

Five Paragons of Peace

Magic and Magnificence in the Guru's Way



Singh Sahib Guru Fatha Singh Khalsa

In *Five Paragons of Peace*, Guru Fatha Singh ji has written a timeless masterpiece on the integration of the ancient wisdom of Guru Nanak and the evolution of humanity today. It is a must read for anyone interested in becoming knowledgeable, elevated and enlightened. Peace is the way and this book helps us along that royal road.

Highly recommended!

Dharma Singh Khalsa, MD, author of *Meditation as Medicine* and *The End of Karma*

I have enjoyed reading your book - and admire your range of reading, arguments and presentation. Your treatment of the subject is very original, thought provoking and refreshing. It brings into sharp focus the relevance of Sikh spirituality for the modern world.

Balwant Singh Dhillon
Head of Guru Nanak Studies Department, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

With such levels of violence in the world, young people need to hear the message of Guru Fatha Singh. He challenges us to create peace in our own lives and in our broader community.

Craig Kielburger, Founder of (Kids Can) Free the Children

...an impressive and thought-provoking document at many points.
A worthy reference work to have and keep on hand.

Joseph O'Connell
Professor Emeritus in the Study of Religion, Saint Michael's College, University of Toronto

I took my time reading your magnum opus. Wow! What a chronicle of the emergence of the Aquarian Age.

Good job. I was amused, entertained, and thoroughly enjoyed the ride. Thank you.

Guruka Singh Khalsa, Founder and Executive Director of Sikhnet

In this fascinating book, Guru Fatha Singh leads us through the evolution we have been going through for centuries – from the days when our consciousness was shaped in a way that has contributed to tragic amounts and forms of violence to our present searching for new paradigms supporting respect for one another and peaceful ways of meeting needs.

Incorporated in the book is a brief, but intriguing history of the Sikh tradition initiated by Guru Nanak.

Marshall Rosenberg
Founder and Education Director of the Center for Nonviolent Communication

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*Magic and Magnificence
in the Guru's Way*

Singh Sahib Guru Fatha Singh Khalsa

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gurufathasingh@gmail.com - 363 Palmerston Boulevard, Toronto, Ontario M6G 2N5 CANADA

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The cover art depicts our mother planet beneath five luminous designs, known as “Ekongkaar” - ੴ. It means, “There is One Creator creating this whole creation.” These are the words of Guru Nanak.

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To Begin...

It is my great privilege to be born in and be a witness to interesting times. It has also been my huge good fortune to live under the tutelage of Guru Nanak and his great disciple, Yogi Bhajan.

This humble effort is my way of sharing with you the richness I have received from the Guru's treasury. I also hope this essay might instill in those who consider themselves familiar with the Sikh tradition a greater appreciation of the full significance of the Master's living legacy for all of us - now and tomorrow.

Truly, blessings abound...

Guru Fatha Singh Khalsa
Guru Ram Das Ashram, Toronto, Canada
June 4, 2010

Introduction

Everyone's talking about it. All the great prognosticators, the culture gurus, the social scientists have been saying it, and it has been reported in the media for years. Though they call it by different names, they are all in agreement. Humanity - that is all of us - whether more or less than willingly, are entering a new age.

Even the pope, not an apostle of new age faddishness by any means, invoked the spirit of epochal change at the dawning of our present millenium.¹ You cannot blame him. It was his church that gave us the calendar by which we measure this riot of strange incontinence.

The winds of change have simply swept the Earth from under our feet. The flat, dull old girl we used to know is gone. Now we tread on something far less stable – a sea of dancing molecules, waves, particles, photons and electrons, all invisible to the naked eye. In a sense, we are all now walking on water.

The intoxicating spirit of change imparts a sense of impending possibility – great discoveries, mind-boggling technology, a touch of the miraculous – and a certain incumbent responsibility. As the horizons of our microscopic and macroscopic vision push ever outward, we find ourselves inhabiting a tiny planet at ever closer quarters. An area that once would have taken years to traverse, can now be crossed over in a matter of minutes. A message, a rumor even, can flash through the skies with lightning speed and accuracy.

If our powers of creation are now multifold, our ability to wreak havoc and misery has increased exponentially. At this very moment, 100,000 mad-genius scientists are plotting ever more elaborate ways to bomb and otherwise knock the living daylight out of everybody – while another 400,000 are at home or on vacation recuperating their hard-pressed scientific sensibilities.²

We have come, or been dragged, into a new paradigm of uncertainty. The only sure thing today is the continual, overwhelming pace of change. The old certainties, the ancient faiths, the ordinary reliances are all out the window.

This is unquestionably a time of science. What is questionable is the near-messianic claims its devotees make for it. Moreover, science makes a lousy religion. It is too detached, too self-centered, too cold-hearted for purposes of human connectiveness. Yet in the bright glow of ever-expanding knowledge and awareness, the old religions have grown frail, eccentric and just a little daft, mired in demonstrable fallacies, cultural bias, and self-serving notions about their importance in the ultimate scheme of things.

New paradigms are hard come by. A real, fundamental shift in values comes only once every couple millennia. Freud, the high priest of the secular mind, only succeeded in replacing the old notion of the overbearing power of sin with a new theory of the murky and no less ominous force of id.

Prophets come and prophets go, inculcating new values, novel insights, and their own set of all-too-human prejudices. Every prophet is a final prophet, has the last word - until another gilded spokesman comes along. Each time, the old idols are smashed and removed from the sanctuary - to be replaced by better, shinier ones.

Guru Nanak

Some 500 years ago, one humble man walked this Earth. He was a man of love. He made no exclusive claims. He did not tell anyone to follow him, or even suggest there was any need to do so. He traveled widely. Everywhere he went, he just sowed seeds of love and understanding.

He talked to Buddhists about their practice. He went to Mecca and spoke with Muslims about Islam. He conversed with Christians about their belief. He spoke to Jews about God. And he met and talked with Hindus about their many gods.

He was a man with a common touch. Nanak was his name. He met with all kinds of people - high and low, rich and poor, literates in shimmering silks and tribespeople dressed in simple skins. Everywhere he went, he shared his goodwill, insight and considerable humanity.

Introduction

There was no place in the Guru's heart for sectarian prejudices. Guru Nanak's living paradigm embraced the very best of human nature. At its core, lived a timeless spirit that transcended cultural idiosyncrasies.

If a Muslim were to insist that God lived in Mecca – fine. If a certain Hindu were to argue that God's home was in his particular temple – that too was agreed. The Guru could easily see that God, the ultimate spirit, the Supreme Consciousness, truly existed in all things and all places.

Everywhere he went, people loved Guru Nanak. He sang to them songs exuding his love of creation and the mysterious, wonderful ways of the world. People loved and sang these hymns for they contained the essence of the Guru's wisdom.

The Guru lived a life pure and simple and carefree – and he encouraged others to live in that same spirit. Inspired by his example, people learned to meditate and pass fruitful, joyful lives – even to entertain the ultimate prospect of death without fear, as the Guru did.

Before the Guru's particular light departed from this Earth, he trained and then acknowledged one disciple as his equal, and turned the trust that had been placed in him over to that most worthy follower. The second Guru continued his Master's legacy, serving and inspiring and transmitting Nanak's wisdom by his own whole-hearted example.

For our purposes, it hardly matters that, over the centuries, the followers of Guru Nanak were opposed and nearly all wiped out by the Mughal Empire, one of the most formidable political forces of all time. It is practically irrelevant they were outlawed and lived for years in jungles and wastelands, from which they waged a relentless guerilla war. Or that they eventually established their own kingdom on the western borders of present-day India, which held its own for some fifty years until, after two hard-fought wars, it became the last part of the Indian subcontinent to succumb to British rule. Or that, as "Sikhs" (the word originally means "disciple"), they developed their own priesthood and their own religious organizations and schools – many of which are as self-absorbed as the priests and schools and organizations of any ideology anywhere.³

Instead, we will like to focus on Guru Nanak's cosmic vision, to see how our evolving reality today coincides with his essential grasp of how things are and whether we, too, like the early disciples of the great Guru, might gain some real insight and peace from that original understanding.

A Word on our Paragons

To attempt to make sense of the great guru's vision, I have broken it into five sections called "paragons."

Now, "What," you might ask, "is a paragon?"

It is an instance of perfection.

What is perfect? Is anything perfect?

According to Guru Nanak's infinite vision, there is perfection. It exists in this world, right here among us.

The first perfection comes in the recognition that we live as part of one magnificent whole, and nothing is excepted. The Universal Consciousness we call "Supreme Being" or "God" is in everything and everyone, and if you are not seeing It there, you are somehow missing It altogether. Any other rendition: "Muslim God," "Christian God," any "rich man's God" or "poor man's God" ... is some kind of fabrication. There is nothing but God. Everything and everyone, black and white and red and yellow, is a singular aspect of the Infinite.

The second perfection comes in the understanding of our causal connectedness. Everything that happens, happens for a reason, a good reason. We are all lucky, but in different ways. Wisdom consists of using your luck to your best advantage.

The third type of perfection can be realized only in action. It means going out, taking your courage and kindness and whatever you believe in, and putting it to good work. It means finding a cause, or creating it, and sticking with it even when things don't go the way you had planned. Sometimes it means putting your life on the line, staking everything, and allowing the universe to come through. It means leaving behind any belittled notion of "you" and living grandly for others. This kind of action can only be termed "enlightened self-interest."

The fourth perfection comes from recognizing the marvelous design in the very details of our physicality, our own flesh and blood. The body is a temple, no less. It is time to put out the garbage and decorate it in a very divine way. No doubt, a person can exist without reverence for their physical body. People do it. But recognizing the body as a unique, inviolable, intricately detailed, marvelously responsive, instrument of spirit, gives it a sublime aura of grace and purpose.

The perfection that comes last is at the hands of an enlightened Master. It calls on the essential discipline of the disciple coupled with the mastery of the truly masterful to develop a powerfully compassionate, consummately effective, nature. Such a consciousness embodies the greatest happiness and consumes even the greatest sorrow. No one says it is easy, but according to Guru Nanak we were endowed with human faculties and given breath for one purpose only – to have a very personal experience of the Infinite within ourselves. The realization of this distinct human possibility is the fifth and final paragon.

Now, let's have a closer look at that first paragon.

There is one Creator
creating this whole creation...⁴

- Guru Nanak

The Boundless Creativity of One

The Guru's World

The world we know is far bigger, and its countless parts and infinite relationships more finely and intricately aligned, than anyone could ever hope to imagine. From our looking post, at the edge of our shimmering galaxy, we can estimate there are more than a billion trillion stars extending endlessly, in dazzling eddies and pools and swirls of light, far into the nebulous blackness of time and space.

This splendid Earth positively teems with varieties of life, from the diminutive *prochlorococcus*⁵ to the hulking 100-ton blue whale. Their life span ranges from the mosquito, whose entire adult existence expires in a matter of hours, to the rugged bristle cone pine, which can endure four or five millennia on an arid California mountainside. There are microbes, their tiny metabolisms suspended in frozen animation for hundreds of thousand of years, just meters beneath the Antarctic ice. Other specialized organisms flourish at the mouths of thermal vents on the ocean floor, where the temperature is above the boiling point.⁶ In caves around the world, entire ecosystems of exotic fungi and bacteria, insects, arachnids and amphibians have evolved, perfectly adapted to a life in perpetual darkness.

Life, in its many forms, is effulgent and possessed of a willful determination. Hardy lichens make themselves at home on barren Arctic rockscapes. Dauntless urban grasses force their leaves through layers of asphalt and concrete. Where oxygen is scarce, microbes instead use iron or sulfur molecules to move life-giving electrolytes through their systems.⁷ At tropical latitudes, there are numberless rafts of pollens and seeds navigating epic, ocean-crossing voyages, while microbes, spores, aphids, tiny seeds and spiders are swept skyward to gaily ride the global air streams, from island to island, and one continent to the next.⁸

The humblest patch of ground teems with creatures little seen, much less understood. One square meter of soil might contain 50,000 different kinds of insects and mites, and millions of worms of various sizes and kinds. Under a microscope, a gram of that same soil might easily reveal tens of thousands of protozoa and algae, hundreds of thousands of fungi and billions of individual bacteria, many of them yet unknown to science. Another sample of soil taken nearby might reveal a few billion more, many of them unlike and previously unrecorded.⁹

Based on scientists' best estimates, there are today between 10 and 100 million living species.¹⁰ But what we can intellectually grasp about all these forms of life is positively dwarfed by the mind-boggling dimensions of what we still do not know.

New life forms and entire solar systems, by the hundreds, are brought to light each year. But even when some novel discovery is made, it must remain indefinitely mysterious until someone dedicates the necessary time to its painstaking study and observation. Ordinarily, we remain largely ignorant of how things exist, how they came to be, or the intricate details of their relationships with the world around them.

Our understanding of complete systems - the symbiosis of seemingly unrelated phenomena, how the parts affect the entirety and how the whole reflects itself in the parts - is the weakest. Holism, in its truest sense, is hard come by.

Guru Nanak (1469-1539), just 500 years ago, painted a picture of a vast world inspired by an overwhelming sense of awe.

The Boundless Creativity of One

Enchanting is sound, amazing its meaning.
Wonderful is life, marvelous its distinctions.
Profound is form. Awesome is color.
Amazing are the creatures who wander naked.
Enchanting is the air, enchanting water.
Wonderful is the fire that works many wonders.
Magical is the Earth, magical its species.
Amazing are the sensations attached to every life.
Profound is the union, profound the separation.
Marvelous is the hunger, wonderful its fulfillment.
Awesome are the hymns, amazing the praise.
Marvelous is the waywardness, enchanting the path.
Magical the distance, wonderful is nearness.
Amazing the vision of God's presence among us.
Seeing these prodigies, I am struck with awe.
O Nanak, perfect is the destiny of those imbued with wonder.¹¹

According to Guru Nanak's description, the entire world, all the manifest shapes and forms and beings, exist as part of a vast cosmic order, inscribed by Infinity, which accounts for absolutely everything.

As ordained by that order, bodies are created. That order cannot be said.
By that order, souls come into being. By that order, glory and greatness are attained.
By that order, some are high and some are low.
By that written order pain and pleasure are obtained.
By that order, some are blessed, while others wander from birth to birth.
All are subject to that order. There is none beyond the reach of that grand design.
O Nanak, in anyone who understands that order, there is no ego to speak of.¹²

While the Guru speaks - sings really, since his poetry is meant to be put to music and sung - of an order, it is not a static system. Clearly it is a sublime, living order, remarkably fluid and nimble, supple and creative without end.

The names and descriptions of beings and species
Are inscribed by one flowing pen.
Who knows how to write such an account? How much writing must that be! What power!
What fascinating beauty! What gifts! Who can know their extent?
The vast expanse of the universe originated with but one Word,
Then hundreds of thousands of rivers came gushing.
Who can comprehend your effulgent nature?
I cannot even once dedicate myself to you.
What pleases you is the only good done,
O you, eternal and formless One!¹³

The world the Guru sees is filled not just with an overawing sense of strength and brilliance and beauty, but with the peculiar intelligence and devotion of its creatures. In this world, a mere ant may be ranked above a mighty king.

Many are those who sing songs of praise without understanding,
As the rivers flow without knowing the sea.
An emperor with mountains of property and oceans of wealth
Is not even equal to an ant who forgets not his Maker.¹⁴

According to the Guru, the forms life takes are manifestly interchangeable. Beguiled and driven on by the enticements of maya, all living beings have been reborn in countless forms, time and time again.

I have taken the form of so many plants and trees, and so many animals.
Myriad times I entered the families of snakes and flying birds.¹⁵

From his childhood, Guru Nanak recognized a world brimming with life and consciousness. He regularly meditated on the wonder of all creation. Sometimes, he would sit and hear the words of wise pilgrims passing

through his village on their way from one holy site to the next. Other times, the Guru would gather his young friends and sing devotional songs with them in a captivating and melodious voice.

The Guru had a gentle heart and a noble spirit. All his father's efforts to make him a man of business, profit and gain, came to nothing, though he was clearly far from stupid. After attending the village school for a short time, Nanak was already writing poetry far beyond his years. His teacher soon recognized the Guru's genius and bowed before him. Since his pupil wished only to enrich himself with spiritual knowledge, the teacher gave him leave to study as he pleased. Young Nanak went on to spend his time in the surrounding forests, learning from the saints and wanderers who enjoyed the peaceful seclusion of the area.

Mehta Kalu worried his dreamer son might be deranged. Others recognized the Guru's special gifts.

When Nanak was eight years old, his father sent him to graze a herd of buffaloes in a nearby forest. Things went smoothly for one day, but on the next, Nanak fell asleep and the buffaloes trespassed onto a neighbor's field of grain. When the owner came and complained bitterly at his loss, Nanak replied that God would bless the field. The farmer would not be put off. He sent for the head of the village to make a complaint.

The landlord, Rai Bhullar, sent for both the boy and his father to settle the matter. Nanak, for his part, insisted that no harm had been done to the field and that it had been blessed by God. When the landlord sent his agents to inspect the spot where the buffalo had intruded into the farmer's field, they found, to their great surprise, the entire property green and flourishing. They could not find a single blade that had been trampled or eaten.

Another day, Rai Bhullar happened to walk by a field where the Guru had lain down for a mid-day nap. To his horror, a big cobra with its hood spread threateningly, had raised its head and was hovering over the sleeping Guru. Fearing for the worst, the Rai Bhullar gripped a large stick and came near.

As he approached, the wary landlord began to see and appreciate what was really transpiring between Nanak and the deadly snake. By spreading its distinctive hood over the sleeping Guru, the mighty cobra managed to cast a cooling shadow over the Guru's face, thereby protecting its tender skin from the harsh rays of the searing, mid-day sun. For several minutes, Rai Bhullar stood by, looking on in astonishment, until the young Guru stirred and began to wake, upon which the cobra lowered its head and slipped away.

When the Guru grew to manhood, he traveled far and wide sharing his unitary vision. On foot, with his disciple Mardana, he reached the Muslim pilgrim sites of Arabia in the west and the jungle highlands of Assam in the East. Travelling north, they reached Samarkand, the busy trading center on the ancient Silk Road. Southwards, they crossed the narrow strait to the lush island kingdom of Sri Lanka.

On one of the Guru's four long trips, it is recorded that he visited a remote, forested area in the Himalayan foothills to meet the reclusive sages dwelling there. As he sat under a venerable old tree speaking with the ascetics, everyone was amazed to see that the tree, which had grown dry and brittle in its old age, was visibly returning to life. As they watched, the tree's ruddy bark regained its youthful complexion. New buds burst open before their eyes, embellishing the ancient tree with a fresh array of fine, new foliage.

The hermits, who had prided themselves in their knowledge of the secrets of life and immortality, were twice humbled: once, as they realized the depths of the Guru's understanding, and again, by the tree's auspicious display of awesome greenery. That place became known as Nanakmata Sahib, the place of "Nanak's Holy Wisdom."

Another account of Guru Nanak's visit to those parts describes a talk he gave under the branches of a soapberry tree. The fruit of the tree of the *Sapindus* family are extremely bitter. Ordinarily, people pick the tree's inedible berries and use them as a natural form of soap.

The branches of the tree under which the Guru was sitting happened to be weighed down with fruit at the time. A hungry listener must have noticed the luscious-looking berries hanging from a branch where the Guru was sitting and tried them. To everyone's surprise, while the branches on the opposite side remained bitterly inedible, all the fruit where Guru Nanak was sitting had turned delectable and sweet.

The Boundless Creativity of One

In his travels, the Guru is known to have arrived at the locale of a well-known Muslim saint, named Budhan Shah. The reclusive holy man made his home in a hut on a remote mountain ridge, where he lived with a tiger and two goats.

Budhan Shah was happy to receive the Guru Nanak as his guest. They spent the day discussing spiritual matters. Finally, his host advised the Guru that he should leave because the tiger, which had taken the goats out to graze, would be returning for the evening. The Guru replied that he had no fear of them, as all creatures were under the power of the Creator.

To his host's surprise, when the tiger appeared with the pair of goats in tow, he put his head down at the Guru's feet before coming and bowing before his master. Seeing his tiger's humble acknowledgement of the Guru, Budhan Shah readily appreciated the charisma of his holy guest. The Muslim saint asked his visitor to instruct him in the way of meditation.

Before the Guru left to continue his journey, Budhan Shah offered him half a pitcher of fresh milk from his goats. The Guru drank the half of it and advised his host to keep the other half in his memory. "One day, a disciple of mine will come. Your life will extend until then. He will build a city and live here."

That half pitcher of milk remained fresh for many, many years, until the eldest son of the sixth Guru in Nanak's lineage came to redeem the Guru's promise. A city named Kiratpur, the "City of Praise" was then founded there by the Guru's disciples.

Another account of the Guru's benign influence relates to his visit with the king of Sri Lanka, Raja Shivnabh. The raja had for long prayed that Guru Nanak might come to his country. As it happened, when the Guru arrived, he found his way to the royal garden and seated himself there in meditation, waiting to be discovered.

During the barren season when Guru Nanak arrived, the garden was dormant and lifeless. To the great surprise of the gardener, upon the arrival of the Guru, the grounds were suddenly flourishing, the plants bursting with life. The astonished gardener urged Raja Shivnabh to come meet his extraordinary guest.

Guru Nanak's gentle spirit filled the hearts of his spiritual heirs, those disciples tested and deemed most able to exemplify the Guru's teachings. Patience, forbearance and compassion were among the Guru's crowning virtues.

When the tyrant Mughal Emperor, Jahangir, decreed that the fifth Guru should be put to death as an "infidel", the Guru willingly offered himself up for arrest and days of inhuman torture.

Just to survive, the sixth Guru and his disciples had to learn to defend themselves. They trained without any yearning for vengeance or the violence of war. As the Guru engaged in hunting expeditions to hone his martial reflexes, many of his followers could not comprehend the danger posed by armies of the emperor.

Honoring life, then learning to fight and defend it, was a necessary development arising out of changing circumstances. On four occasions, armies of tens of thousands of Mughal warriors descended on the Guru and his disciples. Each time, there was terrible loss of life on both sides, but the Guru's volunteer army, through their skill and valor, managed to fend off the emperor's attacking hordes.

The seventh Guru retained a defensive force of several hundred armed and trained men. He also kept up the routine of hunting in the forest – with a difference. The seventh Guru took care to capture deer and other animals alive, then bring them to his zoological garden at Kiratpur for the enjoyment of his disciples and guests.

The eighth Guru, served for three years, from 1661 to 1664. He became Guru at the early age of five. Despite his tender years, he set a glowing example for his many followers. Like his predecessors, he rose three hours before sunrise, bathed, and sat alone in meditation. After that, he would join his disciples in reciting and singing of the Guru's hymns. It was said that the eighth Guru recited the verses so sweetly that birds in the trees stopped their usual chirping to listen to the sweet music of his voice.

The Guru lived his entire life in full recognition of what is all too obvious to a child's heart: we are not alone. Nature is conscious, alive, and all around us. Perhaps most amazing of all is how, as adults in our sophisticated age, we are so inured to feeling otherwise.

Aristotle's View

On a different continent, in Renaissance Europe another view of life prevailed. Christian culture derived much of its scientific understanding from Aristotle (384-322 BCE), the great thinker of ancient Greece. Aristotle had to his credit the first encyclopedia of animal species.

Being a philosopher, the famous Greek made a comparative reckoning of the essential traits of plants, animals and humans. According to his hierarchical paradigm, plants were the lowliest form of life, since they possessed neither the ability to sense the world around them, nor the power of reason. Animals were next on Aristotle's scale of being. They were imbued with the spirit of life, as plants were, and they could also interact with their environments.¹⁶

According to the grand philosopher of Athens, only man was able to reason and freely exercise his will. This placed man in a unique position among all the species. In Aristotle's mind, man's apparent superiority to other creatures proved he alone was imbued with an immortal soul.

Aristotle's classical view was just a step removed from the Bible-based belief that all nonhuman forms of life exist purely for the fulfillment and satisfaction of human needs and desires. For this reason, when Aristotle's main writings were rediscovered in Europe around the thirteenth century, they were adopted by Saint Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) to serve as a philosophical basis for church doctrine. According to the Catholicism's foremost medieval scholar:

Dumb animals and plants are devoid of the life of reason whereby to set themselves in motion; they are moved, as it were by another, by a kind of natural impulse, a sign of which is that they are naturally enslaved and accommodated to the uses of others.¹⁷

Acceptance of the Aristotelian point of view was by no means universal. During the lifetime of Thomas Aquinas, the Cathar community exerted a powerful influence in Europe. The Cathars believed that animals, too, had immortal souls. Out of reverence for other creatures, they forbade the eating of meat. Beginning in the first years of the second millenium, the Cathars supplanted Catholicism as the dominant form of spirituality in southern France and the north of Italy, where they remained prominent for about 100 years. The Cathar community thrived until it was crushed and driven underground in the mid-thirteenth century by a ruthless Crusade and relentless Inquisition.

Nevertheless, in the fertile realm of European popular culture, nonhuman forms of life were commonly imputed with intelligence and reason, even criminal liability. The first recorded interspecies trial was held in Germany, at the town of Worms in 864. It was there decreed that a hive of bees that had stung a man to death should be suffocated. In 1394, a free-ranging pig in Normandy was sentenced to be hanged for the crime of eating a child. The trial of a bear that had ravaged some German villages in 1499, on the other hand, was delayed for a week over a motion from the bear's lawyer that it had the right to be tried by its peers, a proper jury of fellow bears. In the end, the case was dismissed.

The human propensity for recognizing kindred natures in unfamiliar shapes finds its expression in traditional cultures the world over. The commingling of spirits in various forms - animate and inanimate, human, nonhuman and divine - is well represented in the hybrid creatures of ancient lore. There are centaurs and griffins, sphinxes and mermaids, monkeymen and man-lions, ravens that speak and people that fly. Flowers and mountains, rivers and trees are often represented with fully human sensibilities.

Even in the ancient Mediterranean, Aristotle's views on the nature of spirit had been only one of several coexisting doctrines. Until the development of a jealously militant Christian theology, there had never been any consensus on matters of the soul in the far-flung reaches of the Roman Empire. Before Aristotle, Pythagorus (~580-500 BCE), then later Plotinus (205-270), had been articulate and influential proponents of reincarnation.

In contrast to the ancient web of familiarity and interrelatedness between peoples and species, the Aristotelian outlook, with its arm's length approach, might appear downright cold-hearted and self-serving. According to Aristotle, this hierarchical arrangement also applied to the relations of people in a society. Since Aristotle observed that some humans seemed naturally smarter than others, he concluded some people were meant to dominate, others destined by nature to serve as their slaves.

The Boundless Creativity of One

Aristotle's contemptuous outlook was to have terrible consequences when Spanish explorers arrived in the Americas. The leader of the first expedition across the Atlantic described the natives he found as "gentle beings, souls of hospitality, curious and merry, truthful and faithful, walking in beauty and possessors of a spiritual religion." Yet, after taking their lands by force, Columbus himself commenced a reign of cruelty unlike any other in human history.

Aboriginals were routinely deceived, gathered up and enslaved, then tortured pointlessly and mercilessly put to death. Those who tried to escape into the jungle were set upon by fierce, man-eating dogs. Many attempted suicide to escape the ordeals of the heartless conquistadors.

Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474-1566), the first priest to receive consecration in the New World and later the bishop of Chiapas, spent years making an impassioned case for native dignity. All the while he was trying to convince Spain's Charles V (1500-1588, king: 1519-56) that Indians were rational people not so different from Europeans, the ancient streets of Central and South America were awash in rivers of native blood.

The long and forceful arguments of Las Casas were undercut by two significant factors. There was a practical consideration. Huge fortunes in gold, silver and plantations were being made in the Americas precisely because Aristotle's protocol gave the conquistadors a free hand in dispossessing and enslaving its native peoples. Moreover, from the philosophical side, Catholic thinking from Saint Augustine and to Thomas of Aquinas had always lined up squarely on the side of slavery and inequality.

Despite the entrenched ideological and economic interests, Las Casas's pleading finally paid off, somewhat. Sixteen years after the violent conquest of the Aztecs and a year after the destruction of the Inca civilization, Pope Paul III (1468-1549, pope: 1534-49) made a significant concession to what today we would call the Indians' "human rights." In 1537, the pontiff issued an order that Catholics were no longer to deprive the Indians of their liberty or property. According to his *Sublimis Deus*, aboriginal peoples of the Americas were not to be considered dumb brutes, but human beings capable of religious conversion.

Apart from this encouraging note to the missionaries, the papal proclamation was largely ignored in the Americas. Spanish and Portuguese colonists continued to enslave Indians whom they put to work as field hands and miners, porters and laborers. De las Casas remarked that in this new world not even the rudest peasant would do any manual work. Every settler considered himself an aristocrat and superior to the Indian. These *cabalas* resisted every law created to undermine their pretense to superiority and their ruthless exploitation of the natives.

Meanwhile, with the dawning Renaissance in Europe, many longstanding beliefs, like those of the Church and Aristotle, were being called into question. In 1620, Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626), considered the philosopher of the new physics, went so far as to declare his desire "to banish all authorities and all sciences." By this, Bacon made known his opposition to the medieval habit of deferring to established authorities, even over the first-hand evidence of personal experience.¹⁸

In that iconoclastic atmosphere, Aristotle's rightful successor was the skeptic René Descartes (1596-1650), designated the father of modern philosophy. Descartes agreed with Aristotle that the human faculties of will and reason set humankind apart from the rest of creation. The Catholic Descartes added another characteristic, one he considered uniquely human and which automatically culled other creatures from the artful ranks of the intelligent, the noble and the good: people could communicate.

Descartes reasoned that the ability to speak was a distinctive quality of a being with an immortal soul. If nonhumans could not speak, he reasoned, they also could not think. If they could not think, then how could they feel?

In humans, Descartes recognized a redeeming soul – rational, willful, self-reflective – inside a body he described as a "complex machine." According to the great French thinker, "animal machines," from ants to apes, were mere parodies of humankind, since they existed without a soul.

Descartes' philosophical splitting of physical from metaphysical, and human from nonhuman, justified an era of scientific experiment of unprecedented barbarity. With physical science separated from its usual metaphysical constraints, animals were nailed to boards and dissected alive as ready illustrations of the facts of anatomy and physiology. All of nature was analyzed with impunity and without any fear of trespass "to discover the mechanism by which God had built it."¹⁹

The cold ruminations of Descartes gave support to a growing secularization of thought. While in Galileo (1564-1642)'s day the "Will of God" was still considered part of the overall scientific equation, after Newton, science was reduced to a matter of mechanics. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, this development was well established. When Napoleon in 1814 asked his astronomer and mathematician, Pierre-Simon Laplace (1749-1827), if he believed in God, Laplace replied with confidence, "I have no need of that hypothesis."

Within a few decades, the domination of the field of knowledge by the material sciences was almost undisputed. Everything seemed to have been resolvable into the tangible, measurable elements of nature. Energy was understood to be derived from matter. Some speculated that consciousness itself might be a byproduct of some still to be discovered form of chemical synthesis.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the self-absorption of the material scientists was so far advanced that Lord Kelvin (1824-1907), the distinguished mathematician and physicist, proclaimed the scientific understanding of the workings of the universe to be almost complete. Just a couple of niggling details still needed sorting out. Kelvin's advised young scientists considering devoting themselves to a life of physics to seek out a career in some more promising field of study.

In the Cartesian era, the neat medieval reality of an Earth lying flat and motionless below seven heavenly spheres - a realm of senseless plants, witless animals and superior man, all commanded by a celestial God, was taken over by a new model. The new image depicted the world as a mechanical wind-up toy, dominated by man alone. The spinning universe, set in motion by God, had been abandoned to its predictable course.

Each paradigm held a certain simplistic charm. Both lacked something in imagination.

Living Wonders

Only forty-four years after Descartes, the dense walls of human self-conceit sustained their first serious breach. A professor of medicine and director of botanical gardens in Germany made the breakthrough when he discovered that even the humblest flowering plants had sexual parts, male and female, and that pollination was essentially a form of intercourse and reproduction in the kingdom of plants. This revolutionary finding by Rudolf Jakob Camerarius (1665-1721), published under the title *De Sexu Plantarum* in 1694, was hotly contested for nearly a generation.

When the controversy was finally conceded in favor of the greens, Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778), the father of modern botany, proceeded to catalogue the species of the plant kingdom, using primarily the characteristics of the pollen-bearing "male" members of each plant. In the mind of the great Swedish botanist, the only significant difference separating plants from animals and humans was their apparent lack of movement.

Meanwhile, outside the botanist's arboretum, great thinkers like Gottfried von Leibnitz (1646-1716) and Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), raised powerful objections to Descartes' human-centric worldview. The Scottish philosopher, David Hume (1711-1776) put it most plainly.

Next to the ridicule of denying an evident truth, is taking such pains to defend it; and no truth appears to me more evident, than that beasts are endowed with thought and reason as well as man.²⁰

In France, Voltaire (1694-1778) and Rousseau (1712-1778) added their eloquent voices to the call for humane treatment of our fellow creatures. In a culture increasingly knowledgeable of the details of physiology, and of the striking similarities between the bodies of beasts and men, Voltaire attacked Descartes' idea that animals are without sensations.

Answer me, mechanist, has Nature arranged all the springs of feeling in this animal in order that he should not feel?²¹

More poetic spirits, too, felt aroused and compelled to speak on behalf of a broader, more sympathetic reality than that proposed by Descartes. In a thoughtful poem entitled "An Essay on Man," Alexander Pope (1688-1744) argued for the interconnectedness of all things.

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body, Nature is, and God the soul;

The Boundless Creativity of One

That chang'd thro' all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth as in the aethereal frame,
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees...²²

Samuel Coleridge's (1772-1834) epic "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," revolves around the story of a sailor who, while out at sea, kills an albatross, and the troubles he endures as a result. Finally, as a penance, the mariner agrees to travel from land to land teaching love and reverence for all of creation.

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.
He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.²³

In the next century, American essayist and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), penned a sensitive piece, entitled "Nature."

The greatest delight which the fields and woods minister is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable. I am not alone and unacknowledged. They nod to me and I to them. The waving of the boughs in the storm, is new to me and old. It takes me by surprise, and yet is not unknown. Its effect is like that of a higher thought or a better emotion coming over me, when I deemed I was thinking justly of doing right.²⁴

The man who, more than anyone else, upset the precariously overloaded apple cart of human self-importance was an astute observer and naturalist with a degree in divinity from Cambridge. As a young man, he embarked on a voyage, from 1831 to 1836, that took him from England around the coasts of South America. Charles Darwin (1809-1882) then took twenty-two long years compiling and analyzing the specimens accumulated during the tour, and considering the implications of his findings.

Darwin rightly feared the wide-ranging ramifications of his hypothesis would offend the religious sensibilities of his friends and associates, including his dear and pious wife. Darwin was also compelled to keep his findings private for many years sheerly by his meticulous nature. Instead of reveling in his newfound realization, Darwin spent decades accumulating his proofs and polishing his thesis. It was only when news came that Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913), working independently on the Malay peninsula, had come to the same general conclusions, that Darwin's colleagues convinced him to publish the theory of natural evolution that had become his life's work. The year was 1858.

To quote from Charles Darwin's almost poetic summation of his vision of nature:

Authors of the highest eminence seem to be fully satisfied with the view that each species has been independently created. To my mind it accords better with what we know of the laws impressed on matter by the Creator, that the production and extinction of the past and present inhabitants of the world should have been due to secondary causes, like those determining the birth and death of the individual. When I view all beings not as special creations, but as the lineal descendants of some few beings which lived long before the first bed of the Cambrian system was deposited, they seem to me to become ennobled. ...and as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress toward perfection.

...there is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being evolved.²⁵

For his remaining years, Darwin chiseled away at the limits of human understanding with his hallmark thoroughness and clarity of exposition. In *The Expression of Emotion in Man and Animals* (1872), Darwin's detailed physical observations confuted Descartes' old axiom that animals have no feelings. In *Insectivorous Plants* (1875)

and *The Power of Movement in Plants* (1880), he meticulously explored the frontiers of sense and volition in plants, disproving Aristotle's premise that plants are insensitive and listless laggards in life.

Darwin's new understanding of the living universe depicts a world positively burgeoning with crawlers and creepers, swimmers and sweepers, plodders and hoppers, flyers and floaters, divers and flippers, hiders and nabbers, chasers and standers. Millions of life forms present trillions of ingenious living strategies. Even the humblest single-celled organism is endowed with a necessary sense of light and dark, warm and cool, up and down, wet and dry, bitter and sweet – and a repertoire of tactics and abilities. Every creature, however humble its appearance, determines for itself, based on its inherent genius and capabilities, just what it must do.

A simple bean sprout must heroically negotiate its own way from below the earth, around pebbles and roots and twigs, to the surface. Once above ground, it must determine how to lean or whether to twine its weight around this or that support. Should it fasten its weight to a near, but flimsy, straw – or journey a little to a firm and steady corn stalk? How far should it go? How far is too far? A lesser sprout, sunk upside down in the ground, might never exert the effort necessary for a chance of success – realizing its true vegetal destiny in the sun and rain and open air.

By systematically applying Darwin's insights on how plants and animals change under domestication, a transplanted New Englander in California named Luther Burbank (1849-1926) proceeded to work wonders among countless species of vegetation. Exercising an unbounded enthusiasm combined with a keen sense of observation and an uncanny intuition, Burbank simply revolutionized the horticulture business. The sheer volume and undeniable quality of his output beginning in the 1880s easily overwhelmed the criticisms of old school scientists who early on ridiculed Burbank's highly personalized methods.

The secret of improved plant breeding, apart from scientific knowledge, is love," maintained the plant sage of Santa Rosa. Burbank was often seen go onto his knees in order to befriend his plants. To produce a cactus without protective thorns, he had to endure several years of pulling thousands of needles from his hands with pliers, before at last achieving a thornless variety.²⁶

In his words, "When I was conducting my experiments with cacti, I often talked to the plants to create a vibration of love. 'You have nothing to fear,' I would tell them. 'You don't need your defensive thorns. I will protect you.'"

An observer remarked that Burbank's power of love was "a subtle kind of nourishment that made everything grow better and bear fruit more abundantly. Burbank took plants into his confidence, asked them to help, and assured them that he held their small lives in deepest regard and affection."²⁷

As he worked to modify some of the fundamental characteristics of the plants in his care, Luther Burbank maintained a deep respect for their acquired resilience to change.

The most stubborn living thing in the world, the most difficult to swerve, is a plant once fixed in certain habits... Remember that this plant has preserved its individuality all through the ages: perhaps it is one which can be traced backward through eons of time in the very rocks themselves, never having varied to any great extent in all these vast periods. Do you suppose, after all these ages of repetition, the plant does not become possessed of a will, if you so choose to call it, of unparalleled tenacity? Indeed, there are plants, like certain of the palms, so persistent that no human power has yet been able to change them. The human will is a weak thing beside the will of a plant. But see how this whole plant's lifelong stubbornness is broken simply by blending a new life with it, making, by crossing, a complete and powerful change in its life. Then when the break comes, fix it by these generations of patient supervision and selection, and the new plant sets out upon its new way never again to return to the old, its tenacious will broken at last.²⁸

The plant kingdom repaid Mr. Burbank's lavish and sympathetic attentions with a natural cornucopia. Visitors to his experimental farm were always astonished to see fields of hundreds of prolific new varieties of plants produced by importing and cross-pollinating exotic strains with domestic varieties. More luscious, bigger, brighter and faster-growing varieties of tomatoes, corn, squash, potatoes, cherries, plums, peaches, nectarines, berries, walnuts, peanuts, cacti, poppies, daisies, lilies and roses emerged from the nurseries of the acclaimed "wizard of agriculture." Many of those strains today predominate on farms and in gardens around the world.

The Boundless Creativity of One

While Luther Burbank was applying Darwin's theories to an abundant purpose, on the other side of the Earth another inspired plant genius was systematically broadening our understanding of what may be understood to be sentient, responsive and demonstrably alive.

The genius of Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose (1858-1937) was recognized early in his life. From his beginnings at a traditional village school in Bengal, Bose went on to Cambridge University. There, he studied physics, chemistry and botany with such luminaries as Lord Rayleigh, the discoverer of argon and Francis Darwin, son of the evolutionist. On his graduation in 1884, he was given the position of professor of physical science at Presidency College in Kolkata, the best in India. Bose's abilities as an innovator at the very frontier of science were evident even before he started his controversial career specializing in the "neurology" of plants.

In 1895, in the presence of the lieutenant-governor of Bengal, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Professor Bose theatrically transmitted electric signals through the air, an exercise which culminated with the discharging of a pistol and blowing up of a small mine, three rooms away. It would be another year before the patent for wireless telegraphy was issued to Marconi. Bose typically declined to patent the device, which would have brought him significant wealth and worldwide recognition.

Gradually, Bose's line of experimentation led him from physics to physiology, a transition that came naturally to him. It began with Bose's observation that the metallic receiver he used in his radio experiments became less sensitive if used continuously, but returned to normal after a period of rest. Numerous tests proved to him that lifeless metals held certain characteristics in common with the living tissues of animals and plants.

By developing instruments to magnify even the slightest movement up to 50 million times, Bose found he could observe and measure striking similarities in patterns of response between plant and animal specimens. With his apparatus, Bose saw that the skins of various amphibians behaved much as the skins of grapes, tomatoes, and other fruits and vegetables. The digestive organs in insect-eating plants were not so different from animal stomachs. There was, he found, also a remarkable resemblance between the way both leaves and animal retinas responded to light. Moreover, the specialized cells that served to communicate sensations and responses through the body of a plant were virtually indistinguishable from the nervous tissue in an animal. Timed at 400 millimeters per second, the transmissions of one of Bose's plants were midrange between the nervous impulses of a torpid mollusk and a quick-footed amphibian.

Carrying his experiments further, Bose stimulated animal and plant tissues and metals with chemicals, electrical currents and changes in room temperature. In each case, he found that a mild stimulus caused an increase in responsiveness, while a more powerful level of stimulation only served to dampen the response. An extreme shock might render the object completely unresponsive, possibly lifeless. Even so, a powerful stimulus, followed by an antidote, would generally bring about a revival of responsiveness. Sir Jagadis theorized that life and death themselves are cases of alternating stimulus and recovery, with death being an excessively intense shock from which there is no recovery.

The British publication *Nation* captured the almost surrealistic mood of the moment.

In a room near Maida Vale there is an unfortunate carrot strapped to the table of an unlicensed vivisector... When the vegetable is pinched with a pair of forceps, it winces. It is so strapped that its electric shudder of pain pulls the long arm of a very delicate level, which actuates a tiny mirror. This casts a beam of light on the frieze at the other end of the room, and thus enormously exaggerates the tremor of the carrot. A pinch near the right-hand tube sends the beam seven or eight feet to the right, and a stab near the other wire sends it far to the left. Thus can science reveal the feelings of even so stolid a vegetable as the carrot.²⁹

At first, Bose met with outright disbelief from his fellow scientists. Eventually, driven by a consuming urge to prove the oneness underlying all of nature, the untiring innovator managed to win over even his most hardened critics. Accolades poured in whenever he spoke at the famed universities of Oxford, Cambridge and the Sorbonne.

When Herbert Spencer, the acclaimed philosopher of science, met Bose in 1903 he could only express his regret that, owing to his advanced age, he would not be able to incorporate the plant neurologist's revolutionary findings in his authoritative text, *Principles of Biology*. At eighty-three, Spencer was to expire later that year.

The popular French novelist Romain Rolland (1866-1944) offered this tribute to the man he called, in 1927, “the Revealer of a New World.”

In the European scientist the steeling of the mind to the interpretation of nature has often been accompanied by a withering of the feeling for beauty. Darwin bitterly lamented the fact that his research in biology had completely atrophied his appreciation of poetry. With Bose it is otherwise.³⁰

After the passing of Sir Jagdis Chandra Bose, his ground-breaking work remained largely neglected, and then forgotten. There was simply no other scientist with near Bose’s imaginative genius and philosophical zeal to pick up and continue the master’s mission, exploring the uncharted boundaries shared by the human and nonhuman, the living and non-living, the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms.

Natural Prodigies

Over the years, new evidence and theories about forms of life ostensibly “less than human” inspired even hardened scientists to a growing sense of awe, appreciation and humility before their creature fellows. The scientific reconstruction of life on Earth proved to be particularly sobering. Biologists speculated that microbial life originated some 3.5 billion years ago, long before the Biblical Genesis. The first protozoans, single-celled amoebae and paramecia, did not appear until 700 million years ago, plants some 200 million years later. Fossilized remains indicated that mammals originated relatively recently, flowering plants even more recently, humans perhaps just a few 100,000 years ago. Of course, no one knew for sure.

Even the tiny rootlets of a single rye plant could inspire a sense of quiet amazement. Seen under a microscope, scientists were able to recognize an estimated 13 million rootlets calculated to have a combined length of 380 miles. From these miniscule rootlets, they were able to discern even finer root hairs, numbering some 14 billion. Added together, they would extend a total distance of 11,000 kilometers (6,835 miles), almost the entire distance from pole to pole!

Another finding that astonished botanists was the infinite array of pollen grains existing in the natural world, no two of them alike. Equally surprising was the ability of plants, deluged with all sorts of wild-blown insemination, to recognize and become impregnated only by pollen grains from their own distinctive species.

Biologists, tracking the migratory path of the arctic tern were instilled with a sense of wonder and respect. The birds managed to make their way each year from Antarctica to the Arctic Circle and back, fueled only by air, water and such insects, small fish and invertebrates as they were able to catch along the way. Along their 40,000 kilometer (24,855 mile) flight path, they left not a trace of noxious jet fumes, only a trail of phosphate-rich organic fertilizer.

Similar journeys are undertaken every year by heroic adventurers of various shapes and sizes. Newly-hatched turtles, barely five centimeters in length, emerge each year from underground nests and set off through the Florida surf on an epic voyage of nearly 13,000 kilometers (8,077 miles). Using an innate sense of Earth’s electromagnetic field, they navigate their way along a circular ocean stream in the North Atlantic that takes them right across to the coast of Africa. After five to ten years of navigating the ocean in this way, they make their way back to lay their own eggs on the very beach they started from.³¹

Equally amazing are the symbiotic relationships that have developed over time between species. The Egyptian plover is remarkable because of the dangerous reputation of its traditional ally. The powerful Nile crocodile has come to depend on its feathered friends to remove parasites from its mouth. For this reason, the croc holds his jaw wide open for the trusting plover to hop inside and do her work.

Nut-bearing trees and squirrels have a similar partnership. The trees provide shelter and food for their furry friends. The squirrels, who put more nuts in storage underground than they can remember, provide a help in planting new generations of forest.

Bees and butterflies are dependent on flowers for their sweet, nutritious pollen. Flowers, for their part, have evolved beautiful appearances and sweet fragrances to attract their guests, whom they rely on to fertilize their seeds.

The Boundless Creativity of One

Hardy lichen, known for their ability to subsist on barren rockscapes and in arctic climes, are actually the outcome of algae and fungi working in seamless cooperation. Each provides the essential needs of the other. The algae process the sun's rays to create organic materials for the fungi. The fungi meanwhile produce acids that leach minerals used by the algae from their stony habitat.

There is a humanlike resonance to this matrimony of metabolisms. While in some cases the fungus and alga which together make the lichen may still be found in nature without its partner, often the fungus cannot survive on its own for it has become dependent on its algal partner for its existence.

Some species, including plants, are engaged in an endless arms race with their natural predators. The entire mustard family, which includes the mustard, radish, horseradish and wasabi plants, have developed a unique chemical defense. When their leaves are attacked by hungry insects, the plants manufacture a type of cyanide potentially lethal to small predators. Some insects perish. Others decamp for a more hospitable host. The rest, like humans inured to the pleasures of pungent and volatile condiments, manage to suffer and survive their tearful dinner.

Milkweed is the only food of the monarch butterfly in its caterpillar stage. These longtime adversaries have devised a series of innovative offensive and defensive stratagems. To begin with, the milkweed's leaves and stems are covered with a layer of tiny hairs. Any caterpillar or other creature who would feast on the nutriment found inside, must first graze their way through the tasteless, protective trichomes.

The milkweed has also evolved a second layer of defense against any determined larvae who find their way past the trichomes to the luscious flesh underneath. The "milk" from which the plant derives its name is in fact a sticky form of latex. Any careless caterpillar who punctures the outer layer of the plant is assaulted by a pressurized stream of sticky whiteness capable of sweeping the predator away and gluing it helpless to its vengeful host.

For its part, an enterprising monarch larva will deactivate the milkweed's latex defense by expertly breaking the leaf with its sharp teeth, thereby depressurizing the stream of latex. After an hour's preparatory work, the caterpillar devours the defenseless leaf in ten to fifteen minutes.

As a final defense, the milkweed has inside it cardiac glycosides, chemicals capable of killing a hungry predator. Horses and sheep are known to become deathly ill from eating milkweed. Even these deadly toxins are rendered innocuous by the artful larva whose metabolism has evolved a mysterious way of storing them in its body. Harmless to the monarch, these same cardiac glycosides can still cause an intense vomiting reaction in any bird that might try and have it for lunch. While the toxic monarch might not survive being ingested, the bird would likely die before chomping down again on a black and orange flutterer.

Anyone still doubting the uncanny genius of plants should only witness the feeding routine of the Venus fly trap or any of the hundreds of species of carnivorous plants, which may be found in nearly every environment on every continent. On land, small insects and snails, slugs and spiders provide a tasty lunch for the enterprising vegetable. At sea, unwary protozoans and baby fish are snatched and digested whole.

Most common are the 300 species of bladderwort. This highly adaptive species is distinguished by its oval traps or "bladders," the mousetrap-like mechanisms the plants use to catch their prey. The bladders range up to 6 millimeters ($\frac{1}{4}$ inch) in length. Some aquatic species float in the water but remain rooted to the earth below, while others float freely. There are some bladderworts that grow on land, in wet soils. Others grow on moss-covered tree trunks, branches or stones. Some aquatic varieties tend to become terrestrial and some land-based species tend toward water. In cold regions, they protect themselves in winter buds. Over hot, dry summers, they form fleshy tubers underground or spawn seeds that germinate with the arrival of rain. Another unusual adaptation of the bladderwort is that any part is capable of becoming any other part.

The mind-boggling diversity of creation was showcased by a find on a remote British Columbia mountainside in 1909. That phenomenal discovery instilled awe and confusion in the scientific world for the next eighty years.

It all began when Charles Doolittle Walcott, the director of the Smithsonian Institute and recognized as the leading authority on Cambrian life of that time, was returning on horseback with his wife and son from doing fieldwork on a known fossil site. As it happened, Mrs. Walcott's horse stumbled on a boulder. Walcott

dismounted and split open the block of stone with his hammer. To all their amazement, Walcott's blow revealed a profusion of remarkable-looking fossils.

Those specimens and the Burgess Shale, the rock formation they came from, soon became known around the world. Magnificently preserved, embalmed by some sudden, cataclysmic mudslide, the remains of many of the soft-bodied creatures were truly enigmatic in form. So fantastic and unlike any previously known discoveries were these specimens, that it took sixty years for scientists to reach any consensus over exactly what sort of creatures they were and how they might have lived.

The life forms from the Burgess Shale seem to have originated 600 million years ago, when for 3 billion years single-celled bacteria had been our Earth's dominant life forms. The fossilized remains found by Walcott exemplified a burst of evolutionary activity culminating in the appearance of complex multicellular animals. Seeing the profound differences between their physical characteristics and those of any previously known life forms, paleontologists designated entirely new phylums, the main branches of the animal kingdom, to describe the new discoveries.

One of the creatures, named "opabinia" appeared to have been a natural-born science fiction fantasy. The best anyone could figure was that it was a swimmer with a segmented body and a tail, served by a single grasping claw and five eyes protruding high above its head. A gut running along opabinia's length helpfully indicated which was the front end and which was back.

Wiwaxia, an eye-catching ground-hugger, ranged up to two inches in length. Its mouth underneath appeared to be suited for scraping algae or debris from the ocean bottom. Covered with scales and embellished with two rows of tall, vertical spines, wiwaxia looked like a combination of a halved pineapple and the winged helmet of the Roman god, Mercury.

Another discovery had such a phantasmagoric appearance that scientists could think of no better name than "hallucigenia" for it. An inch at most in length, this little creature appeared to have lived on the ocean floor supported by seven pairs of struts. Above its nimble body, seven tentacles with two-pronged tips extended upward. Behind them, clustered a group of six shorter tentacles.³²

Anomalocaris appeared for a time to be a true anomaly. Scientists concurred that it must have been a gigantic beast in its time, all of three feet long, stalking the seas preying on smaller creatures.

Then there was tiny pikaia. A slightly flattened worm with gills, it harbored a distinctive trait: a spine linked up with a basic nervous system. Those characteristics placed it in the chordate phylum that one day would give rise to our own genus of Homo sapiens.

These and the many other fantastic findings gave scientists an instructive glimpse into the history and pace of evolution. They also served to affirm and flesh out in almost unbelievable detail Guru Nanak's cosmic vision of the infinite variety of forms and beings in this creation.

The waxing and waning of the nights and days, the seasons and cycles of the year,
Air, water, fire and the world underground,
In their midst, Earth was established as a special place for the practice of virtue.
Here are living beings of distinctive habits and hues, their names incalculable and endless.³³

A Reverence for Life

As scientists scanned the horizon of an ever-changing universe and philosophers struggled to keep up with new developments, others made brave and largely personal efforts to open windows of respectful coexistence with neighboring species.

Even as Descartes's followers cut open dogs and other living creatures "to watch their mechanisms squeak and groan," eminent scientists, like Robert Boyle (1627-1691) and Robert Hooke (1635-1703) discussed the moral dilemma involved in causing pain for the sake of valuable knowledge. Protestant reformist John Wesley (1703-1791) was known to oppose cruel sports, and to have thought it probable that animals had souls.

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As early as 1684, a man was pilloried in the German city of Sagan for cruelty to his horse. In 1765 and 1766, offenders were imprisoned in Leipzig for inhuman treatment of animals. In the next century, Schopenhauer fulminated against the European convention of indifference to the suffering of other species:

...there is the erroneous idea that our behavior to (animals) is without significance, or, as has been said in the language of that morality, there are no duties to animals. All this is revoltingly crude, a barbarism of the West... In philosophy it rests, despite all evidence to the contrary, on the assumed total difference between man and animal.³⁴

The words of the gentle philosopher reflected a growing consensus. 1824 saw the founding of the first Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Britain. By 1845, France would have its own society. Even in Rome, where Pius IX (1792-1878, pope: 1846-78) had refused to support the movement on the ground that it would be a “theological error” to suppose that man had any duty toward animals, people petitioned to have a SPCA. Over the next fifty years, animal welfare associations were founded, and laws for the humane treatment of animals passed, in virtually every country of the globe.

In the next century, Doctor Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) embodied and articulated the compassionate spirit of a new humanity. The physician-sage dedicated most of his life to healing the sick at his missionary hospital in the Congo, where he cultivated warm and lasting relationships with birds and beasts, as well as his regular patients. Schweitzer stated categorically, “Any religion or philosophy which is not based on a respect for life is not a true religion or philosophy.”³⁵

Elsewhere in Africa, two understudies of paleontology pioneer Louis Leakey (1903-1972), developed remarkable personal connections with primate communities right in their jungle habitats. Starting in 1960, Jane Goodall (1934-) spent fifteen years observing close-up the lifestyles of chimpanzees in Tanzania. Her colleague, Dian Fossey (1932-1985) devoted her life from 1967 on to studying and befriending the reclusive mountain gorillas of Rwanda. In her last years, Fossey courageously defended their shrinking community from farmers and poachers, before herself being murdered by their brutal human adversaries.

While Goodall and Fossey were doing their ground-breaking work in West Africa, in America, John C. Lilly (1915-2001) successfully challenged traditional skepticism about the intelligence and capabilities of marine mammals. He even tried, with the help of computers, to understand the intricate vocalizations of dolphins.

It was John Lilly, inspired by historical Greek accounts of interactions between dolphins and humans, who managed to train a dolphin to carry a boy on its back and perform various stunt maneuvers. His success led to the creation of a number of films (*The Day of the Dolphin*, *Free Willy!*, *Free Willy! 2*) and a long-running television series (*Flipper*) starring trained cetaceans. Lilly’s efforts to increase public awareness and acceptance of the acute intelligence and friendly disposition of dolphins stimulated the animal rights movement and a whole generation of study into animal sensibility.

Around this time, a hardy group of communards settled on a windswept tract of land on the western coast of Scotland. Against all odds and despite expert opinion, they began growing a luscious garden in the sand. Rather than lacing the soil with fertilizers which they could not afford, the inspired gardeners worked wonders with prayer and organic mulches made from waste found readily at hand. Instead of importing toxic pesticides and herbicides, the Findhorn community made contact with troublesome insects and moles and rampant wild plants through prayer and negotiation.

With loving kindness and consideration, vexatious life-forms were offered explanations and alternative venues where they might continue their lives undisturbed. The success of its residents in everything from inter-species diplomacy to growing phenomenal fruits and vegetables, to developing a cooperative and creative community, continue to made the Findhorn community a destination for students, pilgrims and tourists from far and wide.³⁶

Much late twentieth century research served to affirm Darwin’s proposition that humans and nonhumans share a common conscious reality, that the variance among us is what the master evolutionist described as “one of degree and not of kind.”³⁷ In Jane Goodall’s words: “Of course humans are unique, but we are not as different as we used to think. We are not standing in isolated splendor on a pinnacle, separated from the rest of the animal kingdom by an unbridgeable chasm.”³⁸

Studies among numerous species have amply countered the humancentric bias. They have demonstrated that we are not alone in our vaunted ability to make and utilize specialized tools. Neither is it

uniquely human to take creative and unconventional measures to resolve unusual situations. In one experiment, beavers were shown to be capable of putting the types of sticks and poles they ordinarily use for dam building to a number of innovative uses.

In their natural environment, otters utilize and keep with them, stones ideally shaped for smashing open succulent clams and mussels. Herons are known to fish by tossing little twigs or insects on the surface of the water, then waiting for fish to rise to the bait. There are species of birds that grasp twigs in their beaks and use them to probe the bark of trees for grubs and insects. Archerfish (*Toxotes jaculator*) fire precisely aimed pellets of water at insects hovering as much as 1.5 meters (5 feet) above the water's surface.³⁹

Tiny creatures, from amoebae to insects, use sand and stone to make secure and cozy dwellings. Some termites construct large nests, hard as concrete, aligned with Earth's magnetic field. They mix naphthalene, the active ingredient in mothballs, in their nest material to keep unwanted pests away. Leave-cutter ants even manage miniature fungus farms in their sophisticated underground herbariums. When a winged female leaves the nest to start a new colony, she carries a bit of fungal culture in her mouth to begin a new agricultural enterprise.⁴⁰

The ability to play and take pleasure in a good joke were once considered by scientists, shut up in their ivory towers, to be distinctively human traits. Anyone with a reasonably developed sense of observation would know otherwise.

