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Guru Puja and Guru Birthday: A Combined Event

Baba Hardev Singh Ji turned 50 on February 23, 2004. This day is celebrated as Guru Puja Divas (Guru Worship Day). His Golden Jubilee birthday and Guru Puja Divas were celebrated on February 22-23. That concurrence of events was a cause for a celebration that the devotees wanted to commemorate all over the world. A two-day event in the presence of His Holiness Baba Ji was held in Delhi, India where an extremely well planned program was presented with professional finesse. It was evident that a lot of planning had gone into every facet of this program. A select group of singers presented devotional hymns spellbinding the audiences for several hours. Famous Sufi singer

Hans Raj "Hans" and his group of musicians performed non-stop for more than an hour. During his medley of devotional hymns he engaged the audience for a sing-along that only an accomplished professional like him could achieve. His presentation included popular Nirankari songs, Sufi qawwalis, hymns from the Avtar Vani, interspersed with the recitation of a superb selection of mystic poetry. Renowned performers from the entertainment industry, Wadali Brothers, Dev Dildar, Master Laxman Singh, and Talveen Singh, UK, captivated the audience with their melodies. Popular Nirankari singers, Swaran Baldev, Master Madan, Khosla and Party, Leena Ji,

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Mother Teresa Said:

- People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.
- If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.
- If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies. Succeed anyway.
- What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight. Build anyway.
- The good you do today, people will forget tomorrow. Do good anyway.
- Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough. Give the best anyway.
- You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

Contributed by: Shobita Soor

Spiritual Tours in North America

Prof. J.S. Puri's Spiritual Tour of Colorado

During his visit to Colorado, Professor J. S. Puri addressed and blessed many congregations. While at a local devotee's residence in Boulder, Rev. Puri highlighted the fact that whenever a devotee prays, he prays through actions and not mere words. He emphasized that Nirankar, Satguru and Satsang are not just alike but are one and the same.

At a congregation held in Denver, he said, "As soon as a devotee takes shelter at the lotus feet of the True Master, the purpose of his life is achieved. His life is then filled with the eternal peace and happiness; gloom turns into bloom. That is the difference between life before and after being blessed by

"Nirankar, Satguru and Satsang are not just alike but are one and the same."

the True Master."

Speaking at Superior, Colorado, Rev. Puri delivered the message of Universal Brotherhood. He explained that after receiving God-Knowledge, hatred and jealousy depart from our minds and love and fellow-feeling enter. Love begins to bloom, helping us to rise above the differences of caste, creed, and color. He appealed to the audiences to take the shelter of the Holy Master and rise above all narrow distinctions to establish peace.

At a congregation in Boulder, Rev. Puri stated that man feels separate from God because of the layer of ignorance that exists in his

mind. With the blessings of the Holy Master, this veil of ignorance is removed and man begins to recognize his true identity.

At a satsang organized in Colorado Springs, Rev. Puri stressed that the need of the hour is God-Knowledge. The lack of God-Knowledge means a lack of an understanding that God is the Father. That obviously means a lack of understanding that we are all brothers and sisters. Therefore, it is important to know the basics and get back to the basics.

Reverend Rajan Ji's Visit to Washington D.C.

While visiting Washington, D.C., Reverend Rajan Sachdeva Ji not only addressed many Sangats, but he also participated in cultural and musical events. He also shared his knowledge of music with all the young and adult saints. He gave a brief introduction on 'Dholki' and 'Harmonium' followed by a music class, which everyone appreciated. After the music class, he went to

"Surrender to God's will brings peace and harmony in our life."

bless all the saints in Ashburn for the Sunday Sangat .

Addressing the congregation, he said, "I am not worthy of any of the praises that were said about me earlier in the Sangat today. The beauty is in the eyes of beholder, and we see what we want to see. If we want to see good in someone, then we see good. And if we want to see shortcomings, we will see shortcomings only.

Explaining the difference between devotion and surrender,

Rev. Rajan said, "Devotion is serving someone else's wants, whereas surrendering is completely giving yourself in their hands to lead you in the direction they want. Hanuman was a devotee of Ram, and Arjun was a devotee of Krishna. We often wonder why there are so many temples of Hanuman and none of Arjun. That is because Arjun gave commands to Lord Krishna asking to take him in certain directions instead of asking Lord Krishna to take him wherever He wanted to go. On the other hand, Hanuman never asked any questions. It took Krishna several chapters of Holy Bhagvad Gita to explain to Arjun about the God-knowledge, whereas Hanuman never questioned anything. He said to Lord Rama, "You are my Lord and I surrender myself to you." Bhakti is surrendering, and you cannot surrender to someone unless you have complete devotion.

When a baby is born, the parents are devoted to him, and he is devoted to them. For a child, the mother and father are like God. As a baby grows, devotion turns into faith. Then, gradually the reversal also starts. The growing child now thinks that the parents are not perfect, because they cannot provide him with everything that he wants. The image of parents as God starts to change. For parents the baby is not perfect either. As that baby grows up, he does not follow his parents' instructions. Therefore parents start having doubts towards their child also.

