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**SIKH ASSOCIATION OF FIJI**  
**AUGUST 2011**  
**MONTHLY NEWS**

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| <b>1. EDITORIAL</b> |
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*WAHE GURU JI KA KHALSA*

*WAHE GURU JI KI FATEH*

Respected Sadh Sangat Ji

We are introducing our Sikh Association of Fiji Newsletter and request all our members to take a copy, read through it and FILE it well so that the write-ups of Gurbani, Sikh Saakhis and News from around the world can be referred to by the young in the family etc. We shall keep you informed of the important Gurprabs and Festival too.

*S. Dalabar Singh*

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| <b>2.0. GURPRABS AND FESTIVALS:</b> |
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|--------|--------------------|----------|--|
| August | 13 <sup>th</sup> . | Rakhri   | Indian Festival                        |
|        |                    |          |  |
| August | 16 <sup>th</sup> . | Sangrand | 1 <sup>st</sup> . Day of Bhadron month |
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| <b>2.1 RAKHRI – Indian festival</b> |
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**Raksha Bandhan** or **Rakhi**, is a festival primarily observed in North India, which celebrates the relationship between brothers and sisters. The festival is observed by Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims. The central ceremony involves the tying of a *rakhi* (sacred thread) by a sister on her brother's wrist. This symbolizes the sister's love and prayers for her brother's well-being, and the brother's lifelong vow to protect her. The festival falls on the full moon day (Shravan Poornima). It grew in popularity after Rani Karnavati, the widowed queen of Chittor, sent a rakhi to the Mughal emperor Humayun when she required his help.

The festival is marked by the tying of a rakhi, or holy thread, by the sister on the wrist of her brother. The brother in return offers a gift to his sister and vows to look after her as she presents sweets to her brother. The brother and sister traditionally feed one another sweets. Since North Indian and Pakistani kinship practices give cousins a status similar to siblings, girls and women often tie the rakhi to their male cousins as well in several communities. Unrelated boys and men who are considered to be brothers (*munh-bola bhai* or *adopted brothers*) can also be tied rakhis, provided they commit to a lifelong obligation to provide protection to the woman or girl.

## 2.2 SANGRAND - 1<sup>st</sup>. Day of Bhadron Month

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B•••u•e b•aram b•ul••••• ••jai lag• he•.

In the month of Bhaadon, she is deluded by doubt, because of her attachment to duality.

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Lak• s•g•r ba•••i•• k•raj n•h• ke•.

She may wear thousands of ornaments, but they are of no use at all.

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Ji• •in •eh binsas• •i• velai kahsan pare•.

On that day when the body perishes-at that time, she becomes a ghost.

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Paka• c•al••in ••• jam kisai na •en• b•e•.

The Messenger of Death seizes and holds her, and does not tell anyone his secret.

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C••ad k•a•o•e k•inai m•hi jin si•o lag• he•.

And her loved ones-in an instant, they move on, leaving her all alone.

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Hath maro•ai •an kape si••hhu ho•• se•.

She wrings her hands, her body writhes in pain, and she turns from black to white.

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Jeh• b•jai so lu•ai karm• san••••• k•e•.

As she has planted, so does she harvest; such is the field of karma.

N•nak parab• sar••ga••c•ara• bohith parab• •e•.  
Nanak seeks God's Sanctuary; God has given him the Boat of His Feet.

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Se b•••u•e narak na p•••ah gur rak•a• v•l• he•. ||7||  
Those who love the Guru, the Protector and Savior, in Bhaadon, shall not be thrown down into hell. ||7||

### 3.0 SIKH MARRIAGE – ANAND KARAJ

**Anand Karaj** is the name given to the Sikh wedding ceremony, literally translated as "*Blissful Event*". Sikhs regard marriage as a sacred bond of mutual dependence between a man and a woman; a true partnership of equals in marriage is made between those who are united in spirit as well as in mind and body. Marriage is regarded as a strong lifetime bond between the bride and groom and a union between both the families of the bride and groom.

This event leads to a "joining" of the two families into one creating an enlarged extended family structure where each member has a useful part to play in the new family structure; each member of this extended family has to play a part in ensuring that the new couple are given every assistance in this new relationship and their start on this honourable path of **Grist Marg**, "*path of the householder*".

Gristi jivan (*living as a householder*) is given a much respected position in Guru Nanak's society as it is regarded as the essential basic atomic unit of a healthy community; a couple leading a happy, strong and fulfilling relationship will provide a base for a strong, united and coherent community.

