

Shaping of Kirppanidh

Kirppanidh



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By Kirppanidh

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Author

Kirppanidh is a certified holistic, neuro-linguistic practitioner (NLP) and a kundalini yoga teacher. But people who have been able to re-anchor themselves with her help, consider her a mother, a friend, a confidant, and a soul whisperer. A self-practitioner of meditation for forty-five years she has healed herself through ¹Simran and ²Gurbani as well.

She believes that every human being is innately blessed with unlimited capabilities. The brain blur created by external noise, clouds the mind, and inhibits people from achieving their full potential. This causes anxiety, unhappiness, depression, dilemmas, fear, phobias, insecurities, and distorted cognitions which further breed physical diseases as well. Kirppanidh educates people on how to find freedom from their mental blocks and physical diseases. Empowering people by helping them connect with their own guiding light is her goal, and she lives it every day. She guides those who entrust in her, by sharing what she has learnt through personal experiences. Her extensive experience renders her a deep understanding about the nature of mind, and she uses the same to counsel people. Her mental health workshops/counselling sessions emphasise on how the subconscious mind can be rewired, resulting in a significant increase in mental resilience. An active advocate of

¹ In Sikhism, Simran refers to the remembrance of God by repetition or recital of God's Name in meditation.

² Various compositions by the Sikh Gurus and other writers in the holy scripture of Sikhs - Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

optimism, she has made it her life's mission to help people become the best version of themselves.

Kirppanidh's spiritual journey started with her pious ³ gursikh father- a humble, passionate man, with undying buoyancy and ingrained ⁴chardi kala - Sardar Balwant Singh ⁵Ji. After his enlightenment at nineteen, he started connecting people with Gurbani and Simran, to help them overcome life's challenges with chardi kala. Sardar Balwant Singh Ji consistently affirmed his belief in the magnanimity of ⁶Guru and challenged that be it any need – physical, emotional, financial, or spiritual, it could only be fulfilled by Guru and Guru alone. Among the first to initiate meditation, mind training, ⁷Bani bodh (Bani knowledge) and Bani jugat (how Bani works) workshops, he encouraged people to seek everything from the Divine. He was destined to enable people to heal themselves, and he lived it for seventy years.

Kirppanidh proudly says that she owes everything to ⁸Waheguru and her father. She best described it by saying, "Who I was, who I am, and who I will be, from the day I was

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 $^{^3}$ A term used by Sikhs to describe someone who is baptized in an initiation ceremony of taking a holy vow to follow the teachings of the Sikh Gurus. Gursikhs are also known as 'Amritdhari' Sikhs.

⁴ State of mind in which a person has no negative emotions like fear, jealousy, or enmity. Instead, the mind has many positive emotions like joy, satisfaction, and self-dignity.

⁵ Used at the end of titles to show respect.

⁶ In Sikhism, Guru is God.

⁷ Another word for Gurbani.

⁸ A word used in Sikhism to refer to God as described in Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The meaning of the word vahiguru is traditionally explained as vah 'wondrous,' and guru as 'teacher, spiritual guide', which taken together are said to carry the meaning, 'Wondrous Lord.'

born till the day I am gone, is all because of the Almighty's blessings and my father's guidance. Devoid of them, I would be a bird without wings."

Believing that she was born to serve, Kirppanidh considers her every endeavour as an extension of Sardar Balwant Singh's Ji's guidance. In complete submission, she bows to the Guru, for gifting her a father who connected her to the Divine. Giving her father the highest regard, she says

"He is the best father and spiritual guide anyone could ask for."

By launching a website, publishing books, and organising mental health awareness workshops, Kirppanidh wants to honour her father's wish of connecting people to the divine light that dwells within them. She regularly conducts free of cost workshops on meditation, mind training, Gurbani healing in Gurudwaras and other healing centres of alternative healing.

Editor

Muktnoor, is the editor of this book, but her documented name is Aakriti Cheema. She always longed for a name which began with an alphabet chosen for her by ⁹Guru Granth Sahib Ji. After getting involved in the book ¹⁰seva, she requested her spiritual mentor, Kirppanidh to do a name keeping ceremony for her. With Kirppanidh's guidance Aakriti chose a name that felt aligned with her life's purpose, and that is how Muktnoor birthed. Muktnoor means "Liberated in light." The editor believes her spiritual name has elevated her energy, frequency immensely, and she is determined to publish all her work under this name in the future.

Muktnoor wrote her first poem at the age of sixteen and often said "I will write a book before I die." Other than filling her umpteen journals, she continued to write extensively on different occasions for a decade and was even honoured for her writing skills by the eleventh president of India, Late Mr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. Then divine opportunity presented itself during Covid when she volunteered to edit the books written by Kirppanidh, and the author generously agreed.

She is grateful to the author for not only trusting in her with the books but for also generously training her with

⁹ The central holy religious scripture of Sikhism regarded by Sikhs as the final sovereign and eternal Guru following the lineage of the ten human Gurus of the religion.

 $^{^{10}}$ Concept of selfless service in Sikhism. Performed without any expectation or result or award for performing it.

techniques of mental wellbeing. She quoted "Having to edit these special books was like experiencing a "Everything is falling in place in life moment." Before I began the seva of the books I was Aakriti. During the seva Muktnoor was born and today, when this seva has completed, I have learnt that before an Aakriti or a Muktnoor, I am a 'Harsewak first' meaning God's servant."

"I realised on this journey that

The books never needed me,

It was me who needed the books."

Editor's Foreword

On my visit to ¹¹Paonta ¹²Sahib ¹³Gurudwara once, two lines written on a white wall above a small brown door, caught my eye and gripped my attention. The lines were.

"God has time to listen, do you have time to pray?"

I instinctively wondered, "Do I? Do I have time to pray?" An answer followed after a pause "Not enough", and it left me disappointed.

It was hard to understand where this sense of disappointment was stemming from. As I walked through the corridors of the Gurudwara Sahib contemplating, the answer I connected with most was "It did not feel enough, because I was not satiated." After concluding that my soul was hungry for more, it became pertinent to ask myself "Why was I choosing to stay hungry then?" I was even more curious to find the answer to this question, that why was I not making time for something that felt important to me? The lines I read had naturally invoked many emotions in me, one of which was embarrassment. I literally felt obligated to probe myself further, "Why was I not making time for something that is important to me. Where was I so busy? Was I lazy or simply ignorant?" I continued to ask myself some hard questions until

 $^{^{11}\,\}mathrm{A}$ Gurudwara built in memory of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth Guru of Sikhs in Himachal Pradesh, India.

¹² A term of respect that generally means sir, lord, or master.

¹³ A place of worship for Sikhs.

I had my answer. After I allowed myself to be brutally honest with myself, the truth came out "I am not sure if someone is listening."

Shaping of Kirppanidh, is a bold reply to that doubt and a reassurance that "Someone **IS**."

I would not say that my faith was broken, but yes it was incomplete. I did not even know what was missing, until I had heard Kirppanidh Ji's story. She filled that gap for me. Her story taught me, that my faith lacked trust and surrender. The foundation itself of the structure of my faith, was shaky and hollow. Due to this I could not even embrace it completely, be it personally or socially. Owning it became impossible because I did not know how. What excited my soul was so unfamiliar, than anything I had known before that it was like being lost in a desert. Kirppanidh Ji's spiritual journey became my GPS.

Our minds are so conditioned and clouded, that we fail to recognise even our internal strife, simply because we do not understand it. Most of the new age mental dissonance glossary, revolves around terms like depression, suicide, anxiety, stress, insomnia, ¹⁴ PTSD, ¹⁵ OCD or behavioural abnormality. The causes of these conditions are often circumstantial deprivation, abuse, tragedy, accident, divorce, professional dissatisfaction, trauma, or family discord. Just because there were no visible symptoms and because I could not relate to any of the terms or causes listed above, I failed to acknowledge my internal conflict, despite being a psychologist myself. Unable to recognise what I was truly seeking, led to an incapacity to go

¹⁴ Post traumatic stress disorder.

¹⁵ Obsessive compulsive disorder.

after it whole heartedly. Having the good fortune of editing Kirppanidh Ji's story, has ended a conflict of more than twelve years for me. Her story has convinced me that just because something is not visible to everyone, does not mean it does not exist.

"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye." – The Little Prince

Her story is teaching me to trust my instincts and my comprehension of the events in my life. My soul's quest for freedom, did not need a public vote and by helping me realise this, the woman in Kirppanidh's story has made me feel empowered. The conflict between what my soul sought and what my mind knew, is finally over.

Kirppanidh's patience and gratitude, throughout her devotional journey, will inspire the readers to focus on the process and overcome destination addiction. Seeing her embrace every experience without harbouring any regrets, one learns to smile at speed bumps. It might become difficult to notice her struggles, for her perspective makes it difficult for the readers to notice the challenges at all. Not only have we normalized the negativity bias that exists today, we are completely ignorant of its occurrence also. Kirppanidh's story is about a woman, who functions on the principle of positivity bias instead.

Her story will lend you a lens, using which, you will begin to recognise and acknowledge the miracles happening in your own life. By teaching how to transcend the mental boundaries and surrender to the soul's true calling, this story will give the readers the courage to go after what they are born for. If you allow, this story can prove to be a magical guide, which can help you begin a journey of self-transformation.

A story about finding a way back to unconditional love, it talks about the love of the Creator with ¹⁶HIS creation. A love so authentic and pure, that it inspires the creation to love all other creations, only because we are one.

If you believe in divine miracles, this story is for you.

If you have felt God and your soul seeks more, this story is for you.

If you have never felt God and do not believe in him, this story is still for you because the ones who are the farthest, miss him the most.

This story is destined to open many mental horizons by opening doors you did not know existed.

¹⁶ God/Almighty/Divine.

Appreciation by Author

My thoughts were first penned down on paper in the year 2020. Along with my story, I also wanted to expose people to the true nature of mind, through my second book. The books took almost three years to come to life. Shaping two books together would not have been possible without the Almighty's grace and the collective effort of my ¹⁷ sangat. My father's blessings and guidance forever walk with me, without which anything I do would be impossible to even imagine.

The Almighty chose the entire team of this book himself and I deeply appreciate each ¹⁸sevadar's seva, from the bottom of my heart. Extending my gratitude to all the wonderful people, who were a part of "Shaping of Kirppanidh", I applaud and appreciate their enthusiastic and sincere participation. It has been a joy to see them learn and grow.

Muktnoor was the first person with whom I shared my entire story. It was an organic and spontaneous connection, waiting to manifest at a divine time. She was my translator, developmental, evaluation, content, and line editor all in one. Her thorough fact checking, meticulous footnote insertion and creation of a cyclical chapter scheme, made it easier to visualise a structure that my story identified with. Once she

¹⁷ Spiritual family.

 $^{^{18}}$ A volunteer who offers his or her service free of charge without any expectation in return.

committed to the cause, she never looked back. participated with utmost dedication and sincerity. By articulately implementing my ideas and sharing her critical feedback unabashedly, she assisted me for countless hours voluntarily. Despite the stretched hours and physical tiredness, she relentlessly made the changes I suggested. It was special because everything she did, was because she wanted to, and not because she had to. Her passion for writing is heart-warming, and she has managed to translate that spirit in the book. Everything she could do in her capacity to make this story more relatable to the readers, she has done that. In these three years while balancing her personal and professional engagements, she faced many ups and downs, but she never gave up. When I told her that the books will be distributed free of cost, she was on the same page with me, and the passion in her efforts only increased. Despite her busy schedule, she made seva her priority and watch her do this convinced me, that she was born with a heart that wished to serve. An altruistic, compassionate, and giving individual, it is visible that serving others brings her joy. She is a psychologist by profession but tries to counsel people with a healing motive. Watching her grow in her spiritual journey, while connecting to my story and seeing my dream of book seva become Muktnoor's as well, has truly touched my heart. She truly deserves whatever has been written in her appreciation.

Rohaanjit Singh Sandhu- One of the youngest members of my spiritual family, he became the third crucial member along with me and Muktnoor of the book seva team. During the review of the manuscript, along with sharing his consistent, honest, and helpful feedback, he also took the initiative of inserting Gurbani references in Punjabi. For someone who is

not proficient in the language, it was a complex task, but Rohaanjit's will power towards the seva, made him find a way. Along with his creative input, he deserves a shoutout for not getting tired of printing umpteen number of printouts time and again. He even put his important personal projects on the back burner and made book seva his priority. I did not have to worry about anything, with him by my side. He served me like my grandson and was always there at every step of the way, in every way. A young promising boy, very mature for his age, he won my heart and is destined for a bright future. I want him to remember that he is forever appreciated and much valued.

Jaswinder Kaur who I fondly also call ¹⁹ 'Bhujangni,' participated earnestly in the developmental editing process of the book. She was given a very small window to do her part, but she did it wonderfully and did not complain even once. The respect and gratitude she has shown for this seva, is admirable. She continues to seek more seva even till today and her unsatiating hunger for it has impressed me.

Kiran Kaur Sandhu— As her name suggests, Kiran proved to be the light of loving warmth and comfort, that the book team needed. She did a beautiful job of instantly finding and cross checking all the Gurbani references that were given to her. Seeing her not get tired despite being asked to find some references repeatedly, was impressive. In fact, her outlook was so positive that she was happy that the Almighty was taking more and more seva from her. Other than finding the references, whether it was taking care of my health or organising my day, Kiran never failed to offer her pastoral

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¹⁹ Commonly used for a baby girl by Nihangs.

support by making herself available for me. By being there, be it at any time of the day, she has shown her true commitment for this seva with her positive attitude.

Simrat -A social media professional and an artist at heart, Simrat's openness and receptiveness, made it easy to implement the ideas the team had for the cover of the book. She never got tired of incorporating the numerous changes that were suggested time and again. It was difficult to convince the artist in her, as she never settled for anything less than a 'Wow.' Creative and considerate, she carefully tended to even the minutest details with a modest smile.

Anita Bansal – Anita, very kindly participated in the seva by proofreading the manuscript at the final stage of this beautiful journey. She was pressed for time but despite her health challenges she pushed herself and managed to find a way to complete the task entrusted upon her by the Almighty. Her minute grammatical corrections will enhance the reader's experience.

Other than the above team members, Shaping of Kirppanidh would not have been possible without the love and support of many others. I am especially thankful to

My dearest sons, who have always stood by me in every way. Their seva of financial contribution and moral support has helped me immensely in my endeavour to write, share, and therefore serve. Elder son, **Simarjit Singh** deserves to be applauded for his participation in inserting Gurbani references, also at the last minute. Younger son, **Gagan Singh's** passionate, honest, valuable, and consistent input throughout the book seva has positively contributed to the outcome. While

the book seva was going on, he made sure to make himself available despite the geographical distance and time zone difference.

My spouse **Jagtar Singh**, whose encouraging feedback gave me more confidence.

The Almighty completed HIS whole team finally, by including my elder daughter-in-law **Harkamal Kaur** in the nick of time, for insertion of Gurbani references and she did a fine job with her enthusiastic participation. My younger daughter-in-law- **Harneet Kaur's** sentimental feedback, motivation was heart-warming and inspired me to deliver my best.

My grandchildren, and extended family for their support and respect.

Mr. Baljit Singh Sandhu and entire family – Kiran, Tarun Singh, Mahima and Rohaanjit Singh for sharing their home with me and giving me utmost respect and care. Every family member outdid themselves and fond memories made with them will always walk with me.

My entire **spiritual family (sangat)** especially the ones in New York and India. Their good wishes and blessings always walk with me, and I am grateful to them for their openness to the love and guidance I have, to give.

May all the sevadars be blessed with love, light and joy, and may their seva be accepted by the Almighty. I hope they always stay connected to their true purpose and reap the blessed fruits of this seva.

The book - Shaping of Kirppanidh has been written with an intent to serve, by educating and inspiring. The first copies have been distributed free of cost. A free E-book is available on amazon kindle and can also be downloaded from the website - www.kirppanidh.com.

Since the author or editor of this book are not active on any social media platform, you are requested to share your valuable feedback on – dkkirpanidh@gmail.com, muktnoor@gmail.com through an email.

'Feedback of every reader is valued and keenly awaited.'

Before the story begins, I would like the readers to make note of a fact, that the influences of Sikhism I have shared in my story, are because the path of my journey was closely aligned with Sikhism. I identified with it not only because I was born into a Sikh family but also because everything the religion preaches, resonates with me deeply.

> I did not -choose Sikhism, Sikhism chose me.

But for other readers it can be about embracing whatever language their soul understands. The readers are free to draw parallels to their own personal journeys. My story is for everyone, religious or non-religious – Sikh or non-Sikh. At the end, it is about connecting to the vibration of love, and the medium does not matter.

-Kirppanidh

Dedicated to

My Beloved Father

My Spiritual Guide

My Everything

Sardar Balwant Singh Ji

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Prologue

Year 1957, January 1st, 12:15 a.m., I opened my eyes to this earthly sojourn. Marking the beginning of a New Year, this day gives many people a reason to believe in new beginnings. It inspires them to shed the webs of what is holding them back and start afresh. Collective enthusiasm helps in harnessing strength without much effort and move ahead. For me the date, I am born on, is not a casual occurrence. I consider it a blessing to be born on a day which brims with a resurgence of hope and renewed enthusiasm. The date of my conception and then birth is instrumental in my spiritual journey. Empowering optimism that majority of the people experience on the first day of New Year, resonates with the perpetual state of internal ecstasy I live in, and this is the story of that blessed bliss. A soul's story of an eternal discovery in the realm of the ephemeral.

Germination

My form was blessed to life, in the city of Agra, India. My family consisted of my precious father, mother, brother, and two sisters. I was the youngest member of the family.

