

ALLEGORY: A Tapestry of Guru Nanak's Travels Episode 24: Baam-e-Nanak (Light of Nanak)

'Baam-e-Nanak', 'Light of Nanak', presents the everlasting radiance of the embodiment of Oneness. Rooted with the spirit of benevolence for all, Guru Nanak proclaims no one is high or low; only righteousness is supreme.

paravirat niravirat haaThaa dhovai vich dharam firai raibaariaa ||
manmukh kache kooRiaar tin(h)ee nihachau dharageh haariaa ||
gurmatee sabadh soor hai kaam karodh jin(h)ee maariaa ||
(Raag Malar, Guru Nanak)

Action and contemplation are two polarities guided by righteousness.
The ego-centric are weak and negative who certainly lose integrity.
The spiritual-minded are warriors who conquer worldly desires and anger.
(Raag Malar, Guru Nanak)

Tightrope walkers perform with ease because they have mastered the fine art of balancing. Even among external distractions they remain internally focused on the anchor as their guiding force. Similarly, in the worldly arena, while balancing the two human activities - 'Parvirit', outward action; and 'Nirvirit', inward contemplation, Guru Nanak says, 'Dharam', righteousness remains the anchor as a guiding force. The one who has learnt this skill is a hero who can walk the path of spirituality with ease.

From Bikaner, Guru Nanak travelled to Uch, Multan, Jhang, Depalpur, Sher Garh, Megha, Chunian, Manak Deki, Kanganpur, Kasur, Manga, Lahore, Sialkot and returned to Kartarpur.

From Bikaner he first travelled to Uch.

We cross the India-Pakistan border at Wagah and enter Pakistan to resume our travels in Guru Nanak's footsteps from Uch in Southern Punjab.

Mein Azal Ka Shoul Hu. Qaynat Ka Noor Hu ||
Mu Mein Tu Maujood ||
Au Allal Ka Agahiya. Yaha Tu Aur Mu ||

Since inception, I have been a spark of creation. I am the light of the Cosmos.
Within me, You exist.
My existence is satiated when you and I coexist.

Guru Nanak was visiting Uch for the second time. In the earlier visit, during the third odyssey, Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana had spent time with Makhdum Haji Abdul Sheikh

Bukhari, the then 'Makhdum' of Jalaluddin Bukhari's shrine. By now, Makhdum Haji Abdul Sheikh Bukhari had passed away. After making a brief stop at Uch, Guru Nanak travelled upstream on the Chenab River to the city of Multan.

Tracing Guru Nanak's footsteps, from Uch we travel north, to the city of Multan.

We visit the shrine of Hazrat Shah Shamsuddin Sabzwari, a Sufi mystic who was born at Sabzawar in Afghanistan.

Amardeep Singh: Guru Nanak travelled to Uch and thereafter came to Multan. He visited the site of Hazrat Shah Shamsuddin Sabzwari.

Hazrat Shah Shamsuddin Sabzwari had arrived in Multan in the early 13th century to spread the message of Islam in the subcontinent. His spiritual poetry was written in the vernacular and is replete with words from Poorbi, Hindi, Gujarati, Sindhi, Saraiki and Punjabi dialects of the Indian subcontinent. In one of his verses, he writes;

Sachcha Mera Khaliq Sirjan, Har Aapey Upaya Shah Dundhukar.
(Hazrat Shah Shamsuddin Sabzwari)

True is my Creator who has created the creation. It is the supreme energy that creates and evolves.
(Hazrat Shah Shamsuddin Sabzwari)

These words remind me of Guru Nanak's 'Jap' composition in which he states the same concept. Having created creation, the Creator beholds and graces it with joy.

kar kar vekhai nadhar nihaal ||
(Jap, Guru Nanak)

The Creator creates the creation, graces and beholds it with delight.
(Jap, Guru Nanak)

During the third odyssey, when Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana had visited Multan, they were hosted by Makhdum Bahavadi, the then spiritual head and custodian of the mausoleum of Sheikh Baha-ud-din Zakariya. On hearing about Guru Nanak's revisit to the city of Multan, Makhdum Bahavadi came to meet him at the shrine of Hazrat Shah Shamsuddin Sabzwari. He was curious to know if Guru Nanak was in search of a spiritual preceptor as he still chose to continue his odysseys instead of the comforts of a home. In reply, Guru Nanak sang,

sache sa(n)dhaa sadhaRaa suneeaaai gur veechaar ||
sache sachaa baihanaa nadharee nadhar piaar ||
giaanee a(n)jan sach kaa ddekhai ddekhanahaar ||

gurmukh boojhai jaaneeaaai haumai garab nivaar ||
(Raag Maru Kafi, Guru Nanak)

The everlasting honourable message is to hear and contemplate on wisdom of
righteousness.

When this reality is housed within, then one is graced with love.

The wise adorn their eyes with honesty and seek those who are capable of seeing it.