The animals best known for their playful antics are those we see most of – kittens, puppies and foals. Young mountain goats, penguins, elephants, otters, dolphins and chimpanzees, though less well known to us, are also famous for their dispensation for good-natured fun. Small bears and other carnivorous mammals all enjoy play-fighting and general rowdiness.

In Japan, furry young macaque monkeys have a special sport they like to play at. In winter, these merry primates make snowballs and roll them along the ground. Even parrots have been seen making and frolicking with balls of snow.

Many birds also have a well-developed sense of fun. Some crows and ravens take real delight in teasing man's best friend. One particularly audacious magpie has been known to mimic the sound of ducks in order to watch dogs fly out of their house in false pursuit.⁴¹ Hawks and other birds sometimes like to play catch, carrying inedible objects into the air, dropping them, and diving to catch the object before it hits the ground. Two can play, taking turns as dropper and catcher. They have even been known to pass to a lucky human.

Another source of our species's elitism, immersed as we are in electronic and print media, has been our vaunted ability to communicate. Since Descartes, many philosophers and scientists, linguists in particular, have considered the use of language the definitive characteristic of human intelligence. After all, we have 6,000 languages in which to babble. That should count for something, they reason. Should it not? Yet even here, our clumsy veils of self-conceit are fast dropping away.

In 1946, Karl von Frisch (1886-1982) amazed the world with his announcement that he and his assistants had deciphered the first nonhuman form of communication. It was the language of the honeybees. Over a period of years, von Frisch and his research assistants came to understand how bees managed to work together while foraging for pollen and nectar. They observed how honeybees returning from a promising food source flew in a figure-eight motion at a specific angle to the sun, and wagged their bodies at a particular frequency. This angle and the frequency, they came to realize, communicated the direction of the food, its abundance and its distance from the hive.

The dance of temperate-zone honeybees, who targeted large patches of flowers, was found to be accurate up to a distance of 15 kilometers (9.3 miles). Tropical bees did not range so far afield. But since they targeted individual flowering trees, their tightly-constructed syntax was ten times more place-specific than that of their temperate cousins.

Honeybees were even observed to have regional dialects. The rate of waggles per second translated to 50 meters (164 feet) per waggle in a German subspecies, 20 meters (66 feet) for the Italians, and 10 (16 feet) for their Egyptian cousins. These languages, however, were genetically encoded. A German honeybee in an Egyptian hive would still "speak German."

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Dolphins and whales, with their large brains, are known to have highly sophisticated vocabularies, which carry for miles across the ocean – if only we could understand them! Elephants, too, communicate over prodigious distances, although much of their sounding is well below the threshold of human hearing.

Chickens are known now to have alarm calls that specify whether the danger is from an aerial predator like an owl or a ground-hugger such as a fox. They, along with pheasants, turkeys and grouse, are also found to have a rich vocabulary that distinguishes certain kinds of food. As in humans, there can be unstated motives underlying ordinary communication. For example, when a preferred food such as mealworms presents itself, a cavalier cockerel is more likely to cackle if a hen is nearby than if he is surrounded with other males.

Fish are now understood to make clicking sounds beneath the waves. While the nuances of their communication are yet to be made out, experienced listeners are able to recognize rising excitement or a sense of danger by listening in on fishtalk.

Beyond the audio channel of communication, there is the obvious modality of body language. Visual cues are given out by virtually every species. Anyone with a little gift of observation can instantly make out the fundamentals. Strutting, preening, threatening, slinking, and submissive postures convey a fairly universal vocabulary of social interaction.

Anyone with a dog will easily detect Fido's excitement when it is time to take him out for a walk, or his distress if his tail is inadvertently stepped on. The shameful attitude of a dog who has defecated in a prohibited place is unmistakable, as is the silent moping of a dog grieving the loss of a parent or playmate. Aggressive guard dogs are trained and especially valued for the effect their intimidating display has on would-be intruders.

Scientists have recently found that our primate cousins, the chimpanzees, communicate primarily with gestures. Some believe our own vocal articulation could well have its origins in meaningful hand and finger gestures. They cite a number of cases where severely autistic children have been taught the deaf signing language and subsequently gained a remarkable measure of speaking ability. The causal connection has been attributed to a specific part of the left hemisphere of the brain that happens to control precise movements of both the hands and tongue.⁴²

It was not until the 1960s that scientists stopped fixating on the vocalizations of our fellow primates and to realize that their communication was predominantly made up of visual cues. Moreover, in the wild, chimp hand language was found to differ from locale to locale.⁴³ In one community, "stop" was signed with a stop signal like a traffic cop, with the hand up and palm out. Elsewhere, a scooping underhand sign was used. In a third community, chimp intruders were waved away overhand.⁴⁴

Some enterprising scientists have gone so far as to teach chimpanzees, bonobos, orangutans and gorillas to communicate in American Sign Language for the deaf and to use customized symbol boards. In controlled settings, our primate cousins have built up vocabularies of hundreds of words. When tested, they have proven themselves capable of resolving problems of increasing abstraction and complexity. They have also been observed talking to themselves, teaching their offspring ASL, and expressing emotions not so different from our own.

Humor is also not beyond the ken of our fellow primates. Koko is a lowland gorilla born in the San Francisco Zoo and taught ASL by Dr. Francine Patterson. She has a working vocabulary of over 1,000 signs and understands roughly 2,000 words of English, earning her recognition in the *Guineas World Book of Records*. Koko can refer to the past and future, argue, make jokes, and even lie.

One day, while playing with some white towels, Koko made a sign for "red." The researcher acted surprised, since Koko knows all the colors and always identifies them correctly. "You know better than that," she responded. "What color is it really?"

Koko went on to insist, "Red, red, red." The researcher was puzzled. Finally, after a few more minutes of teasing, Koko let her tutor in on the joke. Holding up one of the colorless towels, she pointed to a tiny piece of lint that was clinging to it – *red* lint.⁴⁵

Even lowly plants and bacteria have been found to communicate. Scientists have recognized that when trees are under threat from some sort of infestation, they will inform their neighbors, so they can initiate appropriate chemical responses to make themselves less palatable, and thereby more resistant to the invaders.⁴⁶

On observation, bacteria are found to have an active social life. They flirt by transmitting chemical signals to same-species members of the opposite gender. If a couple find themselves compatible, they swim together, fuse, and the female becomes fertile.

The bodies we inhabit, like those of every other form of life, give off “How are you?” chemicals called “pheromones.” These chemical signals are subtle indicators of our mood and disposition. Although, as humans, we are notoriously inept at deciphering the cues in the pheromone vocabulary, a dog will readily come up and sniff us out as a way of getting acquainted. If he smells trouble, the dog will instinctively take a defiant stance, keep his distance, and growl a warning.

The best we can manage is to cover ourselves with a layer of manufactured scent. If dogs were not so gracious and forgiving, they might treat us with contempt. After all, they might reason, “If people cannot understand such a basic and instinctual form of communication, how can they possibly be intelligent?”

Another province of supposed human singularity, that of social customs, has recently lost its exclusionary sheen. It is not only that French eat *quiche*, Mexicans wear *sombreros* and Punjabis dance *bhangra*. Animal societies also have distinctive cultural traits.

Scientists studying humpback whales in the western Pacific Ocean between 1995 and 1998 were intrigued to find that whales migrating off the Great Barrier Reef seemed to pick up a distinctive Indian Ocean mating song from visiting cetaceans. In the first two years, only 2 of a total of 82 whales sang this song as they identified themselves to other whales for their annual nuptial ritual. The next year, however, the song had become the most popular tune, as whales combined it with parts of their own song. In the fourth year of the study, the new melody had completely taken over, as there was no longer any trace of the old Pacific love song.⁴⁷

Cultural variations have also been observed among different chimpanzee communities. An analysis of studies made over several years in Guinea, Ivory Coast, Uganda and Tanzania showed a remarkable variance of customs. For example, out of seven groups, the males in four performed a kind of rain dance, consisting of branch dragging, ground slapping and coordinated charges. Two chimpanzee communities sometimes danced at the onset of heavy rains. One group was never observed to mark the occasion by any sort of special behavior.

Many other differences in the details of their daily lives were also observed. One group liked to lay down large leaves to sit on and to use a leafy stick for whisking away flies. While grooming one another, some groups squashed fleas they found on a leaf. Others inspected the bugs before disposing of them. Still others squashed them between their index finger and their opposing forearm. While some groups customarily fished for ants by sticking a probe into an ant mound, then wiping the ants off the stick with the other hand, others liked to put the stick covered with ants directly into their mouths.⁴⁸

Whatever we might think of them, animals are known through time to have performed prodigious acts of heroism, not only to save their own, but also to rescue beleaguered members of our species. The story of Androcles and the lion has long ago entered into legend. From what we know, Androcles was a runaway slave in the days of the Roman Empire. To escape from his pursuers, he took refuge in a cave. To his great surprise, a lion appeared to Androcles in the twilight of the cave. Instead of attacking, he meekly held out one swollen paw. The slave relieved the beast’s obvious distress by removing a nasty thorn. Some time later, Androcles was taken captive and thrown into a cage to be eaten alive. There in the enclosure was the same lion, who greeted his savior with every sign of affection that might be expected from a great-hearted beast.

Books have been filled with real life animal rescues.⁴⁹ There are countless recorded episodes of heroic dogs saving individuals from drowning, and entire families from burning homes. Many household pets, even birds and cats, have been known to sacrifice their own lives for the sake of family members. Of course, most of them likely never doubted for a moment that they, too, were members of the family!

Animals in nature have also been known to take a compassionate view of humans in distress. In the waters off Manila in 1975, a survivor of a shipwreck climbed aboard a sea turtle, which stayed at the surface and carried her for two full days, until they arrived safely at an inhabited beach. Tortoises ordinarily like to dive beneath the surface now and again to feed on fish. In this celebrated instance, the giant turtle went foodless for the duration of the rescue. The only plausible explanation is that it did so out of consideration for the aquatic limitations of its terrestrial passenger.⁵⁰

Of course, our wild cousins are also capable of taking heroic measures to defend their own. When a mother lemur was shot by an orchard owner, police took the body to their station with her baby still clinging to

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it, refusing to be separated. After officers decided to let the infant spend a last night with its dead mother, about thirty other monkeys besieged the station, with some sneaking inside, then stealing away into the night with the little orphan. The police inspector told a newspaper, "The monkeys behaved in an exemplary fashion and impressed us with their show of solidarity. Human beings have a lot to learn from them."⁵¹

Psychology professor Hank Davis at the University of Guelph in Canada found that even lowly cockroaches – the giant, hissing Madagascar variety – can be befriended. They can also tell us apart. In an experiment, a student noticed that within a few sessions of petting a vivarium filled with rodent-sized bugs a couple of minutes a day, all but two of them had given up their defensive behavior. The two holdouts were understandable. One had a broken leg. The other's antennae were both broken. By the end of the experiment, the student also was able to recognize some of the bugs. When the student tried to pass her duties on to a roommate, however, the cockroaches were infuriated. They showed their annoyance by hissing and spitting on her friend's hand.⁵²

Animal intelligence can have its quirky side. In one documented case, a Western tourist came to Russia, hoping to go bear hunting. He revealed the purpose of his visit to a local tour operator. The Russian was well aware there were no wild bears in that region, but a price was set and he assured the hopeful hunter that the next day he would bag his trophy animal. The crafty agent then visited a run-down local circus, purchased a bear, and had it delivered to where he knew the hunter would be stalking his unwary prey.

The following day, just as the hunter was closing in for the kill, an unsuspecting postman came down the road on his bicycle. Seeing the bear on the loose, the postman was so panicked that he fell off his bike. Seizing the opportunity, the trained bear promptly leapt the fence of his enclosure, jumped on the postman's bicycle, and cycled down the road, away from the astonished hunter. Once he had recovered from surprise, the hapless trophy hunter turned his sights on the tour operator for swindling him.⁵³

Bugs, too, can be clever. In some species of the scorpion fly, the male must present the female with a food offering of a dead insect before she will mate with him. Some males diligently go hunting for an insect they can present. Others shrewdly present themselves as females to males who already have a gift to offer. They then quickly steal away with the present, hoping to find for themselves a real female they can offer the bug to.⁵⁴

Some elephants and apes are recognized as gifted artists. The artistic potential of Ruby the elephant was first spotted at the Phoenix Zoo when keepers noticed she was holding a stick in her trunk and making shapes in the dirt for hours at a time. She seemed to be quite enjoying herself. Moreover, the keepers recognized that Ruby was daily creating more and more creative designs.

When Ruby's keepers presented her with some large sheets of cardboard, she took to them immediately. Her keepers helped by changing brushes for her and holding a palette where Ruby mixed her colors. Ruby preferred primary colors and often recreated the colors of things she has seen earlier in the day. This caused controversy among scientific observers who previously had considered elephants color blind.

Ruby went on to become a celebrated artist. Her best work sold for \$3,500. By the time of her untimely death in 1998, Ruby's paintings had raised \$500,000 for the Phoenix Zoo.⁵⁵

Several studies have shown that keeping a pet or having a garden, or even tending a single plant, can improve one's mood and general health. Results have been observed even among the residents of such depressing institutions as homes for the elderly, hospital wards and prisons.

Dolphins have a special expertise. Since 1989, the Dolphin-Human Therapy Center in Miami, Florida has compiled an impressive record of dolphin-facilitated treatment of children suffering with serious injuries or disabilities. Children with autism, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, developmental delay and traumatic brain injury come to Miami from all over North America and Europe to play and interact with the dolphins. The children's experience with these playful, accepting, intelligent mammals is deeply healing for them, undoing years of physical, psychological and social trauma. In thousands of cases, some given up as hopeless, there have been remarkable recoveries. A similar facility exists today in Kyoto, Japan.

While the company of animals can have beneficial and therapeutic on our own kind, other species also experience mental trauma, the kind city-dwelling humans, far removed from nature, used to think was uniquely theirs. Observation shows that animals suffer from anxieties, insecurities, phobias and complexes not so different from our own.

For example, primates brought up in an experimental setting without a mother are known to remain socially handicapped for the rest of their lives. In a litter of terriers, one pup is often bullied and made a social outcaste. It then becomes listless and loses its appetite. If, however, it is placed in a sociable group of spaniels, the terrier pup quickly regains its appetite and zest for life. Many mammals and pairing birds, even some fish, are seen to pine for a lost partner. Once the butt of endless jokes, animal psychiatry is a broad and growing area of expertise.⁵⁶

Even justice is not a prerogative exclusive to *homo sapiens*. According to Sarah Brosnan and Frans de Waal at the Yerkes National Primate Research Center of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, capuchin monkeys don't settle for any funny business. Through their experiments, they uncovered an explicit sense of fair play among the small South American primates. When pairs of monkeys were assigned equal tasks, but compensated unequally, the short-changed member would typically refuse their reward or throw it away in a reaction we might expect from an offended member of our own species.⁵⁷

We have so far described a good many traits and abilities that we share with members of other species: problem-solving, tool-using, playing, communicating, keeping and adopting social customs, as well as sacrificing, and healing. In this topsy-turvy world, there are dolphins with innate healing abilities not possessed by most humans, just as there are dogs celebrated for their life-saving feats of heroism. Some chimpanzees are as mindful of the niceties of personal grooming and etiquette as we try to be. When it comes to communicating, who can compare with a whale who beams her song hundreds of miles beneath the waves, without so much as a cell phone? There are also animals, from otters to amoebae, more expert at handling specialized implements than ourselves. And don't try to pull a fast one on a capuchin monkey. They don't appreciate being disrespected.

What about advanced problem solving? Here we can admit to a degree of exclusivity. Unfortunately, our cleverest schemes can easily end up creating far more problems than they solve.

Allies in the Microcosm

In physiology, too, we have a good deal in common with our fellow beings. Our basic structures are the same as those of our nearest relatives, the vertebrates and invertebrates. We all have neurons, synapses and neuroglia, the essential ingredients of an integrative nervous system. Our bodies are "turned on" and "turned off" by the same neurochemicals that regulate the lives of invertebrates and insects. As Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose's work demonstrated, our sensitivity to the world around us and the basic cellular make-up of our bodies are shared even by the plant world. Under a microscope, there are very few clues to differentiate between a plant cell and that of an animal.⁵⁸

Having hopefully overcome a little of our innate human snobbery, let us check around a little closer to home. Right inside our bodies, at a microscopic level, what do we see?

Bacteria. Lots and lots of bacteria.⁵⁹

Intellectually, it may be very humbling just to acknowledge the existence of our microscopic ancestors. These exotic cousins of ours are thought to have come into being about 3.5 billion years ago. (Don't ask scientists how. They're only guessing.) For about 2 billion years, or most of the history of the living world, scientists believe bacteria had the planet pretty much to themselves.

Over that expanse of time, they developed a superb sense of teamwork. While some of them specialized in responding to magnetic fields, others became very good at taking energy from the rays of the sun. As some became adept at digesting nutrients, others developed a talent for regulating body temperature. Still others specialized in reproducing or moving about. All of them, as they branched out into different areas of expertise, continued to interact as perhaps only creatures without any center, millions and billions sharing a common nucleus, could.

As early life forms - bacteria, archbacteria and blue-green algae - mutated, entirely new life forms with their own nuclei came into existence. As these novel organisms developed, they adopted the fundamental processes of life already pioneered by specialized bacteria right into their own cellular makeup. As a result, in every cell of nucleated life today there are hundreds of vestigial bacteria called "organelles." According to evolutionary microbiologists Lynn Margulis and Dorian Sagan:

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From the paramecium to the human race, all life forms are meticulously organized, sophisticated aggregates of evolving microbial life. Far from leaving microorganisms behind on an evolutionary “ladder,” we are surrounded by them and composed of them.⁶⁰

In a very real sense, we exist in each of our parts, even as every one of our cells shares a part of the whole we are. This magical system only breaks down at a cellular level when the parts no longer support the life of the whole. When free radicals break loose and exert their anarchic influence in the body, the diagnosis is “cancer.”

Meanwhile, those bacteria that never developed their own separated nucleated existence have retained their fabulous ability to work together. Within a few years of the first use of an antibiotic, bacteria on a worldwide scale mutate and become invulnerable to it. All the world’s bacteria have access to a single gene pool and hence to the adaptive mechanisms of the entire bacterial kingdom.

It seems the one fundamental difference between our nucleated life forms and the non-nucleated forms with which we share our world, is our own foolhardy illusion of utter independence. The blindness of our self-conceit carries with it a potential for our collective breakdown from a failure to combine the strengths and talents of our entire family, human and not-so-human.

In case we should consider that, as “superior humans”, we can just keep comfortably aloof from our “lesser relations”, we should not forget that our lives are, and have always been, utterly dependent on the dedicated exertions of our fellow beings. In the humble plant kingdom, for example, all kinds of vegetation, adding up to about 25 million square miles of leaf surface, each day engage in photosynthesis, manufacturing oxygen and food for one and all.

Many significant contributors remain out of mind since they have a way of keeping themselves entirely inconspicuous. Some are small enough to be invisible to the naked eye. Others do their essential work unseen or far removed from our favored paved-over, concretized, urban settings.

Though we have grown accustomed to thinking that “tiny critters,” bacteria and insects, are our intractable enemies, newer science is showing that only a minute percentage of them are harmful or ever in competition with us. Insects and bacteria actually play an indispensable role in keeping the planet alive. They provide a major portion of the diets of many birds, fish, mammals and amphibians.

Through their work, inorganic compounds enter the living ecosystem and become nutrients for others further up the food chain. Microorganisms and insects also break down and recycle dead matter, further contributing to the vitality of the soil and of other living species. Enterprising microbes have even evolved to turn the toxic sludge of our industrial waste dumps to harmless byproducts.⁶¹ Not to be underestimated, the total weight of all bacteria is thought to be greater than the weight of every multi-celled organism - mighty whales and lofty redwoods and recalcitrant humans - combined.

The microscopic organisms in our soil are possibly the most vital, yet least understood, of our living relations. For all the science and the \$200 million that was poured into it, Biosphere II, the three-acre self-contained environment experiment that ran in Arizona from 1991 to 1993, led to a humbling realization.

While water and a variety of foods were plentiful throughout its twenty-four month duration and many aspects of the experiment went more or less as planned, the vital oxygen mix went awry because scientists lacked a proper understanding of the least visible members of the entourage. Through an imbalance in the vital microorganisms in the soil, oxygen levels inside plummeted dangerously. Within a few weeks, the oxygen mix was as thin as what is ordinarily found only at an extreme altitude of 17,000 feet. Without the timely infusion of necessary oxygen from outside their artificial environment, the embattled “bionauts” would likely have succumbed to brain damage and possibly died.

Today, it is generally appreciated by scientists that if the members of some of the smaller creature families - such as ants or the bacteria that facilitate our digestion or the fungi that contribute to the uptake of nutrients by plants - were to vanish, the results to life on this little blue-green planet could be disastrous. If, on the other hand, humans were somehow eliminated, the vast majority of other living species would suffer little loss. Some would benefit tremendously.

A New Paradigm of Mind

This brings us to the question of the very nature of our consciousness. While it is increasingly apparent that we humans are but one of countless ingenious species sharing the air, the water and the nutrients of the Earth, is there a possibility we might be sharing more than just our outer contingencies? Might we also have, as Guru Nanak indicated, a common awareness, a certain unanimity of experience?

There are many researchers and academics who persist in the idea that to be concerned with consciousness of any kind, especially nonhuman consciousness, is a kind of sentimental and uncritical thinking to be avoided by serious scientists. Moreover, numerous hardened and influential scientists still believe that the ability to engage in vocal and written communication with members of our species is the benchmark by which all consciousness ought to be measured. These authorities insist that if a creature does not relate in humanspeak, it cannot be said to be truly conscious. This has for long been the position of behaviorists, linguists and other skeptics.

However, based on new evidence and a good amount of reasoned speculation, the balance of opinion in the scientific community in recent years has shifted to acknowledge the possibility that we might not be the only conscious beings on Earth. This renewed outlook has taken hold in such a significant way that even Pope John Paul II (1920-2005, pope: 1978-2005), heir to a legacy of indifference to the sufferings of animals, has been cited calling for “solidarity with our smaller brethren.”⁶²

The shift has been supported by the results of research in the core disciplines of behavior, linguistics and physiology. It has also fostered an increasing respect for the controversial field of parapsychology.

The formal study of unexplained conscious phenomena in the West dates back to the establishment of the Metaphysical Society by England’s poet laureate, Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) in 1869. Its stated objective was to “unite all shades of religious opinion against materialism.” The Metaphysical Society’s discussions included a number of respected academics and luminaries of that time, including the British Prime minister and two archbishops. Topics covered the range of “What is matter?” “Is God knowable?” “What is death?” and “Has a frog a soul?” The Metaphysical Society wound up its affairs in 1880, having discussed much, but resolved little.

Tennyson and others went on to form the Society for Psychical Research two years later. Members included naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941), psychologists William James (1842-1910), Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Carl Jung (1875-1961), physicists Sir William Crookes (1832-1919), Sir Oliver Lodge (1851-1940) and Sir Joseph Thomson (1856-1940), and chemists Marie (1867-1934) and Pierre Curie (1859-1906). Tennyson was joined by fellow writers Mark Twain (1835-1910) and Lewis Carroll in his public persona as mathematician Reverend C. L. Dodgson (1832-1898). Prime Minister Gladstone (1809-1898, prime minister of Great Britain: 1868-74, 1880-85, 1886, 1892-94) and Archbishop of Canterbury, E. W. Benson (1829-1896, archbishop: 1882-96) also lent their considerable prestige to the society by serving terms as president.

Members of the Society for Psychical Research did more than discuss metaphysical questions. They applied their considerable intelligence to investigating instances of unusual psychic occurrences, such as clairvoyance, poltergeists, prophetic dreams, déjà vu, and apparitions.

Some forty years after the founding of the society, which continues to exist, Harvard University psychologist William McDougall began to test the existence of paranormal psychic phenomena under laboratory conditions. McDougall moved to North Carolina’s Duke University, where he established a department of psychology in 1927. With him, came his associates Joseph Banks Rhine (1895-1980) and his wife Louisa (1891-1983).

The Rhines set to work performing experiments on telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and psychokinesis. Their most creative work was in the early 1930’s, when they conducted an astonishing 90,000 tests. It was Joseph and Louisa Rhine who coined the terms “extrasensory perception (ESP),” “parapsychology” and “psi” to describe their new scientific domain.

The Rhines’ pioneering work in no small way challenged prevailing scientific and cultural attitudes. The skeptical, even hostile, reception it received in conservative North Carolina was more than predictable. When McDougall retired, the university ousted Joseph and Louisa Rhine from the psychology department.

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Having by that time achieved tenure, the husband and wife team opened a separate Parapsychology Laboratory to study paranormal mental powers. The lab was associated with the university, although the Rhines had to raise their own funding. When established professional journals would not publish their findings, Drs. Joseph and Louisa started their own *Journal of Parapsychology* in 1942. Shunned by their conservative colleagues in the field of psychology, the Rhines and their colleagues in 1957 founded their own Parapsychological Association.

To their credit, the Rhines were always willing to open up their lab and records to any serious critic. More than anyone, they themselves claimed to want to root out any mistakes in their experimental techniques. Eventually, the charges of falsification and error died down. Instead, year after year, the Rhines and their associates accumulated thousands of tests that defied convention and pointed to the real possibility of extrasensory perception. Long-awaited recognition for their work came in 1969, when their Parapsychological Association was granted affiliation with the esteemed American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Henry Margenau (1901-1997), emeritus member of the faculty at Yale University, a recognized authority on the philosophical basis of physics, once described the challenge of new, unexpected findings in the realm of extrasensory perception.

It appears to be a matter of common sense to any scientifically trained person today that ESP (telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition) is impossible, since such phenomena – if they existed – would violate known and proven scientific laws...

However a question can be raised as to exactly what scientific laws would be violated by the occurrence of ESP. We have assumed that they are of the stature of the Law of Conservation of Energy and Momentum, the Second Law of Thermodynamics, the principle of causality, and the exclusion principle of quantum mechanics. When we examine scientific laws of this caliber, however, we find them unrelated to the existence or non-existence of ESP...

Strangely, it does not seem possible to find the scientific laws or principles violated by the existence of ESP. We *can* find contradictions between our culturally accepted view of reality, but not – as many of us have believed – between ESP and the scientific laws that have been so laboriously developed. Unless we find such contradictions, it may be advisable to look more carefully at reports of these strange and uncomfortable phenomena which come to us from trained scientists and fulfill the basic rules of scientific research. We believe the number of these high quality reports is already considerable and increasing.⁶³

In 1971, ESP research acquired a rare window into the powers of mind when astronaut Edgar Mitchell conducted mind experiments during the last manned space flight to the moon. On a number of occasions, Mitchell mentally beamed a series of numbers and symbols from the Apollo 14 to three earthbound participants, two medical doctors and a professional psychic, over an unprecedented distance of some 200,000 miles. The results were independently checked by Dr. Rhine at his lab in Durham and by another well-known researcher in New York. Their analysis reinforced previous findings that distance played no part in receptivity to telepathic projections. Mitchell afterwards founded the Institute of Noetic Sciences to advance the study of the mind's latent abilities.

Studies at the Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research (PEAR) facility took this approach a significant step further. Princeton University's former dean of engineering, Robert G. Jahn established the privately-funded lab in 1979 to study what effect people might have on sophisticated technical equipment. Jahn originally hoped to gain a better understanding of the weird anomalies and gremlin malfunctions in technical equipment that were the subject of both scientific lore and common experience. His research eventually led him to raise the much larger question of the role of human consciousness in the creation of physical reality.

One device central to the PEAR lab's investigations was an "electronic coin flipper." Technically known as a random event generator (REG), it consisted of a video screen on which a computer-generated line traveled continuously, sometimes above, and sometimes below the display's horizontal midpoint. Over the course of millions of experiments, Jahn and his associates came to recognize that their subjects were able, to varying degrees, to influence the amount of time the line spent in the upper or lower part of their screen.

Those operators able to develop an affinity with the apparatus, to meld their consciousness and lose their ego-sense at the time of the experiment, were found to be most successful. In subsequent, more elaborate,

experiments it was found that the highest scores resulted when two subjects of opposite genders who were emotionally bonded tried to influence the REG together. Could it be love? Even the technical staff at the PEAR lab could not help using the words “love” and “resonance” to describe the critical component in the tests.

Rather like Bose years before him, Professor Jahn was left to puzzle over the mysterious boundaries between psychology, physiology and physics.

The distinction between living and nonliving systems, or between systems capable of “consciousness” or not, is becoming progressively more diffuse when approached from either the biological or physical perspective. Such biological entities as viruses, coacervates, and the life-forming DNA and RNA structures lie in a twilight zone between elaborate chemical complexes and vitally competent organisms.⁶⁴

Quantum theory, first hypothesized by Max Planck (1858-1947) in 1900, seems ideally suited to this magical new paradigm. Already put to practical use in semiconductors, and microchips, atom-powered lasers and clocks, quantum supercomputers and ultra sensitive gravity meters, quantum theory presumes a vast and fundamental wholeness in the universe. New quantum thinking plainly overrides the old Cartesian dichotomy of soul and matter. Quantum theory implies, according to University of London physicist David Bohm (1917-1992), that consciousness is present to some degree in everything.

Everything material is also mental and everything mental is also material... The separation of the two – matter and spirit – is an abstraction. The ground is also one.⁶⁵

This affirms the experience of many people, including the present author, who have from time to time felt their computer or car exert a will and intelligence entirely of its own. Another quantum mind, Nobel laureate, Niels Bohr (1885-1962), unabashedly violated the old Cartesian taboo against attributing consciousness to nonhumans, let alone to “mere machines.”

I am perfectly prepared to talk of the spiritual life of an electronic computer; to state that it is reflecting or that it is in a bad mood.⁶⁶

Bohr is also widely quoted as saying, “Anyone who is not shocked by the quantum theory has not understood it.”

This radical departure from life in the old-paradigm led medical doctor Larry Dossey, an authority on the new relationship between mind and the healing arts, to arrange a diagrammatic “universal spectrum of love.” In his continuum, he ordered seven classes of being, from lofty humans to lowly subatomic particles according to their apparent complexity. Along the way, Dossey described the capacity for love or resonance shown to exist in each of the categories.⁶⁷

Another powerful element of post-Cartesian thinking is the recognition of the ever-presence of being in the continual now. Ultimately, there is no timeframe other than the present moment. This understanding and its larger implications has been described by Erwin Schrodinger (1887-1961), the Nobel physicist whose work is at the heart of quantum theory.

Mind is by its very nature a *singulare tantum*^a. I should say: the overall number of minds is just one. I venture to call it indestructible since it has a peculiar time-table, namely mind is always *now*. There is really no before and after for mind. There is only a now that includes memories and expectations. But I grant that our language is not adequate to express this, and I also grant, should anyone wish to state it, that I am now talking religion, not science – a religion, however, not opposed to science, but supported by what disinterested scientific research has brought to the fore.⁶⁸

This idea was astonishingly validated by an innovative experiment with the PEAR lab’s random event generator. To their surprise, when the researchers asked their subjects to concentrate of the performance of the REG *before* it was run, they were still able to manipulate its output in the direction they desired.

To give the experiment an even more uncanny twist, the scientists then ran the machines without any operators influencing them, and without immediately examining the results. Some hours or days afterward, subjects were asked to focus on the REG performance. As Schrodinger might have predicted, when the results

^a *singulare tantum*: unique thing.

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were checked, they were yet again skewed in the direction intended by the operators. Further experimentation involved having subjects mentally entrain the REG from the other side of the globe. It was found that even separation at such a great distance was not a factor in the results.⁶⁹

In a parallel development, observations at a subatomic level have shown how particles that have once been in contact will change simultaneously, regardless of the distance between them, and allowing no measurable time for any sort of communication between them. The dynamic at work in these amazing exercises is described as the principle of “nonlocality.”

These observations have been used to explain such mysterious phenomena as the ability of thought and prayer to “travel” around the globe. According to the new paradigm model, mental projections are not really “sent” anywhere. If they were, they might weaken as distance is increased. Rather, prayer and meditation involve accessing a mental state of inseparability or nonlocality that transcends time and space, and dissolves the conventional distinctions between “subject” and “object,” “sender” and “receiver.”

Technowizard Ray Kurzweil offers an interesting perspective on this newly holistic understanding.

...the objective and subjective views of reality have been at odds since the dawn of recorded history. There is often merit, however, in combining seemingly irreconcilable views to achieve a deeper understanding... Particles apparently do not make up their minds as to which way they are going or even where they have been until they are forced to do so by the observations of a conscious observer. We might say that they appear not really to exist until and unless we notice them... The Universe is sufficiently sublime that the essentially Western objective view of consciousness arising from matter and the essentially Eastern subjective view of matter arising from consciousness apparently coexist as another irreducible duality.⁷⁰

The quantum perspective offers us a marvelous insight into the true nature of our larger reality. Until the early 1900s, scientists going by the old Cartesian model had continued to deconstruct the universe, hoping to locate the ultimate mechanisms that made things work. Within ten years, they had come to recognize waves and particles, energy and mass, as two complementary aspects of the same thing.

By the 1930s, scientists who had been used to disassembling the universe into smaller and smaller units, found that beyond atoms there was simply no more physical “stuff” to be found. Rather than the solid isolatable material objects of classical physics, subatomic particles were essentially sets of probabilities, each relationship reaching outward in a complicated tissue of events, with connections of different kinds alternating or overlapping or combining, thereby determining the texture of the whole.⁷¹

Here again, the Cartesian paradigm, which had smartly broken with the flat earth Ptolmaic one to describe the infinity of space, found itself caught up in the messy details of the real world. At the subatomic level, the new paradigm confuted the old in two significant ways. Not only did it contradict the old building block description of a physical world that could simply be dissembled into smaller and smaller parts. It also represented the death of the aloof and ever-so-formal theological God, and the birth of a dynamic sense of cosmic oneness derived from countless integral relationships, with no individual existing apart from the defining whole. While the spirit of the old paradigm was aggressively reductionist, the new spirit was inclined toward a profound holism such as had not been seen in the West since the days of Parmenides in the sixth century BCE.

Which brings us back to Guru Nanak. The great Guru’s basic teaching is that all of creation is the work of one infinite Creator. Out of the bounty of that One, come all things: good times and bad times, health and sickness, life and death. These are all aspects of his abounding Creativity. Moreover, as a true artist, the Creator lives right in the details of his handiwork.

Who can weigh you? With what could they measure?
What appraiser should I call?
From what expert can I learn to assess your value?
My dear Love, you are simply endless!
You fill the water, land and sky. Yourself, you are all-pervading.

Pause and reflect.

The heart is the scale. The mind is the measure. By your service is your appraisal known to the world.
Deep in your soul, you size up your lord. This is how you condition your awareness.
You yourself are the balance, the weights and the scale. Yourself, you are the evaluator.

It is you who sees, you who understands and you who conduct the dealings.
The sightless and wretched alien comes for a moment, then leaves in no time.
In his company, how can a fool gain understanding?⁷²

Guru Nanak, the great Teacher of the New Age, reconciled the bitter contentions of the world's rival theologies. While the Muslim and Jewish authorities held that the infinite, immaculate, creative Being existed apart from the physical details of this creation, Hindus daily recognized and worshipped the Infinite God in any of 330 million forms. Most Christians, to the chagrin of the rabbis and imams, took a middle position, allowing for the incarnation of the Infinite, but only in the personality of Jesus of Bethlehem. Guru Nanak taught that the Infinite Creator lives *both* within *and* beyond the creation.

While Buddhists and Jains thought of the world as a place of suffering and self-denial, shaved their heads and lived as monks, Guru Nanak conveyed the joy of living a family life graced with an holistic outlook and fortified with an invigorating spiritual discipline. At the same time as Confucians taught the importance of social continuity and serving the needs of society, Taoist teachings emphasized the need of a person's spiritual development. Guru Nanak showed his disciples how to find their strength within, then use it for the betterment of society.

Existentialists would later urge the necessity of taking responsibility for one's actions. They had to admit, however, that without complete knowledge, a person could never be sure of the effect of their actions. Guru Nanak's approach stressed the importance of cultivating intuitive understanding through the practice of meditation. In this way, a devotee might hope to exercise a pure mind in the service of the common good.

Could it have been just a coincidence that while the great teacher of humanity was engaged in conveying the Aquarian paradigm through the Far and Middle East, three men - an astronomer, a preacher and a doctor - were proclaiming similar revelations in Europe?

In Poland, Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) was careful not to offend the earthly might of the Roman church. Still, his revolutionary observations, which he allowed to be published just before his death, caused the collapse of the long-standing Catholic belief that all the planets and stars revolved around the Earth.⁷³

It remained for Galileo (1564-1642) to refine and then openly espouse the Copernican system, leading to his being summoned before the Inquisition. For fostering this radical new understanding, Galileo lived the last eight years of his life under house arrest.

In Germany, Martin Luther (1483-1546), a priest and professor of theology, stood up to the religious authorities ensconced in Rome. He preached a gospel of protest and change. The movement Luther set in motion became known as "Protestantism." Through Protestant inspiration, the Bible would be translated and printed in dozens, then hundreds, of languages so common people could read and study the authoritative Christian work for themselves.

The Protestant reformation marked an important shift in religious life in Europe. Afterwards, there would be no more buying of heavenly privileges from the Church. For Protestants, divine grace would be recognized as the one, all-powerful means of salvation, accessible to all believers. Honest labor would earn for the pious the respect that previously had been reserved for priests and their wealthy clientele. Gates of hundreds of cloisters and monasteries would be opened, and nuns and monks encouraged to marry. Luther himself married and with his wife, a former nun, raised a family. There would be an end to hair shirts and fasting, the mortification of the flesh. Moreover, Protestants would no longer owe spiritual allegiance to any foreign authority far-removed from hearth and home.

Out of Spain, the findings of Michael Servetus (1511?-1553), based partly on his study of anatomy and partly on his meditations, contradicted a number of deeply held presumptions. Servetus held the Holy Spirit, the "breath of God", coincided with the life force, and that that Spirit entered the blood through the lungs. He also denied the Son of God could eternally co-exist with the Father. Moreover, Servetus strongly opposed the Church's theology of three Gods in one. The doctrine, according to him, had mired the Church in a suspect doctrine and cruelly estranged it from Muslims and Jews.

Servetus's outspoken critique made him powerful enemies. Tried and sentenced twice, once by the Catholic authorities at Vienne, France and once by the Calvinists at Geneva, he was burned at the stake in 1553

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as a dangerous heretic. His death caused an uproar over the cruel intolerance of both the Protestant and Catholic establishments. Servetus's teachings later became the basis of the eminently tolerant Unitarian Church.⁷⁴

Star-crossed religious orthodoxies, science and faith, mass and energy, mind and matter, women and men, diverse races and cultures, rich and poor, creatures great and small – a dawning new age stands witness to a dramatic shift in awareness away from intolerance and abuse toward a synergy of greater understanding and respect. Parliaments of religion,⁷⁵ the neurology of meditation, quantum physics, parapsychology, women's rights, human rights, animal rights, and ecological activism all emerge as new and surprising developments. Each uniquely defines our present circumstance and adds to our future promise.

The unitary vision of the Guru is ingenuously illustrated by a simple band of paper, given a half-twist and joined end to end with a piece of tape. Called a Moebius strip, its discovery was itself an instance of nonlocality, for one Johann Benedict Listing (1808-1882) and the more famous August F. Mobius (1790-1868) are recorded to have invented it more or less simultaneously in 1858.

The two sides of that band, given a half-twist, then formed into a closed loop, might symbolically represent all the attributes of old-school dualistic thinking: "you and me", "pagan and orthodox", "mind and matter", "free will and destiny", "life and death", and the rest. Run your finger along its tactile surface, and you will be amazed to find, like someone blind who comes to see, it is all one side!

Beguiling duality preoccupies the world's thinking.
Lust, anger and egotism bring destruction in their wake.
What should we say is secondary, when there is not a second one?
Within all is the One, the perfect Being.

Pause and reflect.

The devious, double-minded intellect speaks in twos.
Taking birth and dying is the fate of the contrary.⁷⁶

Words and Images of the Guru's Way

According to Guru Nanak, the immortal soul or universal spirit, takes countless shapes through a wondrous art. Though they do not realize it, each instance is a manifest form of one vast creative Consciousness.

Within all hearts, speaks God, speaks God.
Other than God, who else is there to speak?

Pause and reflect.

Out of the same clay, are formed the elephant, the ant, and the many sorts of species.
In immovable life forms and moving beings, in worms and moths,
Within each and every heart, O God is in them all!⁷⁷

There is one consciousness in all created beings.
None has been made without this awareness.
According to their awareness, they are set on their path.
On account of our actions, we come and go through many lifetimes.⁷⁸

Despite their humble condition, even the lowliest aspire to an elevated state of being.

On this path of the Lord, we climb the steps to merge with him.
Hearing of the heavens, even worms aspire to the greatest heights.
O Nanak, once vision is gained, the vain boasting of the false is revealed.⁷⁹

The world is full of lessons, paradigms and examples for those who can see through the Guru's eyes. From the very small, we can learn an attitude of humility.

What are we? Tiny worms, and microscopic germs.
You are our great and glorious Lord and Master.
I cannot describe your state and extent.
O God, how can we, the unfortunate, meet with you?⁸⁰

The Lord is like sugar spilled onto the sand.
The elephant cannot pick it up.
Says Kabir, give up your pride of ancestry, social status and honor.
Become like the tiny ant. Now, pick up and eat the sugar.⁸¹

The vast world, with its many species, also teaches us to trust that our needs are provided for.

He knows the contents of every heart,
And recognizes the sufferings of the virtuous and the mean.
From the ant to the huge elephant,
All are contained in his fruitful vision.⁸²

Why, O mind, do you scheme and make such efforts
When the loving Lord himself is providing for your needs?
Even among the rocks and stones he has created living beings
And He places their nourishment before them.⁸³

Our utter reliance on the Infinite is revealed in the lives of species other than our own.

The mother turtle is in the water and her babies are out of the water.
She has no wings to protect them, and no milk to feed them.
The perfect Embodiment of bliss, the fascinating Lord looks after them.
See this, and gain understanding in your mind.⁸⁴

You are the all-knowing, all-seeing river, and I am but a fish.
How can I find your limit?
Wherever I look, you are there. Without you, I would burst and die.
I know not the fisherman. I know not the net.
But when in difficulty, then I remember you.⁸⁵

According to the Guru's awesome vision, all of creation is absorbed in devotion to the one supreme Being, who created all and, in his various forms, does all things.

In the offering plate of the sky, the sun and moon are your lamps.
The stellar constellations are strung like pearls,
While below, the breeze of the sandal forest is your incense.
All Earth's greenery is a floral tribute to you, O my luminous Lord!
How amazing is your worship!

Pause and reflect.

O Giver of peace, the whole of nature pays its homage to you,
While the divine music resounds within.
Thousands are your eyes, though you have no eyes.
Thousands are your forms, though you have no form.
Thousands are your lotus feet, though you have not one foot.
Though you have not one nose, noses are yours in the thousands.
I am enchanted by your play.
Yours is the light in every light, the light in every created being.
Through the Master's teachings, we come to see that light.
Whatever pleases you, is your worship.⁸⁶

In his life, the Guru would sometimes point out examples of the unerring course of destiny. Once, while the sixth Guru was on a hunting expedition with his disciples, a hissing python approached. While his disciples wanted to kill it outright, the Master told them to let it come near. The Guru touched the python with his toe. It burst and died, and worms wriggled out from the snake's body.

The Guru explained how, in a previous birth, that snake had been an arrogant guru who used to embezzle his disciples' property. Since he did not show any regret for his abusive behavior, the false guru became a python and his victims the worms who had tortured the python's body.

Another episode occurred in the time of the tenth Guru. While passing through a forest, he heard a partridge cry and went in pursuit. The bird made a vigorous attempt at escape, exhausting men and horses.

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Finally, the Guru caught it alive, plucked off its feathers, and threw it before his hunting hawk. After some hesitation, the Master's bird began to devour the partridge.

The Guru explained that, in a previous birth, the partridge had been a farmer and the hawk a money-lender. The farmer had borrowed from the lender, then squandered the money and moved to another village. When the money-lender found him, the debtor begged for time and promised to repay the money. The lender demanded a surety before he would trust the farmer. The borrower said he had no surety other than the Guru. The money-lender was satisfied and went home.

As it happened, the farmer ultimately failed to repay the money. Both died soon after, the money-lender becoming the hawk and the farmer, the partridge. The Guru, as he assured his disciples, had simply fulfilled his role as guarantor in offering the flesh of the rascally partridge to be eaten by the trusting hawk.

Guru Nanak, through the power of his meditation, had gained mastery over the mind and, through his mind, of the animate, inanimate and the invisible spirit worlds. One enduring proof of the Guru's awesome power dates from his visit to an arid locale, now in Pakistan, known as Hasan Abdal. A temple known as Punja Sahib, meaning "holy hand", commemorates the occasion.

When the Guru and Mardana, his faithful companion, arrived at Hasan Abdal, his disciple was complaining to the Master that he was very thirsty. The Guru told Mardana to climb a high hill where a reputed holy man lived, to ask for water from his well. When Mardana arrived at the summit, the keeper of the well asked him who he was and how he had come to that place. Mardana described himself as a musician and told how he was in the company of a great saint, Guru Nanak. Hearing this, the supposed holy man became jealous and refused to provide any water, saying that if Guru Nanak was as holy as Mardana described him to be, he ought to be able to obtain water for himself.

After receiving this reply, Guru Nanak sent Mardana back to the top of the hill to implore that he was only a fellow creature of the one Creator and that he made no claim to sainthood. Still, water was refused by the haughty lord of the hill.

Guru Nanak was left with no choice in the sweltering heat, but to probe the earth for a stream of life-sustaining water. No sooner than he had done so, but a fresh, cool spring issued out of the depths of the earth. At the same time, the well on the hilltop went dry.

The man at the summit of the hill was enraged. He decided to finish the Guru, once and for all. With a huge effort, he rolled a large boulder down the hill at his unassuming guests. Seeing the mass hurtling toward them with increasing momentum, the Guru spoke, "God is the doer!" and held his outstretched hand toward the boulder.

Suddenly the giant stone came to a complete halt. The unstoppable force of the hill *fakir's* hatred had met the immovable object of the Guru's love. The Guru had prevailed.

The would-be saint from the hilltop, recognizing the miracle, had a complete change of heart. Rushing down, he fell at Guru Nanak's feet. Apologizing profusely, he begged to become a disciple of the saintly Guru.

The boulder, for its part, still bears the indelible print of the Guru's outstretched hand as proof of his soulful power over death and vengeful nature.

In the following song, the Guru sang of the boundless fear he found pervading all of creation, including the hill lord, and even the boulder intended to bring his life to such a sudden end.

In fear of the Infinite, the wind ever blows.
In fear of the Infinite, hundreds of thousands of rivers run to the sea.
In fear of the Infinite, fire performs its dutiful service.
In fear of the Infinite, Earth carries its load.
In fear of the Infinite, weighted clouds circle overhead.
In fear of the Infinite, the lord of conscience stands alert at his door.
In fear of the Infinite, the sun and moon traverse tens of millions of miles, without end.
In fear of the Infinite, live yogic adepts, enlightened ones, divine beings and masters of the self.
In fear of the Infinite, space spreads out before us.
In fear of the Infinite, live warriors and mighty heroes.
In fear of the Infinite, numberless come and go.

This fear is written in the destiny of every one.
O Nanak, fearless and uncreated is the True One.⁸⁷

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With each day, the interconnectedness of every part of our reality becomes more apparent and harder to escape. Ignorance has lost its vigor as a cogent argument of defense. What is still unconscious has a way of bubbling up and embarrassing our hard-won ingenuity.

Even physical distance no longer shields us from pervasive reality. If the smokestacks of Chinese industry release untold tons of pollutants into the atmosphere, we too are affected. The prevailing winds recognize no boundaries. If plankton or other tiny, but vital, organisms find themselves in trouble, the effects can easily influence the quality of life everywhere.

Blindly following old dogmas is also no longer such a splendid idea. Even religious leaders have begun to see the light. In a nuclear age, large holy wars have lost their salvific luster. Our humanity recognizes its terrible cost and refuses to pay.

Now, after two devastating world wars and more than half a century of impending nuclear holocaust, people of all faiths and nationalities are sharing Guru Nanak's essential insight: Whoever and whatever we are, we are not so different from each other. It is time we learned a new kind of circumspection and practiced a more inclusive ethic.

Everything happens for a reason.
There is nothing escapes that Grand Design ⁸⁸
- Guru Nanak

Everything That Happens...

Hukam, Chance and Happenstance

- A frustrated motorist in the southern Russian city of Makhachkala called a mechanic after his Mercedes failed to start. When the workman found and removed the source of the problem, the owner was twice relieved. Connected to the vehicle's ignition, the mechanic had found a potentially devastating car bomb.⁸⁹
- According to the US National Weather Service, three Americans are struck and killed each year by lightning. In 1996, lightning twice hit Marjorie Cox, an Ohio housewife – and she lived to tell about it.⁹⁰
- Just two minutes after being shown how to work a metal detector, a farmer's son uncovered the largest hoard of Roman coins ever found in Britain. Kevin Elliot, persuaded to try the machine by his cousin Martin, discovered the first of 9,377 silver coins when trying his luck on his father's dairy farm. The hoard was declared a national treasure and the cousins, both aged thirty-three, stood to make a small fortune from the sale of the chance haul. "The odds of finding something like this in such a short space of time are phenomenal, mind-boggling," said Martin Elliot.⁹¹
- Some years ago, Fred Smith was a man down on his luck. Things went so bad that he was virtually bankrupt. Although he had never before gambled in a casino, as a last resort, Smith decided to go to Las Vegas to try and redeem his fortune. Smith got lucky and won \$50,000, enough to pull himself from the brink of financial ruin and start up a new business. His new enterprise? A little courier company he named "Federal Express."⁹²
- A new professor of statistics at the University of Warwick, England in his first lecture was describing the laws of probability to his students. By way of example, he drew a coin from his pocket and tossed it in the air. It landed on a polished floor, spun around a few times, and to a thunderous applause came to rest – vertically on its edge! The chances of this happening were afterward calculated by a mathematician at about 1 billion to one.⁹³
- Peter Karpin, a German spy in World War I, was captured by the French as soon as he entered the country in 1914. The French sent faked reports in his name to Germany and intercepted his wages and expense money, until the agent escaped in 1917. With Karpin's money, someone on the French side bought a car. They were driving in the occupied Ruhr when they knocked down and killed a pedestrian. It was none other than Peter Karpin.⁹⁴
- One day in the 1830s, a stranger with a barrel full of newspapers and odds and ends came to a frontier homestead in Springfield, Illinois and offered to sell the lot for a dollar. Realizing the man was needy, the homesteader gave him a dollar, although he had no idea how the barrel's contents would be of any use. When he cleared out the barrel, the self-educated frontiersman who supported his family with a series of odd jobs, found among the junk an almost complete set of law books. Those texts, delivered by fate to his homestead, helped him become a first-rate lawyer. Abraham Lincoln eventually rose to the presidency of the United States.⁹⁵

Things happen. There are statistical anomalies. There can be coincidences. Things might just happen for no apparent reason. Occasionally, fate strikes home in ways that feel unbearably personal. Often we are the last to know or to find the reason why.

Everything that Happens

In our old-paradigm culture, God emerges as a terrible possibility. Where there is a sudden catastrophe of horrendous proportions – a devastating hurricane, a shattering earthquake, a terrible flood, a scorching firestorm – it is always an Act of God. We have for long been accustomed to seeing God as a sullen cosmic player given to cataclysmic outbursts.

Whatever we might think of it, the unerring flow of happenstance touches us at every turn, in every situation. Like primordial spirit, it takes up countless forms. Nothing is too great or too small to escape its elaborate design.

In fact, we are surrounded by a swirling mass of incalculable and ever-changing complexity. If the most perfect circle were examined under an electron microscope, its perimeter would reveal intricate subatomic patterns, apparently random and quite beyond our capacity to shape or control. The configuration of waves in the sea, the pattern of stars in the sky, the transfer of genetic material from generation to generation – who gets Gramma’s eyes and who gets Uncle Charlie’s smile – all involve subtle synergies still safely beyond any possibility of explanation.

Ultimately, whatever is destined to happen, happens – and if we were to somehow have knowledge of what is yet to happen, much of it would seem to us highly improbable, difficult even to imagine.

Guru Nanak, the enlightened sage, drew the boundaries of happenstance with a broad, all-encompassing circumference: “All is governed by *hukam* – the awesome designs of destiny. There is nothing that exists outside of it.”⁹⁶

The Master recognized that just as every *thing* occupies a necessary space in the cosmic scheme of things, so every *event*, large and small, figures in some way in the complicated fabric of lives and interactions that make up the grand plan of the universe. There is no use in fighting it.

The writ of karma, the subtle and not-so-subtle course of destiny, of primordial cause and effect, is virtually unstoppable and must usually be left to run its course. Good actions lead to good results. Selfish ones end in painful outcomes. Even the good must pay the toll of their transgressions from previous lifetimes. In his realized state, the Guru sang to the Creator:

“Every suffering, hunger and constant abuse – these too are your blessings, O bountiful One!”⁹⁷

Adversity has its own benefits. Only in the light of conflict do we recognize the merits of peace, since the two are a comparative study.

Adversity demands our best. In time of hardship, we realize our strength. It is adversity that drives us to achieve and excel.

Being as human as he was masterful, Guru Nanak spent the time when he was not praising the Creator praying for the grace to accept and appreciate the surprising ways of unfolding happenstance:

Whatever you do is for the best. This is Nanak’s one prayer.⁹⁸

How Many Ways Can You Say “Luck”?

The aboriginal peoples of the far north are known to have some twenty words for various kinds of snow. A substance we ordinarily see as no more than an inconvenience, a decoration, or an adjunct to winter sports, holds a place of vital importance in their culture. There is “snow you can build with”, “hail that can hurt you”, “a blizzard you can get lost in”, “shimmering snow that can blind you”, “soft snow that sticks to your mitts”, “feathery snow”, “powdery snow”, “slushy snow”, “snow pellets”... Hence, over time, numerous words entered the aboriginal vocabulary to articulate all those varieties of flaky, frozen stuff.

In a similar vein, our culture has a rich vocabulary for describing the way things happen – or how they seem to happen to us, at any rate. This extensive stock of words and phrases arises from the fact that everyone in our culture, whether they consider themselves religious or not, is at least mildly intrigued by the twists and turns of fate, and how from time to time events appear infused with an underlying thread of meaning or purpose. By comparison, there are at least five times as many words and phrases for “luck” in English as there are for “snow” in the northern language of the Inuit!

We have words for all the degrees of luck. There are types we can readily appreciate. Finding a parking place on a busy street at a busy time of day is a “stroke of good luck.” Becoming pregnant at an opportune time, and with the person you want to have a baby with might be “pure fate.” Winning some prize unexpectedly could be “out of the blue.”

Others, we can only detest. Having it rain on your vacation would be “unfortunate.” Getting a flat tire just when you are in a hurry to get someplace could be a “weird fluke.” The sudden death or illness of a friend or loved one might be a “tragic turn of events.”

Then there is the kind of luck that just leaves you wondering. When you run into just the person you’ve been meaning to speak with, but in some out of the way place, it is “freaky.” Receiving the very thing you need just when you least expect it, you might say is “just unreal!” Finding something or someone special when you aren’t even looking could be “some kind of miracle.”

The following is a broad range of words and phrases to put to use just when that unthinkable thing happens to you. Pick an appropriate phrase and fill in the blank, or try a few on for size: “It was _____!”

an accident of history	good fortune	an odd train of events
an Act of God	a good omen	plain weird
altogether unpredictable	Grace	poetic justice
arbitrary	a grave misfortune	predestined
an astonishing outcome	haphazard	a prodigy
an auspicious omen	happenstance	a propitious outcome
as if by some divine plan	a happy conjunction of fate	Providence
as though it was meant to happen	highly improbable	pure luck
as though preordained	hit-or-miss	purely by chance
as though at random	how the cookie crumbles	a quirk of fate
awfully unlikely	a huge coincidence	a remote possibility
beginners’s luck	an imperative of destiny	right out of the blue
bad luck	an incredible result	serendipity
a bizarre coincidence	a jinx	sheer chance
a blessed arrangement	just meant to be	sheer luck
blind chance	just the way it goes	a sign from heaven
by chance	just unreal	some kind of miracle
a complete surprise	karma	something in the stars
completely unexpected	kismet	a statistical anomaly
creepy	Lady Luck	a strange sign
a curious turn of events	like a bolt out of heaven	a strange thing to happen
destiny	the luck of the draw	a stroke of good fortune
entirely unforeseen	a lucky break	supposed to be virtually impossible
an event without precedent	lucky circumstances	surreal
an evil omen	made in heaven	synchronicity
an extraordinary incident	magic	terrible luck
an extraordinary portent	a marvel	totally at random
a fantastic development	a matter of luck	uncanny coincidence

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fate	meant to happen	an unfortunate conjunction
a fateful conjunction	meant to turn out that way	an unusual twist of fate
the fickle finger of fate	a mind-boggling event	the way the ball bounces
a fluke	a minor coincidence	the weirdest thing
a fortuitous arrangement	a miracle	the whimsy of nature
fortune	my misfortune	a windfall
a freak occurrence	a mishap	without any known cause
freaky	never supposed to happen	a wonder
a golden opportunity	nice surprise	a wonderful augury
God's will	no accident	

Priests and Augurs

Instruments of chance, such as dice, exist and seem to have existed from time immemorial. How they are employed has varied from culture to culture, occasion to occasion, and person to person. Sometimes these instruments are the focal point of games of chance. At other times they serve to divide property, allocate responsibilities or resolve contentious issues.

Among North America's original peoples the two main functions, playful and priestly, human and divine, have for long shared an easy coexistence. In aboriginal culture, every game is traceable to some mythological origin. In each case, a primordial hero overcomes some archtypical enemy by exercising their superior skill, cunning or magic. In the course of that struggle, a game of mythic dimensions is invented.