The birth of another girl child, after two daughters, had not evoked joy in all my family members. During the 20th century, welcoming a girl child with glee was rare. Patriarchy was so ingrained in the veins of the Indian social systems that, majority of the people in India, prayed for a male child only. The first child in my family, was a baby boy, but he succumbed to an allergic reaction at the tender age of two. When my mother was expecting for the second time, supplications were made day and night for a healthy baby boy, and those earnest prayers were answered. But after my second brother, my mother birthed two girls consecutively. Consequently, when I was due to be born, fervent prayers for a baby boy were offered again.

When I was born, my mother sat with her back towards me and had said 'Ik hor Pathar' meaning 'One more stone.' Devoid of the privilege of education, her orthodox and conservative outlook, was a result of her upbringing. I could see that she was just prey to deep rooted collective, unfair perceptions. Her views did not stop me from being grateful to her, as I knew my existence would not be possible without her. It was easy for me to empathise with her, because despite her despondency, she fed me and took care of me devotedly.

In comparison to my mother, my father felt very differently about my birth. An engineer by profession, he served in the Indian Air Force for thirty years. Owing his progressive thought process and broad mental horizon to ²⁰ gurmat, he was quite

²⁰ It covers doctrinal, prescriptive, and directional aspects of Sikh faith and praxis.

gleeful about my birth. He valued the countenance, visage and equanimity women carry, and believed that they have the potential to inspire more souls as compared to men.

Vehemently disapproving of the criticism that the girl child endured my father was very supportive and appreciative of the girl child. His unassailable support compensated for the resistance I had received from my mother on my birth. A pampered child of my father, I basked in the glory of his unflinching love. He named me 'Daljit Kaur' and told my mother that, "Our daughter is a blessing. She will grow up to be sincerely spiritual and by touching the hearts of many, she will make us proud." Very confidently, he had predicted that I will not only serve my parents but many others too.

My father used to embolden my mother to learn and live, according to Gurbani's non-discrimination. He would quote from Gurbani to my mother, to wipe off her negative views and elevate her state of mind. Once he quoted from Guru Granth Sahib Ji,

ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੂ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ॥

So kiau ma(n)dhaa aakheeaai jit ja(n)meh raajaan.

So why call her bad? From her, Kings are born.

"This is how ²¹Guru Nanak Dev Ji revered women. Even ²² Guru Gobind Singh Ji, or the Gurus before him, never

²² He was the tenth Sikh Guru of the Sikhs. A spiritual master, warrior, poet, and philosopher.

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²¹ He was the founder of Sikhism and the first of the ten Gurus.

discriminated between a Singh (male) and a Singhani (female) based on gender. It is our utmost duty to abide by that wisdom." father would say.

My father used to remind my mother of the contributions of the mothers, sisters and ²³mehals of the Gurus towards the ²⁴Khalsa Panth, especially – ²⁵Mata Gujar Kaur Ji, ²⁶Mata Sahib Kaur Ji, ²⁷Bibi Nanki Ji and ²⁸Mata Khivi Ji. Highlighting the exceptional valour shown by the Sikh women in the battlefield particularly – ²⁹Mai Bhago Ji, he motivated mother to not follow the world's imprudent ways.

Whenever anyone said something unpleasant or crude to me or my sisters, our father stood by us. My maternal grandmother's approach towards the girl child was more regressive than my mother also. Once, she brought a canister of clarified butter (ghee) for us when she visited. She told my mother, "This butter is not meant for the daughters because they belong to some other family." My father had instantly retorted, "We do not want your butter then. Please take it back with you." I would take comfort in my father's candid activism, when he

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²³ Wife in Punjabi language.

²⁴ The tenth Guru established the Khalsa tradition in 1699 and it was a watershed moment in Sikh history. Today it refers to both a community that practises Sikhism and a specific group of initiated Sikhs.

²⁵ Wife of Guru Teg Bahadur Ji, the ninth Guru of Sikhism and the mother of Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

²⁶ Wife of Guru Gobind Singh Ji also considered as the mother of whole Khalsa Panth.

²⁷ Elder sister of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

²⁸ Wife of Guru Angad Dev Ji.

²⁹ Woman of Sikh faith who led Sikh soldiers against the Mughals in 1805. She was an exceptionally skilled warrior and is revered as a warrior saint in Sikhism.

passionately supported the girl child and incidents like these glorified him even more in my eyes.

Over the years, my father's unabated stance in favour of girls, mellowed down my mother's conditioned perceptions as well. Thanks to my father, her stubborn and archaic thought process dissolved, and I eventually became the apple of her eye. I could now receive unfiltered love of both of my parents. Words can never suffice the gratitude my heart felt, for being blessed with a father like mine.

Sun to my Seed

Even though my mother had warmed up to me, it was my father who played an instrumental role in my upbringing. I owe the early happy and guileless memories of my childhood, majorly to my father. My father was a man with a compassionate heart. A spirited gursikh, yet not rigid or ritualistic. Intelligent, sagacious, intuitive, unworldly and a far-sighted human being, with incomprehensible virtues, he was a galaxy of qualities. I am yet to meet someone with so many qualities. He had a green thumb, and I would notice him reciting Gurbani to the plants while nurturing the garden. Along with being a gifted gardener, he was an exceptional cook too. He would create delectable dishes with just a handful of ingredients. My taste buds can still relish the flavour of my favourite dish- dry khichdi that he used to make for me.

When I was a kid, my father used to spoil me by buying me chocolates every week. Later when I grew into a teenager, despite my mother's disapproval, he would take me to watch English movies. I remember breaking my father's favourite pen once. He was at work when it happened and was an innocent mistake. I was extremely scared to disclose it to him, not because I would be rebuked, but because I felt awful for breaking it. That pen was a favourite of my favourite person. Upon my confession I bowed down my head and, could not lift my eyes to see him. But he well measured the feelings of guilt within my disappointment-stricken heart. He was not angry at all. In fact, to cheer me up again all he said was,

'It's alright, anything for you.'

I can never stop cherishing his love for me. Treasuring his adoring gestures towards me, I would feel grateful for the sync within our mental wavelengths. Calling him an indulgent father would be an understatement. My brother and sisters also took after him in this respect, and the quartet treated me like the baby of the house. Their pampering made me even more frolicsome than I already was.

Loving authentically and selflessly is something I learnt from my father. Freedom of thought and its expression in any relationship, is invaluable. When human beings are blessed with such a gift, their soul thrives as if on an accelerated engine. My dearest father gave me that acceleration. My father's unconditional love surpassed everything. I was his 'Kittu,' and he was the only one I considered perfect, next to God. My father was a paragon of virtue, and his validation was my world.

Habitat

Since, my father was in the Air Force, he would be transferred to a new location every few years. When I was five or six years old, we moved to Chandigarh. But after serving for thirty years in the force, my father took an early retirement and we continued to stay in Chandigarh.

Chandigarh is called the city beautiful, as it is one of the cleanest and greenest cities in India. Back in the seventies, with less than half the population it has today, it was even more quaint. Picturesquely located at the foothills of Shivalik Hills, it is considered as one of the best experiments in urban planning and modern architecture of twentieth century India. Very different from the other cities in the country, it is meticulously planned and divided into sectors. Our dwelling was in Sector twenty-one.

With a liberal loving father, a devoted, dutiful mother, two loving sisters, a competitive brother, and I together we comprised of six different colours creating our very own cluster.

Despite our diversity, we were connected to one nodal, and the adults made sure the children of the house remembered that. They did so by ingraining the family's traditions in us. The curfew time in our house was 8:00 p.m. and, every child would abide by the house rules devotedly. Since both my parents were ³⁰Amritdharis, they took their religious routines sternly.

My mother used to wear a ³¹keski and had learnt all the ³² seven Banis by heart. It was due to constant melodious recitation of Gurbani by her in the house while cooking and

³⁰ Another name for gursikhs.

³¹ It is a small turban worn to protect the unshorn hair and guard the 'Dasam Dwaar' (tenth gate), a spiritual opening at the top of the head.

³² Morning and evening prayers of Sikhs - Japji Sahib, Jaap Sahib, Amrit Savaiye, Benti Chaupai, Anand Sahib, Rehras Sahib and Kirtan Sohila.

cleaning, that we could hear it all day long. Every day, I and my siblings were not served breakfast and dinner until we had recited the ³³Japji Sahib and ³⁴Rehraas Sahib, respectively.

Inviting saints, sangat, ³⁵ Akhand Kirtani Jathaa, doing kirtan and meditating with them was a routine affair for my father. My father would frequently visit ³⁶Sant Ishar Singh Ji at ³⁷Rara Sahib to do Simran in his blessed presence. We would often visit famous Gurdwara Sahibs during the holidays, and visits to the Gurudwara Sahib in our locality were also frequent. My understanding of the rituals and the meaning behind them, was limited when I was a child. But since I and my siblings had been exposed to them from the very beginning, we became quite accustomed to them as we grew up.

Our parents wanted us to imbibe the traditions and rituals that they had grown up with and the children had no complaints. Mother's views regarding gender equality were restrictive, but her role in my spiritual journey was prominent. If it were not for her, I would not have been so well versed in Gurbani. If mother was a disciplinarian, father was dynamic and this added versatility in our lives. A perfect balance was beautifully maintained collectively by them. Today, when I reflect, it is easy to explicate why positive vibrations ran so high in our house.

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³³ Sikh thesis, that appears at the beginning of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

³⁴ Evening prayer of the Sikhs.

³⁵ Baptised group of Sikh people dedicated to the Sikh lifestyle. They have existed in Sikh tradition since the beginning of the Khalsa.

³⁶ Spiritual master, also referred to as a Saint, born in Alowal, in a village near Patiala, India.

³⁷ A village near Ludhiana city in Punjab, India. This village was transformed from simple Rara to Rara Sahib due to the visit by the sixth Sikh Guru, Guru Hargobind Ji.

Sprouting

My entire educational journey was anchored in Chandigarh. After elementary school and higher studies, I graduated from Government College for women. Later, I went on to pursue a master's degree in microbiology from Punjab University. My father always motivated me, to pursue not only academic but co-curricular activities as well. He made sure that I did not perceive my gender as an impediment and this encouragement drove me to put my best foot forward in everything. Other than father's encouragement, challenging my mother's regressive belief that "Girls cannot do everything" also invoked in me, a zeal to excel. For quite some time, this zeal, partly dictated my choice of clothes too. I used to dress up like a tomboy for the longest time, and never hesitated before standing up against any boy, who dared to misbehave with me or tried to bully me.

My father's confidence fuelled such a sense of positive self-belief in me, that I only aimed for success in life. I strived to be an arête at everything, be it academically or experientially. Till class 8th I graduated from two classes simultaneously and on scholarship. Therefore, I studied the curriculum of classes 3rd and 4th, 5th, and 6th, and then finally 7th and 8th together. I always scored full marks in all subjects and came first in every grade. Fortunate enough to be blessed with a photographic memory at the time, deduction of even half a mark in any examination was unacceptable to me. Apart from being rewarded in studies, I would be accolated with an all-rounder trophy every year for being an exceptional theatre artist, singer, dancer, javelin thrower, basketball player, athlete, national level rifle shooter, horse rider and an ³⁸NCC cadet. Owing to my academic and co-

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³⁸ The National Cadet Corps (NCC) is the youth wing of the Indian Armed Forces.

curricular achievements, I was dearly loved by all my teachers. Teachers at school and college would even end up arguing, when they could not agree as to which event I would practice for, first.

Obedience towards my elders, and allegiance towards my academic as well as creative pursuits, did not cast a shadow on my playful side at all. The naughty child in me would surface often on different occasions. Once, on being appointed as the class monitor, I very conveniently took the liberty of telling my classmates, that only those students would be allowed to sit in the class, who would bring me some ripe mangoes to eat. Innocent pranks like these were common, but I made sure that nobody ever felt dominated or bullied by me.

From a very young age, I could sense other people's feelings easily. This empathy was probably the result of inheriting the sensitive side of my father. Every characteristic of a person from childhood till death, defines the personality of an individual in its entirety. As a child, I was unaware of how my disposition was shaping me. But today when I join the dots, it is easy to see how everything was coming together to boost my spiritual impetus.

I did not have many friends in school, college, or university. In school, girls would try to bully me rather than befriend me. They would push me or shrug at me in the school corridors. It was their competitive spirit that got the better of them, and I did not blame them. In college, I was too busy chasing multiple targets. This left me with little or no time to socialize. Preoccupied with the things I had put on my plate along with my three friends, I never felt any void. Two of them were my elder sisters, and the other was a girl named Vipal from school.

Vipal never allowed my achievements to come between our friendship. What we shared was authentic. That is the reason we have still maintained contact after all these years. Both my elder sisters Parminder and Priti fulfilled not one but two roles in my life. Soft at heart, in my eldest sister, I found a second mother. She would stitch my clothes and give me pocket money. In my middle sister I found a true companion. She would wash- iron my clothes, polish my shoes even pick and drop me to school on her bicycle.

I still cherish the memories of vacationing with my elder sister in Rajpura and riding the bicycle with my middle sister. Those faint visuals from my college time, remind me of the carefree days. It is funny, how one forgets so much about one's childhood or youth, but some memories just stick. It is the solace of a fond memory, that has the power to keep it alive.

Back in those days, the motorcycle was my chosen mode of conveyance. I used to see my brother riding it and think 'If he can, I can.' I learnt how to drive a motorcycle and a car on my own. If I wanted to learn something, it was enough for me to observe someone do something just once. My mother never approved of me driving, but my father, as always, gave his vote of consent and that was enough. Just riding a motorcycle did not quench my thirst for adventure, so I went a step ahead and took a keen interest in trying various stunts on the vehicle too. Other than being fearless, I grew into an individual who was eager to learn new things. Whether it was riding gliders, parachute training, driving trucks, or practicing archery, I did it all. By the time I reached college, my willpower had developed indomitably, and the word 'quit' had been erased from my dictionary. Little was I aware at the time, that this would principally navigate my course of life, and contribute to making many headways. What was important to me was achieving what I had set out to do and at times I would even ignore and out do physical limitations.

On my way to a shooting championship in Chandigarh once, an incident occurred that I would like to share. I was eighteen years old at the time and was over speeding on the motor bike. Due to the high speed, the bike happened to slip, and I fell off. The fall was so brutal, that I injured and broke my left knee. My championship was in a few hours and the thought of reaching the venue on time overshadowed everything else. Using my right leg, I restarted the bike and rushed to the hospital. The doctor told me that my wound needed stitches and before he could stitch me up, he had to anesthetize me. Not that I considered myself a superhuman, but an anaesthesia would have interfered with my shooting abilities and completely ruined my focus. Hence, I decided to get the stitches without an anaesthesia. The decision to not take the anaesthesia had been made and there was no looking back. I insisted that the doctor keep on going even though the pain while he stitched me, was agonizing. As soon as the doctor finished stitching me up, he put a cast on my knee, and I was advised complete bed rest. Not only did I make it to the competition, but I also told myself that 'Daljit you owe it to yourself to win, especially after all the hurdles you have crossed today.' It was extremely painful to shoot with a cast, but I hit the bull's eye ten times in one round, and I won. My name was engraved on a national running trophy. I was competing with the princes of Bikaner and Jaipur that day. They had the privilege of practicing with experts every day, so winning over them multiplied my victory by a few folds. After this championship I was declared a national champion and my name was suggested for Olympics. This victory was one of the most special victories of my life, and it felt truly deserved.

All readers must make a note here. There is no excuse for being unsafe at any time. I do not support or promote irresponsible driving at all. By sharing my personal incident, all I wanted to highlight was what a determined mind can do. If we allow ourselves to entirely focus on what we want, our mind cooperates and even the environment supports us.

Missing a Ground

The achievements and accolades mentioned above, have not been shared because I was proud of them. They were not important but the fact that even after winning them all, I felt a lack, is what was important to share. No matter how many titles and laurels were added to my bag, despite excelling at everything, I felt incomplete. The reader needs to know that despite accomplishing all that I did, a deep void knifed me inside. I used to find myself crying often but could not decipher the reason for it.

The ripples of this anguish even took the expression of singing at times. I would find myself sneaking in isolation, to the house terrace and singing like a lover laments in separation,

'Awaaz deke mujhe tum bulao, mohabbat main itna na humko satao'

Even though lyrics of the song mentioned above were not self-composed, I related to them immensely and perpetually found myself humming ³⁹vairaag ⁴⁰Shabads as well. Since my feeling had no affinity with this temporal terrain, I could not comprehend it completely.

Today when I reflect on my journey, the feeling of inadequacy that I felt at that time, was an indicator of what my soul was seeking. Gradually I realised, I was seeking my anchor, something that would fill my up heart and complete me – MY

⁴⁰ Hyms of Guru Granth Sahib Ji, known as Guru's word. Written in the Gurmukhi script and composed in raag, a musical score.

Shaping of Kirppanidh / 40

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³⁹ In Sikhism it describes a forsaken feeling of separation from God. It may also refer to the emotions of a devotee who is stricken with a kind of love yearning for the divine beloved lord.

GROUND. I can confidently say now that honouring my spiritual growth and everything that it has entailed, was the sole purpose of my coming into this world. With each passing year of my life, the Divine has only taken me closer to my purpose.

It was not child's play to connect all the bits and pieces of this jigsaw puzzle and discover the rich and unfathomable treasures of spiritual solace. Though the signs of it had started early, I was oblivious to them. Whenever I used to go to sleep in grade seven or eight, I would sense a light in the middle of my forehead. It was in the shape of an inverted lotus with lots of light illuminating from it. At the time neither could I comprehend what it was, nor did I share it with my father. I must have either assumed it to be a generalized experience or ignored it after perceiving it as a misconception. My understanding of God at the time was ritualistic and limited, so it was beyond me to accept, that the light could be a sign of something special.

Spiritual experiences have a wider net for interpretation unlike scientific experiences as everyone relates to spiritual occurrences with reference to their divine exposure. But an attempt has been made to document all my personal anecdotes and their interpretations, as honestly and as transparently as possible.

