

THE HISTORY OF GURUDWARA GURUSAR NATHANA

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Abstract:

The particular subject is used to be enlightened by its definition which makes its boundaries and differentiates it from other disciplines. As per the definition of History, Greeks who defined it as the knowledge obtained as a result of research or inquiry. Actually History is very much concerned with the activities of human beings in that it is the study of events in man's struggle for progress. History is that discipline which investigates and unfolds the values which age after age have inspired the residents of a country to develop its collective will and to express it through the manifold activities of its life. As History is secular, which is concerned with temporal, mundane matters and not with spiritual efforts, it also gave us such personalities which adopted the secular policy in the past. Gurudwara Gurusar Sahib is a historical place. People visit this place from far and wide. This

Methodology : Proposed study is based on the primary and secondary sources, those I collected all sources from many libraries of different Universities like as Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha Library of Punjabi University, Patiala, Bhai Gurdas Library of Guru Nanak University, Amritsar, Joshi Library of Punjab University, Chandigarh, Punjab State Archives of Patiala. I also visited these historical places. I collected the relevant data from different sources analysing these fact to complete my research paper

Conclusion: Thus, Guru Hargobind Ji's travels were not simply about physical movement; they represented the extension of Sikh community life beyond Majha and Doaba into Malwa. His journeys carried dual significance — **spiritual consolidation of Sangat and military preparedness**. These tours sowed the seeds of a broader Sikh identity, transforming scattered communities into an organized spiritual nation.

Keywords: Gurudwaras, **miri-piri**, Majha, Malwa, Sikhism, sovereignty, Sikh

History stands in testimony that when Guru Hargobind fought his third battle on the land of Gurusar Mehraj, he made his abode on the bank of Ratansar pond at village Nathana for 21 days. During the day time, Guru used to sit in the present *Gurudwara* Gurusar Mehraj but at night he would return in a tent at Nathana. That tent was put up along the banks of Ratansar pond. At that time that pond was spread in 12 Acres. Up to hundreds of miles of surrounding area, that pond was the largest and water remained stagnant there for 21 days, Guru utilised that water and bathed in it. That pious pond of Ratansar was a scenic spot. After Guru Hargobind, the grandson of Guru Hargobind, seventh Guru Har Rai also came to see the pond of Ratansar.¹

During that period, Guru Hargobind did many benevolent deeds for the residents of the area, advised them to live with religiosity, dignity, confidence and self-esteem; Guru also organised the *Malwai* community (Residents of Malwa region) and connected them with Sikhism and *Gurbani* and guided them to the path of truthfulness. That order of *Satguru* is recorded in scriptures.

During the period of organisations, the *Nirmale* (baptised) and *Udasi* (travellers) community leaders, after a thorough search, marked the places travelled by the ten Gurus, including foreign lands, for establishing *Gurudwaras*. Cemented platforms for preaching and buildings were constructed. A *Gurudwara* was constructed at *Nathana* by saints of *Nirmala* sect in 19th century, who established *Gurudwara Sahib* and who the preachers were, this information is lost in the folds of time but in the year 1923, Mahant Hakam Singh was the faith-keeper. During the Akali movement in the year 1923, the management of the *Gurudwara* was taken over by Bhai Sahib Makhan Singh Rattan, Bhai Bhagwan Singh, Bhai Dalip Singh, Bhai Kheon Singh, Bhai Gheela Singh, Bhai Zaildar Teja Singh, Bhai Naurang Singh, Bhai Subha Singh, Bhai Arjan Singh, Bhai Sarwan Singh, Dr. Nand Singh and Bhai Bachan Singh Akali etc. including other Sikhs of village Nathana. A committee was formed to run the management of the *Gurudwara* and Bhai Makhan Singh Rattan was appointed as the President. Bhai Makhan Singh Rattan lived a Sikh way of life, was a reciter of Sikh scriptures and had a sense of self-sacrifice.

Bhai Makhan Singh Rattan rendered a great service during Akali movement which needs no mention. He participated in the movement of *Jaito* and *Guru Ka Bagh*, faced imprisonments, paid penalties and continued his sacrifices as per the orders of the Sikh community till *Punjabi Suba* (state) movement. The first construction of *Gurudwara Gurusar* was completed with the efforts of Bhai Rattan. Some residential rooms, community Kitchen and a well were established during his time. He rendered his services from 1923 to 1936. After his time, various committees were formed and presidents were appointed as under:-

S. Bachan Singh Akali from 1936 to 1941

Dr. Nand Singh from 1941 to 1951

Baba Chanan Singh from 1951 to 1956

Bhai Gurdev Singh from 1966 to 1981

From 1981 to 1999, *Gurudwara* remained under the control of *Gurudwara* Management Committee for 18 years.²