A Master once said to someone to get some sweets from a tree. The devotee went up the tree while others made fun of him for going, because one cannot get sweets from a tree. But Bhai Rana Ji was devot-

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How Illness Proved a Boon

In the last two decades of the 20th century, a lot of turmoil had prevailed in the Punjab, India. The reasons were political but the ordinary people failed to see them. Different sects and religious groups had their disagreements, differences, and disturbing dislike for each other's beliefs. This bitterness may have carried over with them when people migrated to other countries. However, as time passed and good sense prevailed, the differences began to disappear. Recently, it was noticed that the Sikhs, the Hindus, the Nirankaris, the Muslims, the Christians rose above all narrow distinctions in what was a remarkable show of human unity.

Mr. Varinderpal Sandhu's illness so galvanized them that setting aside all their differences, they behaved as members of one community if not a single family. A member of the Nirankari family, Mr. Sandhu was a bright Mechanical Engineer working in the Bay Area. As ill luck would have it, he got afflicted with cancer and needed a bone marrow transplant. A drive was initiated to bring his case to the notice of the potential donors for finding a match. Newspapers like the *India Post*, *India Abroad*, just to mention a few, and TV stations owned by Indians vied with each other in bringing the worthy cause to the public. The Gurdwaras situated in the whole of California played a prominent part in making this drive a success. The Hindu temples in the United States did not lag behind in this noble cause. Within four months the donor was found. So far it is not known who she was, what her religion was. Her nationality is also not known. The noble cause, conducted with so much kindness and grace by the institutions, gurdwaras and temples that the donor felt no urge to project her identity. All we have found out is that the donor was a woman of non-Indian origin. The operation was performed. The transplantation took place to the satisfaction of Virenderpal, his relatives and well wishers. All wished for his speedy recovery.

However, it was the Divine will that Varinderpal was not destined to live long. As goes in Gurbani, "*mirtak bhae dasse band chhoote/mitr bhai sabh shorey.*" To put it "*anik jatan kaar kya paali/marti baar ajin saang Jaahi.*" Varinderpal breathed his last, leaving all in sorrow and distress—his wife, son, daughter, sister, parents, near and dear ones, and the community. Although Varinderpal has passed away and has become one with the God Almighty, he has left the people of Indian origin, in general, and from the Punjab, in particular, galvanized. Let's keep the oneness intact.

—Dr Iqbaljit S. Rai

Did You Know That...

...the Nirankari youth are playing a bigger role in the matters of the Mission in North America.

...the youth have given a new dimension to the spirit of sewa (selfless service). Their concept of sewa is not restricted to the activities within the Nirankari Mission only. The youth are, in fact, going out into the community and taking part in humanitarian programs, such as, blood donation drives, food and clothing charities, soup kitchen programs. For example, see Community Outreach in this issue.

...the youth are managing the Youth Sangats at almost every branch. They moderate and preside the programs too. Youth Sangats are well-attended and liked by all.

...the youth participation in Sewadal has always been at a high level. It is a worldwide pattern. Same holds true for North America too. See pictures in this and previous issues of the Nirankari Journal.

...the youth are doing a great job at reporting their branch activities to the Nirankari Journal. The reports are generally written by young people. In most cases, they are the ones who take the pictures too.

...the youth are, almost 100%, taking care of the Internet and technology needs of the Mission in North America and elsewhere.

...the youth are beginning to take part in Spiritual Tours to other branches. See last page of this issue of the Nirankari Journal. It's a good start. More work needs to be done in this area.

It is evident from the above that the youth are getting on the forefront of:

- Sewa
- Satsang
- Simran

Keep the momentum going!

—Ashwani Madhok
Associate Editor

Guru Puja Divas

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and Nirankari School children also presented their best songs, enthraling the attendees and pleasing the Holy Master who blessed them all with his magical smile. Rev Vivek Shauq moderated the event in a skillful manner.

A brief video documentary on the life of Baba Ji was also shown at the event. It was a wonderful flashback into the past depicted through images and video clips of his life. The documentary included interviews with Baba Ji's family, childhood friends, and school teachers.

A pictorial book on the life of Baba Hardev Singh Ji was also released on this occasion. The book is appropriately called, *With Love*, because it is about an embodiment of love and is produced with love by a very creative group of devotees.

The Nirankari Sewadal volunteers presented an impressive program consisting of parade and songs eulogizing the Holy Master for giving us the gift of Divine Realization.

Thanks to the IT group of the Mission—the event was Webcast as downloadable video. Most of the Nirankari devotees in North America witnessed this gala event on their computer screens. Those who missed it can still log on to www.nirankari.com and see it in the archives section.