Common to most of these traditions are the legendary divine twins, miraculous children of their sun father and virgin mother. Their mother, who is also sometimes their sister and wife and grandmother, the moon or Earth, embodies the feminine principle in nature. These twins are said to be the morning and evening stars, the rulers of east and west, night and day, winter and summer. Always contending with one another, they are recognized as the original patrons of sport and play.

The divine twins, and the instruments of their various sports, are depicted in the following account of the war gods of the Zuni tribe of New Mexico.

Lo! And of chance and fate are they the masters of foreknowledge, for they carried the word-painted arrows of destiny, like regions of men, four in number. And they carried the shuttlecocks of divination, like the regions of men, four in number. And they carried the tubes of hidden things, like the regions of men, four in number. Yea, and they bore, with these, other things – the feather bow and plume arrow of far-finding, tipped with the shell of heart-searching; and the race sticks of swift journeys and way-winning, two of them, the right and the left, the pursuer and the pursued of men in contention. All these things wherewith to divine men's chance, and play games of hazard, wagering the fate of whole nations in mere pastime, had they with them.⁹⁹

According to archaeologists and anthropologists, it is not unusual for games of chance to have their origins in ceremonies of divination. Some rites of divination, with their traditional formalities and conventions, are also derived from games of chance. Their coexistence, however, has not always been so easy as among the tribal peoples of North America.

Most ancient ways of communing with the divine have fallen out of use over the course of time. Some traditions have been banned by jealous authorities. In other cases, practices have fallen victim to traumatic social dislocations such as war, migration and colonization. The influence of modern secular values has also served to diminish the credibility of traditions of divining the cosmic will.

An oracular tradition is central to much of the story of the Torah after Moses. In the ancient Jewish tradition, Moses was a unique prophet who dealt directly with God, "face to face."¹⁰⁰ When passing his responsibilities on to his successor, Moses ordered Joshua to consult Eleazar the priest whenever he wanted to

know God's wishes. Eleazar, in turn, was skilled in the use of Urim and Thummim which could be used to elicit the divine will, stated in simple responses of "yes" or "no."

So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua, son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand upon him; have him stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation, and commission him in their sight. You shall give him some of your authority, so that all the congregation of Israel may obey. But he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the decision of the Urim before the Lord; at his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the Israelites with him, the whole consecration."¹⁰¹

Although other methods of divination, such as dream interpretation, are also mentioned in the Torah, the use of Urim and Thummim was central to the rites of the temple. In this way, the following dialogue between David and God transpired as a series of consultations and responses mediated by Abiathar the priest. The ephod contains the priest's oracular instruments.¹⁰²

When David learned that Saul was plotting evil against him, he said to the priest Abiathar, "Bring the ephod here." David said, "O Lord, the God of Israel, your servant has heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on my account. And now, will Saul come down as your servant has heard? O Lord, the God of Israel, I beseech you, tell your servant." The Lord said, "He will come down." Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?" The Lord said, "They will surrender you." Then David and his men, who were about 600, set out and left Keilah.¹⁰³

Where this sort of consultation had a wider application, it was simply referred to as "casting lots." We know lots were used to resolve conflicts because of the Torah's instruction:

Casting the lot puts and end to disputes and decides between powerful contenders.¹⁰⁴

Lots were used to select Israel's first king. They were also used to divide conquered lands or an inheritance of property, to delegate authority, to select the residents of Jerusalem, and sometimes to determine who was guilty of an offence. Scapegoats were determined by lot, as was the specific date for their sacrifice. When the Jewish fighters besieged at Masada decided to commit collective suicide to avoid capture by the Romans, they decided by lot who was to put the others to death.

The opponents of the Jews also used lots. The Jewish feast of Purim derives its name from the lot cast by Haman to determine the day for killing all the Jews in Persia. When the sailors on a ship carrying Jonah feared for their lives during a great storm, they cast lots to find whose guilt was the cause of their danger. When Christ was crucified, Roman soldiers cast lots to determine who would win his seamless robe.

After the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, which had been central to Jewish ritual life, and the subsequent diaspora in the first century of the current era, the habit of deciding matters by lot simply died out. By the time Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) came to write of the details of drawing lots for determining the scapegoat for sacrifice, the custom had long since fallen out of practice.¹⁰⁵

A sense of the essential integrity of all things seems to have been an important element of classical Greek culture. Our word "cosmos" itself comes from Greek, where it meant order. This profound oneness is depicted by Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine:

There is one common flow, one common breathing, all things are in sympathy. The whole organism and each one of its parts are working in conjunction for the same purpose... the principle extends to the extremest part, and from the extremest part it returns to the great principle, to the one nature, being and not-being.¹⁰⁶

Homer's epics depicted the ongoing activities of the three sister fates. Clotho spun the thread of life. Lachesis, who was associated with sheer luck or chance, measured the thread. Finally, Atropos, who governed inescapable destiny, cut it.¹⁰⁷

The Greeks put their faith in fate into practice. In the *Iliad*, Homer relates how, during the Trojan War, Greek soldiers cast lots to determine who should throw the first spear in a duel and who should fight Hector, the champion of the opposing army. In each case, token lots, one for each man, were put in a helmet. The soldiers prayed to their gods. The helmet was then shaken until the deciding lot flew out.¹⁰⁸

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In many Greek city-states, officials were chosen by lot out of a group of nominated candidates. All magistrates and other office-holders in Athens were appointed in this way. Only military and financial posts were chosen by direct election. Strict limits on re-election and an informed citizenry created the vibrant democratic culture in which civic authority and responsibility could be so widely and freely allocated.

This kind of practice naturally extended to religious matters. The five chief priests for the famous oracle at Delphi, the temple of Apollo, were determined by lot from families descended from Deucalion.¹⁰⁹ Always mindful of the inscrutable play of chance, Greeks commonly showered *astragalus*, the ankle joint of sheep whose six-sided shape served as prototypical dice, inside and over the sarcophagus of their dearly departed ones.¹¹⁰ We can speculate that this was the survivors' way of wishing the dead good fortune in their afterlife.

Classical Roman civilization inherited many of the gods and institutions of the Greeks. While Rome's magistrates were decided by election, their various responsibilities were allotted. The consuls and praetors had their legions and armies attributed to them by lot. Which tribes should offer soldiers, and who of them should serve, was also decided by lot. When two consuls of equal rank needed to decide which of them should dedicate a temple, who should create new officers, or who should tour the provinces or lead the army into war, all these decisions were impartially designated by lot.

Roman law continued the Greek custom of distributing various benefits by lot. Judges were also assigned their cases by lot. Defendant and plaintiff could both then challenge his fitness to pass judgement. If they were able to demonstrate just cause, another judge would be allotted them.

Rome's vestal virgins, the six women from the most respected families who were entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining the flame in the temple of Vesta, goddess of hearth and home, were also designated by chance design. Of twenty offered to take the place of one who had died, retired after thirty years' service or fallen in disgrace, only one would join their privileged and coveted ranks.

Dice were widely used for both public ceremonies and private soothsaying. A citizen might come to a temple with a wish. An attendant would then cast the die and interpret them by referring to tablets on which the meanings of the various throws were inscribed. Some Romans preferred to consult Virgil's *Aenid*, allowing its pages to open haphazardly and taking guidance from the revealed passage.

There were also Romans who ventured out to the town of Praeneste, site of the temple of Fortuna. At the direction of the goddess, divinatory lots were shuffled and a forecast ordained. To assure the impartiality of the selection, the deciding lot was customarily drawn by a child.¹¹¹

The fate not only of individuals, but of the whole country, might hang in the balance when Romans took to dicing. Julius Caesar (100-44 BCE) may have made his historic decision to cross the Rubicon, thereby occasioning civil war, by consulting fate in this way. Before fording the stream in north Italy with his army and advancing on Rome in 49 BCE, the famous general is alleged to have proclaimed, "The die is cast!"¹¹²

The most famous soothsayer of Roman lore was Tiresias of Thebes. According to Ovid's poetic account, the blind sage had sided with Jupiter when he and Juno had argued over which of the two sexes experienced greater pleasure. In a rage, Juno then made Tiresias sightless. Jupiter compensated the honest Thebean by endowing him with the gift of prophecy.

Cicero (106-43 BCE), the influential statesman, orator and author, served for a year as Rome's official augur, a significant and important post. A central part of the inauguration of officials consisted of an augury forecasting good or bad fortune during their term of office.

As the official augur, it was Cicero's job to study the flight patterns and songs of various bird species, and to determine whether their portents were auspicious or inauspicious to the affairs of state. Cicero, however, was not a traditional diviner in the Greek mold. In his essay *De Divinatione*, he discounted the role of divine influence as the determining factor in ordinary events.

Surviving historical records tell us that divination was an important part of the cultures of the Celtic and Germanic nations of Europe. During Julius Caesar's conquest of present-day France, he rescued a captured messenger who recounted how lots had three times been drawn to decide whether he should be burnt at once or saved for a future occasion. Each time, he had been spared by the luck of the draw.¹¹³

The historian, Tacitus, described the custom among the Germans:

For omens and the casting of lots they have the highest regard. Their procedure in casting lots is always the same. They cut off a branch of a nut-bearing tree and slice it into strips; these they mark with different signs and throw them completely at random into a white cloth. Then the priest of the state, if it is a public one, or the father of the family if it is private, offers a prayer to the gods, and looking up at the sky picks up three strips, one at a time, and reads their meaning from the signs previously scored on them.¹¹⁴

In India, too, we find a long history of divination. The *Ramayana* is an epic account of the Hindu Lord Rama, centering on Rama's quest for his kidnapped wife, Sita. When Rama's brother, Prince Bharata along with a huge procession of soldiers and war elephants, arrives in the land of the Bhil people seeking to find Rama, their king fears for himself and his people. To resolve his doubts, King Guha performs an act of divination:

He sat down and cleared a flat space with the edge of his hand. He took nine bird bones from a leather bag and shook them in his hands three times saying, "Rama is my friend who is Bharata?"

He threw his fortune. The bones said, "Don't hinder him."¹¹⁵

Where guilt or innocence was to be determined, the words *dharam*, meaning "righteousness," and *adharam*, meaning "unrighteousness," might be inscribed either on two plates, one of silver and one of lead, or on pieces of white and black linen. They would then be placed in a vessel and the accused made to select one of the pieces sight unseen. Their guilt or innocence was believed to determine their choice.¹¹⁶

The Chinese book of wisdom known as the I Ching was originally written as a text to help diviners in their traditional art of tossing, then interpreting, configurations of yarrow stalks. The classical text was composed and refined over hundreds of years by four eminent sages: the legendary Fu Hsi, King Wen (~1150 BCE) and his son, the Duke of Chou, and Confucius (551-479 BCE).

The I Ching employs a system similar to the yes-no format of the Jewish Urim and Thummim, but elaborated so that each reading is comprised of six elements, each with a number of variants, making for a system of 64 hexagrams. The large range of outcomes results in a system of considerable subtlety and gradation of meaning. This is reflected in the lyric and insightful commentaries of the four originators. The following is the explanation offered for the hexagram known as the "Receptive."

Perfect indeed is the sublimity of the Receptive. All beings owe their birth to it, because it receives the heavenly with devotion. The Receptive in its riches carries all things. Its nature is in harmony with the boundless. It embraces everything in its breadth and illuminates everything in its greatness. Through it, all individual beings attain success. A mare belongs to the creatures of the earth; she roams the earth without bound. Yielding, devoted, furthering through perseverance: thus the superior man has a direction for his way of life. Taking the lead brings confusion because one loses his way. Following with devotion - thus does one attain his permanent place.¹¹⁷

Lot casting was used in pre-Islamic Arabia. Later on, some Muslims took guidance from the Quran much as Romans used to randomly consult the pages of Virgil's *Aenid*. It was also used in the freeing of slaves, divorce, the allocation of property, and for ritual and political purposes.

Muslim husbands with more than one wife are especially tied to happenstance. Before going on a journey, they must decide by lot which wife is to accompany them. This is in accord with the Muslim custom that a husband should treat each wife with equal consideration.

Shamen and priests, people in love, and people in trouble the world over have for long practiced the art of distilling meaning and guidance from chance occurrences. Among the tribespeople of Asia and North America it has for long been customary to leave a caribou scapula in a fire until it has cracked in the heat, then to read the resulting fracture lines. A similar practice using tortoise shells was employed in the imperial courts of China and Japan.

In Britain, Halloween for long served as a time of fortune-telling. People would throw a stone in the bonfire. If they could find it in the morning, they would consider themselves lucky. Some threw in nuts and read their fortunes from how they burned.

"Kupalo" is the name for the ancient Ukrainian festival of the summer solstice. On Kupalo, young marriageable women traditionally made garlands of wildflowers, each with a burning candle, then gently set them afloat in a stream or river. The progress of the individual garlands, whether they sank or the candles remained

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alight, was believed to foretell the maidens' luck in marriage in the coming year. In Poland, a similar day looked forward to by all unmarried women, was "Andrzejki", Saint Andrew's Eve at the end of November.¹¹⁸

Even today, star-crossed lovers are likely to console themselves by plucking the white petals from the buttery center of a daisy, wistfully reciting "He loves me, he loves me not..." And then there is "rock, paper, scissors" which, with local variations, is used around the world to resolve issues large and small.¹¹⁹

Christian authorities, for most of 2,000 years, have opposed the use of lots and other means of divination. This is curious since the Bible recounts how, after the death of Judas Iscariot, the remaining eleven apostles cast lots to pick Matthias, and not Joseph Barsabbas, to replace him.¹²⁰ During the early years of the Church, many Christians even consulted the Bible as an oracle.

Nonetheless, the Synod of Elvira (305-306) required diviners give up their calling before being accepted for baptism. This was followed by an order excommunicating anyone practicing divination, and another at the 419 Synod of Vannes specifically condemning the use of lots.

The life of Saint Augustine (354-430), the greatest thinker of the early Christian Church, offers an interesting study in ambivalence. His mother was a devout Christian, but for long he himself had been uncertain of his faith. In his *Confessions*, Augustine describes how he used to pray, "Grant me chastity and self-control, but please not yet!"¹²¹

Augustine spent many years torn between the aspirations of his soul and the delights of his sensual dalliances. Wrenched apart by these powerful forces, Augustine was consumed with self-loathing and inner rage. Then, one day as he sat in a garden bemoaning his sorry state, Augustine heard the sound of a child's voice from a house nearby singing over and over, "Pick it up and read, pick it up and read..."¹²²

Augustine understood it as an order from heaven. The tormented scholar found a collection of letters of the apostles nearby. The letters opened at a passage of Saint Paul addressing the Romans, "let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires."¹²³

Augustine had no wish or need to read further. The light of certainty flooded his heart and all shades of doubt melted away. Augustine was baptized at his first opportunity. Later, he became Bishop of Hippo and dedicated the rest of his life to teaching and writing Christian philosophy. As a church father, however, Augustine prescribed the practice of lot-taking and bibliomancy only sparingly and as a last resort.

Numberless occasions arose in the early history of the Church that demanded impartial judgements. The Irish church sanctioned the use of lots. In fifth century France the practice was so persistent that it was necessary to threaten the clergy with penalties. Even so, at a meeting of bishops and priests in Dijon the fate of a son of the Frankish king, Lothair I was determined by opening a Bible randomly and accepting its verdict.¹²⁴ Even as recently as 1857, a Vatican council approved a church election where a chapter, equally divided between two candidates who were equally qualified, had drawn lots.¹²⁵

Moreover, the time-honoured procedure – dating from 1274 – for electing a new pope openly embraces the playful spirit of serendipity. The allocation of apartments in the Vatican Palace, where the cardinals must reside in conclave until a new pontiff is decided, is decided by lot. Who resides where is significant because it is certain to influence the associations of the 127-plus cardinals from fifty-some countries. Also decided by a fresh lot before each ballot are the three cardinals who will preside over the voting, the three will manage the counting of the votes, and the three who will collect the ballots of sick and absent cardinals from their apartments.¹²⁶

The Church's foremost medieval scholar, Saint Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) cautioned that lots should not be drawn unnecessarily or without reverence. Neither did he approve their use for earthly gain or in church elections. He cited the opinion of Bede (ca. 632-735). The Anglo-Saxon scholar and theologian had written that the eleven remaining apostles had cast lots to select a replacement for Judas only because the church, consisting at that time of only themselves, was not yet fully guided by divine inspiration. That was yet to come at the Pentecost. Aquinas went on to allow that in a crisis it might be permissible to cast lots "to seek the divine judgement," so long as due reverence was observed.¹²⁷

Some sections of the Protestant Reformation represented a sober turn for Christian life in Europe. Miracles, according to John Calvin (1509-1564), had all been spent during the life of Jesus. Moreover, the entire

course of the universe had all been predetermined at the outset. The wicked were wicked and beyond redemption from the beginning, while the saved had been eternally redeemed.

Even so, some prominent reformers routinely consulted the divine Will. The Moravian Church, which drew its inspiration from the early Protestant teachings of John Wycliffe (1330-1384) and Jan Hus (1372-1415), was especially devoted to the practice of drawing lots. For a time, the Moravians were a significant and growing denomination in the heart of Europe. They welcomed other Protestants into their tightly-knit communes. The minor theological differences that defined the various Protestant denominations were taken lightly by the Moravians, but great importance was attached to the sacramental drawing of lots. Many community decisions, including the choosing of ministers and the sanctioning of marriages, depended on the outcome of their divinations.

The following is an extract from the constitution of the church of the Moravian Brethren at Herrnhut of 1733:

We have a particular esteem for lots, and accordingly use them both in public and in private to decide points of importance, when the reasons brought on each side appear to be of equal weight. And we believe this to be then the only way of wholly setting aside our own will, of acquitting ourselves of all blame, and clearly knowing what is the will of God.¹²⁸

The Moravian Brethren and their practice of consulting lots were to have a formative influence on the life of one John Wesley (1703-1791). The son of a poor, but well-respected churchman, Wesley had developed a love for the religious life during his studies at Oxford in the 1720s. He and a circle of associates had formed a club known as “methodists” for their strict adherence to a routine of fasting twice weekly, helping the needy, and holding regular prayer meetings. After John and his brother Charles left Oxford, however, the group disbanded and Wesley’s career as a priest of the Church of England was largely undistinguished.

In 1735, John Wesley was persuaded by a school acquaintance who had become governor of the colony of Georgia, to go and minister to the aboriginals and settlers living there. On the voyage to America, Wesley was deeply impressed with the devotion of the members of the Moravian Brethren community he met aboard ship and in the American colony. From them, he picked up the practice of bibliomancy, consulting his Bible daily for special guidance and inspiration.

In Georgia, things did not go so well for Wesley. The Oxford missionary did not impress the natives. The settlers were not overly receptive to his preaching either. Moreover, his influence in Savannah was compromised by an ambiguous relationship that developed between Wesley and a young woman parishioner. When an understudy named Delamotte, who had accompanied Wesley, insisted the churchman did not know his own heart and that he should break it off, Wesley trusted the power of lots to resolve the delicate situation between himself and young Sophie Hopkey.

They made three lots. On the first piece of paper was written “Marry.” The second said, “Think not of it this year.” Miss Hopkey, Mr. Delamotte and Wesley prayed for a perfect lot. On their behalf, Delamotte drew the third, on which was written “Think of it no more.” They cast lots again to know whether the two ought to continue to communicate. The answer came: “Only in the presence of Mr. Delamotte.”

By that time, the young lady had already tired of the churchman’s ambivalence. She was married to a colonist soon after. Wesley returned to England.

Within a few weeks of Wesley’s arrival, he was invited to Bristol to preach to working class families out in the open air. Wesley had always tried to maintain friendly relations with the conservative establishment at the Church of England. He knew that preaching to the masses outside a church would offend their upper class sentiments.

John Wesley’s brother and friends and his own desires were all against it, but after opening his Bible again and again, allowing his finger to fall blindly on a verse, Wesley at last mounted his horse and followed his conscience to Bristol. It was to be the turning point of his life and the beginning of the popular movement that would become the Methodist Church.

On another occasion, Wesley determined by lot to print a sermon condemning the idea that everything is preordained, and to preach that salvation was possible for one and all. This was another significant event as it divided Wesley’s Methodists from the Calvinists with their fatalistic inclinations. As it happened, Calvinists were

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also in the habit of casting lots when they found themselves at an impasse. Unlike Wesley, they must have considered their lot's outcome to have been wholly predetermined.

Over the next 100 years or so, tightly-knit Moravian and Calvinist communities on both sides of the Atlantic died out or changed so much as to make them hardly recognizable. With them, perished the magical custom of the lot. Methodists, for their part, spread throughout the English-speaking world, but left off the time-honored practice of consulting Yahweh revived by Mr. Wesley from the Old Testament rite of Abiathar and Eleazar.

After the death of Wesley, one important issue remained to be decided. Since the evangelical Methodists had never been sanctioned by the Church of England, the outstanding question was whether their preachers could rightfully dispense sacred communion, the body of Christ in the form of wafers and wine, among their congregations. The future and the very legitimacy of their denomination depended on an authoritative resolution.

The Methodists called a general conference and prayed on this matter, then trusted their lot to fate. On that occasion, the Lord of Destiny determined that the ministers ordained by Wesley could indeed administer the sacrament to their congregations. This was the final time Methodists appealed to trial by lot to decide an important religious matter.

The Oldest Game

Throughout history, in every culture, people have been amazed at the unfolding wiles of improbability. Games of chance have been devised to fascinate us in a personal way with the unpredictable turns of fate.

The fall of a shooting star, the growth of crops, stocks and bonds, war and peace, birth and death, win and loss, all of these and more, can inspire a reflexive need to speculate an outcome and find an unlucky opponent to wager against. As it happens, the very same implements we might use to take a reading of the divine will can also be used for sheer fun or to feed a blind obsession.

Dice of bone, ivory or semiprecious stones have turned up in the ruins of ancient India, Egypt, China, Assyria, Greece, and Rome. They have been found in the tribal cultures of Africa and the Americas. Even today, dice well symbolize the ubiquitous spirit of chance in crap dens and gambling palaces on six continents.

Ancient India's laws of Manu instructed kings to ban gambling and betting from their realms and to give corporal punishment to offenders. Nevertheless, the events detailed in the ancient Mahabharata, that culture's defining religious epic, center around a momentous gambling contest. When the brave but foolhardy hero stakes and loses all his kingdom, including his wife Draupadi, to an unscrupulous shark, she asks poignantly, "Did my husband lose me before or after he lost himself?"

At grand Roman banquets and other festivities, it was customary to award presents by lot to the assembled guests. Rome was so taken up with gambling that it was restricted by law to the month of December, during the festival of Saturnalia. Under rising Christian influence, Emperor Justinian (483-565, Eastern Roman Emperor: 527-565) limited betting to a fixed stake. Later, gaming was declared a criminal offence. In the gambling subculture, however, such prohibitions were widely ignored. Dedicated gamblers, plebeians and emperors alike, indulged their passion for dicing and betting on holidays and working days, year round.

Dicing and gambling were opposed by the early Fathers of the Church. Clement of Alexandria (150-215) wrote that they stemmed from idleness and an unchristian love of riches.¹²⁹ Saint John Chrysostom (347-407) warned that gaming and betting led to "blasphemies, injuries, anger, reproaches, and a thousand other things more fearful still."¹³⁰ When Charlemagne (742-814, Frankish king: 768-814, Holy Roman Emperor: 800-814), the Holy Roman Emperor, prohibited games of chance he rejected a tradition that was as much a part of Roman culture as it was dear to his Frankish countrymen.

While Christian saints and scholars fulminated about gambling based on their direct observations and their meditations on its harmful effects, Islamic authorities took their prohibitions from the Quran:

They ask thee concerning liquor and gambling. Tell them: There is great harm in both and also some profit for people, but their harm is greater than their profit.¹³¹

O ye who believe, liquor, gambling, idols and divining arrows are but abominations and Satanic devices. So turn wholly away from each one of them that you may prosper. Satan desires only to create enmity and hatred between you by means of liquor and gambling and to keep you back from remembrance of Allah and from Prayer.¹³²

Gambling was at the root of much social strife in pre-Islamic Arabia. Many gamblers would stake and lose their women and property. This resulted in a good deal of dislocation, violence and animosity. These chronic ills were addressed by Islam's strict prohibition of gambling.

Playing at games of cards originated in the Far East as a pastime of the educated class. The Chinese engaged in a number of card games, the antecedents of mahjong, as early as the seventh century. Within 100 years, card culture had migrated to Japan.

The first evidence of carding in Europe relates to its banning in the city-state of Florence in 1376. Twenty years later, when Saint Bernardin of Sienna preached against the vain things of this world from the steps of a grand church in Bologna, it is recorded that bonfires were lit all around the city. At the urging of the Berdardin, the people of the city consigned their cards and other tokens of wanton and profligate living to the flames.

The playing cards of Florence and Bologna had likely made their way there from nearby Venice, Europe's premier trading nation of that time. Venetian traders regularly traveled the distance to the Near and Middle East. Marco Polo (1254-1324), who reached all the way to Beijing, then spent years observing Chinese culture, may have introduced his countrymen to the controversial pastime on his return in 1290.

Piously Catholic Europe was soon assailed from another frontier. Those who traveled to North America regaled their countrymen with lively accounts of red men who gambled with wanton disregard for consequences. In fact, the aboriginal peoples living in countless tribes across the forests and plains and valleys of the continent had devised hundreds of ingenious sports and amusements. About half were games of physical and mental prowess, like lacrosse. Other pastimes involved significant elements of chance, many employing some form of dice. The tribespeople also engaged in all sorts of guessing games.

The games served a valuable social function and could be dedicated to any of a number of purposes. They were played to secure the favor of gods, perform sympathetic magic, drive away sickness, avert some form of evil, produce rain, enhance the fertility of plants and animals, or to effect a number of other benefits.

The traditional "ghost gamble" of the Lakota people of the North American plains offers a glimpse into the gaming mindset of the aboriginals. After the first feast day of a wealthy native's passing away, their effects – knives and beads and pouches and blankets – would be divided into many small piles. If a member of the tribe was not wealthy, their well-to-do friends might donate the stakes for the game. Someone would then play the role of the ghost of the departed against everyone else, who needed stake nothing to join in the game.

The ghost gamble ceremony was usually held in the lodge of the deceased, in the presence of a commemorative bundle containing a lock of their hair. The gambling would be done with marked wild plum stones, used like dice. If a man died, only men would be invited to play. If a woman, just women would join in the game. Those who won in their encounter with the generous "ghost" would take their winnings and exit the lodge, giving the next person a chance. Eventually, all the goods would be distributed among the survivors in this way.¹³³

Compared with Europeans, the native peoples of North America took scant notice of material possessions. The tribes of the Pacific Northwest were famous for the generosity they lavished on their guests at their festive potlatches. At death, many tribes buried the favorite valuables of a deceased with their mortal remains. In gambling, they were similarly selfless and unstinting. In what an outsider might discount as sheer recklessness, a more sympathetic observer might recognize an expression of utmost faith in perpetual Providence. None of this could have been known to the French legislator who visited New France in the early 1500s to witness for himself how a Micmac brave might stake and lose all his possessions, even his wives, in a moment of sheer abandon.

It was not long before the monarchs of Europe capitalized on the universal human proclivity for games of chance. First Francis I of France in 1539, then Elizabeth I of England in 1566, established national lotteries. Like gamblers before and since, gaming Europeans called on God and his saints for their help when they wagered. Besides inspiring the prayers of thousands of people, the lotteries made a substantial contribution to the finances of the state. In this way, France quelled a taxpayer revolt and financed the War of the Spanish

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Succession. In England, lottery money paid for new roads and docks and helped subsidize the first American colonies.

All this speculation gave rise to a number of books pondering the nature of fate, causality, and games of chance. The first treatise of this sort, *Liber de Ludo Aleae* (The Book of Games of Chance) was written by Giralamo Cardano (1501-1576) about 1563. However, all his pondering over the mysterious workings of chance proven too much for poor Giralamo. He ended up losing his mind. Nonetheless, when his work was published nearly a century later, it provided a valuable scrapbook of moral, historical, practical and arithmetical aspects of gambling. Cardano prudently advised his readers that, if they were to gamble at all, they should limit their betting to small stakes and avoid wagering against sharks and desperados.

John Northbrooke, a minister of the Church of England, waged a well-reasoned argument against gambling in his 1577 *Treatise Against Dicing, Dancing, Plays and Interludes*. Northbrooke presented five objections to participating in games of chance.

- Lots are one of the main witnesses to God's power. For this reason, they should only be used in matters of importance, such as the dividing of goods, the choosing of magistrates, or the settling of quarrels. They should not be used in trivial things where we might treat the Master of destiny as a servant of our sports and pastimes.
- Gambling is not a proper recreation or a sport, since it offers no exercise to the body or mind. Those who play remain merely passive observers of the changing course of chance. The only thing that is exercised is their selfish desire for personal gain.
- Since gambling is illegal (as most forms of it were at the time), a gambler sets a bad example for other citizens by flouting the law.
- Gambling wastes precious time that might better be used in meditation, visiting the poor, comforting the sick, or otherwise being helpful.
- Greed inspired by gambling is liable to lead those who indulge in it to poverty, crime, and an "untimely death at the gallows."

For some time, lots and games of chance were under such a cloud of infamy in England that to even write about them might risk a promising churchman's religious career. Thomas Gataker (1574-1654) was a Puritan scholar, educated at Cambridge, who served as a preacher in London. In his erudite *On the Nature and Use of Lots*, published in 1619, Gataker conducted a lengthy historic overview of the use of lots in the Old and New Testaments and in Hebrew, Greek, Roman and other legal practices.

Along the way, the author approved the use of lots as a means of allocating goods or ranks to parties with an equal claim to them. Like Cicero, Gataker rejected their use as a means of forecasting future events. He also wrote that games of chance might serve as harmless recreations, provided people did not neglect their businesses or gamble for money. Although by this time lotteries were commonly being used to finance charitable causes, Gataker had to defend himself from a storm of pious condemnation.

In 1642, a well-traveled and respected doctor published an original work on the nature of man's relationship to religion. Much quoted and widely read, Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* included a meditation on the course of fate and fortune. Given below is Browne's original text:

There is a(nother) way full of Meanders and Labrynth, whereof the Devil and Spirits have no exact Ephemerides; and that is a more particular and obscure method of his providence, directing the operation of individualls and single Essences: this we call Fortune, that serpentine and crooked line, whereby he draws thos actions that his wisdom intends, in a more unknowne and secret way; That crypick and involved method of providence have I ever admired, nor can I relate the history of my life, the occurances of my dayes, the escapes of dangers and hits of chance, with a *Bezo las Manos*, to Fortune, or a mere Gramercy to my good starres: *Abraham* might have thought the Ram in the thicket came thither by accident; human reason would have said that meere chance conveyed *Moses* in the Arke to the sight of *Pharoahs* daughter; what a Labrynth is there in the story of *Joseph*, able to convert a Stoick? Surely there are in every mans life certain rubs, doublings, and wrenches which passe a while under the effects of chance, but at the last, well examined, prove the meere hand of God. ...there is no liberty for

causes to operate in a loose and stragling way, nor any effect whatsoever, but hath its warrant from some universall and more superior cause. 'Tis not a ridiculous devotion to say a Prayer before a game at Tables; for even in *sortilegies* and matters of the greatest uncertainty, there is a settled and preordered course of events; 'tis we that are blind, not fortune: because our eye is too dim to discover the mystery of her effects, we foolishly paint her blind, and hoodwink the providence of the Almighty... There is a neerer way to heaven than *Homers* chaine; an easie Logick may conjoyne heaven and earth in one argument, and with lesse than a Sorites resolve all things unto God. For though we Christen effects by their most sensible and nearest causes, yet is God the true and infallible cause of all, whose concurrence, though it be generall, yet doth subdivide it selfe into the particular actions of every thing, and it is that spirit, by which each singular essence not only subsists, but performs its operations.^{b134}

In France, Blais Pascal (1623-1662) contributed valuable mathematical and philosophical insights into the workings of chance. Pascal's contributions toward a mathematical theory of probability effectively changed the meaning of probability from "probrity," meaning reliance on the credibility of some unimpeachable authority, to our modern statistical model. This was a significant development with a pronounced democratizing influence. The creation of mathematical probability was tied to the efforts of enlightened scientists to overturn the influence of Aristotle and other traditional authorities, replacing their august shibboleths with their own first-hand knowledge and original speculations.

Where Browne had emphasized God as "the true and infallible cause of all", Pascal focussed instead on the grand scheme of worldly happenstance. In the new, critical light of the Renaissance, Pascal portrayed life and all its outcomes in the light of chance and possibility. After all, he ventured,

You only find yourself in this life though an infinity of accidents. Your birth is due to a marriage, or rather a series of marriages of those who have gone before you. But these marriages were often the result of a chance meeting, or words uttered at random, of a hundred unforeseen and unintended consequences.¹³⁵

Pascal, who was known to be deeply, though unconventionally, religious, even speculated on the existence of God and an afterlife. In so doing, Pascal hoped he might convert wastrels and gamblers from the error of their ways:

When gambling, you people act on the sensible principle of evaluating wagers by blending the chances of an outcome with the gain to be realized. Be consistent and do the same in matters of religion. You will then have to agree that no matter how small you deem the chances of God's existence, the infinite reward that will come to the faithful, should he exist, serves to render the gamble of religious commitment worthwhile.¹³⁶

By Pascal's time, Europe's gambling craze had grown to epidemic proportions. It coincided with a general mood of uncertainty. Devastating wars, bloody insurrections and intractable science called into question every conventional authority. Virtually every sphere of life convulsed under the strain of unprecedented and chaotic change.

The urge to wager and speculate was especially strong among men engaged in the risky business of war. This tendency was memorably illustrated by events aboard a Spanish galleon during the Thirty Years War (1618-1638). The commander of the ship, heading to safe haven in Malta after a successful engagement off the north African coast, wanted to ensure that each of his soldiers kept their share of booty and returned home a wealthy man. To achieve this, he gave orders strictly prohibiting gambling on his ship. Methodically, he had all his men's dice and cards confiscated and thrown overboard.

The men's gaming instincts, however, were not to be denied. They drew a chalk circle on the deck. Each man placed a louse near its center, with the winner to be determined by whoever's louse first hopped its way across the chalk circumference. Large amounts of money were wagered in this way. When the commander

^b individualls: serpentine; wisdome: wisdom; unknowne: unknown; crypick: cryptic; *Bezo las Manos*: Gramercy; thank you; starres: stars; meere: mere; Arke: ark; Stoick: Stoic; mans: man's; stragling: straggling; universall: universal; neerer: nearer; chaine: chain; easie: easy; Logick: logic; conjoyne: conjoin; lesse: less; generall: general; doth; does; selfe: self.

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came to know of this, he at last conceded his soldiers their right, recognizing the urge to gamble cannot so easily be suppressed among men of war.¹³⁷

In Britain, high-stake games of chance, indebtedness and cheating among the aristocracy presented such a threat to social stability that both Charles II (1630-1685, king 1630-85) and Queen Anne (1665-1714, queen: 1702-14) passed laws preventing land and wealth being lost to gambling. Measures licensing, restricting or banning gaming activity altogether were also enforced in mainland Europe.

During the height of this era of speculation, a number of new insurance enterprises sprang up centered in London. Insurance was widely considered to be just another form of gambling. From all indications, it truly was.

For a long time, life insurance competed with more popular schemes, known as tontines. Named after Italian banker Lorenzo Tonti, these arrangements collected dues from a number of participants, then awarded the total amount to whomever outlived the rest.

The earliest type of insurance had dealt with the risk to ships posed by storms, pirates and other hazards of sea. The practice was old enough and lucrative enough to have merited Pope Gregory IX's banning its most usurious versions back in 1234.

Civil authorities in mainland Europe were also on the lookout for contracts that served to impoverish, even to endanger the life of, the insurer. The 1570 Code of the Low Countries classed "insurances on the lives of persons" together with "wagers on voyages and similar inventions" and banned the lot of them.¹³⁸

While the opponents of life insurance argued that it promoted crime, some enterprises were clearly innocuous. The Amicable Society for Mutual Insurance of Lives was founded in 1706 by Sir Thomas Allen, Bishop of Oxford, primarily for the benefit of the clergy. The society admitted anyone in good health between the ages of 12 and 45 years and took up to 2,000 members. The association charged each one a membership fee on joining and a fixed amount each year. The annual income was divided equally among the beneficiaries of those who died in that particular year.

In the feverish London insurance market of the mid-1700s, however, it was possible to buy insurance against cuckoldry, lying and even losing the lottery. What we would call legitimate life insurance coexisted with bets on the lives of celebrities, the outcome of wars, plagues, the succession of Louis XV's mistresses and the fate of 800 German immigrants who arrived in England in 1765 without food or shelter. Life underwriters of that time served as bookmakers for any kind of wager.

Life insurance remained illegal and disreputable in most of mainland Europe up to the nineteenth century. By then, attitudes toward other forms of speculation had also slowly begun to evolve.

Under the aegis of royalty and newly rich merchants and industrialists, gambling in the spa casinos of mainland Europe acquired an aura of newfound respectability. These casino resorts offered their wealthy clientele both a period of healthful recuperation and a sense of recreation. The first was established in Baden-Baden in 1744. A number of imitators followed in other idyllic resorts, in Germany's Bad Homburg and Wiesbaden, and Austria's Baden.

The criminalization of gambling in France in 1857 and in Prussia in 1872, combined with an onerous treaty that led to the decimation of the principality of Monaco and the loss of its best farmlands, created conditions for the rise of Europe's best-known casino resort. The profitability of Monaco's Casino Monte Carlo soon inspired legal gambling houses in Italy, Belgium, Spain and Portugal, and the eventual repeal of France's anti-gaming laws.

When Europeans emigrated to the United States, many of them brought along their gambling habits. Prohibitions had been in place as early as 1638 in Puritan Massachusetts and 1682 in Quaker Pennsylvania. All the same, illegal gaming houses sprang up in the large cities of the eastern seaboard. Moreover, by the late eighteenth century, every state relied on revenue from lotteries to support schools and public works.

Like in Europe, times of war and instability in America led to an automatic upswing in gambling, especially among the lowest ranks of the soldiery. Shoeless, freezing troops at Valley Forge during the gruesome winter of 1777-78 were desperate for some form of amusement to take their minds off their miserable situation. Their solution was to wager handfuls of halfpennies. One would call "heads," the second man "tails." The second would then toss the coins into the air and they would split the coins according to how they faced when they landed.

As commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, George Washington issued a number of orders against all games of chance, although he himself enjoyed engaging the extravagant whims of happenstance. Although for political reasons he did not publicly condone gaming, Washington was known to enjoy a lusty game of cards. He was also in the business of sponsoring private lotteries, as were founding fathers Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson.

Early in the next century, a striking reversal in American public attitudes led to the banning of lotteries, first in New York in 1833 and then in other states. Serious gamblers packed their bags and headed west, where a man could still do more or less as he pleased. Soon, the gaming culture pervaded the frontier states. It threaded the Mississippi from New Orleans up through Memphis and north to Chicago. Paddlewheel steamers were such lucrative havens for card sharks and all types of adventurers that by 1833 there were 2,000 floating casinos plying up and down “Old Muddy.”

On the frontier, however, not everyone welcomed the gamblers. In one widely publicized episode, the citizens of Vicksburg, Mississippi scourged the local gambling community, going from shack to shack, until they had chased the gamers into a local swamp. Five men who tried to defend themselves were promptly hauled off and lynched by the angry mob.

The flare-up in Vicksburg in July of 1835 proved to be an anomaly, as the wild west attracted an unrelenting influx of fortune hunters and desperados. The Civil War saw a predictable spike in all sorts of gambling. After the war, devastated southern states used lotteries to raise the necessary cash for reconstruction. By 1872, New Orleans boasted America’s first European-style casino, plus a big-prize lottery that drew interest and money from Americans in every state.

Then, in the 1880s, the wheel of fortune took a turn for another conservative backlash.irate farmers even attacked the Chicago Board of Trade for profiting from speculation in wheat, corn and other farm commodities. While the Board of Trade did implement a few minor reforms to appease its critics, by far the most serious crisis in the gambling culture came when in 1892 the huge Louisiana Lottery, by far the largest in the country, was found to have been rigged. The wide publicity given to the scandal forced national and state legislatures to pass tough new anti-gaming laws. Within a few years, the only legal betting in the US was at the horse races in Maryland and Kentucky.

Quarterbacking for God

As the aboriginal peoples of North America realized long ago, there is an intrinsic element of serendipity in every kind of contest – as in every other thing we do. Generally, those who play at sports do play to win, but those who truly enjoy sports never lose sight of the whimsical, unpredictable nature of any contest. Sports are like that, and to *be* a sport is to accept the outcome of a match, however lopsidedly it might turn out, gracefully and with a consummate sense of humility.

You never really know what is going to happen when you arrive at the stadium or turn on the set for a game. There could be some freakish luck at play. The favored team might be in for a drubbing. A rookie in his first game might steal the show. It could go neck and neck until the final play. The ball or puck could just take a weird bounce at the last second and decide the outcome of the whole contest.

For all the bombast and bravado before the contest, so long as the game is honest, no one can really tell who will win and who will lose - and that is exactly how it is meant to be. There is a touch of skill, an element of experience, a sense of timing, and the help or hindrance of the environment, all capped off by the wholly unpredictable element of chance – who is clicking, all the intangible elements, and how it all plays out in the end.

Some train and practice too hard. In their obsession with the big goal, they miss the thousand little things that ultimately decide the game. Chance favors the prepared, but does not guarantee their success.

Many athletes pray before the start of a game. Lots of stars credit God with winning for them when they score that big touchdown or hole-in-one.

Sometimes there is a feeling of unbeatable grace, being in a zone where nothing can go wrong. At those times, everything works out just as you’d hoped – better than even you’d dared to imagine.

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Of course, it's all true. God Almighty does score those touchdowns. God goes for the underdog too sometimes, and just when you'd least expect it. God does all these things. The Ultimate Power excels in defying our expectations. Probably always will. But then in sport, we get to enjoy the ultimate thrill: the spiritual high of *playing with God*.

Random Ways of Doing

When a difficult situation arises today, and a just and reasonable outcome is beyond reach, it is not unusual for the awesome powers of chance to be called into service. In a terrible drought, farmers are allocated supplies of donated hay by lottery.¹³⁹ During the downsizing of an employer, the union oversees a coin toss to determine which of two employees keeps their job and which one is laid off.¹⁴⁰ In Japan, where space is at a premium, a government lottery determines whose ashes are buried and whose interred in underground vaults.¹⁴¹ In California, prized courthouse seats to see reclusive pop star Michael Jackson on the witness stand are distributed by lottery to avid teenaged fans.¹⁴²

Some counselors advise marriage partners who find themselves frequently at odds to flip a coin next time, however large or trivial the disagreement. A respected authority suggests child custody cases could be settled more economically and with a good deal less heartache if embattled parents just used the age-old custom of appealing to chance.

There is even a poignant touch of serendipity in the otherwise brawny Super Bowl. Before the teams enter the field, their captains must meet with the referee at midfield to decide which side begins with possession of the ball and who plays on which end for the game's first half. Sometimes, the coin toss is arguably the most decisive play of the entire contest.

For all the training of Olympic athletes, much still depends on the luck of the draw since competitors are matched up by a computer lottery. Everyone hopes to avoid facing a favored contender right in the first round. Testing for banned drugs is also done on a random basis. Even admission to watch the Olympics is allocated randomly in order to manage the overwhelming demand for tickets.

In Germany and England, where chancellors today are important members of government, their offices, known as "Chanceries" may once have decided crucial matters of peace and justice by consulting the august verdict of chance. In northern Europe before Christianity, trials were often carried out by ordeal. The root of the word "ordeal" in Old English and Old High German in fact meant literally "to deal out" or "allot in shares." From this came the extended meanings: "to determine one's share," "to decide," and "to give judgement."¹⁴³

While the legal practices for most of early Europe remain substantially cloaked in mystery for lack of written records, a few recorded cases come to our awareness. The ancient law of the North Sea Frisian Islands allowed for a two-part lottery of suspects in a criminal case. The first selection was to determine if any of them was guilty. The second was then to find out the guilty party.

The history of Swedish and Finish law offers up a similar judicial procedure. In a murder trial where a number of people had ganged together to committed a fatal assault and it remained unclear which party had dealt the mortal blow, lots were drawn to isolate the guilty party.

The traditions of the sixth century Franks and seventh century Irish also made provision for trial by lot. An Irish text ruled that, where there was a lack of witnesses, a dispute should be settled by the mediation of a boiling cauldron or by lot.¹⁴⁴ The Franks, influenced by years of association with Roman culture and law, resorted to the verdict of the lot in two instances. They used it in the trial of slaves, who by law were not permitted to swear oaths, and in the trial of foreigners far from home and unable to obtain witnesses to vouch for their integrity.¹⁴⁵

For long, trial by ordeal was considered the only effective way of deciding serious cases. Sometimes, these trials would be painless exercises in divination. At other times, they would be carried out more in the sense that the word "ordeal" has come to us, as a trial of endurance. The accused was expected to survive some painful physical test unscathed in order to be judged not guilty of an offence. Trial by boiling cauldron and trial by water were the two most common.¹⁴⁶

Until the practice was banned by Pope Innocent III (1160-1216, pope: 1198-1216) in 1215, priests were always present at these ordeals. The Old Testament account of how Saul determined by lot the guilt of his own son provided a vivid precedent for Christian practice.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, during the reign of England's Henry II (1154-1189, king: 1154-89), the chancellor, the kingdom's chief legal authority, was always a bishop. The papal decree against this type of trial created a crisis for a time, until the jury system came into vogue. Even so, a form of trial by ordeal with the Bible as its centerpiece was used in a London trial as recently as 1867.¹⁴⁸

As the system of trial by jury spread in the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian world, so did the practice of randomly selecting their members to ensure impartiality. Once the prospective members of the jury had been picked by lottery, they would be checked by attorneys for the prosecution and the defense to disqualify any juror they suspected of having a preformed opinion about the accused.

While this system offered a happy balance between the impersonal power of fate and the discriminative force of reason, conditions of social chaos and instability sometimes tipped the balance in favor of mysterious destiny. During the English Civil War (1642-1649), condemned men were compelled to decide by lottery how many and which of them should die. In this macabre lottery, a winning ticket would read: "Life given by God." By the same token, the council of the army cast lots in 1649 to decide which regiments should be sent on the dangerous mission of putting down the Irish.

An English judicial ruling of 1665 allowed juries who could not come to agreement to avoid a retrial by casting lots to resolve their differences, although that precedent was overruled eleven years later. In the next century, during the Age of Reason, any jury that resorted to chance would be committing serious offence. By then, a citizen's right to trial by an unbiased jury chosen through random selection was established as law.

For a time, chance also exercised its considerable authority over England's trade practices. Contentious issues were often resolved, and lots of goods allocated, by casting "cross and pile," the old equivalent of heads and tails. This practice was referred to by Samuel Butler (1612-1680) in his satirical play, *Hudibras*, where a lawyer gives the advice:

For Matrimony and Hanging here;
Both go by Destiny so clear,
That you as sure may Pick and Choose,
As Cross I win, and Pile you lose.¹⁴⁹

Lots were also widely used to dispose of goods and estates. Merchants in Italy, the German states and England discovered that they could maximize their profits by conducting lotteries to auction off relatively expensive items. The third president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826, U.S. president: 1801-1809), facing large debts and low land prices, notably pleaded with the Virginia legislature in 1826 to allow him to settle his financial affairs by means of such a lottery.

For a time, the inscrutable dictates of fate also played an active role in the governments of Europe. As late as the sixteenth century, borough officers in England could be chosen by lot. In 1653, while England's first constitution was being framed, one London congregation proposed that a new Parliament be selected from among nominees chosen in each religious congregation "by lot after solemn prayer." The hope behind this proposal was that, while religious strife was racking the country, the one God of all the fractious denominations would impartially oversee the details of the lottery.

Italian city-states during the late Middle Ages held electoral lotteries to avoid the domination of any one family group or clique. Six of the twelve members of their governing councils were randomly selected. This system was retained in Florence from 1328 to 1530. In Venice, the chief magistrate was decided by lottery up till 1797.

In Switzerland, there was a common recognition that whoever held the position of mayor would be inclined to use it for personal gain. The Swiss solution to the problem was to make the job a prize with all electors eligible to win. Thus, for nearly 200 years (1640-1837), mayors in many parts of the country won their positions in civic lotteries.

On the North American frontier, for many years the inscrutable hand of fate was assigned a determining role in allocating virgin agricultural lands to eager settlers. Once the sections had been surveyed, the difficult task of deciding who should have the fertile flatlands and who the rocky sections was executed at a public allotment. The randomly assigned properties came to be known as "lots."

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Even in modern times, chance remains on standby in case the ordinary electoral process should fail to do its job. In the event of an electoral tie in a race for a seat in the US Congress, South Dakota's state constitution provides for the drawing of lots to decide the winner.

British Columbia is a Canadian province known for its polarized electorate and hotly contested elections. To make matters worse, in 2002 the 42% of the vote that opposed the winning party yielded only two of the legislature's seventy-nine seats. Making good on a pre-election promise, newly-elected Premier Gordon Campbell put in motion a process intended to improve the province's electoral system. That process would leave the province's future partly to chance.

The procedure involved the creation of a grassroots citizens' congress to propose a new electoral system. The Citizens Assembly was unusual in two respects. Firstly, anyone connected with politics, even losing candidates, from the provincial government to the local school boards, was not eligible to participate. Secondly, the 158 members of the assembly were to be chosen at random.

200 residents in each of the seventy-nine constituencies were chosen in an initial lottery. After everyone has been contacted, the names of everyone eligible and willing to do the job was put in a box or a hat. One woman and one man were then randomly selected to represent each riding.

The Citizen's Assembly took eleven months to deliberate and conduct hearings across British Columbia. Their recommendations were narrowly defeated in a 2005 referendum that required the assent of sixty percent of the voters in sixty percent of the constituencies.¹⁵⁰ Similar randomly constituted hearings to amend the electoral system are planned for other Canadian provinces.

Chance has often figured large in desperate measures of life and death. The word "decimation" comes to us from the military tradition of killing one tenth of a body of treasonous soldiers, picked at random. Hostage takers are known to use the device of murdering every tenth captive to press their demands. Shipwrecked sailors have a long tradition of casting lots to decide who is to eat and who is to be eaten.

Draft lotteries have been favored over universal conscription in seventeenth to nineteenth century France and currently in the US. This type of lottery may have all the trappings of a religious rite.

The initial drawing of America's first peacetime draft lottery took place in October 1940. The strip of yellow linen used to cover the eyes of Secretary of War Henry L. Stinson, was cut from the covering of a chair that had been at the signing of the US Declaration of Independence. The ladle used by him to stir the hundreds of capsules containing fateful numbers representing all the eligible men was taken from a rafter in Philadelphia's historic Independence Hall. The large glass bowl which held the capsules was the same one used in the First World War draft lottery.

After Secretary Stinson had picked the first capsule, he handed it to President Roosevelt, who opened it, then took out the slip and slowly read the number into a forest of microphones representing all the radio networks. Once the drawing had begun, it did not conclude until the early hours of the next morning, when all the numbers had been duly drawn in sequence and recorded.

Military drafts can go terribly wrong when the impartial sentiment of the lot is twisted to serve special interests. During the American Civil War, moneyed gentlemen on both sides of the conflict legally paid the less fortunate to fight, perchance to die, in their place. In the industrial North, the draft was also skewed by a \$300 fee to avoid the lottery.

When New York papers in 1861 first carried the names and occupations of the drafted, thousands of angry members of the city's working class converged on the local draft headquarters even as small white cards with the names of eligible men written on them were being pulled from a revolving drum. The throng vented its rage at the inequitable lottery by burning the building and two adjacent blocks. An estimated 1,000 people died in three days of violence. The mayhem did not end until the militia was sent in to enforce law and order.

The military draft enacted from 1969 to 1973, during the unpopular Vietnam War, was another working class lottery. This draft lottery, with its deferments for the educated and well-to-do, entailed a good deal less ceremony and a great deal more public protest than had been seen in the Second World War. Hundreds of thousands of young men fled to Canada and Sweden to escape a system, both the war and the lottery, they recognized as oppressive and unfair.

The twentieth century saw the study and quantification of the chaotic rhythms of ordinary happenstance and their recognition as patterns in a statistical numberscape. This led to a reevaluation of all kinds of science. It was Englishman Ronald A. Fisher (1890-1962) who refined the science of statistics and made it imminently practical. Fisher's methods are now staples of statistical analysis. Tests of significance, replication of results, blocking of irrelevant data, and randomization help scientists to better assess the significance of their experiments. This refining of statistical method has been dubbed "the taming of chance."¹⁵¹

Today, thanks to the burgeoning field of statistics, we can know the probability – though never the certainty – of rain falling from the sky today. There is a plethora of baseball statistics to serve the endless speculation of fans. There are investment bankers trained to judge a business's statistical chance of success or failure, within a certain margin of error. There are statistics on the chances of dying by cancer, being divorced or becoming a millionaire before thirty. Even the safety of our nuclear plants and the risks of nuclear war have been distilled into statistical nukespeak only a puppet of industry could ever appreciate.

In some contexts, the inscrutable vagaries of chance are actually sought after and imitated. So-called "randomness generators" serve a variety of functions. The randomizer in your CD player decides which track plays when and a similar function in many video games is there to keep you in suspense. In the military, patterns that mimic local topography with a semblance of random densities can serve as effective camouflage. Communications and missile guidance systems use them to avoid interception. In cryptography, simulated haphazardness makes messages look confusingly like any and all possibilities. In frequency-hopping broadcast technologies, a sender moves randomly from one frequency to the next in sync with a receiver which picks up the message without it being scrambled.¹⁵²

Techno-whiz Stephen Wolfram (1959-) touts the value of randomness in his tome, *A New Kind of Science*:

There are all kinds of situations where in the absence of anything better it is good to use randomness. Thus, for example, many exploratory searches in this book were done randomly. And in testing large hardware and software systems random inputs are often used.

Randomness is a common way of avoiding pathological cases and deadlocks. (It requires no communication between components so is convenient in parallel systems.) Examples include message routing in networks, retransmission times after ethernet collisions, partitionings for sorting algorithms, and avoiding getting stuck in minimization procedures like simulated annealing. ...it is common for randomness to add robustness – as for example in cellular automaton fluids, or in saccadic eye movements in biology.¹⁵³

Exquisitely complex Mandelbrot sets and other random formulae serve to mimic coastal irregularities and human signatures. They are also indispensable in simulating human or natural processes in computerized animation and special effects.

Overall, there has been a remarkable shift in our culture's evaluation of randomness. New science had given rise to technologies that operate with a high degree of predictability. With our basic needs of food, shelter and sanitation provided for, we are less likely to fear capricious nature. As a result, randomness and a profusion of highly individual expressions have for many of us become acceptable, even desirable, attributes.

For those of us lucky enough to live high above the level of a meager, arbitrary existence, the culture of randomness may take any of a number of forms. Whatever form it takes, be it the quirky hairstyle of the guy in the next cubicle or the lunch special at the Indonesian bistro, it keeps our lives of surfeit interesting, challenging and intensely human.

Quantum Magic

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the near-collapse of many of the orthodoxies that had dominated Europe, and through Europe the world, for centuries. In London, a reticent Charles Darwin offered up his unsettling view of a vast web of relationship encompassing all species, *homo sapiens* not excepted. At the same time, Karl Marx (1818-83) and Friedrich Engels (1820-95) roused the working classes with their theory of a world riven by irreconcilable interests. At the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, the World Parliament of Religions presented for the first time the farfetched prospect of diverse religious traditions peacefully and

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respectfully coexisting. From Vienna, Sigmund Freud challenged doctors, religious thinkers, and everyone else, with his insight into the prevalent role of the unconscious in people's daily lives. In Bengal and Europe, Sir Jagdis Chandra Bose exposed the world to mind-bending parallels between the behaviors of animals and plants, even metals. In Germany, Max Planck turned the world of physics upside down with his radical new understanding of the quirky, unpredictable realm of subatomic particles.

Humanity's collective understanding of itself turned a fateful corner in those fifty years. The high walls of determinism came crashing down. Chance – the living, breathing sum of all possibilities – had challenged the morbid god of theologies, and won. The sun of Calvin's deity, its miracles long spent, had been eclipsed and swallowed by a primitive trickster who rendered nothing but miracles. The stolid god of rules had been felled by the nimble spirit of exceptions.

Not only did these people and events offer up powerful alternatives to the triumphalist Victorian worldview. Most unsettling of all for the ruling elites in science, religion and politics, was that each of these new understandings presented a vision of the world as a work in progress in the fluid medium of history.

Darwin's burgeoning species, for example, just kept on reinventing themselves in ways both perplexing and wonderful to behold. Marx's vision of history, for all its imperfections, offered up a blueprint by which the disenfranchised might hope to radically transform the workings of their societies. The gathering of religious leaders in 1893 spawned a century of increasing dialogue and cooperation among diverse faiths and denominations. Freud's psychoanalytic model promised a whole new model of personal healing and growth that would radically alter conventional views of sickness and well-being. Bose's poor carrot specimens went right on registering pain, then sensing and feeling who knows what else, well after the experiments were over – and they only represented an infinitesimal sampling of their billions and trillions of kin, mostly wild and presumably perfectly aware, in the plant kingdom. Planck's wave/particles, of course, just went right on with their spontaneous cosmic dance – inspiring alternating feelings of dread and wonder in their wake.

All this was a far cry from the static, human-centered paradigm buttressed by biblical and Aristotelean truisms – or even the unfeeling, mathematical model of Newton and Descartes. The middle of the known universe had by this time twice been resituated: once from terra firma to the sun, and then far into the indeterminate reaches of space, billions of light years from our Milky Way.

In the culture of eighteenth century Europe, "chance" had long been considered a prospect terrible to contemplate and best altogether avoided. Chance was a dangerous word representing the lawless wreakings of raw and naked fortune. Such an unruly and alarming prospect was excluded from the conventions of polite society. The vagaries of chance were particularly unwelcome in this Age of Reason, where scientists determined to eliminate the irrational by measuring and investigating the innermost recesses of nature, the better to predict, to control and exploit her.

Self-assured scientists considered irrational chance to be nothing more than the unfortunate outcome of a lack of objective understanding. France's famed astronomer and mathematician Pierre-Simon Laplace heralded the predictive power of a total science.