Based on a concept depicted in Laava, the Sikh marriage is not merely a physical and legal contract but is a fusion of the souls; holy unions between two souls, where physically they appear as two individual bodies but in fact are united as one. The couple must feel and think alike and both must be completely identified with the other, i.e. they need to become "*Ek Jot Doe Murti*" meaning "*one spirit in two bodies*".

The Laava, or four stanzas, are read and then sung during the ceremony to formalize and sanctify the marriage. The Sikh religious wedding ceremony, which almost always these days takes place in a Gurdwara. The ceremony is held in the presence of, the Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the Sadh Sangat, the holy congregation.

This arrangement offers a way to bring family support into the lives of the couple if they require it. Guru Ram Das, the fourth Guru has given, in the four rounds or Laava, a formula for a successful marriage. These four Shabads, describe the sacred journey of the soul through this world to the final destination, the merging with the infinite. If one follows this sacred path and

applies it properly to the institution of marriage, it should result in happiness and fulfillment – Anand (Bliss).

This Sikh marriage ceremony demands a bit more from the couple than is normally expected. The Guru Granth Sahib advises us that:

:

*mehlaa 3.  
Dhan pir ayhi na aakhee-an bahan ikthay ho-ay.  
ayk jot du-ay moortee Dhan pir kahee-ai so-ay. ((3))*

Third Mehl:  
They are not said to be husband and wife, who merely sit together.  
They alone are called husband and wife, who have one light in two bodies.  
(SGGS p788)

So, it is clear that the couple are only said to be married if they can portray that there is only "**one light**" in the two bodies.

The main part of the Anand Karaj is the reading and then the singing of each laav in turn. When the Laav is sung, the couple as a pair join by a piece of cloth circle the SGGS. This has relevance to the occasion and should not be considered a ritual without meaning. **When the couple circle the SGGS each time they making a commitment to God with the Guru as spiritual witness and support. And as one circles the Sri Guru Granth Sahib you are reminded that the Guru should be the center of your life, from which springs your spiritual guidance and understanding that you require for your souls long journey across this world ocean. The Sri Guru Granth Sahib is the center and the Sadh Sangat is your worldly witness and support.**

The four nuptial rounds were written by Guru Ram Das for his own wedding. They explain the journey of the souls toward the Almighty. In them he tells us of the duties that a person undertaking a life of marriage should perform. In the **first** round, the Guru asks the partners to:

- commit to righteousness
- renounce sinful actions
- Remember, mediate and embrace Naam
- Only by good fortune, is real peace obtained
- Worship the one Waheguru and all your sins will vanish

**The first verse emphasizes the performance of duty to the family and the community.**

In the **second** round, the Guru asks the partners to advance further towards meeting the True Guru - God:

- have fear of God and your ego will disappear
- Sing God's praises and feel His presence
- God is everywhere, outside and within, sing in Joy

**The second verse refers to the stage of yearning and love for each other. The couple are told to face problems and hardships together with a feeling of mutual love, devotion, sacrifice and self-discipline necessary to achieve the ideal, of one spirit in two bodies.**

In the **third** round, the Guru says that the partners mind is filled with "Divine Love":

- meeting the Sadh Sangat (Holy Congregation)
- which is only obtained by good fortune
- Recite Gurbani and sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord
- The Naam will vibrates and resounds within your heart
- and you will know your future destiny.

**The third verse refers to the stage of detachment or vairag, during which divine love supersedes the love of sex and increases their devotion to God.**

In the **final** round, the Guru says that the partners mind become peaceful and they will have found the Lord:

- God's Will seems sweet to these Gurmukhs.
- You will lovingly focus your consciousness on the Lord, day and night
- All your desires will be fulfilled
- The Souls will blend with Waheguru and only Naam will occupy your heart.

**The fourth verse refers to the final stage of harmony and union in married life during which human love blends into the love of God.**

The ceremony is concluded with the customary singing of the first five and the concluding hymn of Anand Sahib followed by Ardas, in which the whole congregation joins; vak or HUKAM (reading a verse from Guru Grant Sahib opened at random) is then received and karah prashad, the Sikh sacrament, distributed.