The spiritually enlightened recognize and understand that ego and pride should be
forsaken.

(Raag Maru Kafi, Guru Nanak)

Guru Nanak walked on the path of spiritual collaboration. For him, dialogue with seers and seekers was akin to communing with the Divine preceptor. Any place where there was love and truth was his home.

Athar Jahanian Jahanhust: Multan is said to be the land of Sufi Saints. The blessed land of spiritualists. Also known as the dwelling place of spiritualists. When honourable Baba Guru Nanak came to this city, the Sufi spiritualists of this place whose names don't find any mention, however, it is stated that the 'Aulia' (Sufi) sent a bowl filled with milk for him. There was a purpose behind this gesture. It was intended to convey that this place is a land of Sufi mystics and is full of spiritualists. Honourable Baba Guru Nanak placed a jasmine flower in the bowl filled with milk. So that the flower would add value with its fragrance but not spill the milk. This is the beauty of honourable Baba Guru Nanak that he came here with the message of Oneness to unite people.

Bhai Gurdas mentions in his 'Vaar' (poetry),

ago(n) peer mulataan dhe dhudh kaToraa bhar lai aaiee ||
baabe kadd kar bagal te cha(n)belee dhudh vich milaiee ||
jiau saagar vich ga(n)g samaiee ||
(Bhai Gurdas)

The 'Pir' (enlightened) in Multan presented a bowl of milk filled up to the brim.
Baba took a jasmine flower from his side and placed it on the milk, symbolizing a river
merging with ocean.
(Bhai Gurdas)

Guru Nanak's symbolic gesture of placing jasmine flowers on the milk conveyed the message that spiritual wisdom is limitless; hence many thoughts can coexist harmoniously without disruption, akin to the rivers which merge with the Ocean without displacing its water.

The egalitarian philosophy of Guru Nanak took form of the 'Guru_Granth Sahib', a repository of verses of spiritualists; the seers and seekers from different faiths, cultures

and social strata. The verses inscribed in the 'Guru Granth Sahib' are duly cited; exemplifying Guru Nanak's principles of integrity.

Interestingly, in the inner sanctum of the shrine of Hazrat Shah Shamsuddin Sabzwari, Sikh names in 'Gurmukhi', the script used in East Punjab to write Punjabi, are scribbled on the walls. The caretakers of the shrine mentioned that these date back to pre-1947, when Sikhs would visit the shrine in memory of Guru Nanak.

From Multan, Guru Nanak travelled further upstream on the Chenab River to the city of Jhang.

We now travel from Multan to Nanak Sir village in Jhang district.

In 1947, during the partition of the sub-continent based on religion, the Hindu and Sikh community migrated eastwards to India. Similarly, many Muslims moved westwards to the regions which became Pakistan. Some of them took refuge in abandoned buildings, like this historic gurdwara.

Amardeep Singh: The village Nanak Sir, close to the city of Jhang, is named after Guru Nanak. This gurdwara in the village was made in the memory of Guru Nanak.

Amardeep Singh: In a discussion with the villagers, I enquired if they were aware about the historical importance of this gurdwara. They were unaware. Yet out of respect, daily, they light a lamp at its entrance.

The villagers guided us to Khadim Hussain, who, at the time of partition, had migrated here at the age of 17.

Khadim Hussain: When I arrived here, I was 16-17 years old. We have heard about Baba Nanak from our elders. When respected Baba Guru Nanak arrived here, this place was a forest. At this place he ate food and drank water. In the evening, when the weather was cooler, he departed from here. When we arrived here, lamps would be lit at this site by the locals. Even in present times, the villagers light lamps here.

I see the lighting of the lamp by the villagers as a symbol of the burning of the ego and emission of the light of spiritual awakening. It instills hope that mistakes made in the past are not repeated in the future.

nai nivaajaa naatai poojaa naavan sadhaa sujaanee ||
muiaa jeevadhiaa gat hovai jaa(n) sir paieeaa paanee ||
(Raag Majh, Guru Nanak)

Before praying, some perform ablutions while some bathe. However, the enlightened always cleanse their thoughts.

Eliminating vices while alive is akin to emancipation. Washing away the ego of the mind
is akin to cleansing.
(Raag Majh, Guru Nanak)

Some believers follow the practice of physical cleansing before 'Niwaja', the gesture of prostration which is a symbolic act of surrendering the ego. Some believers bathe to physically cleanse before performing 'Pooja', which is a symbolic act of awakening the consciousness. Guru Nanak says, however, the enlightened beings cleanse their thoughts by surrendering the ego to awaken their consciousness.

From Jhang, Guru Nanak travelled to Depalpur.

Tracing Guru Nanak's footsteps, we travel from Jhang to Depalpur, a town in the district of Okara.

We visit the erstwhile Chota Nanakiana Gurdwara which was built in memory of Guru Nanak's visit to Depalpur. During the religious divide of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, this gurdwara was abandoned and since then has been a residence for migrant families.

