

The Sikh Greetings

ਬੋਲੇ ਸੋ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਸਤਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ

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(Picture of two baptized Sikhs greeting each other)

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ਨੋਟ:- ਇਹ ਕਿਤਾਬਚਾ ਮੁਫਤ ਹੈ । ਆਪ ਪੜ੍ਹੋ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਉ। ਡਾਕ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕਿਤਾਬਚਾ ਮੰਗਵਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸੱਜਣ 9 x 4 ਇੰਚ ਦੇ ਲਫਾਫੇ ਤੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਐਡਰੈਸ ਲਿਖ ਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਟਿਕਟ ਲਾਕੇ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਪਤਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਫਤ ਮੰਗਵਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ ।

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## FORWARD

ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਵਧ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਨਾਮ ਪਰਚਲਤ ਹਨ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ “ਪੈਰੀ ਪੈਣਾ”, “ਨਮਸਤੇ”, “ਗੁੱਡ ਮਾਰਨਿੰਗ”, “ਸਲਾਮ” ਆਦਿਕ। ਇਹ ਜਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਹਨ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ “ਪੈਰੀ ਪੈਣਾ” ਤੇ “ਨਮਸਤੇ ” ਜਾਂ ਸ਼ੁਭ ਇੱਛਾਵਾਂ ਹਨ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ “ਗੁੱਡ ਮਾਰਨਿੰਗ” (ਤੇਰੀ ਸਵੇਰ ਚੰਗੀ ਲੰਘੇ) ਅਤੇ “ਸਲਾਮ” (ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਲਾਮਤ ਰਹੋ)। ਕੇਵਲ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹੀ ਨਿਆਰਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਨਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ ਦਾ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਹੈ ਸਗੋਂ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਜੈਕਾਰਾ ਵੀ ਨਿੱਜੀ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਜਾਂ ਸ਼ੁਭ ਇੱਛਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਿਰਾਧਾਰ ਛਿਨ ਭੰਗਰ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਉੱਠ ਕੇ ਗੱਜ ਵੱਜ ਕੇ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਜਿੱਤ ਦਾ ਸਾਰਵਜਨਕ ਐਲਾਨ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ “ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪਰਗਟਿਉ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮ ਕੀ ਮੌਜ” ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਿਵਾਜਿਆ ਸੰਤ ਸਪਾਹੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਹਰ ਭਾਵਨਾ, ਹਰ ਉਦਗਾਰ, ਹਰ ਵਿਜੇ ਉਸ ਸਰਬ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਮਾਨ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਜਾਗਣ ਵੇਲੇ, ਸੌਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਸਦਾ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਦਾ ਰਿਣੀ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਭੁਲਾ ਦੇਣ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਮੌਤ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਹੈ। ਆਪ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਮੰਗਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਹਰ ਮਿਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਦਵਾਉਂਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਦੁੱਖ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਉਹੋ ਹੀ ਫਤਹਿ ਬੁਲਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸੁਖ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੁਲਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਫਤਹਿ ਇਕ ਪਰਣ ਹੈ, ਇਨਸਾਫ ਦਾ ਢੰਡੋਰਾ ਹੈ।

ਕਈ ਸੱਜਣ ਆਖ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਬੁਲਾਉਣਾ ਹੀ ਪਰਯੋਜਨ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਫੇਰ ਐਨੀ ਲੰਮੀ ਫਤਹਿ ਦੀ ਕੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ? ਇਸੇ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਉੱਤਰ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਇਹ ਛੋਟਾ ਜਿਹਾ ਕਿਤਾਬਚਾ। ਸਾਡੇ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਵੀਰਾਂ ਭੈਣਾਂ ਔਰ ਖਾਸ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਤੋਂ ਅਣਜਾਣ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੇ ਜੈਕਾਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਫਤਹਿ ਦਾ ਮਹਾਤਮ ਦੱਸਣ ਲਈ ਮੇਰੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਮਿੱਤਰ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਗੁਰਬਚਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿੱਧੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਯੂ-ਕੇ ਦੇ ਡਾਕਟਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਤੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਭਾਸ਼ਣ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਛਾਪ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ।

ਸਰਦਾਰ ਗੁਰਬਚਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸਾਰਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਲਈ ਹੀ ਅਰਪਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ੧੯੬੯ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਮਿਸ਼ਨਰੀ ਸੋਸਾਇਟੀ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਕਰਨ ਉਪ੍ਰੰਤ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਕਿਤਾਬਾਂ ਛਾਪੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੱਖ ਰੱਖ ਕੇ ਮੁਫਤ ਹੀ ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੰਡ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਹੁਣ ਤਕ ਇਹ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਮਿਸ਼ਨਰੀ ਸੋਸਾਇਟੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਹੀ ਛਾਪੀਆਂ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਪਰੰਤੂ

ਹੁਣ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਆਗਿਆ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਲਿਖਤੀ ਆਗਿਆਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਭਾ ਸੋਸਾਇਟੀ ਇਹ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਛਾਪ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਿਮਤ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਸਹਿਯੋਗੀ ਬਣ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ । ਅਰਦਾਸ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਲਮ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਉਦਮ, ਦਲੇਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਘਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਲੰਮੀ ਉਮਰ ਬਖਸ਼ੇ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਇਹ ਇਸੇ ਤਰਾਂ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹਿਣ। ਸਰਦਾਰ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨਾ “ਸੇਵਕ ਕਉ ਸਾਵਾ ਬਨ ਆਈ” ਹੀ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਗੋਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਵਰਗੇ ਢਿਲੜ ਮਿੱਤਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਸੇਵਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਜੋੜ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ । ਇਹ ਹਥਲਾ ਕਿਤਾਬਚਾ, ਜੋ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਇੱਕ ਭਾਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਹੈ, ਅਸੀਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਬੋਰਡ ਗ੍ਰੇਵਜੈਂਡ ਵਲੋਂ ਛਾਪਣ ਦਾ ਮਾਣ ਅਤੇ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਲੈ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ ।

ਦਾਸ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਬੋਰਡ ਦੇ ਸਮੂਹ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਹਾਰਦਿਕ ਧੰਨਵਾਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਕਿਤਾਬਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਛਪਵਾਕੇ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੰਡਣ ਲਈ ਨਾਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਨਾ ਹੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ ਸਗੋਂ ਮਾਇਕ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਵੀ ਪਾਇਆ ਹੈ । ਜੇ ਕਰ ਬੋਰਡ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਪਾਸੋਂ ਇਸੇ ਤਰਾਂ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਬੋਰਡ ਵਲੋਂ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਲਿਖਵਾ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਕਾਰਜ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਫੁੱਲਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ ।

ਮੈਂ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਭਵਨ ਮੰਡੀ ਮੁਲਾਂਪੁਰ ਦੇ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਗੁਰਮੇਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੁਹਿਰਦ ਸਾਥੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਧੰਨਵਾਦੀ ਹਾਂ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਉਦਮ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਸੁਗਾਤ ਛਪਵਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ । ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਬੋਰਡ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦਾ ਮੁਦਈ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵੱਡੀਆਂ ਵੱਡੀਆਂ ਬਿਲਡਿੰਗਾਂ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਸੋਨੇ ਕੇ ਕਲਸ ਲਾਉਣ ਜਾਂ ਸਾਧਾਂ ਸੰਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਰੋਪਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਵਾਜਣ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਕੌਮ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਵੱਲ ਵੱਧ ਤੇ ਵੱਧ ਧਿਆਨ ਦੇਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ । ਜਿਸ ਕੌਮ ਦੀ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਨੀਂਹ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਪੱਕੇ ਬੰਕ ਦੁਆਰੇ ਵੀ ਢਹਿ ਢੇਰੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ । ਕਾਸ਼ ਸਾਡੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਘਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਦਾਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਵੀ ਚੇਤਨ ਹੋਕੇ ਇਸ ਅਤੀ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਵਿਚ ਜੁਟੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ।

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## INTRODUCTION

### Baisakhi

India is known as the country of festivals and fairs. One such festival is Baiskhai. It has been celebrated in India for centuries. The first reference to it is found in the writings of the Chinese traveller Fahien who visited India in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. Fahien writes as follows:-

*“ Every year on the 8<sup>th</sup> of the second month (ਬਸਾਖੀ) they celebrate a procession of images. They make four-wheeled cart and on it erect a structure of five stories by means of bamboos tied together. On four sides are niches with a Budha seated in each and a Bodhi Satva (ਅਗੋਂ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਬੁੱਧ) standing in attendance on him. There may be twenty carts all grand and imposing but each one different from the others. Then on the great day both monks and lay people came together with singers and musicians making their devotions in flowers and incense. This goes on for two nights, with lights burning and music playing all through the nights. Wealthy families dispense charities and give medicines to the poor and the disabled.”*

It appears that this grand celebration, which according to Fahien, was the main festival of the Indians, had nearly ceased after the destruction of the centres of Buddhism and their flight from India. However there is evidence that fairs were held in the first fortnight of Baisakh in various Hindu temples where the local Brahmins were offered barley and grains from the crops about to be harvested. In return the Brahmin priests offered prayers to the deities to guard the farmer's crops against famine, floods, locusts and draughts and to help yield crops and plenty of milk.