Given for one instant an intelligence which could comprehend all the forces by which nature is animated and the respective situation of the beings who compose it – an intelligence sufficiently vast to submit these data to analysis – it would embrace in the same formula the movements of the greatest bodies of the universe and those of the lightest atom; for it, nothing would be uncertain and the future, as the past, would be present to its eyes.¹⁵⁴

Yet, even as nineteenth century European governments excelled in the gathering and interpretation of statistics, even as scientists delved ever deeper, measuring and calculating both the grandest and minutest details of the physical universe, the omniscience they were seeking eluded them. While the beauty of celestial formations, ever magnified, could well enough be appreciated, they could not be read. While the intricate symmetries alive in a fern leaf could be observed under a microscope, they could not in fact be understood. While the number of suicides in France might well be assiduously compiled and analyzed, no one could yet predict just who would become a suicide and who would not.

By the end of the nineteenth century, as the space being made for autonomous laws of chance eroded traditional notions of determinism, chance began to assume a new and belated respectability. Long-held views of human nature made way for statistical models of "normal people" described by mathematical laws of

dispersion.¹⁵⁵ Reputable and long-established insurance companies, using their accumulated record of the trials of happenstance, began to sell policies not as wagers to win easy money, but as true insurance to deflect financial ruin.

Many who found their cherished beliefs assaulted by these novel insinuations recoiled in horror. Others delighted at the implications of a new world ordered by a force impossible to measure or predict. American logician Charles Peirce (1839-1914) observed, “Chance was no longer the essence of lawlessness, but at the core of all laws of nature and all rational, inductive inference.”¹⁵⁶ France’s most famous chemist and microbiologist celebrated the synergy of chance and genius realized in all sorts of scientific discoveries. Louis Pasteur (1822-1895) proclaimed, “Chance favors the prepared mind.”¹⁵⁷

Jacques-Lucien Monod (1910-1976), the French biochemist who in 1965 won a Nobel prize for his research on genetics and evolution, exulted that Darwin’s theory of random selection provided biological proof of the absence of a master plan. Monod credited chance as “the source of every innovation, of all creation in the biosphere.” According to the distinguished geneticist, “Pure chance, absolutely free but blind, (is) at the very root of the stupendous edifice of evolution.”¹⁵⁸

Monod theorized that the unpredictability of genetic mutations is embedded in the quantum structure of matter. Like the quirky paths of subatomic particles, the subcellular events underlying the course of evolution could be speculated about in terms of their probability or improbability, but never reduced to certainty.

According to Monod, the chances of a given gene undergoing a mutation range from one in a million to one in 100 million per cellular generation. At this rate, a population of several billion single-celled organisms in a few milliliters of water would yield from 10 to 1,000 mutations.

In a more complex organism like *homo sapiens*, with a genome containing 1,000 times more genes than the genome of a bacterium, there would be a far greater chance of mutation from generation to generation. By Monod’s estimate, a population of 6 billion humans would manifest from 200 billion to 2 trillion mutations in one generation – “in spite of the jealously conservative properties of the replicative mechanism.” In this light, Monod could only express astonishment at the extreme coherence of the living system that “has retained, amplified and integrated only a tiny fraction of the myriad opportunities afforded it by nature’s roulette.”¹⁵⁹

France’s best-liked poet, Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898), celebrated the triumph of ubiquitous chance with a graphic work, its words more displayed than printed. In ecstatic prose, he proclaimed what is much abbreviated here:

A TOSS OF THE DICE
WILL NEVER
EVEN WHEN LAUNCHED IN ETERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES
FROM THE DEPTHS OF A SHIPWRECK...
ELIMINATE...
CHANCE...

After many fantastic spins and turns, Mallarmé’s famous poem eventually came to rest on a precipice of sweeping consequence:

...All Thought emits a Throw of the Dice.¹⁶⁰

One symptom of the renewed air of uncertainty was the revival in a limited way of the age-old art of divination in the sophisticated centers of Western science and culture. Knowledge of tarot card reading, which originated in France in the late eighteenth century, spread by way of an outpouring of books and pamphlets. The swell of popular interest was served by the founding of the Theosophical Society in New York in 1875, and the opening of chapters in London and Paris. The Rosicrucian Order, too, began functioning openly in Paris during this period.

Much of the Tarot literature claimed an ancient pedigree for the practice, dating back to classical Egypt. Tarot cards in fact originated in late fifteenth century Bologna, where they were used like a regular deck of cards, with a few interesting variations. Nonetheless, the practice of visiting a medium to have one’s cards read eventually became a part of popular culture in the English-speaking world, popular enough to be cited by T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) in *The Waste Land*:

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Madame Sosostriis, famous clairvoyante,
Had a bad cold, nevertheless
Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,
With a wicked pack of cards.

More than Freud, Carl Gustav Jung was able to appreciate the mysterious flow of happenstance. With quantum physicist Wolfgang Pauli (1900-58), he co-authored a book elaborating his understanding of the occasionally uncanny course of coincidence. In *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle*, Jung coined a new definition for synchronicity: a meaningful coincidence in time.

Jung recognized three kinds of synchronicities:

- One is the coincidence of a certain mental experience with a simultaneous and corresponding occurrence outside the body.
- Another is a dream or vision which turns out to be a more or less accurate reflection of something taking place somewhere at a distance more or less simultaneously.
- In the third kind of coincidence, the envisioned event takes place sometime in the future.

Jung described the following coincidence from his own clinical practice:

A young woman I was treating had, at a critical moment, a dream in which she was given a golden scarab. While she was telling me this dream I sat with my back to the closed window. Suddenly I heard a noise behind me, like a gentle tapping. I turned around and saw a flying insect knocking against the window pane from outside. I opened the window and caught the creature in the air as it flew in. It was the nearest analogy to a golden scarab that one finds in our latitudes, a scarabaeid beetle, the common rose-chafer (*Cetonia aurata*), which contrary to its usual habits had evidently felt an urge to get into a dark room at this particular moment.¹⁶¹

Even as the renowned researcher into the mysteries of mind and the Noble laureate of microphysics conducted their cross-disciplinary collaboration, other great minds were engaged in a decades-long debate over the unpredictable new world of the quantum.

The following is Albert Einstein (1879-1955)'s letter to German physicist and fellow Nobel prize-winner, Max Born (1882-1970), dated November 7, 1944:

In our scientific expectations, we have progressed towards antipodes. You believe in the dice-playing god, and I in the perfect rule of law in a world of something objectively existing which I try to catch in a wildly speculative way. I hope that somebody will find a more realistic way, or a more tangible foundation for a conception than that which is given to me. The great initial success of quantum theory cannot convert me to believe in that fundamental game of dice.¹⁶²

Einstein, the genius behind relativity theory, could never reconcile himself with the quantum worldview because it left so much to chance. His hunch, and it should be remembered that all scientific theories begin with nothing more than a very personalized hunch, was that a proper theory should be exact and allow for a high degree of predictability. Einstein also could not reconcile with the eventuality of two or more related events occurring simultaneously at a distance from one another as an outcome of the quantum theory of "nonlocal causes," which he referred to as "phantom actions over distances." Despite years of good-natured scientific argument and counter argument, Einstein himself admitted in the following letter from December 3, 1947, that he remained unable to logically explain his conviction.

I cannot substantiate my attitude to physics in such a manner that you would find it in any way rational. I see of course that the statistical interpretation... has a considerable content of truth. Yet I cannot seriously believe it because the theory is inconsistent with the principle that physics has to represent a reality in time and space without phantom actions over distances... I am absolutely convinced that one will eventually arrive at a theory in which the objects connected by laws are not probabilities, but conceived facts, as one took for granted only a short time ago. However, I cannot provide logical arguments for my conviction, but can only call on my little finger as witness, which cannot claim any authority outside of my skin.¹⁶³

The great man of relativity passed away eight years later without coming to grips with the latest developments of physics. The revolutionary prospects of a quantum universe had outstripped even Einstein's highly evolved capacity to think and imagine.

Quantum scientists began to appreciate a world that was more metaphysical and less physical, more governed by relationships than by individual entities, less definite and increasingly a matter of speculation and probability. The old Cartesian reductionist model, which for three centuries had deconstructed the universe into smaller and smaller parts, was in serious trouble. By the 1920s, physicists were confronted with the reality that there were no more things to be found inside the smallest identifiable particles: photons, electrons and neutrons.

Instead of the solid isolatable material objects of classical physics, what they found were patterns of probabilities. Even more puzzling at first was the realization that these were not probabilities of actual "things." Rather they existed as integral parts of a complex and expanding web of relationships.

As physicist Henry Stapp described it,

An elementary particle is not an independently existing unanalyzable identity. It is, in essence, a set of relationships that reach outward to other things.¹⁶⁴

What we find, therefore, are not elementary space-time realities, but rather a web of relationships in which no part can stand alone; every part derives its meaning and existence only from its place within the whole.¹⁶⁵

Moreover, there seemed to be an essential nexus between matter and consciousness played out in the minutest relations of the universe. Fickle particles, for example, seemed to exist in a virtual Never Never Land until forced to "make up their minds" which way they were going by the observations of a conscious observer.¹⁶⁶

While Einstein pondered the mystery of nature's inherent unpredictability, fresh new revelations and insights were being born. One R. Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983), who preferred being known as "Bucky," saw our Earth as a sophisticated space-faring module equipped with elaborate life-supporting ecologies. The gifted American scientist and visionary made it his life's work to develop Earth-friendly technologies and to inspire a greater realization of our new era of interdependence.

We have today, 150 supreme admirals and only one ship – Spaceship Earth. We have the 150 admirals in their 150 staterooms each trying to run their respective stateroom as if it were a separate ship. We have the starboard side admirals' league trying to sink the port side admirals' league. If either is successful in careening the ship to drown the "enemy" side, the whole ship will be lost.¹⁶⁷

In his long poem "No More Secondhand God", Mr. Fuller offered up a lithe and elegant new deity:

Here is God's purpose –
for God, to me, it seems,
is a verb
not a noun,
proper or improper;
is the articulation
not the art, objective or subjective;
is loving,
not the abstraction "love" commanded or entreated;
is knowledge dynamic,
not legislative code,
not proclamation law,
not academic dogma, nor ecclesiastic canon.
Yes, God is a verb,
the most active,
connoting the vast harmonic
reordering of the universe
from unleashed chaos of energy...¹⁶⁸

While grand men of science contemplated the future, Americans in the desert state of Nevada, up the highway from their country's nuclear testing range, were making their own speculations. During the course of

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the 1940s and 50s, entrepreneurs in the dusty town of Las Vegas revived the old gambling legacy of the Wild West. This event, hardly noticed at the time, was to lead America into a new, globalized culture of chance. The momentum only accelerated in 1964 when the placid state of New Hampshire held the country's first legal lottery in nearly seventy years.

By the 1960s, Americans were leading the world into an age marked by unprecedented uncertainty and breakdown of traditional authority. Not only was the subatomic universe seen to be in a constant state of flux, all of civilization was living under the daily threat of nuclear Armageddon. Bomb shelters and classroom atomic war drills became stock items of early 1960s life in North America and Europe.

Racial desegregation, the peace movement, feminism, revolt within the Catholic Church – each one of these confronted long-standing conventions. Each of these public meltdowns served to profoundly alter people's private and public lives. The forced resignation of President Nixon (1913-1994, U.S. president: 1968-74) in 1974 under an unprecedented cloud of wrong-doing and deception further diminished the people's faith in the big powers - government, business and religion – that for long had dominated their lives. For many, gambling emerged as a way of taking back the authority and the trust that had been so freely given, then squandered away; taking it back into their own hands, playing their own dice, taking their own chances with God and destiny.

Playing at blackjack or slots or the lotteries also served as a respite from a culture of excess and boredom, where it seemed the only meaningful things happened on TV. Legalized gambling let the ordinary citizen - who had long felt locked out of distant government, big business, institutionalized religion and increasingly nonexistent community life - feel the immediate rush of spiritual connectedness in the convergence of truth, grace and the triumphant gesture of fluky happenstance.

Once the taboo was lifted, the gambling public openly racked their fickle intuitions. By the millions, they willed and prayed for favor, hoping to alight on the unerring stream of destiny, to play like a god and emerge, at all costs, a winner. For many, the thrill of gambling combined with the lure of a big payoff was simply irresistible.

At the outset of that intoxicating era, one Jewish writer from Montreal penned a heroin-soaked homily about a magical God who had never died. Leonard Cohen (1934-) would spend later years contemplating in a California Zen monastery.

God is alive. Magic is afoot. God is alive. Magic is afoot. God is afoot. Magic is alive. Magic never died. God never sickened. Many poor men lied. Many sick men lied. Magic never weakened. Magic never hid. Magic always ruled. God is afoot. God never died. God was ruler though his funeral lengthened. Though his mourners thickened Magic never fled. Though his shrouds were hoisted the naked God did live. Though his words were twisted the naked Magic thrived. Though his death was pardoned round and round the world the heart would not believe...¹⁶⁹

Others contributed their own visions to the collective ferment. A dynamic social force in his own right, Jerry Rubin's (1938-1994) passion, nerve, and ingenuity helped create imaginative new forms of protest that inspired and emboldened a generation opposed to war. He offered this timely advice to hopeful activists when Vietnam was still shrouded in the mists of government doublespeak, and peace a visionary's dream:

Give your life to chance.
Let Serendipity be your guide.
History is made by accident.
Be ready to discover what you are not looking for.¹⁷⁰

The era of the outright prohibition of gambling had ended with a few tentative church bingos in the 1930s depression. By 1976, gaming had burgeoned to an \$18 billion a year industry in the United States. Beginning in the 1980s - as their government in Washington jeopardized the jobs and living standards of middle and lower class Americans - casinos, lotteries, riverboat gambling operations, and big prize bingos set up shop in every state but Utah and Hawaii.

Twenty-five years later, having grown 470% and encompassed most of the country, the gambling trade was still expanding at an astonishing rate. Moreover, while Europe's conservative gambling establishments remained largely moribund, high-rolling American operations aggressively marketed the gambling culture in eastern

Europe, Asia and Africa. Over twenty-one years, from 1986 to 2007, the number of countries with casinos worldwide increased dramatically from 77 to 140¹⁷¹.

Meanwhile, in 1982, experimenters at the University of Paris were finally able for the first time to scientifically construct and monitor a nonlocal event, what Einstein had called “phantom actions over distances.” In their experiment, the researchers had managed to separate a pair of photons and send them careening in opposite directions along a randomized course. To their studied amazement, they observed how the spin of the two always correlated, although travelling at nearly the speed of light there would have been no time for any signal to pass between them.

It was no wonder that Einstein did not make the mental transition to a nonlocal and unpredictable quantum universe. One informed scientist has described nonlocality as having more potential to transform our conceptions of the “way things are” than any previous discovery in the history of science.¹⁷² This statement deserves some serious reflection. Just what are the fundamentals of this new quantum paradigm and what do they mean to us?

There are four quantum truths that all contradict scientists’ earlier presumptions about the nature of the physical world:

- Natural laws are only statistical truths. The shorter the sampling of time and the smaller the object being sampled, the less they are predictable. Order abounds in generalizations, while chaos prevails in the details of nature.
- The fundamentals of physics are not things, but relationships.
- The world is not reducible to any rigid scientific theory. All theories are tentative and based only on the best data and best understanding available at a given time. Ultimately, the nature of the world is quite possibly unthinkable.
- Events can and do happen without a local cause.

Translated into a human context, these principles can be just as subversive of old wisdom as they are in the realm of quantum physics:

In the first case, we might consider keeping ourselves open to surprise, not being too rigid in our expectations, and being more willing to play with serendipity – while still fulfilling necessary obligations. Moreover, it is a character of the fluid, inherently unstable nature of the universe that small, apparently negligible actions can lead to tremendous and largely unimaginable effects, the so-called “butterfly effect.” The purport of this realization in daily life is that we should never discount the effect of our own humble efforts to effect some change for better or worse.

In the second instance, we are reminded that it is not the stuff we can buy or hoard or put away that give our lives their emotional richness, but the living relationships that comprise it. We will be wise then, without altogether discarding the physical stuff that feeds and clothes and houses us, to give priority to our personal relations.

In the third case, it will be prudent of us to take our preconceptions lightly, to be prepared to learn more than we thought we knew and always to take into account the personal aspect of any equation.

In the fourth instance, we should be mindful of unseen causes: prayers from a distance, eruptions from an unsettled subconscious, old karma come to roost, the unseen hand of the infinite. All these make life wonderfully surprising and unpredictable.

The quantum mind treats old dogmas and worn-out prejudices with a weary skepticism. Preferring to develop a firsthand working relationship with its Significant Other, it has rendered the regular churchified “secondhand God,” a theological imposter.

Slowly, a new recognition is emerging that it is not stasis, but flux, that is universal and eternal and that chance is not as dreadfully threatening as once thought. If allowed its respectful due, entropy can be befriended, even played with. If you chose to be an agent of change, it will help you. If you change yourself, it will honor you.

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This is a large dance hall. There are countless stars and galaxies here, constantly evolving. There are billions of species, ever changing. There are people here, billions of them, themselves aggregates of billions of cells, every one of them filled with untold possibility.

We are all dancers, each with some special dispensation and some special disability. Some of us are handsome. Some of us are blind. Some of us have pleasing voices. Some of us are deaf. Some of us are strong. Some are missing limbs.

It doesn't matter. Just lift up your limbs, or where your limbs would have been, and lift up your heart and move with the music as best you can.

Stop worrying. It doesn't matter how it looks. It's not that kind of scene. What matters is the joy of freely giving yourself to the music and the rhythm of the greater whole. This is the secret of the dance.

Masters of Chance

The flow of happenstance is a wild and awesome force, impossible to tame and bring under our authority. Though wild men, priests and physicists have tried to pacify it, none has succeeded in their objective.

The best they could manage was to channel the supple workings of destiny along a certain prescribed and limited course within the infinite realm of happenstance. To achieve this in any field or jurisdiction, human or divine, requires an utmost critical awareness and a superlative mastery of the attendant technology.

For the technician hoping to develop a purely random sequence, whatever his intentions might be, this poses very significant challenges. Natural sequences, by their very nature conform to some sort of rhythm. All living things live in and thrive by natural rhythms. Even the inanimate world, from supernovas to atoms, registers certain sequential regularities or probabilities. While, so far as we know, the numeric sequence of pi is irrational, it is no longer random in so far as it is commonly known, and therefore predictable, up to a given integer.

While many kinds of randomizing programs have been developed in recent years, it can always be argued that insofar as they are humanly designed, they are still liable to reflect the natural rhythms and limitations of the one who designed it. To that extent, they would be less than purely haphazard and arbitrary.

In dicing and carding, too, there is great concern for allowing the unimpeded flow of happenstance. There are rules to prevent improper rolling of dice. All eyes are on the dealer as they shuffle and deal a hand.

Gaming regulations require the backs of cards be indistinguishable, one from the other. Dice must be perfect cubes, within one part to a few thousand. Most casinos discard their dice after a few hundred rolls. Cards are similarly retired.¹⁷³

The shaman or priest takes similar care to purify themselves before attempting to obtain a reading. Physically clean and offering up appropriate prayers and chants to purify their mind and spirit, then following a prescribed and ritualized routine, they hope to serve as a pure channel for inimitable chance.

The saint, the warrior, the poet, the athlete, all have their prescribed rituals to clear away the cobwebs of self-conceit and allow themselves to be filled not with certainty, but with the infinite spirit of incalculable chance.

Jon Elster, a professor of political science and philosophy, offers his own appreciation of the impartial workings of serendipity:

Chance will regulate a large portion of our lives no matter how hard we try to avoid it. By taming chance, we can bring the randomness of the universe under control as far as possible, and keep free from self-deception as well. The requirements of personal causation and autonomy are reconciled by the conscious use of chance to make decisions where rational argument fails. Although the bleakness of this vision may disturb us, it is preferable to a life built on the comforting falsehood that we always know what to do.¹⁷⁴

While the taming of chance may not be ours to realize, it may yet be befriended – though a friend of such wild abandon is hard to conceive. With such a robust and exacting companion, on the other hand, there is nothing bleak or disturbing in life, and no possibility of falseness at all.

Taking the *Hukam*

While ordinary Methodists did not pick up the habit of bibliomancy and Catholic authorities have long denounced it, the people of Guru Nanak still observe the practice of consulting the universe, taking the *bukam*, daily or before setting out on any important undertaking. Taking the *bukam* is distinguished from the ordinary practice of seeing omens in natural phenomena.

The *bukam*, or order, is taken from the pages of Siri Guru Granth Sahib. In 1430 pages, it is considered the embodiment of the entire wisdom of Guru Nanak. Compiled in a distinctive script, called *Gurmukhi*, which is neither Hindu nor Muslim, it contains the inspired verses of dozens of Indian saints along with the songs of Guru Nanak and his successors. If Siri Guru Granth Sahib is not available, a condensed version may also be used for the purpose of taking a *bukam*.

Before taking the reading, a devotee offers his prayer asking guidance for himself and wishing for the well-being of all. Then he, or someone else assigned to that role, opens the pages of the Siri Guru Granth Sahib and allows them to fall where they will. The reader normally chants as he does this, and the greatest care is taken not to intentionally influence where the pages might fall.

When the text lies fully opened, the reader takes the passage on the upper left hand corner and reads those verses aloud. Whatever that passage is, it is taken as the Guru's guidance, literally his order, applicable to the given situation.

Not every Sikh today can understand the meaning of the *bukam* when it is read, since language changes over centuries and while the truth that is spoken is as fresh as ever, the original words now sound somewhat archaic and unfamiliar, especially to Western ears. Moreover, not all people who are ostensibly Sikh even think to pay full attention when a *bukam* is read, their minds preoccupied with a thousand distractions. Nonetheless, there are some notable instances where the reading of a *bukam* had a real and marked effect on the course of history.

First *Hukam* of Siri Guru Granth Sahib, 1708

The tenth Master in Guru Nanak's lineage was a brave and remarkable personality. His entire life, from when he was given the weighty responsibility of guruship at the age of nine, was dedicated to uplifting people and giving them the strength to stand up to powerful tyrants. Sometimes these cruel rulers invoked their prerogative in the name of kingdom. Sometimes they proclaimed their right to oppress others for the sake of their particular religion.

To revive India's heroic legacy, which had grown weak, Guru Gobind employed dozens of poets to take inspiring accounts from that culture's ancient legacy and translate them from the Sanskrit of the scholar-priests into the common language of the people. The Guru also gave his followers a physical and mental discipline to equip them with calm minds and powerful bodies.

From 1688 to 1705, Guru Gobind and his Sikhs were several times attacked by large armies sent to destroy them. Many died in those battles. The Guru's family was scattered. His four sons, the youngest only five and seven, courageously gave their lives rather than succumb to the fear or temptations of their worldly foes.

Throughout all this, the Master never once lost his saintly humility. He had not come to Earth to create yet another cult of power or adulation. To put off those who would focus on his charisma rather than developing their own, he proclaimed openly:

Those who say I am God shall fall into the pit of hell.
Recognize me only as a slave of the Almighty.
Do not have any doubts in this matter.¹⁷⁵

In his final days, Guru Gobind Singh told his disciples that he would not be passing on the line of succession to another human. The lineage would rightfully pass on to the Word, where it had begun, for when Guru Nanak had been asked the source of his inspiration, he had acknowledged only the Word as Guru. In this case, the Master meant to pass the guruship on to the Granth Sahib compiled by the fifth Guru, to which Guru

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Gobind had added the verses of his father, the ninth in succession. It was hence to be called “Siri Guru Granth Sahib.”

The Master was questioned by his disciples about this new turn of events. They were understandably sentimental and wished to always have the Guru speak with and listen to. According to Bhai Nand Lal, who was there with Guru Gobind Singh in his final hours, the Master advised his Sikhs in the following way:

If you should want to sit and talk with me,
Read the Granth Sahib and meditate on its words.
If you want to hear me speak to you,
Read the Granth Sahib and listen in your inner mind.
Recognize the Granth Sahib as my form.
Do not entertain any inkling of doubt about this.

The Guru told his disciples that he had infused his spirit both in them and in Siri Guru Granth Sahib, and that in future, they should obey the dictates of the Word. Guru Gobind Singh then conducted a small ritual formally investing authority in Siri Guru Granth Sahib. After that, the congregation prayed for the first time to the Word as Guru. The pages were then parted and opened.

This is what the Guru said:

Opportunity has dawned. The Master has shown kindness.
The praises of God resound.
My struggles are over. I have come to rest. Come to an end is all my running about.
Now I have attained a state of dignified existence.
The Arranger of destinies has entered this mind
And I have come to the sanctuary of saints.

Pause and reflect.

Lust, rage, greed and infatuation are extinguished
And restrained are all my adversaries.
God is always present. I keep in his sight. At no time is he distant.
In peace and tranquility, my faith is completely fulfilled.
The saints have become my helpers.
In an instant, the wretched are made holy. They is no way to speak of this greatness.
Fearless am I. I have lost all apprehension.
The feet of the Lord provide my protection.
Nanak is day and night absorbed in singing the praise of the Master.¹⁷⁶

The Guru’s words had special significance for everyone. A new existence beyond this mortal form was dawning for the Master in his final day of life. His struggles were indeed coming to an end as he rose to a sublime new level of being.

For his disciples, too, this was an occasion charged with tremendous possibilities. The Guru as Word could easily be enshrined in their hearts. So long as they remembered the sublime verses of Siri Guru Granth Sahib, they would no longer need to be “running about” seeking the Guru’s guidance.

There was consolation for everyone in the affirmation that God remains not far and is omnipresent. In his life, Guru Gobind Singh had praised the power of the saints’ congregation. The Master had confessed that without their active support, he would have achieved nothing. Now it remained for his disciples to appreciate for themselves the essential potency of the saints. The *bukam* ended most fittingly on a note of fearlessness, remembering God’s protection, praising the Master in the day of life, even into the twilight of bodily death.

The Election of Nawab Kapur Singh

In 1733, the descendants of Guru Nanak’s soulful legacy, bound by the chivalric vows of Khalsa^c, were faced with an implacable foe. Mughal authorities were bent on destroying the Sikhs, root and branch. The

^cKhalsa: a member of the Order of Khalsa, those Sikhs dedicated to the discipline of Guru Gobind Singh and living in a consciousness infused with *Amrit*.

Khalsa saint-soldiers knew they needed to band together for the fight of their lives and that they needed one leader to unite and organize their efforts.

Who was it to be? There were no obvious choices. The leader had to be a man of consensus, someone everyone could agree to, not merely the favorite of a certain clan or region. After some discussion, all those assembled in that august gathering, in the presence of Siri Guru Granth Sahib, decided to consult the Guru, and let the Guru give them some meaningful direction.

The following is the *bukam* they received:

One who serves as an instrument of destiny has no need of social status.
They dedicate their mind and body to the True Guru^d, and seek his sanctuary.
Their greatest source of distinction is the Name they cherish in their heart.
The beloved Lord God is their constant companion.
They alone are fit to serve as an instrument of destiny who die while yet alive.
For such a one, pleasure and pain make no difference.
With the Guru's Grace, they are saved by the liberating power of the Word.

Pause and reflect.

Everything they do is in accord with the divine order.
Without the Word, there is no place of rest.
Singing the praise of the Creator, the Name lives in the mind.
The saintly giver gives without hesitation.
The egocentric roams the world in self-delusion.
Without credit, his dealings are counterfeit.
With no credit, he obtains nothing.
The egocentric wastes his life in error.
One who serves the True Guru is an instrument of destiny.
High is their rank and lofty their spirit.
Climbing the Guru's ladder, they become the highest of all.
O Nanak, they are distinguished by the Name!¹⁷⁷

Hearing these words cleared away everyone's anxieties and doubts. The *bukam* most elegantly laid out the qualifications of their leader. Above all else, he would have to be humble and serviceful. After consulting each other, the gathering decided that the most serviceful, and therefore deserving among them, was one Kapur Singh (1697-1753, nawab of the Sikh confederacy: 1733-53), a junior soldier who worked each day in the stable, tirelessly seeing to the well-being of the horses.

When approached by the proposition that he should be their military leader, Kapur Singh agreed only on condition that he might also continue his duties in the stable. That condition being granted, the humblest Sikh took up his post as Nawab Kapur Singh and served his people bravely and wisely for many years to come.

The Rescue of the Brahmin's Bride

On a hot, sweltering day, a brahmin from the town of Kasur approached a gathering of Khalsa saint-warriors in the holy city of Amritsar. The date was April 10, 1763. The Hindu priest's bride had been kidnapped by an Afghan chief named Usman Khan. He pleaded with them to rescue her.

After hearing the brahmin's appeal, the battlewise gathering of Singhs discussed the situation among themselves. Some of them reckoned the number of Afghan forces and forts well-stocked with arms and ammunition. The band of Khalsa was not even at full strength.

Sensing the drift the debate was taking, one Hari Singh spoke his heart. He told the gathered Singhs that since the brahmin had come in faith to the Court of the Guru, it was their moral obligation to do their best to help him. Hearing these words as a call to duty, one Charat Singh took his sword in hand and asked Hari Singh

^dTrue Guru: a Teacher who inspires and empowers their students to live in their highest consciousness.

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to lead the gathering in prayer before Siri Guru Granth Sahib in the Harimandar Sahib. All those assembled there agreed to this proposal, and resolved to act according to the Guru's divine dictate. The *bukam* follows –

There is one Creator of all things.
By the True Guru's Grace we receive all we need.
Meditating on the Name of the Supreme, we blossom forth.
Our destiny has brought us to this wonderful season of greenery.
Let our body, mind and spirit flower
And, in this way, obtain the ambrosial fruit of God-awareness.
Meeting with the masterful saint, peace wells up and all misdeeds are erased.
O Nanak, meditating on the one Name, we will not be sent here again.
Leaning on the True One, the five powerful impulses are subdued.
He leads us to meditate at his own feet, where he stands right in our midst.
Sickness and sadness are all done away and we are always fresh and radiant,
Day and night meditating on the Name. We will not die again,
But return again to the One from whom we were created, O Nanak!
Where do we come from? Where do we go? Where do we end up?
All creatures belong to the Lord. Who can assess his merits?
Those who always speak, meditate and listen
With their minds attuned to that one Lord are his beautiful devotees.
The Lord is Infinite and Incomprehensible. There is none to compare with him.
This truth has been taught him by the perfect True Guru. Nanak tells it to the world.¹⁷⁸

Hearing the encouraging words of their Guru, that band of Khalsa became fixed in its resolve. Disregarding the question of numbers, they set out for the fort where Usman Khan was known to be keeping the kidnapped wife of the Hindu priest.

On that sweltering day, while they journeyed, the saint-warriors did not see another soul, neither were they observed. All the people of the countryside had taken shelter in the dark indoors, away from the scorching rays of the sun.

In this way, the saint-warriors were able to approach the culprit's fort and launch a successful surprise attack. With ease, they entered the stronghold of the Afghan warlord, and managed to rescue and return the brahmin's bride to her husband.

The Whims of State

Maharaja Ranjeet Singh (1780-1839, maharaja: 1801-1839) created and administered a kingdom unlike any other the world has seen. From its humble beginnings, in 1799, he pushed out the borders of his domain with conquests and alliances, so the distinctive Sikh kingdom eventually encompassed some 800,000 square kilometers (310,000 square miles), an area larger than Texas or France. The territory he governed included much of what today is Pakistan, eastern Afghanistan, Jammu and Kashmir, western Tibet and north-western India. For neighbors, he had unruly Afghan tribes in the mountains to the West and the acquisitive East India Company encroaching across the Sutlej River to the East.

Within the maharaja's borders, lived an astonishing array of peoples and cultures. Most of his subjects were Muslims. Many were Hindus. There were also Sikhs, the traditional soldiers and tillers of the soil, as well as an infusion of professional military men from Europe. Some were graduates of Napoleon's Grand Armée. There were Frenchmen and Italians, Spaniards and Hungarians, Irish, Russians and a lone American. In the Maharaja's kingdom, they all found dispensation and justice.

Visiting ambassadors and wayfarers marveled at the sense of good government and communal harmony. The maharaja equally funded the repair and construction of mosques, Hindu temples and Gurdwaras. The rate of literacy in his kingdom was comparable with British India. Women were respected. The army was graced with modern cannon and guns, and trained in the latest European modes of warfare.

In many of his important undertakings, the maharaja deferred to the wishes of his Lord. For this, Ranjeet Singh had a particular custom involving two pieces of paper. On one, he would write out his personal wish, on the other, the opposite. The maharaja would then have both placed before Siri Guru Granth Sahib. A young boy would be brought in to retrieve one of those slips of paper. Whichever it turned out to be, the maharaja would treat the outcome as a *bukam* of his Guru.

Akali Phoola Singh

The original Akalis, or Nihangs, were the blue-swathed saint-warriors of Guru Gobind Singh. They carried on their strict martial tradition in the kingdom of that most cosmopolitan of emperors, Maharaja Ranjeet Singh. Their battlefield commander and exemplar was Akali Phoola Singh (1761-1823), a man of uncommon spirit and rigor.

The Akalis were highly valued by Maharaja Ranjeet Singh and used as shock troops in his fiercest campaigns. Once the fearless Akalis had offered their prayers and taken their battle orders in the form of a *bukam*, they would fight to the last man, but never turn back. The Maharaja and his generals knew this well, and used them often to overwhelm an enemy.

On March 14 1823, there was a grim prospect. The Khalsa army was lined up against an outnumbering foe. A large force of zealous Afghan warriors, led by their battle-hardened chief, Muhammad Azid Barakzaai, were arrayed in their mountain strongholds at Nowshera.

Behind the Khalsa army was the Attock River. They were far from their regular sources of supply. Reinforcements were unlikely and they had no cannon to dislodge the Pathans from their defenses. Under the circumstances, there seemed to be no alternative but to attack. To retreat, would have meant recrossing the Attock with the enemy in hot pursuit, and certain death for many of the maharaja's soldiers.

Under those circumstances, the decision was made to launch an assault. As usual, the Akalis gathered first before their Guru, offered a prayer and received their *bukam* from their True Commander. What that *bukam* was, we will never know.

Just as Akali Phoola Singh and his cavalry of Immortals was mounted and set to charge the enemy, a hurtling messenger arrived from the direction the Attock. "Cannons are coming!" Several powerful cannons were arriving much sooner than expected. By using them, the enemy could be bombarded and dislodged from their secure positions by a steady rain of cannon fire in a matter of hours.

Word was immediately sent to Phoola Singh to postpone his attack and allow time for the cannons to arrive. Hearing the news, the great Akali replied that he had already taken his orders from his Commander-in-Chief. He was to attack, risking all, and not to fear the consequences. Saying no more, Phoola Singh and his Nihangs thundered from their defensive positions into the open field of battle, defying the bullets of the Afghans and the conventional logic of their general and maharaja.

Seeing his best fighters setting out to engage the enemy, the maharaja's heart sank like a stone. He had no choice but to order a general attack. There would be no waiting for cannons.

A tremendous battle ensued. Eventually, the enemy was overcome and made to retreat from its strongholds. Many warriors fought valiantly and went to their eternal reward. One of them was the great Akali, Phoola Singh.

Verdict at Amritsar

At various times in the history of India, its outcaste peoples have improved their lot in life by adopting another religion where the cruel stigma of caste might be erased or at least diminished. Buddhist dharma, Jain dharma, Christianity and Islam have, by turns, accepted large numbers of lower caste Hindus.

In the early 1920's, there was a significant movement into the Sikh fold from the underprivileged Hindu masses. While according to their Guru's teachings the Sikh people ought to have been free of caste discrimination,

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in practice this was not always so. Sikhs who ate and socialized with people born in a lower caste, Hindu or Sikh, were commonly ostracized.

A storm was brewing in the community as many Sikhs sought to assert and defend their social status by shunning Sikhs born in the lower Hindu castes. The matter came to a head on October 12 1920, when a large group of new Sikhs received the *Amrit*^e baptism in Amritsar. This new wave of Khalsa felt encouraged by reformers who promised to support their efforts against the priests of the Sikh establishment.

Fully knowing the significance of their action, they prepared Guru *prashaad*^f to bring with them and offer at the Golden Temple. It was a direct challenge to the caste prejudices of the priests who routinely refused offerings prepared by the hands of members of the lower castes. After some discussion between officiating priests and reformers, it was decided to offer a prayer and consult the Guru.

The *bhukam* read:

The Lord Himself blesses the undeserving, O Sibling of Destiny,
And appoints them to the True Guru's service.
Great is the service of the True Guru, O Sibling of Destiny,
For through it, our minds become attached to God's Name.
The living God himself showers blessings.
We are useless misfits, O Sibling of Destiny,
But the perfect True Guru has embraced us in his blissful union.

Pause and reflect.

Who, who are the misfits, O Beloved,
Blessed by contemplating the True Word?
To cross the fearful world ocean, O Sibling of Destiny,
They boarded the True Guru's boat.
From a piece of scrap iron, I have turned to gold,
Touched by the Guru, the Lord of Alchemy.
Shedding my self-conceit, the Name has come to live in me,
O Sibling of Destiny, and my light is joined with Infinite Light.
I am dedicated. I am dedicated.
I ever dedicate this life as an offering to the True Guru
Who has given me the treasure of the Name.
O Sibling of Destiny, through the Guru's teachings
I am effortlessly absorbed in meditation.
Without the Guru, this state of effortlessness does not arise, O Sibling of Destiny.
Go and ask people of wisdom.
Always serve the True Guru, O Sibling of Destiny and your self-conceit will leave you.
Following the teachings of the True Guru, fear of God arises, O Sibling of Destiny.
True and excellent are the things done in this fear.
The wealth of loving kindness is realized, O Sibling of Destiny
And the True Name becomes one's foundation.
I fall at the feet of those, O Sibling of Destiny, who serve their True Guru.
Their lives are adorned, O Sibling of Destiny, and blessed are their generations.
True is the utterance of the True Word, O Sibling of Destiny.
In it, the Guru has shown his kindness.
Nanak proclaims, One in whose heart God's Name lives, O Sibling of Destiny,
Finds no obstacle whatsoever in their life.¹⁷⁹

^e*Amrit* baptism: the initiation into the Order of Khalsa. During the ceremony, a sacrament called "*Amrit*" is made from water and sugar wafers stirred with a double-edged sword as *Gurbaanee* is chanted over it, much as it was made by the tenth Master on the first Baisakhi at Anandpur Sahib.

^f *prashaad*: blessed food served as a sacrament, usually made of flour, ghee, sugar and water that has been prepared while being chanted over.

Everyone immediately recognized the meaning of the *hukam* for them. In the light of the Guru's verdict, the conservative priests immediately tendered their resignations. Respected members of the congregation quickly came forward to take their places and duly distribute the sweet Guru's *prashaad* to the entire assembly. From that day onwards, all Sikhs, regardless of their previous caste, were accorded equal rights at the Golden Temple.

Hukam for a Yogi

By September of 1968, Harbhajan Singh (1929-2004) Puri had resigned his well-paying position as chief customs inspector at India's busiest airport. He had visited many of his friends to wish them good-bye. He had prepared his family, his parents, his wife and three young children, as best he could, to manage without him.

Harbhajan Singh, later to become known as Yogi Bhajan, was following a call, an urge to be of service to his Guru and to humanity, just as Guru Nanak had been so many years before. Like Guru Nanak, many people thought he had suddenly gone crazy. They thought his marriage had gone bad. They thought many things. His life with a chauffeur and valet, a large staff, prestige, a nice family, many friends, influence, a big house in a nice part of Delhi – why should he want to leave all these things?

The Yogi Sikh, thirty-nine years old, would never succeed in making anyone understand. It was a very personal calling. His Guru was calling him to serve. There would be no denying that call.

In the evening before going to the airport, this time as an outbound passenger, Harbhajan Singh checked in with his Guru. He offered a prayer for guidance, for success, for the well-being of his family. This is what Siri Guru Granth Sahib said:

With your tongue, chant the Name of the One.
It will give you peace and much joy here
And be helpful in the times ahead.

Pause and reflect.

Be rid of your disease of ego
And by the grace of the Guru, practice raja yoga.
Whoever imbibes the essence of God,
Their thirst is quenched.
Those who have found God, the treasure of peace,
Do not go chasing around any more.
Those to whom the Guru has given the Name,
O Nanak, their fears are removed.¹⁸⁰

With the Guru's blessing, Harbhajan Singh made those last, difficult farewells and boarded a plane to a new world. Yogi Bhajan would share his inspiration and knowledge with many people in many lands. Sikh dharma, a clannish, and insular way of life for a few million followers, would never be the same. Many people in many lands who had never heard of the magic and magnificence of Guru Nanak would be changed forever.



In the light of Guru Nanak's teachings and all the arguments about causality, before and since, and all the recent innovations of technology, from the random setting on your CD player to the colorful phantasmagoria of fractal art, we can discern a fine Aquarian insight: God does play dice, but beautifully.

While politicians and zealots, profiteers and generals might appear to dominate in the broad strokes of creation, there is an infinitely creative spirit alive, at work and also at play in the largely invisible details, there not to be controlled, not to be understood, content even to remain largely unobserved. That our gruesome imaginations necessarily depict an "Act of God" as a huge, apparently clumsy and necessarily violent, natural disaster says a good deal more about ourselves than it does about the One we think to describe. The infinite

Everything That Happens

Creator is in the macrocosm and microcosm both, while our limited appreciation encompasses only a tiny fraction of the awesome spectrum of all-that-is.

In the end, we find there is a reason for everything. Things don't just happen for no reason. There is a method in the madness. Our promise lies not in manufacturing a better reason, a better purpose, but in becoming more perfect instruments of the awesome, sometimes confounding, but ultimately compassionate order already here, already pervading all existence.

**Those who are truly learned,
dedicate themselves to the good of all.¹⁸¹**

- Guru Nanak

The Good of All

When Guru Nanak walked the Earth, the going concepts of “humanity” and “altruism” were different from those we cherish and largely take for granted today. Man and womankind was far more divided by the insulating peculiarities of culture and geography – and it showed.

At the time, the few maps of outlying regions that existed were largely speculative and filled with inaccuracies. The seas were rumored to be patrolled by death-dealing dragons. Forests and wilderness were dark and prowled by dangerous animals. It is small wonder that people generally kept close to their hearthfires.

Where today there are less than 200 sovereign states on six continents, in Guru Nanak’s day there were hundreds and thousands of tribes and little kingdoms. Without the homogenizing influence of today’s printed and electronic media, each valley, town and village developed and retained its own distinctive dialect.

Most travel and commerce was highly localized. While common trading interests did unite the peoples of the great cultures of east and west in a limited way, traders themselves were a small and insular class. More often, disparate civilizations met on the battlefield, as kings and conquerors pressed out their borders against neighboring peoples.

Religious prejudice, too, played its part in dividing humanity. Every priesthood had its favorite terms of abuse for people of other faiths. They called them “heathens” and “pagans,” “barbarians” and “infidels.” Egged on by bigoted religious leaders, societies might erupt in cruel campaigns of persecution or send powerful armies to subdue people of cultures they could not understand or appreciate.

It was in this world, a world largely divided against itself, that Guru Nanak set out on four epic journeys to touch people’s hearts and reveal to them their common humanity. With his companion, Mardana, accompanying him on the rebeck, he serenaded far-flung kings and villagers, wanton thieves and would-be saints, with his message of love and essential goodness.

Guru Nanak and Babur the Conqueror

In the course of Guru Nanak’s wide-ranging travels, he came in the path of a conquering army under one Zahir Ud-din Muhammed Babur (1483-1530, Mughal emperor: 1526-30). This Babur, a descendent of the fearsome Tamerlaine, had begun his career of conquest by three times taking and three times losing Samarkand. In 1504, his forces at last took over Kabul. Then, assembling his army, he attacked India in 1517, and again in 1519.

According to an old written account, Guru Nanak was in the town of Eminabad, in present-day Pakistan, when Babur’s force attacked. The town was taken, the defenders put to the sword and the inhabitants taken as slaves.

On this occasion, the Guru composed a song describing the suffering of the people:

Leading the marriage party of wickedness, Babur has descended from Kabul
To demand the bride by force, O Lalo.
Modesty and righteousness both have vanished,
And villainy proclaims its dominion, O Lalo.

Gone is the time of *qazî*[§] and brahmin.
Now it is Satan who conducts the marriage rites, O Lalo.
Muslim women read the Quran and in their misery call on God, O Lalo.
Hindu women of high status and low, suffer the same fate, O Lalo.
Hymns in praise of bloodletting are sung,
And the bride and groom have their brows anointed in blood.
Nanak sings the praise of the Lord in the city of carcasses, and voices this observation:
The One who created mortals and leads them to their pleasures,
Sits apart and watches dispassionately.
True is the Lord and true his verdict.
True is the justice he administers as he sees fit.¹⁸²

Along with thousands of other captives, the Guru was given a load to carry and Mardana, his disciple, a horse to lead. In passing them, one of Babur's men was intrigued to notice that the Guru's bundle was carried without any support, while his disciple's horse followed of its own accord, without reins.

When Babur was told of this, he remarked, "If I had known there were such a holy man here, this town should not have been destroyed." At the suggestion of the warden of the prison, who had been witness to these prodigies, Babur went to the place where thousands of people were confined to see for himself.

At the prison, there were hundreds of women huddled over hand-turned millstones, grinding wheat. The Guru, too, had been given a handmill for this purpose. When the sultan found him, he was deep in meditation, singing a hymn. The grindstone appeared to be turning by itself.

Seeing the Guru, the sultan fell down and kissed his feet, saying, "On the face of this *fukir* one sees God himself!" Then all his courtiers, Hindus and Muslims alike, offered their respective salutations.

Babur offered, "O Dervish, let me give you something."

The Guru answered, "I will take nothing, but you must release all the prisoners of this town."

Thereupon, by the order of Babur the conqueror, all the people of Eminabad were set free and their property returned to them. The people of the town returned to their homes and began to dispose of their dead. Every house was darkened with grief.

One day, Mardana asked the Guru to explain the reason for the massacre of the town. "Surely some of the people have done wrong, but why have so many been killed on their account?"

In answer, Guru Nanak pointed to a tree and asked Mardana to go and sleep under it. When he awoke, the Guru said, he would give his explanation.

Anxious to hear the Guru's reply, his disciple straightaway lay down underneath the spreading branches of the tree and took a nap. While he slept, a drop of honey fell from above onto his naked breast. Sensing the sweet syrup on Mardana's chest, a troop of ants came to drink it. Feeling the movement of the little ants on his skin, the sleeping Mardana began unconsciously to crush them to death with his hand.

On awakening, the Guru asked Mardana what he had just done.

Mardana replied that since one insect had bitten him, he had killed them all.

The Guru replied, "It is in this way that the people of this town were killed."

Before parting from Eminabad, the sultan asked for spiritual instruction and a blessing on his lineage. The Guru advised Babur to deliver justice, respect the holy, and give up wine and gambling. "The ruler who indulges in these shall, if he survives, regret his misdeeds," said the Guru. His final advice was to be kind to those he defeated, and to worship God in spirit and in truth. If he did all these things, Babur's empire would endure for a time.

Babur went on to become master of Delhi and Agra, where he founded the Mughal dynasty. Before passing his kingdom to his son, Humayun, in 1530, he had defeated all his rivals and taken the whole of northern India.

[§] *qazî*: a Muslim who serves a both as religious official and judge.

“It is Difficult to be a Muslim”

Babur was only the most recent of a succession of invaders who had found their way to India since the tenth century. With them, they had brought distinctive foods, clothing, customs, language and the faith of Islam. While, at times, the harsh pride of conquest made Muslim rule hard for ordinary people to bear, at other times, greathearted Sufi saints succeeded in spreading the goodwill of Islam.

Though he did not consider himself Muslim, Guru Nanak – who was respectfully called “Pir Nanak” among the people of the Prophet – was not beyond teaching the essential principles of that faith. With his keen judgement of human character and his masterful use of language, he endeared himself to the Muslim priests whom he diverted from the error of their ways, and the common people he saved from their predations.

It is difficult to be a Muslim.
 If one truly is, then one may rightfully be considered a Muslim.
 First of all, one should find the path of saints to be sweet.
 Then, one should be robbed of the pride of one’s possessions.
 Submitting oneself to the authority of God,
 One must shed the false distinction between death and life.
 Subjecting oneself to the will of God, the Doer of all,
 One’s self-conceit is erased,
 And when, O Nanak, one practices kindness to all living beings,
 Then one may worthily be called a Muslim.¹⁸³

The Guru well knew that much of what passed for religion was simply a matter of idle talk or boastful argument. Soulful awareness and rightful conduct occupied no place in the hearts of many who prided themselves on their religion.

To take what rightfully belongs to another, is like a Muslim eating pork, or a Hindu eating beef.
 Our Spiritual Guide stands by us if we do not eat those carcasses.
 By mere talk, people do not earn passage to heaven.
 Salvation comes only from the practice of truth.
 By adding spices to forbidden foods, they are not made acceptable.
 O Nanak, from false talk, only falsehood is obtained.
 There are five prayers and five times of prayer. Those five have five names.
 Let the first be truthfulness, the second honest living, and the third charity in the Name of God.
 Let the fourth be goodwill to all, and the fifth the praise of the Lord.
 Repeat the prayer of good deeds, and then, you may call yourself a Muslim.
 O Nanak, the false obtain falsehood, and only falsehood.¹⁸⁴

The Guru taught that all races and religions come from one common humanity. While egotistical priests and scholars might differ on points of religion, God and his saints are forever one in the spirit of truth and loving-kindness.

True Religion

In Guru Nanak’s time, the priests of Hinduism, complacent from thousands of years of dominating India’s religious and spiritual life, found themselves in an unfamiliar crisis. Wherever Muslim rulers, known in India as “Turks,” ruled the land, the brahmins no longer received their customary patronage and privileges. Where Islam was favored, Persian, and not Sanskrit, served as the language of government and Muslims, not Hindus, were favored in the granting of positions of influence.

Discriminatory laws targeted Hindu subjects. A hated tax called the *jizya* was imposed on all non-Muslims. Whenever Hindus visited their holy places, they could expect to pay a pilgrimage tax. While political prudence usually stayed the hands of Muslim rulers among their overwhelmingly Hindu populace, brahmins and others intent on practicing their ancient faith were liable to persecution by religious zealots. Those fanatics tried to enforce the strict Islamic *shariat*, the religious law that decreed death or a life of utter humiliation for subjects who would not embrace Islam.¹⁸⁵

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Gradually the culture of those parts of India under Muslim governance in the north, west and centre, and to the east in Bengal, changed as the language and customs of Islam took hold. Guru Nanak recognized the development as part of the divine plan, a change whose time had simply come.

Now the original Being is called "Allah." The turn of the sheikh has come.
Hindu temples and gods are taxed. This is what that religion has come to.
Everywhere there are pitchers for ablution, calls to worship, recitations in Arabic, prayer rugs.
Krishna's deep blue body has dyed the foreign garb of the worshipers in its unmistakable hue.
In every house, the spoken tongue has changed.
If you, O Lord of the Earth, cause something to happen from your peerless nature,
Who would I be to question it?
In the four directions, people offer their salaam to you.
In every house, they speak your praise.¹⁸⁶

The Guru exposed how hypocrisy inspired by greed undermined the moral authority of many brahmins. The priestly class in practice shared common cause with their Muslim rulers. Both depended on the subjugation of the country's Hindu masses.¹⁸⁷

On their foreheads they wear sacred marks,
And around their hips a distinguishing loincloth,
But in their hands is a knife. They are the butchers of the world!
Wearing blue clothes like Muslims, they consider themselves in fashion.
Although they eat the offerings of uncivilized brutes,
They persist in ostentatiously displaying respect for their scriptures.¹⁸⁸

The Hindu visits the house of the Hindu,
Places a sacred thread around his neck and reads sacred texts.
Wearing the thread, he then commits atrocities. His bathings and washings will be useless.
The Muslim praises his faith. Without a Spiritual Guide, his efforts come to nothing.
The path is laid out, but few go there.
Without good actions, no one enters paradise.¹⁸⁹

The brahmins insisted on strict adherence to the rules of India's caste-based apartheid. According to their tradition, the priest-scholars lived at the pinnacle of Indian society, above the castes of the soldiers, businesspeople and laborers. Non-Hindus were considered uncouth and uncivilized. The elitist pretensions of the brahmins were only exacerbated by those who preached the universal brotherhood of Islam.

Guru Nanak offered a vision of a different kind of brahmin:

He who knows Brahman, the God of all, is a brahmin.
He meditates, withstands hardship, masters his senses and does good.
In modesty and contentment, he upholds his religion.
Bursting his bonds, he is free.
Such a brahmin is worthy of worship.¹⁹⁰

Guru Nanak never embraced the ancient faith of his forefathers, but his willingness to stand up to the hypocrisy and injustice of all kinds of religious authorities won him the love and respect of many Hindus.

The Guru and the Carpenter

Bhai Lalo was a virtuous man, a carpenter by trade. Guru Nanak stayed with him for three days during a visit to his town, then known as Saidpur, in present-day Pakistan.

At the time of the Guru's visit, a wealthy Hindu official, named Malik Bhago, was arranging a feast, to which he invited all the upper-caste Hindus and holy men of the town. Such a feast, known as a "brahm bhoj," was an act of charity whereby well-to-do Hindus hoped to gain religious merit.

After the grand event, Malik Bhago came to know that a certain holy man had declined his invitation and chosen to dine with a low-caste carpenter instead. Messengers were sent to Bhai Lalo's humble abode, to bring the Guru to the mansion of Malik Bhago.

When the Guru arrived at his home, Malik Bhago spoke accusingly, “Why did you ignore my invitation to the feast in honor of brahmins and other men of piety? Is the food your casteless host serves better than mine?”

Guru Nanak replied, “I eat whatever God provides for me. In His sight, there are no castes.”

“Then,” as delicious foods were summoned from his kitchen, his wealthy host went on, “you should eat whatever is offered in this house.”

The Guru asked Bhai Lalo, who had followed him to Malik Bhago’s estate, to bring some food from his house. When he had returned, the Guru took Lalo’s coarse bread in his right hand and one of Malik Bhago’s delicacies in his left. As he held and squeezed them, milk began to drip from the simple bread earned by Lalo’s honest labor, while from Malik Bhago’s rich food there oozed an unmistakable flow of blood. All who witnessed it were astonished.

Bhago instantly recognized the Master’s judgement. He begged the Guru’s forgiveness and promised he would show consideration not only to men of wealth and status, but also to the meek and poor. Guru Nanak assigned Malik Bhago the task of starting a free community kitchen to feed people of every caste and creed.

The Verdict of Flowers

Guru Nanak’s life mission had been to inspire harmony between peoples and self-mastery among his devotees. Before passing from this world, he appointed his best disciple as successor to his life’s work, and gave him the name, “Angad”, meaning he should continue as an *ang*, or limb, of his. Afterwards, Guru Nanak retired to his farm at Kartarpur and left his successor to manage the affairs of his disciples.

A few weeks had passed in this way when, on September 7, 1539, the original Guru affectionately gathered his disciples one final time to wish them farewell before he breathed his last. Guru Nanak led everyone in a recitation of Kirtan Sohila^h, followed by the last verse of Japji Sahibⁱ. He then drew a sheet over himself uttered “Wahay Guru!” and surrendered his soul to the Infinite.

His Muslim and Hindu followers were united in their grief, but divided over what to do with their beloved Guru’s remains. The Muslims were determined that it should be buried in accord with their sacred tradition. The Guru’s Hindu disciples, however, insisted the body should be cremated according to their ancient rites.

The Guru proposed both sides collect flowers and bring them, the Hindus on the one side, the Muslims on the other. Whoever’s flowers were fresh in the morning would have their choice.

Early the next morning, the disciples came to see for themselves the verdict of the flowers. All around, there were flowers – Muslim flowers, Hindu flowers, big droopy red flowers, tiny white flowerlets, fancy fragrant flowers, gorgeous multi-colored flowers, long-stemmed flowers, flowers in clusters, flowers of all kinds and descriptions.

As it happened, the blossoms on both sides had remained perfectly in bloom and, surprisingly, when someone looked under the sheet, the Guru’s body had vanished. Together, the amazed disciples respectfully divided all the flowers, the Hindus to cremate their half and the Muslims to bury theirs.

Guru Angad

The immensity of the newly anointed Guru Angad (1504-52, guru: 1539-52)’s task cannot be overstated. His Master had been Guru Nanak, the Guru of the world, master of meditation, inspired poet, world traveler, embodiment of compassion. Out of his greatness, the loving Guru had picked Angad to carry on his work.

^h Kirtan Sohila: Sikh evening prayer, also recited during last rites.

ⁱ Japji Sahib: the Song of the Soul composed by Guru Nanak.

^j Wahay Guru!: literally “unspeakable wisdom;” an expression of divine bliss and spiritual surrender.

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Guru Angad was understandably missing his master and somewhat overawed at the scope of his assigned task. For six months, the second Guru retired into solitary meditation.

When finally he emerged, Guru Angad energetically began his work of providing guidance and inspiration to the Gurusikhs^k. Like his master, he made the inspired verses, or *Gurbaanee*, of Guru Nanak the centerpiece of community life. *Gurbaanee* was sung each morning and evening in the congregations. It also provided the substance of Guru Angad's lectures to his Sikhs.

In time, Guru Angad was moved by such inspiration that he wrote his own *Gurbaanee*, although he never attached his name to it. Beginning a tradition that was to be followed until the time of the tenth Master, he designated himself "Nanak" in the compositions that he wrote.

Guru Angad also set about compiling a record of Guru Nanak's life and collecting his *Gurbaanee* for posterity. Already, some of the Guru's verses had been written down – in the Sanskrit alphabet by his Hindu disciples, and by his Muslim devotees using their customary Arabic letters.

In order to convey the Guru's true universal spirit and to make an effort at bridging the wide gulf that remained between his Muslim and Hindu followers, Guru Angad created an entirely new script for the Guru's writings. This *Gurmukhee*, meaning "from the Guru's mouth," was perfectly suited to the purpose. It was simple and, most importantly, it was partial neither to the Hindus, nor to Islam.

Food for All

One of Guru Nanak's basic teachings was that all people, regardless of their religion or social standing, were worthy of respect. As a practical measure, the Guru established the custom of *Guru-ka-langar*, a free community kitchen to serve pilgrims and guests, devotees and the poor alike.

The ideal of the *Guru-ka-Langar* is that food should be provided freely to all, just as spiritual knowledge is dispensed generously to one and all by the Guru. Hence, the rows of people seated on the floor enjoying the hospitality of the *Guru-ka-Langar* are known as the "pangat", while its corollary, the congregation gathered for meditation is called the "sangat."