#### 4.0 CHAPTER FROM SIKH HISTORY – Life of Baba Ram Singh and Bhai Gurdas Ji

**Baba Ram Singh** (known by his followers as Satguru) was a religious leader and social reformer and the **first Indian** to use non-cooperation and boycotting of British merchandise and services as a political weapon. He was the religious leader of the Namdhari (Kuka) sect of Sikhism. **Ram Singh launched his revolt against the British on 12 April 1857 by hoisting a white flag of freedom and announced a programme of far reaching significance.**

He called for the people to boycott government services, boycott British run educational institutions and law courts, boycott foreign made goods and defy British laws. He was the originator of the nonviolent and civil disobedience movement in Punjab in 1872.

Ram Singh's fight for independence was a turning point in world history for it eventually sounded the death-knell of colonial rule in the British Empire. Mahatma Gandhi later used the concepts of non-cooperation and civil disobedience propounded by Ram Singh as political weapons against the British. His ideas played a key part in securing India's Independence from the British.

Baba Ram Singh was born at village Bhaini Raiyan, district Ludhiana, on the 3rd February, 1816. His father, Bhai Jassa Singh, was a carpenter by profession. His brother-in-law, Sardar Kabul Singh, was a gunner in the artillery of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In 1837, Sardar Kabul Singh took Ram Singh with him to Lahore and got him recruited in the regiment of Kanwar Naunihal Singh. On the 18th December, 1845, the Sikh army suffered a defeat in the battle of Mudki due to traitorous settlement of some Brahman and Dogra Generals of the Sikh army with British. Baba Ram Singh could not bear the defeat of the Sikh army in this manner. He left the service of the army at Mudki and came straight to his village Bhaini.

On arrival at his village, Baba Ram Singh started preaching the Sikh principles of "Worship of eternal being, giving up worship of the dead, keeping off the intoxicants, minimum expenditure on marriages and widow remarriage etc." He used to say, "I am only a messenger or a reporter and not a Guru." His followers started calling themselves 'Namdharis', while others called them Koukey. Baba Ram Singh was a supporter of reform of the 'Mahants' and priests of the gurdwaras as a result of which they were against him. Every year, on the occasion of Bandi Chhor or Vaisakhi fair he used to go to Amritsar and put his views before the congregation. He started a movement in 1848 to force the British to leave the Sikh Kingdom. He called upon his followers to boycott foreign goods and Government departments due to which people stopped buying imported cloth, gave up taking their disputes to courts and started deciding these in villages.

The boycott movement of Baba Ram Singh had great effect on the work of the Government. In 1863, the Government set up a police post at his village Bhaini. Halaal was banned in Amritsar during Sikh rule. In 1870 somebody spread a false rumor in Amritsar that the Government was about to give permission to the butchers to slaughter in the Halaal mode in the holy city of the Guru. On the 14th June, 1870, a group of Koukas beheaded four butchers at Amritsar. Four of them were hanged and two were imprisoned for life for that crime. On the 15th July, 1872, some Koukas had a quarrel with the butchers of Malaud and Malerkotla over the question of Halaal, in which ten people were killed and seventeen were injured. The deputy commissioner of Ludhiana, Mr. Crown, pronounced death sentence on sixty-eight Namdharis. Forty-nine of them were blown by cannon fire and nineteen were hanged. Baba Ram Singh was exiled to Burma. He died there on the 29th November, 1885, in jail of Margee Island. Although the Government crushed the Kouka movement, yet they could not extinguish the light of freedom lit by Baba Ram Singh.

**Bhai Gurdas Ji** is a much honoured Sikh scholar, missionary, and literary master who is also respected for his Sikh way of life. He was a leading figure in Sikhism who enjoyed the company of Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru.

It was under the supervision of the fifth Guru that he inscribed the first copy of Sikh Scripture, then called The Adi Granth, which is now respected as the perpetual Guru of the Sikhs and is central of the Sikh religion. He was also responsible for various writings in his own right which have gained much respect in the Sikh community. His **Varan** have been referred to by Guru Arjan as the "Key" ("*khungee*") to the Guru Granth Sahib.

Bhai Sahib was born in a Bhalla Khatri family. His father was Bhai Ishar Das and his mother's name was Mata Jivani. He was born at Goindval, Punjab, India in 1551. He was the nephew of the third Guru, Guru Amar Das. Bhai Gurdas was a first cousin of Mata Bhani, mother of Guru Arjan Dev.

Bhai Gurdas, who was the only child of his parents, lost his mother when he was barely three and his father when he was 12. He had spent his early years at Goindval and Sultanpur Lodhi. At the former place, he had the opportunity of listening to many men of knowledge and spiritual attainment who kept visiting the town which fell on the Delhi-Lahore road. At that time the city was the religious centre of the Sikhs.

