 two to **Dubai**, one to **Kuwait** and two to **Canada**, once in the summer of 2004 and again in the summer of 2006.

The kirtan programs in Dubai were held in a warehouse and were very well attended and appreciated by the Sikh sangat of Kuwait.

In Kuwait, **Mr Mohinder Singh Saini** arranged for Veerji's programs which were held in the large basement of his residence. The basement was big enough to accommodate the sangat of two to three hundred Sikhs.



Veerji with members of Surrey, BC, sangat

His last trip outside of India was to the United Kingdom where he held

samagams at various Gurdwaras from **September 5<sup>th</sup> to September 17<sup>th</sup> 2006.**

All of the trips were highly successful and thousands of Sikhs from these countries got to meet and listen to Veerji live; something they would not have been able to do otherwise.



Wherever Veerji went, he specifically made it a point to have his kirtan programs in as many Gurdwaras as possible.

He was always sensitive to the local politics that existed in the cities he visited and went out of his way to avoid being embroiled in any frays. He made every effort to stay above all forms of politics and was particularly averse to the existing divisions within the Gurdwara management committees. Not once was he ever criticized

for favouring any one faction against another.

The Sikh sangats of many other countries, especially the USA and

Thailand made repeated requests of Veerji to visit the those countries. The sangat in the US had been longing to have him over to have kirtan functions both on the East as well as the West coast, particularly in California.

The sangat in California were planning to welcome Veerji for Vasakhi in 2007.

In early August of 2006, after his trip to Canada, Veerji travelled to various small remote villages in India including Hassnapur, (Uttar Pardesh) Latifpur, Merrut etc. Big crowds welcomed Veerji to these villages where arrangements had been made to organize camps for young children.

## Sant Santokh Singh

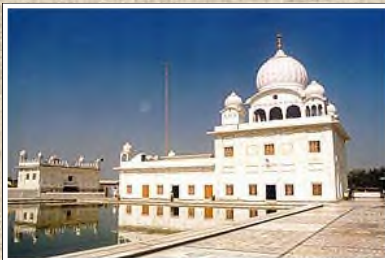
Among the several notable Sikh personalities who Veerji was fond of and shared a great deal of love was Sant Baba Santokh Singh, Joti Saroop Wale.



He is known as Joti Saroop Wale because his *dhera* is in front of Gurdwara Sahib Jyoti Saroop,

which is where the two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh, Baba Fateh Singh and Baba Zorawar Singh were cremated.

During his final years, Veerji became particularly close to Sant Baba Santokh Singh Ji who is very highly regarded as a Bhramgiani amongst Sikhs who share into and who are knowledgeable about Sikh personalities. Veerji used to meet Sant Ji as often as in could in the last few years before his passing.



Gurdwaras Sahib Jyoti Saroop

In March 2006, Veerji inaugurated the premier show of **Shaheedan De Sartaj**, a religious film dedicated to the 400th martyrdom day of the fifth Guru of the Sikhs Shri Guru Arjan Dev Ji, in the auditorium of Shivalik Public School, Phase-VI, Mohali. Which was produced and directed by **Hardeep Singh**, from Mohali.

### Inspiration:

Veerji acted as an inspiration to thousands of Sikhs worldwide. He helped needy people irrespective of caste and creed. His melodious recitation of Gurbani Kirtan is being heard worldwide through the countless recordings that were done during his lifetime.

Those who knew him, knew that he was a tireless worker and one who was always thinking, talking and discussing about how to help the less fortunate, the underprivileged, the sick and the needy.

Lately he had become very concerned about the absence of Sikh individuals in their Sikhi saroop at high positions in the civil service and the beaucracy in India. He had a strong desire to correct this: by training and coaching, qualified candidates for the civil service examinations in India.

He was always pleased to see Sikhs in Sikhi saroop who were successful in business, in the professions or in the civil service.

He had a desire to create a "network" of such like minded individuals who could work

collectively for the panth.

There is not doubt that had Veerji made a few more trips to North America and Europe, he would have helped establish a form of networking amongst Sikh professionals from different countries. He took every



opportunity to mention the names of the people who impressed him so that the worldwide sangat got to know such individuals and recognised

their contributions.

He did not confine the gift of kirtan to himself but shared it with countless others. As a result of his inspiration, individuals from various town and cities began to sing kirtan and set up "Nishkaam" kirtani jathas, Gurshabad Parchaar Sahbas, and Gursikh Istri Satsang sabhas.

### 300<sup>th</sup> Gur ta Gaddi Celebrations

Veerji did his utmost during the various centennials that have



been celebrated by the Sikh panth. He did all that he could to spread and propagate the message of the Gurus as stated in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. He was extremely excited about the upcoming tercentenary celebrations of Gur ta Gaddi to be celebrated in remembrance of the 300<sup>th</sup> year of the consecration of GURU GRANTH SAHIB in 2008.

The tercentenary celebration of Gur-Ta-Gaddi to be celebrated is of great relevance to the Sikh Community. This involves the remembrance of the 300<sup>th</sup> year of the consecration of Shri. Guru Govind Singh Maharaj as eternal Guru of Sikh community by Guru Gobind Singhji. The event will also commemorate the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Parlok Gaman of Guru Gobind Singhji.

