

## Tributes to WWI Sikh Soldiers on Remembrance (Armistice) Day

Never forget Sikh sacrifices for Europe's freedom



Vergeet nooit de Sikh opoffering voor Europas Vrijheid

On Armistice Day on 11 November hundreds of Sikhs from Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Germany and the UK will gather in the Belgian town of Ypres (Ieper) to commemorate the sacrifices of Sikh soldiers who fell in the First World War. Sikhs will participate in the 'poppy parade', a yearly ceremonial walk thousands from the centre of Ypres up to the Menen Gate, where the names of numerous Sikhs who sacrificed their lives are individually listed. Sikhs will walk behind a large banner with the image shown here to get across an important message. The Last Post – the traditional (British) salute to the fallen warrior – that is sounded every evening under the Menen Gate, a British memorial to commemorate all soldiers who fell around Ypres, will be heard at 11am. Sikh representatives from across Europe will then lay wreaths under the Menen Gate and pay tribute to Sikhs who sacrificed their lives so the people of Europe could live in freedom. Thousands of postcards will be distributed to highlight the importance of the Sikh identity. The postcards will read: 'Around 80,000 Sikh troops fought in Belgium and France during World War I. More than one quarter of these soldiers became casualties. In the first battle of Ypres in Flanders in 1914 a platoon of Sikhs died fighting to the last man. The people of a free Europe should never forget the contribution and bravery of Sikh soldiers during World War 1. Sikhs recognise their sacrifices as an important part of their modern history. The Sikhs 'European' past and sacrifices for the freedom and liberation of Europe needs much greater exposure and proper recognition as part of the existing commemorations of the fallen. During these challenging times the distinct Sikh identity and their tradition as fighters for freedom depicted by those courageous Sikh soldiers who sacrificed their lives for our freedom should be promoted and celebrated across Europe. The visible Sikh identity is fundamental to the way of life and very existence of a Sikh and should be protected and given the highest respect by European governments and institutions.' In the two world wars **83,000 turban wearing Sikh soldiers** sacrificed their lives and a further 109,045 were wounded for Europe's freedom. Sikhs from across Europe are being urged to take part in the weekend of activities aimed at raising awareness of the Sikh identity and history. Sikhs in Belgium have arranged for a large European-wide tribute to the Sikh Nation's martyrs on Sunday 12 November at Gurdwara Sangat Sahib, Sint Truiden, Belgium.

### GURPURABS & PROGRAMME Oct. - Nov. 2017

Parkash Guru Ram Dass Sahib Ji	Oct 07, 2017
Gurgaddi Guru Harkrishan Sahib Ji	Oct 07, 2017
Joti Jot Guru Har Rai Sahib Ji	Oct 07, 2017
Bandi Chhod Diwas	Oct 07, 2017
Gurgaddi Guru Granth Sahib Ji	Oct 07, 2017
Joti Jot Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji	Oct 07, 2017
Parkash Guru Nanak Dev Sahib Ji	Nov 15, 2017
Gurgaddi Guru Gobind Singh Sahib Ji	Nov 15, 2017
Shahidi Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib Ji	Nov 15, 2017

Monthly Youth Prog: First Friday of the month held at Gurdwara Sahib from 6-8 PM

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# Nit Chardi Kala

NEWSLETTER OF SIKH GURUDWARA PERTH

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## Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib (Delhi)

On 24 Nov. 1675, it was here at Chandni Chowk Delhi that Guru Tegh Bahadar was beheaded and three of his devout disciples tortured to death. Guruji undertook the supreme sacrifice for the protection of the most fundamental of human rights - the right of a person to freely practice his or her religion without interference or hindrance. In the modern times we tend to take this freedom for granted – but in 1675, millions of people were denied this basic right. To give ones life for a cause is a difficult and highly challenging undertaking. Many in past human history have given their lives for their own personal reason; however, what is astonishing in the case of the Guru Teg Bahadur is the fact that he was not protecting the right of the Sikhs to practise their religion but instead the rights of the Hindus.