'Gurbani' inscriptions, the spiritual verses from 'Guru Granth Sahib', the Sikh scripture, on the walls of the dilapidated gurdwara have withstood the impact of time.

aape har ik ra(n)g hai aape bahu ra(n)gee ||
jo tis bhaavai naanaka saiee gal cha(n)gee ||
(Guru Ramdas)

The Creator is one with many colours.
Nanak says, whatever is done by the law of nature that alone is good.
(Guru Ramdas)

I wonder, does this convey a deeper message that if a society is deeply entrenched in spiritual values then it develops the resilience to withstand destructive forces!

jiau goddahu tiau tum(h) sukh paavahu kirat na meTiaa jaiee ||
(Raag Basant, Guru Nanak)

The deeper one digs in contemplation, the more peace is attained. This profound action
cannot be negated.
(Raag Basant, Guru Nanak)

The phrase 'dig deep' means to exert effort to the fullest of one's potential. Guru Nanak says, the more one digs within to reflect on one's actions, the more one experiences peace. He reminds us that sincere efforts can never be discounted. The more peace there is in us, the more peace there will be around us.

From Depalpur, Guru Nanak travelled to Sher Garh.

Tracing Guru Nanak's footsteps, we travel from Depalpur to Sher Garh.

We visit the mausoleum of Daud Kirmani, a renowned Sufi Saint of the Qadri sect, who was a contemporary of Guru Nanak.

It is mentioned in the 'Meherban Janamsakhi' that at Sher Garh, Guru Nanak met Daud Kirmani, a spiritually wise person. During dialogue, Daud Kirmani mentioned that his mentor was Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani of Lahore.

This interaction made Guru Nanak desirous of visiting Lahore to meet Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani.

We met Syed Khursheed Muslim Sahib, the current 'Makhdum', the caretaker of the shrine of Daud Kirmani at Sher Garh.

Syed Khursheed Muslim: Respected Guru Nanak travelled from Multan to Depalpur and thereafter arrived at Sher Garh. The sacred chamber of respected Daud Wali Kirmani at Sher Garh was his residence at that time. It is at this place that respected Guru Nanak met respected Daud Wali Kirmani. The ancestors of respected Daud Wali Kirmani travelled from Saudi Arabia to Iran to Kum and through Sindh arrived here. Respected Baba Guru Nanak also wished that humans should live together with love. They should refrain from conflicts and negativity and spend time in harmony. Respected Daud Wali Kirmani, a Muslim by faith, also desired to shower happiness on humanity. Treat humans as humans. Love and don't inflict atrocities on one another. It is for this mission that the two met. They met because their vision was the same.

Derived from Greek language, the term 'metamorphosis' is made up of two words, 'meta' meaning 'after' and 'morph' meaning 'form'. It refers to stages of evolution, analogous to the process of transitioning from a caterpillar to a butterfly.

Guru Nanak in his composition, 'Jap', describes the five sequential realms of spiritual metamorphosis as 'Khand' - stages of evolution of the human mind in its alignment with the inner-self. These stages start from 'Dharam Khand' and transcend through 'Gyan Khand', 'Saram Khand', 'Karam Khand', to reach the apex, 'Sach Khand'.

'Dharam' is a Sanskrit word which means the duty to hold and support. Guru Nanak says, in the realm of 'Dharam Khand', while performing daily duties, holding and supporting righteousness should be paramount.

dharam kha(n)dd kaa eho dharam ||
(Jap, Guru Nanak)

In the realm of duty, righteousness is the duty.
(Jap, Guru Nanak)

From Sher Garh, Guru Nanak is believed to have travelled through the villages of Megha and Chunian.

In Guru Nanak's footsteps, from Sher Garh we pass through Megha and Chunian villages. At Megha is the dilapidated and abandoned Chota Nanakiana Gurdwara which was built in memory of Guru Nanak.

At Chunian, one finds an unclassified gurdwara.

The word 'Gyan' is derived from Sanskrit and means 'Knowledge'. Humans are born with certain inherent knowledge and acquire the rest. Guru Nanak says, upon ascending to the realm of 'Gyan Khand', one is bestowed with immense forms of knowledge; however, knowledge by itself is not enough. It should be supplemented with wisdom through effort of self-reflection. It is a stage like that of a skillful archer, who pulls the string of the bow closer to oneself so that the arrow can be launched at the target.

giaan kha(n)dd meh giaan paracha(n)dd ||
(Jap, Guru Nanak)

In the realm of knowledge, spiritual wisdom reigns supreme.
(Jap, Guru Nanak)

Guru Nanak continued his journey and travelled through the villages of Manak Deki and Kanganpur.

In Guru Nanak's footsteps, we travel to the villages of Manak Deki and Kanganpur which are in close proximity.