To commemorate this event, Veerji, with the assistance of Bhai Prithpal Singh, the President of Gurdwara Dukh Niwaran Sahib, Ludhiana, organized and participated in celebrations at Dukh Niwaran



S a h i b ,  
Ludhiana from  
September  
22<sup>nd</sup> 2006 to  
September 24<sup>th</sup>  
2006 (*just  
three weeks  
before his  
passing*).

T h i s  
s a m a g a m  
was titled “*Gurshabad Bibek Samagam*”. It was an occasion at which leading Sikh personalities and academics gathered and spoke on the main ideas and topics contained in the

Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Amongst others, the Head Granti of Sri Harmandir Sahib, Singh sahib Giani

Gurbachan Singh Ji spoke on the topic of “*Guru Granth and Guru Panth*”.

**Veerji’s passing:**

Veerji left for Sachkhand on October 14<sup>th</sup> 2006.

He suffered a heart attack when he was at Gurdwara Akal Ashram in Sohana. He was immediately taken to Shri Guru Harkrishan Charitable Hospital but doctors were unable to save his life.

Veerji’s body was kept in a mortuary in Fortis Hospital for a night and the cremation took place the next day, i.e. October 15<sup>th</sup> 2006.

In the morning the body was brought from the mortuary of the Fortis hospital to Veerji’s residence in Phase VII, Mohali and after rituals it was taken to the gurdwara premises. Kirtan and prayers continued at the gurdwara and thousands stood in long queues to have the last Darshan.



A 'shok' march left from from Gurdwara Gur Shabad Parkash Akal Ashram, Sohana at midday. It passed through Ambwala chowk, the Phase VII market, the PTL chowk and then to the cremation ground in Phase VI Mohali. Veerji's body was carried in a flower-bedecked tractor-trailer from the premises of the Gurdwara.

Devotees in large numbers accompanied the body in different vehicles and also gathered at some places along the route. Cold water was served to the sangat at different points on the route.



Although the cremation was scheduled for 1 pm, it got delayed by about three hours because of the rush of followers and other mourners. Kirtan was performed by Bhai Tejinder Singh Shimlewale and Bhai Amrik Singh Jakhmi at the cremation ground while the mourners waited for the

arrival of the body.



Amrik Singh Zakhmi

A huge number of mourners, who had been waiting for hours at the cremation ground, surged forward to have a glimpse of their beloved Veerji when the body reached there. They showered flower petals on the body.

A wreath, on behalf of the Punjab Chief Minister, was placed on the body by Mr A.S. Miglani, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mohali. Another wreath was placed on behalf of the Deputy Commissioner by the SDM, Mr Sandeep Hans.

### **Shardanjali samagams:**

After Veerji's passing, Shardanjali samagams to pay tributes to Veerji were held in various parts of the world. The main samagam was held at Gurdwara Akaal Ashram in Sohana on October

22<sup>nd</sup> 2006.

Among those who attended the bhog were Giani Joginder Singh Vedanti, Jathedar Akal Takht, Giani Tirlochan Singh Jathedar Keshgarh Sahib, Giani Balwant Singh Khalsa Jathedar Damdama Sahib, Giani Iqbal Singh Jathedar Patna Sahib.



The bhog ceremony was performed under the guidance of new Chairman of the trust Bhai Devinder Singh.



Veer Davinder Singh being honoured at the Shardanjali samagam

Bhai Devinder Singh concluded the ceremony with kirtan. He also addressed the gathering and told the sangat that he would follow the guidelines of 'Veerji' and will fulfill all his dreams.

Other personalities who performed kirtan on the occasion are Sant Anoop Singh Unewale, Bhai Harbans Singh Jagadhariwale, Bhai Devinder Singh Riar, Bhai Jaswant Singh, Bhai Tejinder Singh Simlawale, and Bhai Manjit Singh, Bhai Ravinder Singh, Bhai Balwinder Singh Rangila and Bhai Manpreet Singh Kanpur Wale.



*Bhai Gurmej Singh at the Shardanjali samagam*

Bhai Gurmej Singh, former Head Ragi of Sri Harminder Sahib did kirtan and sang the shabad "Gurmukh Sadey Jaan Awan Ghalleya".

Many prominent Sikh

personalities who were unable to attend the shardanjli have subsequently paid their respects and recorded their tributes which can be heard in mp3 format on [www.panthrattan.com](http://www.panthrattan.com).

Samagams were also held in England, Vancouver, B.C and at Toronto, Ontario.



A Rainsbhai Keertan, organised by Akhand Kirtani Jatha UK at Singh Sabha Gurdwara Sahib, ILFORD, on Saturday 21st October to

commemorate the Gurgaddi Divas Guru Granth Sahib Ji was also dedicated to Veerji.

In India Shardanjli samagams continue to be held at various cities including Ludhiana and Jalandhar.

Veerji was more than deserving of this award. No other Sikh during the current times even comes close to being able to

match what Veerji did and accomplished during his lifetime. He was a nishakaam kirtean and one who was anxious to spread the concept of Nishkaam kirtan.