Guru-ka-Langar soon became an integral aspect of every Gurdwara. Often, space equal to the worship area was dedicated to the cooking and serving of food. Usually, the meals were entirely prepared and served by volunteer labor, although in exceptionally large Gurdwaras, a sum might be paid to some essential staff. Anyone was free to work or otherwise contribute to the *Guru-ka-Langar*.

Tasty vegetarian fare was served. Everyone received the same food from the bounty of the Guru's kitchen, each according to their taste or desire. There were no special dishes for the rich or for temple regulars.

By the time of the third Guru (Guru Amar Das, 1479-1574, guru: 1552-74), the institution of *Guru-ka-Langar* had become so important that guests were required to sit and eat before seeing the Guru. Even the mighty Emperor Akbar (1542-1605, raja of Punjab, then Mughal emperor : 1556-1605) was informed he could not have an audience with the Guru until he had joined in the community meal. Though the food on that day was nothing more than coarse, unseasoned rice, the emperor remarked that it tasted to him like ambrosia.

Akbar was so moved by his experience that he offered to donate a large parcel of land for the supply of provisions for the *Guru-ka-Langar*. While the Guru refused the offer, saying everything he needed was provided by God, the kind Emperor was permitted to give the land over to Bibi Bhani, the Guru's youngest daughter.

In the time of the tenth Guru, the Master himself, disguised as a pilgrim, made surprise checks of various *Guru-ka-Langar* facilities. He ordered that a guest should be served food without any hesitation or delay. To him is attributed the saying, "The mouth of the hungry is the Guru's treasury." As a result of this longstanding custom of open hospitality, the first Sikh coin to be minted in the mid-eighteenth century was engraved with the maxim: "*Deg tegh fateh* – victory to the Guru's kitchen and the sword!"

^k Gurusikhs: disciples of the Guru.

The Power of Humility

Baba Siri Chand (1494-1629) was the eldest of Guru Nanak's two sons. He was designated the Guru's special emissary to the reclusive yogis in their forest and mountain retreats.

In his wisdom, the Guru had passed over his two sons, the younger Lakshmi Das and the elder Siri Chand, in giving his spiritual authority to Guru Angad. Baba Siri Chand had not taken kindly to being overlooked in this way. He resented and avoided meeting the first Guru's successors, the second and third Gurus, whom he considered his rivals.

Finally, Baba Siri Chand decided to overcome his ill feelings and pay a visit to Guru Ram Das (1534-1581, guru: 1574-81), the fourth in the line of succession. As a tribute, he came with an offering of sweets and 500 rupees.

While making conversation, Siri Chand, who was many years older than his host, remarked at the length of the Guru's beard.

His host replied, "Yes. I have grown a long beard so that with it I might wipe the feet of saintly men like you."

The elder Baba was so touched by the Guru's words that a newfound respect awakened in his heart. Instead of a rival, he began to recognize his own father's spiritual eminence in Guru Ram Das.

Baba Siri Chand said, "O Great King, you are better than me. It is fitting that you should occupy my father's place. It is magic like this which has made you Guru. I have no such power, so I was passed over. I cannot express your greatness. The disciples who gain your vision shall be liberated!"

Baba Siri Chand went on to live many more years as a friend of the Guru's House.

The Harimandar and Adi Granth

By the time of the fifth Master, Guru Arjun (1563-1606, guru: 1581-1606), there was hardly any city in the East where Sikhs could not be found. Once the spirit of Guru Nanak had become so widespread, what remained was for his successors to consolidate, embellish and, later on, to defend it.

The foundation for the jewel of all Sikh temples, the Harimandar, known in English as the Golden Temple, was laid at this time. It was situated in the sacred pool of healing water, which had earlier been excavated by Guru Ram Das. Guru Arjun invited his friend, Mian Mir, a respected Muslim holy man, to lay the cornerstone of the temple in 1588.

When people suggested that the temple they were constructing should be raised high above the other buildings in the neighborhood, the Guru disagreed, "No. The lowest shall become the highest. The more a tree is filled with fruit, the more its branches bend toward Earth. From whatever direction you approach the temple, you should have to descend eight or ten steps. In this way, let the Harimandar be the lowest building of all."

This special temple was to be visibly distinctive in other ways. While Hindu temples and mosques were traditionally closed on three sides, with the temples facing to the sunrise in the East, and the mosques toward Mecca in the West, this temple was designed to have doors in each of the four directions, open to one and all.

As a centerpiece for this magnificent place of prayer and meditation, Guru Arjun set about creating a unique work of universal significance. The Guru arranged all the writings of his predecessors and his own considerable poetic output. He sent messengers far and wide, to find and obtain hymns Guru Nanak might have composed in his extensive travels. As well, the Guru invited the followers of other saints to submit the inspiring songs and poetry of their traditions.

A great deal of sifting and organizing was done. Works were rejected for extremes in outlook, whether they overly despised or embraced the world. Some songs were far too morbid. Others were so ecstatic they were difficult to bear.

In the end, thousands of inspiring hymns were selected and compiled in a work like no other. In a time when it was considered sacrilege for a Hindu to hear a Muslim sermon, or for a low-caste Hindu to take spiritual

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instruction from a brahmin, the Guru had masterfully bound verses of saints, Muslim and Hindu of every caste, together with his own inspired compositions.

When it was completed, the Guru named it the Adi Granth, the “original tome.” It comprised some 1,400 pages – almost 6,000 verses, hand-written and arranged according to thirty different musical scales. The Adi Granth uniquely testified to the underlying oneness of all creation. Page by page, it served to instruct and uplift the human spirit, directing it to God, the Supreme Spirit and One Creator.

Out of his deep sense of awe and appreciation before the inspired Word, Guru Arjun was accustomed to sleeping on the floor underneath the richly caparisoned Adi Granth. The Guru advised his Sikhs that the Adi Granth was the embodiment of the spirit of Guru Nanak. It was the Shabd Guru, designated for the liberation of humanity everywhere. The Guru ordered that it should be translated into many other languages, so its enlightening influence might illumine the world.

At last, on August 16, 1604, the Adi Granth was installed like royalty, under a canopy and on a raised seat, in the middle of the Harimandar. Baba Buddha, who had served since the days of the first Guru, was made the officiating priest by Guru Arjun. After prayers of thanksgiving had been offered, the volume was opened, and this is what it said:

The Lord himself has come and taken up the task of the saints.
Beautiful is the Earth, beautiful the pool containing the ambrosial waters.
The ambrosial waters are filling it, the task is completed and all desires are fulfilled.
Ovations are resounding throughout the world and all misgivings are laid to rest.
The praises of the perfect Being, eternal and undying, are sung by the Vedas and Puranas.
The Absolute Lord has kept his promise. Nanak meditates on the Name of that Lord.¹⁹¹

The Hope of the Hopeless

The Guru’s House was well known as a place where any and all could find solace and inspiration. People of all communities and every social class sought out the Guru in good times and especially in times of need.

On a day in May of 1606, a royal prince at the head of 650 horsemen came for the Guru’s blessing and his material assistance. He was Khusrau, the popular grandson of Emperor Akbar.

When relations between his father, the impetuous Jahangir (1569-1627, Mughal emperor: 1605-27), and the Emperor had become strained, Prince Khusrau had been put in the dangerous position of being widely considered his father’s rival to the throne. Then, just a few months before his passing away, Akbar had reconciled with Khusrau’s father. Shortly after Akbar’s death, Prince Khusrau fled the capital for his life.

Guru Arjun recognized the young prince, who had earlier visited with Emperor Akbar. The prince pleaded that he was poor and friendless, without enough money to escape to Kabul. The Guru was well acquainted with the consequences of helping a fugitive from the emperor to escape. But, having no fear, the Guru offered Prince Khusrau and his men the largess of the *Guru-ka-Langar* and lodging for the night, as well as 5,000 rupees to help him on his way.

The prince was captured a few days later and summarily put to death. This pleased the hard-hearted emperor on two grounds. For one, he was happy to be rid of his popular young rival. For another, he now had grounds to act against Guru Arjan.

The emperor, unlike his liberal-minded father, had no sympathy for any religious tradition but his own. Rather, he had been observing the growth of the Sikh community with a burning heart. In his memoirs, the emperor clearly revealed his animosity toward the Guru:

A Hindu named Arjun lived at Goindwal on the bank of the river Beas in the garb of a holy man. As a result, many of the simpleminded Hindus, as well as ignorant and foolish Muslims, have been persuaded to adopt his ways and manners, and he has raised the banner of sainthood and holiness. From all sides, rustics and idiots become his confirmed followers. This business has been flourishing for three or four generations. For a long time it has been in my mind to either put an end to this false traffic or bring him into the fold of Islam.¹⁹²

Now Jahangir summoned Guru Arjun to see him at his durbar in Lahore. The Guru could well discern the intent of the summons. As a precaution, he appointed his eleven-year-old son, Hargobind, as his successor. The Guru also spoke consoling words to his wife before setting out for Lahore, in the company of five devoted Sikhs:

“This body does not last forever. For this reason, a wise person should not lavish affection on it. Whatever is born, must die, and whatever is high must fall sooner or later. This is nature’s law. To love the body is a big mistake. All bodies daily grow older and do not keep their original strength. From a child, one grows to be a man. Then comes old age, which seizes the body and makes it waste away until it falls into its final sleep. Live on when I am gone. Do not mourn for me and make no effort of your own to separate your soul from your body.”¹⁹³

When the emperor asked the Guru to explain the assistance he had provided Prince Khusrau, he replied:

“I regard all people, whether Hindu or Muslim, rich or poor, friend or foe, without love or hate. It is on this account that I gave your son money for his journey, and not because I was in opposition to you. If I had not helped him in his forlorn condition, and shown some regard for the kindness of your father, the Emperor Akbar to myself, all people would have despised me for my heartlessness and ingratitude, or they would have said that I feared you. This would have been unworthy of a follower of Guru Nanak, the Guru of the world.”¹⁹⁴

Naturally, Jahangir’s hatred of the Sikhs was not assuaged by the claim that Guru Nanak was “the Guru of the world.” He ordered the fifth Guru to pay a fine of 200,000 rupees and to alter those hymns of the Adi Granth that opposed the Hindu and Muslim religions.

Guru Arjun refused to pay the fine, since he admitted to no guilt. He also refused to alter the Adi Granth in any respect, since its hymns were the outcome of divine inspiration and offered no disrespect to any Hindu incarnation or Muslim prophet.

Moreover, the Guru said that his main object in life was the spread of truth and destruction of falsehood. If, to realize that objective, he must shed his mortal body, he would consider it his good fortune.

The emperor left without a word, but the magistrate informed the Guru that he must either pay the fine or be imprisoned. When the Sikhs of Lahore heard this, they quickly offered to take up a collection to pay the required amount. The Guru would not agree. “Fines,” said the Master, “are for thieves, adulterers, slanderers and robbers,”¹⁹⁵ but not for men living righteously.

Guru Arjun was bound in chains and taken to the Lahore fort, where he was tortured in the sweltering heat of the hottest month of the year. On hearing of the torments being endured by the Guru, his old friend, Mian Mir (1550-1635), a respected Muslim holy man, came to visit. He was moved to tears by what he saw. The saint begged the Guru’s permission to pray for the destruction of that cruel government, or to petition the emperor for his release and the punishment of his torturers.

The Guru managed to console Mian Mir, saying, “I bear all this torture to set an example to the teachers of the True Name, so they might not lose patience or abuse God in times of difficulty.”¹⁹⁶

The Guru’s tormentors had him sit on an iron plate while they stoked a slow flame underneath and poured blistering hot sand over his body. After five days and nights, the Master asked to be taken to bathe in the waters of the Ravi River. His jailers favored the idea. The cold waters of the river would open the Guru’s wounds, they thought, and make him more susceptible to their painful tortures.

Arriving by slow and difficult steps at the river filled with Himalayan ice water, the Guru bathed his feet and hands. Then he immersed his whole body in the chill waters, reciting Japji Sahib as he did so. The Sikhs who had joined him there, followed his lead.

The Guru greeted and spoke to his disciples:

“I have achieved my life object. Go to my son, holy Hargobind, and console him. Tell him not to mourn or cry, but to sing God’s praises. Ask him to help the other members of the family in their hour of grief. Tell him he should sit fully armed on his throne and maintain an army to the best of his ability. Have him attach the crest of spiritual sovereignty to his forehead according to the ancient custom, and ever treat his Sikhs with utmost courtesy. Tell him to hold Baba Buddha in honor and,

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in all respects except the wearing of arms, adopt the practices of the preceding Gurus. Do not cremate my body, but allow it to flow on the bosom of this river.”¹⁹⁷

Spotting a travelling musician with a two-stringed lute, the Guru invited him to take a seat at a pleasant spot on the river and sing the Guru’s hymns. The minstrel sat down and began to play the Guru’s hymns with a great deal of feeling.

As the musician sang and played, those who were gathered there celebrated their good fortune in having known and witnessed the kindness and courage of the fifth Guru. Even as they joined their thoughts and hearts together in praise of Guru Arjun and the Creator who had staged the entire play in all its magnificence, the spirit of their Guru shed its earthly form and merged once more in the ever-flowing, endless river of creation. The day was May 30, 1606.

Liberator of Kings

An uneasy peace existed between the Mughal raj and the House of Guru Nanak in the wake of Guru Arjun’s martyrdom. In obedience to his father’s last words, Guru Hargobind (1595-1644, guru: 1606-44) had armed himself with not one, but two shining swords, one representing his spiritual mastery and the other his command of worldly affairs.

Within a month, the Guru had created a large, impressive throne from which to conduct day to day affairs. At twelve feet in height, it towered twice the height of the throne of the emperor, boldly in defiance of the imperial order prohibiting even an ordinary pedestal more than two feet in height. From this Akal Takhat or “Immortal Throne” that the Guru issued his first edict. It was addressed to Sikh congregations far and wide, announcing the creation of the Akal Takhat and asking they bring weapons and horses as their offerings.

Hearing of Guru Hargobind’s fame, a number of brave warriors and powerful wrestlers came to his service. They formed the core of a volunteer army of 500 men. To develop the skills necessary in battle, they spent much time with the Guru in military exercises. When the business of the day had been attended to, the Guru would often ride off with a small retinue to hunt tigers and deer in the neighboring forests.

While Guru Arjun had customarily being called “True King”, his son began to look and act the part of a regal sovereign. Many of the Guru’s Sikhs, including his mother, expressed their reservations about this new, martial style, but the Master would not be deterred. Many evenings, he would arrange for bards to sing ballads of courage and gallantry at the Akal Takhat, by the perimeter of the pool surrounding the Harimandar.

When Emperor Jahangir heard reports of the young Guru’s increasingly imperial style, he was doubly suspicious. He was still not reconciled to the existence of the Sikhs. Moreover, there were rumors circulating that Guru Hargobind was planning an attack to avenge his father’s final ordeal.

Two of the emperor’s key ministers held opposing views of the Guru’s intentions, and tried to influence him accordingly. Wazir Khan was himself a devotee of the Guru. Chandu Shah was a wealthy banker and revenue official of the Mughal court at Lahore, who had earlier been instrumental in influencing the emperor against Guru Arjun. While he tried his best to sow distrust and malice in Jahangir’s heart, Wazir Khan spoke of the Guru’s virtues.

To resolve the matter, Emperor Jahangir told Wazir Khan to invite Guru Hargobind to Agra, the Mughal capital. Naturally, the Guru also received much conflicting advice. Should he should go and meet the emperor? It had been only six years since his father had been summoned, never to return.

In the end, the Guru decided, despite the admonitions of many of his disciples, to set out for Agra. Unlike his father, who had gone to his hearing with only five Sikhs, and made arrangements for the passing on of his spiritual responsibilities, Guru Hargobind made no such arrangements, but took with him an armed escort of 300 men.

Partly from Wazir Khan’s glowing references, the emperor put on a show of great respect for his holy guest. Seeing the Guru for himself, and recognizing his youth, Jahangir decided to test his knowledge of religions. Again and again the Guru gave suitable replies based on *Gurbaanee* and Gurusikh teachings. Still, the emperor did not feel satisfied.

When Jahangir raised the question of the fine that had been imposed on the Guru's father, and remained unpaid, Hargobind repeated the argument of his father, that he had not committed any crime and therefore would not pay any fine. As for hunting and bearing arms, no restriction had been imposed by the government on its subjects. Regarding his holding court, the Guru submitted that only religious matters were taken up and that he did not preach against the emperor or his rule. He assured Jahangir that he was a loyal subject of the government who abided by its laws.

The emperor invited Guru Hargobind to join him in a hunting expedition. During their outing, he witnessed the Guru's skill in slaying a tiger with only his sword and shield. On the way to Agra, the emperor asked why the Guru was called the "True King", and whether that did not imply that he, the emperor, was a false king.

The Guru replied, "I have never told anyone to call me true king. Where there is love between people, there is no need for formality and a man is simply treated as he treats others. I love my Sikhs in proportion to the love they have for me. In Guru Nanak's eyes, there is only one Emperor over all, and that is God."

According to a popular Sikh account, a young grass-cutter approached the imperial camp about this time. He asked the people who were around where he might find the Guru. Mistaking Jahangir for the Guru, someone pointed and said, "He is sitting under that tree."

The young man went there, bowed low, and pulled a small coin, a cent in value, out as his offering. Placing it before the emperor, he said, "O True King, all earthly kings are false. Your realm is permanent in every age. Protect me at my last hour and save me from hell. I am a poor disciple of yours. Only your kingship is real and powerful enough to protect me."

The emperor said to his attendants, "I cannot even save myself. How can I save this man's soul?" By this incident, the emperor could see that the Guru had no way of prompting the disciple to call him "True King." He said to the grass-cutter, "I am a false king." Then, pointing away, he said, "There is the True King."

The grass-cutter immediately took back his coin and ran with it to the Guru, who received him affectionately and gave him the following instruction, "My brother, meditate on God. Live honestly. Do not desire your neighbor's wife or property. Be kind to the suffering. Practice the Guru's teachings. In this way, you will enjoy happiness in this world and the next."

At Agra, the emperor became very ill. At Chandu's instigation, the court astrologers and ministers told Jahangir that, to avoid the dire consequences of an unlucky astrological alignment, a holy man must be confined in the royal prison of Gwalior. The saint must then remain there for a time to pray for his health and wellbeing.

Hearing the emperor's intention, the Guru did not hesitate. He advised his troops to stay behind, and taking with him five Sikhs, set out for the mountain fortress of Gwalior.

In all these events, Jahangir revealed his narrow religious outlook and despotic disposition. It is no wonder then that the tone of his memoirs, quoted below, varies considerably from the account of the Guru's disciples.

I ordered that he should be produced in my court. He obeyed the order. He could not give proper replies to my questions. I found him without wisdom and sagacity, and extremely arrogant. I thought it was necessary to confine him for a few days in a disciplinary jail so that his brain and temper might be somewhat rectified and the people's commotion subside. I therefore entrusted him to the stone-hearted Bani Rae to keep him a prisoner in the fort of Gwalior.¹⁹⁸

Gwalior was a special prison for important political prisoners. It contained many kings who had been deprived of their thrones by Jahangir. They were happy when they received news that the Guru was to join them.

The Guru remained for months in that ancient fort with the rajas, himself serving an indefinite sentence. Periodically, his disciples would make the long trek from Punjab to pray outside the walls of the fort. The Guru's mother sent old Baba Buddha to bring him home. The Master replied that he was perfectly happy in the prison, where he could meditate without the distraction of worldly people constantly bothering him for the satisfaction of trivial desires.

History tells us Guru Hargobind was confined in the Gwalior fort for two years, from 1617 to 1619. Some accounts say the emperor simply forgot about the Guru. Others maintain that he was kept ignorant of the

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Guru's condition by people in his inner circle who were opposed to the Sikhs. Finally, after a number of petitions by the Guru's disciples and supporters, Jahangir ordered Guru Hargobind released.

The sixth Guru had, by this time, developed a close relationship with all the prisoners of Gwalior. The Master responded to the emperor's offer by saying he would only leave Gwalior if his fellow captives were also released. After some reflection, Jahangir agreed to release the rajas also, so long as the Guru would vouch for their future conduct.

A popular account relates that the emperor ordered that only as many prisoners as could catch hold of the Guru's robe would be freed. Guru Hargobind then had a special robe designed with fifty-two tassels attached to it, one for each of the prisoners. In this way, each of the captives could take hold of a tassel and come out of the fort, to freedom, with the Guru. From this time on, Guru Hargobind was widely known as *Bandi-Chhor*, the "Liberator from Bondage."

The Guru's Safe Haven

Mian Mir, the renowned Sufi sage who had set down the cornerstone of the Harimandar, had a good many disciples. One of them was the daughter of Rustam Khan, a Muslim priest and magistrate of a suburb of Lahore. From her childhood, she had devoted her mind to prayer and meditation.

The *qazī's* daughter was beautiful, friendly and virtuous, but spent her days isolated in her own room, except when it came time to go out and see her spiritual teacher. She declined her parents' advice that she should marry, for she had decided to dedicate her entire life to God.

In Mian Mir's congregation, the *qazī's* daughter had heard her teacher and other holy men speak highly of Guru Hargobind, the sixth in Guru Nanak's line. However, when she began to praise the Guru at home, her father became angry with her. He was incensed with his daughter on two accounts. Firstly, she had gone against social custom and refused to marry. Secondly, she was praising the Guru, a non-Muslim.

"O Infidel," he said, "you praise an infidel and disobey the law of Muhammad, according to which it is forbidden, under penalty of death, to praise an unbeliever."

His daughter replied, "Father dear, the law of Muhammad does not apply to holy men or to me. It applies to those who neither know nor obey anything besides. Saints are God's servants. At the same time, the Lord obeys them and they do as they please. Saints have no concern with the law of Muhammad."

Hearing these words of defiance, the *qazī's* heart burned with indignation. That very day, he consulted with his fellow priests and issued an order for his daughter's execution for disobeying the Islamic law.

When the *qazī's* wife heard of this, she informed both her daughter and Mian Mir. The sage replied, "There appears to be no hope of saving you here. You will be innocently put to death by these tyrants. It will be better for you to go at once to Amritsar and seek the protection of Guru Hargobind. At this time, there is none but him who can save your life."

The *qazī's* daughter at once returned home and packed her possessions. Mian Mir then arranged a proper escort and she, along with a fellow disciple, was secretly brought to Amritsar.

At the safe haven of the Guru, she was treated to every respect. Guru Hargobind arranged that she should have a house of her own, and encouraged her to spend her time as she pleased. He also gave her a new name, Kaulan, meaning "promise."

Kaulan's father went to plead with the Emperor Jahangir for his daughter's return. However, when it was revealed how the *qazī* had made his daughter miserable and beaten her daily, and that for fear of him, his daughter would not return from the safety she had found with the Guru, the emperor offered him no assistance.

Kaulan adjusted well to her new surroundings. Often, she would be heard singing the following *Gurbaanee* in a mood of thanksgiving:

O Mother, in joining with the saints, I have awakened!
Seeing the love of my Beloved, I recite his bountiful Name.
Eager for his vision, my eyes are fixed on him and have forgotten all other things.

Now, I easily enjoy the Guru, the giver of peace.
Seeing him, my mind is absorbed in God. From seeing the Lord, joy has welled up in my mind.
O Nanak ambrosial is the word of my Beloved!¹⁹⁹

After some time had passed in this way, Kaulan offered her dowry of precious jewels to the Guru, so their value might be dedicated to some spiritual object. The year was 1621. Accordingly, the Guru arranged for a pool to be excavated in her name by her house, just a short distance from the glorious Harimandar, surrounded by a pool of its own. This second pool became known as Kaulsar. Years later, a Gurdwara in her name was built on the site of Kaulan's home.

When Guru Hargobind was forced to move from Amritsar because of the danger of attack from the Mughal army, Mata Kaulan came with him to Kartarpur, now a short distance from Jullundur.

As Kaulan's health deteriorated, Guru Hargobind came to offer his assistance. In a feeble voice, she thanked the Guru for saving her and giving her the spiritual instruction that had placed her on the path to deliverance. The Guru advised her to meditate on the Immortal God within. She had only twenty-four hours to live, he told her, and during that time she should meditate on her Creator. The Guru promised to come again at her final hour.

When he returned to Mata Kaulan's apartments, he advised her, "Be ready. Your time has now come. Prepare yourself. Give up concern for your body and focus your mind on God, who is unborn and deathless. The world is unreal and shines only with his Light. The soul is pure, real, conscious and happy. As long as one is proud of one's body, one is subject to birth and death, but when one gains divine knowledge and goes beyond the limitations of alternating love and hate, then one is liberated."

Meditating on the Guru's words, Mata Kaulan opened her eyes one last time, to say, "Thank you! Thank you! O patron of the homeless, I have found shelter in you. In a moment, you raised me to the status yogis strive many years vainly to attain. You took away the ignorance that hung over me for millions of births like a chronic disease." She then closed her eyes, uttered "Wahay Guru!" and passed painlessly from this world. The day was May 29, 1652.

The Guru instructed her servants to prepare Mata Kaulan's body for the last rites. They bathed and clothed her body in a shroud and a costly shawl. While a minstrel sang the Guru's hymns, her body was taken to the garden, outside Mata Kaulan's home, and cremated there. Kirtan Sohila was recited and prayers were offered for the peace of her soul.

Guru Har Rai

Guru Har Rai (1630-61, guru: 1644-61) inherited from his predecessor the full military regalia of a king and a standing army of 2,200 men. These were necessary in those dangerous times living under the constant threat of the Mughal government.

The Guru, however, had a tender disposition. It is recorded that one time, while young Har Rai was returning from a riding lesson, he spotted his holy grandfather from a distance. At once, he dismounted from his horse to greet Guru Hargobind. In doing so, his flowing robe caught on a bush and a number of flowers were broken from their stems.

Seeing the damage caused by his robe pained Har Rai's gentle heart. The Guru consoled him and said, "By all means, wear your robe, but take care as you move about. A servant of God should be gentle in all things."²⁰⁰

As Guru, Har Rai remembered well his lesson. Like the Sixth Guru, he polished his martial skills while hunting in the forest, yet preferred to capture his prey alive to roam free in his garden at Kiratpur. After a time, that sanctuary took on the appearance of a small zoo.

The Guru also took an interest in medicine. He cultivated many varieties of healing herbs and managed a free medical dispensary.

Around 1652, came an unusual request. Emperor Shah Jahan (1592-1666, Mughal emperor : 1628-57) sent a plea for medicine for his favored prince, Dara Shukoh. The royal physicians feared the heir apparent had been

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poisoned. Day by day, the patient's condition worsened. Tiger's whiskers appeared to be firmly lodged somewhere in Dara Shukoh's bowels. If they were not soon removed, there could be no hoping for his recovery.

The physicians concluded that if a certain astringent fruit, a myrobalan, two ounces in weight, and a large clove weighing several grams could be found and given to the patient, his health could be restored. However, try as he might, the emperor could procure neither of these vital ingredients anywhere in his kingdom.

Finally, word reached Shah Jahan that the required medicines might be found in the Guru's dispensary. This was a difficult situation for the emperor. He had no great sympathy for the Sikhs. Four times, his Mughal armies had engaged Guru Hargobind and his men in mortal combat, at a cost of thousands of his soldiers' lives.

A noble was sent to the Guru's court at Kiratpur, in the Himalayan foothills. He came with a message of friendship, and a plea for the medicines. Guru Har Rai was happy at the warm tone of the emperor's communication and agreed to provide the necessary items, which he located in his dispensary.

To his disciples, the Guru remarked, "See how with one hand a man breaks flowers and with the other, he offers them. But the flowers perfume both hands alike. Although the axe cuts the sandalwood tree, still the fragrant wood perfumes the axe. In this way, it is only fitting that the Guru should return good for evil."²⁰¹ In addition to the herbal remedies, which would cause even the hardest substance to be digested, the Guru sent a third medicinal gift. A giant pearl was to be ground and taken as a tonic.

When the emperor received these gifts, he was deeply moved, "Look at the wonders of God! The saint of Kiratpur has in his garden what I do not have in all the botanical gardens of my empire."

Dara Shukoh recovered quickly from his illness, and the emperor vowed to never again cause any annoyance to the Guru.

Guru Har Krishan

The eighth Guru (1656-64, guru: 1661-64) assumed his spiritual responsibilities in 1661, at the young age of five years, yet carried that weight with a poise and courage far beyond his years. Guru Har Krishan maintained himself with a regular discipline, rising three hours before sunrise each day to take his bath and meditate. Afterwards, he would sit with the congregation, recite *Gurbaanee* with them, and enjoy the kirtan.

The Guru's own recitation was said to be so sweet that even the birds paused to listen. His discourses were gifted with precocious insight into the meaning of *Gurbaanee*. The Master's splendor was such that just by seeing him, people would be healed of their mental and physical disabilities.

In 1664, a smallpox epidemic swept through Delhi, where Guru Harkrishan was staying. Because of the well-known curative powers of the Guru, people came from all over the city to be healed by his sight or touch.

According to one account, after many days of ministering to an endless stream of the sick, Guru Harkrishan asked someone how many people there were in Delhi and how much longer people might continue coming to be healed. The person replied that the city was very large and there was simply no end in sight. At this news, the Guru replied, in a tone of calm deliberation, "If they cannot all come to me, then I will go to them."

It was not long before the Guru himself developed a high fever. In a matter of days, he surrendered his mortal body to the dreaded pox, much to the dismay of his mother and his gathered devotees. But shortly thereafter, the virulent epidemic, which had claimed the lives of tens of thousands, came to a sudden end.

Tegh Bahadur the Guru

Terrible events and their train of awful consequences occasion the birth of great souls like Tegh Bahadur (1621-1675, guru: 1664-75), youngest of the five sons of Guru Hargobind, in 1621. He was first named Tyag Mal, the "great sacrificer." Guru Hargobind renamed him "illustrious sword," or Tegh Bahadur, in recognition of his brave actions defending against a large Mughal force which had descended on Kartarpur when he was just fourteen.

After Guru Hargobind, the Master's spiritual light passed to his grandson, Har Rai in 1644, and from Guru Har Rai to Har Krishan in 1661. Three years later, when young Guru Har Krishan passed away, Tegh Bahadur was made the ninth Guru.

In 1668, Guru Tegh Bahadur was visited by a troubled Rajput general who served in the Mughal court. Raja Ram Singh's family had been devotees since the time of Guru Hargobind. The Rajputs, with their long heroic tradition, were vital to Emperor Aurangzeb (1618-1707, Mughal emperor: 1658-1707)'s strategy of military conquest.

His father, Raja Jai Singh, had been an important general, fighting alongside the emperor in the south and west of India. Nearly two years earlier, Raja Jai Singh had been instrumental in convincing the great Maratha military leader, Shivaji, and his son to come to the Aurangzeb's court, on his personal assurance of their safety. Unfortunately, the scheming emperor's idea of hospitality was that Shivaji should be kept under constant guard in the Raja's house.

When the Marathas managed to flee the Rajput household, Aurangzeb decided to exact revenge for their escape. Raja Jai Singh was summoned to Delhi. Broken-hearted, the honorable old Rajput fell ill and died before reaching the capital.

Six months later, Raja Ram Singh received an ominous order from the emperor to prepare to lead an army against the kingdom of Assam. Mir Jumla, one of the greatest Mughal generals, had died on a mission to defeat the rebellious Assamese, just five years earlier.

None of the Muslim commanders wished to go to Assam. Its disease-infested jungles, constant guerilla warfare and the sorcery for which that land was well known, were said to have caused the death of Mir Jumla. The prospect of a campaign in Assam caused terror not just among the Mughal army's rank and file, but even in the minds of its generals.

Raja Ram Singh speculated that if he succeeded in his difficult assignment in Assam the kingdom would become an extension of the Mughal empire. But if he perished in the effort, it would hardly be a loss to Aurangzeb. At his death, the crafty emperor could easily annex his Rajput kingdom.

To Raja Ram Singh's delight, the Guru agreed to accompany him on his dangerous assignment to the East. They proceeded from Patna, where the Guru had been staying, to Dacca, close by Assam, where the remnant of Mir Jumla's army was stationed. The Guru and raja stayed there for two years.

In Dacca, the Guru ministered to the people. Guru Nanak had visited there and a Sikh congregation dating from that time had eagerly awaited his arrival. As the Guru taught and prayed among the people of Dacca, his fame spread throughout the region.

Raja Ram Singh, for his part, started to negotiate for the peaceful submission of Assam, even as he prepared for a full-fledged war against the rebel kingdom. The proud King of Assam, however, was not prepared to surrender to Muslim rule.

Ram Singh and Guru Tegh Bahadur left Dacca for Assam in December 1668. Under the raja's command were 4,000 of his own Rajputs, plus 18,000 Mughal cavalry, 30,000 foot soldiers and 15,000 archers. They reached the border, some 300 kilometers (180 miles) away, in late February.

The Assamese had built a dam on a tributary of the Brahmaputra River, where the Mughal forces were encamped, with the idea of inundating their enemies in a torrent of water overnight. The Guru surmised this plan and warned Raja Ram Singh. Several Muslims ignored the Guru's advice and would not move their tents. They were swept away by the river's sudden deluge.

Raja Ram Singh's forces pushed ahead and gained a few victories. The nimble Assamese, finding they could not hope to match his formidable cavalry and thousands of archers, in an open contest, began to use guerilla tactics, to the annoyance of the Mughals.

The Raja of Assam was also said to have engaged his kingdom's most famous sorceress to defeat the enemy. When her efforts and the efforts of all the other black magicians proved useless, it was attributed to the presence of a great holy man among the Mughals.

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As the failure of their magic became generally known, large crowds of Assamese came to pay homage to the Guru and receive his blessings. The raja and his soldiers were also regular guests at Guru Tegh Bahadur's camp, a few miles removed from their own.

As Raja Ram Singh's army bogged down under Assamese resistance and the presence of the Guru alongside his camp became widely known, Guru Tegh Bahadur came to play a vital role as peacemaker between the two warring sides. The Master took Raja Ram Singh across the Brahmaputra to the capital of Assam with a guard of 1,000 Rajputs. They were well received by the raja of that kingdom. During their visit, the Guru brokered a settlement between the Rajput and the Assamese King in which they agreed to respect certain mutual boundaries.

Guru Tegh Bahadur also gave spiritual instruction to the Raja of Assam. He advised the king to meditate on the True Name, associate with the virtuous and serve the saints. In difficulty, he should pray only to the timeless Being and rely on the words of the Guru.

Before leaving, the Guru requested the soldiers of both armies to each bring five shields filled with earth to build a memorial to Guru Nanak, who had been there years before. In this way, a high mound was built up in a matter of hours. That place, overlooking the bank of the Brahmaputra River, was known as Dhubri. A Gurdwara was built on top of the hill in memory of the Guru's peace.

Munificent P

Pir Bikhān Shah was a well-known Sufi saint. The *pir* lived and taught in the seventeenth century in the district of Kurukshetra, in northwestern India.

One day, his disciples were astonished to see their teacher perform his customary daily prayers facing not Mecca in the West, but in the opposite direction, to the East. Pir Bikhān Shah's disciples very well knew that in the Muslim tradition a person should make his prayers in the direction of the Kaaba, and nowhere else.

Seeing his disciples' consternation, the saint explained that in a city to the East, God had just revealed himself in the form of a newborn child. It was to this special infant that he had offered his respects, and not to any ordinary mortal.

Some days later, the Sufi saint set out himself with his disciples, to gain a glimpse of that blessed child. They arrived in the ancient city of Patna when Gobind Rai, the son of Guru Tegh Bahadur, was barely three months old. While his father undertook the difficult journey back to Punjab, the young Gobind was being raised by his mother and maternal uncle among the devoted Sikhs of Patna.

The *pir* at once recognized that this designated family was not Muslim. Neither was it Hindu. In order to satisfy his curiosity and learn what the feelings of this special soul might be toward India's two rival communities, the saint placed two small covered pots in front of young Gobind. One was filled with water and the other with milk. In the mind of the *pir*, the milk represented the Hindu faith and the water Islam.

Gobind Rai good-naturedly approached the pots, then sat up and simultaneously placed one hand on each one. Pir Bikhān Shah's heart at once was at peace, for he intuited that the growing young saint would show respect to Muslims and Hindus alike.

The Sacrifice of the Ninth Guru

On May 25, 1675, a delegation of brahmins arrived in Anandpur to see Guru Tegh Bahadur. They had been enduring a terrible ordeal in their home country of Kashmir. In that mountainous northern province, the local governor, Iftikar Khan, was engaged in a ruthless policy of repressing the Hindus and their religious practices. All across India, Emperor Aurangzeb's bigoted religious policy was causing untold suffering among the majority of his subjects.

¹ *pir*: a Sufi master.

As the ninth Guru sat deep in thought, reflecting on the dimensions of the dilemma just described for him by his brahmin guests, his son, not quite nine years old, entered the room. Seeing his father so pensive, young Gobind Rai asked the cause of his concern.

The Guru replied, “These are difficult days on Earth. The situation will only improve if someone worthy comes forward and gives their life.”

His precocious son answered, “Who could be more worthy than you for such a great sacrifice?”

The Guru was pleased to hear these brave words, which confirmed his own resolution to lay down his life for the sake of the brahmins and all others whose freedom of worship was at stake. Guru Tegh Bahadur told the Hindu priests to inform the governor that should he first convert the Guru, they would all willingly follow his example.

The pundits duly informed the governor, who conveyed the news to Aurangzeb. The emperor was pleased by the prospect of what he heard. He ordered his officers to summon the Guru to the capital and force him to accept Islam or face execution.

Guru Tegh Bahadur spent his remaining days arranging his community’s affairs at Anandpur. On July 8, he passed his spiritual authority on to his son. Three days later, he set out with three devoted disciples, Mati Das, Sati Das and Dyala, to court arrest.

They were taken into custody by police the very next day. For more than three months, the Guru and his three disciples remained in jail and were given the harshest treatment. Finally, they were taken to the imperial capital and subjected to further tortures.

The Guru was given the choice of converting, performing some miracle, or being put to death. The Master replied that he had no fear of being parted from his physical form. Then, Mati Das was brought before him, tied standing up and his body sawn in two from his head down. After that, Dyala was placed in a cauldron of boiling water. Sati Das was next, his body wrapped in a thick layer of cotton wool set on fire. All of them endured their torments stoically, keeping the True Name on their lips.

The ninth Guru well recognized the gravity of his ordeal. Freedom-loving people were depending on his ability to endure the unendurable. Performing a miracle was out of the question. Guru Nanak had always taught the wisdom of submitting the ephemeral ego to the Will of the Eternal. When the time came, Guru Tegh Bahadur calmly surrendered his head to the naked sword of the executioner, without malice or fear.

The ninth Guru’s sacrifice is unique in the annals of history. Never before had anyone staked their life for the sake of the cherished values and ideals of another people. Guru Tegh Bahadur’s son celebrated his martyrdom in the following verse.

To protect their *tilak* and sacred thread,
He performed a great deed in this Dark Age.
For people of faith, he gave his head, but not a groan passed his lips.
For the sake of human goodness, he did that remarkable deed.
He gave his head, but did not display his powers.
Men of God should be ashamed to do such tricks for show.
He smashed the clay pot of his body on the head of Delhi’s king
And left for the abode of the Infinite.
None had ever before done such a deed as Tegh Bahadur.
At his going, the world was wrapped in sorrow.
Sounds of mourning filled the Earth,
While the heavens trumpeted his glory.²⁰²

Guru Gobind Singh^m

Gobind Rai, the son of the ninth Guru was destined to personally confront the awful brunt of Emperor Aurangzeb’s religious bigotry. In his time, nearly 1,000 venerable Hindu temples were smashed to the ground.

^m After joining the Order of Khalsa on the occasion of Baisakhi 1699, the Guru assumed the name “Gobind Singh”.

The Good of All

Mosques with towering minarets were erected in their place. Intolerable taxes were imposed on the Hindus. Men employed in government service were threatened with dismissal if they did not adopt Islam. At trial, a criminal might be spared punishment by agreeing to convert. The emperor banned the holding of fairs on Hindu holidays and prohibited Hindus from riding horses or riding in palanquins.

Thousands of his subjects, the poor and powerless, submitted to the emperor's tactics. Even proud Rajput families were humiliated, their daughters taken from them and married to Mughal princes.

Devout Muslims whose views differed from the emperor and his intolerant version of Islam were also endangered. Many leaders of the Shia sect were executed. Prominent Sufis who had enjoyed the patronage of the emperor's broad-minded father, Shah Jahan, and his brother, Dara Shukoh, were singled out for persecution. For holding a musical gathering, Yahiya Chishti, a well-known and saintly musician, almost suffered beheading. The emperor ordered the poisoning of own son, Prince Sultan Muhammed, for wearing clothes embroidered with gold threads in defiance of his code of austerity.

In response to the continuing onslaught of oppression, Guru Gobind Rai (1666-1708, guru: 1675-1708) adopted a number of defensive measures. Rather than living at Amritsar, in the vulnerable plains near the provincial capital of Lahore, he kept to the relative safety of the Himalayan foothills. There, he built up the fortifications of Anandpur, and trained and outfitted his Sikhs for combat.

Taking a wider view of the cultural genocide being visited on his people, the Guru patronized an entourage of fifty-two poets. They composed verses in the vernacular about the great heroes and legends of India to inspire the common people and preserve their illustrious heritage.

The Guru also sent five Sikhs to Benares, the traditional centre of Hindu higher learning, to master classical Indian philosophy. Their scholastic lineage became known as Nirmalas, or "immaculate ones." Himself, Guru Gobind Rai commenced writing *Gurbaanee* with a distinctly Persian flavor, appealing to the Muslim ear.

Guru Gobind Rai was able to draw on a broad spectrum of support in his defensive war against Aurangzeb's reign of terror. Countless oppressed Hindus joined the Guru's fold, or at least sympathized with his struggle. Although the emperor invoked the cause of religion in his war against the Guru, the tenth Master also enlisted the support of many brave and righteous Muslims.

Bhai Nand Lal came to the Guru in 1682 from Delhi, where he had been a poet of the Mughal court. At Bhangani in 1688, the saint, Pir Budhu Shah joined the Guru against an alliance of Rajputs and Afghan mercenaries, a battle which saw the loss of two of the *pir's* sons and hundreds of his disciples.

At the third battle of Anandpur, in 1702, the Mughal commander, Saiyid Beg parted company with his troops and joined the Guru's side. During the fifth battle, in 1704, Saiyid Beg and Maimun Khan led the Sikh charge against the outnumbering Mughal army. In that same battle, the leader of the attacking army, Saiyid Khan, retired from the battle out of respect for the Guru.

Later, when the Guru lived as a fugitive, he received vital assistance from Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan, who carried him incognito in a palanquin, at great risk to their lives. Saiyid

Pir Muhammed had been the Guru's Persian teacher when he was still young. While serving as an officer in the government's hunt for the elusive Guru, his former teacher could not help recognizing the Guru. He deflected suspicion away from the Master by declaring the occupant of the palanquin was a Muslim holy man, the "Pir of Uchh." Further on his perilous journey, Rai Kalha, a wealthy Muslim landlord, warmly received the Guru and provided him with a safe haven for several days.

At no time did Guru Gobind Singh oppose or offer any insult to Islam. Although Islamic principles, like jihad against non-Muslims, were used to justify the government's efforts to diminish or destroy other religious communities, at no time did he challenge the legitimacy of the Muslim faith. Rather, in his correspondence with Emperor Aurangzeb, the Guru scolded the emperor for himself living to the high principles of Islam:

You have no faith and observe no religion. You know nothing of God and do not believe in Muhammad. One who has regard for his religion never swerves from his promise. You have no idea what an oath on the Quran is, and you must not believe in God's Providence. Were you to swear a thousand oaths on the Quran, I would not trust you in the slightest. If you had any intention of keeping your oath, you would have girded up your loins and come to me. When you swore by Muhammad and

called the Word of God as witness, it was incumbent on you to observe your oath. If the Prophet himself were here, I would make a special effort to inform him of your treachery...²⁰³

Remarkably, Aurangzeb had a change of heart and invited Guru Gobind Singh to see him in the hill country to the south of India. The Guru was on his way to meet with the Emperor, when Aurangzeb passed away.

The details of the Guru's colorful life serves to illustrate his basic faith in the One Creator who prevails through all humanity, regardless of their religion.

He is in temple and mosque. In Hindu adoration and Muslim prayer, is He.
Humanity is one, though its forms are many.
The pious and impious, materialist and holy minstrel, countryman and foreigner,
Each is colored by their distinctive and varied circumstances,
Yet their eyes, ears and body are the same,
And all are made of the same elements.
The God of Hindus and Muslims is one.
The Quran and Puranas praise the same Lord.
They are one, exactly created in the same divine image.²⁰⁴

Kanhaiya

The year was 1705. The Guru's contingent had been holed up for months in their Anandpur fort, in the wooded foothills of the Himalayas. Encircled by the armies of the Mughals and their allies, the brave saint-warriors ventured out in little raiding parties at night to ambush their adversaries and take for themselves as much of the enemy's provisions as they could carry.

Each day, the situation became more desperate. The fighting grew more and more intense. The Mughals enjoyed a constant supply of food, medicine and materials of war, while the defenders had less and less.

Under those extreme circumstances, every mouthful, every blanket, every arrow, held a vital significance. Every resource and each effort was measured with the greatest of care. Sometimes, an air of dread seriousness hung over the Guru's fighting men, struggling to keep free, to keep the enemy at bay and themselves alive.

They were a mixed assortment of men. Before joining the Guru's camp, they had been involved in all the fields of life. There were farmers and businessmen, craftsmen and scholars.

As the Guru's men, they had developed a rare camaraderie. Overcoming their differences of caste and region, they were united to a man, dedicated to their new calling, devoted to their Guru and the remarkable life he had given them.

To a man, they lived for the Guru and his mission. Already, many of them had proven their love, sacrificing life and limb on the testing ground of battle. Live or die, they considered themselves the Guru's own, and the Master was generous with his affection.

For all their brotherly spirit, the saint-warriors were also, each of them, fearsome individuals in their own right, willful, daring, not easily contained. Among them, one Kanhaiya was an especially regarded, but enigmatic figure. Whenever there was a large clash of arms, he would rove the field among friend and foe, fearless, undaunted, resolute. The Mughals marveled at him.

Many of the great Guru's Sikhs also marveled, but some grumbled. They petitioned the Master, protesting their brother's high-minded tactics.

The Guru's handsome, bearded face was a picture of calm majesty. From a low stool, he presided over this impromptu gathering, his disciples spread around him, respectfully seated at his feet. The Master's body sleek and powerful, his eyes playful and filled with quick intelligence, he sat at ease and scanned the faces of these men who loved him as their father. Most of them wore the badges of their dauntless spirit – bruises here and there, healing wounds casually dressed, missing fingers on the sword hand.

"And who has something to say against Brother Kanhaiya? Speak your peace now and let yourself be heard," spoke the Master, his words clear and elegant, supple like a morning breeze.

The Good of All

“With all respect, I have seen Kanhaiya Ji wasting our precious water. He goes out with a goatskin of water from our spring and gives it away to everyone he meets. I have never seen anything like it! He gives water to our wounded and to the hated Mughals!

“That’s what bothers me! I say let the Mughals die of thirst, if it comes to that. If they are already wounded, then let them die! There are so many thousands of them. We don’t need to help their wounded recover so they can rise up and kill us another day. I tell Brother Kanhaiya this, but he won’t listen!”

Bhai Kanhaiya sat motionless, his eyes to the floor, as his accusers leveled their charges against him.

Another of these men, another member of that spiritual brotherhood, confined together under such trying circumstances, raised his voice, “Brother Kanhaiya, why do you do it? Don’t you understand that they are our enemy? They have come here for no other reason than to kill us, to wipe us out. They would love to finish us all, to put an end to us today. Why do you go and help them? Leave them lie. Just let them die! Let them go to their warrior’s paradise. Leave them alone! Don’t you go keeping them alive!”

There was truth in what the accusers said. Under the harsh Mughal Emperor, there were many restrictions on people of other faiths, whom he called “infidels”, while his own Muslim community, and anyone who would convert, was granted many liberties and privileges. Hundreds of temples had been methodically razed to the ground and mosques erected in their stead. Even moderate Muslims might fear for their lives from the fanatic emperor and his dreaded enforcers, the tax collectors, the police, the judges and jailers and dealers of death.

The Master remembered well how, when he had been just nine years old, and his father was Guru, a group of Hindu holy men had pleaded that something needed to be done to stop Aurangzeb’s bloody campaign of persecution. He had prayed for his father when he left Anandpur to challenge the tyrant Emperor.

It was common knowledge how the Guru had withstood each protracted torture and every silver-sweet temptation. Six months later, a lone disciple returned from the Emperor’s capital with a gruesome treasure. Wrapped in simple cloth was the Master’s lifeless head, severed by an executioner’s sword.

The living Master addressed Kanhaiya, nearly his age, “Well, my son, why do you do these things? Will you answer your accusers?”

For once, Kanhaiya lifted his face and gave a world-weary look about him. “Master, it is not out of any ill will that I go into the field with my goatskin filled with water. My only intent is to do good, and good takes no sides.

“Those mercenaries we fight each day are not our enemies. They are ordinary men, with wives and families who have taken up a difficult profession. Through our skill, and by the will of the Creator, we have laid a great many of them at death’s door.

“I recognize that there are also some who have come with rancor and pride in their hearts, set on doing evil to us, but by the time they have been knocked out of battle, bleeding and crushed by the wayside, they no longer harbor such foolish animosity. They are humble and pure as babes. How can I refuse them water, if they thirst?

“We have shown them our strength and manly courage in battle. After that, I like to show them another side, the gentle, human touch taught by our Guru. When I serve the wounded, whether they cry “Allah” or “Ram”, they are so overwhelmed, they think an angel has come and visited them. Tell me, how can I turn my back to these broken, pleading men and call them “enemy”?”

As Kanhaiya finished his defense, a breeze lifted away a screen of clouds. At that very moment, the radiant, amber light of sun shone down, drenching everyone in its warmth and brightness, Kanhaiya and his accusers and the noble Guru.

The Master smiled at this transparent dispensation of heavenly grace. For a long moment, nothing was said. Only the sun, the breeze, the rolling clouds, frolicked overhead.

“Kanhaiya Ji, your intentions are noble, and so long as we have our own spring inside the fort, we should not fear for lack of water. Rather we should fear, in these aggravated circumstances, that we might lose our precious humanity, that thing which alone distinguishes us from quarreling birds and beasts of the wilderness.

“Brother, well you have understood the philosophy of life, the dictum of the saint-soldier. May you remain

true to your dispassionate vision! May your brothers take heart in your mission, where you risk the arrows and abuse of both sides, though you serve impartially. Surely there is a little of God in what you do,” and the Master smiled mischievously.

“You are treading a high path. May you be blessed to continue in this way. Our love and prayers will always be with you.”

The Guru's Prayer

Prayers can reveal much about the one who prays. By definition, a prayer embodies a person's strongest, most deeply felt desires. It is a poignant expression of their sense of who they are, their ethics, their idea of community and their real sense of what life is about.

The prayer of Guru Nanak's Sikhs, has developed over some 500 years. The people of the Guru stand and recite it together whenever they gather for some worthy purpose. It is a formula to invoke success and blessings from God that has evolved over the history of the Sikhs.

The prayer as we know it was first put into words by Guru Gobind Singh. It begins by calling on those who are participating in the prayer to remember the original Power that made this creation. The prayer then draws the devotees' minds successively to Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjun, Guru Hargobind, Guru Har Rai, Guru Har Krishan and Guru Tegh Bahadur. Since the time of the Tenth Master, his name and the name of Siri Guru Granth Sahib (guru: 1708-present), the living Guru of all Sikhs, have been added to the prayer.

After calling to mind God and Guru, the prayer goes on to mention the saints and martyrs who have given their all so the life and spirit of the Master's tradition might live on. It evokes their sacrifices and the things of special value to the Sikhs: the gift of the Guru's teachings, the gift of naturally long hair, the gift of a disciplined life, the gift of a discriminating mind, the gift of faith, the gift of confidence, the greatest gift of the Name and the gift of bathing at the sacred pool in the holy city of Amritsar. There is also a place in the customary format for any special prayer, any particular need that might exist.

Finally, the person who is praying asks to be forgiven for any errors or omissions in their prayer, and adds, “May our enterprises be successful. May we keep the company of people of love, so that we might remember your Name in their presence. May we be in high spirits through the Name given to us by Nanak, and may all beings prosper by your Grace.”

Those final words convey the quintessential spirit of Sikh Dharma, the heart of what Guru Nanak lived and taught. It is an open prayer, a call that not just Sikhs and not only human beings, but that all creatures, might flourish and enjoy good fortune.

Guru Nanak believed that all creatures are the creation of One Creator. This prayer takes his high vision and matches it with an equal intention.

“Do Not Call Them Dogs”

The mid-eighteenth century marked a turning point in the fortunes of the Sikhs. After decades of severe persecution at the hands of the intolerant Mughals, they had settled in small bands scattered through the wilderness. Sometimes, they would receive help from sympathizers in the villages. Occasionally, they might dare and congregate at Amritsar for the spring holiday of Baisakhi or the fall celebration of Diwali.

Beginning in 1739, a number of invasions from Iran²⁰⁵ delivered a series of body blows to Mughal prestige and authority. As the Mughal government lost its grip over the affairs of Punjab, Sikhs emerged from their hideouts to wage a relentless guerilla campaign against both the attacking Afghan armies and the remaining Mughal authority.

The invaders' objective, each time, was to reach the capital of Delhi and return with mule-trains burdened with tribute and spoils. In bold maneuvers, the Sikhs increasingly attacked the returning processions weighted down with all kinds of plunder.

The Good of All

Often the Sikh cavaliers would liberate women who had been captured to stock the invaders' harems and returned them safely to their homes. It is recorded that in one heroic rescue as many as 2,200 Hindu women were saved. Even when an enemy general, Jahan Khan, was defeated in 1763, and a number of his female relations and dependents fell into Sikh hands, they were escorted unmolested to their abode in the Himalayan foothills near Kashmir.

To punish the Sikhs, the Afghan invader, Ahmad Shah Abdali (1722-72, Durrani emperor 1747-72), targeted the sacred Harimandar. Thinking that he could deflate the buoyant spirits of the Sikhs by an assault on their holiest shrine, Abdali gave orders that it should be blown up, its sacred pool filled with rubbish and bloodied cow carcasses.

Despite the desecration of their temples and occasional setbacks and massacres, the Sikhs began to achieve the status of folk heroes. The common people increasingly supported their dangerous opposition to the marauding Afghan armies and overbearing Mughal officials alike. As their numbers increased, united bands of Sikhs were able to put together a formidable fighting force of 60,000 cavalry and engage their foes in frontal attacks.

Inured to all sorts of privations and invigorated by the justice of their cause, the Sikh fighters won the grudging admiration of their opponents. Qazi Nur Muhammad joined the seventh Afghan invasion in the winter of 1764-65, expecting to be appointed a judge at Lahore after the annexation of the Punjab to Afghanistan. In his written account of that expedition, he devoted an entire chapter to his observations of the Sikhs.

Do not call them “dogs” because they are lions and are brave like lions in the field of battle. How can a hero who roars like a lion in battle be called a dog? If you wish to learn the art of war, come face them in the battlefield. They will show you such wonderful feats of war.

O Swordsman! If you want to learn the art of combat, learn from them how to face the enemy like a hero and come out unscathed from the fight... Truly, they are like lions in battle and they are unsurpassed in times of peace...

Besides their mode of fighting, there is one more thing in which they excel all other fighting peoples. In no case would they slay a coward, nor would they put an obstacle in the way of a fugitive. They do not plunder the wealth or ornaments of a woman, be she a rich lady or a humble servant. A female, whether she is young or old, is called a ‘granny’ by them.²⁰⁴

The last Afghan invasion in 1798 penetrated no further than Lahore before being routed by the gathered forces of the Sikhs. They were led by an eighteen-year-old horseman named Ranjeet Singh.

The One-Eyed Maharaja

Ranjeet Singh, popularly called Sher-i-Punjab, “the Lion of Punjab”, began as a youthful horseman at the head of a small clan in a time of great danger and terrible opportunity. Physically, he did not look so imposing. In his childhood, he had lost an eye and his face had become pockmarked from a nearly fatal bout of smallpox. Still, through his good fortune, courage, and considerable humanity the one-eyed maharaja was able to unite the scattered Sikh forces to stem a thousand-year tide of incursions from the northwest frontier. Ranjeet Singh was especially appreciated for restoring peace and good government to the people of Punjab, after decades of misrule and anarchy.

Maharaja Ranjeet Singh was able, for the first time, to create a government that actually put into practice the universal spirit of Guru Nanak. After years of sectarian strife and forcible conversions, at last, the people – Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others – were able to live together in harmony under a ruler who respected all their traditions.

It was a policy the maharaja practiced both publicly and in his private life. Through his reign, Ranjeet Singh participated in the annual religious festivities of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs alike. He respected their saints and religious leaders equally.

The maharaja's generosity was completely magnanimous. Each day, he had charity distributed among the poor without any consideration of religion. Ranjeet Singh also donated a good deal of money to the upkeep and restoration of the holy places of every denomination.

As was the royal prerogative in those days, the maharaja took for himself a total of seventeen wives. Some were widows he married to ensure their safekeeping. Others were the consummation of political alliances. They came from all three of Punjab's religious communities, though they were joined to the maharaja in a Sikh ceremony.

Most of Ranjeet Singh's highest ministers, his closest confidantes and most powerful generals were non-Sikhs. The maharaja made it a point to employ the best people he could find, regardless of their faith. In this way, the government benefited from the highest caliber of service, while reflecting the social fabric of the country, in which Sikhs remained but a significant minority.

Even Europeans joined the Lahore durbar to offer their valued Western training and experience. The foreigners would swear an oath of allegiance and agree not to shave their beards, smoke or eat beef. Many of them married native women and settled in Punjab.

Jean Francois Allard (1785-1839, served: 1822-34, 1837-39) and Jean Baptiste Ventura (1792-1858, served: 1822-1843), a Frenchman and an Italian who had served under Napoleon, were among his top generals. Paolo Crescenzo Martino Avitabile (1791-1850, served 1827-43), an Italian, became the governor of Peshawar. Dr. John Martin Honigberger (1795-1865, served: 1830-33, 1839), a Hungarian versed in homeopathy, served as court physician. Josiah Harlan (1799-1871, served: 1832-35), an American adventurer, served for a time as governor of Gujrat.