Becoming a Sapling

My married life began earlier than I or anyone could have predicted. Our family received a proposal from an affluent family when I was nineteen and my father asked me if I was interested. I told my father that whatever he would decide, would be acceptable to me. My father accepted the proposal, and I was married. Many around me did not understand this decision. My national rifle teacher was very disappointed, because my training for Olympics was due to begin soon. She even came to fight with my parents, as to why was I married at such a young age. My faith in father's decisions was indubitable and I did not question anything even once. I firmly believed that my father knew what was best for me and from where I am looking today. I was right.

Like most newly married girls, I also took some time to adapt to my new environment. During this phase of transition, the delight I used to find in helping others came in very handy. It aided me tremendously in overcoming any adjustments that followed. As my chores had always been taken care of by my sisters before marriage, making pickles, brooming, sweeping, washing, or cooking were all new activities for me. The joy I found in learning new things, translated to my current situation as well, and I did everything with full spirit. My stamina improved every day, and I began to take pride in my self-sufficiency.

As was the common tradition in those times of starting a family immediately after marriage, with God's grace I was also blessed with my first son at the age of nineteen and the second at twenty-one. My kids were very gentle, affectionate, and calm, as compared to the kids of their age. I do not remember tussling between their upbringing and my spiritual crusade. On the contrary, I found them to be very accommodating. They always acknowledged and appreciated my gestures, through which I

expressed my love for them. With two kids and duties around the house, I now felt quite at home with my new family.

I was learning how our perceptions have the power to affect how we feel in any situation and started realizing that new and unfamiliar circumstances are not sent to decapacitate us in any way. Rather, they are hidden opportunities, that help us to see the dormant potential within us which rarely emerges in conducive and comfortable situations.

Infestation

Soon after my second son was born, I began to have splitting headaches without an unidentified cause. Even doing the daily chores had become impossible and the intense pain used to make me cry out of helplessness all day. I met a few doctors and even went to the Gurudwara Sahib daily. Nothing worked, and it really pulled me down physically and mentally. The only person, I could think of that time, was my father. He had come to my rescue earlier also when I was expecting my children. In the tenth month of my first pregnancy, there was no movement of the baby. I never did any Simran at the time and father had just asked me to chant Waheguru. During my second delivery also, there were some complications and father had advised me to do the same. With Guruji's blessings and my father's guidance, despite the prediction of a C section by the doctors, I had been blessed with healthy babies both the times.

The thought of seeking help from my father did not just stem, from being his daughter and because he had helped me during my pregnancies. Other than his previous help, I had also seen many people visit him when they faced challenges. I was aware and knew that whatever he was doing was working, because the number of people who visited him had only increased with time. My maternal grandmother who suffered from leprosy, would have been handicapped if father had not helped her connect with Gurbani. A ⁴¹ragi Ujjagar singh's tumour had been healed after father had given him a Shabad. My father's colleague in the Air Force Surjit Singh, had become delirious once but after father connected him with Gurbani, Mr Singh had healed within a week. Incidents like these increased my hope from my father.

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⁴¹ A Sikh musician who plays hymns (shabads) in different ragas as prescribed in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

When I went to see my father, he was conducting a Gurbani healing and meditation camp at a Gurudwara in Delhi. After seeing the queue outside, I sent a message for him. The reply I received to my message was "If Daljit is here to see me as a daughter, she can break the queue and come from the back door. But she will then only get a father's blessing. If she is here for spiritual blessing like sangat, then she will have to stand in the queue and wait for her turn like everyone else." I decided to stand in the queue. When my turn came, I pleaded to him "I cannot withstand my pain anymore. You help everyone who comes to you. Please help me too."

His response was unexpected. He told me "First of all you need to understand that as a father I cannot help you. You will have to seek the Almighty's shelter. Go and consult the doctors you want to and once you are confident that nobody else can help you, then come to me. The doors of the Divine open when all other doors close and when you are convinced of that, blessings will come." I was so surprised because I had scheduled some appointments with renowned specialists but had not shared that with my father. I found myself engulfed in an extremely weird predicament after this meeting.

Since I had no choice and the pain was unbearable, my search to find the one who could take my pain away continued. I went to almost all the doctors in the city, but all of them had very different opinions without zero coherence with each other. Some doctors had diagnosed it as a tumour and some as cancer. According to them, my chances of survival were meagre. Mentally and physically drained, without any doctor left to consult anymore, I wrote a letter to my father. I wrote everything that transpired between me and the doctors. The only difference between my last request and this was that this time I did not ask

for help as a daughter. Rather, I asked for help like sangat. I did not approach a father but a 'Spiritual Mentor' and thereafter, always regarded him as my 'Spiritual mentor' first.

The change in my approach worked and my father opened up to me. The first thing he told me was about the ⁴² cycle of karma.' He said "Every ⁴³karma, is like a seed sown by us. The seed bears' fruit sooner or later. Everyone has to eat the fruits of the seeds sown. It is the immutable law of nature and is applicable on all whether we like or not." Any and every kind of suffering, is the consequence of our bad karma or deeds done in the past he insisted. I understood that he was trying to teach me that my disease was a result of my own past actions. But the question was how to undo what I had already done? Was it even possible?

My father told me that the first step is to always be mindful of our thoughts and actions. But sincere recitation of 'Bani' and chanting of God's name in remembrance, had the power to ease the consequence of the karma we commit. Asserting that 'Gurbani and Simran' have within them the power to elevate our frequency, he said I must try to cultivate a stable mind first and connect with that power with utmost faith (faith healing).

ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਨਾਜ਼ਰ ਮੰਨ ਕੇ ਇਕ ਮਨ ਇਕ ਚਿਤਿ ਹੋ ਕੇ ॥

Guru ji nu hazar nazar man ke, ik mann ik chitt hoke.

⁴² In Indian religions, it refers to a principle of cause and effect often descriptively called the principle of karma wherein intent, and actions of an individual (cause) influence the future of that individual (effect).

⁴³ In Sanskrit it means an action or deed.

Believing that Guru is present focusing with a single thought and without a doubt.

According to my father, ardent listening, and recitation of ⁴⁴Guru's words, with complete belief in his sermons, heals people unquestionably.

ਲੋਗੂ ਜਾਨੈ ਇਹੂ ਗੀਤੂ ਹੈ ਇਹੂ ਤਉ ਬਹਮ ਬੀਚਾਰ॥

Log janai ih git hai ih tau braham bichar.

People believe that this is just a song, but it is divine wisdom.

He said that "The way 'Bani and Simran' respond to our devotion and help us is magical. The words written in Guru Granth Sahib Ji are not just words, but uplifting, healing vibrations wrapped in words."

"They are much more alive and real than you and I are."

While stressing on the healing power of Bani my father made sure to emphasise on the practice of Simran as well. He did not have even an iota of doubt in the power of Gurbani, Simran and the blessings they encompass and said, "Strength of belief that enables leap of faith, is a flower that blooms only with the seed of Simran."

⁴⁴ Another name for God in Sikhism.

ਸਿਮਰਉ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਵਉ॥ Simra-o simar simar sukh paava-o

Meditate, meditate, meditate in remembrance of him and find peace.

Nutrition to my Roots

I was given a specific Shabad from 'Bani' by my father. It was related to my ailment.

ਸਿਰ ਮਸੂਕ ਰਖ਼੍ਯਾ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਹਹਮੰ ਹਸੂ ਕਾਯਾ ਰਖ਼੍ਯਾ ਪਰਮੇਸੂਰਹ ॥

Sir mastak rakhayeaa paarabrahama(n) hast kaayaa rakhayeaa paramesavaireh.

The Supreme Lord God has protected my head and forehead; the transcendent Lord has protected my hands and body.

My father recited the Shabad and taught me how it was to be done as well. I remember when father had given me the Shabad, he had asked me 'Don't you feel like knowing ⁴⁵HIM?' I was struck by the question. My face had spontaneously brightened, and I was eager to ask more. My father had said, "The Creator is the only master of our soul, and we completely belong to HIM. From HIM, we emerge and merging back in HIM is the objective." After hearing this, it felt as if my soul had heard about someone it had been aching to meet since a hundred lifetimes, and the search was over. I did not believe the things my father said just because I was his daughter, but because what he said resonated with me deep inside my gut. What he used to say felt like my soul had already heard, but only forgotten.

Immediately after my father connected me to Gurbani, with God's grace, I was blessed to do Guru Granth Sahib Ji's ⁴⁶Parkaash at home. As I had no other place, the storeroom on the third floor of my house, became Guru Sahib's Ji's room. Without even a day's delay, I had started reciting the Shabad in the presence of Guru Sahib Ji everyday with complete faith. Within

⁴⁵ The creator.

⁴⁶ Privilege of bringing the holy book – Guru Granth Sahib Ji home permanently.

a month my headaches went away, and I began to feel healthy. What the doctors were apparently calling cancer or a tumour, was erased completely and in no time. This episode laid a burly foundation of faith in me to begin with. I did not have to try hard to lay this foundation. It felt like the relationship between my soul and Gurbani had existed long before this birth. Growing up in a home whose foundation was embedded deeply in Gurmat, and the way both my children were born only rekindled that relationship. Mystic preludes of my current life, my upbringing and my soul's existing connection with the Divine had already laid my faith foundation subconsciously, only I was not aware.

Even though Guru Sahib Ji's room was in a packed space, the interiors did not matter to me at all. All that mattered was what I felt there. Without trying too hard I automatically started waking up at ⁴⁷Amrit vela, to do Simran and Bani recitation in Guru Sahib Ji's room.

As my mind stabilised and my belief strengthened, the longing for reciting Gurbani and connecting with the Guru, increased. This longing had especially increased enormously after I had started waking up at Amrit vela. Since I had studied Punjabi till class five only, I was not very adept at reading Gurmukhi, but I was determined to understand the Bani profoundly. Guruji's words were so gripping, that nothing seemed more appealing that delving into the celestial world. As I began to understand Bani's depth with meaning, I would read and experience a catharsis simultaneously. Not only did I complete reading the Guru Granth Sahib Ji within six months, but also began to feel the connect with the Divine more

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 $^{^{47}}$ Integral religious time used for daily meditation and recitation of Gurbani hymns, during last part of the night before the dawn of the early morning sun.

evocatively. Overwhelmed with what I was experiencing, my heart's exhilaration knew no bounds.

All my worldly accomplishments, the laurels, and all the staggering victories and triumphs from my youth, seemed so inconsequential now. The thought of why I wasted so much time before discovering such a priceless treasure of ⁴⁸Dhur Ki Bani before baffled me for quite some time. I was filled with remorse for the time that could not be brought back.

⁴⁸ A sound which is not produced by physical concussion - the mystic melody of divine. Unending and knowns no limits.

Regeneration

Two to three years after starting Simran and recitation of Bani, I suffered from severe typhoid. Since I had already embarked on my spiritual journey with Guru's grace, my 'Abhyaas' (practice) came to my rescue during this time and helped me immensely. My typhoid got serious, and I was bedridden in the hospital. Along with typhoid, I also got pneumonia, andd my condition deteriorated even more. Neither my temperature was going down, nor could I eat anything. Due to the severity of the illness, I was confined to the hospital bed for almost two months. Without the energy to even speak, I was getting weaker and weaker, and the doctors also gave up on me. My father had also come to visit me, but he did not ask about my physical health at all. All he was concerned about was my mind and his only question was "How is your state of mind?" To this I had responded "chardi Kala." After hearing my answer, he said "Nothing will happen to you then but keep on doing Simran." It was very reassuring to hear my father say those words. Since I did not have the energy to even sit at the time, I used to meditate while lying down in the bed, as the only thing that kept me going at that time was Simran.

In deep meditation one day, the bed on which I was lying started to vibrate towards the roof and ultimately touched it. At the same time, I was surrounded by water on all sides, and was literally drowning. It is difficult to share this experience without sounding unreal. But my life is a string of many such countless episodes, which have left me and the people around me in complete awe of the Divine's magic. Soon after I felt I was drowning; I saw a pair of small hands that pulled me out of the water. Gasping for air, I felt like I could breathe again. I heard a

voice which very vividly said that this was the ⁴⁹Dhan Shri Guru Harkrishan Ji, who saved you. I did not know what had happened and was completely bewildered.

As astounded as many readers might be after reading this, in that moment, I could not make any sense of what had happened either. The emotions I felt were a mixed bag of gratitude, doubt, amazement, relief, joy, happiness, perplexity and much more. Until then, I had never felt so connected to Guru Harkrishan Ji, and had never visited Gurudwara ⁵⁰Bangla Sahib Ji but after this incident, I could not wait to go there.

After this miracle, my fever which had not gone down in two months, completely vanished. I was stable and, in a condition, to retreat. Upon reaching home, I wondered and wondered, how Guru Sahib Ji's blessings made me stand back on my feet, helping me overcome that phase of misery. All that I went through was quite surreal to me. The very next day after coming back home, I was healthy enough to resume Simran.

The man-made world hardly ever allows us to believe in magic and miracles. We are stubbornly conditioned to disregard anything our minds cannot justify. I was prey to this conditioning as well. Hence, post my experience, I had an urge to get a validation for what I had experienced in the hospital. I went through an internal conflict between what I thought was possible, and what happened with me. Even though my heart believed the Guru, my mind stopped me from surrendering completely. I was desperate for a sign and prayed for the same. My prayer at the time was "Oh! Guru Harkrishan Ji, I know it is very low and disgraceful of me to ask you this, but every time my soul wishes

⁴⁹ Youngest and eighth Guru of the Sikhs. He became Guru at the age of five and is also known as bal (child) Guru.

⁵⁰ One of the most prominent Gurudwaras in Delhi. It is known for its association with Guru Harkrishan Ji.

to thank you for saving my life, my mind gets in the way. It mocks me by labelling my experience as a mere delusion and nothing more. I ask you with folded hands, to kindly give me a sign to overcome this scepticism. Bless me with guidance, to believe your faith and ⁵¹rehmat." As a part of my daily practice, I went to Guru Sahib Ji's room to meditate. I opened the door and bowed down to Guruji. What I witnessed, left me speechless. All I can say is that it was breathtakingly beautiful. I saw the impressions of two small hands on the wall.

"Imprints of Dhan Guru Harkrishan Sahib Ji"

The joy I felt in that moment was very different from anything I had ever felt before. It could be distinguished from the worldly happiness we are accustomed to. I felt like Guruji had kept HIS hand over my head, and I was in loving protection. I felt blissfully peaceful, yet apologetic for the disbelief I had shown towards the Guru, but my happiness overshadowed my guilt. I quickly went downstairs, held my sister—in—law's arm, and brought her to the room upstairs. When she saw it, she was equally taken aback in disbelief and wonder.

Tears of joy and gratitude welled up in my eyes. My request was obviously an expression of the fact, that I was allowing my mind to get in the way of my devotion. Even though I doubted the almighty, HE still came to strengthen my faith. The benevolence of the Divine moved me. HE forgives all our doubts, mistakes, and comes to our rescue, when we seek HIM from our core. His magnanimity for listening to an offender and sinner like me, filled my heart with gratitude and unshakeable trust. I bowed down again and again asking for forgiveness.

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⁵¹ Divine mercy.

Leaves to my Branches

A shower of Gurmat wisdom, was washing away old patterns of thoughts and beliefs. Relationships, meaning of life, purpose of life, literally everything, was now looked at with a fresh perspective. I once asked my father, "What is the purpose of my marriage in my devotional journey?" to which he had replied "Your karam would have come in the way of your devotional journey, so it had to be vanquished. Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the socially active renunciate had also propagated the ⁵²grihast way of life. He considered it to be a catalyst in one's spiritual journey, as opposed to the life of a celibate. The presence of our relationships in our lives, is instrumental in our transcendental journey. But we must remember that only the Guru is real, and our aim is to merge with HIM. We get so absorbed within our relations and roles, that we end up shaping our entire life around them." I then understood that relations and associations in our lives, are an important medium to learn certain lessons and resolve past karma. By accepting our relationships opportunities to serve, we must learn what they teach and grow from those learnings.

By now all my doubts had also vanished, after the sign Guru Harkrishan Ji gave me, and my mind became more clear, concentrated, and focused. The light that I used to feel on my forehead, during my teenage resurfaced prominently. I had not taken it seriously earlier, but now I found it hard to ignore. Now whenever I did Simran, my attention would automatically go to the light. Along with the light, Sobha Singh's painting of Guru Nanak Dev Ji mounted on a wall in one of the rooms in my house, also used to harness my attention. I was quite habituated of catching a glimpse of it every now and then. One day, Guru

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⁵² The second stage in the Brahmanic ashrama in which a man assumes the duties and responsibilities of a householder.

Nanak from the painting, started smiling at me. Not only did he smile at me I felt that he began to walk with me everywhere and talk to me. I rejoiced within whenever I would witness magical moments like these. This continued for four to six months. Today when I reflect on that episode, the only explanation seems to be the projection of my intense devotion. I discussed it with my father and his answers helped me clear my mind.

My father said that "No manmade form or structure could be compared to the actual expanse of the Guru. He told me to focus only and only on Waheguru, his qualities and nothing else and added that while meditating, I should chant to ⁵³Mul Mantar and/or Waheguru with strict focus on the breath – ⁵⁴Swaas Swaas Simran. He also mentioned that if you get distracted, then bring your attention back to the Shabad Guru, and strengthen your focus with the support of the sound of the same. Your focus will enhance, if you connect with the meaning of the words that you chant in meditation. Father guided me from time to time, but only briefly as he knew my own experiences would educate me the best.

My father's Swaas Swaas Simran guidance gave an impetus to my meditation practice. While meditating on ⁵⁵Naam, I began to see glimpses of light and many other magical things now. Curious to witness a new mystical wonder unfold daily, I was encouraged to meditate more and more. Even four to five hours of meditation did not quench my thirst. And on the days, I would not be able to meditate for at least four hours, I used to punish myself by staying hungry. I thought that the hunger pangs would

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⁵³ Opening verse of the Sikh scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib Ji-depicting Waheguru qualities. They summarize the essential teaching of Guru Nanak, thus constituting a succinct doctrinal statement of Sikhism.