Bhai Gurdas later proceeded to Varanasi where he studied Sanskrit and Hindu scriptures, subsequently he was initiated into Sikhism. He was then sent as a missionary of the Sikh Guru to spread the teaching of Guru Nanak. He made extensive visits to Agra, Lucknow, Varanasi, Burhanpur, Rajasthan, Jammu and the Chamba hills, preaching Guru Nanak's words.

After the passing of Guru Ram Das, in 1581, Bhai Gurdas returned to the Punjab, where he first visited Goindval and thence proceeded to Amritsar to pay his obeisance to Guru Arjan, Guru Ram Das's successor. He made Amritsar his home and through his devotion and love of learning carved for himself a pre-eminent position among the Guru's disciples.

When the Guru compiled the Adi Granth containing the hymns of the Gurus and those of some saints and sufis, Bhai Gurdas inscribed the entire text. Though the original copy was once turned over to Guru Tegh Bahadur after an attempt on the ninth Guru's life, it was returned at the wish of the Guru to Dhir Mall, the elder son of Baba Gurditta and a grandson of Guru Hargobind. Though many hope that the original Bir as penned by Bhai Gurdas will one day return to the possession of the Panth, the original Granth is still in the possession of the family of Dhir Mall's descendants at Kartarpur, in Jalandhar district of the Punjab. (Some have pointed out that had the Adi Granth been in the library of the Darbar Sahib during 1984's attack the Original Bir would most likely have been lost in the fires that destroyed so many priceless treasures of Sikh History.)

Bhai Gurdas also contributed the labour of his hands to the excavation of the sacred pool at Amritsar (1577). He was chosen to recite the Gurus' hymns to Emperor Akbar when he visited Kartarpur in 1596-97 on his way back from a military campaign.

As the tradition goes, the Emperor had been incited by Prithi Chand and his supporters against Guru Arjan saying that the hymns he was planning to compile into a volume had an anti-Muslim tone. As Bhai Gurdas read out verses selected at random, the Emperor was deeply impressed with their spiritual content.

When Guru Hargobind, decided to construct the Akal Takht (lit. Throne of the Timeless (a reference to God)) in front of the Harmandir Sahib , he entrusted the task to the two most revered Sikhs of the time, Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Buddha, the latter who had been blessed by Guru Nanak himself.

Bhai Gurdas was assigned to look after the premises. Guru Hargobind also appointed him to teach his young son (the future (Guru) Tegh Bahadur, the ancient classics. Bhai Buddha also trained the Guru's son in the manly arts of archery and horsemanship.

Bhai Gurdas led a batch of Sikhs to Gwalior where Guru Hargobind had been detained under the orders of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir. He was present at the weddings of the Guru's sons Baba Gurditta (April 1621) and Baba Suraj Mall (April 1629). He offered ardas at the death in 1621 of Mata Ganga, the Widow of Guru Arjan. He also recited Scripture and offered ardas at the time of Baba Buddha's death on 8 September 1631.

Bhai Gurdas continued as the 'bulwark' of Sikhi for many years. He was the expounder and exemplar of the Sikh way of life. He was a man of wide learning especially in ancient texts and philosophy who devoted his exceptional talents to preaching the Sikh faith. He composed verse which is valued for its vigorous, fast paced style and for its vivid exposition of the teaching of the Gurus.

His poetry, now available in two volumes, in Punjabi, **Varan Bhai Gurdas** and in Braj, Kabitt Savaiyye, is often sung along with Gurbani, the Gurus' words, at holy congregations. Guru Arjan put his seal of approval on the *Varan Bhai Gurdas* by designating it as the "**key**" to the Sikh Holy Scripture.

Bhai Gurdas, who never married, died at Goindwal on 25 August 1636.

## **Waheguru Gurmantar – Bhai Gurdas Ji Vaar1 Pauri 49**

*Satijougi Satigur Vaasadayv Vavaa Visanaa Naamu Japaavai.*

In Satyug, Visnu in the form of Wasudev is said to have incarnated and 'V' Of Wahiguru reminds of Visnu.

*Duaapari Satigur Haree Krisan Haahaa Hari Hari Naamu Japaavai.*

The true Guru of dvapar is said to be Harikrsna and 'H' of Wahiguru reminds of Hari.

*Taytay Satigur Raam Jee Raaraa Raam Japay Soukhu Paavai.*

In the the treta was Ram and 'R' of Wahiguru tells that rembering Ram will produce joy and happiness.

