

Written by Dr. Devinder Singh Sekhon PhD
Friday, 15 February 2013 11:19

time. Even though, the holy Shabad was uttered by Guru Ram Dass Ji to educate Pirthi Chand, but it is intended for all of us to serve as guidance.

Meaning: Why do you argue hotly with you father, oh my son! Quarreling with the parents, who give birth to and raise their children with love and proper guidance, is a sin. Pause.

The wealth, of which you are so conceited about, never stays permanently with you.

A man repents when the attractions of maya leave him in a moment.

Recite the Naam of Waheguru Who is your real Master and the Master of us all, oh my son!

(Guru) Nanak advises you; if you listen to it carefully, all your discomforts and complaints will disappear.

(2) GURU AMAR DASS JI'S DICTATE ON DEATH

Hindu Rituals and Customs on Death

Brahmans had created many, many superstitions for every occasion to misguide people and fleece them by suggesting many worthless rituals in which people were forced to pay the Brahmans because they had created a deep impression on the minds of the ignorant masses that they were God's agents and had solution for every problem which were created by them in the first place. The death of a person, old or young, was a blessing in disguise for the Brahmans because this provided an opportunity for them to earn a lot of money. Brahmans had preached that when a person dies, his/her soul does not want to leave the home and hangs around for thirteen days. Once the soul has left the surroundings it takes 360 days for it to travel to its final destination. This journey is very difficult to cover and is in

the dark.

Before the advent of machinery, very few deaths took place as a result of accidents, and most deaths were the result of long illnesses in which the death was expected. Shortly before the death of an individual, the Brahman would advise to take the dying person off the bed and lay the body on some kind of mat on the floor. An earthen (or flour) lamp was placed on the hand of the individual to “provide light” for the long journey. In addition to the oil, the family was required to put some money for expenses during the journey (of course the Brahman would take that money). 360 earthen lamps are also lighted up at this time to show light to the deceased on his long journey which requires as many days to cover. Some butter-oil (ghee) is put in the mouth of the deceased to show that he died well-fed (rich). After the death, the body would be washed and put on a wooden plank to carry to the cremation ground. There was lots of wailing and crying in the family.

If the deceased is an old person (with grand-children), the plank to carry the dead body is decorated with an expensive cloth and with balloons etc. Also, dry fruit and candy is hurled in the air over the coffin to celebrate the death. This is called Bibaan. A new earthenware is also carried along to be broken somewhere in the middle of the journey to the cremation ground when the eldest son of the deceased makes a loud scary wail which is supposed to convince the deceased that he had died and to scare him to leave the home for his long journey.

The dead body is set on fire in the cremation ground and a few rotis (flat breads) of barley flower on big leaves are given away to people, and some are left for the deceased to eat during the long journey. (This is called puttal or putter kiryaa).

On the fourth day the mortal remains (ashes and small bones) of the dead

are collected and taken to the River Ganga (or the holy city of Banaras) for immersion.

For the next thirteen days the Brahman reads the Groorr Purana every day, and he is fed with rich food by the family everyday (sometimes the whole family of the Brahman is fed). On the last day, the family Brahman offers a pind or pinn (a ball) rolled from rice or barley flower to gods and one to the Brahman performing the last rites who recites some Mantras from the Vedas. The idea behind offering the balls is to provide food to the dead body on his way to the final destination. The soul of the deceased (hopefully) leaves the home and the rites are complete.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji preached strongly against all such worthless practices (Read His holy Shabad which follows shortly) which earned Him the expected displeasure of the Brahmans who began to oppose Him at every step. Remember Guru Nanak Sahib refused to put the so considered holy white cotton thread (janeyoo) around his neck at the early age of 9 years, and He also refused to go around the fire to perform His wedding ceremony at Batala.