**SIKH GURDWARA PERTH, 10 Cheltenham St. Bennett Springs WA**

## THE ACCOUNT OF GURU NANAK'S JOURNEY TO ARABIA

(An eyewitness account based on the diary of an Arabic writer Taajudin Naqshabandhi who accompanied Guruji - Punjabi Book "*Babe Nanak di Baghdad Pheri*" by Kunwarajit Singh)

Khwaja Jainul Abdin, the author of *Tarikhe Arab*, wrote the first-person account of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Arabian journey. In his Arabic book, he writes, "I was with Guru Nanak Dev Ji when Guru Ji met Qazi (an Islamic religious judge) Rukn-ud-din." As they came face-to-face, Rukn-ud-din offered his Salam, and the Guru replied, "*Sat Shri Akal, Gurbar Akal*" (The Lord immortal is the sole truth; the all-powerful timeless God). Rukn-ud-din asked, "*Fala Alla Mazahbu,*" meaning "which religion do you belong to?" The response was, "*Abdulla Allah La Mazahabu,*" meaning "I am God's servant; I have no religion." The whole day passed in questions and answers. There were three hundred and sixty questions in total. About the ban on singing in Islam, the Guru said: "it is written in Hadees that your Prophet Mohammed Sahib went to a wedding in the Quresh tribe where women were singing. Seeing Hazrat Mohammad, they stopped singing folk songs and started singing hymns. Mohammad Sahib Ji said they should sing folk songs and God will bestow respect on them." Stumped, Rukn-ud-din said, "*ya rabi tahroo fi al kabool-ul rab,*" meaning "you have been sent to me by God; please bless me with the ability to recognize." Rukn-ud-din then argued that, in Islam, it is acceptable to cut hair, but that the Guru keeps his hair uncut. In response, the Guru said, "this is not correct. Even your Quran does not allow this." Rukn-ud-din was taken aback, and asked, "do I go against what the Quran says? Do you mean, 'I read the Quran, but don't understand it?' Please explain." Then, Guru Ji said to refer to paragraph two Surat Badar Raku 24 Ayat 195 (2\* The translator found the reference in question in Ayat 196 instead of 195), where it is specified that cutting hair is prohibited for the ones who go to the Hajj and wish to lead a spiritual life. On the issue of whether or not God lives in Kaaba, the Guru said: "even the Quran challenges the notion of considering Kaaba as God's abode. The God addressed Mohammad and said '*Nakhan Akarth Wa Allahay Min Habul Vareed,*' meaning, 'I am closer to every human than his own jugular.'" Hearing this, the audience called out, "*Marhaba! Labank!! Zazak Hum Allah Tala,*" meaning, amazing! We surrender in your service. May God bless you with boon and goodness." Over the next days, the Guru continued daily services of *kirtan* (singing God's praises) and sermons. His services blissfully drew people who were in search of God and truth. People would bring milk, dates, and honey as offerings, which were then distributed amongst the congregation. One day, the congregation requested guidance for salvation so that their human wanderings could end. According to the author, Jainul Abdin, Guru Nanak Dev Ji sang the following *shabad* (hymn) in *raag* (melody) Tilang, page 721 SGGS:

*Yak araj guftam pes to dar gos kun kartar.*

I offer this one prayer to You; please listen to it, O Creator Lord

*Hakā Kabīr karīm tū be aib parvardagār. ||1||*

(You are true, great, merciful, and faultless, O Cherisher Lord. ||1||)

*Dunā mukāme fānī tēhkīk dil dānī.*

The world is a transitory place of mortality – I know this in my mind.

*Mam sar mūe ajrāl girafteh dil hech na dānī. ||1|| rahāo. (Yet, I do not realize in my mind that the Messenger of Death has caught me by the hair on my head. ||1||Pause||*

*Jan pisar padar biradarān kas nes dastangir. (When the messenger will take my soul] not my spouse, children, parents, or siblings will be there to hold my hand.*

*khīr biatam kas na dārad chūn savad takbīr. ||2|| (And when at last I fall, and the time of my last prayer will come, there shall be no one to rescue me. ||2||*

*Sab roj gastam dar havā kardem badī khīāl.*

Night and day, I wandered around in greed, contemplating evil schemes.