At Manak Deki, we visit the gurdwara which was built to commemorate Guru Nanak's visit. The site was abandoned during the partition of 1947, and the only remaining room of the dilapidated gurdwara is now home to a migrant family. According to oral narrative, during Guru Nanak's visit, the natives of this village were modest and ethical. While departing, Guru Nanak is believed to have told the villagers, 'May you get uprooted.'

At the nearby Kanganpur village, we visit the remains of the erstwhile Mal Ji Sahib Gurdwara, which was built in the memory of Guru Nanak's visit. After the partition of 1947, it was abandoned and since then its premises have served as a home to a migrant family. According to oral narrative, during Guru Nanak's visit, the residents of this village were temperamentally rude and unethical. While departing, Guru Nanak is believed to have told the villagers, 'May you remain settled.'

Contagious behaviour is the unconscious transmission of actions or emotions from one individual to others. Guru Nanak valued the virtuous villagers and thus desired their dispersal so that goodness could spread. However, he wanted the egoistic villagers to stay contained so that their negative temperament would not be emulated.

Amardeep Singh: Virtuous conduct in human interactions play an important role in one's spiritual development. This fact was endorsed by Guru Nanak through his message to the villagers of Kanganpur and Manak Deki.

The word 'Saram' in Sanskrit means 'Modesty' with a connotation of 'Humility'. In the realm of 'Saram Khand', Guru Nanak says that embracing all forms of creation as equal is the highest state of humility. It reminds me of the cuckoo bird, which humbly remains invisible and unconditionally spreads joy to its surroundings with its melodious callings.

saram kha(n)dd kee baanee roop ||
(Jap, Guru Nanak)

In the realm of humility, all forms of creation are beautiful.
(Jap, Guru Nanak)

Guru Nanak proceeded further north and travelled through Kasur.

In Guru Nanak's footsteps, we travel to Kasur, a city close to the India-Pakistan border.

Ancient history mentions that Kasur was founded by Prince Kush, the son of King Ram, and his wife Sita, of the epic 'Ramayan'. This city is also famous as the resting place of the renowned 17th century Sufi Saint Bullhe Shah.

Kasur district had many gurdwaras, which after the partition of 1947 have gone into oblivion. We visit Kalu Khara where exists a functional syncretic place of worship, known as Gurdwara Ram Thaman. It was built in memory of Guru Nanak's cousin, Ram Thaman, a maternal aunt's son.

Amardeep Singh: In district Kasur, many Gurdwaras were built in the remembrance of Guru Nanak's visit to this region. This shrine in the village Ram Thaman is the only surviving monument in the memory of Guru Nanak.

The structure of this site is such that it appears to be a temple externally but the inscriptions on the building indicate it was regarded as a gurdwara. This reflects that it was a center of congregation for the 'Nanakpanthis', the Hindu and Sikh adherents of Guru Nanak.

Amardeep Singh:

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Ik Ongkar Satgur Parsad, Gurdwara Baba Ram Thaman, Sambat 444 Nanakshahi.

One Omnipresent. Realized through the grace of wisdom. Gurdwara Baba Ram Thaman. Built 444 years after birth of Guru Nanak.

The gate to this syncretic place of worship in Ram Thaman was built in the year 444 'Nanakshahi' (calendar starting from birth day of Guru Nanak).

In present times the Muslim community of the village continue the tradition of holding the annual Vaisakhi fair at this shrine in memory of Guru Nanak and Ram Thaman.

The word 'Karam' in Sanskrit means 'Actions' and 'Deeds'. The word 'Bani' connotes 'Positive Intent'. Guru Nanak says, in the realm of 'Karam Khand', amongst all deeds, actions guided by spiritual intent are most powerful.

karam kha(n)dd kee baanee jor ||
(Jap, Guru Nanak)

In the realm of action, positive intent is powerful.
(Jap, Guru Nanak)

From Kasur, Guru Nanak travelled through Manga.

Tracing Guru Nanak's footsteps, we travel from Kasur to Manga and visit the remains of Gurdwara Chota Nanakiana, which was built in the memory of Guru Nanak's visit. This gurdwara was abandoned during the partition of 1947. Later, some part of the land was used to build the adjacent Aligarh Public School. 'Sarovar', the water pond of this gurdwara is now being used by the Department of Fisheries to breed fish.

The word 'Sach' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Satya', meaning 'Truth'. It corresponds to being in accord with facts and reality. Guru Nanak says, in the realm of 'Sach Khand', one realizes the Ultimate Truth - that the One formless force resides in the entirety of creation. It is in this realm that one reaches the state of liberation.

sach kha(n)dd vasai nira(n)kaar ||
(Jap, Guru Nanak)

In the realm of Truth, the formless cosmic energy resides.
(Jap, Guru Nanak)

From Manga, Guru Nanak travelled to Lahore. Earlier, he had visited Lahore during his second odyssey.

Tracing Guru Nanak's footsteps, from Manga we travel to Lahore.