Following the Teachings of Guru Nanak Sahib, Guru Amar Dass Ji continued to enlighten the people and advised them not to follow the worthless and money- wasting practices. The holy Shabad (Ramkali Sud) written by His great-grandson, Baba Sunder Ji, highlights Guru Amar Dass Ji's teachings against the worthless and unwarranted practices at death. In addition, the holy Shabad also illuminates the fact that when Guru Amar Dass Ji passed on the Guruship to His son-in-law Bhai Jettha Ji, Who became the fourth Guru, Ram Dass Ji, there was almost no opposition from any quarter, and everybody respected Guru Sahib's decision.

But before we discuss the holy Shabad written by Baba Sunder Ji, let us pay

attention to a Shabad written by Guru Nanak Sahib Ji on the meaningless practices on death.

ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ ੧ ॥
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ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ ੧ ॥

§ Assa M:1 (358). Deeva mayra ek Naam dookh vich paaya tale. Oon chaanan oho sokhiyaa chooka jum sioun male. Loaka mut ko phukkerr paaye. Lukh murriyaa ker ekhutthay ek rutti lay bhaahe. Pause. Pind puttal mayri Kaysou kiriyaa Such Naam Kartar. Aithaiy oathaiy aagaiy peechhaiy eho mayra aadhaar. Gung Banaras sift Toomhaari naavaiy aatam rao. Suc ha naavan taa theeye jaa ehniis laagaiy bhaao. Ik loakee hoar chhamichharee Brahman vutt pind khaaye. Nanak pind bukhsheesh ka kubhoon nikhootis naahe.

Word Meaning: Deeva = lamp; Dookh = troubles (sins); Chaanan = light; O ho = that (troubles);

Sokhiyaa = absorbed, killed;

Chooka = ended;

Jum = the angel of death;

male = meeting.

Loaka = hey people;

Mut = lest;

Phukkerr =

joke, make fun;

Lukh = lakh (100000), many;

Murriyaa = wood;

Ekhutthay = gather;

Rutti = a very small amount (spark);

Bhaahe = fire;

Pind = a ball (of barley flour or rice flour);

Puttal = leaves used as plates;

Kaysou =

Waheguru;

Kiriyaa = last rites on the thirteenth day after death;

Kartar = Waheguru;

Aithaiy Oathaiy Aagaiy Peechhaiy = in this world and the next world (after death), everywhere;

Aadhaar = support;

Gung Banaras = the River Ganga and the (holy) city of Banaras;

Sift Toomhaari =

Your (Waheguru's) praise;

Aatam Rao = (my) soul;

Sucha Naavan = the real dip (which pleases waheguru);

Theeye = happens;

Ehnis = day and night;

Bhaao = love;

Loakee = gods;

Chhamichharee = the Brahman who performs the last rites;

Bukhsheesh = Waheguru's kindness;

Nikhootis = runs out;

Kubhoon naahe = never;

Meaning: (Guru Nanak says) for me, the lamp of rice flour (that is placed on the hand of a dying person to provide light) is the Naam of Waheguru and I am pouring my sins in that lamp to serve as fuel. Waheguru's Naam lights up the lamp, and my sins burn away as a result of which I will not have to see the angel of death (I will rather be united with Waheguru). Ju

st like unlimited wood can be burned away even by a spark, countless sins can be burned away by Waheguru's Naam.

Please do not take this statement lightly, oh folks! Pause.

The ever fresh memory of Waheguru in

my mind replaces the (useless) ritual of serving balls of rice flour and His eternal Naam serves as the last rights which is also my eternal support in both the worlds (before and after death).

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People take the mortal remains (ashes) of the deceased person to Ganga and (the holy city) of Banaras, but Waheguru’s praise is the River Ganga or the holy city of Banaras for me in which my soul takes a dip. Day and night (continuous) love for Waheguru is the real dip (approved by Waheguru). To provide food for the deceased person on his journey to the final destination, the family Brahman rolls balls of rice (or barley) flour and offers one ball to gods and one to the Brahman who performs the last rites; but for how long can this ball last (if we believe that it is needed by the dead person)? However, if you have pleased Waheguru, then the food of His kindness never runs out.