*Gāhe na nekī kār kardam mam t'n chīnī ahvāl. ||3||*

I never did good deeds; this is my condition. ||3||

*Badbakhāt ham cho bakhīl gāfil benajar bebāk.*

I am unfortunate, miserly, negligent, shameless and without the Fear of God.

*Nānak bugoyad jan turā tere chākrān pā khāk. ||4||1||*

Says Nanak, I am Your humble servant, may I become the dust of the feet of Your slaves

Eventually, it came time for Nanak *Shah Fakir* (\*3- *Shah Fakir* is a Muslim title. In India and abroad, Muslims regarded Nanak as their own and addressed him using Muslim titles.) to leave, and the congregation asked for parting words. The Lord Nanak said, "may God be in your mind always; meditate on Him. Your devotion has been accepted in the Guru's house." In this gathering, Hajji Gul Mohammad, Shiekhe-Arab Khawaja Jainul Abdin, the chief of the Quresh tribe, Aban Aswad, and the chief of the Basu tribe were all present. The news that Rukn-ud-din had accepted Nanak Shah as his spiritual guide spread like wildfire in Mecca (\*4 - Guru Nanak's meeting with *Qazi* Rukn-ud-din is also mentioned in the Guru's biography, accredited to Bhai Bala.) This meeting is narrated by the Arabic author in 300 pages. He further writes that Rukn-ud-din came into contact with the Creator on a Friday evening in 917 *Hijri* (\*5- *Hijri* is the Islamic calendar linked to Prophet Mohammad. 917 *Hijri* corresponds to 1511 AD.) Only the *qazi* knows the mystery of this contact. Lord Nanak presented the big toe of his feet to touch the initiation water (\*6- Before the Tenth Guru started the modern-day tradition of preparing Amrit (the Sikh initiation nectar) using a double edged sword, the initiation Amrit used to be created by Gurus as per the ancient Indian tradition of touching the water with their toe) but the *qazi* sucked Guru Nanak's toe in his mouth before washing it in water. The *qazi* went into a trance. I stepped forward to wake him up, but Lord Nanak stopped me and said, "let him enjoy the bliss." After Guru Nanak's departure, Rukn-ud-din, who was imbued in God's love, became aloof, immersing himself in *simran* (the constant remembrance of God). He would spend his time in solitude, in the caverns of mountains. Amir (Shah) of Mecca received word that Rukn-ud-din had adopted Nanak as his *murshid* (spiritual guide), and the Mullahs issued a *fatwa*, branding Rukn-ud-din a *kafir* (non-believer). Following *fatwas* were read:

1. He [Rukn-ud-din] is a kafir, and his *murshid*, Nanak Shah, is also a kafir.

2. Give him thirty lashes and then lock him in a box without food for eleven days.

3. Drive his kin from the country( Rukn-ud-din's descendants still live around the Tirah Mountains in Afghanistan) 4. Confiscate all his wealth 5. Paint his face black and then walk him through the streets 6. Hang him upside down. 7 Bury him up to his neck in sand, and then stone him to death. - Rukn-ud-din was hauled from the mountains and in summer heat, Rukn-ud-din underwent all punishments undeterred. When they removed him from a box after eleven days, people could hear God's name from every pore of his body. Finally, after twenty-two days, the seventh *fatwa* of burying in sand and stoning approached. Rukn-ud-din was carefree in eternal bliss and *simran*. There was no sign of sadness in him. At the end, the Shah of Mecca sent for a pen and ink so that Rukn-ud-din's last words could be documented. Rukn-ud-din came out of his trance and remembered the words of his guru: "share with others what you experience." There could have been no better time for this; the masses of Mecca had gathered for the stoning. In front of everybody he stated his last testament: "*Rubanian khatiba el imame hazrat Nanak ma, akallamehu ina feehay musle mun.*" This meant that "my religion and my god is Guru Nanak. He brings the greatest sacred message and the book. I believe in him. If you wish for redemption, then seek Nanak's shelter. Whoever reflects on this, will go to heaven." Upon saying this, he left his body. Those who had brought stones to hit him fell on his feet. Many in the crowd turned their faith to Nanak. Even to this day, the people of Badh tribe, who are lion-hearted, and who are descendants of Nanak's devotees, still live in Mecca and Baitul Makadas. As Sikhs, they do not cut their hair.