The 'Meherban Janamsakhi' mentions that Guru Nanak visited Lahore to meet Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani, after having heard about him from his devotee Daud Kirmani at Sher Garh.

Amardeep Singh: We are at the site where Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani Sani lies buried. Guru Nanak met him on the banks of River Ravi in Lahore, where the two had spiritual discourses.

Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani of Lahore was the son of Syed Jamal-ud-Din Gilani, who had migrated from Baghdad to Lahore in the 15th century. He belonged to the Islamic Sufi 'Qadri' tradition which was initiated in Baghdad by the 12th century saint, Pir Mohiuddin Abdul Qadir Gilani. Guru Nanak, during his third odyssey, had visited the mausoleum of Pir Mohiuddin Abdul Qadir Gilani in Baghdad.

Zahid Bashir Hashami: Respect Baba Ji is associated with the spiritual seat of Abdul Qadir Gilani of Baghdad. He was from his lineage. On account of spiritual achievements, he was given the name of Abdul Qadir Sani, the second Abdul Qadir. He met respected Baba Guru Nanak on the banks of River Ravi. The religion of the saints is humanity which is not bound and associated with any religion, sect, colour, caste or race.

During a conversation with Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani, Guru Nanak expressed that all pleasures of life are transient and only the pleasure of union with the Divine energy is permanent.

sabh ras miThe ma(n)niaai suniaai saalone ||
khaT turasee mukh bolanaa maaran naadh ke'ee ||
chhateeh a(n)mirat bhaau ek jaa kau nadhar karei ||
(Sri Raag, Guru Nanak)

All flavours are tasty. The ability to hear is akin to saltiness.
Tanginess, to words spoken positively and spiciness, to the awareness of divinity.
The essence of diverse philosophies is Oneness. It is savoured only by those graced
with spiritual wisdom.
(Sri Raag, Guru Nanak)

Nature is infused with diverse flavours to stimulate pleasure in the taste buds. Like the sweetness of sugarcane, the saltiness of rocks, the tanginess of lemons and the spiciness of chillies. Guru Nanak says, similarly, diverse philosophies are intended to stimulate spiritual thinking to savour the pleasure of diversity in creation.

From Lahore, Guru Nanak visited Sialkot.

In Guru Nanak's footsteps, we travel from Lahore to Sialkot.

Guru Nanak, during his second odyssey, had met Moola Khatri at Sialkot, who thereafter had travelled with him for some time. According to the 'Meherban Janamsakhi', while passing through Sialkot for the second time, Guru Nanak visited Moola Khatri's home. Though Moola Khatri's wife greeted Guru Nanak warmly, she was apprehensive that her husband might decide to go on another journey, and she falsely declared that he was not in Sialkot. On learning about the deception, Moola Khatri is said to have succumbed to death. On hearing about Moola Khatri's demise, Guru Nanak visited his home to participate in his last rites. Expressing a message of true and ever-enduring allegiance, Guru Nanak is said to have sang,

jau tau prem khelan kaa chaau ||
sir dhar talee galee meree aau ||
eit maarag pair dhareejai ||
sir dheejai kaan na keejai ||
(Salok, Guru Nanak)

If you desire to play the game of love,
then step on the path with your ego on your palm.
When you place your feet on this path,
do not hesitate to give up the ego.
(Salok, Guru Nanak)

A tree unconditionally nourishes without seeking returns; a quality which can be inferred to as 'Prem', true love. However, a bumble bee is attracted to flowers and nibbles them to seek nectar in return; a quality which can be inferred as 'Moh', attachment. 'Prem', true love, emerges from compassion whereas 'Moh', attachment, is an outcome of ego. Guru Nanak says, if one aspires to play the game of love then the negativity of the egoistic mind needs to be surrendered without conditions.

From Sialkot, Guru Nanak headed back to Kartarpur.

In Guru Nanak's footsteps, we travel from Sialkot to Kartarpur.

Guru Nanak returned to Kartarpur after having travelled for approximately two years. The fourth odyssey, to places in and around Punjab, which started in 1525 AD, is estimated to have lasted two years; concluding in 1526 AD, when Guru Nanak was about 57 years of age.

It is estimated that between the start of the first odyssey in 1504 AD, when Guru Nanak was 35 years, to the end of the fourth odyssey in 1526, when he was 57 years, he had travelled far and wide for about 22 years.

Before embarking on his fourth journey, Guru Nanak had entrusted Bhai Lehna with the responsibility of managing the community at Kartarpur. Upon his return, Guru Nanak continued to guide the commune; to live harmoniously, to earn one's living through fair means and to practice spirituality. According to the 'Meherban Janamsakhi', the settlement had gained acclamation.