Reverend Joseph Wolff was a missionary from Germany. When he crossed the Indus into the maharaja's kingdom, Reverend Wolff was given a grand welcome, befitting a man of God from a distant land. A twenty-one gun salute was fired and a banquet held in his honor.

On his arrival, Reverend Wolff enjoyed the hospitality of the heir apparent, Prince Kharak Singh, at his camp in Rawalpindi. Further on, he stayed in Gujrat with its American governor. Reverend Wolff also spent some time in Wazirabad during Avitabile's term as administrator there.

In 1832, Reverend Wolff came to Lahore, where he was given accommodation in the mansion of the French general, Allard. While in the capital, the missionary Wolff took the opportunity of holding lectures where he denounced other religions and urged people to turn to Christ. He also posted notices to that effect on walls along the lanes and streets of Lahore.

Maharaja Ranjeet Singh had been receiving regular reports about the activities of his guest, which he had been following with interest. In this instance, however, he sent Reverend Wolff a letter of mild rebuke. The maharaja had read the missionary's proclamations. But, he added, "such words must neither be said nor heard."

Maharaja Ranjeet Singh's reign was famous for its liberal dispensation of justice. There was no capital punishment. Crimes were generally atoned for by the payment of a fine. To accommodate the differing legal traditions of Hindus and Muslims, each community maintained its own religious courts. While there was no written law, common law, based on oral tradition, was administered on a village, provincial and national level.

The maharaja himself was the court of final appeal. In his palace, he placed a petition box in a place accessible to one and all, with the key firmly in his possession. Ready justice was also administered by Ranjeet Singh while he passed through the streets of Lahore. According to custom, a petitioner would draw attention to their grievance by either lying down in the path of the royal procession or shouting for the maharaja's protection from the middle of a crowd.

Maharaja Ranjeet Singh decided some matters on the spot. Others, he would refer to one of his aides. The maharaja would often inquire about these cases afterwards. It was not unusual for him, with his sharp memory, his knowledge of his subjects and his keen desire for justice, to examine a case after it had been decided, in order to confirm or alter a decision of one of his officers.

Despite the considerable authority he exercised and the respect he enjoyed, the maharaja never considered himself above reproach. So far as he was concerned, Ranjeet Singh was only a servant of the high ideals of the Khalsa. When he spoke of the government, he always referred to it as Sarkar-E-Khalsa, "the government of the Khalsa."

The Good of All

Maharaja Ranjeet Singh's real humility was revealed early on, when he submitted himself for punishment at the Akal Takhat, the highest seat of Sikh temporal authority. At the age of twenty-one, the young maharaja stood accused of violating the code of conduct of a Khalsa. Ranjeet Singh's offense was that he had fallen in love with a beautiful young woman, a dancer by profession, whom he eventually married. This was considered offensive by Akali Phoola Singh, who acted as the official enforcer of the community's moral standards in those days.

When questioned, the maharaja made a frank confession of his fault, whereupon he was sentenced to be flogged in public. Without any hesitation, Ranjeet Singh bared his back to receive the punishment. He was tied to the trunk of a tree, with his hands behind his back. The sentence he was to receive was 100 lashes. Those who had gathered to witness and loved their monarch, burst into tears.

At last, the head Akali reduced the sentence. Ranjeet Singh was struck once lightly on the back as a token of his submission to the purifying discipline of Khalsa, then untied from the tree. On being freed, the maharaja joined his hands in humble gratitude before all the people. Sweet Guru *prashaad*ⁿ was served to everyone, and a fine of 125 rupees paid by Ranjeet Singh to Harimandar Sahib.

Perhaps the most trying relations for the maharaja were those between Sikhs and Muslims. After all, during Mughal times, Sikhs had been hunted to death to appease zealous Muslim priests and their friends in government. To the surprise of many, Maharaja Ranjeet was perfectly magnanimous in his relationship with Muslims and their faith.

The maharaja's dispassion and his particular consideration for his Muslim subjects is well illustrated by two incidents recorded by Fakir Aziz Ud-din, the maharaja's trusted foreign minister and confidante. One relates how a deputation of Sikhs from a part of Lahore came and complained that they were finding it difficult to live with the sound of the Muslim priest calling out from the minaret of the local mosque, five times each and every day. They demanded the practice be put to a stop.

On hearing their appeal, Ranjeet Singh looked to the wisdom of his foreign minister, who just happened to be at hand. "Your Highness," he explained, "this practice they refer to is a call to prayer, and since the Muslim's prayer is congregational, they obviously cannot do without it."

The deputation of Sikhs was not appeased. They persisted in their complaint.

Addressing the maharaja, the minister then suggested, "Your Highness, are these people willing to undertake that they will go to every Muslim's house and summon him to prayer five times a day?"

The Sikhs gladly agreed to this new arrangement, and the call to prayer was abandoned in its favor. A week later, however, the delegation returned, even more distressed than before. This time they begged for the call to prayer to be reintroduced. "Now we understand why the Muslim religion has this particular system of calling people to prayers."

On another occasion, the maharaja and Fakir Aziz Ud-din were out walking in the outskirts of the capital when they came upon a cart carrying what appeared to be a very large book. When they inquired what it was, the driver of the cart informed them, "I am a calligrapher and this book is the Holy Quran. It is my life's work. I am just now on my way to Hyderabad to sell it to the Muslim king of that country. I understand he is a very pious and generous man."

The maharaja turned to his companion and remarked, "This man seems to think that there is no one this side of Hyderabad who is pious and generous enough to pay him a good price." To the calligrapher, he inquired, "How much are you expecting, my good man?"

The calligrapher replied, "10,000 rupees." In today's currency, that translates to about US\$15 million.

Without any hesitation, and before his trusted advisor could intervene, the Maharaja closed the deal. "Fakir Ji," commanded the maharaja, "See to it that this man is paid 10,000 rupees from the state treasury."

ⁿ *prashaad*: a sweet sacrament made by cooking and chanting over a combination of water, clarified butter, flour and sugar.

According to one account, the maharaja then respectfully pressed the sacred volume to his forehead with the same reverence he would have shown his own Siri Guru Granth Sahib.

Later on, over the prudent objections of his minister, Ranjeet Singh said, “God intended that I should look upon all religions with one eye. That is why he took away the sight of the other. This is a holy book. The money I paid was not only in recognition of the value of that man’s work, but also a tribute to God.”

First Victory

In the years following the First World War, Britain’s most populous colony was seething with dissension between the government and those it presumed to govern. During the war, the British rulers had promised the people of India that, once victory had been achieved, they would be allowed a freer hand in managing their own country. That promise had been made to rally support for the British war effort.

With the return of peace, however, the imperial British regained their usual confidence in their right and ability to rule solely as they saw fit, with minimal interference from the “natives,” whom they considered unfit to govern themselves. Every solemn pledge made in the dark hours of a desperate war was reneged on by India’s colonial government. Moreover, anticipating an increase in popular resistance, a draconian new law, the Rowlatts Bill, was passed, in March 1919. The law gave the government unbridled power to arrest and imprison suspects without trial and to crush civil liberties.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) had little understanding of Sikhs and their traditions.²⁰⁵ However, on April 6, 1919, when he called on all Indians to launch a campaign of non-cooperation with the British to force the colonialists’ hand, it was especially the people of the city of Amritsar, founded by Guru Ram Das, who rallied in defiance of the authorities.

Despite a government ban on public meetings, 20,000 people gathered at an enclosed park known as Jallianwala Bagh on April 13, the Sikh holiday of Baisakhi. The group, comprising Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, had just passed a pair of resolutions against the government when fifty soldiers and two armored cars with mounted machine guns arrived at Jallianwala Bagh. With military precision and no warning, they took up positions and fired into the crowd. After twenty minutes of indiscriminate slaughter, the force, under Brigadier-General Dyer, withdrew from the site, leaving about 400 dead and more than 1,000 wounded.

Through the length and breadth of India, the news of the bloodbath spread like wildfire. People everywhere, loyalists and radicals, rajas and street beggars, people of every religious persuasion were outraged at the massacre in Amritsar.

To contain popular sentiment, the British adopted a two-pronged approach. A committee of inquiry was formed, which eventually found Dyer guilty of acting under a mistaken sense of duty and saw him prematurely retired from the army. More strikingly, and within a week of the massacre, the government used its control of all the main Gurdwaras to have Dyer and his second-in-command invited to the Golden Temple. There, in an obviously staged and bogus ceremony, the two were “honored for their meritorious achievements” and “initiated into the Order of Khalsa.”

The control of the major Gurdwaras had been a key part of the British policy to contain the Sikhs. The farcical aftermath of the mass killing in Amritsar served to awaken Sikhs to the grave implications of the colonial administration’s policy. Suddenly, what had been a small movement to reform Gurdwara practices and liberate those Sikh shrines whose custodians were overtly under British influence, or simply debauched and unfit to serve, became a popular cause.

In fact, the once holy Golden Temple had descended to a pathetic semblance of its former glory. The managers and priests increasingly ignored the sentiments of the Sikh nation, drawing their support instead from the British authorities. If the integrity of Sikh practices and authority was in decline, that hardly seemed a matter of concern to the British, who rather welcomed these developments.

There were countless indications that things had gone terribly wrong at the sacred Harimandar. Costly gifts to the temple had been finding their way to the homes of the Gurdwara manager and his priests. The precincts had begun to be used by astrologers and fortune-tellers. Idols had begun to be openly worshipped there.

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Certain shops in the vicinity had been allocated as butcher shops, from where vultures would pick up scraps of carrion and fly off, sometimes across the sacred waters surrounding the Harimandar. Loose bits of flesh and bone were liable to rain unexpectedly from the sky.

Symbolically, a newly built and oddly incongruous Gothic clock tower overshadowed the entire panoply of degeneracy. Vendors in nearby stalls openly sold pornography. Innocent women pilgrims were sometimes abducted to neighboring brothels for the pleasure of lecherous “holy personages.” At certain times of the year, the whole area around the temple turned into a meeting place for all kinds of criminals and shady characters.

Confronted by increasing pressure from its citizens, the government tried to procrastinate, but this time the rising tide of indignation would no longer be put off. A number of public meetings condemned the inaction of the authorities and called for the immediate resignation of the manager of the Golden Temple. To pacify the agitators, the government offered to send its appointee away on two months’ leave.

The clamor for justice continued unabated. At a huge religious gathering in Jallianwala Bagh, the reformers threatened to conduct a mock funeral with an effigy of the temple’s manager if he did not give up his position. This prospect so shook the unfortunate gentleman that he came before the assembled congregation with folded hands, begging their forgiveness and announcing his resignation.

This was a decided victory for the reformers, but the British were yet far from giving up their control of the holiest shrine of the Sikhs. Soon the government announced that it had nominated a new committee of thirty-six Sikh loyalists, men they could count on to manage the Golden Temple.

In a stroke of genius, at a public assembly two days later, the government’s nominees were absorbed into a much larger committee of 175, including Sikh representatives from throughout India and abroad. The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, the “Principle Gurdwara Management Committee” was mandated to manage Gurdwaras in the true spirit of Guru Nanak. Its first meeting was held at the Akal Takhat, December 12, 1920.

Those were days of great excitement and rising hopefulness. It was only a question of time before the hopes and aspirations of the people would be further put to the test. That test began on October 29, 1921, when the SGPC’s executive passed a resolution asking their vice-president, who happened to also be the government’s newly-appointed manager for the Golden Temple, to submit the keys of the temple’s treasury to the SGPC president, Baba Kharak Singh (1868-1963, SGPC president: 1921-30).

The government was determined to stymie every effort to free the Golden Temple from its influence. On learning of the SGPC resolution, an official with a contingent of police was dispatched to take possession of the keys from the vice-president’s house.

By November 26, a dark cloud of condemnation hung over the government. SGPC activists were being sought out by the police and arrested. As word circulated, ordinary Sikhs started courting arrest. Many came in organized groups, dressed in defiant black and singing the Guru’s hymns. Soon the jails were packed with thousands of volunteers.

In another development, the SGPC passed a resolution advising Sikh veterans to boycott all functions being planned in honor of the India tour of the Prince of Wales, scheduled for early the next year. It also issued a call for a general strike on the day of his arrival. All this so unnerved the authorities that they cancelled the Punjab segment of the tour.

Finally, under growing pressure from all sections of Punjabi society, the government announced it would return the keys in time for the celebration of Guru Gobind Singh’s birthday, on January 5, 1922. The SGPC insisted that before letting up its campaign of civil disobedience, all who had been arrested should be released unconditionally.

Six days later, a government minister announced the freeing of all detainees. The SGPC called off its campaign, but refused to send anyone to fetch back the stolen keys. Finally, on January 19, a court official came and hand-delivered the keys to Baba Kharak Singh and other Sikh representatives at a specially convened gathering at the Akal Takhat. Some 20,000 Sikhs served as grateful witnesses to the restoration of rightful authority at the Golden Temple. Their victory marked the first tangible dent in the prestige of the British raj.

The next day, Baba Kharak Singh received a poignant telegram. It was sent by the wiry Hindu lawyer from Gujarat who had assumed moral leadership of India's independence movement. The telegram said: "First decisive battle for India's freedom won. Congratulations. M K Gandhi"

The Freeing of the Gurdwaras

The "first victory" won in Amritsar was a defining moment in the struggle to rid the Gurdwaras of outside interference, corrupt management and questionable practices. That movement, which gained its irrepressible force from a general awakening in the dark aftermath of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, found heroic expression far beyond Amritsar.

The sacrifices of Sikh volunteers who embraced the discipline of non-violent resistance, and many of whom became martyrs, galvanized the freedom-loving Indian people. The sufferings of these "Akalis", or Immortal Ones, at the hands of ruthless police and hired ruffians gave the movement a powerful moral authority that shook people around the world. Eventually the stalwart Akalis even caused the British to question their own tactics and objectives in Punjab.

Sikhs, as a small but active and readily identifiable minority, found themselves uniquely situated between the vast Hindu majority and a 100 million Muslims. Both of these larger communities took heart from the efforts of the Sikhs. Some even joined them in their non-violent demonstrations and languished with the Sikhs in the jails of Punjab.

This was the high time of India's freedom movement, an era of tremendous oneness of purpose, before fractiousness and politicking came to rule the day. It was before Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964, prime minister of India: 1947-64) turned against the Sikhs, perhaps because they realized the Sikhs were too powerful to be controlled, and before Jinnah's Muslim League turned on everyone else to achieve a separate state of its own, "Pakistan."

First blood in the confrontation between the Akalis and the corrupted old-style management was shed at Gurdwara Janamasthan at Nanakana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak. In those days, before partition isolated it inside Muslim Pakistan, this historic Gurdwara was a popular destination for pilgrims. The shrine was well endowed through the patronage of the many thousands of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs who went there for homage and inspiration.

The managers of Nanakana Sahib's shrines were all Udasi priests. Their forebears had taken up their responsibilities at the historic Gurdwaras in the dark days of Mughal persecution, when ordinary Sikhs were not allowed even to exist. The priests had since fallen to the temptations of their status and power. Some were known to be keeping women and taking drugs and alcohol, with the indulgence of the British. Richest and most wayward of them was Mahant Narain Das, the custodian of the main Gurdwara.

When Narain Das learned of the popular revolt against the Gurdwara management in Amritsar, he bought weapons and hired mercenaries to defend himself. The Udasi Mahant may have felt he had nothing to fear. He must have known the government's sympathies were with him and not with the reformers.

The SGPC reformers set March 4-6 as the dates for a large public gathering to take peaceful possession of the Nanakana Sahib Gurdwaras. Meanwhile, on February 20 1921 a group of 150 activists arrived at Nanakana Sahib, on their way to a nearby assembly where details of the planned liberation of Gurdwaras were to be arranged. Lachhman Singh and his group of volunteers had been cautioned that Mahant Narain Das had accumulated arms and men, and was harboring bloody intentions. Disregarding all warnings, they came to pay his respects before their meeting.

While the pilgrims sat in the courtyard singing hymns in the early morning light, Narain Das's dark designs began to take shape. The solid new gates were closed, locking the devotees inside. Next, bullets rained down on the worshippers from the roofs overhead. Dozens were mercilessly shot or pursued and hacked to death. Those who came from outside to intervene were shot in cold blood.

Once the bloodshed had finally died down, a heap of firewood was doused with kerosene and ignited. The dead and wounded were indiscriminately thrown onto the flames.

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News of the brutal massacre at Guru Nanak's birthplace gave another shock to the country. Estimates of the number of victims ranged from eighty-two to nearly twice that. The Governor of Punjab and prominent Hindu and Muslim leaders came to the site to offer their sympathies. The management of the shrine was given over to the SGPC.

For his part, the engineer of the butchery, Narain Das was tried and sentenced to death, commuted to life imprisonment on appeal.

“100 Christs” – The Sacrifices of Guru-ka-Bagh and Jaito

The struggle for independence continued to play itself out in significant local confrontations between entrenched authorities and ordinary Sikh men and women dedicated to the cause of renewal and reform.²⁰⁶

Guru-ka-Bagh, literally “the Guru's garden,” was one such focal point. Located twenty kilometers from Amritsar, it consisted of a historic Gurdwara and an adjacent wood lot, which provided fuel for the community kitchen. The manager of the property was a notorious priest named Sundar Das, who early in 1921 had come to an understanding that he would improve himself and work under an SGPC-appointed committee.

The next year, Sundar Das disavowed the agreement and charged the Sikh congregation with trespassing on the wood lot, which he claimed to have kept as his own private property. Before pressing his claim, the manager had been assured by the local government and police that they would support his claim. The stage was set for a classic battle of wills.

On August 9, 1922, five Sikhs gathering firewood were charged with trespassing. The next day, they were sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment. In response, the Gurdwara reformers decided to send out a group of five Akalis each day to chop wood at Guru-ka-Bagh and court arrest if prevented from doing so.

Realizing arrests would not deter the Sikhs, the police began a new tactic of mercilessly beating the volunteers into unconsciousness and leaving their senseless bodies wherever they might fall. With each passing day, contingents set off in ever-larger numbers for Guru-ka-Bagh. Soon, the groups setting out each day were numbering more than 100 members.

Each day, a new contingent would assemble at the Akal Takhat to pray and take a pledge of silent suffering. The road to Guru-ka-Bagh became lined with men and women, some giving their prayers, some offering drinking water, others silently showing their support. Somewhere along the way, their path would be blocked by numbers of police, who would order them to disperse. Whether the Akalis chose at this point to sit chanting hymns or to remain standing impassively with their hands folded, the police would start viciously assaulting them with brass-bound sticks, rifle butts and jack-boots.

Though many of the volunteers had served in the World War and well knew how to defend themselves, they kept, each one, to their promise of neither uttering a sound nor raising a hand to defend themselves. This continued until, inevitably, every one of the men lay prostrate, near death or seriously hurt on the ground.

The SGPC issued a call to all communities to come witness the spiritual struggle at Guru-ka-Bagh firsthand. This appeal was designed to prevent the government distorting or denying the daily reality there. Papers sent reporters. Independence-minded politicians came. Doctors and other volunteers arrived to tend the wounded.

The police continued their ruthless policy of intimidation. The offices of the SGPC and its political wing, the Akali Dal, were raided and closed. Key members were arrested. The Englishman in charge of the police moved through the villages surrounding Guru-ka-Bagh, on a horse accompanied by one or two others, searching for black-turbaned Akali sympathizers. Anyone they found was cane-beaten by the infamous Mr. Beatty.

Medicines and other supplies intended for victims were intercepted on their way to Guru-ka-Bagh. Ambulances were not permitted to take the usual route to Amritsar, but forced to detour across furrowed farm fields. Already grievous injuries were made worse by the tortuous bumps and twists of the journey.

One witness, the Reverend Charles Freer Andrews, had come to India as a missionary. What he saw of the Akalis being so miserably treated moved him to declare that he had seen “hundreds of Christs being crucified” at Guru-ka-Bagh. In a detailed report that he sent to the press, he continued,

There has been something far greater in this event than a mere dispute about land and property. It has gone far beyond the technical questions of legal possession and distraint. A new heroism, learnt through suffering, has arisen in the land. A new lesson in moral warfare has been taught to the world.²⁰⁷

Based on Andrews’s report, the Governor of Punjab himself came to Guru-ka-Bagh on September 13 and stopped the daily beating of Sikh volunteers. Demonstrators began to be arrested instead. At the government’s announcement that preparations were being made to keep 10,000 Akalis in jail, activists stepped up their campaign. Large numbers came forward to court arrest and fill the prisons.

Trainloads of volunteers who had been arrested were shipped out to old forts and jails in the outlying regions of Punjab. Accommodations for the trip were neither comfortable nor humane. The Akalis were loaded into boxcars with no facilities for food or sanitation.

When news that a trainload of prisoners was to pass through their town reached the residents of Hasan Abdal, they were both excited at the prospect and grieved at the miserable conditions of the Akalis. The people in the town, where Guru Nanak’s visit was vividly commemorated by his handprint on a large boulder, determined to prepare a meal for the heroic demonstrators.

The next morning, all was in readiness for the train’s arrival. However, when the townspeople reached the railway station with the food, the stationmaster informed them that the train was not scheduled to stop there. All their subsequent pleas and arguments came to nothing. Slowly the people came to realize that if the train was going to stop at all, they themselves who would have to stop it.

As soon as the train could be heard from a distance, two Sikhs, Partap Singh and Karam Singh, went and seated themselves cross-legged on the tracks. Several others, men and women, joined them. On sighting them, the engineer slowed the train, bringing it to a screeching halt, but not before running over eleven of the volunteers. Partap Singh and Karam Singh succumbed to their injuries the next day, but their objective was fulfilled. The prisoners were allowed to eat the *Guru-ka-Langar* prepared for them.

The government, its claims to justice and fair government increasingly under siege, was desperate to find a way out. In November, it arranged for a wealthy citizen of Lahore, Sir Ganga Ram, to lease the disputed wood lot and allow the Akalis to access it. In April, it released those it had arrested, some 5,605 in all. This was a second important moral victory for the Sikhs.

At its year-end session, the Indian National Congress passed a resolution recording “with pride and admiration its appreciation of the unexampled bravery of Akali martyrs and the great and noble example of non-violence set by them for the benefit of the whole nation.”

While the Guru-ka-Bagh demonstrations were still going on, another conflict brewed up, this time in the princely state of Nabha, near present-day Patiala. On July 8, 1923, the British political agent, newly arrived in Nabha, surrounded Maharaja Ripudaman Singh (1883-1942, ruler of Nabha: 1912-23)’s palace with 200 soldiers, then took the ruler of the state into custody and removed him to virtual exile in the isolated foothill town of Dehra Dun. The Maharaja’s three-year-old son was designated the new ruler, while the state was placed under British administration until the prince should come of age.

Maharaja Ripudaman Singh’s championing of the Akalis and his known sympathies for the nationalist movement had made him a target of the colonial government. After the Nanakana Sahib massacre, he himself had worn a black turban in protest. His recent public support of Akali efforts at Guru-ka-Bagh had further estranged him from the British.

Unlike his pro-British rival in neighboring Patiala, who had taken pains to keep his imperial insignia tucked in a beardnet under his chin, the Nabha Maharaja had kept his royal beard plainly in sight. The British were happy to be rid of him.

The government’s highhandedness in the affair was denounced throughout India. The SGPC designated July 29 a day of prayer for the Maharaja and sent a telegram to India’s Viceroy, seeking an independent inquiry. Three days later, with no official reply, Sikhs began defying a Nabha government ban on public discussion of the

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issue. Meetings were convened where hundreds of people came forward to express their sympathy for the Maharaja and their condemnation of the government's actions.

On August 25, a three-day religious assembly was convened in the town of Jaito in Nabha state. When the organizers were arrested, the SGPC upped the ante by commencing a series of *Akband Paaths*, or unbroken recitations of the 1,430 pages of the Shabd Guru. The police blockaded the Gurdwara where the readings were being held, allowing no food or water to enter the compound.

Meanwhile, in Amritsar, beginning September 11, daily groups of twenty-five volunteers came before the Akal Takhat. Each contingent vowed to peacefully endure any hardships inflicted on them in order to uphold the right of the Sikhs in Jaito to their freedom of worship. These dedicated groups then set out on foot for Jaito, a distance they would cover in about twelve days.

On September 14, a body of police burst into the Jaito Gurdwara and arrested everyone there. In so doing, they committed an unprecedented sacrilege by seizing hold of the arms of the reader, whose turn it was to keep the unbroken reading going, and dragging him away. That the police had their own reader complete the reading did nothing to mollify the popular sense of outrage.

The breaking of the *Akband Paath* gave the protest at Jaito a new focus. The Sikhs' desire to redress that sacrilege was a powerful spiritual motivation, overshadowing the original issue of the Maharaja's forced abdication. Even as the SGPC condemned the official action, groups of volunteers, galvanized by the latest developments, began to arrive in Jaito. On arriving, they were beaten, arrested, loaded into trucks and left to their fate in the Rajasthan desert 250 kilometers (150 miles) away, without food or money.

Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru, a future Indian prime minister, and two Congress party colleagues came to Jaito to see for themselves just what was going on. Entering Nabha State in a bullock cart behind a contingent of Akali volunteers, they were arrested, then charged with conspiracy and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. Soon, all of India was focussed on the huge clash of wills in the little state of Nabha.

In Kolkata, the Secretary of State directed the Viceroy "to put an end to the Akali operation by the arrest and prosecution of all the organizers as abettors." Acting on that directive, in mid-October, the Punjab government declared the SGPC and the Akali Dal to be illegal organizations. Its leaders and hundreds of members were arrested and charged with sedition.

By this time, public feeling around the situation in Nabha had reached a fever pitch. Groups of peaceful marchers continued to regularly set out for Nabha, even with the movement's main leaders in jail. It was decided to make a show of strength six months from the day when Maharaja Ripudaman Singh had been deposed.

On February 9, a group of 500 Akali men and women quietly assembled in front of the Akal Takhat before setting out for Jaito. Only those were allowed to join who could be relied upon to remain perfectly non-violent under all circumstances, however provocative. Profusely garlanded and warmly appreciated, they set out on foot with an admiring entourage of several hundred more.

The 500 and their followers received unprecedented welcomes in the towns and villages through which they passed. Each morning and evening, at stopovers along the way, large crowds of as many as 25-30,000 would come out to pay the Akalis homage and wish them well. A car carrying a *New York Times* correspondent and two observers, a Muslim and a Hindu, from the Congress party joined them along the way.

At the border entering Nabha state, the group was met by officials who tried to restrict their entry to small groups of fifty. The thousands who had come so far to protest the government's imperious tactics were hardly inclined to recognize the officials' authority. The procession continued unimpeded into Nabha.

Some 150 yards from one of the two Gurdwaras in Jaito that was to be their destination, the Akalis were met by the British administrator of Nabha, accompanied by a large armed contingent, including machine guns and cavalry. On refusing to stop or disperse as ordered, the Sikhs - now elderly men and women and children as well - were fired on. Those remaining were set upon, beaten and arrested. According to the government count, nineteen died and twenty-nine were injured. The organizers of the march estimated 100 dead and twice as many wounded. In all, more than 7,000 peaceful demonstrators were arrested on this one occasion.

The whole country rankled at the shooting of the unarmed protesters, but spirits remained high. A week later, on February 28, another peaceful procession of 500 set out from Amritsar, to be arrested. In the

months that followed, another fourteen groups of 500 traversed the same route to Jaito, beatings and jail.

Only the last procession, which took its vows at the Akal Takhat on April 27, 1925, was allowed to proceed unmolested. By that time, the British had wearied of the situation and decided to come to terms with the Sikhs. In July, the Sikh Gurdwaras Bill allowed Sikhs full democratic control of their main Gurdwaras in Punjab. Thereafter, most of the thousands arrested in the course of the struggle at Jaito were released.

To celebrate the return of control of their places of worship, the Sikhs commenced a series of 101 *Akband Paaths* to make up for the interruption of the sacred reading at Gurdwara Gangsar. The British, for their part, remained adamant that Ripudaman Singh should not regain the throne they had taken from him. In 1926, they removed him from nearby Dehra Dun to Kodaicanal, far in the south of India. The deposed Maharaja remained there for the rest of his life. Ripudaman Singh passed away in 1942.

A Help for the Helpless

Puran Singh (1904-1992) was born in Punjab to a Hindu family of modest means. As a boy, he attended a festival at Fatehgarh, commemorating the martyrdom of the tenth Guru's two youngest sons at the hands of religious fanatics during the Mughal raj. The youngster was enthralled by the atmosphere and especially by the tall, bejeweled figure of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, the ruler of Patiala, and his equally striking team of aides. On that day, Puran Singh determined that he too would let his hair grow long, wear a regal turban and be a Sikh.

By the age of eighteen, Puran Singh had adopted the Sikh lifestyle and moved from his village near the town of Ludhiana to the bustling city of Lahore. There, he took a vow of celibacy and dedicated his life to looking after the sick and disabled by any means possible. His first hospice was on the pavements and under the shade trees of the city. A Gurdwara dedicated to the memory of Guru Arjun provided his food and shelter.

Puran Singh's life took another significant turn when he spotted a crippled and deaf four-year-old boy, sick and abandoned, on the side of the road. The sight of the unfortunate child, deaf and unable to speak, physically deformed and afflicted with dysentery, so touched his heart that he picked him up and adopted him. For fourteen years, the determined Puran Singh carried that growing young man everywhere he went, himself walking barefoot, undergoing the ridicule of people less thoughtful than himself. Puran Singh became a common sight along the roads of Lahore, picking up and removing nails, metal pieces, stones and anything else that might prove a hazard to people or vehicles – all the while, carrying his sacred charge on his back.

During the terrible days of India's partition, Puran Singh tended to a group of twenty helpless men, women and children in gurdwara Dera Sahib. While not occupied keeping them fed, bathes, clothes and medically treated, he was on the streets of Lahore appealing for money for their care. After a nearby gurdwara came under attack, Puran Singh, with Piara Singh on his back, boarded a refugee-laden truck for the safety of Amritsar.

In the refugee camp was mayhem, as millions of uprooted people struggled just to stay alive. The sick and dying were abandoned to pass a lonely and pathetic death. In the midst of the chaos and inhumanity, Puran Singh took up the cause of the helpless and unwanted almost single-handedly. He fed the weak with his own hands, washed their clothes, and administered medicine and first aid. When the end came, Puran Singh would gather wood and cremate their remains.

When, after some months, the camp was closed, Puran Singh remained with the seven most destitute. They stayed where any kind of shelter might present itself. A few months were spent under the spreading branches of a tree by the roadside. Sometimes, they made their home in an abandoned building.

Puran Singh developed a reputation as a friend of the forlorn, a help for the helpless, and a ready nurse for any disease, however infectious or loathesom it might be. Five years after partition, the Punjab government gave him his own building. It was known as "Pingalwara – home of the disabled."

Puran Singh went on to develop a resource that served the needs of society's most neglected: its orphans, the physically and mentally handicapped, and those afflicted by serious and terminal diseases. To raise public awareness of urgent social and environmental issues, Puran Singh established the Pingalwara Press. Using entirely recycled paper, the press published, and continues to publish, pamphlets and leaflets on a range of timely themes from pollution to overpopulation to deforestation to the arms race.

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Puran Singh remained largely unaffected through the years, his manner decidedly low-key. Often, he would be found reading up on current events, seated beside a simple white donation box with “Pingalwara” scrawled on it, at one of the entrances to the Golden Temple. In his older years, he began to use a three-wheeled cycle to take himself from place to place. And he still looked after the abandoned boy he had found, since named “Piara Singh” (Dear Lion) and grown well into manhood.

Simple and unpretentious to the end, Puran Singh allowed and cherished one title only, that of “bhagat,” a person lovingly devoted to his cause. He was commonly called “Bhagat Puran Singh.” In the sunset of his life, the bhagat was awarded a number of distinguished prizes in recognition of his selfless service, twice by the Indian government (1980, 1991), and once by the Punjab government (1981) and the Punjab Human Rights Organization (1991).

Since Bhagat Puran Singh’s passing away, Dr. Inderjit Kaur (1942-), who served for years at Pingalwara as his assistant, continued his life’s work and began establishing Pingalwaras in other cities in Punjab.

Punjabi *Suba*

In the years following India’s realization of political independence, and its simultaneous wrenching apart into the republics of India and Pakistan, most Sikhs who ended up in the Indian state of Punjab lived with a dour sense that they had been betrayed by their national government.

Before independence, both Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi had promised the Sikhs their own “place in the sun”, a semi-autonomous region within the fabric of the Indian federation. Moreover, owing to the patchwork arrangement of borders India had inherited from two centuries of British divide and rule, there was a general consensus that state boundaries should be realigned on the basis of the country’s main linguistic groups.

According to this model, Bengali-speakers were to have their own state of Bengal, where Bengali would be the primary language of education, culture and local government. Similarly, the Assamese would have their state of Assam. The people of Orissa could have their own state where they could preserve their Oriya heritage, while Kashmiris would have their Kashmir, and so on. As well, there were to be a handful of states where Hindi, the predominant language of north India, would be the official medium for schooling and administration.

Punjabi is an ancient language spoken by some 80 million Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. With the exception of some Sufi literature written in Arabic script, its literary heritage uses the script coined by Guru Angad, known as *Gurmukhee*.

Since Sikhs constituted not only a linguistic group, but also a distinctive religious community, the government of Pundit Nehru and the Congress party hesitated to give Punjabi the full recognition it was due. The memory of the creation of Pakistan, based on the separatist aspirations of a religious minority was still too fresh in their minds. Though he had promised the Sikhs a degree of autonomy during the struggle for independence, Nehru did not want to risk creating the conditions for a full-fledged “Sikhistan.” Those who reminded the Prime Minister of his pledge to the Sikhs were told that since independence the situation between Congress and the Sikhs had changed.

For their part, the Sikhs of Punjab feared for their future. As a minority of barely 1.5% of the population of India, many of them felt the pressure to assimilate into the vast morass of Hindu culture on a daily basis. When popular Hindi media made fun of Punjabi and Punjabis, it only served to increase Sikhs’ sense of betrayal and isolation.

Master Tara Singh (1885-1967, president of the Akali Dal and SGPC, directly or through a nominee, for most of 1930-62), forcefully promoted the cause of a Punjabi-speaking state by holding several large dharmic^o camps (in 1948, 1951 and 1953) to raise the awareness of the Sikh populace. To publicize the Sikh position, he called a conference to be held in the Indian capital February 20, 1949.

The government was so opposed to the idea of the conference, that it arranged Tara Singh’s arrest the day before, as he was coming to Delhi by train. In Delhi, other Sikh leaders were arrested on the day of the meeting.

^o dharmic: spiritual or religious.

The first general election in modern India gave the Akali Party the chance to take the language issue to the voters. In the Patiala and East Punjab States Union, a jurisdiction with a slim Sikh majority, the Akalis formed a governing coalition on April 21, 1952. It was the first government in the country to be lost by the Congress party, the party of Gandhi and Nehru that had dominated Indian politics for thirty years.

From years of fruitless talks with the Congress government in New Delhi, the Akalis slowly came to realize that Nehru's government was determined not to yield any meaningful concessions. At the annual Baisakhi parade of 1955 in the holy city of Amritsar, large crowds chanted slogans demanding their right to a Punjabi-speaking state. More than a dozen leaders were arrested.

On May 10, to protest a government prohibition on demonstrations for a Punjabi-speaking state, Master Tara Singh and nine volunteers entered the streets of Amritsar loudly raising their voices for the sake of "Punjabi Suba." All ten surrendered themselves into the hands of police.

Each day, ten more volunteers took to the streets and were duly arrested and jailed. After a few weeks, the daily number increased to 100. Soon, more than 100 people were each day offering themselves for arrest. By late June, there were 12,000 volunteers filling the jails. Among them, were many eminent legislators, writers and lawyers, and 427 women.

People gathered daily within the Golden Temple complex both for inspiration and news of the latest arrests. The police besieged the Harimandar and occupied the *Guru-ka-Langar*. The government prohibited any sort of congregation at the large, open facilities of the Manji Sahib Gurdwara in the Golden Temple precincts.

When people ignored the government ban, police entered the Harimandar Sahib complex and exploded tear gas bombs to disperse the crowds. The next day, July 5, the police entered again, this time to arrest Bawa Harkishan Singh, the interim president of the SGPC while Tara Singh served his detention. Hukam Singh, a distinguished member of India's Parliament, was also arrested.

Finally, on July 8, the police stopped arresting the protesters. On July 12, government reversed its May 10 prohibition against demonstrations. Months of negotiations followed, but the negotiations led nowhere. When it was announced that the general session of the Congress party was to be held in Amritsar February 11-12, 1956, the Sikh leadership seized the opportunity to showcase its demands. It boldly announced plans to hold a parallel conference of its own.

The Congress party convention was completely overwhelmed by the scale of the Akali mobilization. The entire Punjabi countryside seemed to burst onto the streets of historic Amritsar. The following comes from an eye-witness account.

On a bright, cool north Indian winter morning, the contending groups massed their forces in a show of strength, especially for the benefit of the Congress high command which was camped close by. First came the Sikhs in the most impressive – and peaceful – demonstration I have ever seen. Hour after hour and mile after mile they marched, eight abreast, down the main streets of Amritsar, a hallowed name in Indian nationalism because of the shootings of 1919.

Old and young, men and women, they came in an endless stream, most with an expression of determination and sadness in their eyes, many still remembering the ghastly days of 1947 when their homeland was cut in two and hundreds of thousands fled before the Muslims, and when thousands of their co-religionists died or were maimed. What strength there was in the appearance of the older men who, with their flowing beards, looked like Hebrew prophets of old! Many carried their traditional sword, the Kirpan, and many wore blue turbans, symbols of militancy.

They had come from the villages and towns of Punjab and from far-off places as well. Almost without exception, they marched in orderly file, portraying their unity of purpose. At intervals, came the resounding cry, "Punjabi Suba Zindabad!" (Long live a Punjabi state.) and "Master Tara Singh Zindabad," with intermittent music to enliven the proceedings. On they came, for five hours. Few who watched them could doubt their genuine fear of being swallowed up in the vice-like embrace of rabid Hinduism. By conservative estimate, they numbered over 100,000. To this observer, it seemed more like double that figure.²⁰⁸

Discussions to push forward, or forestall, the creation of a Punjabi-speaking state continued, even as other states based on linguistic contiguity were being carved out of the old colonial map of India. In 1956, the state of

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Andhra Pradesh was created for the Telugu-speaking majority there and Kerala state for the speakers of Malayalam. After communal tensions erupted into riots between its two dominant communities in 1960, the old province of Bombay was divided in two. The state of Gujarat ensured the preservation of the Gujarati language, while Marathi culture found its future in Maharashtra state.

Master Tara Singh called a large Punjabi *Suba* convention, open to members of other political parties, for May 22, 1960 in Amritsar. It was presided over by Pundit Sundar Lal, a respected Hindu. Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew, a Muslim and once a key member of the Congress party of Punjab, opened the proceedings. The resolution, arrived at by the day's end, called on the government "not to delay any more the inevitable formation" of a Punjabi-speaking state.

Seizing the momentum of the convention, Tara Singh announced a march, beginning May 29, Guru Arjun's martyrdom day. It was scheduled to wind through the Punjabi countryside, stopping at historic Sikh Gurdwaras, and culminating in a large demonstration in New Delhi on June 12.

Once again, police squelched the Sikh leader's plans for a confrontation with the government in the capital. Large-scale arrests were made, beginning the night of May 24.

As they had five years earlier, bands of volunteers started to court arrest. The *satyagraha* campaign proceeded on two fronts: in Delhi and in Amritsar. In Master Tara Singh's absence, one Sant Fateh Singh (1911-72, president of Akali Dal: 1962-1972) directed the resistance from within the Golden Temple complex. In the evenings, thousands upon thousands of people congregated at the Manji Sahib Gurdwara to be inspired and informed of the latest developments.

The ultimate issue was language and not religion. In Sant Fateh Singh's words, "We do not seek a Sikh-majority area. We are not concerned about percentages. We want the Punjabi *Suba* to comprise an area where the Punjabi language is spoken, regardless of the fact whether the Sikhs are in majority or minority."²⁰⁹

The protest stretched on for weeks, then months, with no end in sight. The government would not relent. Neither would the Sikh volunteers. They filled the jails by the thousand.

Finally, on October 29, Sant Fateh Singh wrote a letter to the prime minister to say that if the Sikhs' democratic and constitutional right to a Punjabi-speaking state was not conceded, he would go on a fast unto death. Nehru was unmoved.

At last, on December 18, while Master Tara Singh and tens of thousands more languished in jails, Sant Fateh Singh addressed a huge gathering at the Golden Temple, urging them to remain peaceful in any event. "Every particle of the country is ours, and any damage is to ourselves." After announcing a roster of ten volunteers to continue his effort, should it end in his death without any resolution, Sant Fateh Singh retired to his modest quarters to begin his fast.

Within a couple of days, the Prime Minister began making conciliatory statements. On December 31, he made a personal appeal for Sant Fateh Singh to end his fast. However, Nehru's reassurances were not considered adequate, so the fast continued.

On January 4, 1961, the government released Master Tara Singh from jail. He immediately went to Amritsar to pay his respects to Sant Fateh Singh, who was considerably weakened by his fast. Wasting no time, Master Tara Singh flew to meet Nehru with a contingent of supporters, including one Seth Ram Nath, an influential Punjabi Hindu. Master Tara Singh met with Nehru January 7, but after two hours, he had nothing new to report to Sant Fateh Singh.

The next day, however, the Prime Minister added an afterthought to what he had already said to Master Tara Singh. He announced, "It is not out of any discrimination against Punjab or distrust of the Sikhs that the process of forming a linguistic state was not possible after applying it elsewhere... Punjab state is broadly speaking a Punjabi *Suba* with Punjabi as the dominant language."²¹⁰ Nehru also expressed his concern over Sant Fateh Singh's health and his wish to see his ordeal ended.

It sounded like a victory. Master Tara Singh assured Sant Fateh Singh that the obligations of his fast had been fulfilled and urged him to terminate his fast. To Master Tara Singh's appeal was added a motion adopted by the Working Committee of the Akali Dal and a religious edict from five Khalsa, Sikhs of unimpeachable moral credentials. Thus, on the morning of January 9, the seven months of protest, which had seen the jailing of 57,129 Sikhs, ended with Sant Fateh Singh's accepting a glass of juice, his first nourishment in twenty-two days.

The Akalis met with the government three times. Once, Sant Fateh Singh met with Nehru himself. Unfortunately, while all kinds of safeguards for the Punjabi language were offered, the prime minister still balked at the idea of making the area of Punjab where Punjabi was the main spoken language into a separate state.

Master Tara Singh took up a hunger fast to exert pressure on the government on August 15, India's Independence Day, just six months after persuading Sant Fateh Singh to end his hunger strike. Mediators tried to resolve the issue. On the forty-eighth day of the fast, Master Tara Singh was persuaded that his objective had been achieved and Punjabi *Suba* was at hand. Nehru appointed a commission, but as usual nothing was resolved.

The Sikh nation turned overwhelmingly against Master Tara Singh, for his role in the failed negotiations, and more importantly for the loss of face he had occasioned by the interruption of the two hunger fasts.

After months more of inconclusive efforts, a conference held in Ludhiana in July of 1965 raised the stakes by calling for self-determination for Sikhs within the Republic of India. On August 16, Sant Fateh Singh announced that if Punjabi *Suba* were not forthcoming, he would renew his fast September 10, and if there were no successful outcome he would set himself on fire on the top floor of the Akal Takhat at 4:30 p.m. on September 25.

As it happened, fate provided two momentous opportunities for the Sikh people to win both the confidence and admiration of their foes in the government. Already in 1962, Sikhs had volunteered in large numbers and fought determinedly to repulse a surprise Chinese invasion of India's frontiers in the east. Then, just as the date of Sant Fateh Singh's renewed ordeal approached, Pakistan launched a sudden military assault on India's western frontier states of Punjab, Rajasthan and Kashmir.

At a high-level council in Delhi, prominent Sikh leaders, as well as representatives of the government, issued a unanimous appeal for Sant Fateh Singh to postpone his fast for the sake of national unity and the country's defense. On September 9, Sant Fateh Singh honored their appeal and issued a public call to all his countrymen, but especially the Sikhs, to resist the onslaught from across the border.

In the border districts, the Sikh populace readily rose up to meet the need of the hour. Rather than evacuating to safer places, Sikhs living in farming communities along the frontier gave every assistance to the Indian army. They offered their help as guides and volunteered their labor. Punjabi Sikhs put their own vehicles at the service of the army and offered refreshments to the troops.

When the Pakistani air force dropped paratroopers behind Indian lines, Punjabi farmers, men and women, young and old, eagerly rushed out with any readymade weapon they could lay their hands on to apprehend the hapless invaders. A few were beaten to death. The rest were handed over to the military.

In the army, Sikh officers and enlisted men played a prominent part. Facing a foe equipped with technically superior tanks and fighter jets, the soldiers and pilots turned what might have been a rout into a brilliant victory, using their wits, daring, and trust in God. Within twenty-one days, the Pakistani army had been pushed back across the border.

After years of stalemate, finally there seemed to be a will to negotiate Punjabi *Suba* in New Delhi. Hukam Singh, the speaker of India's Lower House of Parliament, the Lok Sabha, convened a diverse committee of twenty-two elected representatives to try and resolve the issue. After five months of deliberations, the committee submitted a unanimous vote in favor of the creation of a Punjabi-speaking state. On November 1, 1966, it became a reality.

While a number of issues remained outstanding, the creation of Punjabi *Suba* showed, once again, the marvelous power of a peaceful people united in purpose and dedicated to the good of all.

The Struggle To Save Indian Democracy

Since its beginning in 1947, India has been known as the biggest democracy in the world. Free elections, a lively political opposition, a judiciary free of political constraints and an independent press together have created the necessary synergy to make the people's voices heard and represented in the daily details of government.

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The vigor of India's democracy was put to a difficult test on the 12th of June 1975, when a court ruled the prime minister, Indira Gandhi, was guilty of corrupt practices in her own riding during the 1971 national election. The ruling barred her from holding elective office for six years. The opposition parties demanded the prime minister immediately resign. When Indira Gandhi, the proud head of the Congress party who, with her father Jawaharlal Nehru, had ruled India for an almost unbroken span of 27 years, refused to step down, opposition leaders began to mobilize large public rallies to force her resignation.

Opposition plans had not gone very far when, two weeks after the ruling, the President signed an order declaring a national state of emergency, due to "internal disturbances threatening the security of India." The order gave the Prime Minister dictatorial authority, including powers of press censorship and detention without trial. The leaders of all opposition parties, as well as outspoken critics of her government were immediately arrested and put behind bars.

With the entire country in a state of shock and the main opposition decapitated, the Sikh leadership convened meetings in Amritsar where they resolved to oppose the "fascist tendency of the Congress." The first mass protest in the country under the new emergency regime was organized by the Akali Dal and launched in Amritsar July 9. A statement to the press recalled the Sikh struggle for freedom under the Mughals, then under the British, and voiced concern that whatever had been fought for and achieved was being lost. The police were out in force for the demonstration and arrested all those who raised the call of "Sat Siri Akal" (Truth is Undying), including the Akali Dal and SGPC leaders.

The Prime Minister seemed genuinely surprised at the strength of the response from the Sikhs. Fearing their defiance might inspire civil disobedience in other parts of the country, she offered to negotiate a deal with the Akali Party that would give it joint control of the Punjabi legislature. The new leader of the movement, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, refused even to meet with government representatives so long as the state of emergency was in effect. In a press interview, he made clear the grounds of the Save Democracy campaign.

The question before us is not whether Indira Gandhi should continue to be the prime minister or not. The point is whether democracy in this country is to survive or not. The democratic structure stands on three pillars, namely, a strong opposition, independent judiciary and free press. Emergency has destroyed all these essentials.²¹¹

The on-going emergency crisis saw countless abuses of authority on the part of the government, which operated with impunity across the length and breadth of the land. Perhaps the most outrageous infringements of human rights were the forced sterilization of millions of men and women in the name of official "family planning." Publications that criticized government actions were shut down, their editors confined to jail.

While the civil disobedience campaign caught on in some parts of the country, especially at Delhi University, the government's tactics of mass arrests, censorship and intimidation curtailed the opposition's popularity. After January, the Sikhs, who had started the campaign, remained virtually alone in their active resistance to the regime. Hailed by imprisoned opposition leaders as the "last bastion of democracy," they continued to come out in large numbers each month on the day of the new moon, symbolizing the dark night of Indian democracy, to court arrest.

The prime minister's days of dictatorship came to an unexpected end when, believing she had neutralized the opposition, Mrs. Gandhi called elections for March 1977. With their voice returned to them, the people of India trounced Indira Gandhi at the polls.

According to Amnesty International, 140,000 people had been arrested without trial during the twenty months of Indira Gandhi's emergency. Of them, about 45,000 had come from the 2% of India's people who were Sikhs.

The Yogi

During Harbhajan Singh (1929-2004)'s childhood and youth, his grandfather loved to invite sages and holy men of every denomination to their home in west Punjab. They would stay for long talks about the eternal forces that, by turns, unite and divide the world.

Harbhajan was barely eighteen years old when his homeland was spliced in two by the bloody politics of religious intolerance. In the face of impending disaster, he led the people of his village on a painful exodus out of Pakistan, to the safety of the newly formed republic of India.

In the chaotic aftermath of India's partition, Harbhajan Singh took responsibility for his parents. After graduating from a university created under the trees of Delhi for the many thousands of refugees, Harbhajan began a career in the government service. There, he served his country diligently. In his final post, Harbhajan Singh was in charge of customs at India's busiest airport.

Like his father, Harbhajan Singh had kept up a fascination with the reputed saints of India, of whom there were many. A shrewd judge of character, he would often seek out individuals he had heard of. Over the years, he met a handful of remarkable men and a lot of imposters.

Harbhajan took his know-how of yogic practice and put it to good use teaching students at a well-known ashram in Delhi. His own experience of Indian spirituality made him sensitive to the plight of thousands of Westerners following in the footsteps of the Beatles, looking for a guru. Most of them returned thoroughly fleeced and disappointed.

About this time, destiny offered up a choice for the Sikh yogi. His government had been approached by the Soviets, who wanted a yoga master for psychic experiments they were conducting at their research institute in Tashkent. The researchers were interested in military applications of the yogis' supposed paranormal powers. Harbhajan Singh was at the same time offered a position by a university professor, teaching yoga in the West.

By 1968, Harbhajan Singh was well settled with many friends, a wife and three children. He had a chauffeur, servants and staff to do his bidding. Life was comfortable. His family was well known and respected. Practically nothing was lacking. However, when Yogi Harbhajan received the call to share the spiritual technology of the ancient East in the distant West, he did not hesitate to leave his familiar roots for an unknown future in North America.

Early on in the United States, Harbhajan Singh allied himself with the gentle "flower people." For a time, he lived among them in a rustic New Mexico commune. As Yogi Bhajan, he openly shared their vision of a dawning era of peace and understanding. He broke with long-established Indian tradition by teaching casteless hippies the methods of Kundalini Yoga, all the while regaling them with stories of the great saints of India's timeless spiritual heritage.

In New Mexico, word spread about the redoubtable kundalini yogi in his distinctive white tunic and turban. A delegation of Hopi elders welcomed him as the "great white warrior" their legends had told them would come from the East to fight the dark forces of this age. The Hopis entrusted him with a sacred arrow and conducted a sweat lodge ceremony for his students.

Befitting the new Aquarian paradigm, Yogi Bhajan openly shared his knowledge and inspiration, and initiated none. He chided his students that he had not come West to have disciples crowd around his feet. He had come to train teachers better than himself to teach and uplift people during the difficult transitional years entering the coming age. In 1969, he established the Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization (3HO) to serve the need of the times.

In 1970, Yogi Bhajan convened a "Holy Man Jam," a gathering of seekers and teachers of acclaimed understanding at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Soon after, the warm-hearted yogi was introducing a host of spiritual luminaries to a crowd of 200,000 at the Atlanta Pop Festival. Rabbis and priests, shamans and swamis, lamas and imams all came to know Yogi Bhajan, the warmhearted teacher with the irrepressible sense of the familiar.

Serving sometimes as a teacher, sometimes as a father, Yogi Bhajan began to raise a nation of longhaired yogi-Sikhs, chanting the empowering mantras of Guru Nanak, rising early, working hard and wearing the distinguished turbans of Guru Gobind Singh's ever-ready Khalsa. During Yogi Bhajan's early years of teaching in the West, it was not unusual for him to be touring and teaching in two or three cities a week. As the occasion required, he shared his considerable expertise in the arts of yoga, marriage, business, community-building, and healthful cooking.

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Harbhajan Singh Yogi's tireless efforts earned him the respect of countless people of love and vision. Werner Erhard, Swami Satchidananda, Murshid Samuel L. Lewis and Rabbi Schlomo Carlbach were among his early acquaintances in America. In 1971, he was awarded the unprecedented title of "Siri Singh Sahib," (Great Respected Lion) at the holiest shrine of the Sikhs in Amritsar.

The Siri Singh Sahib shared Guru Nanak's message of peace and goodwill in Europe, Japan and the Americas. In 1972, he visited the head of the world's largest religious organization and advised Pope Paul VI to call a gathering of friendship and understanding for representatives of all religions. He reminded Paul VI that catholic meant "universal" and suggested he would be the most suitable leader to host such a meeting.

The son of a righteous and dignified woman, Yogi Bhajan was at first surprised, then saddened to learn how women in America could be exploited and treated as exchangeable sex objects. Paraphrasing Guru Nanak, he reminded his men and women students of the essential power of a woman - even if the world might appear to be dominated by men:

As a man you are born of a woman. When you grow, you want a woman. Eventually you marry a woman and have children. Your A-to-Z structure is around and around a woman. You want to be rich for a woman, you want to be poor for a woman, you want to move to the country for a woman, you want to move to the city for a woman. Whether you admit it or deny it, basically you are a slave of woman in one way or another.²¹²

In the summer of 1975, Yogi Bhajan organized what would be the first of many summer camps for women to regain their self-esteem and touch their wellsprings of creativity and inspiration. Not only did the women meditate and study family arts. They traversed grueling obstacle courses, learned to march in formation, and practiced kung fu, sword fighting, and marksmanship. Fearlessness, competence and grace were made to go together.

Besides teaching his students, the Siri Singh Sahib continued to represent the people of Guru Nanak, the world's fifth largest religious denomination, at countless interreligious conferences and gatherings. He especially arranged for the first-ever appearance of Jain leaders outside of India, at the Unity of Man Conference in New Mexico, hosted by him in 1975.

Yogi Bhajan challenged his students to be "ten times greater" than himself. Some of them really worked at it. The 3HO community in Vancouver staged a series of gatherings, where they invited some of the brightest luminaries of the Aquarian paradigm. The Symposium on Humanity held November 1976 offered workshops in everything from spiritual midwifery to macrobiotics, from new Christian sensitivity to Sufi meditation, and from Hebrew dance to shamanic ritual.

It was a great time of eclectic meetings and remarkable synergies. One of those meetings was between the Master of Guru Nanak's empowering spiritual science and a uniquely visionary technologist. R. Buckminster Fuller had coined the term "Spaceship Earth" back in 1951 and selflessly dedicated his life to engineering systems to serve planetary peace and well being. At eighty-two, he radiated a youthful optimism, and his words found a receptive place in the hearts of his audience, when he spoke from the stage of the symposium:

There are relatively few generalized principles... One thing about these eternal generalized principles is the following: the whole cannot be predicted from the part. There's nothing in biological protoplasm to predict "camel" and "palm tree" and the respiratory exchange of gases that takes place between the two. The larger complex is never learned from the lesser... We break the whole game down into focussing humanity on its parts, rather than trying to understand the whole. That's one reason why we're in such an enormous dilemma...

When I was young, people were inherently remote and deployed from one another. They thought and organized themselves in order to protect themselves in their respective wildernesses. But suddenly, completely unplanned, not put into operation by any human being, they were suddenly completely integrated. We have 143 nations in the United Nations - 143! We have one big spaceship and 143 absolute admirals (laughter) getting nowhere. (applause)

All revolutions, up to now, have been on the basis that there's not enough to go around, so class warfare is necessary. It's you or me, and the revolution is going to bring the top down! What I'm saying now, the game is that, we'll pull the bottom up! The most beautiful thing going on in this society is that whereas we used to have the older world telling us how to play the game, suddenly the young world has

really broken away. The breakaway was not planned. When I was young, I was always told, “Never mind what you think, this is what we’re trying to teach you.” I’d been continually told that life is very, very tough, and you have to get over all that sensitivity: “If you’re ever going to protect your family, you’re going to have to be tough, you’re going to have to kill somebody or deprive someone else.” Those horrid kinds of things were being taught...

We are going to make it on our planet, and I know we have the option to make it. If we make it, it’s not going to happen through politics. You’re going to coordinate spontaneously just because you love to work. Thank you.²¹³

All the while R. Buckminster Fuller was speaking, Yogi Bhajan had listened intently – smiling, marveling and shaking his head at Dr. Fuller’s wisdom. As a powerful ovation shook the air, he rose to the stage to embrace the diminutive scientist, who beamed and put his head on the big man’s shoulder. Yogi Bhajan expressed the appreciation of the people gathered there, “You have talked in this short time more wisdom than could be found in a whole library of books. You have given us a lot of love and have done so much for the young people. We owe you a lot.”

The Yogi had shared his own holistic vision earlier that day:

I have learned a lot. It is beautiful to learn the Oneness. I’ve found the Oneness here... What I have studied all these years is, why do we human beings, creatures of God, the Creator’s special specimens, have to lie? Why? Why do we find it so difficult to express ourselves? Why can’t we say, “Well, this is what I’m saying.”? Everybody has nine holes in the body, so everybody is holy. (laughter) Yeah, everybody is holy. How could somebody be holier than another?...

The first teacher is the mother. When mother doesn’t teach courtesy, nobody can teach it. Nobody! No swami, no yogi, no this, no that... It takes one Mary to give a Jesus. It takes one woman to give a Gautama Buddha. It takes one Tripta to give a Guru Nanak. It takes one woman to give a Muhammad. It doesn’t take two. It just takes one woman to produce one man of God...