⁵⁴ Remembering God with each breath.

⁵⁵ Name of God.

remind me to remember God, and that way I would never forget HIM. My father strictly condemned this and explained to me that to attain God, there was no need to harm ourselves. He was clear that self-injury is against the principles of Gurmat and will not lead anyone anywhere. He said "Gurmat teaches us, that only by working on our ⁵⁶Mann its ⁵⁷Swaroop can be unveiled. It gives us an awareness on how the mind gets deluded and gets triggered to fall into mind traps." My father's focus always remained on taming the mind, without hurting the body. His policy was,

"Be kind to your body and tough with your Mann."

Body is simply subservient to the mind. Mind is the one which thinks, plans, prods, plots, and the body is designed to serve it till the last breath. A mind is like a dog's tail, the moment we let it loose, it instantly coils back to conquer us. So, if anyone needs to be mastered it is the Mann is what I was learning on this journey.

⁵⁶ Mind.

⁵⁷ True/real nature.

Blooming with Flowers

The divine began to support me in the most amazing ways. Every morning at 2:00 a.m., a voice began to wake me up for Simran. In the peak summer season, the temperature would go up to forty degrees Celsius and the water for bathing, would be very hot but when I would touch the water it would feel cold. Since the storeroom where I used to meditate, was very small, there was no provision for a fan or air conditioner and due to the heat, it used to get very humid. But under HIS loving grace, it used to get so cold while I did Simran there that I sometimes required a shawl to wrap myself. The warm and cosy embrace of Gurbani and Simran, gave me insurmountable comfort and tranquillity. It was strange that the moment I would step out of the room, I would begin to feel hot again. It is hard to say whether Guruji changed the temperature of the room for me or was Bani helping me in keeping my mind so stable, that nothing external mattered. In the way of my spiritual practice, anything that felt like a hurdle would involuntarily dissolve making the road to what I was seeking easier than ever.

Endless hours began to pass by while chanting Mul Mantar and doing Waheguru ⁵⁸jaap. Mul Mantar became like a magnet towards which I got pulled with great force. Most of the time now, I would feel its vibrations rotating between my eyebrows without any effort. It would be correct to say that I was obsessed with chanting it.

The depth of my devotion and the frequency of the miracles in my environment, progressed parallelly. One day, a radiant light hit me on the area between the forehead and the eyebrows with an extreme force. I had a splitting headache and literally saw a door of a cave opening in a crooked manner on the same area. That was a sign of my third eye spot (chakra) opening and even

58 Chanting.

my father confirmed it. With closed eyes, I was able to see caves, gardens, temples, bells ringing in temples, mountains, sun, and trees successively. Everything I saw, was unlike anything that I had ever seen before. As my consciousness (surt) travelled I saw night sky with stars and daylight simultaneously. Whenever I sat for meditation, I would witness colossal, supernatural, and elaborate shows. Even though I could not interpret what I experienced, it was still enough for me to know that there existed a much bigger reality than what our open eyes perceived. Every time I meditated after this experience, I witnessed unique adventures.

After my third eye opened, I was completely consumed with reciting Naam. To meditate at odd hours of the day and without any disturbance, I would hide behind the curtains and inside the trunks. Every day, I would witness a new sublime experience, which motivated me to find new corners in the house to do my meditation. At forty-eight degrees Celsius, I would go to the top of the terrace to meditate for hours. It was very difficult to explain to people why I was doing what I was doing. While doing a daily task I would get lost in bliss, and my eyes would shut while standing itself. My eyes became droopy, and I used to cry in HIS remembrance all the time. Seeing my devotional passion and my pining for God, people began to call me ⁵⁹Mira and ⁶⁰junooni. They were not wrong. It was true, I had lost myself to the Guru and became ignorant of others said about me. I did not feel misunderstood, as I knew that to understand what I was going through one had to either experience it or be a seeker of it. To fall in love with the Creator the way I did and feel the love of the Divine for oneself, is not an ordinary experience. Expecting

⁵⁹ Mira Bai was a Hindu princess and poet who dedicated her life to Lord Krishna.

⁶⁰ Obsessed with God's love.

people to understand it, would have been very naïve of me. So, I did not keep any such expectations. My Guru had taken all the space there was, in my mind and heart so now there was no room for any validations anymore.

I started going to the Gurdwara even more than before now, and did the seva of cleaning the floor, and washing utensils and would never refuse any invitation to any spiritual congregation. Day by day ⁶¹Bakshish started pouring more and more. Simran became my priority and food, water, everyone, everything else became secondary for me. I meditated for at least eight to ten hours every day.

In the beginning after my third eye opened, I used to only see magical objects during my meditation. But after few days, as the intensity of the whole experience increased, I began to see myself walking towards the light of Guru through the light of the Guru.

The more powerful and closer I felt to the divine, the stronger my instinct and intuition became. Once when my relative visited us, it slipped from my mouth, that he was going to have a son after seven daughters. And so, he did. Another time when I had lost my ring, during the meditation I saw where the ring was without me having to try.

My intuition was getting stronger and my supplications more efficacious. One of my relatives wanted a son as her second child. I went to Bangla Sahib Ji and did ⁶²Ardas for her, which was accepted. The same relative's daughter was in the grip of brain fever once. I took seven rounds around her daughter and prayed to God to pass that child's disease onto me. That is exactly

⁶¹ Blessing.

⁶² The Sikh 'Ardaas' or supplication is a set prayer of the Sikhs seeking divine grace and blessings.

what happened. I instantly felt feverish, and the child was relieved.

One of my father's sangat member was childless. During my meditation, I saw that due to the couple's old karmas, they would not have a child in this birth, but if they prayed earnestly, they could be blessed with a child in their next birth. I told them the same, when they came to me, but they requested me to do Ardas for them. I melted upon seeing how desperate they were for a child and agreed. As soon as I began Ardas, I saw my hands swelling badly. Only I could see the swelling, and no one else had any idea of what I was going through. I could not hold anything after Ardas, and my hands were completely devoid of any sensation. It was a clear indication for me to never interfere in Nature's ways.

It hit me hard that by participating in acts like mentioned above, I was interfering with God's will. Positive energy is a treasure of grace, that you build through prayers and meditation. By taking matters of the Divine in your own hands, not only do you deplete that energy, but you also indirectly try to compete with the Creator. My father condemned it and warned me that this competition could have detrimental consequences. I prayed, meditated, and apologized for my follies.

My father sternly discouraged me and taught me that motivating others to connect with God on their own, is more important than praying for them. He stressed that praying for chardi kala and good will of everyone is acceptable but interfering with God's ⁶³hukam is not.

⁶³ Guru's command or order.

ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਧੁੜਿ ਮੰਗੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਕੀ ਜੋ ਆਪਿ ਜਪੈ ਅਵਰਹ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ ॥

Jan naanak dhoor ma(n)gai tis gursikh kee jo aap japai avareh
naam japaavai

Servant Nanak begs for the dust of the feet of that Gursikh, who himself chants the Naam, and inspires other to chant it.

Accumulation of worldly materials is like collecting pebbles. It is of value only in this realm. But accumulation of Lord's name, is like collecting currency of a bank account that extends beyond this realm. I had learnt that remembrance of God, is equivalent to collecting liquid Gold. But once I realised that the seva of helping people connect with the Naam was, like collecting Diamonds of the eternal realm, that is what became my life's goal, and I never dared to repeat my previous follies again.

Cutting the Weeds

At twenty-three, I was able to learn and memorize the entire Guru Granth Sahib Ji by heart. When people saw me reciting Bani flawlessly at Gurudwara Sahib they flattered me, and I sensed my ego inflating. Praise poured in from multiple sources. As my ego skyrocketed, my positive temperament, stamina to do Simran and bliss, began to come down. I had stopped feeling joyful and in harmony with Guruji. Within two weeks of this, I felt completely miserable. I realized that by taking pleasure in my pride, I had committed a debacle.

I made ⁶⁴Deg Prashad and did an Ardas. Embarrassed, I asked for forgiveness "Waheguru Ji, I have committed a blunder by giving into my pride. It is taking me away from you. I do not need anything, that alienates me from you. All I need is your love." I cried and cried. Lamenting, I confessed, "Waheguru Ji, the flattery engulfed me and ripped me away from all your mystic treasures. Your love is the air to my lungs. Please do not deprive me of the intoxication of your love. I cannot survive without it. I will be ruined." Thankfully, my prayers were heard, and everything went back to the way it was. Rather, everything became even more blissful after this incident. This incident left an indelible impression on my mind. It was clear - Pride and God are inversely proportional to each other. Guru resides only in the heart of the humble.

After seeing how I felt upon being deprived of Guru's love, ⁶⁵Prema Bhakti for the Divine increased, and pangs of separation gnawed in. This craving for an even deeper connection kept increasing and made me weep for ten to twelve hours daily. I felt

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⁶⁴ In Sikhism, Prashad is a sweet dish made with equal portions of whole wheat, clarified butter, sugar and double quantity of water. After it is made, an Ardas is done, and it is always first offered to Guru.

⁶⁵ Highest form of love for God.

HIM but that was not enough. I wanted to lose myself in HIM irrevocably.

Sharing my thoughts, I would talk to Guruji about how difficult it was for me to bear the separation that I felt. I would say, "I know you hear me, but I want to hear you, see you and completely merge in you. My plight is well known to you, more than I know it. You are ⁶⁶antaryami, you know the deepest secrets of my heart, and you know what my heart craves for. Then why do you keep me away from you?" Tears would roll down from my eyes to feet as I kept wailing all day. My eyes used to swell because of this, but the tears never stopped.

Then one morning at Amrit Vela, during Simran, a voice ordered me "You need to move. Your time here is over. Go where you are awaited." It was an instruction by ⁶⁷Babaji. I took it as a clue and followed it. I had no idea where I was supposed to go, or what I was supposed to do. The only person who came to my mind after I heard the voice, was my mentor – my father. I packed my bags and went to see him immediately.

I had not informed anyone at my maternal house before leaving but upon seeing me, my father said "Oh! You are here." His reaction was a testimony to the fact that he was already expecting me. Later, my sister told me that father had gotten my room ready, a day before I came. After finding this out, I was confident that I had done the right thing by following the voice that I had heard.

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⁶⁶ A Sanskrit term that means inner witness. It can refer to the Higher Self or the power of God residing within the individual soul.

⁶⁷ Another way of addressing God.

Extension of my Branches

I came home on March 18th, 1986, but even before I had come home, my father had booked a ticket to United States of America for April 20th,1986. He had booked only one ticket which was for him but told me that "Daljit you are also coming with me." I was perplexed and could not piece the statement together initially. Without a passport in my hand, I wondered about the possibility of having all the necessary travel documents, ready in just a month. My faith in my father was insurmountable, and by now I had learnt to accept every surprise in life with a smile. He told me that vigorous Simran and meditation on the following Shabad would not let my faith deter.

ਬਲੂ ਹੋਆ ਬੰਧਨ ਛੂਟੇ ਸਭੂ ਕਿਛੂ ਹੋਤ ਉਪਾਇ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਤੁਮਰੈ ਹਾਥ ਮੈ ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਹੋਤ ਸਹਾਇ॥

Bal hoaa ba(n)dhan chhute sabh kichh hot upai Naanak sabh kichh tumarai haath mai tum hee hot Sahai

My strength has been restored, and my bonds have been broken; now, I can do everything.

Nanak: everything is in your hands, Lord; You are my Helper and Support.

I did not doubt my father at all, but the turn of events in the days that followed, were quite incomprehensible even for me. I applied for a passport soon after my father told me that I was going to accompany him, but one of my relatives complained to the passport agency and an inquiry was ordered. This delayed the process. When I informed my father, he asked me a question, "Who is more powerful – Guru or the relative?" I instantly replied, "Guru." After listening to my response, father reassured me that I was flying with him. Even though I was emptyhanded, without a passport, visa, or a ticket, my father asked me to pack my bags on 16th April. I must admit, it was a real test of my faith and surrender, but I still went ahead and packed my bags. The next day, on 17th April, around 9:00 a.m., I went to the passport office to check the status of my passport. I had not heard anything from their office, and it was my last chance to get a passport before the flight. The official there told me that since an inquiry had been set up, the chances of me getting my passport were next to none. I was refused the passport bluntly on my face. Dejected for a brief period, I sat at the passport office and began to cry. I was experiencing mixed feelings at the time. One part of me was sad, and the other part was still hopeful. After crying for some time. I started Simran and recited the Shabad father had given me. Instantly my faith bounced back in full force, and I was convinced that I had nothing to worry about.

Once my faith was reinstated, I saw the officer proceeding towards me with a warm smile. He said, "As ordered by the higher authorities, here's your passport madam." I could not decide whether I should laugh or cry out of joy. With gratitude in my heart, I rushed straight to the U.S embassy and reached there around 11:45 a.m. Thankfully the U.S embassy and I both were in Delhi, so I could reach within forty-five minutes. The gates at the embassy used to close at around 11:30 a.m. and no one was allowed to enter after that. But I had to try. Upon reaching the

embassy, the watchman opened the gate for me and said, "Come, Madam, I was waiting for you only." Amazed, like a deer dazzled by the headlights, I asked him "Are you talking to me?" He said, "Yes madam I am talking to you. Please hurry up and come inside." It is funny to me today, that on one hand I was getting stupefied, and on the other, I was behaving as if everything was happening exactly the way it was meant to.

Since I was already behind time, I got a little late in filling out the form. At noon, they shut the windows and stopped accepting any more forms. But suddenly the window opened, and the lady said, "We were waiting for you only madam, please hand over your to passport me." The next step was the interview, but the man who was interviewing me, said something coquettish and I got offended. This led to an argument. The official got agitated and said, "I'll see who gives you a visa now." My audacious self-retorted, and replied, "My God is the one to give me the visa, not you." I called upon his supervisor and complained about his misbehaviour. Displeased I questioned the supervisor "Is this the way you treat women here?" The supervisor pacified me and asked me to wait in the lobby.

As soon as I sat, I saw a painting of Guru Nanak Dev Ji in the lobby. It was exactly like Sobha Singh's painting in my house. When I saw it, my mouth opened in sheer amazement and joy. I wondered why an American Embassy would have Guru Nanak Ji's painting in their office. I felt blessed to see it, and more confident in whatever I had set out to do. I waited in the lobby till 4:30 p.m. approximately, after which the supervisor called me and apologized for the delay. He informed me that I had got the visa for double the time I had applied for. With a U.S visa valid for ten years in my hand, I thanked him, blessed him, and rushed. But on my way out, I saw that there was no painting of Guru Nanak anywhere, rather there was just a television in the room. I realised;

Waheguru Ji was just reassuring me that I would get the visa. As I had a close affinity with that picture of Guru Sahib Ji, HE must have chosen this method, to pacify my anguish in the moment.

It was a race against time, and I hurried, as I still had to buy a ticket. My father could have bought the ticket for me, but he wanted me to go through these miracles myself and strengthen my faith. He made sure that I never forgot that all obstacles, challenges, karmas, and powers – no matter how big, will always be small for Guru. I rushed to Connaught place and reached Air India's office around 6:30 p.m. It had closed around 6:10 p.m., but luckily, I met one of their employees in the elevator. I told him I was there to buy a ticket to America. He told me the plane was full. I pleaded and pleaded, until he agreed to check again. When he checked, he was taken aback to see that the seat right next to my father, had been cancelled just five minutes previously. With that cancellation, I got my passport, visa, and ticket all on the same day.

On 20th of April, my father and I took the flight to the United States of America. I remembered that few months ago, when I had bought a new house, I had refused to throw a housewarming celebration. I had a very strong feeling I was not going to live there for long. Everyone had asked me where I was going, and I had replied, "I don't know where, all I know is that I am going very far." Now "Everything was falling in place" and I knew where I was going.

To call it "The miracle trip" will not be an exaggeration at all, as the way it got aligned was nothing less than a series of the Almighty's marvels. What sync and surrender with the Universe can do, I saw play out live, with my eyes. How the Universe rescues you is not your job to think. All you must do is work on believing, that if you have entrusted the Universe, it will come to your rescue.

A New Habitat

For the initial six months after reaching America I, my father stayed with my aunt and her family in New York. My aunt, an extremely loving sister to my father, was a lady whose face always gleamed with happiness. I had never seen a happier or more loving soul than her before. Once when I asked her, "Aunty ji, when will the maid come?" she cheerfully replied, "I am the maid here." Her humility was touching and inspiring. She and her family never got tired of serving us. They cared for us selflessly and made sure we had everything we needed.

Life was completely different in this new habitat. I and my father made full use of the opportunity that we had been blessed with. We could meditate together and as much as we wanted. We would be indulged in Simran all day, and even all night at times. Chanting the Lord's name had become like breathing for me now. I felt connected to the Almighty all the time, as if HIS name had seeped into each cell of my body. At my aunt's house, deeply drenched in devotional worship, fourteen to sixteen hours of meditation every day, became a necessity.

I always wanted to do an ⁶⁸Akhand paath by myself, and I wanted to do it in one sitting. I shared this wish with my father, at my aunt's house. He blessed me and advised me to fast for a day before commencing. With the grace of Guru ji and the guidance of my father I did the whole ⁶⁹ paath sincerely and passionately. Neither did I eat or drink anything in between, nor did I sleep or use the washroom. It took me four days to complete it, but I did not stop at all in between.

I was in an inexplicable supreme bliss. The bluish light I used to see on my third eye, with my eyes closed was now visible even with open eyes. The splendour of the light had the power to

⁶⁸ A continuous reading of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji from front to back.

⁶⁹ Prayer.

illuminate an entire room and this light had become like a friend to me. At night, if I could not sleep, I would say "Oh! Dear light please help me sleep" and it would rock me to sleep like a baby. My father disapproved and felt that by indulging in acts like these I was wasting the special energy for petty uses.