Addressing and blessing the audiences, Baba Hardev Singh Ji said:

“All of you have gathered today to celebrate this occasion and it gives an immense pleasure to see the devotees happy. With the blessings of Nirankar I got a chance to grow under the divine guidance of Baba Avtar Singh Ji, Jagat Mata Ji, Baba Gurbachan Singh Ji, Rajmata Ji and had a great opportunity to spend my time in the loving lap of Sadh Sangat. Even today I am extremely fortunate to receive such love from all of you. The renowned scientist Newton had said, “If I have been able to see far, it was because I stood on the shoulders of giants.” Like Newton, I too can say that it is because I have been made to sit on the shoulders of the Sadh Sangat that I have been able to do whatever little I could to serve all of you. May God bless all so that they may attain spiritual bliss and prosperity.”

Throughout the North America this event was celebrated at ALL the branches of the Mission. Here are the excerpts from some of the reports received by the Nirankari Journal.



Northern California

In Northern California, the celebration began with the local Sewa Dal welcoming Rev. Kumar Sahajwani from Arizona in a Sewa Dal parade with a band procession around the Tracy Bhawan.

Saints communed together to hear sermons and sing devotional songs, and recite praises. The program included a puppet show, in which the moral was that saints should not lose sight of the present by worrying about the future. Later, about 20 children lined up in front of the stage and took turns singing songs in Punjabi, Hindi, and English. They also shared what they learn in their morning Sunday School classes. The children's segment ended with everyone singing Happy Birthday to Baba Ji in the following words: “*Bar Bar Din Ye Aye... Tum Jiyo Hazaro Saal, Yeh Meri Hai Arzoo.*”

Reverend Kumar Ji emphasized that all forms of sewa are equal and what matters is the intention with which one performs sewa. Sewa provides us with an opportunity to remember God and thank Him. Kumar Ji also stressed that although we are celebrating our Guru's 50th birthday, Guru is ageless. Essentially, Guru refers to *Gian* and He is everlasting.

Later, the bal sangat showcased their talent by coming out in different costumes and acting in a play about how Unity and Love Can Conquer Evil.

Vancouver

Guru Puja Divas 2004 was a special day and was cele-

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Guru Puja Divas

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brated with full vigor and enthusiasm. Rev. Daljit Sidhu welcomed and thanked Rev. Skattar Sandhu Ji of Edmonton, who is Director In-Charge Sewadal, Canada. This was followed by a poetic symposium (*Kavi Darbar*).

In a special act of kindness, the Vancouver youth and Satsang filled 50 bags of hygiene items for the homeless and poor people in celebration of Satguru Baba Ji's 50th birthday. Rev. Skattar Singh Ji stated that the secret of devotion is to serve your master with no "ifs" "ands" or "buts", but to follow the teachings wholeheartedly.

Calgary, Alberta

Members of the Calgary branch, under the able guidance of Parmukh Rev. P.S. Kamal celebrated the auspicious day with great devotion and enthusiasm at Saddle Ridge Community Hall. Rev. Kamal Ji had printed beautiful greeting cards for the occasion and distributed to many centers all over the



world. The program started with the Sewadal rally, where a donation on behalf of the members was presented. While accepting the donation, Rev. S.S. Bassan Ji sought the blessings of the Satguru for one and all. The Satsang followed the rally. Rev. Richard Pilotte, speaking on behalf of many Canadian friends, thanked Baba Ji for bestowing God knowledge upon all the people of the world.

In his concluding discourse, Rev. Bassan Ji said, "If a disciple presents to the Lord Master a spiritual bouquet, comprising of such virtues as unconditional love, selfless service, utmost humility, unity, honesty, sincerity and forgiveness, he receives everlasting peace and bliss, as well as pleasures and glories of the world."

Winnipeg, Manitoba

The city of Winnipeg is the capital of Manitoba province, where late Rev. Kuldip Singh preached for many years. Once again here, Rev. Richard Pillote spoke on the principles of the Mission. Rev. Saleh Nanda, Parmukh, requested all those present to join him in the local congregation and avail of the benefits of the teachings of the Lord Master. Quoting from the



past scriptures, Rev. Bassan Ji stressed that God realization is possible only by meeting the living Guru. Millions of Nirankaris testify to this fact. In the end Rev. Bassan Ji hoped and prayed that Winnipeg will become an important center of the Mission in the days to come

Michigan

A large congregation was held at the Sant Nirankari Bhawan in Michigan. Many saints from Kent and Toledo—Ohio, and Windsor, Canada also attended. Rev. Kamal Dablani Ji from Washington DC presided the event.

The morning started with Sewadal rally and Satsang. A purse on behalf of the Sewadal and Sangat was presented to the stage. Saints expressed their prayers and devotional songs and congratulated each other. The youth expressed their happiness through a skit, narration on His Holiness's life and devotional group songs. Rev. Kamal Ji expressed that "We are so thankful to Satguru Baba Ji that he has united us with the Nirankar and each other. Baba ji teaches us through His actions that whatever we expect from others we need to do it first. "Satguru is an embodiment of truth, patience, tolerance, humility and Divinity". Rev. Gobind Singh, local Parmukh, welcomed and thanked all the saints for participating in the celebrations.