We find references in the Sikh history to the effect that Guru Amar Das, the third Guru of the Sikhs weaned away his followers from the Hindus and prohibited them from assembling at the

Hindu places of worship. Instead he required the Sikhs to visit Goindwal once a year on the birthday of Guru Nanak and Guru Angad Dev which fell in the month of Baisakh. Prayers were held daily which usually lasted for days. Later the whole month of Baisakh became sacred for the Sikhs because the birthday of Guru Arjan Dev also fell in the same month. The veteran Panjabi poet Bhai Gurdas mentions this as follows, “All Sikh homes turn into holy places and resound with the Guru’s word in Baisakh.” (ਹੋਵੇ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਸਦਾ ਵਸੋਆ)

In the time of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru, the Sikhs also celebrated the birthday of Guru Tegh Bahadur and the assumption of Guruship by the third Guru and the ninth Guru, which fell in the same month. Once again it was in the month of Baisakh 1699 that Guru Gobind Singh laid the foundation of the Khalsa brotherhood, which is usually celebrated every year on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April (Once every 36 years it falls on the 14<sup>th</sup> April)

The Khalsa created by Guru Gobind Singh had its own flag, religious book, slogans, army discipline and code of conduct established by the Guru. Since the Khalsa brotherhood was an army of revolutionary saint-soldiers, it had to have a slogan inculcating a motto. Guru Nanak had already given this slogan to his followers. Whenever and wherever the Sikhs met they always greeted each other by saying *Sat Kartar*. In order to make it resound as a response to exhortation it had to rhyme with the commanding voice of the leader. The Guru therefore changed the word *Kartar* to *Sri Akal*. The meaning remained the same (both *Kartar* and *Sri Akal* mean *God*) but the slogan (known as *Jaikara ਜੈਕਾਰਾ*) now on became, “**Jo Bole so Nihal, Sat Sri Akal.**” In the following pages an attempt has been made to understand the meaning of this slogan.

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## The Sikh greetings

*Translation of the speech delivered in Panjabi at the annual General meeting of Sikh Doctors' and Dentists' Association of U.K held at Hinckley (Leicestershire) on 7.4.2001.*

There are three Sikh salutations or greetings. Two of them '**Sat Sri Akal**' and '**Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh**' are the forms of greeting used when the Sikhs meet each other. Both parties say the same words. The third greeting is called a '**Jaikara**' (Cheer of victory) which is used in congregation. All three have the same meaning but the '**Jaikara**' is different in that the first part of it is spoken by one person and the other part is spoken by all the congregation. For example At the end of a congregational prayer a dominant voice shouts, "**Jo bole so Nihal**" and the congregation responds loudly "**Sat Sri Akal**". The '**Jaikara**', as we shall see later, is not simply a traditional greeting, it is a resolute self-imposed pious duty

### What does the Sikh-greeting mean?

The key to understanding the meanings of the Sikh greetings lies in understanding the word **Bole** (pronounced as '*boley*'). The actual words of the Sikh Jaikara used to be **Jo Bole So Nihal, Sat Sri Akal**. These days the word **Jo** is usually omitted. Although this omission does not alter the meanings, it is nevertheless very important in understanding the concept. The Panjabi word **Jo** means 'whoever' and the word **Bole** means 'speaks, answers or responds.' A very common and oft-used domestic phrase in Panjabi is "**Jo Bole, Kunda Khole**" ਜੋ ਬੋਲੇ ਕੁੰਡਾ ਖੋਲੇ (he/she, who answers the call, must open the door). Thus "**Jo Bole So Nihal**" means 'he/she who responds will be blessed. It is in the form of an invitation or a challenge to affirm collective faith.

In order to clarify the meaning of "**Jo Bole So Nihal**" and that of answering it, let us take a hypothetical situation. Suppose it is

pitch dark and a ruffian, armed to the teeth attacks an unaccompanied, unarmed woman. The helpless victim raises a hue and cry calling for help. In this situation he who (**Jo**) **challenge** the scoundrel (**Bole**), rushes forward for her rescue and caring little for his own life invites trouble, has answered the call (Bole- has responded). He is the **Khalsa**. He is the one who dived into the tempestuous sea for the sake of establishing **Sat Sri Akal**. He is the man who scores a point in the sum total of his righteous achievements towards a glorious goal (**Nihal**). He is the one who cannot resist holding his life on the palm of his hand and showing grit and resolve in the face of dangerous situations to redeem his pledge of **Sat Sri Akal**. Since the pledge is taken voluntarily, the Sikh cannot wriggle out of his self-pledged duty. It is for such men that the Holy Quran says, “ Is he not the more worthy, who answereth the oppressed when they cry to him, and taketh off their ills”(Sura The Ant xxvii-62). It is for such men that the Guru said, “ ਜੇ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੋਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ, ਸਿਰ ਧਰ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ, ਇਤ ਮਾਰਗ ਪੈਰ ਧ੍ਰਿਜੈ ਸਿਰ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਾਣ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ” (If you crave for the love of human service, come to me with your head on the palm of your hand. Whoever follows this path must make sure that he/she will lay down his /her life but will not flinch from doing good)