The Almighty's blessings had begun to walk with me steadfastly and due to this, the energy had also lifted so high within me, that I began to have out of body experiences. One day, when I was sitting on a recliner in deep meditation, my consciousness (surt) left my body from my third eye. I instantly screamed loudly and started flying high in the sky. I was sitting on something like an open helicopter, and I literally saw my body going out of my body. My third eye was the equivalent of a television screen in that moment. I could see my body on the recliner and my consciousness in the mountains, gardens, and in between planets all at once. Barren lands became lush green, and rain descended on dry lands. I could not speak a word even if I tried. This ethereal voyage could not be compared to anything I had seen before, not even to the most bewitchingly beautiful sceneries of the physical realm. It all lasted for less than five minutes, but the energy travelled so fast that it reached all the way to my feet from my right ear in no time. Just when my feet found it hard to withstand the intense energy, I felt myself back within the body on the recliner. When I opened my eyes, I saw my father standing beside me with his hand on my forehead. I touched and pinched myself to check if I was alive. My father told me "You will have such experiences frequently now. Get used to them. There is no reason to be scared. These experiences are a testimony to the fact that you are already in protection." After the first time, incidents of a similar nature became a routine affair. At times such celestial spectacles would last for few minutes only, and at other times they would last for a longer duration.

It was a very blessed time. I and my father made some beautiful memories with my aunt and her family. But after it was clear to both me and my father, that my stay in America was going to be for an extended period, he asked me to look for a job. Even though my aunt and her family were supportive and made us feel very welcome at their house, my father and I did not want me to be dependent on anyone. Thereafter, we rented an apartment and moved from my aunt's house.

Becoming a Tree

A completely new chapter started for me, with finding a job in New York city. With zero experience in this sphere, I somehow managed to get myself a job at a diner. On the first day of my job, I steered myself through a snowstorm. Asking for whereabouts on the way, discovering what a subway was, I finally landed at my destination. I had to quit my first job on the first day itself as it involved serving meat and alcohol. Even though I had no other job offer, I had to quit because it was against my principles to serve meat and alcohol to earn a living. After that, I started working at a cloth shop. My owner was not very compassionate and financially exploited me by under paying me.

Another stint I did was at an export house. My task was to pick two big bags of clothes and carry them from one avenue to another. Neither did I have warm clothes at the time, nor the right shoes for the weather. It was only the warmth of the Divine's love, that kept me going. Thankfully by the end of the month, I bought the things I needed from the pay I got. I could have asked anyone in my family to send me money but my I considered my self-sufficiency my jewel. After some time, I got a job at an entry-level accessioning. By now, my mother was also with us in America. As my green card was under process the remuneration was not much, so I did three jobs in the beginning. One at accessioning, and the other two as a phlebotomist.

Theft and burglary were rampant there due to the economic strain New York was facing at the time. But I never felt scared, not even while travelling alone at midnight. Late at night one Friday evening, just when I was about to enter the premises of my apartment's building, two men came out of nowhere and pointed a gun at me. They asked me to hand over my wallet to them. I told them, "Today is Friday, to give you something I need to withdraw my pay out." One man told the other, "Let's check

her!" The moment one of them took a step towards me, I sternly replied, "You cannot touch me, it's against my religion." I told them to back off. They looked at each other and one of them said "Let's leave the lady alone." I did not feel scared even for a second.

It is because I never felt alone, I knew my God walked with me and protected me no matter where I was -

ਗੁਰੂ ਅੰਗ ਸੰਗ॥

Guru Ang Sang

The dynamic, loving energy of the universe vibrates in every cell of my being.

In the middle of carving a new abode for myself and my family, I developed an allergy, due to which, whenever I ate or drank something my entire body swelled up. As a result, I could not eat or drink anything. None of the doctors could determine the trigger of the allergy. Even in the past, none of the doctors had been able to diagnose or cure any of my illnesses. I knew who my saviour is. I began with the Shabad therapy again and started reciting,

ਘੋਰ ਦੁਖ੍ਯੰ ਅਨਿਕ ਹਤਯੰ ਜਨਮ ਦਾਰਿਦ੍ਰੰ ਮਹਾ ਬਿਖ੍ਯਾਦੰ॥ Shaping of Kirppanidh / 83

ਮਿਟੰਤ ਸਗਲ ਸਿਮਰੰਤ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੈਸੇ ਪਾਵਕ ਕਾਸਟ ਭਸਮੰ ਕਰੋਤਿ॥

Ghor dhukhaye(n) anik hataye(n) janam dhaaridhra(n) mahaa bikhayeaadha(n) Mita(n)t sagal simara(n)t har naam naanak jaise paavak kaasat bhasama(n) karot

Excruciating pain, countless killings, reincarnation, poverty, and terrible misery.

All are destroyed by meditating in remembrance on the Lord's

Name

O Nanak, just as fire reduces piles of wood to ashes.

If we try to comprehend the meaning of these blessed words, they can emancipate us from any misery. I had been suffering from the allergy since a year, but within eleven days of chanting this Shabad, I was completely cured. Just like each medicine targets a specific problem, each Shabad also has its unique purpose. The condition is that when we are reciting it, our focus and concentration must be completely on the words of the Shabad. It is very important to recite the Shabad correctly and pay attention to the vibration of the sound of the words while reciting it. The faith in the power of the Shabad, is what heals us and to harness that faith, we need to connect with it completely.

After recovering from my allergy, another test came my way. After standing for fourteen hours at my job, the nerves in the heels of my feet had become weak. Because of this, I used to experience immense pain in my heels. I started visiting a physiotherapist, but the pain did not go away. I decided to discontinue with the therapy. It was not giving me any result and was only taking my time, energy, and money. One day I got really annoyed with the pain. I looked at my feet and the words that came out of my mouth were, "ਬਹੁਤ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ, ਠੀਕ ਹੋ ਜਾ ਤੇ ਹੁਣ

ਠੀਕ ਹੋ ਜਾ meaning "Enough is enough: Get healthy and get healthy now." It was reflexive but an authoritative reaction that had come out, without any deliberation. But to my surprise, the pain completely vanished after this instance. I was as surprised by it as you must be after reading this incident right now. I was not suddenly blessed with any supernatural powers or their like.

The coming true of such utterances, was a result of my strengthened conviction, determination, and mental stamina. It was the result of the perception of my challenges, as opportunities of growth. Each human being has within themselves the capacity to unlock this strength and the only way to do it, is by strengthening the connection with the divine. My past experiences had increased my band width for adjustment and adaptation. Gurbani and Simran gave me the strength to overcome the fear of the unknown. Together, my experiences and HIS grace helped me cope in a new land seamlessly.

Soon after this I and my children were called for a green card interview in India. If it were not for the blessings that walked with me, I do not think a young girl like me with zero experience in the working sector, would have survived in a new country.

The Homeland Wind

Within few days after reaching New Delhi -India, I applied for my children's passports. The date for the green card interview was due in a week, but the passports were yet to arrive. It reminded me of my 'miracle trip' and I did not feel anxious at all. By now I had evolved from thinking that I was being tested, to thinking that Babaji is showing me how faith can make the impossible, possible. I asked around and found a person at ⁷⁰Janpath who could help me get information on the status of the passports. That man quoted a heavy price, but I told him, "I am ready to pay. I want to try my best; rest is up to God."

Every challenge we face in life is there to teach us something. Without putting in our efforts, we would never be able to learn what we are destined to learn through the challenge. It is pertinent, that before expecting anything from God, we put our best foot forward first. "God helps those who help themselves" is a simple old saying, but very true and relevant even today. Be it physical, mental, or devotional labour, "Effort, then surrender + blessing = job done."

Three days after paying the man the passports were in my hands. I knew that the one and only to get the job done, was Guruji but since the man was a medium, I bought him a gift as a token of thanks.

After the way, the kids and I got our passports, there was no doubt in my mind about getting a green card. I was sure that we would get it. And we did. Usually, as part of the normal protocol before someone gets a passport in India, a police inquiry is conducted. But in our case the officials came to inquire after two weeks of our receiving the passports. This only meant that there was no record of the fact that we had already received our documents. It was surprising yet amusing to witness this. I did

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⁷⁰ Area in New Delhi.

not say anything to the cops and let them carry out their routine proceedings.

The day of travelling was drawing near, but my younger son fell extremely sick. His haemoglobin dropped to eight and he began to suffer from seizures. Many specialists were consulted, but nobody was sure about what the problem was. I finally took him to Bangla Sahib Ji and made him take a few dips at the ⁷¹Sarovar. While my son was taking dips, I recited a Shabad simultaneously.

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਿਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਧਿਆਈਐ ਜਿਸੁ ਡਿਠੇ ਸਭਿ ਦੁਖਿ ਜਾਇ॥

Sree harikirashan dhiaaieeaai jis ddithe sabh dhukh jai

I remember Guru Sri Har Kishan, by whose sight all the sufferings vanish.

After we got back from the Gurudwara Sahib, his fever rose to 103 degrees, but I did not once worry or even once think that he will not be well. I did Simran with full belief and visualized him getting well. With God's grace, my son recovered before it was time for us to fly. He never got seizures after that. Complete focus on the Shabad of the Guru while chanting, is the key to witness miracles. It can take some time before one gets there, but once we begin faith shows us what it can do.

Initially, when we begin Simran, it is easy to sway from Guruji's words. Since they are like an unknown territory, our mind drifts away. We are habituated to giving up and want to get back to our familiar comfort zones. But if we show irrevocable trust in Guru's words, and indomitable consistency in our

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 $^{^{71}}$ Sacred water of a pool in the vicinity of Gurudwara. It may be square or rectangular with steps descending into the water.

practice, the channel of communication between us and grace becomes clearer. We all can have the good fortune of reaching the exalted state where our consciousness single-mindedly focuses on connecting with Guruji's words alone and nothing else.

ਇਕ ਮਨ ਇਕ ਚਿੱਤ

Ik mann Ik chitt

Single thought without doubt.

Visions and vibrations experienced then while meditating, are on a higher level and the magical journey begins. Like Arjuna in Mahabharata, our focus should be merely on the eye of the fish and nowhere else. When you realise that nobody has the capacity to help you and sincerely invest your faith in HIM, HE comes for you.



One of the first things I had done after returning to India, was plan a trip to ⁷²Hemkunt Sahib Ji. This Gurudwara is devoted to Guru Gobind Singh Ji, and I have always felt a strong pull towards HIM. With its setting of a glacial lake and location at an elevation of 4160 meters, this Gurudwara Sahib is not open throughout the year. I was feeling extremely lucky and grateful, that Babaji had finally decided to call me there. My younger son was too small to travel to such a high altitude, so my elder son accompanied me. Although the trip to this place was very meaningful to me, but encounters that happened on the way, made it even more memorable.

While trekking up the path to the Gurudwara Sahib my son went ahead of me on a horse and for quite a long span of stretch in between, it was just me on the path. I could not see anybody else. Just when I was beginning to wonder if I was lost, a black dog came to my rescue and guided me to the Gurudwara Sahib. It felt like the dog was specially sent to guide me, because rarely do we find any dogs on such high altitudes. Upon reaching there I took a dip in the Sarovar and went inside the Gurudwara Sahib to take Babaji's blessings. After doing my prayers when I went to receive the Deg parshaad, but the sevadar told me it was finished. But when I folded my hands, looked up and did an Ardas for HIS blessing, at that very moment, the sevadar came back with a serving from inside. If we believe, we receive. My Guru did not let me leave emptyhanded. I felt like my visit was accepted and blessed by Babaji.

Another validation I got on this pilgrimage was from a very old gursikh ⁷³sadhu on my way back. There was something very mystical about his appearance. He had a long white beard and

⁷² It is a Sikh place of worship and pilgrimage sit in Uttarakhand, India.

⁷³ A holy man, sage or ascetic.

was wearing spectacles. His clothes were not very clean, and it seemed as if he had come straight from a jungle. Upon bridging a little distance and coming closer he guided me downhill and I asked him, "How do you know this route?" He replied, "I visit this place quite often." He walked with me and my son a little, and upon reaching a turning point, he said,

ਤੂਹਾਨੁ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੇ

Tuhanu ⁷⁴darshan hon wale ne

You will be having darshan soon.

and gave me a Shabad recite.

ਦਰਮਾਦੇ ਠਾਢੇ ਦਰਬਾਰਿ॥

ਤੁਝ ਬਿਨੁ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਕਰੈ ਕੋ ਮੇਰੀ ਦਰਸਨੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਖੋਲ੍ ਕਿਵਾਰ ॥

Dharamaadhe thaadde Dharabaar

Tujh bin surat karai ko meree dharasan dheejai kholi(h) kivaar

⁷⁴ An opportunity to see or meet the divine.

I stand humbly at Your Court.

Who else can take care of me other than You? Please open Your door and grant me the blessed vision of Your darshan.

I was ecstatic after what he told me. In that moment, I felt I was exactly where I needed to be, and that statement from the sadhu felt like a direct message from Guru. I asked the sadhu, "Where do you live?" he said, "75 Nada sahib Gurudwara." I decided in that moment itself that I would buy him a new pair of spectacles, as the ones he was wearing seemed dilapidated. The message the sage had given me was so valuable to me that I had to go back and find him.

After coming back from Hemkunt Sahib Ji, I bought a pair of spectacles and went to Nada Sahib Ji. I asked almost everyone in the area about an old ascetic, but everyone said the same thing, "We haven't seen anyone like that here." I wondered about him and what he said for many days. If I share who I think he was and what he said really meant, I might create many illusions for the reader, so I have decided to withhold that personal interpretation here.

 $^{^{75}}$ Sikh Gurudwara in Panchkula district of Haryana State, India. $Shaping\ of\ Kirppanidh\ /\ 93$

Metamorphosis

Guru's love taught me to see him everywhere and in everyone. It made me want to be a better daughter, sister, mother, wife, co-worker and much more. I tried to teach my children all the values I had learnt from my father.

Now that I was a green card holder, finding a job that was more aligned with my degree, gained precedence over having a job at all. I started doing temporary jobs in American companies on a pay I deserved, and so now affording a more spacious accommodation became possible. My new house gave me more space and opportunity for my abhyaas. Even though we were in a new space and there was more room, I liked to be in the vicinity of Guru Sahib Ji's Prakaash. Since the year 1978, my bedroom had been divided into two parts. In one part was Guru Granth Sahib Ji Da Prakaash, and the other part was for my use. I slept on a carpet on the floor, for thirteen years, as I had sworn that till the time, I do not get to meet my God, I will not sleep on the bed. God does not demand any such external sacrifices from us. I was on a mission and whatever I did was out of my personal devotion for the divine. The readers do not have to indulge in the same actions. Rather I would encourage you all to discover your own unique way in which you feel more connected to God.

My meditative practice became stronger than ever, and one afternoon while sitting in a corner at a Gurudwara Sahib near my house in the year 1991, I got attuned very quickly. During my fervid experience, what I was experiencing that day was very new and powerful. A very powerful light had hit me on my Dasam dwar (tenth gate) and I was asked.

"Are you ready to receive?"

I had taken a few seconds before saying "Yes!" Even though I was ready, I had hesitated because I thought the light would cut me into two halves. I had allowed my mind to get in the way. Mixed feelings of doubt, disbelief had stopped me from saying 'Yes' quickly. As an instant consequence, the flow of the divine blessing was interrupted, the light had gone, and it became pitch dark.

Space for the Guru to enter is created when one is thoughtless and emotionless. Emptying ourselves is the only way to create this space. After all these years of practicing trust, forgiveness, compassion, humility and abhyaas, the fact that I still hesitated, reflected that I lacked complete surrender. And that day I learnt yet another important lesson "To merge with the divine, you must die while you are alive. You cannot be affected by anything."

ਮੁਰਦਾ ਹੋਇ ਮੁਰੀਦੂ ਨ ਗਲੀ ਹੋਵਣਾ॥

Muradhaa hoi mureedh na galee hovanaa

Only by becoming dead in life, i.e., totally detached, and not through mere verbal jargon one can become true disciple.

It was a test of my love and faith versus my fear. I knew I had missed a golden opportunity but did not quit and started working on how I could surrender more. First, I asked for Shaping of Kirppanidh / 96

forgiveness, for not showing more trust, and then started meditating even more after this incident.

I increased my abhyaas of Mul Mantar and slept for merely three or three and a half hours every day. I raised two children, did a job, and survived on three hours of sleep. Even then I was full of energy, and it was all because of divine blessings. I did everything because I wanted to and not because I had to. I was pining for the Lord inside, more and more every day. My heart ached for HIM badly, and I wanted to be embraced by HIS unconditional love. I felt so purposeless after the incident in the Gurudwara. It was like craving for a lifeline. I was ready to give whatever it took of me to have that blessing again. I meditated from 1 a.m. – 7:00 a.m. every day. Thereafter, any interstices I would get I would use, to meditate, for e.g., my lunch hour. Whether I was meditating or not, I would be absorbed in HIS name all the time.

On October 5th, 1991, I slept after doing a desperate Ardas. In Ardas that night before sleeping, I cried reciting a vairaag shabad. Earnestly I begged that please accept me,

ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਅਪਨੀ ਯਾਦ ਵਿਚ ਸੁਲਾਓ, ਅਪਨੀ ਯਾਦ ਵਿਚ ਉਠਾਓ

Babaji apni yaad vich sulao, apni yaad vich uthao

O! Waheguru bless me to sleep in your remembrance and bless me to wake up in your remembrance.

ਕਰਮਹੀਨ ਧਨ ਕਰੈ ਬਿਨੰਤੀ ਕਦਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਆਵੈ ਵਾਰੀ॥

karamahin dhan karai binanti kad nanak ayai yari

The unfortunate soul-bride makes this prayer: O Nanak, when will my turn come?

That night I had very scary and creepy nightmares. In one of them, I was shown hell. With a foul smell spread all around, people were tied upside down and were being horrifically punished. Any and everywhere I looked, I saw people howling, crying, screeching, and screaming. I saw myself among those people, petrified and trying to find a way out of that place.