Toronto

A large number of attendees had turned out to take part in the Guru Puja Divas celebrations at the Nirankari Bhawan. The day started with community breakfast fol-

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Community Outreach

“A Nirankari saint has to be bread for the hungry, water for the thirsty and clothing for the naked.”
—Baba Gurbachan Singh

Vancouver: BC Fire Relief Fund

In 2003, the province of British Columbia (BC) was struck with a record number of forest fires. These fires burned thousands of acres of forests and caused damage and destruction to local communities. Thousands of local residents lost their homes and jobs. Many residents were forced to evacuate their homes and head to temporary shelters. The saints of the Vancouver area responded to the needs of the victims of this natural disaster. They collected cash and clothing from the fellow-devotees and donated to the Fire Relief Fund. The donated clothing was dropped off to the collection bins at London Drugs. The cash donations were donated directly to the Kamloops Red Cross, Fire Relief Fund. This is a wonderful example of putting the Holy Master's teachings of selfless service into our actions and showing love to our fellow beings.

Surrey Christmas Donations to the Food Bank

The holiday season always brings to mind feelings of joy and happiness. It is a time of sharing and celebration. But for many unfortunate human beings the holidays bring stress and sorrow. While we feast on wonderful foods and exchange countless gifts, many people do not even have enough resources to provide their families with a hot, healthy meal. Keeping in mind the spirit of Christmas and the teachings of our

Lord Master, the devotees of the Vancouver sangat organized their annual food collection. Everyone joined in the spirit of sharing and brought boxes and bags full of food donations. Many saints also donated cash to help their fellow human beings to enjoy the holidays. All of the food and cash donations were donated to the Surrey Food Bank.

Montreal Youth Contribute to Christmas Fund

The youth members of the Sant Nirankari Mission (Montreal) were given the opportunity to help those less fortunate for the Christmas

season. They conducted a fundraiser driver within the local congregation and then donated cash to the Christmas Fund. Their generous donation was acknowledged in the local newspapers. Their kind gesture is in keeping with the teachings of the Mission and the master. Baba Gurbachan Singh Ji used to say, “A Nirankari saint has to be bread for the hungry, water for the thirsty and clothing for the naked.” The youth pray to Baba Hardev Singh Ji to bless them so that they may continue to perform selfless service with such eagerness so as to attain the blessings of His Holiness.

Creative and Proactive Youth in D.C.

Car Wash Fundraiser

On an early morning, more than 20 young Nirankari devotees gathered at a local service station in Reston, Virginia, for a fundraiser activity for their youth program and the Bhavan building fund. There was plenty of teamwork and fun as the morning ended and noon settled in. At the end of day the spirited youngsters left with a good feeling that they had indulged in this activity for a good cause.

Spiritual Literature Promotion and Development Program

A literature-promotion program was introduced in Washington D.C. The young saints have become more actively involved in developing content for the Nirankari Journal. Their plan is simple but highly effective. They come to the satsang as attentive listeners, ready to record any good thoughts presented by any devotee. The participating saints bring their notebook to every Sangat and record a minimum of three points. The thoughts must be a valid spiritual concept relating to Baba Ji's teachings written in four or more sentences.

The rewards for the saints with the most points will result in their spiritual growth. Additionally, they are incentivized to receive prizes consisting of English versions of the Avtar Bani and the Bible, school supplies, etc. The program was developed and implemented by Sunny Sahajwani Ji who will also manage the program.

Picnic and Prayer Combined

Northern California Youth Camp

The second youth camp for the year 2003 was well-attended and successful. The youth of Northern California Branch plan these youth camps once in 3 months. The idea behind these youth camps is to bring the youth together socially and spiritually. These are also important to cultivate the sense of belonging in the youth and maintain the learning process about the Mission. These youth camps are planned alternatively at bhawan and outside. Rev. Dr. Rai addressed all the saints and appreciated the efforts put by the youth to organize these camps. He also welcomed Rev. Lachhman Singh, Sanchalak from Los Angeles. Dr. Rai presented to the attendees hats imprinted with the Nirankari Mission's logo and the words "Universal Brotherhood."

Southern California Picnic

Southern California Nirankari Family Sangat Picnic was held at Yorba Regional Park in Anaheim, CA. The day was filled with a lot of fun for all, from little children to grandparents. The congregation took place under the comforting shade of trees with the pretty sight of a lake and the sweet chirping of birds in the far background. Nirankar's creation is simply beautiful and sitting in such an environment was another reminder of all the great gifts He has bestowed upon us. Everyone felt that the informal atmosphere of the picnic provided an opportunity to the youth to bond closer with their older fellow devotees.