**Bole So Nihal** is a call to duty, a call to do something, a challenge to meet a need, an exhortation to rise up and be counted. In response to this the congregation or the Sikh gathering answers **Sat Sri Akal**. The word **Sat** means ‘truth’ and the words **Sri Akal** mean ‘The eternal Lord.’ **Sat Sri Akal**, therefore, means ‘**restore, establish or bring about the truth and justice of the eternal Lord**’. The whole slogan is, therefore, in the form of an oath administered by the Leader, the priest or one Sikh to the other Sikhs. The administrator casts a challenge aloud and says, “He who responds will be blessed” and the congregation responds by affirming “ We will work for establishing the truth of the Lord.” More precisely the administrator calls the assembled Sikhs to respond if they are prepared to establish the kingdom of God at the cost of their lives and the congregated Sikhs full-throatedly

respond that they will determinedly work for establishing the true kingdom of God. 'Jo Bole So Nihal' is a replay of the call of Guru Gobind Singh at the time of founding the Order of the Khalsa in 1699 when he repeated this call five times. The response of "Sat Sri Akal" is the replay of the response given by the Guru's five beloved ones who offered their heads at His call. The important condition attached to the Jaikara is that it must be for **Sat Sri Akal** (Thy Kingdom come – Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh). The Jaikara cannot be used for personal aggrandizement or self-interest.

**Waheguru ji Ka Khalsa** means 'the Khalsa army belongs to God' and **Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh** means 'The victory of Khalsa in establishing righteousness is dedicated to God.' Thus every time the Sikhs greet each other or respond to a 'Jaikara', they give a pledge to their Guru through the administrator that they will always work for God and truth and when they achieve the results they will not claim any credit for it. Their achievement will be God's achievement. The response **Sat Sri Akal** is, therefore an affirmation of a commitment. In making this commitment the Sikh is not to feel that he /she is doing something on his/her own but to say, "ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਮਤ ਦੇਵੈ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਹਰਿ ਆਪੇ ਬੋਲ ਬੋਲਾਵੈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੨੨੦)" (The Lord Himself bestows understanding and He Himself exhorts the Sikh to respond ਬੋਲ ਬੁਲਾਵੈ). Nay the Sikh even goes a step further and repeats, "ਹਰਿ ਆਪ ਬੁਲਾਵੈ ਆਪੇ ਬੋਲੇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੩੫)" (The Lord Himself cajoles and He Himself responds). A Sikh is thus only an instrument of righteousness in the hands of the Master.

### **The aim: -**

Religious preceptors have been trying to preach the establishment of peace, amity, good will, justice, and fair play and the end of economic, political, social, and other forms of discrimination for centuries. The Christians pray and say, "**Thy kingdom come**". The Holy Bible says, "The righteous shall inherit the land and

dwell therein for ever (Book of Psalms xxxvii 2-31). The Hindus call such an era as **Ram Raj**. The Sikhs call it the regime of **Sat Sri Akal** wherein the Ultimate Truth reigns. **Thy kingdom, Ram Raj or Sat Sri Akal** are the expressions of a desire pulsating in every heart. The World is waiting for it. The Muslims believe that a day will come when Prophet Muhammad will raise the dead from their graves and establish such a kingdom of God. Most other religions also believe that an agent of God or a prophet would at some unspecified time come and do the job but the Sikhs believe that the true followers of the Lord (the Khalsa) must strive to bring about that divine state on this earth. This must be done here and now instead of waiting for some mythical deity to come and do it. It should be understood clearly that the Templers in Christianity and the Mujahid in Islam do not aim for the creation of God's Kingdom. They simply work for establishing the suzerainty of their respective religions. The Sikhs are particularly instructed not to fall in this trap. They are instructed to establish the Kingdom of God (ਸਤਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ) for all people irrespective of caste, colour, creed or country. Good of all (ਸਰਬਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ) is prominently mentioned in the daily prayer of the Sikhs and is a precondition for the Jaikara.

### **The Sikhs and Singhs:-**

From times immemorial the thought has vexed the minds of many a philosophers as to the qualifications of an ideal man or woman. The Hindu goddess with eight arms is a pictorial representation of an idea that such a man or woman should have eight qualities. The book in the hand of the goddess represents knowledge and the sword represents power and so on. It is also notable that the goddess rides a tiger. He who rides a tiger cannot dismount. An ideal person is therefore wedded to his ideal for life.

The Holy Bible says, "*The law of God is in his heart, none of his steps shall slide*" (Book of Psalms).