He was unique in that despite his immense popularity he never had the prefix "baba" or "sant" to his name.



The Shardanjali samagam at Sohana

He was unique in that instead of constructing an endless number of Gurdwaras, he established and promoted charitable causes to help the less fortunate, the under-privileges the sick and the needy.

He had the foresight and desire to bring about change where it mattered most i.e. in the promotion of education and qualified Sikhs who could act as role models to the younger generation.

Veerji also had the foresight to

realise that it was necessary and important for him to appoint a



Prof Darshan Singh at the Shardan-jali samagam held for Veerji in Toronto at Dixie Gurdwaras Sahib on

successor during his lifetime – someone who could carry on with the seva. On December 14, 2003 Bhai Sahib, , while addressing a large gathering of *Sangat* announced the name of Bhai Devinder Singh Ji as his successor.



Sangat at the Shardanjali samagam held for Veerji at Sohana on October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2006

The choice of Davinder Singh provided some solace to the sangat in the knowledge that a noble and spiritual person had been personally handpicked by Veerji and that all the good work that Veerji had began will be carried on.

And After the demise of Bhai Sahib, Bhai Devinder Singh took over as Chairman, on Oct.17,2006, of Sri Guru Harkrishan Sahib (C ) Eye Hospital Trust (established in 1983) which runs Sri Guru Harkrishan Sahib Multi-Specialty and Eye Hospitals at Sohana (1995), Khanna (2003) and Sirhind (2003) under the auspices of Gurdwara Gur-Shabad Parkash Akal Ashram (1983) Sohana and was conferred the title of 'Veer Ji' by *Sangat* .

### Panth Rattan Award:

On 22nd October 2006 during the Shardanjali ceremony held at

Sohana, Jathedar **Avtar Singh Makkar**, President of the of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, announced the award of "Panthrattan" for Veerji.

The SGPC President also announced that the SGPC would cooperate in all respects to complete the projects started by Bhai Jasbir Singh Khalsa.

### Panthrattan award ceremony

On July 17th 2007, the Secretary of the SGPC sent a letter to Bibi Daljit Kaur inviting her to attend a formal ceremony for the presentation of the Panthrattan award.

The award was formally



presented at Sri Akal Takth

Sahib on August 4th 2007. It was presented to Daljit Kaur, widow of Bhai Jasbir Singh, by Jathedar, Akal Takht, Joginder Singh Vedanti, Balwant Singh Nandgarh, Jathedar, Takht Damdama Sahib, Giani Tarlochan Singh, Takht Kesgarh Sahib, and SGPC chief Avtar Singh at Akal

Takht here.

She was given a silver plate, Sri Sahib, siropa and a cheque for Rs 5 lakh.

In his speech at the award presentation ceremony, the President of the SGPC, Avtar Singh Makkar praised Bhai sahib for his selfless and dedicated service to humanity. Mr. Makkar said that Bhai Sahib had spent his entire life preaching Sikhism and performing seva. It was in



recognition of the noble work of this great Gursikh that the SGPC had decided to confer the award of Panthrattan on him.

Giani Joginder Singh Vedanti, the Jathedar of the Akal Takht said his speech that Bhai Sahib was an illustrious example of a person who was immersed in Shabad Guru. He was one with the Guru and had spent his entire life trying

to connect the sangat to the Guru. Bhai Sahib's kirtan was blissful and he spread the fragrance of his kirtan throughout his life. Jathedar Vedanti mentioned that Bhai Sahib had carried out all his work without any financial expectation and not for any monetary gain.

Bhai sahib's whole family including



his two sons, Jagmohan Singh and Jatinder Mohan Singh were also presented with siropaos.

Prior to the formal presentation of the award, Bhai Davinder Singh Ji of Sohana and Bhai Baldev Singh sang Gurbani kirtan at the ceremony.

Others present at the award ceremony included Jathedar Singh Sahib Tarlochan Singh (of *Keshgarh Sahib*), Giani Balwant Singh Nandgarh (Jathedar of *Takht Sri Damdama Sahib, Talwandi Sabo*), Giani Gurbachan

Singh (*Head Granthi of Sri Darbar Sahib*), Giani Mohan Singh (*Additional Head Granthi of Sri Darbar Sahib*), Singh Sahib Mal Singh, Sahib Jaswinder Singh, Sukhdev Singh Bhaur (*Secretary of SGPC*), Rajinder Singh Mehta, Suba Singh Dubwala (*member of SGPC*), Amrik Singh Shahpur Goriyan, Karnail Singh Panjoli, Hardalbir Singh Shah (*Member of Dharam Parchar Committee*), Inderjit Singh Bittu (*Nishkaam Sevak Jatha, U.K.*), Dr. Jasbir Singh Sabar, Harbeant Singh, Dalmegh Singh, Waryam Singh, Roop Singh (*Additional Secretary, SGPC*), Joginder Singh Adliwal, Ranvir Singh, Daljit Singh (*Assistant Secretary*), Satbir Singh, Mahinder Singh, Harbhajan Singh (*Manager of Sri Darbar Sahib*), as well as representatives from various other Sikh organisations.

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