The following holy Shabad by Baba Sunder Ji describes the teachings of Guru Amar Dass Ji for this occasion. The Shabad has six stanzas which will be discussed one at a time.

ੴ ਸਤਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਏਕੁ, ਸਾਧੁ ਸਾਧਿਕੁ ਸਾਧਿਕੁ ॥ ਸਾਧਿਕੁ ਸਾਧਿਕੁ ਸਾਧਿਕੁ ਸਾਧਿਕੁ ॥
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§ Ramkali Sud, Baba Sunder Ji (923). Ek Onkar Satgur persaad(i). Jug daata soye bhagat wuchhal tihou loye jeeou. Gur Shabad smaavey uver nah jaanaiy koye jeeou. Uvro nah jaanhe Shabad Gur kaiy ek Naam dhiyaavhe. Persaad(i) Nanak Guru Angad perm pudvee paavhe. Aagya aaya hukaara chullenwara Hur Ram Naam smaaya. Jug ummer utull utoal Thakur bhagat(i) tay Hur paaya. 1.

**Word Meaning: Jug daata = provider for the whole world; Bhagat Wuchhal = lover of His devotees;
Tihou loye = sky, earth, and the underworld;
Smaavey = is fully dedicated, sings Waheguru’s praise;
Uver = else;
Dhiyaavhe = recites (the Shabad);**

HISTORICALLY IMPORTANT SHABADS CONTINUED

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Persaad(i) =
by the grace of;
Perm Pudvee = highest spiritual state;
Aagya =
with the order;
Hukaara = messenger;
Chullenwara = one who leaves;
Hur = Waheguru;
Ummer = immortal;
Utull = eternal;
Utoal = immeasurable.
Thakur = master;
Bhagat(i) Tay = through worship;

Meaning: Guru Amar Dass Ji is always connected to Waheguru while singing His praise – the Waheguru Who is the provider for all the living beings in the sky, on the earth and in the world under the earth, and Who loves His devotees. Guru Amar Dass does not acknowledge any other power than Waheguru and recites only His Naam. By the grace of Guru Nanak sahib and Guru Angad Sahib, Guru Amar Dass Ji has achieved the highest spiritual level. Under Waheguru’s orders, the messenger asking to leave this mortal world has come to Guru Amar Dass Ji who is fully absorbed in Waheguru’s Naam – Waheguru who is the sole master of this universe and Who is immortal, eternal, immeasurable and Who can be realized only by worship. 1.

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ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਚਿੰਤਿ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪਾਸਿ ਜੇਉ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਕਰੈ ॥
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**Hur bhaana Gur bhaaya Gur jaavaiy Hur Prabh paas jeeou. ॥ Satgur kuray
Hur peh bayntee mayri paij rukhou ardaas jeeou. ॥ Paij rukhou Hur junhe
kayri Hur dehoun Naam Nirunjuno. Unt chulldiyaan hoye baylee jumdoot kaal
nikhunjuno. Satguru kee bayntee paayee Hur Prabh sooni ardaas jeeou. ॥
Hur dhaar kirpa Satguru milaaya dhunn dhunn kuhaiy shabaash jeeou. 2.**

**Word Meaning: Hur Bhaana = Waheguru's will; Bhaaya = liked; Paij = dignit
y; Jun
he kayri =
of the devotee;
Nirunjuno =
of Waheguru (unjun = dark, maya;
Nirunjun= unaffected by maya, Waheguru);
Unt =
end;
Baylee = friend;
Jumdoot Kaal = angel of death;
Nikhunjuno=
destroyer;
Dhaar Kirpa =
through kindness;**

**Meaning: Guru Amar Dass Ji loved the will of Waheguru and began
preparations to go to Waheguru. Guru Sahib prayed to Waheguru
to save His dignity (unite Him directly with Himself (Waheguru) unlike
everybody else who are subjected to the scrutiny by Dharamraj – the**

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mythical judge who evaluates the deeds of the people).