\*

*Kalijougi Naanak Gur Gobind Gagaa Gobind Naamu Alaavai.*

In kalijug, Gobind is in the form of Nanak and 'G' of Wahiguru gets Govind recited.

*Chaaray Jaagay Chahu Jougee Panchaain Vichi Jaai Samaavai.*

The recitations of all the four ages subsume in Panchayan i.e. in the soul of the common man.

\*

*Chaaro Achhar Iku Kari Waahaguroo Japu Mantr Japaavai.*

When joining four letters Wahiguru is remembered,

*Jahaa Tay Oupajiaa Dhiri Tahaa Samaavai 49 1*

The jiv merges again in its origin

[Wahe denotes Wonderful; Guru denotes Spiritual Light. The meaning of the word WAHEGURU is: Wonderful Spiritual Light.

In Satjug God was known as **Vishnu**; in Duapur as **Hari**; in Tretajug as **Ram** and in Kaljug as **Gobind**. With the combination of alphabets: W.H.G.R. the word WAHEGURU was formed.]

*Waheguru Gurmantar hai jap haoumai khoyee*: Waaheguru is the Gurmantar; by meditating on it, one loses his false ego (**Bhai Gurdaas, Vaar 13, Payuree 2**).

*Waheguru Gurmantar Hai Japi Haoumai Khoyee.*

His Guru-mantra is Waheguru, whose recitation erases egotism.

## **5.0 SACRED RELIC OF GURU GOBIND SINGH JI – GANGA SAGAR**

In 1705, Guru Gobind Singh ji went to Machiwala after leaving Anandpur Sahib. During those severe hardship days some Rajas refused even to offer help to Guru Sahib due to the fear of death as Aurangzeb was after the life of Guru Sahib and his family.

When Guru Sahib reached Raikot state, the Muslim Chief Rai Kalha welcomed him and felt honored in offering his services to Guru Sahib as his guest for as long as he wanted to stay. Guru Ji spent a few days with Rai Kahla.

It was in Raikot that Guru Sahib got the most tragic news of the death of his two minor sons and his mother. The news was brought from Sarhind by Noora Mahi who deputed by Rai Kalha of the seva of Guru Sahib. Guru Sahib during his stay asked Noora Mahi to serve him milk in Ganga Sagar (a vessel) having 288 holes which was part and parcel of his personal belongings.

Noora Mahi said that his buffalo did not give milk and even if it did, the milk will not stay in Ganga Sagar as it had holes in it. Guru Sahib told him to utter the name of God and start milking the buffalo. To the surprise and amazement of Noora Mahi, the buffalo gave milk and it did not leak out from the Ganga Sagar.

Before leaving Raikot, in recognition and appreciation of the services and hospitality extended by Rai Kalha, a Muslim Chief, who risked his own and his family' lives, Guru Gobind Singh Ji presented Ganga Sagar, a sword and a Real to Rai Kalha as personal gifts.

Till 1947 the Ganga Sagar was displayed by Khan Bahadur Rai Inayat Khan for darshan by sangat who use to walk bare-footed from Gurdwara Tahlina Sahib in Raikot, Distt. Ludhian(Punjab) India.

The present owner of Ganga Sagar is Rai Azizzulah Khan (the 9th generation descendant of Rai Kalha III), a grandson of Khan Bahadur Rai Inayat Khan and the heir of the Rai family who have kept his sacred gift of Guru Gobin Singh Ji with great respect and care for almost 300 years.



**Ganga Sagar**

This Ganga Sagar will not hold water at all. Water leaks out through the holes But it holds milk .Rai Azizzulah Khan took this Ganga Sagar. to many countries around the world and our Sikh sangat had Darshan of it. The point made by Rai Azizullah is very important indeed. The real significance of the Ganga Sagar is not in its holes, nor in any miracle that is sometimes attached to it. The real significance is in what the Ganga Sagar represents. It represents an appreciation of fearless love and respect shown by the Rai Family towards the Guru. Even more remarkably, the Rai family did this against the obvious risk of serious reprisals from rulers of the day. In this sense, the Ganga Sagar is a symbol of love. It reminds us, and will continue to remind all those who are fortunate enough to see it in the future, of love that transcends the artificial boundaries of religion, race or caste. It is, therefore, a symbol of love that embraces the entire humanity and expresses the same one-ness of humanity that was the essence of Guru Gobind Singh's life and teachings.