Washington D.C. Nirankari Picnic
Food, sports, and spirituality

mingled during the Washington D.C. picnic and resulted in a fully enjoyable day. The atmosphere was filled with the echoes of Baba Ji's teachings resonating from every discussion, every game and every experience. Whether it were the ever so bonding games of cricket, volleyball, youth scavenger hunt or the joyous hike, they all symbolically illustrated the ups and downs, twists and turns of life. Just as in a cricket match, it is not as important how a ball is thrown, but how well one hits this ball that makes the greatest difference. As such, it is our positive reaction to another's action that makes us a Nirankari.

Throwing the ball is important but you can only make runs by hitting the ball well. And so, it is more important how well we react to life rather than paying attention to what life throws at us. It is not so much of receiving this Gyan, but practically incorporating it into our lives that makes the greater difference.

If someone is hungry, then we feed them. If someone is thirsty, then we give them water. Also, if someone falls, then we pick them up. It is this positive reaction to others that makes a person a Nirankari devotee. And, how can one forget the beautiful message of Maya Ji who explained that it is not important to pay attention to the person that is speaking, but rather the message being delivered. It is not important to judge the speaker, but how to use their message in improving ourselves. The picnic was fun, but more than that, it was spiritually enlightening.

Anshul Mohaan
Washington D.C.

The Monster's Failure

There was a monster. He wanted to be the most powerful being on earth. He was so cruel that he would cut off the fingers of those who he had killed and then make a necklace out of those fingers to horrify others. One day he came to a God-realized devotee and said that he wanted to kill him.

The saint said, "No, you can't kill me."

The monster replied, "Yes I can, and will do soon. I have killed so many people. Nobody can stop me from killing you."

The saint said, "Okay, you can kill me, but first cut the trunk of that tree. I merely want to see whether your sword is sharp enough to cut off my head."

The monster did as the saint had said, and then the monster said, "I have done it, exactly as you said. My sword is sharp enough to cut your head off."

At this, the saint replied, "You have only done half of the work. You have managed to cut the trunk, now put the trunk back on the tree."

The monster said, "No, I don't have the ability to unite. I only know how to divide. You can ask me to cut off anything or kill anybody, I can do that for you. But I don't know how to put things back together."

The saint then said, "If you can't unite, then you have no right to divide either."

Healthcare Seminars By Nirankari Physicians in Chicago

Two Nirankari devotees who are practicing physicians in Chicago have been holding healthcare educational seminars that are open to the entire community. Vijay Bajaj, MD and Jyoti Kalra, MD have held dozens of hour-long educational activities which helped hundreds of attendees in 2003. They also offered various free healthcare services to the attendees. Their humanitarian efforts have helped draw many community members to the Nirankari Mission. The community members have been highly appreciative of the practical demonstration of these Nirankari physicians' spirit of service. May Nirankar bless them so they continue to use their skills in the service of the mankind.

The following is a list of the programs they offered in 2003.

Healthcare Education Seminar Series Agenda

Topic: Prevention and Treatment of Hypertension and Congestive Heart Failure.

Speaker: Dr. Vijay Bajaj

Free Blood pressure checks

Topic: Myocardial Infarction/Heart Attacks, Sudden Death, High Cholesterol. Prevention and Treatment.

Speaker: Dr. Vijay Bajaj

Flu Vaccines (Pre-Registration required)

Topic: Diabetes, Anemia, Arthritis, Prevention and Treatment.

Speaker: Dr. Vijay Bajaj

Free Blood Sugar Check

Topic: Calories Count: Some suggestions to modify diet to lower cholesterol and fat intake; Role of Exercise and Yoga.

Speaker: Dr. Jyoti Kalra

Technology Education Wins Over Older Devotees

The Chicago area Nirankari youth found a new way to win over the older devotees in the congregation. The youth who have expertise in computer technology began to hold computer and technology education programs on topics that range from "Introduction to computers" to "Computer security" to "Advanced emailing capabilities." The youth were surprised at the overwhelming response they received from the elderly devotees. Professor Puri encouraged and blessed the youth's initiative and was the first student at one of these seminars. The following is a list of the programs offered by the young educators. May Nirankar bless them to serve the community in as many ways as they can!

Computer Classes For Beginners

Introduction to Computers

Basics of MS Windows 1 & 2

Computer Basics Practical

MS Word Part 1 & 2

MS Word Practical

Internet Concepts

Internet Browsing Concepts

Internet & Instant Messaging

Basic Emailing Capabilities

Advanced Emailing Capabilities

Internet & Email Practical

Parental Controls

Internet Security

Complete Course Practical

Basics of Computers

Introduction of Computer Terminology

Computer Hardware & Software basics

Introduction to Windows & File Management

Word Processing

Introduction to Word Processing using MS Word

Advanced Word Processing using MS Word

Introduction to Internet

Web surfing basics

Internet resources

Introduction to Chat & Instant Messaging

How to use MSN

Introduction to Email

Parental Control & Protection

Computer Security

Heard In Satsang

Hanging On By A Cord

A new baby had been born into our family, and experiencing the birth of a human life is extraordinary. As our daughter was delivered, we studied her features and size, but I could not help notice this great biological device—the umbilical cord. It grows for a temporary period of time to provide life to the baby. On one end it is connected to the mother and the other end to the baby. Nutrients, oxygen and water pass to the baby, as well as wastes pass back to the mother to discard for the baby.