The 'Janamsakhi' literature mentions that an unnamed friend of Guru Nanak who had worked with him at the state granary in Sultanpur Lodhi, visited Kartarpur to meet him. He asked Guru Nanak to share the procurements and gains accomplished during his travels. Guru Nanak replied,

hiradhai naam naahee man bha(n)g ||
anadhin naal piaare sa(n)g ||
har jeeau raakhahu apanee saranaiee ||
gur parasaadhee har ras paiaa naam padhaarath nau nidh paiee ||
(Raag Asa, Guru Nanak)

When spiritual wisdom is not separated from heart and mind,
then, every moment, inner peace resides with the seeker.

O all-pervading, keep me in your sanctuary.

Through spiritual wisdom, the essence of Truth is gained and the treasures of self-reflection are attained.

(Raag Asa, Guru Nanak)

Guru Nanak says, true accomplishments are measured through the attainment of non-material 'wealth', when one earns the means of self-reflection; makes profits through insights as to one's actions; seeks the sanctuary of Divine grace; and receives the treasure of wisdom through experiential learning.

The 'Meherban Janamsakhi' mentions another unnamed friend of Guru Nanak who visited Kartarpur and was elated to see the way of life followed by the commune. After spending a few days with Guru Nanak he headed back home and greeted his family, as was done in Kartarpur by saying 'Sat Kartar', meaning, the Creator is Truth. He is said to have breathed his last while sharing Guru Nanak's universal philosophy with the villagers. On hearing the news of his friend's demise, Guru Nanak sang,

naanak dderee ddeh piee miTee sa(n)dhaa koT ||
bheetar chor bahaaliaa khoT ve jeeaa khoT ||
(Raag Sarang, Guru Nanak)

Nanak says, the body reduces to a pile of mud, akin to a mud-fortress.

Thief (vice) resides within. It makes bodily existence false.

(Raag Sarang, Guru Nanak)

Guru Nanak says, the body is made of mud and upon death, as it becomes a pile of ash, similarly, the duality of mind housed within, perish with the body. Guru Nanak reminds us that the existence of the body and its desires are temporary.

Existence thrives on the innate mechanism of communication. Guru Nanak honoured this law of nature. Through years of communication with spiritualists during his travels, Guru Nanak formulated his creed, titled, 'Mool Mantar', to communicate the essence of his wisdom. This creed forms the opening verse of the 'Guru Granth Sahib', the Sikh scripture. 'Mool', means fundamental, and 'Mantar', means a tool for the mind. To endorse his philosophy of Monism, the Omnipresence of one light embodied in different forms, Guru Nanak affixed the numerical '1' in the beginning of the 'Mool Mantar'.

ikOankaar sat naam karataa purakh nirabhau niravair akaal moorat ajoonee saibha(n)
gur prasaadh ||
(Moolmantar, Guru Nanak)

One Omnipresent. The Truth. Personified in Creation. Fearless. Bereft of
Discrimination. Eternal Form. Beyond Birth. Self-Existent. Realized through the Grace of
Guidance.
(Moolmantar, Guru Nanak)

To carry forward the nectar of ambrosial wisdom, Guru Nanak passed the baton of leadership to Bhai Lehna, renaming him as Angad, a name derived from Sanskrit meaning, part of one's body. Metaphorically, this name implied that the two were an embodiment of the same philosophy.

barasai a(n)mirat dhaar boo(n)dh suhaavaneer ||
saajan mile sahaj subhai har siao preet banee ||
(Raag Tukhari, Guru Nanak)

Ambrosial nectar of wisdom is showered. Its drops are delightful.
Meeting the spiritually enlightened and living in a tranquil state, one falls in love with
Divinity.
(Raag Tukhari, Guru Nanak)

Guru Nanak handed over to Guru Angad the collection of 'pothies', a repository of his verses and compilation of hymns of other enlightened beings. Through this gesture, the commune realized that the demise of Guru Nanak's bodily existence was imminent.

Death is a significant aspect of life. The two are inseparable, like inhalation and exhalation which reside in the same breath. Consciousness is infinite thus every aspect of life flows from Divine grace, including death. While death is considered inauspicious, Guru Nanak says, when wisdom is acquired then death becomes a well-wisher.

e man mirat subh chi(n)ta(n) gur sabadh har ramana(n) ||
mat tat giaana(n) kaliaan nidhaana(n) har naam man ramana(n) ||
chal chit vit bhramaa bhrama(n) jag moh magan hita(n) ||
thir naam bhagat dhiRa(n) matee gur vaak sabadh rata(n) ||
(Raag Gujri, Guru Nanak)

O mind, even death wishes well. Contemplate on the words of wisdom.
The intellect receives the essence of knowledge and treasure of grace. Practice
contemplation and self-reflection.
The fickle mind wanders in doubt. It remains engrossed in materialistic attachments.
Constant contemplation results in the stability of mind. Spiritual wisdom and dialogue
are priceless jewels.
(Raag Gujri, Guru Nanak)

According to 'Janamsakhi' texts, Guru Nanak remained in his bodily form for seventy years, from 1469 to 1539 AD.