The Holy Quran says, “He may bring forth those who believe and do righteous deeds from the shadows into the light. Whoever believes in God and does righteousness shall be admitted to the gardens underneath which rivers flow. Therein they shall dwell forever and ever” (Quran LXV-106)

In India the first serious thinkers about these mystical ideal human beings were the Buddhists. They called the ideal man “A Sikh” or a “Singh” and listed his qualities in detail. It is beyond this essay to discuss Buddhist scripture in any reasonable detail but we give here quotations from the Buddhist scriptures to clarify the point.

**Sikh:** “Sikho pathwin Wuja asthi yamlokam cha ima sadevkam  
Sikho dhampadam sudeshtam kushlo pupham iva pachasti”  
(Dhampadam)

(The Sikh shall be the victor in the race of life, the path of which is strewn with evil and suffering. The Sikh shall achieve life everlasting and thus garner the flowers of life on earth)

**Singh:** In Anugutra Nikaya (V. 32-33) the monks ask about the attributes of a ‘Singh’ and the reply is recorded as follows:

“As for the word Singh; O monks, that is a term for a truth finder (*Tathagat*), a perfected one (*Puranprusha*), a fully awakened one (*Buddha*), for as much as he preaches dharma publicly; this is his lion’s roar (*Sinhanada*)

When Guru Gobind Singh wrote “*Ab Rachha Meri tum karo, Sikh Ubar Asikh sangharo*”, (Now shield me Lord. Glorify the Sikhs and defeat the non-Sikhs), he was not talking simply of Sikhs in terms of those who are born in the Sikh families. He was talking about the ideal persons as described in the above two quotations from the sacred Buddhist scriptures. He was perhaps the first person to have succeeded in creating the ideal man (**Khalsa**.) envisioned by the Indian sages. For his **Sinhnada** (the lion’s roar), Guru Gobind Singh prescribed **Bole So Nihal, Sat Sri**

**Akal.** The word ‘Singh’ got permanently attached to the ideal man of the Guru’s concept and became his proud appellation. The way Guru Gobind Singh moulded his Khalsa with his holy touch from the downtrodden, bewildered, perplexed and soul-stricken myriads is now a byword. Thus the Khalsa created by Guru Gobind Singh is not a muddle-headed revolutionary but a disciplined member of the brotherhood of saint-soldiers with qualities of head and heart, dedicated to the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth (**Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh- Dharma or righteousness**). It is for this reason that the Khalsa has to take a vow of Sat Sri Akal and to remember it every time he/she meets another Khalsa. The Khalsa takes this vow every morning, tries to follow it during his/her active life throughout the day and in the evening apologizes for any transgressions and repeats the vow once again before retiring to bed.

The Khalsa is instructed to develop as many good and pious qualities as he can. It is for this that the Khalsa keeps up studies of the Guru Granth Sahib, which raises his spirits high and helps increase his/her spiritual acumen. On the physical plane the following are the most important instructions out of the many enunciated for the Khalsa by the illustrious Guru.

1. The Khalsa has to pray for and involve in pious deeds that help humanity. He repeats, “ਦੇਹ ਸਿਵਾ ਬਰ ਮੋਹਿ ਇਹੈ ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮਣ ਤੇ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਨਾ ਟਰੋ” (O God, grant me the boon that I may never flinch from *righteous deeds*). The Khalsa has to rush to every place where human values are on the decline or where there is obstruction in the way of the establishment of God’s Kingdom of Truth and Justice.
2. The Khalsa must always remain in high spirits (ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ). Even one Sikh is asked to consider himself as equal to One Lakh (100,000). At the time of selecting the five Pyaras, who formed the nucleus of the Khalsa army, the Guru is reported to have said, “ਚਿਤੀਓਂ ਸੇ ਮੈਂ ਬਾਜ਼ ਤੁਝਾਉਂ ਤਬੈ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਮ ਕਹਾਉਂ” (I

will make the meek sparrows hunt the hawks and only then would I consider myself vindicated).

