

Research Scholar, Writer, Journalist, Editor, Author – All in One

By MOHINDER SINGH

Giani Gurdit Singh is a unique personality. He is a rare combination of a research scholar, writer, journalist, editor, author – all in one. He is a man of letters and author of books on religion, culture and folk lore. He excelled in every field of activity he touched.

Giani Gurdit Singh is a historian of a different sort. Like usual historians he did not write history of events and happenings. He has written history of the Sikh Scripture; who wrote it, how was it collected and by whom and how was it compiled.

He is author of a large number of books in Punjabi. More popular being Mera Pind (My Village) Maire Pind Da Jeevan (Life in my village), Culture of Punjab, Punjab's Folk Tales (3 volumes), Festivals, Traditions and Customs, History of Guru Granth Sahib (Bani of Bhagats), Bhats and their writings, Takht Damdama Sahib and Mundawni.

He has also written biographies of 20 eminent religious and intellectual personalities; some of the prominent among them being Giani Ditt Singh, Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh, Akali Kaur Singh, Bawa Harkishen Singh, Principal Teja Singh, Sardar Hukam Singh, and Bhai Sahib Ardaman Singh Bagdian.

Giani Gurdit Singh was the publisher and editor of the daily Parkash newspaper which he founded in Patiala in 1947. He was only 24 years young at that time. He was also founder, editor and publisher of Singh Sabha Patrika which rendered invaluable service to Sikh religion and Sikh history.

He founded the Kendri Singh

Sabha and worked as its General Secretary and President. He established two Sri Guru Granth Sahib Vidya Kendars. He initiated organizing series of Path Bodh samagams, seminars on religion and history. He possesses the gift of the gab. He edited over 100 rare booklets about the tercentenary of the Khalsa Panth.

Though basically Giani Gurdit Singh is a writer of religious literature based on his research, he came in close and intimate association with some top politicians. He was one of the closest persons to Giani Zail Singh, the President of India, (1982-87), Home Minister (1980-81) and Chief Minister of Punjab, (1972-77). He was also very close to Sardar Gian Singh Rarewala, Chief Minister of erstwhile PEPSU (Patiala and East Punjab States Union) (1948-53) and Sardar Partap Singh Kairon, Chief Minister of Punjab (1956-62). Giani Zail Singh and Sardar Rarewala liked Giani ji mainly because he was doing research on Guru Granth Sahib, in addition, of course, to his other qualities of head and heart.

Giani Gurdit Singh is a very learned person. He, however, earned and self-acquired knowledge and wisdom the hard way from practical experience in life and not by attending academic institutes. God was very kind and generous in richly compensating him by making a top educationist as his "better half", who rose to become Vice Chancellor of Punjabi University, Patiala and later elevated as Chairman of the Staff Selection Commission, Government of India. One of his two sons obtained Master's degree in Journalism from a prestigious

university in America and is well placed in a prominent newspaper of India.

His latest contribution to Sikh religious literature is a book titled Mundawni. He has tried to convincingly and logically prove with the help of documents that Mundawni written by Guru Arjan Dev, whose contribution is the maximum in the compilation and editing of Guru Granth Sahib, is the last and final hymns enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib. Raag Maala, printed in Guru Granth Sahib after Mundawni, he claims, is neither a divine scripture nor approved and authorized by Guru Arjun Dev. He has pleaded and proved that Raag Maala was not included in the Aad (First) Granth Sahib which Guru Arjun Dev got hand-written by Bhai Gurdas, and was ceremoniously installed in the Golden Temple, Amritsar in September 1604.

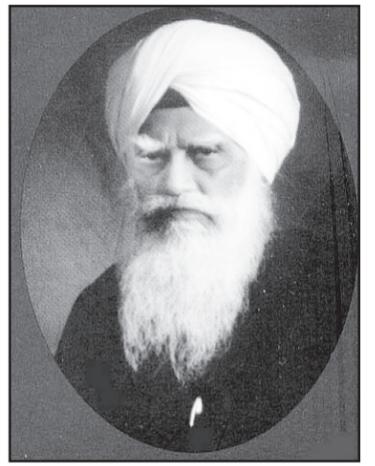


Though the book "Mundawni" was published in July 2003, Giani Gurdit Singh had started doing research and collecting material for this nearly 60 years back. It is on record that a meeting between the supporters and opponents of Raag Maala was held under the chairmanship of then SGPC President Jathedar Mohan Singh Nagoke in Amritsar on Dec 10, 1946. Nagoke was also

holding the post of Akal Takht Jathedar at that time. The opponents of Raag Maala were led by then 23-year old Giani Gurdit Singh. The leader of the supporters of Raag Maala was Late Bhai Jodh Singh, then 60-year old Principal of Khalsa College, Amritsar, who described Giani Gurdit Singh as a "boy." Giani Gurdit Singh presented several photographs of the last page of different volumes of Guru Granth Sahib which did not contain Raag Maala and had concluded with "Mundawni," which means end.

Jathedar Mohan Singh Nagoke was so much impressed by Giani Gurdit Singh with his brilliant presentation supported by facts, figures and documentary proof that Raag Maala was not a part of the original Aad Granth and was a later fake addition, that he offered to designate him as "Gurbani Research Scholar". But Principal Jodh Singh was so much upset with the "boy" stealing the show that he walked out of the meeting.

The ways of almighty God are strange and unpredictable. That "boy" became a member of the Punjab legislative Council (1956-62) at the age of 33



Giani Gurdit Singh

and Principal Jodh Singh got that honor much later. The wife of that "boy" succeeded Bhai Jodh Singh as Vice-Chancellor of Punjabi University, Patiala.

The 81-year old Giani Gurdit Singh with his so much research on Guru Granth Sahib has given more to the community than the community has given to him. Giani ji richly deserves something more. The community has not yet repaid its gratefulness to him. As Bhai Sahib Bhai Randhir Singh told Giani ji on Oct 24, 1945 in a letter "Satgur will grant you everything."

Pakistani Rangers Offer Sweets to BSF Personnel

WAGAH - Pakistani rangers on Feb.2 offered sweets to Indian Border Security Force personnel as officials from both sides shook hands at the International Border here on the occasion of Eid-ul-Zuha.

Major Ishfaq presented a basket containing sweets to BSF Commandant R P Singh in the presence of a large number of villagers at the Zero Line. The border guards of the two countries also exchanged pleasantries. (PTI)

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