Amardeep Singh: The message of Oneness that Guru Nanak spread during his travels, is reflected at this site in Kartarpur. As per oral narratives, when Guru Nanak passed away, both Hindus and Muslims claimed to perform his last rites as per their respective traditions, representing that Guru Nanak belonged to all.

Kartarpur Gurdwara was built to commemorate Guru Nanak's life spent at this tranquil settlement. This site became a spiritual landmark for the adherents of Guru Nanak. The Radcliffe line decided the fate of many historic sites during the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, wherein Kartarpur became part of Pakistan. Due to religion based migration, the Kartarpur Gurdwara was abandoned. It was reestablished in 1995.

The gurdwara was renovated and expanded to its present form in 2019, on the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak upheld the spark of oneness and unity in diversity. His cognizance was, is and will remain a ray of hope for a united world.

Jhaan ki bujhti hui nigahon ko, jagmagata hai bam-e-nanak
Na pak koi na koi napak, koi uncha na koi nicha
(Anand Narayan Moola)

The diminishing light of humanity is illuminated by the wisdom of Nanak.
Neither is anyone pure or impure. Neither is anyone high or low.
(Anand Narayan Moola)

Our physical journey in the footsteps of Guru Nanak unfurled unique opportunities in our humble attempt to understand the essence of his profound philosophy. The process of

**'ALLEGORY: A Tapestry of Guru Nanak's Travels', the 24 Episode Guru Nanak Docuseries
is available in 5 languages at TheGuruNanak.com
Email: onenessindiversityfoundation@gmail.com**

unravelling the 'ALLEGORY' of Guru Nanak has facilitated our ability to unlearn, relearn and ponder on diverse perspectives of life.

For us, the most liberating experience has been the realization that the universe is one comprehensive phenomenon and that truthful conduct is the key to grasping its glory.

Do ponder on your 'ALLEGORY'!

eko dharam dhiraRai sach koiee ||
(Raag Basant, Guru Nanak)

Righteousness is the only truthful universal law.
(Raag Basant, Guru Nanak)

Discussion Pointers

ALLEGORY: A Tapestry of Guru Nanak's Travels Episode 24: Baam-e-Nanak (Light of Nanak)

As detailed in this episode, the discussion points offer a framework for exploring Guru Nanak's historical journey and philosophical insights. By examining his travels through various regions, interactions with spiritual leaders, and establishing the Kartarpur community, we understand how his physical journey mirrored his spiritual vision. The philosophical questions focus on his insights regarding spirituality, the balance between action and contemplation, love versus attachment, and the essence of his experiential learning. Guru Nanak emphasised righteousness, truth, and the oneness of humanity, messages that resonate beyond religious boundaries. His awareness remains a ray of hope for a united world. These discussion points encourage more profound reflection on how his timeless wisdom can enhance our understanding of spirituality, human relationships, and meaningful living in contemporary society. Guru Nanak upheld the idea of unity in diversity.

Historical Discussion Pointers:

1. What was the timeline and geographical extent of Guru Nanak's fourth journey?

The episode highlights the significance of Guru Nanak's fourth journey in and around Punjab, which began in 1525 AD when he was around 57 years old and spanned approximately two years, concluding in 1526 AD. This journey was part of his extensive travels spanning about 22 years, from 1504 AD to 1526 AD. During this fourth journey, Guru Nanak travelled from Bikaner to various locations, including Uch, Multan, Jhang, Depalpur, Sher Garh, Megha, Chunian, Manak Deki, Kanganpur, Kasur, Manga, Lahore, Sialkot, before returning to Kartarpur. How might this particular geographical route have influenced the depth and resonance of his message during this final odyssey?

2. How did Guru Nanak's interactions with saints influence spiritual dialogue, and what lasting outcomes emerged from these exchanges?

Guru Nanak engaged in meaningful exchanges with various Sufi saints throughout his journey. For example, during his time in Sher Garh, he met with Daud Kirmani, which prompted him to seek out Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani in Lahore. The caretaker of Daud Kirmani's shrine noted that these spiritual leaders connected because they shared a common vision. According to Syed Khursheed, Guru Nanak and Daud Wali Kirmani aspired for humans to live together in love and treat one another respectfully. In what ways did these interfaith dialogues with mystics demonstrate Guru Nanak's commitment to spiritual collaboration and the pursuit of universal truths that transcend religious boundaries?

3. What significance did the Kartarpur settlement hold in Guru Nanak's life and legacy?

Kartarpur marked both the starting point and the pinnacle of Guru Nanak's fourth odyssey. Before embarking on this journey, he entrusted Bhai Lehna with managing the community there. Upon his return, Guru Nanak continued to inspire the community to live harmoniously, pursue their livelihoods through ethical practices, and deepen their understanding of spiritual living. The Meherban Janamsakhi highlights that the settlement gained much acclaim for these principles. Over time, Kartarpur emerged as a spiritual beacon for those who resonated with Guru Nanak's philosophy. How did the establishment of this community embody the practical application of Guru Nanak's philosophical insights?