I was being followed by frightening, red-eyed, dangerous, dark-faced demons with small horns. They had a stick in one hand and a sword in the other. My heart was racing, and I was literally climbing walls, jumping across dungeons, while running for my life. They ran as fast as me while chasing me. It was the month of October and the winter season had already begun in New York, but I was sweating badly all over. Dead tired of running, I fell and uttered, "I am exhausted and cannot run anymore - take my life if that's what you want." I was startled and woke up. It was 00:00 hours in the morning. These nightmares must have lasted for two hours. What I had seen in those two hours was so terrifying that it was very difficult to go

back to sleep, so I decided to sit for Simran instead. I took a shower, did an Ardas and started Simran.

After experiencing the nightmares, I questioned Guruji "What did I do to deserve this?" I considered myself to be a true devotee. In my Ardas I was crying loudly, and said, "Guruji, I try my best to be as sincere as possible towards you. I am praying and doing Simran most of the time. It is always my intention to have positive thoughts for everyone. Then what could be the meaning of these nightmares? Why were those scary people coming for me?" There was a pause for barely one or two seconds, and then I heard a thundering voice,

ਜਿਨੇ ਸਾਹ ਉਸਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਉਹ ਸਭ ਨਰਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਭਾਗੀ ਹਨ ॥

Jinne saah ohde naam toh bina lende hon, ohne saah narkan de bhaaghi hann

All the breaths you take in the absence of his remembrance, all those breaths deserve hell.

After hearing this, I felt like my blood turned to water. I was perplexed, and thought to myself, "How is it possible? In the middle of working and raising kids, I might lose out on seconds, and in those seconds, I may not be able to remember Naam. Other than forgetting him in some seconds I wondered how I could

remember HIM while sleeping?" According to me I was doing my best, and hearing that was not enough shook my world.

When we do Naam abhyaas or indulge in any spiritual practice, we can get ensnared by the rewards we get on the way and lose sight of our destination. We assume we are doing well and get entrapped in the subtle ego, which is so subtle that even identifying it is a challenge. By reducing my devotion to nothing, God was shedding my ego. Not only ego, but also judgement and superiority. According to me, I had already shed these vices, but little did I know that they still existed. I was pushed to reassess my devotion, that I was giving so much credit to.

ਇਕ ਤਿਲ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਭਗਤਿ ਕਿਨੇਹੀ ਹੋਇ॥

Eik til piaaraa visarai bhagat kinehee hoi ||

If someone forgets the Beloved Lord, even for an instant, what sort of devotion is that?

After accepting that I was not even a candidate for meeting him, I felt like I stood nowhere. It felt like the sky had fallen upon me, the Earth had slipped from beneath me, and my life was over. The pain in those moments was immeasurable. The Almighty made me realize that not only was I nothing, but I was below nothing. Everything I had believed until then was all shattered.

I and my years of devotion meant nothing if my God did not accept it. Getting turned down by someone you love is not easy to endure. For me, Babaji was above everyone and for HIM I was ready to sacrifice my everything. Whatever I could do in my power, I had done but seeing it was not enough, I hit a dead end. I felt that without HIS acceptance my entire life would go waste. It was the most painful rejection of my life. For the treasure of HIS acceptance, I was ready to sacrifice my life also, as without him I felt purposeless, helpless, and hopeless.

ਬਖਸ਼ਨ ਹਾਰੇ ਬਕਸ਼ ਲੇ

Bakshan haare baksh le

O! All knowing lord, forgive me for my folly.

ਤੇਰੀ ਰਹਿਮਤ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਹੈ, ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਮਾ ਪਾਪਾ ਤੋਂ ਵਡੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਰਹਿਮਤ

ਹੈ, ਜੇਹੜਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਵੀ ਲੈਂਦਾ,

ਤੂੰ ਉਹਦੇ ਤੇ ਵੀ ਉਦਾਰ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਬਖਸ਼ ਦੇ ਤੇ ਆਪੇ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜ ਦੇ, ਰਹਿਮ ਰਹਿਮ ਰਹਿਮ, ਮੇਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਬਿਨਾ ਜਾਨ ਨਿੱਕਲਦੀ ਹੈ, ਮੈਨ ਆਪਣਾ ਗੁਲਾਮ

ਬਣਾ ਲੈ॥

Teri rehmat vich bahut shakti hai, mere karma paapan to vaddi teri rehmat hai, jehra tera naam nahi vi lenda, ohde layi vi tu ehna udaar hai. mainu vi baksh lai te aapne naal jod de, reham reham. meri tuhade bina jaan nikal di hai, mainu aapna gulam bana lo

Your Grace is so powerful, so kind. You are magnanimous and bigger than my sins. You even forgive the ones, who do not remember you at all. Please forgive me also and merge me with yourself. Please show me Mercy Mercy Mercy. I cannot live without you, please make me your slave if that is what it takes.

All that I was saying was being said without any thought, it was flowing from inside without any effort.

ਮੋਹਿ ਨਾ ਬਿਸਾਰਹੁ ਮੈ ਜਨ ਤੇਰਾ॥

Moh n bisarah main jan tera

Please do not forget me! I am Your humble servant.

The estrangement I was feeling in those moments surfaced and shed many egoistic beliefs, which were hiding inside. The lesson to learn was, that we are not even capable of remembering HIM on our own. It is the Lord who chooses us and makes us capable enough to remember HIM and chant HIS name. I realised, that despite my sincerity, dedication, and devotion, it was impossible to do Swaas Swaas Simran without HIS blessing.

ਮੋਹਿ ਗਰੀਬ ਕਉ ਲੇਹੁ ਰਲਾਇ॥

Mohi Gareeb ko laehu ralaae

Merge me, the poor one, with You, O Lord; Shaping of Kirppanidh / 103

ਨਾਨਕ ਆਇ ਪਏ ਸਰਣਾਇ॥

Naanak aae peae saranaae

Nanak has come to Your Sanctuary

I realized, that if the Almighty had not chosen to bless me with HIS Kirpa (Grace), I would not have even been able to become a devotee. Without HIS benediction, my soul could not have been enthralled by all the metaphysical expeditions I had been on. By becoming HIS devotee, I was not doing anything extraordinary, rather by choosing me HE had done me the biggest favour of my life. The Almighty could have chosen anyone in this world, but I was lucky that HE chose me. My thoughts immediately changed from, 'I am' to 'It was all HIM.' Now I knew I had nothing to give HIM. Like a bankrupt person, I believed I had been robbed of all that I felt I possessed. I felt hollow.

ਜਦੋਂ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਹੈ ਹੀ ਉਸਦਾ, ਕੀ ਦੇ ਸਕਦੀ ਹਾਂ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਫੇਰ ਮੈਂ? ਨਾ ਮੈਂ ਕੁਝ ਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਆਪੇ ਕੁਝ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਹਾਂ | Jad hai hi usda, ki de sakdee haan usnu pher mein, na mein kuch haa te na he aap kuch kar sakdee haa

When everything is His, what can I offer him? Neither am I anything nor can I do anything just myself.

Other than my vices there was nothing left to offer. How could a beggar offer anything to the One who already possessed every atom, every molecule of my body?

ਕਬੀਰ ਮੇਰਾ ਮੁਝ ਮਹਿ ਕਿਛੁ ਨਹੀ ਜੋ ਕਿਛੁ ਹੈ ਸੋ ਤੇਰਾ॥

Kabeer maeraa mujh mehi kish nehee jo kish hai so thaeraa

Kabeer, nothing is mine within me. Whatever there is, is Yours,

O Lord.

ਤੇਰਾ ਤੁਝ ਕਉ ਸਉਪਤੇ ਕਿਆ ਲਾਗੈ ਮੇਰਾ॥

thaeraa thujh ko soupathae kiaa laagai maeraa

If I surrender to You what is already Yours, what is my contribution?

I remembered how God had come to ⁷⁶Sadhna Ji's rescue once, when he had prayed earnestly with utmost humility and surrender.

He had chanted the words:

ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਛੁ ਹਉ ਨਹੀ ਕਿਛੁ ਆਹਿ ਨ ਮੋਰਾ॥

ਅਉਸਰ ਲਜਾ ਰਾਖਿ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਧਨਾ ਜਨੂ ਤੋਰਾ॥

Mai naahee kachh hau nahee kichh aaeh na moraa

Aausar lajaa raakh leh sadhana jan toraa

I am nothing, I have nothing, and nothing belongs to me.

Now, protect my honour; Sadhana is Your humble

servant.

 $^{^{76}}$ He was a north Indian poet, saint, mystic and one of the devotees whose hymn was incorporated in Guru Granth Sahib.

It was clearly visible to me how deeply we are consumed with pride, that even recognising it becomes inconceivable. A devotee can pray for years on one foot, cross a thousand miles, swim across continents, hang upside down, do anything and everything, but until he sheds his pride, merging with God is impossible.

"When you become nothing i, when you become everything."

Realizing where I was going wrong, made me very emotional. I continued to chant the same Shabad as Sadhna Ji, and did Simran passionately, egolessly for hours.

Suddenly there was a thunderous noise on my third eye as if a hole had been punched there. Just as a plane takes off on a runway, my consciousness took off. My body began to vibrate at a high speed, and I moved out of my physical form. It is difficult to accurately describe what happened, due to nature of the experience itself. After the vibrations began, it was hard to decipher whether it was my consciousness or my body which was taken to the Sarovar in ⁷⁷ Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar. But I literally felt as though my physical body took a holy dip in the Sarovar. The Shabad that was playing in the Gurudwara at the time was

⁷⁷ Also known as The Golden Temple, it is a Gurudwara located in the city of Amritsar, Punjab, India. It is the preeminent spiritual site of Sikhism.

ਸੰਤਹੁ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਸਰੋਵਰੁ ਨੀਕਾ॥

ਜੋ ਨਾਵੈ ਸੋ ਕੁਲੂ ਤਰਾਵੈ ਉਧਾਰੂ ਹੋਆ ਹੈ ਜੀ ਕਾ॥

Sa(n)tahu raamadhaas sarovar neekaa Jo naavai so kul tarravai udhaar hoaa hai jee kaa

O Saints, the purifying pool of ⁷⁸Guru Ram Das is sublime. Whoever bathes in it, his family and ancestry are saved, and his soul is saved as well.

On my navel point, I felt a throbbing pain and my ⁷⁹kundalini, jarringly opened at the base of my spine. A lotus shaped flower, which was upside down in my navel originally, opened and became upright. Then a luminous current from the base of the back, went to my ⁸⁰dasam dwar starting Waheguru ⁸¹Ajapa Jaap at my navel. Thereafter, my entire body heated up and started vibrating with full force in ecstasy.

⁷⁸ Fourth guru of Sikhs.

⁷⁹ Latent female energy at navel point.

⁸⁰ The Tenth Door or Gate in addition to the physical body having nine openings (two eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth and the organs of procreation and excretion). It is at the top of the head.

⁸¹ Japa means chanting of the mantra and Ajapa means being in constant awareness of the mantra. It is the next step to vocal mantra chanting.

It felt like I was nowhere and everywhere, all at the same time. Jaap of $-\$

ਤੂ ਹੀ ਤੂ

Tu hi Tu

You and only You

reverberated in every cell of my body and vibrated on my Dasam Dwar (tenth gate) along with the Shabad,

ਤੋਹੀ ਮੋਹੀ ਮੋਹੀ ਤੋਹੀ ਅੰਤਰ ਕੈਸਾ॥

ਕਨਕ ਕਟਿਕ ਜਲ ਤਰੰਗ ਜੈਸਾ ॥

Tohi mohi mohi tohi antar kaisa kanak katik jal tarang jaisa

You are me, and I am You-what is the difference between us?

We are like gold and the bracelet, or water and the waves.

Shaping of Kirppanidh / 109

Losing myself, into the one, where I came from, was an experience that cannot be weaved into words. The ripples created by the vibrations had no boundaries. I felt limitless and unanimous with the entire cosmos. Everything outside of me and everything within me, was one. All dualities had dissolved. There were no walls, no roofs, just blazing and dazzling lights disseminating till the sky all around. All I could see was the light and myself. Any limitation of any kind, be it physical, mental, geographical did not exist at all. I was vibrating in oneness.

We all are aware of how exhilarating is the feeling of love is. I want the reader to imagine what it must have felt like, when I coalesced transcendentally, with the source of love. That same feeling of exhilaration multiplied a zillion times, is what I was experiencing in those moments. My soul was rotating and oscillating swiftly in lightness. The light I saw was so radiant as if it were coming out of a thousand suns.

It was so intense that after a point I became unconscious. I have not been able to describe even ten percent of what I experienced. Words fall short when one is trying to speak a language of the spiritual realm in a terrestrial domain. After I became unconscious, that radiant light lifted me, and I felt as though my stay on the Earth was over. I cannot disclose, what happened while I was unconscious because I was told not to, but I would like to share what happened after I became conscious again.

Metamorphosed

ਰੂਪੰਤਰ

A big brush almost the size of seven to ten toothbrushes cleansed my mouth, palate, tongue, and teeth. It had never felt so clean and fresh before. My Dasam Dwar had opened wide, and a semi thick cold flowing nectar ⁸²Amrit started to fall on the back of my throat. My mouth tasted sweet. Amrit began to slowly spread across every hair follicle as if somebody were massaging it very gently, seeping it deep within the nucleus of every cell. My hair follicles felt like they had become like tongues which were tasting the sweet nectar through the skin. A pleasant smell had spread all around. It was a semi-awakened yet ecstatic state, but I had no control over what was happening to me. I lay there wonderstruck for many hours. I could not move, could not speak - the awe of it all had totally consumed me. Physically, it was as if I were dead, but I do not think I had ever felt so alive before. No choice of words will ever be too accurate to precisely describe this experience.

Then I was approached by some unfamiliar extra-terrestrial beings. They said, "We wish to take you to an ⁸³Astral planet." I asked them what that was, and I was then told, "It exists between Earth and God." We need your services and will give you whatever you ask for. I told them that "I am a devotee of ⁸⁴Akaal Purakh. I was born to only serve HIM and that I need nothing. I am under the protection of the Almighty and you cannot take me." On hearing that, they did not say anything further, and left

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⁸² Syrup considered by Sikhs to be divine.

⁸³ Nonphysical realm of existence in which the physical human body is said to have a counterpart.

⁸⁴ Timeless, Immortal, Non-temporal – Term integral to Sikh philosophy.

immediately. We must always remember that Guru always protects us everywhere. We are never alone.

ਸਜਣ ਸੇਈ ਨਾਲਿ ਮੈਂ ਚਲਦਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ ਚਲੰਨਿ੍॥

ਜਿਥੈ ਲੇਖਾ ਮੰਗੀਐ ਤਿਥੈ ਖਤੇ ਦਿਸੰਨਿ॥

Sajan seiee naal mai chaladhiaa naal chala(n)ni(h)

Jithai lekhaa ma(n)geeaai tithai khare dhisa(n)n

Guru alone is my friend, who travels along with me; In that place, where the accounts are called for, HE appears standing with me.

A glittering magnificent golden carriage laden with gems and a peacock in front alighted from the sky and I was made to sit on it. After I sat on it, I literally floated in the air, feeling as light as a feather. Where I was taken and what I saw after that, is way beyond a human mind's imagination. All the people there, were young and attractive. Sickness, disease, or affliction of any sort did not exist. The entire atmosphere was abounding with joy and cheer. It was a sheer delight to be there. Gurbani from Guru Granth Sahib Ji had disseminated all around the Universe and a bright light emanated from within them. Everything around them was completely engulfed in their enigmatic, divine light. I was in an ambience of captivating, different, soulful melodies

completely unheard before. Kirtan was going on and intoxicated with the bliss of Naam, people were meditating everywhere. I was welcomed with reverence; love, and the people there made me wear a garland of flowers.

On my third eye, without me even having to try, Mul Mantar, followed by 85Nitnem, various Shabads, 86Asa di Waar, and Waheguru Simran were vibrating constantly in a revolving manner. I could not halt the outpour of these divine blessings even if I tried and became unconscious again. Coming in and out of Simran, becoming conscious and falling into unconsciousness, was all happening involuntarily and repeatedly that day.

As shared before also, I have always felt a dearness towards Guru Gobind Singh Ji, so I begged to have his darshan. What my eyes beheld after that, was incomprehensible. I saw a glimpse of Guru Gobind Singh Ji and the light emanating from him stretched from the Earth far across the infinite sky, encapsulating the entire universe. His expansiveness and grandeur could not be contained, and I became unconscious again.

I was then shown my previous births, after which I discovered that my current birth is my fifteenth birth. In the first nine births I saw myself engulfed in vices and maya. Then in the tenth birth I met my father who was a saint. I meditated with his guidance and served him wholeheartedly, after which he told me "You will do bhakti in the next five births. In your fifteenth birth you will be my daughter, you will get enlightened and serve others."

 $^{^{85}}$ A collection of Sikh hymns ($\mathit{Gurbani}$) to be read minimally 3 different times of the day.

⁸⁶ Meaning "A ballad of hope," is a collection of 24 stanzas (pauris) in the Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

Further, I was informed that based on my cycle of karmas, I would have to be born four more times before being blessed with liberation (mukkti). I prayed to Guru Ji to allow me to merge within HIS love in this birth itself. I did not want to wait for more births, before going into where I was meant to be. HIS grace showed mercy on me and said, "Then you will go through many tests, including the trials you were to face in your forthcoming births." I was told that even though my devotion was accepted, and I was blessed with enlightenment, but it could not rid me of my past karmas. Consistent Bani and Simran could reduce or forward them, but I would still face physical challenges and be scrutinized for ⁸⁷Kaam, Krodh, Lobh, Moh and Ahankar.

Outbursts of passion made me cry and I felt as if Guru came and sat in my heart. I wanted to be closer to God and in my intention to get purer, I innocently asked Guru ji,

ਮੈ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਾਵਾਂ ਲੈ ਲਵਾਂ?