Study with anybody, go anywhere, do anything – I don’t care. Let us all be human... It is beyond Earth’s tolerance to have ungrateful people walking on it, day in and day out. Let us try to understand. We can still change the environment by changing our own selves. And there is one thing that can change us: to be kind. Kindness won’t hurt you. Kindness will never degrade you. Kindness will never let you be lonely and sick. Kindness is the best gift of God, which only flows through human beings. Let us be kind. Let us be kind to everything which God has created. Let us see God in everything. That is the only thing which you can lean on. Alright, how many of you promise to behave more kindly than you have been behaving? Raise your hands. Raise your hands straight! It is not broken hands I need. What I need is a few straight hands...

It doesn’t require yogis, swamis or trips, humiliation and salutation. It is the simple way of the Aquarian age, the age when times and polarities are going to change. In the Piscean age, we said, “I believe, therefore I know.” In the Aquarian age, we shall say, “I know, therefore I believe.” It is the opposite law of polarity. Old scriptures won’t fit in. It is a life and space for new dimensions. I’m sorry, it is the will of God, not mine, not yours. See right, hear right, speak right, breathe right, eat right, eliminate right, and you will be all right. *Sat Naam*.²¹⁴

Four years later, when the Punjab was about to sink into a dark decade of violence and terror, Harbhajan Singh Yogi was possibly the only credible figure to speak with both sides in the conflict, trying to counsel them away from the brink. As Siri Singh Sahib, he arranged for 200 registered letters to be sent to the Sikh leaders in Punjab, warning them of terrible consequences if they did not soon overcome their self-destructive factionalism.

Frustration at a New Delhi’s inaction on Punjab’s remaining outstanding issues prompted a renewed campaign of widespread civil disobedience in 1982. When that large mobilization became tainted by bloodshed, the Siri Singh Sahib wisely recommended the leader of the campaign call off the effort and resume it again after a suitable time – to no avail.

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Often, the tireless emissary of peace was reviled by both the government propaganda and the shrill voices of separatism. Yet the yogi in Harbhajan Singh would not budge. He would not take sides. He was not going to be a politician.

In America, too, Yogi Bhajan actively supported the cause of peaceful coexistence. While the US and the Soviet governments raced madly toward nuclear annihilation, the esteemed yogi spoke at large peace rallies, and mobilized friends and followers for the cause of human sanity. His outspokenness, however, did not come without a cost. Within months, the Reagan government responded by removing the special dress code exemption that had allowed Sikhs to serve in the US armed forces, as they did in the Indian, British and other militaries, with their distinctive beards and turbans.

Twice, in 1983 and again in 1984, the Siri Singh Sahib met with Pope John Paul II. At the time, both their homelands were under pressure from political forces based in the Soviet Union that opposed their respective religions. The two great men exchanged prayers for each other's struggles, then, when the Golden Temple came under assault from the Indian army, the pontiff offered his official condolences:

In recent days there has been news of ever more serious happenings in the State of Punjab in India, tragic events that have registered the sad total of several hundreds of victims and that unfortunately do not yet appear to have ended. It is not my wish to go into the delicate and complex reasons that are at the root of these disturbances in a great country that is a crucible of races and ancient cultures and, what's more, enlivened by a keen religious sense. But it is a saddening fact that the place where so many persons met a tragic death is a temple where people are accustomed to gather for prayer. May a sentiment of human pity arise immediately for all the victims, accompanied by the prayer that in mutual understanding the way to settle the present conflict may be found.²¹⁵

Then, in 1986, a bright new day of celebration took shape high on the side of a mountain near Santa Fe, New Mexico, a sacred Hopi pilgrim site the Siri Singh Sahib had acquired and named "Ram Das Puri". Peace Prayer Day invited people of goodwill from all walks of life to join together as a human family, united in the cause of peace. Since then, visionaries, artists, activists, people of religion and people of conscience have gathered each year to pray and meditate. Awards have been given annually in recognition of people who have made outstanding contributions to the possibility of human coexistence.

As Siri Singh Sahib, Harbhajan Singh also carried the responsibility of those sixteen million human beings who truly believed themselves to be followers of Guru Nanak, yet whose circumstances found them far removed from his teachings. A good deal of his energy was invested in addressing their concerns and their weaknesses:

It doesn't matter how many religions you invent, and how many messiahs come in, and how many temples and churches you build, and it doesn't matter what else you do. The purpose of the sum total of that creative consciousness is that you, as you within you, learn to be you – and that's the purity. That's God!

This hanky-panky won't work! Diplomacy with God doesn't work. The God has not created yet embassies, neither he gives visas. Man, when his permit comes, you don't stay a second – you go! When you go, you go!

Your attorneys can't work in the court of the divine judge: 'Please me, Lord. This man has not yet finished cheating 350 more people which he obligated last year in his budget.' It doesn't work. When you go, you go! '...and he has not yet completed six more marriages, seventy new sex relationships he was creating, and thirty new children which are just as good as neurotics, but he wanted to see whether they are better neurotics than him or not...'

I mean, what are you doing? Where are you? What do you think you are?

That is why this question was asked to Guru Nanak exactly, directly like that – "Well, you know, everything is in a mess. The whole world is in shambles!"

Nanak said very simply, in a very simple monotone, "Rise up in the early hours of the dawn. Meditate on the True Name and the meaning of greatness. Your actions will be clothed in modesty and the door of liberation shall come into sight." Look at the language! Such a beautiful man! God as a man, and so beautiful.

The secret of a Sikh is that the Sikh should not bother. Let his presence work. Let your radiance work. When a Sikh walks into something, let the divine, the entire psyche refigure itself, recompute itself to harmonize the environments. A Sikh is a psyche which creates harmony in everyone.

Being a visionary with his mind firmly on the future, it was only fitting that the great follower of Guru Nanak should establish a grand school outside Amritsar dedicated to the coming generations. Since 1998, the largely Western-born youngsters at Miri Piri Academy – School of Royalty and Reality – have been developing a boldly universal spirit, learning the Guru’s traditions and daily practicing the empowering discipline of the Masters. Grounded in the legacy of the past, while looking eagerly to serve the dawning dream of Aquarius, taking equally from cultures East and West, each of the students are touched by a special sense of destiny.

Yogi Bhajan, Siri Singh Sahib of Sikh Dharma International, visionary, counselor, healer, earthy, heavenly and vastly un sentimental, dedicated his life to the realization of an age of goodwill and understanding. In recognition of his service to humanity, at the 1999 celebrations in Anandpur, India celebrating the founding of the Khalsa 300 years before, he was endowed with the distinctive title, “Jewel of the Khalsa.”

By his sacrifice, Harbhajan Singh, the Yogi and Siri Singh Sahib gave new life to Guru Nanak’s vision in the West. The unitary outlook of the loving Master, who recognized the high and low and served them equally, is contained in his simple refrain: “If you can’t see God in all, you can’t see God at all!”²¹⁶

The Word from Chiapas

When Spanish seamen sought a westerly route to India around the time of Guru Nanak, they landed instead in the Western Hemisphere. Once ashore, they brutally took over the land and enslaved the people. For centuries, the native peoples of the Americas, mistakenly designated “Indians,” suffered untold oppression and injustice.

Most of Latin America cherishes a centuries-old legacy of popular struggle and resistance. In Mexico, resentment at the actions of the government and wealthy landlords has boiled over in periodic revolutions. Unfortunately, these recurrent upheavals have been of little benefit to the very poorest in the country, natives living in the most impoverished rural regions of Mexico.

In 1993, the usual specter of poverty and exploitation was given a new urgency with the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement between Mexico, the United States and Canada. Scheduled to take effect on the first day of 1994, sections of the agreement legislated the removal of natives from their traditional lands, as well as trade in cheap, genetically-modified imported corn.

Before the arrival of Europeans, all the land had belonged to the native peoples. Moreover, for 1,000 years, the farmers of Mexico had been the only people in the world to grow and cultivate corn. Now it appeared as though, thanks to “free trade,” poor tenant farmers in Chiapas and other agricultural states would be doubly victimized, taken from their land and driven out of business by the cheaply-produced corn of American agribusiness.

For a number of years, guerilla bands had been active in the jungles and mountains, opposing the government. Some of the insurgents had been radicalized by a 1968 student uprising in Mexico City, ruthlessly put down by army and police, and resulting in the deaths of hundreds of activists. One of the rebel commanders to enter Chiapas in 1983 with a handful of dedicated guerillas was known as “Subcommandante Marcos”. His small band of revolutionaries, three indigenous and three mestizos, called themselves the Zapatista Liberation National Army (EZLN), after Mexico’s revolutionary hero, Emiliano Zapata (1879-1919).

At the invitation of native community leaders, the Zapatistas entered indigenous communities, defending them from ruthless landlords and police, thereby earning their trust and respect. The subcommandante proved to be a brilliant analyst and strategist, as well as a gifted communicator, witty, disarming and poetic. Within a few years, there were thousands of indigenous Zapatistas, entire communities inspired by the hopeful vision of democracy, freedom and justice conveyed by Subcommandante Marcos. The councils of several of these communities approved a military offensive by the Zapatista Liberation National Army (EZLN) to mark the coming into force of NAFTA.

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On January 1, 1994, as planned, 3,000 masked Mayan guerillas occupied six large towns and hundreds of ranches in an armed uprising. They occupied the police station in the old capital, San Cristobal de las Casas, smashing its computers, government records and land titles. The Zapatistas also broadcast a declaration of war calling for a general uprising against the government. Although the declaration had been drafted by native Mexicans, it did not once mention indigenous peoples. The authors of the declaration considered their struggle to be for not only themselves, but for all Mexicans.

Over the next ten days of firefights, rocket attacks and aerial strafing, the guerillas were driven back to their bases and a truce was arranged by the sympathetic Catholic bishop Samuel Ruiz. There had been no uprising outside of Chiapas, but the entire country had been thrown into an uproar. Everyone was talking about the cocky Zapatistas and their guerilla campaign.

For his part, Marcos began to openly proclaim the determination of Mexico's native peoples:

January 6, 1994

Here we are, the dead of all times, dying once again, but now in order to live.

During these past ten years more than 150,000 indigenous have died of curable diseases. The federal, state, and municipal governments and their economic and social programs do not take into account any real solution to our problems; they limit themselves to giving us charity every time elections roll around. Charity resolves nothing but for the moment, and again death visits our homes. That is why we think no, no more; enough dying this useless death; it is better to fight for change. If we die now, it will not be with shame, but with dignity, like our ancestors. We are ready to die, 150,000 more if necessary, so that our people awaken from this dream of deceit that holds us hostage.

Subcommandante Insurgente Marcos²¹⁷

The following January, the Chase Manhattan Bank issued a report calling on the Mexican government to "eliminate the Zapatistas." By this time, dozens of communities, representing well over 50,000 civilians had aligned themselves with the EZLN. The next month, 60,000 troops invaded these areas and established encampments in nearly every corner of the state.

The strength of the insurgents lay not so much in their armed might, as was shown during their brief insurrection when some were outfitted with mere wooden guns. The power of the Zapatistas was in the justice of their cause. For a time, Subcommandante Marcos sent poetic daily communiqués from the mountains of southeast Mexico to a leading paper in the capital. His denunciations of the country's corrupt political hegemony, the grinding poverty faced by Mexico's Indians, the media's subservience to the state, and the country's imminent corporate takeover in the North American "free trade" zone – all struck a responsive chord across Mexico.

To rid themselves of their well-spoken adversary, the Mexican government targeted Marcos personally in the media. In February 1995, they announced that the mysterious poet under the anonymous black ski mask, was really Rafael Sebastian Guillen Vicente, a long-missing philosophy professor from the city of Tampico. Old photos of Vicente as a young academic were released and splashed across the front pages of the world's papers. Tens of thousands of Zapatista sympathizers, many in dark balaclavas, responded by filling the streets of Mexico City and chanting "We are all Marcos!"

The government also made a serious allegation. By claiming the EZLN leadership was not indigenous, it at once questioned natives' ability to successfully sustain their campaign. It also hoped to drive a wedge between the Mayans and their charismatic representative. To finesse its strategy, the Mexican government offered amnesty to EZLN's indigenous foot soldiers if they would turn over Marcos and give up their arms.

The Zapatista Indian leadership strongly refuted the government's charges, asserting that the EZLN's entire General Command consisted of indigenous Chiapanecos. It maintained that Subcommandante Marcos maintained direct authority only over military questions. As it turned out, the beauty of the trademark Zapatista ski masks was twofold. While they protected the identities of the wearers, they created a certain bond of commonality. The masks said that anyone could join forces with the oppressed natives of Chiapas, including a non-native philosophy professor from another state.

Not only the government, but all kinds of critics and experts, armchair revolutionaries and representatives of divergent interests found fault with the enigmatic Marcos. He responded with a good-natured confession:

The machos accuse him of being feminine. Guilty.
The feminists accuse him of being macho. Guilty.
The communists accuse him of being anarchist. Guilty.
The anarchists accuse him of being orthodox. Guilty.
The reformists accuse him of being an extremist, a radical. Guilty.
The radicals accuse him of being reformist. Guilty.
The “historical vanguard” accuses him of appealing to civic society and not to the proletariat. Guilty.
Civil society accuses him of disturbing their tranquility. Guilty.
The serious ones accuse him of being a jokester. Guilty.
The adults accuse him of being a child. Guilty.
The children accuse him of being an adult. Guilty.
The orthodox leftists accuse him of not condemning the homosexuals and lesbians. Guilty.
The theorists accuse him of being practical. Guilty.
The practical accuse him of being a theorist. Guilty...²¹⁸

A year later, Zapatista and government representatives signed the San Andrés Accords granting a program of land reform, native autonomy and cultural rights, similar to those already in the Nicaraguan and Colombian constitutions. In July and August, Zapatistas convened a conference “for humanity and against neoliberalism,” attended by several thousand like-minded activists from Mexico and around the world. Four months later, Mexican President Zedillo formally rejected the February agreement, calling it “a dangerous plan for separatism.”

Early in 1997, masked Zapatista representatives fanned out across Mexico holding meetings with grassroots supporters in all Mexico’s thirty-one states on the issues of indigenous and municipal autonomy. What they learned was that a great many Mexicans did not want to join them in rising up and warring against the government, but neither did they want to ignore them. These people wanted a civil dialogue between the EZLN and the Mexican government.

As a consequence, in September, an unarmed wing of the Zapatista National Liberation Front was founded in Mexico City to serve as the political arm of the native movement in Mexico. Another outgrowth of the countrywide consultations was that the EZLN added to its demands from the government. To the original eleven, “work, land, shelter, food, health, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace,” they added “security, anti-corruption, information and environmental protection.”²¹⁹

Peace was to elude the Zapatista communities. In December, a paramilitary group massacred forty-five unarmed Indians, mostly women and children, in a church. A subsequent investigation and trial led to the imprisoning of fifty-five attackers, including a former Chiapas mayor.

While the court proceedings went on, the Mexican government launched a campaign to expel foreign human rights observers from Chiapas. 150 were deported over the next two years. Meanwhile, the army began dismantling four Zapatista communities, destroying records and arresting leaders. Bishop Ruiz withdrew his peacemaking efforts, accusing the government of preferring the path of war and oppression.

The EZLN, for its part, continued to provoke fresh thinking about the future of the Mexican people, and to forge alliances across the country and abroad. Often the inspirations and provocations came in the form of communiqués posted on the EZLN web-site or from interviews of Subcommandante Marcos by dedicated journalists who would make the difficult trek past police and army patrols into the Chiapas mountain heartland. While Marcos and the Zapatista leadership were prepared to hold out for a long armed struggle in the hills, their preferred strategy was to spread their movement across the country, even to export it.

After enduring months of constant army patrols, low-flying helicopters, bombings, attacks, and general harassment, the Zapatistas announced they would lead a caravan from Chiapas to Mexico’s capital on February 25, 2001. The aim of the “March for Indigenous Dignity” would be not to sign a peace deal with the government, but to reach out and broaden their base of popular support.

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The caravan of buses set out as scheduled with a colorful contingent of several thousand Mexican and international supporters. Subcommandante Marcos and twenty-four other EZLN leaders were accompanied by 300 Italian activists dressed in indistinguishable white mechanic coveralls, who had come to ensure their security. All along the way, they were met with enthusiastic crowds of supporters. Two weeks and 2,500 kilometers (1,500 miles) later, the entourage arrived to a tumultuous welcome from hundreds of thousands in Mexico City shouting, “You are not alone!”

During their stay in the capital, the Zapatistas held press conferences, toured indigenous communities, and agitated the defiant Mexican congress to give them a hearing. Their days in the capital were capped by a massive televised Zapatista gathering in the city center. Finally, the government invited four representatives of the EZLN caravan to come and speak in the Mexican legislature.

Everyone expected the eloquent Subcommandante Marcos to lead the indigenous delegation of speakers. Instead, he wisely remained outside leading a rally of supporters while four native representatives, led by one Commandante Esther, spoke in Mexico’s national political forum. It was the first time indigenous people had ever addressed the congress.

A month later, the legislature passed a considerably weakened version of the 1996 accord into law. The weakened legislation soon faced hundreds of challenges from indigenous groups, challenges that might take years to work their way through Mexico’s slow-moving legal system. In the meantime, hopeful of a positive decision from the courts and ever mindful of the government’s electronic and aerial surveillance, the Zapatista fighters returned to their Chiapas jungle hideaways to await developments.

In Mexico, the sustained rebellion and media tour de force of the Zapatistas fundamentally changed that country’s political landscape. Its ability to stand up to Mexico’s President Zedillo and to raise long unanswered questions of social justice contributed to Zedillo’s defeat in the 2000 general election, the first defeat of the ruling PRI party in living memory. It also led to the passing of new, albeit compromised, legislation to protect Mexico’s 15 million indigenous peoples. The Zapatista uprising then gave native organizations the confidence to present legal challenges to the gutted statute.

While the main demands of the Zapatistas remained unmet, the government agreed to release many prisoners and to close some army bases that had been encroaching on EZLN villages. The tour to the Mexican capital also generated tremendous publicity, fulfilling the Zapatista aim of broadening its base from a local military insurrection to a nationwide, even international, movement.

Every month, while Mexico waits for its justice system to deliver an affirmative ruling on native rights and as Subcommandante Marcos and his revolutionaries hold out in their Chiapas jungle stronghold, the pressures of integration with the massive North American economy exact a greater toll on its poorest citizens. Every month of passivity means thousands more die uselessly of curable diseases. The hope for justice and dignity is a race against time.

Education in Crisis

John Taylor Gatto (1935-) was the New York State Teacher of 1990. Ironically, after thirty years in the public school system of New York City, he was also profoundly disgusted and frustrated with the very nature of education as it had come to be known. In March of that year, the celebrated Mr. Gatto distilled the accumulated weight of those emotions into a terse essay titled, “I Quit, I Think,” and mailed it to the *Wall Street Journal*:

Government schooling is the most radical adventure in history. It kills the family by monopolizing the best times of childhood and by teaching disrespect for home and parents. The whole blueprint of school procedure is Egyptian, not Greek or Roman. It grows from the theological idea that human value is a scarce thing, represented symbolically by the narrow peak of a pyramid...

David learns to read at age four; Rachel at age nine: In normal development, when both are 13, you can’t tell which one learned first – the five-year spread means nothing at all. But in school I label Rachel “learning disabled” and slow David down a bit, too. For a paycheck, I adjust David to depend on me to tell him when to go and stop. He won’t outgrow that dependency. I identify Rachel as discount merchandise, “special education” fodder. She’ll be locked in her place forever.

In 30 years of teaching kids rich and poor I almost never met a learning disabled child; hardly ever met a gifted and talented one either. Like all other school categories, these are sacred myths, created by human imagination. They derive from questionable values we never examine because they preserve the temple of schooling.

That's the secret behind short-answer tests, bells, uniform time blocks, age grading, standardization, and all the rest of the school religion punishing our nation...

I can't teach this way any longer. If you hear of a job where I don't have to hurt kids to make a living, let me know. Come fall I'll be looking for work.²²⁰

John Taylor Gatto was born in Monongahela, Pennsylvania, a river town near Pittsburgh. By his own account, he learned most of what was worth knowing from his parents and from dropping in, listening, watching, visiting with his amicable, sometimes eccentric, adult neighbors.

Before grade one, John's father taught him to add, subtract and multiply in his head, not as work but as games, during drives around Pittsburgh. Mr. Gatto also told his son that learning anything was easy when you felt like it. His mother introduced young John and his sister to the natural splendor of life over the course of many long walks in hills above silent Monongahela after dark or in the mist of early morning. Then, if a turtle was too slow crossing the road, she would make John's father stop the car so she could get out and carry it to the other side of the road. The "high-rolling car dealer," the "druggist wiser than a doctor," the "psychological haberdasher," the "fun-loving mayor," and the reclusive old woman who scolded him when he hit a bird with his BB gun – they and others contributed to his early experience of learning by inquiry and osmosis.

At the age of five, Gatto's sense of cozy family life was suspended for a time by the realization that his parents were at war with each other, a long-lasting war without resolution, a conflict based on disappointed expectations and differences in culture hard to reconcile. Mrs. Gatto née Zimmer, of feisty German and Irish stock, had been brought up with a servant and dresses from Paris. Italian, suave and Presbyterian, Mr. Gatto managed only a modest living as a travelling salesman and later as a pressman. The upshot was that for a time John and his sister were sent to a Catholic boarding school.

For all the shock and loneliness of it all, it was there, at Xavier Academy, that the budding educationalist first learned to exercise his critical faculties so as to be able to recognize the difference between mere intellect and sheer intelligence. He learned the greatest lesson of his life when he was just eight years old. It was the Second World War then, and a Jesuit brother from the college across the road came to teach the boys of the third grade class the causes of the first war as a prelude to the causes of the second.

After a brief lecture, an outline of incitements to that first conflict was written on the board. Then, Brother Michael asked for a volunteer to face the back of the class and tell the causes of World War One. Young John Gatto happily volunteered. This was a familiar routine. He had a good memory and enjoyed pleasing his teachers.

On dutifully reciting the causes given and listed on the board, John felt like he was being flattened by a steamroller when Brother Michael revealed that those were not the causes at all and that he had been a fool for believing they were. The teacher then shrewdly laid out the real reasons for the conflict, a much more plausible list. The Jesuit brother warned his class, which by now was giving him their rapt attention, not to let others do their thinking for them – even if that authority happened to wear clothing associated with people of God. For little John Gatto, it was a magical piece of theatre and an unforgettable lesson.

Later that year, John and his sister returned to their family and the relatively uninspired routine of the Monongahela schoolhouse. John went on to study at Cornell, Columbia and the University of California. There followed a stint as a script writer, songwriter, jewelry designer, cab driver and then as a writer for the advertising agencies of Madison Avenue, writing fifty or so words a week, "drunk everyday, hunting sensation every night."

John Gatto left his career, a fraternity boy's dream job flogging cigarettes and hosiery, on a personal quest. He was not even sure he liked young people, but a teaching certificate was simple to obtain, and he hoped to create a future worth living. That was how entered the Byzantine world of the New York City public school system.

Three or four years before typing out his essay, having had countless run-ins with education authorities starting on his very first day at work, John Gatto began to organize his thoughts around what was wrong with

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the school system he himself had become a part of. Instinctively, he knew something had to be wrong. Most of his teaching career he had found himself angry in the morning, angry at work, and angry before going to sleep at night. For years, that consuming rage had driven him to try and master the destructive institution of education – to no avail.

Gatto soon realized that compulsory education was a new entry into the world's cultural landscape. In the cradle of Western civilization, ancient Greece, those with a thirst for learning freely attended Plato's academy, Aristotle's lyceum and the various other *gymnasiums*. That atmosphere was reflective of an open society where everyone's competence was assumed, and magistrates and civic office holders chosen from the common citizenry by lottery. There was no regular homework, no standardized tests, no bells and no register for attendance. To the Athenians, forced training was a mark of enslavement. Their word *scholē* itself evoked the leisure to think and reflect in a garden setting.

With the collapse of Mediterranean civilization, cathedral schools and monastic schools formed. They kept the germs of classical culture alive through Europe's Middle Ages. Many of these relatively formal arrangements gave rise to local universities. Later on, but well before the establishment of conventional schools, the Church in the form of Jesuit tutors trained and educated the elites of Europe.

In his studies, Gatto came to know that compulsory schooling as we now know it originated in Prussia. Shocked by the Prussian army's defeat by Napoleon at the battle of Jena in 1806, the philosopher Johann Fichte (1762-1814) argued the need for harnessing the nation's children in the interests of the state. After a decade of debate, a new centralized schooling system was enforced to deliver obedient soldiers and workers, well-subordinated civil servants and clerks, and a common national culture and ideology.

Massachusetts, where Puritans had already tried the idea back in 1642, was the first American state to take up compulsory schooling in 1852. The school year was just twelve weeks long and only children aged nine to twelve years were required to attend. In spite of the sage objections of Count Leo Tolstoy and more impassioned protests elsewhere, the practice slowly expanded and spread. By 1868, mandatory schools began to be legislated by the governments of western Europe. In 1880, Great Britain fell in line. By 1918, the last American state, rustic Mississippi, cast its lot in with the rest.

Mass education served the interests of an emerging industrial society. It created a homogenized work force comprised of interchangeable units with virtually identical skills. It "Americanized" the large population of Slavs and Mediterranean peoples who by 1896 had begun to outnumber the immigrants from Anglo-Saxon Europe. It also centralized authority in the corporate state at the expense of local autonomy and self-reliance, even undermining the once-sacrosanct integrity of home and family.

Gatto could not help but to marvel at the versatile geniuses of early America, before the institutionalization of education. They were self-taught men like David Farragut, the US Navy's first admiral, who began his career as a commissioned midshipman on the warship *Essex* at the ripe age of ten. There was Ben Franklin, who spent less than two years at school. Thomas Edison left school early because his teachers thought him feeble-minded. Andrew Carnegie begged his mother not to send him to school and was well on his way to fame and fortune by the age of thirteen. George Washington spent just two years in school and succeeded as official surveyor, land speculator, architect, grower and marketer of wheat, boat-builder and fisherman - all before distinguishing himself as general and father of his nation.

Gatto, the Teacher of the Year, could also not help wondering at how by 1840 the rate of complex literacy was generally between 93 and 100%, while today it hovers around 83%. The quality of the popular literature - dense works of art like the best-seller *The Last of the Mohicans* and the writings of William Shakespeare, Sir Walter Scott, John Bunyan and Samuel Johnson - also inspired his respect for the people who lived before schooling by law.

Gatto was surprised to find that in Switzerland, the country with the highest per capita income in the world, only 23% of the student population went to high school. Looking at the American scene, he began to conclude that government schooling only served to make people "dumber, not brighter," "families weaker, not stronger," that it "ruined formal religion with its hard-sell exclusion of God," that it "set the class structure in stone by dividing children in classes and setting them one against another," and that it had been "midwife to an alarming concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a fraction of the national community."²²¹

The whole situation called to mind an observation of Alexis de Tocqueville in *Democracy in America*, his testament to the enterprising spirit of early America:

(Administration) covers the surface of society with a network of small complicated rules, minute and uniform, through which the most original minds and the most energetic characters cannot penetrate, to rise above the crowd. The will of man is not shattered, but softened, bent, guided; men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are constantly restrained from acting; such a power does not destroy, but it prevents existence; it does not tyrannize, but it compresses, extinguishes, and stupefies a people till each nation is reduced to nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which government is the shepherd.²²²

In his thirty years as teacher, John Gatto had developed a reputation as a passionate teacher dedicated to his students, willing to reach out and help and guide their best creative instincts, whatever it took. Naturally, his approach had been unconventional. It had been disruptive of traditional authority because it empowered and acknowledged the individual genius of his students and encouraged their personal initiative.

The Teacher of the Year had initiated hundreds of efforts to reintegrate students within the larger human reality outside of school. One eighth grade class had put in 30,000 hours of volunteer community service. A student-run food cooperative had been set up and financed out of Mr. Gatto's own pocket. Tens of thousands of books had been obtained for students' private libraries. Over 1,000 apprenticeships had been arranged.

It was not enough. It would never be enough, or so it seemed. Eventually John Gatto, 1990's Teacher of the Year concluded that the education system was destructive of the human spirit, destructive of human genius and human initiative because it was meant to be.

On July 5, 1991, Gatto quit. Twenty days later, the *Wall Street Journal* published the essay he had submitted back in March. A week later, he was going over invitations to speak at NASA Space Center, the Western White House, the Nashville Center for the Arts, Columbia Graduate Business School, the Colorado Librarian's Association, Apple Computer and United Technologies Corporation.

If compulsory schooling and institutional education was an oppressive religion, John Taylor Gatto responded to the popular groundswell of disenchantment like an impassioned reformer. Without an agent and with no effort at advertising, he was soon on a near-endless tour of speaking engagements, engagements that took him to every state of the Union and several countries abroad. In articles, audio and video tapes, a documentary film and books with provocative titles like *Dumbing Us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling* and *How To Get an Education in Spite of School*, Gatto offered a historical perspective on a crippling institutional disease. He also prescribed numerous practical ideas, based on his own years of struggling with the system, on how to begin fixing it.

The first Enlightenment was a false one. It merely transferred the right to direct our lives from a corporate Church and a hereditary nobility to a pack of experts whose minds were (and are) for sale to anyone with a checkbook. In the second Enlightenment we need to correct our mistakes, using what schools we decide to allow to help us strive for full consciousness, for self-assertion, mental independence, and personal sovereignty... Only in this way can we make use of our understanding without guidance from strangers who work for a corporate state system, increasingly impatient with human beings.²²³

Breaking the teacher certification monopoly and having everyone teach, localizing administration and reducing the size of schools, breaking down class boundaries and individualizing testing, integrating teaching with life outside the school and conveying practical life-skills like sewing a button or sailing a boat – even admitting there is more than one way to grow up successfully – all these are part of the former Teacher of the Year's radical agenda.

John Taylor Gatto is talking revolution, and he knows it.

Noble Kim

Kim Dae-jung was born in 1925 on a small island off the southwest tip of Korea, the second son of a sharecropper. Since 1910, the Korean peninsula had been occupied by Japan and Kim's father's land was owned by a Japanese landlord.

Kim Dae-jung's first taste of politics came when, in school, he wrote a short essay critical of the Japanese. In consequence, he was removed from his position as class captain. After graduating from high school, Kim worked for a shipping company, which saved him from conscription into the Japanese Imperial Army.

During the Korean War (1950-53) between communist North Korea, backed by the Chinese army, and the South assisted by American and allied forces, three million soldiers and civilians died. On one occasion, Kim was captured by communist fighters and sentenced to be shot. He was lucky to escape to the South, where he resumed work in the shipping business and publishing a newspaper.

In 1954, Kim Dae-jung resolved to run for election to the South Korean legislature. Twice he lost, before finally being elected in 1961. The country's elected representatives never had a chance to meet. Four days after the election, Major General Park Chung Hee staged a military coup and the National Assembly was dissolved. Under pressure from within South Korea and abroad, strongman Park established a civilian government with himself as president. Park went on to win two elections.

Kim, meanwhile, won re-election as a member of an opposition party. He made a name for himself as a gifted speaker and responsive legislator. In 1969, Kim was able to generate widespread opposition against a constitutional amendment to allow Park a third term as president. When the amendment passed and the next election came, Kim Dae-jung himself ran against the incumbent Park. It was the most dangerous election of his life. During the campaign, Kim survived an attempt on his life made to look like a traffic accident. When the vote was held, he narrowly lost the vote in spite of extensive election fraud.

Adding insult to injury, Kim was accused of illegally influencing the election results and specially targeted by the Park regime. When martial law was declared in 1972 and Park declared president for life, Kim went abroad to organize anti-Park campaigns in the United States and Japan.

The next year, South Korean secret service agents dramatically abducted Kim Dae-jung from a hotel in Japan. An international alarm was sounded. Kim and his captors were traced to a boat in the Sea of Japan. An American helicopter pilot spotted the agents as they put weights on Kim's body and prepared to throw him overboard to drown. Strong protests from the Japanese and US governments, and continual aerial surveillance forced the agents to abandon their original plan and return with Kim to South Korea. Kim was released, then put under house arrest.

Despite the government's efforts to silence him, Kim Dae-jung joined other opposition leaders in issuing a widely reported appeal for a return to democracy in 1976. For this offence, he was arrested and imprisoned. When released in late 1978, Kim was returned to house arrest.

President Park was assassinated the next year. Two months later, there was another military putsch. The new regime of Chun Doo Hwan lifted the restrictions on Kim. In the topsy-turvy history of Korean democracy, what followed was called the "Spring of Freedom." Demonstrations and movements for democracy swept the country, leading to a violent government crackdown. In May 1980, Kim Dae-jung and other democratic leaders were arrested. Thousands of demonstrators were massacred by troops in the city of Kwangju.

In the aftermath, Chun was installed as president of South Korea. At a show trial, Kim Dae-jung and twenty-three associates were sentenced to death. While the American and Japanese governments protested without effect, Kim began an indefinite stay in prison. For five months, he was kept in solitary confinement, then allowed to communicate only with his family and with just a single, one-page letter per month. In his communications, Kim tried to instill courage and forbearance in his wife, two younger sons, and the wife of his eldest son, Hong-il, who was also imprisoned by the authorities.

Kim Dae-jung conveyed his deeply moral and essentially Christian faith in his twenty-nine letters, each written in tiny script, so as to be able to say as much as possible. He communicated a thoughtful spirit, not afraid of hardship.

Loving is difficult because one must forgive and embrace those whom one does not care to love or even hates. It may not be possible to love someone who is not emotionally acceptable. It is possible only, I believe, when we depend on God and seek His assistance.

There are several ways in which this might happen. First of all, there is the fact that I am a sinner. If all of my misconduct, or the evil thoughts I have harbored in my life, were flashed up on a screen, before God and all people, would I still be able to face others and say I cannot forgive them? Second, to be unforgiving or hateful toward others is to inflict pain in one's own heart through hatred and sin; it is masochistic behavior. Third, genuine peace and harmony cannot be established in human society if we reject forgiveness and love. We cannot be free of anxiousness, or truly happy. That this is so is easily understood when we think of the example of nazism and communism. Last, only the truly magnanimous and strong are capable of forgiving and loving. Let us persevere, then, praying always that God will help us to have the strength to love and forgive our enemies. Let us together, in this way, become the loving victors.²²⁴

Finally, at the end of 1982, Kim Dae-jung was released from prison on medical grounds and sent into exile in the United States. For the next two years, Kim continued his efforts for Korean democracy from abroad and studied at Harvard's Center for International Affairs. When Kim returned to Korea, he was accompanied by a large entourage of press, US government and other observers. They were mindful of the assassination of activist Benigno Aquino on his return to the Philippines eighteen months earlier. Kim Dae-jung returned home safely, but was promptly placed under house arrest.

Finally, after a sustained outbreak of large demonstrations for democracy, the government restored democratic presidential elections. All restrictions on Kim Dae-jung were lifted and his political rights restored. In his role as an influential opposition leader, Kim lobbied internationally for the restoration of democracy in Myanmar, ruled by a military dictatorship, and East Timor, invaded by the Indonesian army. He ran for president unsuccessfully in 1987 and 1992. At last, on his fourth presidential bid in 1997, Kim won with 40.3% of the vote. It was the first time the presidency had passed peacefully to an opposition leader.

On gaining power, Kim Dae-jung was immediately faced with a terrible financial crisis that gripped not only his country, but all of East Asia's "economic tigers." Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines also suffered huge economic downturns, bankruptcies and unemployment. In these difficulties, Korea's new president managed to inspire the confidence of foreign bankers and investors and to provide moral leadership to his struggling people. The Korean people responded generously by contributing US\$2 billion in gold from their own savings to balance the nation's economic deficit.

The next, and most ambitious, goal of President Kim was to effect reconciliation with the communist northern half of the country. Fifty years after the devastating Korean War, the border remained a no man's land of barbed wired, troops and heavy fortifications.

In consultations with South Korea's main strategic partner, the United States, and with European and other governments, the South Korean president proposed a policy of trust-building and increasing cooperation. Kim Dae-jung's intentions were well received by North Korea's new leader, Kim Jong-il. They resulted in an unprecedented meeting between the two leaders in the northern capital of Pyongyang in June 2000. After the three-day summit, they agreed to a joint declaration committing their governments to resolving the issues surrounding reunification, facilitating cultural and other exchanges, and scheduling a visit to Seoul by the North Korean leader at an appropriate time. This historic effort toward a peaceful reconciliation was a big factor in the Korean president being awarded the Noble peace prize later that year.

Political developments in America proved less than helpful to Kim's peace-making initiatives. President George W. Bush, elected to the White House in 2000, vilified North Korea and accused it of being part, with Iran and Iraq, of an international "axis of evil." Subsequently, when President Bush visited South Korea in February 2002, the tension in North and South Korea was palpable. There were predictable denunciations of the United States in the media in the North and street demonstrations in Seoul. Kim the diplomat managed to calm the situation by having the American leader state publicly, and for the first time, that he supported reconciliation efforts between the two Koreas, and that his country had no intention of attacking the communist North.

While President Kim's mission of normalization of relations between North and South still faces a considerable challenge from fears in both the United States and North Korea, he remains undaunted. Crises come and crises go, but a deserving peace and democracy for the Korean peoples remain his life's objective.

Ralph Nader, Public Citizen

Ralph Nader (1934-) was born in Winstead, Connecticut, the youngest of four children, to Lebanese immigrant parents, Nathra and Rose. His father's business, the Highland Arms Restaurant, was widely known for the spirited debates about public affairs among the customers and Mr. Nader. He encouraged his son to take the rights and responsibilities of citizenship seriously. His father once said, "When I sailed past the Statue of Liberty, I took it seriously."

Studious, intense and bright, young Ralph excelled in his studies and went on to Princeton, then Harvard, to study law. Nader was appalled by the Harvard's narrow intellectualism and moral complacency. In his words, "It was a high-priced tool factory, only instead of tools and dies, they were producing hired advocates for corporate law firms and corporations. If you were worried about issues of right and wrong and justice and injustice, you were considered soft intellectually."²²⁵

At Harvard, Nader studied the faulty and dangerous engineering of American automobiles. His research resulted in an article in *The Nation* that indicted the major auto companies for making cars without any consideration for the safety of the people who use them. His research turned up 5 million reported accidents, nearly 40,000 fatalities, 110,000 permanent disabilities and 1.5 million injuries in the United States yearly. The statistics were amply confirmed by Nader's personal experience. Many of his high school friends had died in twisted metal and broken glass.

After a few years of world travelling and freelance writing, then a stint as a lawyer in a quiet Hartford practice, Ralph Nader arrived in Washington, D.C. on a bus in 1963, there to begin his life of professional citizenship. Nader's first job was as a consultant to the US Department of Labor. Nader also acted as an unpaid advisor to a Senate subcommittee exploring what role the government might play in auto safety. All the while, Nader was working on a book elaborating the theme of his *Nation* article.

Unsafe At Any Speed: The Designed-in Dangers of the American Automobile was published late in 1965. It showed that the immediate cause of car injuries was not the "nut behind the wheel," so often blamed by the auto industry. In considerable detail, the book demonstrated how American automobiles were filled with woeful engineering and design deficiencies that made them uncrashworthy.

While the book did not immediately catch the American public's imagination, it did draw the attention of executives at General Motors, whose "sporty" Corvair was a prime target of Nader's allegations. They hired private eyes to dig up dirt on Nader. The sleuths, however, turned up empty-handed. Ralph Nader had early on dedicated his life exclusively to serving the public good. He did not date, did not drink, did not smoke, did not gamble, and did not seem to care for money. At night, he slept in a run-down rooming house.

When a journalist found out about GM's defensive maneuvering, Ralph Nader's work suddenly became a front-page story. A Senate committee set up to investigate auto safety issues summoned the General Motors president to apologize to Nader. The publicity boosted *Unsafe At Any Speed* to the top of the bestseller lists. The incident also proved a core Nader belief: that one person, acting with intelligence and persistence, can make a difference – even if the target is the largest corporation in the world. New safety legislation saw the rate people died on America's highways fall from 5.6 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles in 1966 to 1.6 in 2000.

The subsequent objects of Ralph Nader's very public citizenship have been large and many. A couple of years later, he arrived at an airport to find there was no seat for him on a flight from Washington, D.C., to Hartford, Connecticut, where a large audience was waiting to hear him speak. At the time, such a cause for chagrin was considered an unfortunate and largely unavoidable hazard of air travel.

Nader, always the activist, sued the carrier for breach of contract since he had paid for a reserved seat. In the subsequent court case, it was discovered that airlines routinely overbooked their flights. The case, which went to the US Supreme Court, led to a ruling that allowed the airlines to continue overbooking their flights, but required them to compensate displaced passengers and first to ask for volunteers to give up their seats.

In 1971, with the American people steeped in a generational divide and confronted by a harrowing crisis of idealism, Ralph Nader wrote a timely article for *Life* magazine on patriotism. In the piece, he keenly recognized the existence of two distinct groups in American society: those who assume that "patriotism is automatically

possessed by those in authority,” and those who consider patriotism “not a pattern imposed but a condition earned by the quality of an individual’s or a people’s behavior.”

Nader proceeded to insist that a nation’s symbols should not be used as a shield to deflect public criticism by those unworthy of leadership. Moreover, he went on to observe that damaging the country’s ecology, wasting its resources and lying to its people was as much a desecration as tearing down its flag. By the same token, “working to end poverty, discrimination, corruption, greed and other conditions” that undermine a nation’s promise was as patriotic as the exploits of a righteous war.²²⁶

True to his principles, that year Ralph Nader used the settlement money from his invasion of privacy suit against GM to form Public Citizen, an organization dedicated to safeguarding citizens’ interests and ensuring government and corporate accountability. The publicity raised by the lawsuit also caused an outpouring of public support. Donations ranging from crumpled dollar bills to a check for US\$100,000 began to pour in. Public Citizen eventually grew into six branches employing 150,000 people, and spawned similar citizen advocacy groups in dozens of countries.

In the US, advocates and activists inspired by Ralph Nader were admirably known as “Nader’s Raiders.” They became involved in almost countless issues. These included nuclear safety, international trade, the rights of the disabled, occupational health, mining safety, tort reform, pesticide regulation, quality of care in homes for the elderly, insurance fraud, false advertising, meat processing, pension reform, land use, and banking. The US Motor Vehicle Highway Safety Act, the US Freedom of Information Act, and the US Clean Water Act are direct outcomes of their work.

When his older brother, Shafik, died of cancer in 1986, Nader took a rare pause from work to be in Connecticut with his family. For the first time in twenty years, Ralph Nader rested his passion for the public good for a few weeks. Shortly afterwards, he was afflicted with Bell’s palsy, which forced him again to slow down. The disease, caused in part by his long work hours and demanding schedule, froze the right side of his face, making it difficult for him to talk or eat, even to smile. For a few months, Nader kept out of the public eye. Slowly, his body healed itself, leaving him with only a slight occasional twitch.

It has been said that Ralph Nader’s views radicalized as he became older. After the election of President Bill Clinton in 1992 with his promise of “fundamental change,” Nader wondered aloud just how much real social change could be realized without a rejuvenation of the nation’s democratic culture. To achieve this, Nader proposed a basic retooling of America’s civic infrastructure.

In the corporate realm, Ralph Nader envisioned a Corporate Democracy Act to give shareholders an effective voice in corporate decision-making. He also proposed that consumers, workers, local communities, shareholders, and small businessmen have greater legal protection from destructive corporate practices. To maintain an ethical corporate culture, Nader further recommended special protection to ensure employees have the freedom to speak out in cases of fraud, corruption, unsafe products or practices, and pollution of the environment.

In the realm of government, Nader proposed public funding of presidential and congressional election campaigns to free candidates from the corrupting influence of corporate donations. He also suggested limiting the terms for members of Congress and remedying recent judicial rulings that restricted the right of citizens to hold their government to account in a court of law. Nader proposed a citizen watchdog group be established to guard against the mismanagement or imprudent sell-off of taxpayer assets, such as national forests, grazing lands, mineral deposits, power projects, information resources, broadcast frequencies, and research and development rights. Most importantly, he recommended the democratization of some significant part of the public airwaves to create an open forum of ideas, free of commercial and corporate interests.

Ralph Nader’s insistence on freeing politicians and media from the rule of wealthy corporate interests was partly based on his observation of what was and was not discussed during American elections. The domination of the nation by Big Business was hardly mentioned, if at all, in the corporate-run media. The unmentionables, according to Nader, were “corporate welfare, reckless deregulation, corporate crime, corporate buying of politicians, multinational corporate erosion of our national sovereignty, corporate munitions trade, corporatist education, corporate-dominated media and corporate environmental destruction.”²²⁷

Of particular concern to Nader was the impending influence of the World Trade Organization on the quality of American life. Nader quoted constitutional scholar and Harvard law professor Laurence Tribe’s

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charge that the “shift of sovereignty from state and local governments to the proposed World Trade Organization” was so substantial that it ought to have been treated like a treaty and required the approval of two-thirds of the Senate.²²⁸ Instead, the deal was put on a congressional fast track with no possibility of amendment and a simple majority vote.

When the 550-page agreement was sent to Congress for ratification, Nader offered to donate \$10,000 to the charity of a congressman’s choice if any of them signed an affidavit saying they had read it, and could answer several questions about it. Since it was labeled a “free trade” agreement, many Congressmen simply supported it as an article of faith. Only one – Senator Hank Brown, a Colorado Republican – took up the challenge. After reading the document, Brown changed his mind and voted against the agreement.

After years of trying to exert a conscientious influence on a Washington increasingly overcome by the interests of big business, in 1996, Ralph Nader decided to run for the US presidency on the Green Party ticket. He dubbed the dominant Republican and Democratic parties “Tweedledee and Tweedledum,” and criticized them for competing for the backing of large corporate interests while ignoring the interests of ordinary citizens. The consummate activist challenged his fellow citizens, “If Americans continue to turn off politics, politics will continue to turn on them, to the detriment of their standards of living, justice and freedom.”²²⁹ Nader, whom opinion polls indicated was one of the few people in Washington Americans trusted, received a respectable 685,000 votes.

Four years later, Nader and the Greens managed a more publicized campaign, with Winona Ryder, a First Nations advocate, as his vice presidential running mate. In a close election, which many analysts considered the Democrats lost because of the strength of the Greens, Nader hammered away at substantive issues. The widening gap between rich and poor, quality in the media, government handouts to Big Business, broken down inner cities, global warming, affordable housing, the plight of family farms, and the corporatization of virtually everything. Despite the media’s predictable focus on calling “the horserace” between the two predominant parties, and despite being shut out of the vital televised presidential debates, thinking people gave Nader nearly 3 million votes.

In 2001, social commentator and humorist, Michael Moore offered the following perspective of the many Americans who blamed Ralph Nader for allegedly spoiling the election for Al Gore, the Democratic Party’s presidential candidate:

The anger now leveled at Nader is so personal, so intense, from Baby Boomers who blame him for Gore losing the election (he didn’t lose). I look at these individuals in their forties and fifties and I wonder why Nader seems so personally threatening to them.

It’s taken a while, but I think I’ve got it figured out: Nader represents who they used to be but no longer are. He never changed. He never lost the faith, never compromised, never gave up. That’s why people hate him... No wonder millions of high school and college students love him. He’s the opposite of their parents, the people who “raised” them by handing them a latchkey, a Ritalin, and a remote for the TV set in the bedroom...

Well, guess what, fellow Boomers – this Nader dude ain’t ever going to change. So why don’t you save your breath, increase your Prozac dosage, and get some suburban therapist to see you once a week? Or just chill out and be thankful there are people like Ralph Nader out there. He’ll do all the work; you just relax and order up another margarita.²³⁰

Of course they hate Ralph Nader. He’s a disquieting reminder of what might happen if we elected someone who will represent the bottom 90 percent of the country.²³¹

In 2004, Ralph Nader made a third run for the United States presidency. Big “D” Democrats aggressively worked, sometimes successfully, to keep Nader off the ballot in state after state. Although, as a result, he was only on thirty-four state ballots and while he ran this time without a political party, and was again sidelined by the big corporate media, Nader still managed to garner more than one million votes, about one percent of the total. Rather than conceding defeat, Ralph Nader vowed to continue his uphill fight against corporate domination of American politics and to make electoral reform a prime civil liberties issue.

Whatever the future may hold, it is widely acknowledged that Ralph Nader has already substantially changed the fabric of life not only in America, but in many other countries. The idealistic young man from a little town in Connecticut has upped the ante of corporate responsibility and set a global example of civic

activism. Very few would deny that, despite its ongoing social challenges and contradictions, America - and the world, is a better place because of him.

Taking It Personally

Anita (1942-2007) grew up as one of four children in an Italian immigrant family in Littlehampton, on the south coast of England. Like everyone else in her home, she worked long hours in their stylish American-style diner where she wore a classy uniform and dished out exotic ice cream concoctions. It was a popular community destination and served also as an extension of her family's home. In the distinctive small-town diner with its glitzy atmosphere and endless customers, Anita learned her first lessons about public relations and managing a retail operation.

From her mother, Anita inherited a gutsy, subversive nature. Mrs. Perilli dressed her daughters in trousers to go to school. When the nuns sent her girls home, she just sent them back, still in trousers. The feisty Catholic sabotaged Sunday mass by rubbing the hems of her children's clothes with garlic to ensure no one smelled the incense. After Mr. Perilli died, the local priest, whom she loathed, came to tell her how lucky she was that he was going to be given a Catholic funeral. In no time, the irksome priest standing at Mrs. Perilli's door found himself dripping wet from a bucket of filthy washwater.

Anita Roddick's sense of moral outrage was first awakened when she was ten years old and she picked up a paperback book about the Holocaust. Those photographs from Auschwitz seared themselves unforgettably into her brain. They inspired in young Anita an unquenchable thirst for social justice.

At school, Anita's teachers indulged her social conscience by giving her credit for studying American and English social writers of the 1930s. Her activist spirit led her to join vigils in support of the Campaign for Freedom Against Hunger, to march with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and to contribute to many other causes.

While going to college to learn to be a teacher, Anita became restless. She ended up in Geneva, where she talked her way into a job at the United Nations. After an eye-opening year at the women's rights division of the International Labor Organization, Anita set out on a world tour, taking in Tahiti, Australia, Mauritius and points beyond.

After her global tour, Anita returned to Littleton. There, her mother introduced Anita to an aspiring children's story writer named Gordon Roddick. Over three long autumn days of talking and walking that encompassed the parks, beaches, and cafés of Littleton, Anita and Gordon realized they agreed on many of the fundamentals of life. Soon, they would get married and start a family, not necessarily in that order. He would never sell any stories, but they would prove to be excellent working partners.

Together, Gordon and Anita made several tries at entrepreneurship. They tried a picture framing shop, then a restaurant and a hotel, while Anita's mother took charge of their young daughters, Justine and Samantha. It was hard work. Anita and Gordon returned exhausted each night. Finally, they quit to try something else.

While Anita planned a little shop to sell the kind of natural cosmetics she had seen women using in her travels around the world – things like cocoa butter, almond oil and aloe vera – Gordon prepared to fulfill a childhood dream: to ride a horse from Buenos Aires to New York. Anita was less than thrilled at the prospect of being left for two years with the children, yet she could not help admiring his adventuresome spirit.

When the bank first turned down Anita's request for a loan to start her business, she was crushed. Gordon came to the rescue, coaching her to wear a business suit instead of a Bob Dylan T-shirt, to leave Justine and Samantha at home, and to bring a professional-looking business plan. Gordon then accompanied Anita to the bank. They received their loan a week later.

Busy weeks were spent finding a chemist to make the kind of products Anita had in mind, then finding a suitable location in the city of Brighton - fashionable, up-market and twenty miles from Littlehampton. March 1976 the shop was ready to open. Its first day, the shop made the equivalent of US\$175. Anita was thrilled.

Anita began her enterprise with a critical attitude about the traditional cosmetics industry, which Elizabeth Arden had once described as the "nastiest in the world." She realized the megabusiness was based on creating

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false needs and unnecessary fears, then capitalizing on and profiting from them. By preying on women's fears – of lost youth, diminishing appeal and fading beauty – the false hopes offered by the cosmetics industry created misery, demoralization and a deep-rooted sense of inadequacy among women.

The Body Shop opposed all the conventional cosmetics industry values. While the established wisdom was that glamorous packaging was essential, Anita Roddick sold her products at The Body Shop in plain jars. Many were available to customers in basic pack-it-yourself bulk format. Although regular cosmetic companies tested their formulas on animals, The Body Shop created a policy of not selling animal-tested products. While the large cosmetic companies spent millions on market research, The Body Shop culture thrived on direct communication between staff and customers.

Although the established corporations spent large parts of their budgets on advertising, The Body Shop received most of its publicity free by word of mouth or coverage in the news media. The Body Shop's fresh corporate ethic based on common sense, ecology and goodwill was news in itself.

Anita was outspoken in sharing her belief that companies needed to be based on emotions more developed than fear and greed. Even as the bosses of conservative enterprises fretted about profits and worker productivity, The Body Shop developed an inclusive business culture, encouraging communication and initiative at every level. This difference in approach made dealing with the bank difficult for the first year or so and led to conservative financial "experts" labeling The Body Shop weak, inefficient and at least a bit loony.

While regular corporate stakeholders denied it was their business to become involved in larger social issues, The Body Shop culture enriched itself with a sense of community service and a commitment to activism in issues of global concern. The Roddicks were bolstered by the realization they were not alone, that there were like-minded companies in the US, such as Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream Company, Rhino Records and Patagonia, each dedicated in their unique way to human values and consciousness-raising.

Despite Anita and Gordon's unconventional approach, by 1984, they managed to successfully float shares on the stock market. With thirty-eight stores in the United Kingdom and fifty-two more abroad, and with The Body Shop shares gaining value, they were slowly becoming wealthy. But riches were not on their mind. With his focus on legal and financial matters, and her knack for product development, design and public relations, plus some good professional help, Gordon and Anita managed the company day by day, and year by year.

In 1985, the Roddicks began collaborating with organizations like Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and Amnesty International. Sometimes the show windows of all the chain's stores would be given over to publicizing issues such as acid rain, the extinction of the whales and the torture of political prisoners. Within a couple of years, The Body Shop established its own Environmental Projects Department to more efficiently manage its policies and its outreach to the 12 million people coming in and passing by its store windows every week.

Soon after, they established a Community Care Department to assess the impact The Body Shop staff might have working with voluntary service organizations. Staff at stores worldwide were then encouraged to go out into their communities and make some positive contribution. Once their communities recovered from the shock that people from The Body Shop were truly offering something for nothing, numerous projects were initiated. In Melbourne, 500 people were galvanized to plant 250,000 trees. In Sweden, a shop stayed open after hours for the blind and disabled. In Brantford, Canada, staff helped at a school for crippled children.

Anita Roddick noticed, to her chagrin, that the shops embraced community projects with more enthusiasm than staff in the warehouse or the office, or those in management. For some of those people, the idea of social service remained completely out of the question.

One Earth Day, the Roddicks tried to persuade their staff at the warehouse and offices in Littlehampton to go clean up the local beach. To their chagrin, just thirteen turned up. A cyclist only added to Anita's simmering sense of frustration when he stopped and demanded to know what was going. When she suggested he dismount from his bike, take a bag, and help out, the cyclist pushed off and memorably yelled over his shoulder, "Not on your life!" Clearly, The Body Shop mentality had not yet gained universal acceptance.

The rapport between The Body Shop and its customers was tested when the European Economic Community proposed all cosmetic products sold in Europe be tested on animals. Anita and The Body Shop went on the offensive, challenging companies still trying out their products on animals instead to label them

“Tested On Animals.” In the end, four million people signed a petition for the proposed policy to be withdrawn, and it was.

By 1987, The Body Shop was designated “Company of the Year” by the British Confederation of Industries. With hundreds of outlets in dozens of countries, it had a bigger presence abroad than any other British retailer. Smarting from years of not being taken seriously by traditional business folk, at her acceptance ceremony, Anita Roddick went and delivered a blistering attack on the uninspired practices of the old-style captains of industry she called “dinosaurs in pin-striped suits.”

That same year, The Body Shop initiated a policy called “Trade Not Aid.” It was based on the recognition that existing international players were nowhere near succeeding at the task of balancing out the huge inequalities of material abundance in the world. From her year working at the United Nations in Geneva, Anita recognized how the UN operated on a huge scale with little sense of accountability. Multinational corporations seemed to be uninterested in the Third World except as a source of cheap labor and extra profits. For their part, charities too often collected from the poor in rich countries only to give to the rich in the poor.

The principles behind Trade Not Aid were: to respect all environments and cultures, to utilize traditional skills and materials, to create trade links that are both successful and sustainable, to trade in replenishable natural materials, to encourage small-scale projects that can easily be duplicated, and to provide long-term commitment to all projects. Fifteen years later, there were already forty Trade Not Aid initiatives in twenty-six countries.

It all began in Nepal. When Anita Roddick was having difficulty finding a source for recycled paper that was both attractive-looking and economical, her younger daughter Samantha referred her to the mother of her best friend. Mara Amats happened to know a lot about paper. It was she who suggested paper made from materials other than wood pulp and that Nepal, one of the ten poorest countries in the world and with a long history of papermaking, would be a good place to look.

The three of them went together to Kathmandu, where they found a family-run paper business on hard times because of a lack of raw materials. With Mara’s expertise, they showed the local business how to switch to making paper from water hyacinths, which had been growing rampant there since being introduced in Victorian times, and from readily available banana leaves. Anita then made a contract with the manufacturer to supply The Body Shop with a variety of paper products. By dealing directly with the supplier in Kathmandu, most of the benefits remained in the local economy.

Later that year, Anita journeyed with Samantha and a guide to an historic meeting of tribes at Altamira, deep in the Amazon rainforest. These people, like hundreds of other tribes, were in imminent danger from the destruction of their wilderness habitat. Millions of acres had already been destroyed by road-building, mining, damming and ranching.

When they returned to England and a large meeting of company stakeholders, seventeen-year-old Samantha gave a stirring testimonial about the plight of the natives of the Amazon. The money she raised provided the Kayapo tribe with a light airplane complete with pilots and maintenance to serve as an ambulance and facilitate communication between remote communities. Funds also went to various Brazilian native advocacy groups.

A Body Shop awareness campaign precipitated a flood of letters to Brazil’s president urging him to preserve the rainforest. While that was going on, the company negotiated with the Kayapo to buy from them locally harvested nut oil, herbs and beadwork, so these isolated people could enter the global economy gracefully and at a pace of their choosing.