The baby's life is hanging on by a cord! If anything happens to this umbilical cord, the baby will suffer or perish. This can happen by becoming knotted or disconnected from the mother. The requirements for life would not pass through the cord to supply the baby for its physical life.

Baba Ji is our spiritual umbilical cord! On one end, he is connected to Nirankar the provider of all spiritual nutrients, and the other end he is connected to all the saints. Baba Ji passes the spiritual nutrients from Nirankar to us, so we grow in His ways. These nutrients are love, mercy and compassion towards all of mankind. We also pass our sins through Baba Ji to be forgiven by Nirankar.

If we knot or disconnect this spiritual cord from us, we will surely perish spiritually. This can happen as pride and ego enter our lives. Each step we take to become part of this world makes the knot tighter and tighter, until we completely cut off Nirankar and Baba Ji from our lives. We must allow Baba Ji to show us the way to eternal life by keeping this cord free of entanglements.

When the baby leaves the mother's womb, the doctor cuts the umbilical cord. Then the baby merges with its family; mother, father, siblings and all. So will Baba Ji cut the spiritual cord at the end of our lives, so we can merge with Nirankar. We are only hanging on by a cord for our dear spiritual lives. Let us keep this cord intact and free of the knots of pride and ego, so we will be one with Nirankar.

—Dan Slebodnik (Washington D.C.)

A Preacher's Tools

During his tour in the state of Gujarat, India, one of the devotees was speaking with Baba Hardev Singh Ji. He said to the Holy Master that it is hard to spread the message of Truth to all areas because people speak many different regional languages. Baba Ji responded by saying, "The message of the Truth is not conveyed by any language or any other physical means, rather it is through love, dedication, and the spirit of selfless service. We have the example of Rishi Vyas Dev Ji who was able to deliver the

message of the Truth to thousands of people in Maharashtra state where very few people speak Hindi or Punjabi. He was successful in winning over the hearts of people through his abiding love, devotion, and dedication to the cause of spreading the message of the Mission."

—Harjit Mudhar (Montreal)

Devotion: To Surrender or Not to Surrender

At a Youth Sangat held in Washington D.C. the topic was "Devotion." Professor Rajan Ji gave an interesting spin to the topic by giving an example of the terrorists who brutally killed so many people and destroyed the Twin Towers in New York. These ignorant terrorists had surrendered to an ideal and not to God. That is the danger of blind devotion. Reverend Rajan Ji said that faith and devotion are two separate things. Faith should take its roots from God-knowledge and then bloom into devotion.

—Anshul Mohan, Washington D.C.

In Memoriam

Ontario:

Rev. Angad Singh Sandhanwalia Ji, 99, passed away on September 4, 2003. He was enlightened with Brahm Gyan in 1952. He freely shared not only his faith but also his wealth throughout his life. Rev. Sandhanwalia is survived by his five children, Harlivline Bajwa, Meena Singh, Harjap Chahal, Harsimrat Singh, and Maninderpreet Singh, and 13 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren. Rev. Parduman Singh Ji of Toronto presided a congregation held to pay homage.



California:

Rev. Varienderpal Sandhu, passed away on July 31. After receiving a bone marrow transplant, he had developed some complications that doctors could not overcome. Rev. Gobind Singh, Parmukh of Ann Arbor/Detroit presided over the sangat at Tracy Satsang Bhawan and blessed the Sooch and Sandhu families.

Nevada:

Rev. Ishwar Das Chawla, Mukhi of Reno, Nevada passed away. He was 75. Rev. Chawla leaves behind a rich legacy of life-long work and devotion toward the Mission.

Guru Puja Divas

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lowed by Sewadal rally, in which youngsters participated wholeheartedly. Blessing the Sewadal volunteers, Rev. Shah Ji, Pramukh of Toronto branch, said that Satguru is the ocean of happiness. The real cause for celebrating His birthday is to thank Him, who has given us the gift of Divine knowledge and helped us in our life here as well as hereafter.

Rev. R L Manocha Ji conducted the program. Young kids presented special songs and skits celebrating the Holy Master's birthday. Baba Ji's sister, Rev. Jagjit Ji, sought blessings from God Almighty that everyone could imbibe the teachings of Baba Ji.

In the end, Rev. Sukhbir Shah Ji, Pramukh of Toronto, blessed the congregation. He said that Satguru is the messiah of peace and His message is to unite us with the One. His blessings put us on the path of virtues and whosoever walks on this path lives a life filled with happiness and bliss.