4. How did the partition of 1947 impact the historical sites associated with Guru Nanak's journey?

The episode discusses how many historical sites related to Guru Nanak's travels were impacted by the partition of India in 1947. For instance, the Chota Nanakiana Gurdwara in Depalpur was abandoned and has since served as a residence for migrant families. Similarly, the former Mal Ji Sahib Gurdwara in Kanganpur was also abandoned and has become a home for a migrant family. Kartarpur became part of Pakistan and was deserted before it was re-established in 1995. It expanded to its current form in 2019. What does the current state of these historical sites indicate about the preservation of Guru Nanak's legacy across political and religious boundaries?

5. What was the process and significance of Guru Nanak's succession planning?

Before his passing, Guru Nanak entrusted Bhai Lehna with the mantle of leadership, renaming him Angad, a name from Sanskrit that signifies "part of one's body." This choice of name symbolically suggested their profound unity in shared philosophy. In addition to this important transition, He also handed Guru Angad a collection of 'pothies,' a repository of his spiritual verses and a compilation of hymns from other enlightened beings. How did this succession process ensure the continuity and preservation of Guru Nanak's spiritual legacy beyond his physical existence?

Philosophical Discussion Pointers:

1. How does Guru Nanak describe the five realms of spiritual metamorphosis?

This episode highlights Guru Nanak's concept of the five realms of spiritual evolution, known as 'Khand,' which connect the human mind to its deeper essence. Dharam Khand emphasizes duty, reinforcing that righteousness is a fundamental responsibility. In Gyan Khand, knowledge emerges as our guiding light, while Saram Khand focuses on humility, encouraging appreciation for the beauty in creation. Karam Khand illustrates how our intentions can reshuffle our experiences, and Sach Khand represents the realm of Truth, where formless cosmic energy offers unity and purpose.

How can these realms provide a framework for spiritual growth, enabling more profound insights, meaningful connections, and fulfilment in our complex world?

2. What is the significance of balancing outward action and inward contemplation in Guru Nanak's philosophy?

Guru Nanak emphasizes balancing 'Parvirit' (outward action) and 'Nirvirit' (inward contemplation) with righteousness as the guiding force. He uses the metaphor of tightrope walkers who efficiently perform because they have mastered the fine art of balancing. In this context, Guru Nanak explains that 'Dharam,' or righteousness, is an anchor guiding us in balancing these two human activities. How does this insight about balancing action and contemplation offer guidance for navigating the complexities of modern life while maintaining spiritual equilibrium?

3. How does Guru Nanak differentiate between love and attachment?

In this episode, Guru Nanak distinguishes between 'Prem' (love) and 'Moh' (attachment). A tree embodies 'Prem' by nourishing others unconditionally without expecting anything in return, demonstrating the essence of true love. In contrast, a bumblebee represents 'Moh' as it is attracted to flowers to extract nectar, seeking a return for its attention. Additionally, 'Prem,' or love, arises from compassion, while 'Moh,' or attachment, stems from ego. How can understanding this distinction help us assess and transform our relationships with others and the world around us?

4. What is the essence of Guru Nanak's "Mool Mantar" and how does it encapsulate his philosophy?

The episode describes the 'Mool Mantar' as Guru Nanak's foundation of insights that communicate the essence of his wisdom. 'Mool' means fundamental, and 'Mantar' means a tool for the mind. Guru Nanak affixed the numerical '1' at the beginning of the 'Mool Mantar' to endorse his philosophy of Monism, the Omnipresence of one light embodied in different forms. This truth can be experienced and realized through experiential learning and spiritual wisdom. In Guru Nanak's philosophy, how does this fundamental creed serve as a foundation for understanding divinity and human nature?

5. How did Guru Nanak approach the concept of death and the transience of bodily existence?

Guru Nanak viewed death as an essential part of life, emphasizing that the two are inseparable, such as inhalation and exhalation occurring within the same breath. He believed that consciousness is infinite; therefore, every aspect of life, including death, flows from Divine grace. In his words, the body ultimately reduces to mud, making our physical existence deceptive. He reminds us that both the body and its desires are temporary. How can this perspective on the transience of physical existence influence our approach to living a meaningful life?

6. What was Guru Nanak's view on dialogue and collaboration with other spiritual traditions?

Guru Nanak is a pioneer of spiritual collaboration, engaging in dialogue with seers and seekers as a profound communion with the Divine. In the episode, his interactions with various Sufi saints reflect a deep commitment to fostering interfaith dialogue. This egalitarian philosophy is embodied in the Guru Granth Sahib, which serves as a treasure of wisdom with verses from spiritual leaders spanning different faiths, cultures, and social backgrounds. How does this approach to spiritual dialogue across traditions offer a model for interfaith understanding in our increasingly diverse world today?