3. The Khalsa may suffer losses and pass through trials and tribulations but not even for a second would the Khalsa accept defeat. The Guru says, “ਮੁਕਤੀ ਮਹਾਂ ਸੁਖ ਗੁਰ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਵਿਚਾਰ, ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਕਦੇ ਨਾ ਆਵੇ ਹਾਰ” (The God-orientated people seek liberation and supreme bliss in the Guru’s word and never accept defeat)
4. The service of the Khalsa must be selfless (ਨਿਸ਼ਕਾਮ). The Khalsa is not to expect the fruits of *Kalpabrikhsha* (of Hindu mythology) or the **Huirs** of retiring eyes (of Muslim theology) as a reward. He repeats “ਅਵਰ ਬਾਸਨਾ ਨਾਹਿ ਮੋਹਿ ਧਰਮ ਯੁਧ ਕੈ ਚਾਇ” (I have no other desire but to strive for Dharma ਸਤਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ)
5. “Peace is the dream of the wise, war is the history of man” says Richard Burton. The Sikh wears a sword. In order that it is not misused, the Sikh is instructed to make use of force only when it is absolutely necessary. The Sikh repeats, “ਚੂੰ ਕਾਰ ਅਜ਼ ਹਮਾ ਹੀਲਤੇ ਦਰਗੁਜ਼ਸਤ, ਹਲਾਲ ਅਸਤ ਬੁਰਦਨ ਬ ਸਮਸ਼ੀਰ ਦਸਤ” (It is rightful to wield a sword only when all other means have been exhausted). The Khalsa, being the army of God, has to fight only for Truth and Justice. He cannot fight for achieving any selfish ends or to commit aggression. He may forfeit life but not faith.
6. Lastly the Sikh must have firm faith in God and God alone and no other deity. “ਪੂਰਨ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਗੇ ਘਟ ਮਹਿ ਤਬ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਤਾਹਿ ਨਖਾਲਸ ਜਾਨੈ” (Khalsa is only he who has God at heart at all times. He who fails in this respect is an imposter)

### **What does’ Thy Kingdom’ mean?**

The kingdom of heaven on earth (Sat Sri Akal) must be a

reflection of the Almighty Himself. That, which is contrary to the virtues and qualities of God, is contrary to the establishment of His Kingdom. Guru Gobind Singh Describes God as follows

“ਚਕਰ ਚਿਹਨ ਅਰ ਬਰਨ ਜਾਤ ਅਰ ਪਾਤ ਨਹਿਨ ਜਿਹ, ਰੂਪ ਰੰਗ ਅਰ ਰੇਖ ਭੇਖ  
ਕੋਊ ਕਹਿ ਨਾ ਸਕਤ ਕਿਹ”

“No one can tell anything about God’s contours, features, sect, caste, countenance, complexion or demeanor.” Therefore the state of Sat Sri Akal will be the Kingdom where there is no discrimination, no injustice, no aggression, no tyranny, and no bloodshed on the basis of the above mentioned diversities. It will be a place where the essential unity beneath the superficial diversity is as much respected as the varieties of flowers and plants in a garden; where everybody feels the rhythm of his life in tune with the rhythm of universal life. This will be a state where each individual considers himself a nonentity in the ocean of immensity, a state where everybody sings with Nanak,

“ਏਕ ਨੂਰ ਤੇ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਕੋਣ ਭਲੇ ਕੋ ਮੰਦੇ”

(Humanity is born of one divine light, how can some be good and the others bad).

ਹੁਣ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੋਆ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਣ ਦਾ, ਪੈ ਕੋਇ ਨਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਰਿਵਾਣਦਾ

ਸਭ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ ਵੁਠੀਆ, ਹੋਆ ਹਲੇਮੀ ਰਾਜੁ ਜੀਓ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੪)

“Now, the Merciful Lord has issued His Command. Let no one chase after and attack anyone else. Let all abide in peace, under this Benevolent Rule.” (GGS Page 74)

As long as there is hatred, poverty, exploitation, ignorance, superstition, bloodshed, aggression, discrimination and distrust in this world, the ideal is not achieved and the Khalsa’s work is not finished. Wherever the universal human values are on the decline, wherever the humanity is shrieking for help, the Khalsa has to answer the call (Bole ਬੋਲੇ) and rush to that place to restore the state of Sat Sri Akal. The Khalsa cannot be complacent in fulfilling his self-imposed divine mission. He has pledged to die for others to bring about liberty, equality and fraternity.



Guru Nanak says, “ਅਸੰਖ ਮੂਰਖ ਅੰਧ ਘੋਰ ਅਸੰਖ ਚੋਰ ਹਰਾਮ ਖੋਰ” “There are innumerable fools who are blind to the core and there are innumerable thieves and swindlers”. As long as this situation remains, the work of the Khalsa is unfinished and the Sat Sri Akal is not established. It is an onerous duty and therefore the Khalsa’s duty is never finished.

### **Precepts for the Khalsa**

The Sikhs are asked to take an oath of Sat Sri Akal after every congregational prayer. It is an oath, which is administered after fully explaining what it means and what happens to those who take this oath. The Sikh prayer (**Ardas**) is a repository of the great deeds of the Gurus, blessed men, martyrs and the Khalsa who answered the call (**bole-ਬੋਲੇ**) and stood firm as a rock against discrimination, tyranny, injustice and irreligion. At least twice daily the Sikhs refresh their history through Ardas and get inspiration from these martyrs in the cause of Dharma (ਸਤਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ). They consider themselves as part and parcel of the body of the Khalsa and take an oath to do God’s Will revealed through those saints and pious personalities mentioned in the Ardas. Concentration on the divine figures in the *Ardas* inspires the Khalsa to feel himself as one with those God-like beings, add their bit to the ongoing strife for Sat Sri Akal and thus keep up the traditions of the line voluntarily. It is under the influence of *Ardas* that the Khalsa begs the Almighty, not for any personal gains, but for the gift of ‘Sikhism’ and firmly pledges to work for the ideal laid down in the words “Sat Sri Akal”. All through the *Ardas* he is made amply aware of the self-imposed divine mission of The Khalsa for the defence of Dharma and the sacrifices and dangers it entails.