"Main tuhade naal laavan le laa?"

Can I marry you?

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⁸⁷ In Sikhism, the five Thieves also called the five vices are the five major weaknesses of the human personality at variance with its spiritual essence, and are known as "thieves" because they steal a person's inherent common sense. They are kaam (lust), krodh (wrath), lobh (greed), moh (attachment) and ahankar (ego or excessive pride).

The response to my request was, "No need for that."

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਦੀ ਦਾਤ ਲੈ ਲੈਣਾ ਹੀ ਮੇਰਾ ਨਾਲ ਇਕ ਮਿਕ ਹੋਣਾ ਹੈ

Amrit di daat le lena hi mere naal ek mik hona hai

After getting baptized you will be mine.

When you will partake Amrit from ⁸⁸"The Panj Pyare", you will see my Swaroop in them. You need not worry about anything anymore. I will take care of you." It was a clear message for me to get baptized as an Amritdhari.

After the passing of a few hours, I saw my apartment again. While still trying to regain consciousness, I thanked God for whatever I had witnessed. Immediately, after my gratitude prayer, I saw two white birds on my windowsill. They resembled pigeons but were quite big in size. I had never seen birds like that before. I am not sure they even exist. They had gleaming feathers and looked magnificently beautiful. Smiling while looking at me, they sang in a sweet voice "Guru Guru Guru" very loudly. After hearing my Guru's name, I realised Guru ji was reassuring me in the physical realm also. He was letting me know, that he had

Shaping of Kirppanidh / 116

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⁸⁸ In Sikh tradition, the *Panj Pyare* is the term used for the Five Beloved: the men who were initiated into the *khalsa* (the brotherhood of the Sikh faith) under the leadership of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The Panj Pyare are deeply revered by Sikhs as symbols of steadfastness and devotion.

accepted me. After the birds flew away, I got immersed in Simran again.

What I experienced and how I experienced it, is unique to my personal journey. It does not mean that only people who practice Sikhism can have experiences like this. Be it a Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian or someone from any other faith, to merge with the divine all you need to do is reach the pure, elevated frequency of universe. The frequency of highest peak of unconditional love. Even Guru Granth Sahib Ji has reference of fifteen ⁸⁹bhagats who are from different religions. The tools or mediums that you choose to get there are your individual choice and destiny.

While all the above was happening, my body lay on the floor in prone position like a vegetable, for many hours. I even defecated in my pants. Somehow, I mustered the strength to go to the restroom to clean myself. It was a mission to even take a shower, as I had zero energy. Consciousness was travelling repeatedly, my whole body was shaking badly, and it was difficult to find my balance.

After I manged to clean myself, I bowed down to Guruji in gratitude again for all HIS blessings. Throughout the entire episode, neither had I eaten nor drunk anything, but I did not feel hungry or thirsty at all. Satiation for food and water continued for few days. Intoxicated by the divine glory, I was mute. In the evening when my family who had gone to my aunt's house, came back, I could communicate with them only in sign language. To even speak a word felt impossible. My eyes could still not open properly, so I did not go to work also.

Even though my physical body was still coping from the remnants of spiritual bliss, I was feeling serene and silent.

⁸⁹ Dedicated devotees.

When I was finally able to speak a little, I called my father to share what happened and felt fortunate to have someone who could understand my experience. I told him how my soul was devouring Amrit every second. Remembering his own enlightenment experience and beaming with joy he said, "Oh! My dearest child, the Guru has accepted your devotion and you have been enlightened." My father was nineteen, when he got enlightened. He was in a pit in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib Ji Parkaash, in the middle of ⁹⁰chaliya, when he had his own experience of meeting Guruji. After sharing his experience, my father asked me to read the book *Jail Chithian – Biography of Sant Randhir Singh Ji*.

Synchronously, the same day I had received a call from a Gurudwara Sahib nearby. They informed me that some extra books of ⁹¹Sant Randhir Singh Ji were there in the Gurudwara, and I was called to ask if I wanted them. I enquired if they had *Jail Chithian*. The man on the phone promptly replied "Yes." Soon after the phone call the man from the Gurudwara Sahib came and handed over the books to me. After listening to my father's story and reading *Jail Chitian*, I was able to relate to them and feel little less overwhelmed. After I finished reading the book, I took a deep breath and started feeling normal.

It had been five days since the blessed episode on 10th October, but I could not open my eyes so I did Ardas, "Babaji the duties that you have delegated to me in this life, must be taken care of. Please bless me with the strength to complete them efficiently. Grant me with the brawn I will need, to fulfil my roles." My eyes finally opened properly after Ardas, and I was

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⁹⁰ Religiously meditating and/or praying or visiting a holy place for forty days consecutively.

⁹¹ He was a Sikh leader who was involved in various anti-British activities during 1914-1916.

able to eat something. My eyes continued to stay absorbed with the light long after the episode, so I used to wear sunglasses. I slowly resumed worldly life, but something was different. My soul was whirling with grace and enraptured in bliss. This hypnotic state continued for a very long time. It will not be an exaggeration to say, that I feel that lightness experienced during the episode even today. It has stayed with me.

Soon after, I resumed worldly life. As directed, I first went for ⁹²Amritsanchar. During the ceremony, I felt Guru Gobind Singh Ji's power with such intensity that I could not even stand. It was very difficult to even complete the ceremony, as my body was shaking throughout the whole experience. I immediately had to lie down once I managed to reach home. Lying down, I was immersed in Simran enjoying the bliss of Amrit in and out.

ਝਿਮਿ ਝਿਮਿ ਵਰਸੈ ਅੰਮਿ੍ਤ ਧਾਰਾ ॥

Jhim jhim varasai anmrith dhaaraa

Slowly, gently, drop by drop, the stream of nectar trickles down within.

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⁹² Also called Khande di Pahul, it is an initiation rite ceremony started by Guru Gobind Singh Ji to become an Amritdhari.

ਮਨੂ ਪੀਵੈ ਸੂਨਿ ਸਬਦੂ ਬੀਚਾਰਾ ॥

Mann peeve mann Shabad bichara

The mind drinks it in, hearing and reflecting on the Word of the Shabad.

With Amrit of Naam inside and blessing of Amritdaat outside,

I felt COMPLETE and my life felt worthwhile.

Becoming Kirppanidh

After my enlightenment, my father did an, Ardas and blessed me with a new name which became my spiritual name. He blessed me to be his successor.

From Daljit I became Kirppanidh.

ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਨਿਧੱ Kirppanidh

Treasure of GRACE

Shaping of Kirppanidh / 120

When you see the Swaroop of the Almighty, everything begins to feel completely meaningless. The external world, which had already stopped holding much importance even before my enlightenment, became less than zero in my eyes now. The quantity of clothes and shoes I owned, seemed unnecessary. Barring a few suits, I gave away everything else. Some clothes and shoes I gave my friends, and some I donated to other people. I did not see myself in the mirror for about six months to a year. Communication became very limited, precise at home, and at my workplace.

Only when my children once expressed that they felt I did not dress appropriately, is when I realised that I was being unfair to the people around me. It took me almost one year to find my balance after the enlightenment. I introspected and realised that all the roles and responsibilities I have in life, are also Guruji's blessings. There was a reason for these duties to be entrusted upon me. They also must be taken care of, and thereafter I started taking more interest in my appearance and attire. I understood that while honouring the Divine, I could not ignore HIS creations, I had to serve them for HE existed in them too.

A Tree of Miracles

The Guru turned an ordinary tree like me, into one which began to bloom in miracles. We all have within us, the seed to access the eternal. All we have to do is turn towards the sun of Almighty's light.

I returned to work on 11th October. It was the last working day of my temporary job. My colleagues had organized a pizza party for me and started inquiring, if had a new job offer. I replied, "Not yet but God will take care." We were still in the middle of our conversation when we got a call from the main office. My colleague handed me the phone saying, "DK there is a call for you." I assumed it must be my seniors calling to bid me goodbye. It was my manager, but he was calling to say, "We will be very fortunate if you join our company as a lab supervisor." I had put in a request, to hire me as an entry-level phlebotomist.

I had been refused for an entry level job earlier but then I got selected for a position which I had not even applied for. I was not eligible for this position before, because I was not certified. But due to a ⁹³grandfather clause that was put in application a week ago, anyone who had done their masters in biology, was eligible to be a supervisor without certification. It was only because of this clause, that I was able to get the job of a supervisor, otherwise it would have taken me one and a half years to just get the certification. Cheerful and grateful, I asked my employers when I could join. They said that the paperwork required for the job was already complete; only my signatures were pending so I could join from Monday, which was 14th October. Guruji did not let me be jobless even for a day. The clause was revoked after my working tenure was over. I was not surprised and like always, bowed my head down in gratitude a

⁹³ Refers to a section of a law, regulation, or other legal document that limits how changes will be applied existing prior to the change.

zillion times. I urge all the readers to unflinchingly believe in the Almighty as HIS grace can convert even the biggest bumps into soft landings for his devotees.

After enlightenment, my self-belief grew manifolds, and I did not allow the weaknesses of my mind to overpower me at all. One day, on my way back from work, my body started heating up and I felt extremely feverish. I was very disoriented. The windows, doors, and walls around me all began to revolve. When I checked on the thermometer, it showed that I had 106-degree fever. I got up, jumped into a cold shower, wore my clothes, made my son sit right next to me, and drove to the doctor. When we arrived at the clinic, the doctor said, "Seeing you drive in this condition is like seeing the eighth wonder of my life." Affinity with Gurbani and Simran empowers us to face the perils of life with extreme composure and faith. The mind stops feeling alone, scared, and anxious. This makes more room for the Divine to function, turning all impossibilities into possibilities.

God had always been generous with HIS blessings on me, but after Guruji's Darshan it was like the gates to the land of Grace had opened even wider for me.

While going to work I used to pass through two tolls. I would pay fifty cents at one toll, and \$2.5 at the other. I would often get late because of waiting in the long queues at the toll. One day, while waiting in the long queue I thought to myself that there should only be one toll instead of two. Within a week of having that thought, those two tolls merged into one.

During the winter season, in the month of December, a snowstorm was predicted one day. A lot of snow had amassed on the windshield of my car. I requested an employee at the gas station to help me clean the snow off the windshield. His disposition was quite harsh, and he blatantly refused. I was very disappointed at his rudeness and mumbled to myself, "If the

employees at the station cannot assist people who come here, it should shut down." Within a month that petrol station shut down. Another gas company took over, and the new employees were extremely cooperative and kind to their customers.

These incidents shook me inside. It literally felt like God was closely listening to not just everything I was saying, but also what I was thinking. I realized then that I should be extremely vigilant of what I say or even think.

Whatever happened in my life after enlightenment was evidence of the Divine's power and magnanimity. The Guru had said 'I will take care of you.' He meant it and showed it.

On the day of a yearly inspection once, I got late as I was meditating. But when I reached my workplace, the inspection officials arrived later than me as well. Due to some unforeseen activity, the tolls bridge on their route had halted for some time.

When you make Guru your priority then Guru makes you, HIS priority.

While driving through a snowstorm once, I ran short of gas in the car. Although there was a petrol pump nearby, it was shut due to the snowstorm. I had my cell phone on me, but it had no battery. When I got on the highway, my car stopped midway as it ran out of gas. I could not even step out as the snowstorm had progressed into a blizzard. I put the car in neutral gear and parked it on one side of the road. I started doing ⁹⁴Chaupai Sahib Paath. The moment I finished the Paath; with complete faith, I switched on the ignition and the car started. For forty-five minutes without

⁹⁴ Prayer composed by Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

any break, I drove without gas. The words that were coming out of my mouth were,

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੂ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੂ॥

ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥

Aadh sach jugaadh sach
Hai bhee sach naanak hosee bhee sach

True In The Primal Beginning. True Throughout The

Ages. True Here And Now. O Nanak, Forever And Ever

True.

When we are in trouble or in a crisis, we waste our precious energies in disbelief and complaining. We must remember that the source of our doubts is not the trouble but the conditioned mind. Instead of worrying, if we start investing our time and energy in connecting with Guruji, those same troubles and crises become windows for harnessing miracles.

Due to an infection post my enlightenment my jaw was adversely affected. The extent of the infection was so grave that the doctor said, only a major surgery could restore my gums back to health. I took the shelter of Gurbani as always. I started doing

oil pulling while reciting '95Har Har' and within six months I healed completely. Gurbani has emanated from the blessed mouth of Akaal Purakh Ji himself. It is immortal and transcends all barriers of Earth and other infinite worlds.

Even though the Divine's light was with me all the time now, I was not satiated. In fact, enlightenment only felt like the beginning. After it, I used to feel the bliss so intensely that I wanted it even more than before. To experience uninterrupted bliss, I started a practice of sitting in meditation for forty days (chaliya) consecutively every year, starting from 1991.

In the middle of my first forty-day meditation, I was tested for greed. 96Riddhi's and 97Siddhi's were sent my way and they tried to allure me, by asking me if I wanted my house to be filled with jewels. I blatantly refused and asked for only the love of Wahe Guru. They came again the next day and asked me to write down a number. After I wrote a number, I was told that the same would be the winning numbers of a seventeen million lottery. These powers wanted me to get bewitched by the temptation of wealth and get up from my forty-day-long meditation. I was clearly told "Leave the meditation and lead the good life." It was evident to me that I was being tested, to see whether I was worthy of the gift of enlightenment or not. But I was not interested in anything else except God's devotion, so I continued Simran. Under Guruji's shelter and grace, I completed my forty-day meditation. Later when I came out of my room, I showed the numbers I had written to my children and asked them to check the winning lottery numbers. I did this just to cross-check,

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⁹⁵ Waheguru, Lord.

⁹⁶ Good fortune, prosperity, wealth, success, supernatural power.

⁹⁷ Complete understanding of everything.

whether what those powers had said was true or not and the numbers coincided.

In 1992, during my second forty-day meditation I was asked if I wanted healing powers. I was again tested and told, "We will give you healing powers, and whoever you touch, will be healed." I refused assertively. I knew such powers simply distance us from the Lord. It is important to remember that these are crucial tests; a seeker goes through. A true follower does not get charmed by these temptations. The ones who do, lose their way to the Guru due to these entrapments.

In the year 1993, again engaged in the forty-day meditation, I was challenged by fierce-looking ghosts. They put me down, hurt me, put their weight on me and forced me to stop Simran. I did not submit to them and started chanting Mul Mantar as loudly as I could. They groaned in pain and begged me to discontinue the chant. I saw them get hurt whenever I chanted Mul Mantar. I warned them and told them to never create obstacles for a devotee again. They agreed to leave. As I was not sure of what they said. I asked, "How would I be assured that you have left to which they replied, "Once we leave, the window right in front of you will break." And that is what exactly happened. As they, left the windowpane broke. When the evil forces try to create hurdles for you, remember these words of Guruji,

ਤਾਤੀ ਵਾਉ ਨ ਲਗਈ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਸਰਣਾਈ ॥

ਚਉਗਿਰਦ ਹਮਾਰੈ ਰਾਮ ਕਾਰ ਦੂਖੂ ਲਗੈ ਨ ਭਾਈ॥

Taatee vaau na lagiee paarabraham saranaiee Shaping of Kirppanidh / 128

Chaugiradh hamaarai raam kaar dhukh lagai na bhaiee

The hot wind does not even touch one who is under the Protection of the Supreme Lord God. On all four sides I am surrounded by the Lord's Circle of Protection; pain does not afflict me, O Siblings of Destiny.

If fear persists, then chant the word,

ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਭਉ

"NIRBHAU NIRBHAU"

Without fear, without fear, without fear

After my forty-day meditations, I started to hear Waheguru, Waheguru, Waheguru everywhere. In the walls, the floors, the windows, in almost all the objects surrounding me. When I told my father, he replied with great composure and ease,

ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਤਾ ਹਰ ਚੀਜ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ

Wahe Wahe tah har cheez ho rahi hai

A wondrous play of universe is going on all the time.

Due to our ignorance, we are unable to hear the truth. Absorbed by HIS grace and HIS love, I began to see the power of Waheguru (HIS light) in everything- In every atom, every micro and macro-organism, animals, humans, everything movable and immovable, tangible, and intangible.

The fourth time, when I was just about to sit for my forty-day meditation, some old medical bills were sent home. I was not aware of them, and the amount was \$4000. Non-payment would have led to transfer of the matter to the collection agency. I did not have the money to pay this amount, but I did not get stressed at all. I said,

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਤੁਸੀ ਜਾਣੋ ਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਕੰਮ॥

Waheguruji! tusi jaano te tuhada kam

O! Lord, you know better how to take care of your matters.

Shaping of Kirppanidh / 130

and got engrossed in my meditative practice. Once I had entrusted in my God, then I did not worry about it. The day my meditation finished, I returned to work. On the way to work, I was waiting at a signal and a truck hit my car from behind. I alighted to inspect it and saw a huge dent. The truck driver apologized and said, he had no idea what happened, as he did not press the accelerator at all. He was bewildered himself. However, he assured me, that his insurance company would pay for the damage done. In less than a month, I received a cheque from the insurance company for \$4002. I cleared the payment of \$4000 and the remaining \$2 I put in the ⁹⁸golak of the Gurudwara sahib ji.

The insurance money went for the payment of the medical bills, but the dent on my car had to be repaired. I went to a nearby market to get it fixed. Every mechanic told me that it will take around two weeks to repair the dent, and that it would cost a few thousand dollars. I had a job to go to and found it difficult to manage without a car for two weeks. So, I decided to go back home without getting it repaired. On the way back home, two extremely good-looking fair boys, with a glow on their face stopped me. They asked me, "Are you looking to get your car fixed? In amazement, I nodded and asked, "But where is your shop? They said we have a garage in ⁹⁹Brooklyn, but we do not mind working here on the road itself. They told me that "We can fix your car right here and you can pay us whatever amount you deem fit." In almost four hours they repaired the dent. I told them "I don't have enough cash in hand, but if you come with me to the ATM, I'll give you at least \$2000". They said "We cannot come with you; you go get cash; we will wait

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⁹⁸ Cash box or any other container used for keeping money especially one used for receiving contributions for charitable purposes.