Bhai Makhan Singh Rattan was reappointed as President from 1956 to 1966. Under the Presidentship of Bhai Makhan Singh Rattan, the foundation stone of a new building of *Gurudwara Sahib Gurusar* No.171 was laid at Nathana Distt. Ferozepur on Tuesday 11th June, 1957. After the conclusion of *Akhand Path* (uninterrupted recitation of *sucriptures*), the foundation stone laying ceremony of the *Gurudwara Sahib* was performed by the five beloved ones of the Guru (*Panj Piaras*) namely S. Parja Singh Mehraj, Shriman Sant Kirpal Singh from, village Rode, Shriman Panth Rattan Master Tara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh from village Gidder.³(As per the information given by S. Harinder Singh Darvesh s/o Late S. Makhan

Singh Rattan during an interview)

During the time of *Shiromani Gurudwara Parbhandak Committee* (SGPC), the service of reconstruction of *Gurudwara Sahib* was assigned to Sant Harbans Singh of Delhi who after demolishing the old building, initiated construction of the new building in February, 1995. The supervision of construction of the new building was being done by Sant Karnail Singh of Jaito. The grandeur of white marble donning the walls of the building and brown cardboard on ceiling was inexplicable. More so, the artistry of coloured glasses insid *Manji Sahib* is worth mentioning. The building is attractive and worth-seeing. Likewise, a beautiful holy pool of nectar had been constructed after leveling the old pool. The marbled periphery is too beautiful. This voluntary work was executed within a short span of time by Sant Harbans Singh and sant Karnail Singh, Sardar Malkiat Singh, Sardar Harbans Singh, Sardar Harinder Singh, Sardar Gurbhej Singh, Sardar Gurdeep Singh

Out of the above members, S. Malkiat Singh was made President and S. Harbans Singh was appointed Vice President. All those five members and Manager of *Gurudwara*, namely Bhai Sahib, Major Singh (birth village Nandgarh Distt. Mukatsar) worked tirelessly day and night, with unity and love for the progress of the *Gurudwara*. The service, faith and respect of this committee beyond words. After those men, Bhai Bhola Singh and Baldev Singh, Manager and other beloved Sikhs had done the tasks of *Gurudwara* not with a sense of work but with service. Till them the construction of community kitchen, residential rooms, main entrance and room for keeping shoes, had been completed.⁴

The Chief of that shrine, Kalu Nath was a follower of Guru. He always remained present there along with his disciples. During the time of war, Kalu Nath, like all other *Malwai* (Natives of Malwa Region) followers and disciples, served food, milk-water, curd and provided first-aid in the war. Guru was happy with the services of Kalu Nath. Kalu Nath, by making a request, made Guru agree to live in his *Ashram*. Therefore the residence of Guru was in Kalu Nath's Nathana.⁵ After victory in the third battle, Guru Hargobind Sahib made his abode in Kalu Nath's Nathana. At that time Dheera Vall (who was a follower of Baba Kalu Nath) came to had a sight of Guru Sahib. Dheera Vall thought that in the battle with Mughals, many Sikhs of Guru Sahib had been sacrificed and he had suffered considerable financial loss also; so he brought sufficient money with him. But Guru refused to accept money. Dheera Vall then thought of giving that money to Kalu Nath but he too refused to accept it. Then Dheera Vall requested Guru that he had already donated that money, as such, he could not take it back with him. He requested for a proper solution of that stalemate. After pondering over the matter, Guru asked Dheera Vall to build a square-crossing out of that money. It should have four minarets and between those minarets a space could be created in such way that 5-7 persons could examine the surrounding area therefrom. Minarets were to be joined together with angles in such a way that in case of need, those can serve as a battlement. The map of square- crossing was prepared on the asking of Guru Hargobind Sahib.⁶

The sole purpose of building that square-crossing was that the four minarets of this square-crossing will stand testimony to the meeting of these patriarchs and will serve as a scaffolding from where one can see far and wide. Dheera Vall started construction of the

square crossing by employing some labourers. This square-crossing was made on a 4ft raised platform of hard bricks in a mixture of lime in an area about one and half *Marla*. It was made of bricks of Guru Nanak era. When the square-crossing was ready, Dheera called Baba Kalu Nath and showed it to him. Baba after doing the prayers did purification of the building.⁷