The Sikh *Ardas* runs like a film. It encapsulates the history of those who decimated themselves like a moth on fire to resist the conditions impeding the establishment of **Waheguru Ji Ki**

**Fateh.** It starts with remembering *Bhagauti*. *Bhagauti* is not any goddess, as some people would hasten to interpret it. *Bhagauti* is the spirit of strife enshrined in the ideology of the Sikh Jaikara. It is the vital divine force required by God Almighty to establish His Law (Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh).

After this the Sikhs remember Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak is not simply a personality, the son of Mehta Kalu. Nanak is an institution, a philosophy and a way of life that coincides with **Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh or Sat Sri Akal**. If it were not so the later Gurus would not have used the word ‘Nanak’ in their writings. (Nanak is Na=not and Anak=many. Nanak means not many). In other words the followers of Nanak will observe no distinction, no discrimination and no social barriers. ਮਾਣਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਵੇ. Only this basic postulate could be the basis of **Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh**. Guru Nanak in his human form fought for this ideal world with his pen, discussions, debates, dramatic deeds and his divine musical compositions. He used the language which no body dares use for kings. He said, “ Sin is the king; greed the minister, falsehood the mint-master and Lust the deputy to counsel with. They sit and confer together.” When his heart bled to see thousands of men, women and children being butchered, Guru Nanak fearlessly condemned (**Bole ਬੋਲੇ**) the cruelty of King Babur and underwent imprisonment. His *Asa Di War* is an ode against irreligion and all that negates “Sat Sri Akal”.

The latter Gurus followed the same philosophy and were the iconoclasts of religious, social and cultural shams. They demolished the contemporary ritualistic practices of the priest-ridden, caste-ridden and pluralistic society. They stood intrepidly against superstition, disrespect towards women, and *waranashram Dharama* (a fundamental Hindu postulate of insularity Gita xviii-47). Guru Angad Dev started common kitchen (*Langar*) to fight against convivial discrimination. Guru Amar Das stood against *Sati* (the self-immolation of wives with

their dead husbands). He caused the *Baolis* (wells) to be dug because the high castes denied the low castes access to their wells. Low castes were not permitted to pray in Mandars and mosques. Guru Ram Das, therefore, founded Harimandar where people of all faiths and social standings could go and pray. Guru Arjan Dev prepared Guru Granth Sahib in which the devotional hymns of saints from all castes and creeds were collected. Guru Har Gobind built a mosque for Muslims to demonstrate equality. Guru Tegh Bahadur laid down his life for maintaining the right of all to worship in their own way. Finally Guru Gobind Singh formally instituted the Khalsa (1699) with Spartan habits to carry on the work of the Gurus further. He also completed the Holy book, which is directing the fight for establishing Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh, and will carry on directing it till dooms day.

The struggle for “Sat Sri Akal” demanded sacrifices. Guru Arjan Dev was made to sit on a hot iron plate (May30, 1606AD), Guru Tegh Bahadur had his head severed off (1675AD), Mati Das was sawed alive, Bhai Dyala was boiled in a cauldron and thousands of Sikhs laid down their lives for the cause. Surely these thousands of gallant and valiant souls did not accept torture and mutilations simply as momentary fits of self-immolation but they were people who answered the call of humanity (**Bole-ਬੋਲੇ**) and fell in order to stem the threat to liberty and social justice. It is these people on whose achievements and sacrifices the Sikhs concentrate in their *Ardas* while taking the vow of “Sat Sri Akal” “Thy kingdom come”. The idea of reminding the deeds of foregone stalwarts before administering an oath is to tell the neophyte what is likely to happen if he/she answers the call (**Bole-ਬੋਲੇ**). It is clearly stated in the *Ardas* that the role of the Khalsa entails hardships and demands ample sacrifices and fearless bravery. This is where scalps are removed from the heads, where children are butchered and their quivering hearts are put round the necks of their mothers because of their stand for Sat Sri Akal (**Bole-ਬੋਲੇ**). The Khalsa is therefore, not a hotchpotch collection of directionless, half-baked and muddle-headed revolutionaries. It

has a sense of dedication to a noble cause that demands sincere commitment. “**Bole So Nihal**” is a reminder of the duty demanded by the master from the Khalsa and “**Sat Sri Akal**” is a self-imposed response to cultivate the consistency and thoroughness to actualize the ideal of selfless service. It is a pledge to uphold the humanistic traditions, an assurance to remain virile in action not sterile in speculation and hollow pronouncements.