⁹⁹ Borough of New York city.

for you here. We trust you." I went to get the cash but when I came back, they were gone. I looked and asked for them everywhere but could not find them. It was clear to me, that God had sent someone to repair my car. I immediately did a gratitude prayer, drove back home, and went into a meditative state for the next couple of hours.

Surrender and pure intentions, always yield outcomes in our favour. Back in the day when I did not have enough money even in dire circumstances, I would always take out ¹⁰⁰Daswandh. Surprisingly, every time I received the amount of my tax return, it coincided with the amount of Daswandh.

I had always shown faith in Guru, while dealing with individual challenges. But on one instance, when my younger son met with a serious accident, my faith was put through one of the most serious tests of my life. A mother's heart was tested. The van in which my son was travelling had overturned and when I got a call from the hospital, I was told that he was in a critical condition. I did not lose my equanimity at all. Something inside me dissuaded me from reacting, and I felt puzzled as to why was I not behaving like any mother would in this scenario. Like all mothers I also love my son dearly and would do anything for him. But Simran, HIS remembrance, confidence in HIS decisions gave me an indomitable spirit. I felt like a strong indestructible fort had built inside me, which would guard me from the pain of any misfortune and agony.

ਹਰਿ ਮੰਦਰੂ ਹਰਿ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਹਰਿ ਵਸੈ ਜਿਸੂ ਨਾਲਿ॥

¹⁰⁰ One tenth part of one's income that one should donate, both financially and directly in the form of seva according to Sikh principles.

Har ma(n)dhar har saajiaa har vasai jis naal

The Lord built the Harimandir, the Temple of the Lord; the

Lord dwells within it.

In a composed demeanour, I told my sister "Let's go" and she asked me in a worrisome voice, "Will you be able to drive? You look as if you are going grocery shopping". I said, "Yes, I am okay. Why should I worry? My son does not belong to me. He is God's child, like we all are. Guruji will take care of him. I am just his caretaker. Don't we say in Ardas everyday?

ਤੂ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਤੁਮ ਪਹਿ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ॥

ਜੀਉ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਸਭੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਰਾਸਿ॥

ਤੁਮ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੇਰੇ॥

Too thaakur tum peh aradhaas

Jeeau pi(n)dd sabh teree raas

Tum maat pitaa ham baarik tere

Shaping of Kirppanidh / 133

You are our Lord and Master; to You, I offer this prayer. This body and soul are all Your property. You are our mother and father; we are Your children.

If we do this Ardas every day, then we must live it also. She looked at me in disbelief, and we drove to the hospital. I saw my son lying unconscious. He was wrapped in bandages from head to toe. He suffered from multiple fractures, and it was not confirmed yet, whether his organs were functioning properly or not. I was looking at my son, but talking to Wahe Guruji in my heart, "Guruji he is your child, you know what is best for him." I completely surrendered. With unshakeable faith that my son was in Guruji's shelter, I sat in front of his bed and started doing the Mul Mantar Jaap. Thoughts about his survival did not enter my mind. I was in Simran and a greenish light came out of my third eye. It shone on my son's entire body and rotated from top to bottom. Within ten minutes I saw my son healing. Guruji had blessed him, and he was out of danger.

It is important to note that I did not have anything to do with the light. I do not have any powers. It was God's miracle, and it was the Almighty who did everything. When my son gained his senses, he looked at me and gently whispered "Mama." I wished to repeat his scans the next day. The doctors said that the investigations had been done just a day before, but I insisted that the tests be repeated. To everyone's bewilderment, all my son's organs were fine with no trace of injury, except the broken ribs. For doctors, it was a bolt from the blue and they agreed to discharge him. It took him one month to bounce back to mint health.

Other than my youngest son's recovery from, a critical accident, my youngest grandson's birth was also a result of faith healing and Gurbani belief. After five months of conception, due to certain medical complications, my daughter in law was advised to abort the baby. I took my Gurbani shelter and gave a Shabad to my daughter in law to recite.

ਮਾਤ ਗਰਭ ਮਹਿ ਆਪਨ ਸਿਮਰਨੂ ਦੇ ਤਹ ਤੂਮ ਰਾਖਨਹਾਰੇ॥

Maat grabh mein aapn Simran Dey the tum rakhanhare

Blessing with thine meditation in the mother's womb, Thou O saviour you save the mortal there.

Within one and a half month, all the tests regarding baby's health were normal. Doctors had predicted that, there would be a major surgery at the time of childbirth. But I asked my daughter in law to keep her faith strong and she delivered normally, without any complications. My grandson was a premature baby and again a Shabad had only restored him back to good health.

ਸੂਕੇ ਹਰੇ ਕੀਏ ਖਿਨ ਮਾਹੇ

Sookae harae keeeae khin maahae

Shaping of Kirppanidh / 135

I feel grateful to have witnessed miracles which have shown me that there is a power greater than us all which even defies science.

Expecting that your parents must never reprimand you, give into all your demands and always provide for you is very unrealistic and unfair. It can breed a lackadaisical, aimless, and dependent individual. For me, Guruji was my first father, and I did not aspire to be an aimless child. Asking for a comfortable life from God, was not something my mind and heart were aligned with. Hence, I always asked for HIS strength and support to build a meaningful life for myself. Guruji never failed to bless me with the strength and support, I prayed for, and that opened up so many possibilities for me.

The way I bought my first house will highlight that truth. The house, whose vibration I had liked, was in Long Island, New York. But the agent, who was showing me the houses, said that the house was already in contract, and only the payment was pending. But on the same night, I got a dream that Babaji's room will be made in the house that I had liked, and my children will get married there. I woke up and meditated for a while and saw my kids getting married in that house. I called the agent and told her that, "I plan to buy the same house that I liked." She said it was impossible, but I insisted and asked her to try again for my sake. On my persistent requests, she called up the owner to know if the previous deal was still valid. The agent found that the deal fell through because the previous buyer could not pay the down payment in time. I was in the seventh heaven because now I could buy the house I had dreamt of. Rather, it felt like I could buy the

house Babaji had chosen for me. The dream came true indeed Babaji's room was made in the house, and my children got married there as well. After hearing that the house was under contract, I could have given up also, but my connection with Babaji gave me the strength to trust his signs and keep going. Until we reach a dead end, we must keep trying. Connection with the Almighty, conviction in the Almighty, give you the motivation while Simran and Bani show you the direction.

I got my second house also with Guruji's blessings and magnanimity. My elder son had got a job upstate, so we had to move from our current location. We searched for a house for many months. I did not like any of the houses, and my children got tired of searching. I told my children that we will know we have found our house when we see it. Upon seeing it all three of us will say WOW! from our hearts. The house that I am living in presently was on sale. But when we enquired, we were told that the down payment for the house had already been made, and the deal was closing in a week. I requested to see the house from outside, as I really liked it. I wanted to feel the vibration of the house but could only see it from the side of the driveway. The words that came out of my mouth upon seeing the driveway were, "This is my house." I told my real estate agent that the current deal will fall, and you will call me to buy this house. The agent started looking at me and smirked as if I was crazy. I left for India after this episode and within a week, I got a call from the agent saying, "Mrs. Singh the previous deal fell on the table. The house is yours, come and take it." I was flabbergasted. Even though we did not get to see the house from inside before, when we entered I and my children looked at each other and uttered WOW! in unison. One of my sons had wanted a drop ceiling and the other a circular driveway, and I wanted positive vibrations. We got all three. It was not very easy to get the mortgage on such a short notice, but Guruji made it possible. We moved in the very day we got the deed. It was one of the loveliest moments.

In 2008 I had bought a painting of a beautiful house and when I saw the painting,

I desired to buy a similar house. I got to know later that the construction of the second house we bought, had begun in 2008. My wish manifested in the form of this house. For four years this house did not have any buyers. In 2012, we bought the house. My family and I became the first owners.

Bearing Fruits

After enlightenment, Waheguru Simran vibrated within me all the time. Even when I am not meditating, I feel the light, power, bliss, and Ajapa Jaap of Waheguru continues. I wanted and still wish for everyone to connect with this light that I connected with. Slowly after my enlightenment, I began to build and bind groups of people, who believed in the Almighty's power, or were seeking to connect with it.

I felt like taking the onus of the seva of organizing ¹⁰¹Sukhmani Sahib Paath and Simran in the local Gurudwara Sahib every day. I did Ardas and asked for Guruji's blessing and began the service. I loved to pick and drop sangat from their houses. We would all do the paath together and discuss the lessons that had been elucidated by ¹⁰²Guru Arjan Dev Ji in the paath. The service of doing this paath in the Gurudwara became an inseparable part of the entire Sangat's daily routine. With the grace of Wahe Guru, whether I was in town or not, the congregation continued to meet for the paath. Guru's grace is so majestic, that the sangat follows the same routine even till today. More people have joined, and the mutual love and respect continues to multiply.

Once Guru fills you with his love, the will to share that love with others becomes very strong and almost impossible to suppress. You want to share the fruits of HIS love with all HIS creations. Since I was working full time earlier, I could not devote enough time to seva as I wanted to. So, I started small. I began counselling and started conducting short and small meditation workshops to guide and uplift people.

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¹⁰¹ Usually translated to mean Prayer of Peace. It is a set of 192 stanzas of 10 hymns present in the holy Guru Granth Sahib, the main scripture of the Sikhs.
¹⁰² The first of the two Gurus martyred in Sikh faith and fifth of the total ten Sikh Gurus.

But in 2009, I felt like my devotion and service deserved all my time, so I quit my job. I started meditating and participating in seva more. I made myself available for workshops and counselling sessions on a larger scale online and offline.

Whenever we help someone, it has nothing to do with us. It only becomes possible because God choses us as a medium to get that deed done. We alone do not hold the capacity to go beyond ourselves, until we are blessed with that vision. Whenever I have been able to help someone in any way, it has all been possible because of HIS grace upon me.

Any advice or suggestions that I have ever given, or give people while sharing what I know, is an amalgamation of my father's guidance, Gurbani knowledge and Simran experiences. It goes without saying that this amalgamation is a consequence of Guru's grace, which finds ways to make its sangat hear the advice they are destined to hear.

Only the Beginning

In 2011, I woke up to find my entire left side numb. It was completely devoid of sensation. My chest felt totally clogged, as if it was frozen and I was unable to breathe. I informed my elder son about what was happening. He told me, "Mom it's a stroke, we should go to the hospital immediately." I wanted to know what happened during a stroke. My son is a doctor and he told me "A clot, of blood gets formed in the brain causing a stroke." He was very distressed and desperate to leave for the hospital at the earliest. I held his hand and gave him a gentle smile of assurance, "Please do not get worried for me. Guruji will take care of me."

Without any panic, I first took a shower and withdrew myself into my room. I got absorbed in Simran and visualized the clot melting. After that I had a cup of tea, and then went to the hospital. My symptoms were diagnosed as CVA – Cardiovascular arrest. The CAT scan and MRI were done, and the reports did not show any abnormality at all. They said that there was a clot, but it had melted. As an aftereffect of the clot the left side of my body was still not working.

The doctors said it would take an extensive period to recover. Life will not be the same because walking would not be possible. My children got emotional and started crying. But the strength and faith that Guruji has blessed me with, did not let me get disappointed at all. This is the power of Simran. The nurse at the hospital advised me to call her, whenever, I needed to use the washroom. But my self-reliance did not allow me to seek external help. With the support of one arm and one foot, I used to go to the washroom. I was told by the hospital staff, "The rehabilitation therapist will come, and she will teach you how to walk." I replied, "Don't worry about me, I am leaving the hospital in three days and will be participating in a five-kilometre marathon next year." They started laughing. I told them, "I know it sounds funny. I do not have the ability to make it possible, but my faith

in God will make it possible." Upon hearing this the staff stopped laughing. Although the staff was not in favour of it, but due to my persistence they agreed to discharge me sooner than they approved of.

When I was back to my nest, my physiotherapy treatment began, but I made sure to consolidate all my energy and focused, on Simran alongside. I started meditating on Mul Mantar and did Waheguru Simran. While inhaling and exhaling I chanted 'Har Har' with every breath. I started using the healing power of Bani and Shabad to send positive energy to all the cells of my body. Neither my left elbow nor my left arm was functional, but I started doing kirtan on the harmonium. The Shabad that I did was,

ਘੋਰ ਦੁਖ੍ਯੰ ਅਨਿਕ ਹਤ੍ਯੰ ਜਨਮ ਦਾਰਿਦ੍ਰੰ ਮਹਾ ਬਿਖ੍ਯਾਦੰ ॥

ਮਿਟੰਤ ਸਗਲ ਸਿਮਰੰਤ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੈਸੇ ਪਾਵਕ ਕਾਸਟ ਭਸਮੰ ਕਰੋਤਿ॥

Ghor dhukhaye(n) anik hataye(n) janam dhaaridhra(n) mahaa bikhayeaadha(n) Mita(n)t sagal simara(n)t har naam naanak jaise paavak kaasat bhasama(n) karot

Excruciating pain, countless killings, reincarnation, poverty and terrible misery. Are all destroyed by meditating in remembrance on the Lord's Name, O Nanak, just as fire reduces piles of wood to ashes.

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I used to repeat these verses and bond with the words of Guruji.

Taking baby steps with the help of a cane, one day at a time, slowly and steadily, I started to get better. The portion just below the elbow started moving. I kept on repeating Guruji's words with conviction, left the support of the cane and continued therapy.

My memory power was also affected after I suffered from the stroke. I would miss some of the alphabets, and even some parts of Gurbani. I tried cognitive therapy, but it did not help me in my rehabilitation. Gurbani helped me to synthesise my mind back to effective functionality. But my hand remained non-responsive, especially my fingers. During Simran one day when I was chanting 'Har Har,' the thought of wearing a ¹⁰³karha on my left wrist occurred to me. Even though I was wearing a karha on my right hand already, I recited the following Shabad and wore the karha on my left wrist as well and my fingers also became functional instantly.

ਪਰਮੇਸਰਿ ਦਿਤਾ ਬੰਨਾ॥

ਦੁਖ ਰੋਗ ਕਾ ਡੇਰਾ ਭੰਨਾ॥

Paramesar dhitaa ba(n)naa

Dhukh rog kaa dderaa bha(n)naa

 $^{^{103}}$ A steel or cast-iron bangle worn by the Sikhs. $Shaping\ of\ Kirppanidh\ /\ 145$

The Transcendent Lord has given me His support. The house of pain and disease has been demolished.

Some circumstances might take longer than others to change. But without worrying about the results and the time, if we continue our practice with consistency, we will be blessed with results undoubtedly. We are habituated to look at 'change' as a challenge, whereas a 'change' is only a door to possibilities we never knew existed. My stroke motivated me to become a yoga teacher. When I could not even walk too well, I used to go to ¹⁰⁴Manhattan to learn yoga. I trained for one year and cleared the course with 93%. Doctors had sternly advised me to walk with a cane, but I did not feel like I needed it. I continued my exercise routine, along with Gurbani Shabads. After completing my yoga course, I participated in a five-kilometre marathon and came third. The fundamental rule is to 'never give up. Hit the challenge back and hit it hard. If you cannot run, then walk, if you cannot walk, then crawl but never stop moving, and bounce back with double force. Like they say

"When the going gets tough, the tough get going."

Taking remedial measures when we get sick is logical, but acknowledging and accepting the disease, is lethal for the body and the mind. I strictly advise against it. Owning the disease breeds room for permanency of it.

Shaping of Kirppanidh / 146

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 $^{^{104}\,\}mathrm{Most}$ densely populated and geographically the smallest boroughs of New York city.

When we come under the shelter of the Divine Shabads of Gurbani, our mind gets trained for a narrative of positivity and optimism. Words like "impossible" stop existing in our dictionary.

Bani confronts your soul, scrapes out all the impurities and Simran creates room for the Divine Together they show you a mirror which brings true clarity. That mirror then shows you who you are, where you come from and where you need to go.

Epilogue

Reviving the connection with my reason of existence, embracing it with all my heart, travelling to a foreign land and finding my purpose was only the beginning of my journey. Neither have my tests and challenges stopped nor do I feel like I have done enough. In fact, the magnitude of the tests I face and my will to serve others has only grown with the increase in the depth of my devotion. I have recently completed an NLP (Neuro linguistic programming) certification as my approach is not limited to just sharing gurmat wisdom. I want to equip myself with new tools and technologies and talk to people in a language they understand, while counselling them. Other than the workshops I conduct on mental health, I want to connect with and counsel people globally. Guruji's wisdom and my father's guidance must spread across the entire planet. Other than my endeavours for seva I intend to train in archery, athletics and aspire to participate in the Olympics. Life never feels stagnant when you keep learning and growing. Do not let your eyes fool you, even the sky is not the limit for we are born in a universe which is enriched with abundance and infiniteness.

All the incidents that have been propounded in this book are not written with the intention to put the spotlight on me. They have been shared to inspire the readers to look within and discover the unique hidden treasure that will unveil under HIS mercy.

I have learnt that each breath is a gift by recognising the divine light.

I want everyone to discover and live in this light.

Each breath taken without the remembrance of the divine light is a breath wasted.

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਚੜਦੀ ਕਲਾ

ਤੇਰੇ ਭਾਣੇ ਸਰਬਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ॥॥

Nanak Naam Chardi Kala
Tere Bhane Sarbat Da Bhalla!

Nanak, with naam comes high spirits.

and blessings for everyone.

Further Reading

For those who want to read more by Kirppanidh can read another book authored by her –Mannmukkt – A liberated mind. It is also written to share with an intention to guide and help people. As an endeavour of seva it will soon be available free of cost on the website – www.kirppanidh.com and amazon kindle.

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Walk in His Light