In the year 1998, when this construction was demolished by the Saints of *Kar seva* (voluntary service) at that time, it had a raised platform about 2-2.50 ft from the ground level. Remaining portion of the platform was submerged in the ground due to reinforcement in accordance with the site-map. The underground stairs were constructed as per the original plan. This staircase had very strong door which can be closed in case of need so that any unauthorised person could not come or go inside. The stairs were very congested; only one person could come up and down. Some portion of that was already damaged due to some reason. The reason of this damage could not be ascertained as to how and when these were damaged. Its door was of ancient *mehrab* (a semi- circle in the niche of a wall) style. It has a window made up of strong iron grill. Before demolition, it was used as a kitchen for a long time by the servants of the shrine.⁸

But many residents of village Nathana believe that it was built by Lakhi Shah Vanjara. Lakhi Shah was a businessman who used to travel to and fro Delhi and Lahore in connection with his business. There were two routes for travelling to and fro Delhi to Lahore, first Sher Shah Suri route and second one beginning from Delhi to Lahore via Hissar, Agroha, Fatehabad, Sardoolgarh Rori, Surtia, Shergarh, Bhatinda, (since demolished) Mehalwala (Nathana), Kotha Guru, Bhagata, Baghapurana and Patti. They believed that Lodhi Shah Vanjara used to travel on that route. En-route, where-ever a pond was located, he used to build a hut like resting place nearby for his traders. Those can still be seen in the shape of blocks which they believed were built by Lakhi Shah Vanjara. Sant Wisakha Singh of Kishanpur Kalan has testified this fact that Dheera Vall was also a follower of Kalu Nath, so it is clear like water that although Dheera Vall would have spent much of money but the labour of removal of wastage was done by Lakhi Shah Vanjara.⁹ One day, before leaving from the battle- ground, Guru Hargobind Sahib sent a sikh to Kalu Nath. The sikh left with the notion in mind that if Kalu Nath offered him milk of a white cow, then he would come know that Kalu Nath had supernatural wisdom. When that Sikh reached to Kalu Nath, he understood his mind and after greetings, asked about the wellbeing of Guru. There after he showed him a white cow and offered its milk to him. The Sikh understood that Kalu Nath really possessed supernatural power and he gave the news of Guru's arrival to Kalu Nath. On hearing the news of arrival of Guru , Kalu Nath felt very happy.¹⁰ He bowed his head in Guru's feet and sat beside him. Guru Hargobind Sahib watched him with benevolent eye and said that he had struggled a lot, that was why he was named Kalu Nath. Kalu Nath requested not to consider him as Nath (Almighty) as he was Guru was the pet dog, Guru's are owner of the Universe, owner of the Cosmos, he was his servant from body and soul, it would be an honour for him to serve Guru as a servant. ¹¹ Here Guru felt that Kalu Nath had not only done his (Guru) service, but of the community too. Inside his soul, there was a small hint of ego and greed.

During that conversation, Kalu Nath was holding a beautiful urn in his hands. Guru told to him that his urn was very beautiful. Kalu Nath answered that he kept that urn very carefully with him that was dear to him more than his life. Guru replied that the urn was really mind blowing, and asked Kalu Nath to give it to him. Kalu Nath replied that he had a special love for that urn. Guru request for anything else, he would present before him but could not give that urn. Guru replied that he said that he was Guru's Sikh, by body, mind and wealth. Everything of a Sikh belongs to Guru. If he was his Sikh then he should give that urn to him. Kalu Nath replied with humbleness that he was his servant along with the urn, the urn was Guru's even if it was in his possession and he was also his.¹²

After the victory, Kalu Nath was invited with due respect to meet Guru at his shrine (Nathana) along with five other saints namely Guru Hargobind Sahib, Kalu Nath, Hazi Rattan, Kalyan Dass, Sakhi Sultan.¹³

After the conclusion of awareness meeting, Baba Kalu Nath prayed to Guru Hargobind with folded hands that he be blessed, like all others with the thinking of Guru Nanak to attain salvation. At that time, Kalyan Dass and Kalu Nath were made immortals and Kalu Nath was also given a boon that his glory would raise considerably and prosperity would last throughout his life. The land is worshipped for the produce it gives. The village Ganga has been established and people deem it equal to the Ganges and immerse the mortals of dead in it. After taking a bath there, they think of becoming pure from impure. In the month of March, a big fair is arranged there.¹⁴

Even before winning the war, while playing with Kalu Nath, Guru often prophesied about future events in his conversation. He often said to Kalu Nath about his prophecy of witnessing wars, victories and defeats at that place. The prophecy came true. Kalu Nath by becoming true follower of Guru attained wealth and super natural powers as a result of which, his seat was not only worshipped, people gave it the status of Ganga where ashes of the dead are submerged. The houses are of concrete and residents have good sources of income.¹⁵