Guru Ji requested Waheguru to give His Naam to Guru Sahib – the Naam which is your real friend at the end, and which destroys the fear of the Angel of Death, and thus saves your dignity. Waheguru listened to the request of Guru Sahib favourably and united Him with Himself (Waheguru). Waheguru was very pleased with Guru Sahib, praised Him saying He (Guru Sahib) was great, He ws great! 2.

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Mayre Sikh soonhou poot bhayeeho mayrai y Hur bhaana aaou mein paas jeeou. Hur bhaana Gur bhaaya mayra Hur Prabh kuray shabaash jeeou. Bhagat Satgur Purakh soyee jis Hur Prabh bhaana bhaavhe. Anand unhad vujhe vaajay Hur aap gul maylaavhe. Toosee poot bhaayee pervaar mayra mun vekhou ker nirjaas jeeou. Dhoor likhiyaa pervaana firai y nahee Gur jaaye Hur Prabh paas jeeou. 3.

**Word Meaning: Hur Bhaana = Waheguru’s Will; Bhaaya = liked willingly; S habaash = praise, admire;
Anand = bliss;
Unhad = uniform;
Vujhe Vaajay = musical instruments playing;
Nirjaas = test, think deeply;
Dhoor Likhiyaa =
written by Waheguru;
Firai y Nahee = cannot be changed.**

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Meaning: Guru Sahib then addressed His Sikhs and relatives, and told them that Waheguru had decided to call me (Guru Sahib) to be with Him (Waheguru) and that Waheguru had praised Him. Guru Sahib further advised the Sikhs that He had liked Waheguru’s decision because a real devotee like Guru (Sahib) must accept Waheguru’s Will gladly. Guru Sahib was in a blissful state as if He was already being hugged by Waheguru, and a uniform sweet music was playing. Guru Sahib continued to say that all of you (Sikhs and relatives) ponder carefully that Waheguru’s Will cannot be changed, so He (Guru Sahib) must go to join Waheguru. 3.

ੴ ਸਤਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ॥ ਸਤਗੁਰੁ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ ਸਤਗੁਰੁ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ ਸਤਗੁਰੁ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ ਸਤਗੁਰੁ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥
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Satgur(i) bhaanaiy aapnaiy beh pervaar sudaaya. Mut mein pichhaiy koyee roavsee so mein mool nah bhaaya. Mitt paijhay mitt bigsaiy jis mitt kee paj bhaavay. Toosee veechaar dekhoo poot bhayee Hur Satguru painaavay. Satguru pertukh hoandaiy beh raaj aap tikaaya. Sabh Sikh bundhap poot bhayee Ram Dass paireen paaya. 4.

**Word Meaning: Bhaanaiy Aapnaiy = By own will; Pervaar = family; Sudaaya = called;
Mut = lest;**

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Mool = not at all;
Bhaaya = like;
Mitt = friend, dear;
Paijhay = honoured;
Bigsaay = feels happy;
Paij
Bhaavay = enjoys the honour bestowed;
Painaavay = being honoured;
Pertukh Hoandaiy = visibly in physical body;
Raaj = kingdom of Guruship;
Tikaaya = established, declared;
Bundhap = relatives;
Paireen paaya = made to kneel.

Meaning: With His own accord, Satguru Amar Dass Ji called the whole family to Him and strictly advised, “I will not like it at all if somebody cries after I am gone (see the contrast with the Hindu customs). If you like a friend being honoured, then you must feel happy when the friend is being honoured. Now, you think carefully, your Guru is being honoured in Waheguru’s Court. (So, there is no reason for you to cry).”
While still in physical body, Guru Sahib established the kingdom of Guruship (passed on Guruship to Ram Dass Ji) and made all the relatives and the Sikhs to kneel before Guru Ram Dass Ji. 4.