At the end of the *Ardas*, a Sikh is reminded in clear-cut language that (1) Wherever the Khalsa happens to be, he must provide just protection to all ਜਹਾਂ ਜਹਾਂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਜੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤਹਾਂ ਤਹਾਂ ਰਛਿਆ ਰਿਆਇਤ”। (2) He must remain in high spirits (ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ) and finally (3) he must ensure that his actions are devoted to the welfare of all without any discrimination (ਸਰਬਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ). It is only after clarifying the role of the Khalsa that the administrator asks if the congregation accepts this difficult role (of Bole-ਬੋਲੇ) or not, and suffer martyrdom for the cause of God. There is no pressure on anyone to respond.

After this the Sikhs pray for this pious hope to come true. They are optimistic and say ਰਾਜ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਆਕੀ ਰਹੇ ਨਾ ਕੋਇ A day will come when the true believers (the Khalsa) will rule.

### **Is the Khalsa really of any use in today’s world?**

The Khalsa is the crying need of the hour. Worthless indeed would be the tenets and ideals of the Khalsa, should they break down when subjected to the pressure of events such as those through which the world is passing now a days. It is only at such times that the true character of a nation is tested. It will be a stigma to the memory of the Sikh martyrs of the *Ardas* if the Khalsa lacks in initiative, drive, vitality, adaptability, recuperative energy and the will to volunteer for hazardous undertakings. In the Khalsa, psychology and religion meet in aim and purpose.

Only sleepwalkers may remain unaware of the need of the hour and prefer to stay asleep while a terrible unrest has everywhere unhinged the minds of the people of the world. There is discrimination on the basis of caste, colour, belief, economic status, sex, education, distribution of resources, jobs and a host of other fields. The Khalsa should not wait for more powerful stimulants to rouse him up for the regeneration of the world. Wherever there is a Sikh he/she must try to become the hub of the wheel, a powerhouse of love and psychic energy and answer the call (**Bole -ਬੋਲੇ**) with usual grit, determination and esprit-de-corps. Let the Khalsa fight against illiteracy, poverty, famine, superstition, political exploitation, oppression, racial discrimination, and religious degeneration, which are so evident in the world. Let the Khalsa bring about a refined, leisurely, temperate and restrained revolution wherever it goes in the world. Let the Khalsa shake off its sloth and sluggishness and take up cudgels against embezzlers, swindlers, murderers, criminals and other scoundrels who seriously disrupt the public order. Is not this the time for the Khalsa to march with nonchalant air and renewed dedication to achieve its ideals, justify its pristine glory and the trust reposed in it by the great master Guru Gobind Singh.? No doubt the task is long and unending but the Khalsa must remember the following words of the master:

ਪਛਮ ਸੂਰ ਚੜ੍ਹੇ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਅਰ ਗੰਗ ਬਹੀ ਉਲਟੀਜੀ ਆਵੈ ,  
ਜੇਠ ਕੇ ਮਾਸ ਤੁਖਾਰ ਪਰੈ ਬਨ ਔਰ ਬਸੰਤ ਸਮੀਰ ਜਰਾਵੈ।  
ਲੋਕ ਹਲੈ ਧਰੂ ਕੋ ਜਲ ਕੋ ਥਲ ਹੋਇ, ਥਲ ਕੋ ਜਲ ਕਬਹੂੰ ਚਲ ਆਵੈ।  
ਪਰਬਤ ਕੇ ਨਖ ਪੰਖਨ ਧਾਰ ਉਡੈ , ਖੜਗੇਸ਼ ਨਾ ਪੀਠ ਦਿਖਾਵੈ ।

The sun may rise from the west, the Ganges may flow backwards.  
June may experience snow; the breeze may burn the woods.  
The pole star may leave its place, the deserts may become oceans.  
Mountains may develop wings and fly in the air  
**But my sword bear (Khalsa) will not flinch from duty**  
**(Guru Gobind Singh)**

It is time the Khalsa realizes its duty to the master, takes up  
courage in both hands and makes its mark in the comity of just  
and peace-loving nations.

**“Fierce though fiends may fight,  
Long though angels hide,  
I know that truth and right.  
Have the universe on their side.” (Washington Gladden)**

### **Other books by the same author**

1. Introduction to Sikhism
2. The Sikh Temple
3. Guru Arjan Dev, the apostle of peace
4. Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev (Panjabi)
5. The Sikh woman
6. Sikh Religion and Christianity
7. A challenge to Sikhism.
8. Sikh Religion and Islam.
9. The Sikh marriage ceremony
10. The Sikh greetings.

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- 8      Sardar Piara Singh Atwal Erith (Kent)
- 9      Sardar Hardev Singh Gravesend(Kent).
- 10     Master Jodh Singh Gosal Coventry (West Midlands)

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