Rai Jodh Singh and other well-wishers repeatedly requested Guru to return back. Guru acceded to their request and started preparations for return. Entire group got ready. Tents and other paraphernalia were loaded on the vehicles. Kalu Nath, Sultan Nath, Rattan Nath, Kalyan Dass, Atak Mann, Dheera Vall and Raja Ram, all bowed in the feet of Guru. Satguru happily gave his blessings to all and departed for 'Kangar'. Kalu Nath and all other followers went to village Kalayan to bid farewell to Guru. Here Guru pleasantly asked all of them to return back.¹⁶ This historical place is situated at village and block Nathana, Distt. Bhatinda, 13 K.M from Railway Station and 1 K.M from Bus stand on the East side of the village.¹⁷

At present, the control of *Gurudwara Gurusar Nathana*, is in the hands of management of *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandak Committee* (SGPC), Amritsar. A

Gurudwara (Sikh Temple) is not only made of bricks, lime, iron, wood, marble, granite or inquisitive artistic engravings, all these things are also available in hotels, clubs, multi-storey buildings, dance houses, bars, on gravestones and tombs which are not giving any life rather

these are far away from life. The matter is of soul and inner-self. The beauty and greatness of a *Gurudwara* is with spiritual activities. Congregation sangat of devotees is the prime and main function of a *Gurudwara*.

The second great part of a *Gurudwara* is the concept of row (*Pangat*). All devotees of Guru, high and low, rich or poor without any discrimination of caste and creed partake food together sitting in a row.

Thirdly, every *Gurudwara* has a *Nishan Sahib* (religious flag) It is a matter of considerable thinking as to what is the purpose of a *Nishan Sahib*? In ancient writings, inscriptions and books, it found written as ‘*Jap Nishan*.’ The word meaning of ‘*Nishan*’ is ‘loud’, drum. It is a symbol of fearlessness and self-rule. Where ever it is installed, there is no scare or fear. This *Gurudwara* has two *Nishan Sahibs* installed, out of which, one is 101 ft. high and the other is 96 ft.

The Manager of *Gurudwara* S. Jasveer Singh, a preacher, a cook, a hymn- singer and helpers all are performing their duties. Verses from holy book, hymns and religious discourses are read in the morning and evening. Sweet offering (*Parshad*) is distributed amongst all devotees. Entire congregation savours the ‘*Parshad*’ with love and respect.¹⁸

A society named Shri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar Sewa Society has been established by the *Gurudwara* management. This society sprinkles water, brooms the place and put lime at the place and houses in the village where religious congregations are held or processions are taken out. A group of women devotees named *Sukhmani Sewa Society* is also functioning which organises recitation of scriptures in homes. They also organise recitation of hymns from *Gurbani* in village *Gurudwara*, 40 days prior to the birth anniversary of Guru Hargobind Sahib.¹⁹

A religious procession is also taken out at this place on the occasion of birth anniversaries of first, sixth and tenth Sikh Gurus. Singing of scriptures is also done. The majesty of the procession is worth seeing and describing. The martyrdom day of fifth Guru and non-stop recitation of scriptures dedicated to the memory of *Sahibzadas* (Sons of Guru Sahib) is undertaken.²⁰

Auspicious days like *Massaya* (Moonless night), *Sangrand* (start of new religious month) and other monthly auspicious days are celebrated. Devotees take a bath in the holy pool of *Gurudwara* on these auspicious days to make their lives successful. In addition to this, an annual four- day fair is organised in the month of March. Shopkeepers from far off places come on this occasion. Religious congregations are held. Intellectuals, lecturers, preachers, hymn singers, bards and poets reach at the place. Discourses from *Gurbani*, benevolence of Gurus and deeds of the valiant are narrated to connect the people to religion. *Gurudwara* Gurusar Sahib is rendering yeoman’s service in the proliferation of religion²¹

A *Gurudwara* (Guru's Abode) is related to history of Gurus. Likewise, *Gurudwara* Gurusar Nathana remarks the visit of Guru Hargobind at that place. The third war of

Gurudwara Gurusar Mehraj was fought by Guru and his soldiers the region. He resided near Ratansar pond far 21 days, where the Gurudwara has been built, Guru guided the people of Malwa region to live life of truthful path and connected them to *Gurbani*. The upkeep and care of the Gurudwara was in the hands of different committees since then. Many Sikhs were appointed its president & Gurudwara management committee also played significant role from 1981 to 1999. During SGPC, reconstruction of Gurudwara was done by Sant Harbans Singh of Delhi and the building was made attractive and worth selling but some residents of village Nathana believed that Gurudwara was built by Lakhi Shah Vanjara. *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandak Committee* holds the charges of Gurudwara Gurusar Nathana, spiritual activities, partaking food without any discrimination and *Nishan Sahibs* makes the Gurudwara what it is meant for in real sense different societies have been established for various activities.

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