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Untay Satguru boliyaa mein pichhaiy keertan kuriyou Nirbaan jeeo.□ Kesho Gopal pundit sudiyou Hur Hur kutha purrhe Puraan jeeo.□ Hur kutha purrhiye Hur Naam sooniye bibaan Hur rung bhaavye. Pind puttal kiriya deeva full Hur Sur paavye. Hur bhaaya Satgur boliyaa Hur miliyaa Purakh Soojaan jeeo.□ Ram Dass Sodhi tilak deeya Gur Shabad Such neeshaan jeeo. 5.

Word Meaning: Untay = at the end; Keertan Kuriyou = sing the praise of Waheguru; Nirbaan = who is above all the desires (Waheguru); Pundit = learned Sikhs; Kesho, Gopal = names for Waheguru, (Devotees of Waheguru); Sudiyou = call, invite; Purrhe Puraan (See above, Hindus read the Groorr Purana at the death of a relative); Hur Hur Katha = story (praise) of Waheguru; Bibaan = decorating the coffin; Rung = love, devotion; Pind = ball of rice or barley flour; Puttal = plate of leaves; Kiriya = last rites on the 13th day; Full = flowers; Hur Sur = sarovar (pool) of Waheguru or gathering of holy men or devotees; Bhaaya = liked; Purakh Soojan = Wise Waheguru; Tilak Deeya = anointed (appointed); Such = Waheguru; Neeshaan = letter of approval (certificate)

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Meaning: At the end, Satguru advised that the Hindus have the tradition to recite the Groorr Purana at the death of a relative, but I want my Sikhs to invite learned Sikhs to sing the praise of Waheguru after I am gone (and no recitation of the Puraan). According to worldly standards, I am old by age, but I do not want my coffin to be decorated. My love for Waheguru is my bibaan, so listen to Waheguru's Naam and sing His praise (and no decoration of my coffin). All the Hindu customs of worthless charitable acts like distributing balls of rice (or barley flour) on plates of leaves, last rites on the 13th day, lighting up of earthen (or flour) lamps etc. etc. must not be performed. All such insignificant purposes are served by obeying the Will of Waheguru and singing His praise in the company of the devotees. Guru Sahib further advised that he is one with Waheguru and He is going to fulfill the Will of Waheguru by appointing Ram Dass Ji Sodhi as His successor who will disseminate Guru's Teachings from now on. 5.

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**Satgur Purakh j(i) boliyaa GurSikhaan munn luyee rajaaye jeeo.□
Sabh puvaiy paireen Satguru kayri jitthaiy Guru aap rukhiyaa.□
Koyee ker bakheelee nivaiy nahee fir Satguru aan nivayaa.□ Hur
Gurhe bhaana deeyee vudiyayee dhoor likhiyaa laykh rajaaye jeeo.**

Kuhai Sunder soonhou santou sabh jagat paireen paaye jeeo. 6.

Word Meaning: Rajaaye = Will; Guru aap Rukhiyaa = where the Guru took residence now (in the heart of Guru Ram Dass Ji);

Bakheelee =

jealousy;

Nivaay = kneel;

Nivayaa = made to kneel;

Bhaana = Will, liking;

Dhour Likhayaa = written (or predetermined order) by Waheguru;

Laykh =

order;

Rajaaye = of Will;

Sabh Jagat = the whole world, everybody.

Meaning: The Sikhs obeyed the God-like Guru Sahib's Will, and touched the feet of Guru Ram Dass Ji in whose body Guru Amar Dass Ji had taken (spiritual) residence now.

If someone did not kneel before Guru Ram Dass Ji because of jealousy (or malicious thoughts), Guru Amar Dass Ji forced such people to kneel before Guru Ram Dass Ji.

Guru Ji bestowed this honour on Guru Ram Dass Ji as a result of Waheguru's Will as had been predetermined by Waheguru.

(Baba) Sunder Ji says that the whole world (everybody) was made to kneel before Guru Ram Dass Ji. 6.

HISTORICALLY IMPORTANT SHABADS CONTINUED

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NOTE: Baba Sunder Ji Bhalla was the son of Anand Ji, grandson of Mohri Ji and great-grandson of Guru Amar Dass Ji (Bhalla).