New York

The devotees from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania gathered at the NY Metro Branch Bhawan in New Jersey. Everyone was in a joyous mood to celebrate the birthday and the Guru Puja Divas events. The day started with a breakfast feast, which was followed by a well-attended Sewadal rally. Rev Arun Ahluwalia, Parmukh, addressed and blessed the volunteers. A large Satsang was also held after the rally. A number of songs and inspiring thoughts were presented, eulogizing the Satguru for blessing us with the Divine gift of God-realization. The youth showed immense enthusiasm in organizing this highly successful event.



Rev. Surinderpal Singh of Stockton, CA, donated a new 15-passenger van to replace the aging van at the Tracy Bhawan. Rev. Singh is shown presenting the keys to Dr. Rai.

Sewa Dal Activities

A Highly Interactive Two-Day Camp in Chicago

In a two-day Sewadal camp held at the Chicago bhawan, Col Mela Singh engaged the members in various interactive programs. In such camps, the Sewadal PT (physical training) and an overview of the volunteers' roles and responsibilities are a routine exercise. This program, however, had so many extracurricular activities and they were so engaging that everyone felt that it was an extraordinary camp. Besides the Sewadal training, there was a Yoga session called 'Lifetime Fitness Program.' Sister Sharmishtha Dureja presented the history of the Sant Nirankari Mission. The youngsters gained a lot of insight from this lecture, connecting them to the past of the Mission. This was followed by outdoor games of volleyball, tug-of-war, and Red Rover. The attendees were later split into groups, and all were asked to read the first part of *Gurudev Hardev*. The four groups took turns answering questions, asked by Colonel Mela Ji. There were 20 questions in total, and all groups put out an equal effort. In a congregation held on the second day, the four topics were: Sewa In Action, God Realization, Humility Vs. Ego, and Spiritual Love and Compassion. There were some individual speeches done, and three skits/plays. Following lunch, there was a crossword puzzle on "Who is Who in the Nirankari Mission." Rev. Professor Puri and Dr Jyoti Kalra (Parmukh) and their many fellow devotees did a commendable job in organizing such a camp that was educational, inspirational, and entertaining.

—Nimrata Singh

Vancouver Sewa Dal

The blessings kept on showering upon Vancouver area as saints like Col. Mela Singh, Commander Incharge, Sewadal, Canada, Rev Surinder Bassan, President, Sant Nirankari Mission, Canada, and [Late] Rev Trilochan Dhillon (UK) visited the region. There were Sewadal training activities and satsangs that helped strengthen the devotees' faith in the Master and His timeless teachings. The visiting saints emphasized on the Holy master's message: "to serve mankind is to worship God. To serve the creation is to serve the Creator." —Dr. Parvinder Birdi



Spiritual Tours

Continued from page 2

ed to his Guru, and he did not let anyone bother him. If we develop this kind of devotion without any knowledge, that's dangerous. When we churn milk cream, we get butter. However, if we churn water with the greatest of devotion, we will not make butter. Therefore, devotion without knowledge is not good either. As it's said, "*Jaane Bina Na Hoyal Preeti*". If we have devotion for something without knowledge it is called "Andh Vishwaas", blind faith. Baba Avtar Singh Ji said, "There are no questions in true devotion." If there's a doubt, then it's not devotion.

During the times of slavery, someone bought a young and healthy man. On the way back home the master asked his slave "What is your name, what should I call you?" The slave replied, "Lord, I'm your slave. You may call me whatever you wish to. I will answer no matter what name you give me." The man later asked, "You are a very healthy man. What kind of food do you usually eat? I don't want your health to go bad, so tell me what kind of food do you want me to provide for you?" The slave replied, "Master, I'm your slave, whatever you give me to eat, I will eat." Finally, the man asked him, "What kind of work can you do?" The slave replied, "I will do whatever work you ask me to do; I am your slave." The master was speechless after listening to his slave's answers. He bowed before the slave and said, "You have so much devotion to me, and if I can even have half of that much devotion for my lord, God, then I would be much better off." Surrender to God's will brings peace and harmony in our life.

—Ritika Thohan, Washington D.C.

Montreal Youth Sangat:

Do You Want to Be Superman?

The stage secretary for the youth congregation was Rev. Gurmohan Arneja and the presiding saint was Rev. Surjit Arneja. A beautiful story from the youth congregation is presented below.

One day, a man asked a young child, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" The child replied, "When I grow up, I want to be like Superman!" The man laughed, and didn't realize that the boy was very serious about this. From that day onwards, the boy's role model was Superman and he was very determined to be like Superman. He would wear Superman's costumes, keep his hair like Superman, imagine flying one day like Superman and saving people's lives just like Superman. A few years later, after trying so hard to be like Superman, the boy became very frustrated. He realized that he was still very far away from actually becoming like Superman and that he might never reach his goal. The man who had asked the question to the boy about what he wanted to be when he grows up, was passing by and noticed that the boy was very down.

He asked the boy, "What's wrong?" The boy told him everything. To this, the man replied, "Young boy, you are upset because for so many years you've tried hard to be like Superman and today you've realized that it is impossible. This is a learning experience for you and a blessing in disguise. Remember, God has made each person in this world unique and no two persons can be exactly alike. We all have our own individual qualities, talents and abilities. The God-gifted qualities and talents which you have, Superman does not have. So, stop trying so hard to be like someone and focus on who you are." From that day onwards, the boy felt a huge burden fall off his shoulders and he began to enjoy life even more because he stopped copying others and learned to love and appreciate himself.

The last advice the man gave to the boy, "...stop trying so hard to be like someone and focus on who you are."

Satguru has revealed to us, who we are. God made us in His own image. Let's try to be human—the spiritually enlightened beings that our Holy Master wants us to be. If we have sincerely made the commitment to lead spiritual lives and attain true happiness we must try to become true followers of our Holy Master. We must try to become what is possible, a goal worth having—To be True Nirankaris, Mahapurush, that is, The True Superman indeed!

A journalist once asked Baba Ji, "What is your Mission doing for this world?" Baba Ji humbly replied, "I am giving the world good human beings."
—Davinder Dhanoa (Toronto)

Baba Avtar Singh Ji once said, "There are two things which I cannot do". The devotees were surprised to hear this because they thought that the Satguru can do anything. Addressing their curiosity, Baba Ji said, "I cannot take anyone and place him/her outside of Nirankar." Then he added, "The second: I cannot see anyone's faults."
—Shobita Soor, Montreal

Tours 2004

January-April

Rev. Bhagat Kotumal Ji

Boston, MA
Houston, TX
Brownsville, TX
Phoenix, AZ
Kent, OH
Ann Arbor, MI
Minneapolis, MN
Milwaukee, WI
Chicago, IL
New York, NY
Washington, DC

Dr. Rajan Sachdeva

Chicago, IL
Minneapolis, MN
Manchester, TN
Nashville, TN
Washington, DC

Dr. Iqbaljit Rai

New Orleans, LA
Orlando, FL
Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Dr. Shivaraj Tyagi

Rochester, NY
Los Angeles, CA

Rev. Gobind Singh

New York, NY
Los Angeles, CA

Dr. Jyoti Kalra

Ft. Lauderdale, FL
Minneapolis, MN

There has been a significant increase in spiritual tour activities throughout the Northern America. The following comparison between July-December 2003 and the first few months of 2004 shows it at a glance that more preachers are visiting more branches of the Mission.

Rev. Dan Slebodnik

Denver, CO
Ann Arbor, MI

Rev. Prem Sushil

Paducah, KY
Atlanta, GA

Rev. Arun Ahulwalia

San Francisco, CA
Chicago, IL

Rev. Kamal Dadlani

Ann Arbor, MI

Rev. M. S. Chawla

Rochester, NY

Rev. Sister Robin Mallor

Boston, MA

Rev. S. M. Dureja

Atlanta, GA

Rev. Kumar Sahajwani

San Francisco, CA

Dr. S. L. Arora

Washington, DC

Rev. Harlivleen Bajwa

San Francisco, CA

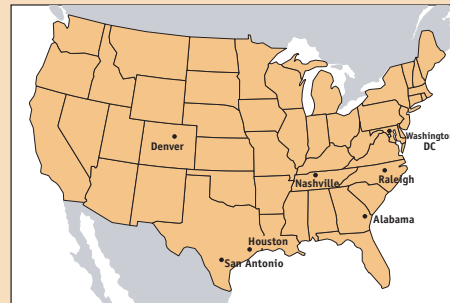
Rev. Prem Mehta

Milwaukee, WI

Tours 2003

July - December

Prof. J. S. Puri



Dr. Rajan Sachdeva



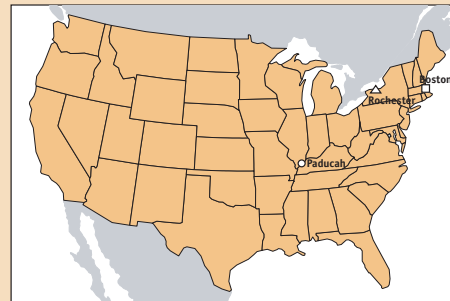
Dr. O P Tandon



□ Rev. Kamal Dadlani

△ Rev. M S Chawla

○ Rev. Prem Sushil



EDITOR: DR. IQBALJIT S. RAI
Nirankari Journal, P.O. Box 99230, Stockton, CA 95209
Phone: 209-369-7400; Fax: 209-365-0507; e-mail: israi@aol.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR/PRODUCTION: ASHWANI MADHOK
15 Arbutus Way, Monmouth Jct., NJ 08852
Phone/Fax: (732) 355-0289; e-mail: ashmadhok@msn.com

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