Anita’s passion for fair trade and justice took her to six continents in search of exotic ingredients and new cooperative partnerships. In Ghana, she helped local women establish a cooperative to supply shea butter. In Bangladesh, Anita sourced an already-existing organization of women to produce jute pots, amphora pot holders and terra cotta pumice foot scrub. The Body Shop found a supplier of sesame oil in a village in Nicaragua. In Tamil Nadu, it set up Teddy Exports to provide a decent living, including a Montessori school, for its workers’ families, in exchange for their foot-rollers and cotton bags. In a once-impoverished Glasgow slum, Soapworks created full-time employment and a cheerful daycare for a hundred workers.

Not all Anita’s well-intentioned projects came to fruition, however. In South Dakota, she offered the Oglala Sioux tribe on the Pine Ridge Reservation that The Body Shop could buy the oil from their abundant sage

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bushes. After she had joined tribe members in a couple of sweat lodges, it was concluded that the plant kingdom had rejected the idea, so the Oglala tribe did too.

In 1990, seeing the plight of thousands of orphans in Romania pictured on television, Anita visited the country herself and saw “one orphanage after another of abandoned, unloved, unwashed and unstimulated children.”²³² Returning to Britain, she put her considerable talent and energy to work and, within six weeks, the Romanian Relief Drive was up and running. Three orphanages were refurbished. A permanent healthcare team was established. Dozens of volunteers, including Anita’s daughter Samantha, arrived to caress and entertain the neglected youngsters, with a hope to give them back their childhood.

Since 1991, the Roddicks and The Body Shop had been contributing funds to the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. Then, at a UN conference in Vienna, Anita met representatives of the Ogoni people of Nigeria. Their homelands in the Niger River delta had been despoiled by pipelines, gas flares and petroleum waste since Shell had discovered oil there in 1958. Beaten down and exploited by their brutal government, the desperate Ogoni had begun a campaign for environmental, social and economic justice by demanding autonomy for their region.

Gordon and Anita were touched by the plight of the gentle Ogoni leaders they met. After first approaching other groups known for supporting struggles for human rights for help, without success, they organized a letter-writing campaign to push for the release from prison of the Ogoni leader. Gordon also visited Shell a number of times to offer help in resolving the situation. He volunteered to send a team to Nigeria to assess the plight of the Ogoni and propose solutions. Shell officials politely declined his offer, saying they had no control over what happened on the Ogoni lands. All the blame, according to them, rested with the Nigerian government.

Then, August 1993, Ken Saro-Wiwa, the articulate Ogoni leader, was unexpectedly released from prison. One of the first things he did was fly to Littlehampton to thank his supporters and assure them of the rightness of their cause.

Meanwhile, in Nigeria the atmosphere grew increasingly repressive. Many Ogoni communities were mysteriously ambushed with sophisticated weapons and mortar grenades. Soldiers later admitted being involved in the attacks. 600 Ogoni, including Saro-Wiwa, were seized, held without trial, and tortured. The Body Shop on Manhattan’s Fifth Avenue responded by turning unused space into the first Ogoni Freedom Center, filled with information and offering thousands of visitors a chance to write, fax or phone Shell, the Nigerian embassy or President Clinton. Despite all their efforts, the widespread protests and quiet diplomacy, Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other activists were summarily hanged in October 1995.

The wave of outrage that swept the world led to the Nigerian government being suspended from the Commonwealth. While Anita knew Shell executives must have been appalled by the news, she also saw the unfolding events as a natural consequence of a large and insensitive multinational doing business with brutal tyrants. The Body Shop appointed a full-time human rights campaigner to co-ordinate the Ogoni campaign. They also helped some of Ken’s family escape from Nigeria.

Shops from Japan to Germany adopted the nineteen Ogoni activists still being held in inhuman conditions in a Nigerian prison. Hundreds of thousands of postcards were sent to Shell and the government in Lagos. Officials of the regime could not help wondering why a skin and hair outfit should be so concerned over their treatment of the Ogoni.

Finally responding to a storm of international criticism, in March 1997, Shell officials revised their operating charter to include human rights and sustainable development as integral parts of company policy. Eighteen months later, the “Ogoni 19” were released unconditionally from prison. Their detention was ruled to have been “unconstitutional, unlawful, illegal, null and void.” It was a bittersweet victory for everyone at The Body Shop.

Anita’s travels took her to some of the remotest parts of the globe. They also exposed her to some of the worst aspects of global capitalism. She visited countries where sweatshops had set up to take advantage of a lack of regulation. In Mexico, she spent two weeks among farmers growing tobacco for the big multinationals. Anita was particularly upset to find that the pesticides being used on the fields were being absorbed in workers’ wombs, causing their babies to be born with no genitalia.

Anita Roddick was invited to speak at a meeting of the International Chamber of Commerce in Cancun, two weeks later. The slides of her two week sojourn among the Huichol people of the Sierra Madre, to no response whatsoever. While executives and shareholders were keen to capitalize on the cheap labor, minimal standards and reduced tariffs of “free trade,” no one would take responsibility for the resulting human tragedy.

Th(e) perverse idea that only money counts in business, has reached its apotheosis in the World Trade Organization – recognizing profit and loss, but not human rights, child labor or the environment. If the WTO is our new, unelected world government, then it is a government without a heart, and without a heart you find the creativity of the human spirit dwindles too. The result is devastated forests, chemically-mutated babies, child slaves, and a situation where – even in Thailand – there are more prostitutes than monks.²³³

Anita Roddick’s intensely human spirit brought her to Seattle to speak out against the World Trade Organization during its meetings in November 1999. She was possibly the only head of a major corporation in the streets with the estimated 50,000 demonstrators being tear-gassed and pepper-sprayed by police. Anita came away from Seattle more radicalized than she had come, with “a deep sense of shame at the way multinationals and politicians can behave.”²³⁴

Leaders in the business world should aspire to be true planetary citizens. They have global responsibilities since their decisions affect not just the world of business, but world problems of poverty, national security and the environment. Many, sad to say, duck these responsibilities because their vision is material rather than moral.

Authority to lead should be founded on a moral vision rather than a desire to create the biggest or the richest company in the world. I don’t understand how anyone can be a leader without a clearly defined moral vision. If your ambitions and interests do not extend beyond the role of making money or expanding your business, as far as I am concerned you are morally bankrupt.²³⁵

Anita made a continuous effort to stoke her outrage, never to allow herself to become complacent or comfortable. Even in America, the world’s richest country, where The Body Shop was becoming an increasing presence, she found plenty to be outraged about in a two week tour of the shantytowns from Louisiana through to Georgia, where poor Afro-Americans live. There, she witnessed the ubiquitous flickering blue screen in “broken-down shacks 24 hours a day, pacifying the mind and perpetuating the myth that material wealth defines self-value and self-worth.”²³⁶

True to her vision, after growing The Body Shop and nurturing its distinctive philosophy for 26 years, Anita Roddick announced in February 2002 that she was stepping away from her executive role to serve as a non-executive director and creative consultant. Then in 2006, Anita sold her business of some 2,000 outlets in fifty countries to the world’s largest cosmetic company, L’Oréal for the fabulous sum of US\$1.09 billion.

Anita Roddick took advantage of her new freedom to redouble her efforts to change the world by taking it very personally. Her widely quoted motto was: “Pray for the dead and work like hell for those still living.” She served on the boards of several organizations celebrated for their progressive social agendas. A proud grandmother, the irrepressible “blur” filled her personal agenda and her electronic newsletter with worthy causes.

Afflicted with hepatitis C from a blood transfusion she had received during the birth of her youngest daughter, Anita soldiered on until 2007 when she succumbed in hospital to a major acute brain haemorrhage.

Anita’s citations are many. In 1988, she joined the prestigious Order of the British Empire. In 1993, the National Audubon Society officially recognized her distinguished achievements. That same year, Anita was given the Mexican Environmental Achiever Award. She was also given awards of recognition by the United Nations Environment Program in 1989 and 1997. On Peace Prayer Day 2001 at Ram Das Puri, New Mexico, Anita Roddick, tireless campaigner, was acknowledged “Woman of Peace” of the year. Two years later, she was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II and officially designated Dame Anita Roddick.²³⁷

The Cost of Living

Arundhati Roy (1962-) first gained international recognition as the author of *The God of Small Things*, for which she won the 1997 Booker Prize. She was born in the South Indian state of Kerala, the daughter of a

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Hindu tea plantation manager and her mother, a Syrian-Christian teacher. Arundhati's mother home-schooled her until she was ten. At sixteen, she left home to live in a Delhi shantytown and study architecture.

Though she won a grant to study in Italy, Arundhati became bored with architecture. Instead, she and a classmate moved to Goa where for four years they made and sold cakes to the tourists. After a time that, too, had lost its novelty.

From there, Arundhati took up a brief and undistinguished career as a film actress. After a year, she met Pradip Krishen, who presented her with the possibility of writing screenplays. After a year of professional collaboration, they married and Arundhati Roy launched into her partly autobiographical novel. *The God of Small Things* took five years to write and was published in 1996.

When, in May 1998, India detonated its first atomic warhead – and Pakistan soon followed suit - Arundhati Roy found herself on a reading tour in America. She chafed at the smug, hypocritical attitude to these new developments that she witnessed in the United States. Opinion there seemed to be firmly of the view that America was somehow deserving of membership in the exclusive nuclear club. All the permanent members of the UN Security Council, after all, were nuclear powers. Yet, the so-called “third world nations,” according to that same consensus, could not be trusted with weapons of mass destruction.

At the same time, Roy was aware that by detonating a nuclear device, her government had crossed an important threshold. By joining the nuclear club, India had come down from the commanding moral heights where its leaders had been able to say, “We have the technology. We can make bombs if we want to, but we won't. We don't believe in them.”

In July, Arundhati Roy put her feelings into “The End of Imagination,” and arranged for its simultaneous publication as a cover story in India's mainstream magazines *Frontline* and *Outlook* in August. The editors boldly published her article despite the jingoistic noises being orchestrated by the political parties and much of the media.

In “The End of Imagination,” Arundhati Roy portrayed the moral and psychological pitfalls of going nuclear. She also described the incredibly devastating effects, as well as the self-destructive dimensions of a conceivable atomic attack on neighboring Pakistan. Roy decried the deceit of her government that, by blithely prescribing iodine pills and staying indoors as effective contingencies in the event of an attack, hid from its citizens the terrible scope of nuclear annihilation.

If only, if *only*, nuclear war was just another kind of war. If only it was about the usual things – nations and territories, gods and histories. If only those of us who dread it are just worthless moral cowards who are not prepared to die in defense of our beliefs. If only nuclear war was the kind of war in which countries battle countries and men battle men. But it isn't. If there is a nuclear war, our foes will not be China or America or even each other. Our foe will be the earth itself. The very elements – the sky, the air, the land, the wind and water - will turn against us. Their wrath will be terrible.²³⁸

In her writings, Arundhati Roy appreciated the essential dignity of ordinary people faced with extraordinary forces outside of their control. She lauded the efforts of India's many “small heroes”, decent people staking their lives against government bureaucracies, large corporations, and all kinds of insensitivity. Roy cited the examples of individuals and organizations striving to protest cultural bias in history texts, to end mining on aboriginal lands, to organize industrial workers, to preserve diversity of seed strains, to force government accountability, and to halt the construction of huge dam projects.

Arundhati Roy herself became personally involved in the movement to stop the dams on the Narmada River in Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. She first became aware of the situation in February 1999, when she read in a newspaper that the Supreme Court would be lifting its four-year stay on construction of the controversial Sardar Sarovar megadam.

Organized opposition to the projects had begun with one person, thirty-year-old Medha Patkar, in 1985. A researcher and activist, she well knew that despite the grand symbolism of big dam projects, their benefits were dubious, and the cost to be paid in terms of social displacement simply heart-rending. For a number of years, Patkar lived among the aboriginals who passed their lives in the dams' long submergence zone, the better to understand the planned project's impact on the inhabitants. She urged the people to organize to force the government to respect their rights.

The more Arundhati Roy followed the story, the more horrified she became. In late March she made her first of several forays to the Narmada valley. What Roy found out, left her feeling numbed. By government figures, over fifty years, 33,000 large dam projects had already uprooted and dispossessed some 50 million river people with little or no compensation. Rivers and their adjacent forests had provided these people with all their needs, as well as a rich, highly localized culture. After being flooded out, these rural communities ended up dispersed and disoriented in large urban slums or desolate resettlement colonies.

At Narmada, Arundhati Roy found a theme that was to inform and inspire her writing for years to come: the tyranny of “experts” and the diabolical role of their “expertise” in broadening the gap between the powerful and the powerless. Somehow, unelected men in posh offices far removed from the scene were managing the significant details of billions of people’s livelihoods. Sometimes, these people’s very existence was at stake – with very little or no chance of feedback or representation.

India’s Prime Minister, Jawharlal Nehru had once called big dams “the temples of modern India.” The phrase had become a patriotic slogan, finding its way in a dozen languages into the country’s primary school texts – though Nehru himself came to regret his fixation, referring to it as “the disease of giantism.” In the international dam industry and Indian governments, however, there was no such recanting. For all the experts and all the money involved, Roy found curious the lack of any reliable estimate of how many people had been displaced by India’s big dams, or even an audit of a single dam to see whether or not it had achieved its objectives.

Years of protests and reevaluations finally convinced the World Bank and private foreign partners to pull out of the Narmada schemes. The arrogance and steely determination of the government alone remained to push forward with the dams at any price. 35,000 people had already been forced out. Some were resettled into pathetic tin shantytowns. Others had been left to fend for themselves.

When Arundhati Roy shared her outrage with the editors of *Frontier* and *Outlook*, they agreed to give her story front-page coverage. It was published as “The Greater Common Good” in June 1999.

To slow a beast, you break its limbs. To slow a nation, you break its people. You rob them of volition. You demonstrate your absolute command over their destiny. You make it clear that ultimately it falls to you to decide who lives, who dies, who prospers, who doesn’t. To exhibit your capability you show off all that you can do, and how easily you can do it. How easily you can press a button and annihilate the earth. How you can start a war or sue for peace. How you can snatch a river away from one and gift it to another. How you can green a desert, or fell a forest and plant one somewhere else. You use caprice to fracture a people’s faith in ancient things – earth, forest, water, air.

After that’s done, what do they have left? Only you. They will turn to you because you’re all they have. They will love you even while they despise you. They will trust you even though they know you well. They will vote for you even as you squeeze the breath from their bodies. They will drink what you give them to drink. They will breathe what you give them to breathe. They will live where you dump their belongings. They have to. What else can they do? There’s no higher court of address. You are their mother and their father. You are the judge and the jury. You are the World. You are God.²³⁹

That summer, the three judges holding public hearings on the Sardar Sarovar project themselves read and took personal offence at Roy’s article. In October, they passed an order warning her not to continue with her “objectionable writings.”

A year later, the stay on construction was lifted and work at the Sardar Sarovar resumed. In December 2000, Medha Patkar and a group of some 500 people about to lose their homes and livelihoods on the Narmada, gathered outside the gates of India’s Supreme Court. They had come to convey their personal anguish and to tell the court that, despite its rulings, no land had been offered to them for rehabilitation.

The Chief Judge would not see them, but Arundhati Roy, who had heard of their arrival, came late that morning to encourage and offer them her support. When asked to speak to the people for five minutes, she said simply, in the presence of several film and television crews covering the event, “I do not even need five minutes to tell you why I’m here. I’m here because I support you.” The gathering went on without incident until evening. Some *kicheree*^p was served and everyone left.

^p *kicheree*: an Indian gruel of rice, mung beans, spice and vegetables.

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In February, Arundhati Roy was charged with contempt of court for remarks she was alleged to have made at the rally. In March of 2002, Roy served a night in Delhi's Tihar prison and paid a 2,000 rupee (US\$40) fine. The court ruled that the author had committed criminal contempt "by scandalizing it and lowering its dignity through her statements in her affidavit." The ruling stated that although Arundhati Roy had shown no remorse for her comments, it was imposing a light sentence because of her gender.

Roy was unrepentant:

The message is clear. Any citizen who dares to criticize the court does so at his or her peril. I stand by what I said and am prepared to suffer the consequences. The dignity of the court can only be upheld by the quality of their judgements.²⁴⁰

According to Arundhati Roy, the rights of minorities in the "world's largest democracy" were imperiled by the grave imbalance between a jingoistic Hindu government, an autocratic judiciary, and a media severely restricted and intimidated by the judiciary. Were they functioning properly, she observed, the politicians behind the 2002 massacre of thousands of Muslims in Gujarat and the 1984 pogrom against the Sikhs of Delhi would be in prison, and not holding office.

In a world beset with specialists, Arundhati Roy sees herself as a person able to "join the dots." For those who question her, who cite her background as a fiction writer, she replies that fiction is "the truest thing there is." Only in so-called "fiction" is a writer able to overcome the barriers that prevent ordinary people from understanding what is happening to them. Buoyed by her innate curiosity and gifted with the perspective of her childhood, when she was not rural, not urban, not completely "traditional" nor wholeheartedly "modern", where she was educated, but able to see rural India at work, Roy brings a unique intellectual brilliance to her work that is passionate and dispassionate in the same instance.

For all her criticism of the ineptitude of its politics, Arundhati Roy remains rooted in India, in the chaos and sheer unpredictability of the subcontinent. It is where she functions best. And for all the names she is called, Arundhati Roy continues to work "to rescue democracy by being troublesome, by asking questions, by making noise."²⁴¹ Dissent, she contends, is "India's best export."²⁴²

Where local and international concerns intersect in the push toward globalization, Roy is naturally fully engaged. Like a prophet, she warns of the dangers of every kind of hegemony – military, economic, religious, cultural or linguistic. As in nature, monocultures can be both dangerous and fragile. She worries openly about the concerted push for globalization of money, goods, patents and services – but "not the free movement of people, not a respect for human rights, not international treaties on racial discrimination, or chemical or nuclear weapons, or greenhouse gas emissions, climate change, or, god forbid, justice."²⁴³

Roy questions "all the endless empty chatter about democracy" while the world is largely run by three of the most secretive institutions in the world: the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization. Arundhati Roy cites "the hidden fist" of the market, without which, according to *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman, "the market will never work... McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas... And the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technology to flourish is called the U.S Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps."²⁴⁴

In an address she delivered in Santa Fe just a year and a week after the infamous assault on the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center, Arundhati Roy took aim at the label "anti-American" so widely and effectively used by the US government against its many critics.

What does the term "anti-American" mean? Does it mean you're anti-jazz? Or you're opposed to free speech? That you don't delight in Toni Morrison or John Updike? That you have a quarrel with giant sequoias? Does it mean you don't admire the hundreds of thousands of Americans who marched against nuclear weapons, or the thousands of war resisters who forced their government to withdraw from Vietnam? Does it mean that you hate all Americans?

This sly conflation of America's culture, music, literature, the breathtaking physical beauty of the land, the ordinary pleasures of ordinary people with criticism of the US government's foreign policy (about which, thanks to America's "free press," sadly, most Americans know very little) is a deliberate and extremely effective strategy. It's like a retreating army taking cover in a heavily populated city, hoping that the prospect of hitting civilian targets will deter enemy fire.²⁴⁵

Roy mocked the strategy of bombing Afghanistan to give its women rights and make it free.

Think of it this way: In India there are some pretty reprehensible social practices, against “untouchables,” against Christians and Muslims, against women. Pakistan and Bangladesh have even worse ways of dealing with minority communities and women. Should they be bombed? Should Delhi, Islamabad, and Dhaka be destroyed? Is it possible to bomb bigotry out of India? Can we bomb our way to a feminist paradise? Is that how women won the vote in the United States? Or how slavery was abolished? Can we win redress for the genocide of the millions of Native Americans upon whose corpses the United States was founded by bombing Santa Fe?²⁴⁶

On May 13, 2003, Arundhati Roy returned to America, to New York, to the Riverside Church where the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. had in 1967 had delivered a stinging rebuke of his government’s policy of war in Vietnam.²⁴⁷ Roy addressed her audience self-consciously, being a person of colour and a subject of the American Empire, “as a slave who presumes to criticize her king.”²⁴⁸

As King had done, Arundhati Roy painted a large picture of America’s imperial aggressions. In her own words, she pointed out the grievous ways of what Martin Luther King had dubbed “the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism and militarism.”²⁴⁹ Once again, it was the poor and the Negro who were fighting and dying in disproportionate numbers far from the shores of land of the brave and the free – that country with the highest proportion of its citizens in prisons, the vast majority of them poor and coloured. It was the already rich and the well-connected who were determining public policy – and placing almost unprecedented curbs on the liberties of Americans, and indirectly Britons, Indians, Australians, Canadians and many others, along the way.

Arundhati Roy concluded by telling her audience, in contradiction of their president, that theirs was not “a great nation.” But they could be a great people. History was giving them a chance.

While it is possible that the American people might simply miss their opportunity, Arundhati Roy cannot but be optimistic. History, logic and a certain intuition points the way.

A world run by a handful of greedy bankers can’t possibly last. Soviet-style communism failed, not because it was intrinsically evil, but because it was flawed. It allowed too few people to usurp too much power. Twenty-first century market capitalism, American-style, will fail for the same reasons. Both are edifices constructed by human intelligence, undone by human nature.

The time has come, the Walrus said. Perhaps things will get worse and then get better. Perhaps there’s a small god in heaven readying herself for us. Another is not only possible, she’s on her way. Many of us won’t be here to greet her, but on a quiet day, if I listen very carefully, I can hear her breathing.²⁵⁰

Medicins Sans Frontiers (Doctors Without Borders)

From the enchanted weeks of May 1968 in France, when the nation’s students and workers very nearly toppled a moribund government, and from the torpid months in Nigeria a year later, where aid workers watched helplessly as people starved in sight of planes loaded with food and medicine - was born a new kind of humanitarian organization. Many of the ten original members had performed surgeries in the rebel stronghold of Ibo as bombs fell around them and, after its fall, been imprisoned by the Nigerian army.

The medical activists were a mixture of militants, leftists, and devout Christians. They envisioned a global emergency service willing to cross borders and defy established authorities to serve those truly in need. Ten of them banded together in 1971 to form “Medicins Sans Frontiers” (Doctors Without Borders). They formed an international network of volunteers dedicated to moving quickly and daring to take risks to save lives.

The first MSF tour of duty was in response to an earthquake in Nicaragua in 1972. Two years later, the doctors began a long-term project in Honduras to make up for the devastation of hospitals and medical facilities in the wake of Hurricane Fifi.

The first MSF war mission was in Lebanon in 1976, when for seven months, fifty-six doctors and nurses took turns in a Beirut hospital caring for civilians during the civil war. The next dangerous zone was Afghanistan, where teams worked secretly with resistance fighters caring for the civilian population.

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Civil wars, more earthquakes, the collapse of communist eastern Europe, refugee crises, famines, droughts, floods, genocide – Somalia, Sudan, El Salvador, Armenia, Romania, Albania, Turkey, Zaire, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Chechnya, Rwanda, Kosovo, Palestine – all received the quick and courageous attentions of the volunteer doctors and nurses of MSF.

Although early MSF ventures were described as characterized by “improvisation, a taste for rhetoric, and a considerable degree of amateurism,”²⁵¹ the volunteers evolved a fresh and responsive expertise. Over the years, MSF developed a unique capability of effectively answering emergencies in the most outlying regions of the world. Hundreds of highly trained volunteers in dozens of countries learned to be ready to converge for a mission anywhere on a day’s notice. Four logistical centers were established in Europe and East Africa, while stocks of emergency supplies were stored in Central America and East Asia.

Pre-packaged, highly compact disaster kits were developed to help an MSF team set to work immediately. These packages were specially adapted to various field conditions, geographic situations and climates. A kit the size of a conference table might contain an entire operating theatre or provisions to treat hundreds of cholera victims. The MSF kits were soon replicated by aid agencies worldwide.

Typically, teams of four to twelve volunteers from abroad collaborated with a larger local staff, supervising them and training them in medical techniques. The local personnel helped their foreign associates better understand the needs of patients and the overall social and cultural context.

Areas of work have included administering vaccinations, providing clean drinking water and sanitation facilities, registering vital medical data, feeding the hungry, diagnosing and providing immediate medical relief, dispensing drugs and supplies, health education, and restoration of crisis-ravaged hospitals and clinics. As well as giving immediate humanitarian assistance, MSF teams have provided highly credible witnesses to abuses of human rights from Chechnya to Kosovo to Palestine.

In embattled regions, MSF volunteers have been trained to observe strict neutrality and impartiality, and to demand full and unhindered freedom in carrying out its operations. When medical assistance alone has not sufficed in saving lives, however, MSF has been known to speak out against violations of humanitarian law witnessed by its team members.

Most distressingly, in Rwanda in 1994, MSF launched an international campaign to show how genocide is a political, not a humanitarian, crisis. MSF requested military intervention to create a safe haven zone where minority Tutsis could gather and escape harassment, rape and murder by the majority Hutus. Instead of listening, the global community did nothing. News coverage and aid arrived in Rwanda only after 800,000 innocents had been put to death.

MSF, like other international aid agencies, has tried to keep clear of the conflicting interests of factional, regional and national interests. The eighteen operational sections in as many countries have remained wary of government influence. So far as possible, they have supported themselves from private donations to stay clear of political interference. MSF also has maintained a lively tradition of self-criticism.

The humanitarian industry’s harshest critics – many of whom are MSF intellectuals – often express the view that the underlying political function for humanitarian aid is to serve as a kind of media-hyped smokescreen to cover the manipulations of the First World. This opaque atmosphere allows the governments of wealthy industrial nations to give the impression that they are struggling to help the disordered Third World when in fact they are doing very little. Indeed the “aid” masquerade allows the imperial nations such as France and the United States to manipulate the impoverished world for their own geopolitical ambitions – under the cover of the alleged civilizing virtues, for example, of Francophonie or “Freedom.” Further, it allows these governments to maintain a humanitarian image while their manufacturers are reaping enormous dividends. After all, the Third World is one of the primary customers for the five-hundred-billion-dollar annual arms trade; and its demand seems insatiable for all the hardware of modern war – for landmines, poison gas, small arms, artillery, tanks, and airplanes.²⁵²

From its humble beginnings among a handful of idealistic doctors, MSF has expanded to become the world’s largest independent medical relief agency. Each year, more than 2,500 volunteer doctors, nurses, other medical professionals, logistics experts, water/sanitation engineers and administrators join 15,000 locally hired staff to provide medical aid in more than 80 countries. For its life-saving efforts in terrain both physically and

politically challenging, Mediciens Sans Frontieres/Doctors Without Borders was awarded the Nobel peace prize in 1999.

The Good Banker

Muhammad Yunus (1940-) was once a bright, Western-educated economics professor without any understanding of the grinding poverty in his native Bangladesh or any way of alleviating it. After obtaining a Fulbright scholarship and earning his PhD at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, Yunus Muhammad returned home in 1972 to become the head of the economics department at Chittagong University. The situation in newly-independent Bangladesh was worsening, day by day. The terrible man-made famine of 1974, which killed an estimated 1.5 million of his countrymen, changed his life forever.

Tiring of teaching elegant economic theories while people were dying in the streets, Yunus determined to learn how it was that people who worked 12 hours a day, seven days a week, did not have enough food to eat. After leading his students on field trips to the nearby village of Jobra for two years, Yunus began to interview the villagers to better understand their life challenges.

The professor made his breakthrough while listening to a woman who made attractive-looking bamboo stools. Yunus found that, after borrowing sixty cents to buy enough raw bamboo for each stool, the woman made only four cents profit. The rate of interest she was being charged worked out to 10% a month. Some people, she told him, had to pay 10% a week.

Yunus could not believe that anyone could make such a fine product, yet earn so little. He recognized that the woman's poverty was not for laziness or a lack of intelligence. Moreover, she was not alone. His graduate students found there were forty-two other villagers in the same predicament. None of them could afford to buy their raw materials outright and the amount of money they had to pay in interest ensured that they could never save or invest anything.

Right away, the kindly professor's remedy was to loan the villagers the equivalent of US\$26, with no interest and no repayment date, to help them out of their cycle of impoverishment. He then set about trying to interest banks in extending credit to the poorest. The bankers laughed at him. They objected that without collateral the poor were not creditworthy. Yunus, who trusted more in people than in financial institutions, countered that perhaps the banks were not people-worthy.

Undeterred, Yunus and his students continued his experiment in Jobra. By 1979, they had improved the lives of some 500 borrowers and persuaded the Central Bank of Bangladesh to invest in some pilot projects. Four years later, 59,000 clients were being served from eighty-six branches in what had become known as the Grameen (meaning "village") project.

Since Muhammad Yunus quit his professorship and incorporated the Grameen Bank in 1983, the "Grameen movement" has grown dramatically. Unlike most financial institutions, at the Grameen Bank the less a person has, the higher their priority is for a loan. Beggars, illiterates and widows are especially eligible. Although originally backed by preferential loans from large sympathetic banks and by grants from charitable trusts, like the Ford Foundation, in 1995 the bank began to operate on a profit basis. Every borrower is a shareholder.

To ensure repayment, the bank depends on a system of peer pressure and support. To qualify for a loan, a borrower must join with four fellow borrowers, none of whom can be a family member, to form a group. If one borrower defaults, the group is penalized. This system saves the bank the costly business of screening and monitoring borrowers. Borrowers are also pledged to send their children to school and to neither demand nor pay dowry for their daughters' marriages, values that are happily embraced.

A high 94% of Grameen borrowers are women and 98% of loans are repaid. Yunus found that lending to women, traditionally the least economically advantaged in Bangladeshi society, was more beneficial to whole families, and that women were more careful than men about their debts. An additional benefit he found was that after a wife joined the bank, the husband was likely to show her more tenderness and respect. Divorce rates dropped, as did birth rates.

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The microcredit system pioneered by Muhammad Yunus has since spread to at least fifty-eight countries around the world. In China, it has helped starving farmers with too little to keep warm in winter. In South Africa, it has given poor men the chance of opening their own car repair shops or timber-sawing businesses. It has helped women become self-employed in India's cities.

There are about 500 microbank spin-offs in the United States. They work well in black ghettos, on Indian reservations and in closely-knit rural settings, places where there people have a sense community solidarity. It was Bill Clinton who, as governor of Arkansas, invited Yunus to set up a Grameen-style bank there in the 1980s. The result was the Good Faith Fund in Pine Bluff, where people came to apply for loans of as little as \$375.

In Bangladesh, the Grameen Bank has grown to be the largest rural bank in the country, with some 2 million borrowers in 35,000 villages. Around the world, some people classed as the "poorest of the poor," have received microloans. Muhammad Yunus's methods, while unorthodox, have been studied and approved by the World Bank and UNESCO. He has won his country's highest prize, the Independence Day Award (1987), the World Food Prize in the US (1994), and the Nobel Peace Prize (2006). Yunus today serves on the boards of about a dozen international organizations dedicated to eliminating hunger and helping the world's poor.

The professor in Muhammad Yunus, who lives in a modest two bedroom apartment with his wife and has no car, does not mind sharing what he has learned about the root causes of poverty:

One can reasonably state that people are poor today because of the failure of the financial institutions to support them in the past. Like the right to food, clothing, shelter, education and health, credit should also be recognized as a fundamental human right.²⁵³

Ultimately, Yunus's objective is nothing less than the eradication of poverty from the face of the Earth. He figures there are 1.2 billion poor in the world and that Grameen and its spin-offs have so far helped thirty-six million. Once the 100 million mark is reached, there will be a critical mass. The rest will be easy.

People say I am crazy, but no one can achieve anything without a dream. When you build a house, you can't just assemble a bunch of bricks and mortar. You must first have an idea that it can be done. If one is going to make headway against poverty, one cannot do business as usual. One must be revolutionary and think the unthinkable.²⁵⁴

The Price of Ornamental Culture

Susan Faludi (1959-) is a gifted writer on the American social scene with a special insight into modern gender relations. In 1991, she won a Pulitzer Prize for labor reporting for the *Wall Street Journal*. That same year saw the publication of *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, her detailed account of the social and political backlash to American feminism in the 1980s. Eight years later, in *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* Faludi documented men in a debilitating crisis of soul.

Susan Faludi herself grew up a town outside New York City. Her mother and her father, a Hungarian immigrant, had fallen in love, married, and bought a house in the suburbs to live out the American dream. It was there, at home, that the budding writer gained her early perspective on the predicament of women in the twentieth century American nuclear family.

With her husband off at work all day in the city, and relations all far removed, the 1950s wife was left to fend for herself, caring for children, keeping house, shopping, going to the beauty parlor, but essentially removed from meaningful society, or at least what society valued as meaningful. According to the social agenda of that time, she "didn't work." She was "just a housewife."

Young Susan's mother was bright and talented. She was also very bored. Mrs. Faludi had put her career aspirations on hold to live vicariously through her husband and children. She was trapped in her suburban home with all its modern conveniences. In the phrase coined by Betty Friedan in her 1963 testimonial, *The Feminine Mystique*, Mrs. Faludi suffered from "the disease with no name."

Susan Faludi honed her writing ability and her knack for censuring injustices while editor of her high school and college newspapers. As an undergraduate at Harvard, she penned a piece about sexual harassment on

campus. After the publication of Faludi's article, the particular professor she had targeted was asked by the university to take a leave of absence.

At her subsequent jobs with the *New York Times* and other newspapers, Susan Faludi gained a reputation as a passionate crusader for social justice with a dogged sense of supporting research and a rare skill of interviewing that allowed her subjects to candidly expose their private motivations. Some of her best writing described the impact of government and corporate policies on the poor and vulnerable. Faludi's Pulitzer prize-winning article for the *Wall Street Journal* documented the human cost being paid by its thousands of employees for Safeway Stores' leveraged buyout.

Susan Faludi's inspiration to write her first book came from a widely-cited national marriage study. The Harvard and Yale study, which made headlines and spawned numerous articles and programs in the popular media, proclaimed that women who postponed marriage and education in favor of education and careers would have difficulty finding husbands. Faludi, then 27, said, "I hadn't been worrying about finding a husband, but suddenly I felt morose and grouchy."²⁵⁵

Susan Faludi checked the methodology behind the study and found it to be flawed. When she and other journalists wrote articles about her discovery, however, the story was largely ignored by the national media. Faludi began to suspect an arcane anti-feminist backlash in American popular culture, and launched into her five-year project documenting *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*.

In her book, Faludi accounted how women in the United States had been active since the mid-nineteenth century, pushing for the right to vote, for equal access to higher education, for jobs, and for marital and property rights. Suffragettes had even formed their own political party, picketed the Capitol, chained themselves to the White House gates, and endured imprisonment and force-feeding, until finally in 1920 they were given the vote.

By 1970, many of their original objectives had long been realized. US women were voting, serving on juries, attending universities, holding regular jobs, postponing marriage, practicing birth control, and exercising their legal family and property rights. But they also were about to enter a fallow period characterized by active resistance and passive indifference to their rights and claims.

American women still earned just 59% of men's average wages. They were rarely found in the higher ranks of big business, government or the justice system. While more women than ever before held jobs and supported families, sometimes on their own, they were increasingly the objects of attacks in the media, in their homes, on the streets and in politics, where "family values" became a code word of the antifeminist backlash.

Through the 70s and 80s, feminists were broadly tarred as the cause of increasing family breakdowns and male unemployment. In the abortion debate, they stood accused of disrespect for the essential sanctity of human life. When the media was not depicting "women's libbers" as shrill-mouthed misfits or scheming careerists, it was extolling the virtues of traditional nesting, and all the attendant accessories, products and services. Mass media and consumer culture proved to be powerful instruments of social mollification and constraint.

With the publication of *Backlash*, Susan Faludi became an instant celebrity in feminist circles. For years, well-known feminists had written revisionist accounts to explain the shortcomings of the movement. There was a sense of grave relief that finally someone had named and described in significant detail the backlash that for twenty years the women's movement had struggled under.

A surprising encounter with a male acquaintance led Faludi to her next project, to investigate the current status of American masculinity. At the time, it was a favored topic of newspaper editors, TV pundits, preachers, advertisers and politicians of every stripe. Everyone seemed to have an opinion on "the end of American home life" and the "masculinity crisis."

The question Pulitzer prize-winning Faludi set out to answer was: "Why are so many men so disturbed by the prospect of women's independence?" To start her research, she settled in southern California, then in the throes of massive economic and social dislocation. From there, she criss-crossed the country in search of significant indicators of men's social malaise.

Susan Faludi spent a year sitting in at the weekly meetings of a domestic violence group. She interviewed dozens of laid-off workers, most them with their lives, their finances and their families in shambles. She listened to unemployed nineteen-year-olds whose sexual predations had won them national notoriety. She tried talking with cadets in a South Carolina military academy who were hazing the institution's first female student. She

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spoke with faithful fans in Cleveland whose football team was moving to another city where the owners could make more money. She communicated with actors and porn stars, militia members and Vietnam veterans, homosexuals and heterosexuals, obedient sons and prodigal sons, religious fundamentalists and aspiring “wild men.”

The more Faludi explored the predicament of postwar men, the more she found in it close parallels to the box 1950s women had found themselves in: the “disease with no name.” Men, who had traditionally been valued for their contributions to society, their loyalty, their team-spiritedness, their ability to sacrifice, had become largely redundant. Their traditional strengths were no longer valued in what Susan Faludi termed an “ornamental culture,” a society taken up with superficiality, selfishness and instantaneous gratification.

Macho media stars, automation, and faceless corporations had fundamentally changed the rules of social engagement. Community life had long ago died in most American neighborhoods. Company spiritedness had suffered a recent demise. It seemed for many men, alienated and belittled in a fast-paced nuclear society, they would soon be losing their families.

As much as feminists liked to vilify men for their roles in American culture, where they dominated and objectified women, Faludi began to recognize that men, too, are controlled and objectified. If woman was expected to be perpetually submissive and pampered, then man was relied upon to be the unfailing and powerful breadwinner. The ideal of male superdominance was as oppressive as women’s ideal of supermodel glamour.

At century’s end, feminists can no longer say of consumer culture with such ringing confidence that “what it does to everyone, it does to women even more.” The commercialized, ornamental “femininity” that the women’s movement diagnosed now has men by the throat. Men and women both feel cheated of lives in which they might have contributed to a social world; men and women both feel pushed into roles that are about little more than displaying prettiness or prowess in the marketplace. Women were pushed first, but now their brothers have joined that same forced march.²⁵⁶

Susan Faludi concludes her meditation saying that blaming “a cabal of men” has taken feminism about as far as it can go. There is also a need for men who have considered themselves battered by feminism to recognize the larger, oppressive role of culture. Ultimately, women and men share a common humanity and a common desire for “a freer, more humane world.” Men, Faludi observes, have an important and vital role in bringing that world to realization.

In the end, though, it will remain a dream without the strength and courage of men who are today faced with a historic opportunity: to learn to wage a battle against no enemy, to own a frontier of human liberty, and to act in the service of a brotherhood that includes us all.²⁵⁷

Fighting Big Tobacco

Jeffrey Wigand (1942-) wanted to be a doctor. Growing up in a strict Catholic home, the eldest of five children, he had demonstrated a special talent for chemistry and biology. Then, for a time, he had worked as a scrub nurse at a local hospital. Possessed by a need to get away, he dropped out of college and joined the air force in 1961.

Wigand ended up running an operating room at an American air base in Japan. After a time, he returned to the US, where he earned a doctorate at the State University of New York in Buffalo and married, then took a job with a health care company. A couple of jobs later, he was in Japan again, testing medical equipment for Union Carbide. In Japan, Wigand’s career was in top flight, but his marriage was under strain. His wife, Linda, had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Although he searched the world for specialists, her condition continued to deteriorate. They had a daughter in 1973, but eventually Linda returned to her parents’ home in Buffalo.

Wigand met his second wife, Lucretia, back in the US where he was working as director of marketing for a medical equipment company. Lucretia was a sales rep, the daughter of two doctors. They married in 1986 and had two daughters. Two companies later, Wigand was doing consulting work to make ends meet.

Jeffrey Wigand wanted finally to pursue his dream of being a doctor. Lucretia, for her part, did not look forward to the years of medical school with no supporting income. She convinced her husband he was too old

to begin a medical career. Hoping to find some lucrative work to maintain his family, Wigand approached a headhunter. The recruiter asked Wigand if he would consider working for a tobacco company.

The company was Brown and Williamson, a subsidiary of BAT Industries (formerly British American Tobacco), a conglomerate with US\$3 billion annual profits. They needed a head of research and development. Along with the impressive title, the job offered a US\$300,000 salary, a budget of more than \$30 million, and a staff of 243. The headhunter told Wigand that B & W needed someone to help them develop a new low-tar cigarette.

The project was a challenge to Wigand, who prided himself in his research skills. The salary was more than he had ever earned. The move to Louisville, where Lucretia had spent part of her childhood, appealed to his wife, who just had delivered a baby. Wigand took up smoking, to see what it was like, and took on the job with Big Tobacco. That was in 1989.

Not long after his arrival at Brown and Williamson, Wigand began to feel the part of the outsider in his new position. His urban, go-getter nature obviously grated on his colleagues. He also began to question his function at the company. The equipment in his lab was antiquated and inadequate. The staff was lacking essential expertise. Significant lab reports and minutes were censored. Many executives smoked, privately worrying about the risks. Instinctively, Wigand developed the feeling he could not trust anyone at B & W, that he was just a “different animal.”

Events at Brown and Williamson confirmed Wigand’s suspicions. At one point, he was promised a scientific and medical advisory committee. Later, that promise was suddenly revoked. When it appeared as though the safe-cigarette project was being cancelled, Wigand approached the company president, Thomas Sandefur, and found himself rebuffed. When he told Sandefur that he had found a flavoring agent in the company’s pipe tobacco to be carcinogenic, the president countered that removing the additive would impact sales.

The antipathy between the two reached such a point that when Sandefur became CEO in January 1993, Wigand knew his days were numbered. Two months later, Wigand was fired and escorted out of the company’s headquarters. As a condition of his severance, he had to sign a lifelong confidentiality agreement so strict that he would be in violation if he discussed anything about the corporation. Once again, Wigand the technical wizard, found himself out of work.²⁵⁸

By coincidence, just about the time Wigand was fired, someone left a crate of technical papers from tobacco giant Philip Morris on the doorstep of an award-winning investigative reporter in Berkeley, California. For months, Lowell Bergman, a producer of CBS television’s *60 Minutes*, tried to find someone to help him make sense of the documents. A friend put him in touch with Wigand.

Jeffrey Wigand proved to be an invaluable help to Bergman. He immediately recognized the significance of the Philip Morris papers. They made him angry. The documents related to advanced research on a fire-safe cigarette, a product which had never been brought to market. Bergman hired Wigand as a consultant.

In February 1994, Dr. David Kessler, the head of the US Food and Drug Administration, leveled an unprecedented charge at the tobacco companies. He openly alleged there was “mounting evidence” those companies controlled the amount of nicotine in cigarettes to control smokers’ addiction. His conclusion, based on a combination of new findings by the FDA and years of petitions from anti-smoking organizations, was that tobacco products should be regulated like a drug.

In March, Bergman aired a program about fire-safe cigarettes on CBS. That same month, the ABC network ran a similar program about the tobacco industry’s alleged manipulation of levels of highly addictive nicotine in its products. Philip Morris’s lawyers responded by serving ABC with a \$10 billion lawsuit for libel, a suit ABC could not defend against without exposing its secret informant, a tobacco company executive.

Despite the threat of legal consequences, the momentum against Big Tobacco was beginning to build. A coalition of motivated lawyers filed a class action suit against the tobacco companies. Most of them had lost friends or family to smoking-related diseases. The “Castano group,” named after a recently deceased New Orleans lawyer, was determined to use new evidence of the tobacco companies’ knowledge and manipulation of the addictive properties of nicotine to take revenge.

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Then, on March 25, televised federal hearings on “Regulation of Tobacco Products” began on Capitol Hill, with Kessler as the star witness. On April 14, before the eyes of the nation, the country’s top seven tobacco executives, including Sandefur, each testified they believed that nicotine was not addictive. Wigand was furious, but he realized that, by remaining silent, he was not so different from the men he was watching on the screen.

In late April, a man stealthily entered through a side door of the Food and Drug Administration’s headquarters in Rockville, Maryland to meet with David Kessler, the FDA head, for the first time. The secret informant, who identified himself only as “Research,” was nervous, but full of information. He tutored Kessler on the additives cigarette companies used to make nicotine more potent. Research also helped the FDA subpoena specific tobacco company documents, thereby avoiding the industry’s tactic of “document dumping,” answering a subpoena for nicotine documents by dumping a tractor-trailer of ten tons of documents at the FDA’s door.

One day, as the relationship between Kessler and his secret accomplice grew, the head of the FDA was combing through a list of Brown and Williamson executives, when he asked, “Who’s Jeff Wigand?”

“I’m Jeff Wigand.”

That same month, Attorney General Mike Moore sued the tobacco companies on behalf of the state of Mississippi, to recoup \$940 million his government had spent treating sick smokers. Suing to recover health care costs was a novel strategy to try and crack the virtually unassailable defenses of Big Tobacco. Out of 1,830 claims previously filed on behalf of dead and near-dead plaintiffs, only twenty-three had managed to be tried in court. The cigarette makers’ two losses had been overturned on appeal. Recognizing the shrewdness of Moore’s tactic, soon the attorney generals of Minnesota, Florida and thirty-six other states followed suit. A hopeful third front had opened in the fight against Big Tobacco.

Although Wigand tried to remain anonymous while helping the FDA and lawyers from ABC, his personal life became increasingly stressful. With his Brown and Williamson references, there seemed to be no hope of landing another corporate job. Meanwhile, Wigand began receiving calls threatening himself and his children. He bought a handgun. The Wigands followed their children to school. He started drinking.

In January 1995, Jeffrey Wigand landed a job at a local high school teaching Japanese and chemistry for a tenth of what he had earned at his last job. Lucretia was surprised. Shortly thereafter, Bergman taped an interview with Wigand for *60 Minutes*, with the understanding that it would not be aired without his permission.

By September, the CBS legal department blocked the airing of the Wigand episode. It was wary of being sued by the tobacco companies. CBS management was especially circumspect. The company chairman’s son was one of the tobacco barons who a year earlier had sworn on national TV that nicotine was not addictive. The CBS show would incriminate him. Moreover, the chairman did not want a tobacco company lawsuit to jeopardize secret merger negotiations between CBS and Westinghouse.

For all the efforts of management, someone at CBS leaked a transcript of the taped Wigand interview to the *New York Daily News*, which published excerpts and identified him for the first time as the CBS tobacco source. The article quoted Wigand as saying Brown and Williamson lawyers doctored documents and that the company had kept a known carcinogen in its pipe tobacco blend. The company denied the charges and immediately sued Wigand for breach of his confidentiality agreement.

By this time, Jeffrey Wigand was connected with a good lawyer. Richard Scruggs was a talented Mississippi attorney who had made a small fortune suing asbestos companies for health claims four years earlier. He offered to represent Wigand without charging his usual 25% fee. Scruggs also quickly recruited the rebel scientist as an expert witness in Mississippi’s case against the giant tobacco interests.

Wigand was very late arriving at the one-room courthouse in Pascagoula, Mississippi on the day of his scheduled testimony. On his way, he had been advised by a friendly criminal-defense expert that, if he testified, he might well go to jail back in Kentucky. About fifteen tobacco company lawyers were waiting in Pascagoula, betting Wigand would not show up. After weighing the consequences one last time, he told his friend, “Fuck it! Let’s do it.”

Wigand’s testimony in November marked the beginning of a new phase of his life. Wigand’s marriage had become a shambles and was heading for divorce. Wigand also became the target of a professional smear

campaign, as his former employer hired a public relations man and a lawyer to investigate his private life and publicly undermine his credibility.

Toward the end of January 1996, Alix Freedman of the *Wall Street Journal* received a copy of Wigand's testimony in the Pascagoula courthouse. It was a terrific scoop. In her article, Freedman laid out all of Wigand's allegations, one by one. Two were possibly the most damaging. One was his recollection that the president of Brown and Williamson had told him that "there can be no research on a safer cigarette."²⁵⁹ The other was that the company was in "the nicotine delivery business"²⁶⁰ serving the needs of addicted smokers. Freedman would go on to win a Pulitzer prize for her reporting on the tobacco industry.

A week later, the *Wall Street Journal* received a 500-page dossier attacking Wigand. It was a last, desperate ploy on the part of Brown and Williamson. "The Misconduct of Jeffrey S. Wigand Available in the Public Record" turned out to be a motley hash of exaggeration and insinuation. The company that had orchestrated it looked at once sinister and ridiculous. The scam became material for another front page article featuring Wigand and slamming the tobacco industry.

By this time, CBS News had a new president. The merger with Westinghouse had been completed. Besides, the publication of Jeffrey Wigand's leaked disposition in the *Wall Street Journal* meant there was no longer any legal problem in airing Bergman's long-delayed report. *60 Minutes* quickly taped and broadcast a second program with Wigand.

A real momentum had developed in the anti-tobacco cam. A few months earlier, President Clinton had risked his election fortunes in the tobacco belt with a televised plea from the White House. Surrounded by robust, smiling children, he had said, "It is time to free our children from addiction and dependency,"²⁶¹ and gone on to split the tobacco-growing states and win re-election. The president remained in close touch with both pro- and anti-tobacco lawyers as they negotiated a settlement out of court.

In March 1997, three more high-level whistle blowers emerged from Big Tobacco firms. Next month, a judge in the heart of tobacco country ruled, against the cigarette giants' best arguments, that the US Food and Drug Administration did have the authority to regulate nicotine as a drug. In August, Grady Carter, a retired Florida air traffic controller missing part of his lungs due to cancer, won an historic \$750,000 court judgement against Brown and Williamson.

On June 20, after seventy-nine days of face-to-face dealing, top lawyers for the opposing sides battled out their final settlement at a hotel in America's capital. The proposed deal entailed unprecedented regulation of tobacco products and advertising, special requirements to reduce youth smoking, a public health education campaign, and programs to help smokers quit their habit – all funded by billions of dollars from the tobacco companies.

The immunity of Jeffrey Wigand, as well as past and future whistle-blowers, was the last issue to be settled at the end of the marathon negotiations. Faced with the stubborn intransigence of Wigand's former employer, Florida's attorney general, Bob Butterworth, threatened to walk away from the whole deal, "We're not going to leave a wounded soldier on the battlefield. It's over." The other attorneys general agreed.

Finally, the BAT chief executive backed away from his hard line. He pardoned Wigand, and a US\$368.5 billion deal was signed. Jeffrey Wigand went on to use his experiences to become a compelling health educator, touring schools and public functions across North America.

America's historic settlement had a double meaning for the rest of the world. The legal and moral victory of the American people over their tobacco companies was inspiring, no doubt. Smokers' rights organizations and governments in a handful of countries – Britain, Canada, Australia and Israel – managed to adapt some of the lessons of the American experience to regulate their tobacco interests. The lessons had certain built-in biases, though, as the governments of Guatemala, Nicaragua, Ukraine and other nations would discover when they tried to recover their health care costs from the American tobacco conglomerates, only to have their cases dismissed in the US.

Like a larger-than-life outlaw, despised and run out of town in the West, the Marlboro man has so far managed to hide the sordid details of his old life and make a respectable new beginning for himself as an advertising icon on Moscow's fashionable Gorky Street and a soccer league sponsor in cheering Chinese stadiums. As settlements and legal fees have bitten into profits at home, international sales by the big American and British tobacco firms have more than made up for them. Even as the smoking habit dropped by 1.4% a year

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in developed countries, it rose by 1.7% in the more populated developing countries. Recent estimates peg the total number of smokers at around 1.2 billion, one out of every five men, women and children on the planet.²⁶²

Sea Shepherd

Paul Watson was born in Toronto in 1950. During the years his soldier father was fighting a war in faraway Korea, young Paul enjoyed spending days at the Riverdale Zoo with his maternal grandfather, an art professor at the University of Toronto. While Grandfather Larsen painted animals on canvas, Paul was absorbing a growing knowledge and love of the many species at the zoo.

When Paul's father returned from overseas, the family moved to a village in New Brunswick, right on the salty Bay of Fundy. Paul was not like the other boys who regularly shot birds, tied tin cans to cats' tails and put frogs in the street to be hit by cars for amusement. Over a summer, he developed a special friendship swimming every day with a beaver in a local pond. Paul was hit hard when the next year he found the beaver no longer there, presumably killed by hunters or poisoned by developers.

When Paul was eight, he applied for membership in the "Kindness Club," a children's organization promoting humane treatment for animals.²⁶³ He recruited his five younger siblings to roam the woods, freeing unfortunate creatures caught by trappers. Paul's adult love of the sea was foreshadowed by his boyhood habit of going fishing almost every day. At eleven, he took a volunteer job at a marine biology station.

Paul's mother died before he was quite thirteen years old. At sixteen, Paul drifted away from his father and brothers and sisters to be a tour guide at the 1967 Montreal World's Fair. From there, he hopped a freight train bound for Vancouver. At the west coast, the strapping seventeen-year-old signed on as deck boy on a Norwegian ship plying the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Between jobs aboard various ships, Paul Watson participated in the fledgling environmental movement. In October 1969, a group centered around three Quaker members of the conservationist Sierra Club blocked the Canada-US border at Blaine, Washington to protest a planned nuclear test on Amchitka Island, off the coast of Alaska. The 10,000 protesters feared the American government's underground testing of a device hundreds of times more powerful than the bomb at Hiroshima might trigger an earthquake and tidal waves all along the west coast. Just five years earlier, more than 100 Alaskans had died in an earthquake.

The so-called "Don't Make A Wave Committee" was boosted by the first Earth Day celebration on April 22, 1970, when millions of people demonstrated against pollution. On that day, the movement for environmental peace was born. The "foundation" part came from futurist Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* trilogy. In this way, Paul Watson became a founding member of the "Greenpeace Foundation."

The first Greenpeace project was to oppose the planned nuclear tests a few hundred feet under earthquake-prone Amchitka Island. The science of exploding their most powerful atomic device to date just 100 miles from the northern extension of the San Andreas fault seemed brazen and careless to the environmentalists. They planned to arouse popular opinion through skillful use of the media. To achieve their goal, the Greenpeacers promised the world a riveting spectacle. They would charter one or more boats the 2,500 miles up the Pacific coast to the Amchitka blast zone and present the US authorities with a choice: either cancel the tests or kill the protesters in the full view of the world media.

Their campaign brought 10,000 demonstrators to the US consulate in Vancouver. A telegram of protest with 188,000 signatures was delivered to the White House. The United Church of Canada joined the act by ordering church bells be rung all across the country in protest, and that prayers be said for the dozen crewmen engaged in their fateful showdown with the American authorities. Paul Watson, his jean jacket festooned with anti-establishment buttons, served as crewman on one of the three converted fishing boats sailing for Amchitka. The Atomic Energy Commission responded to the storm of publicity by setting off its 5.2 megaton hydrogen bomb before the Greenpeace boats could arrive, then canceling the rest of the scheduled nuclear blasts.

For the next two years, Paul Watson and the Greenpeace volunteers refocused their sights on French nuclear testing in the South Pacific. While Watson and others managed the publicity and raised funds, a Greenpeace sailing vessel entered the testing area in the remote Mururoa Atoll. The French navy rammed the Greenpeace ship. Its seamen came aboard and severely beat up the crew, one of whom nearly lost his eye.

Greenpeace won subsequent lawsuits against the French government, although the awarded damages fell short of the costs.

The French received their comeuppance when two navy ships went to Vancouver for a goodwill visit in the fall of 1973. Watson, in a fifteen-foot motorized fishing boat with a few other activists on board, repeatedly charged the bow of the much larger *Victor Schroeder*, even as Coast Guard and Harbor Police boats tried to block his way. Then, just as the navy ship approached the Lion's Gate Bridge on its way out of the harbor, Greenpeace confederates unfurled an enormous banner of sewn-together bedsheets, with the words, "*Mururoa, Mon Amour!*" (Mururoa, My Love!) As the ship came directly under the bridge, demonstrators rained buckets of symbolic mushrooms and marshmallows onto the decks of the warship. Even a few French sailors were seen cheering the Greenpeace theatrics.

While light-hearted fun always occupied a place in Paul Watson's expeditions, personal commitment and considerable danger also played their part. A few months before the hijinks in the harbor, when some 200 members of the American Indian Movement seized the trading post and church in Wounded Knee, South Dakota, Watson was already read the classic *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*. The Indians had staged the occupation to draw attention to their plight and to demand a full-scale government investigation of treaty violations and other injustices they had endured since the creation of the United States. Watson's heart was with the occupiers.

Watson and Greenpeace cohort David Garrick eluded a massive police and army cordon to join the embattled Indians at Wounded Knee and serve as their medics. From February 28 to May 8, 1973, the Indians held off the assembled might of about 500 United States marshals, 500 FBI agents, 500 members of the US Army's 82nd Airborne Division and sixty armored personnel carriers, with a minimum of casualties. Every night, the sky erupted into a dangerous display of parachute flares and tracer bullets.

At the end of the standoff, there were two dead and five wounded among the Indians, and one US marshal left paralyzed. The Indians did not achieve their hoped-for congressional inquiry, but they did seize the public's attention for a time. Intensely grateful for the service rendered by Paul Watson and David Garrick, local medicine men afterwards initiated them into the Oglala Sioux tribe in separate ceremonies, re-naming them "Grey Wolf Clear Water" and "Two Deer Lone Eagle." It was during Watson's turn in the sacred sweat lodge that he first saw his destiny as a protector of the whales who, like the great herds of buffalo before them, were being hunted to near-extinction.

The following year in Vancouver, Bob Hunter and Paul Watson were relaxing over a couple of beers at a downtown pub when Hunter shared an idea not so different from the original Greenpeace idea of sailing into harm's way to protest nuclear testing. This time, Hunter proposed they organize a crew to save the whales, placing themselves directly between the whalers and their defenseless victims. Dr. Paul Sprong, an acclaimed whale scientist, had earlier appealed to the radical journalist that something needed to be done. Watson liked the idea. This was a departure from previous Greenpeace ventures, which had all concerned nuclear testing. Before long, this new inspiration will have taken on a life of its own.

Eight months later, in April of 1975, a crowd of thousands of well-wishers cheered as the "Greenpeace V" pulled away from Jericho Beach in search of the Japanese and Soviet whaling fleets that were flagrantly violating international whaling restrictions. The boat was captained by a surly old seaman and crewed by Watson, Hunter, Garrick and ten other Greenpeaceers in their twenties and thirties. They were equipped with official records detailing the locations of previous years' whale harvests in the Pacific, obtained by Dr. Sprong and with plenty of film and three cameramen to record their bloody findings and broadcast them to the world.

They were also outfitted with a promise from Dr. Sprong. He had told Watson that, if he should go to aid the whales, he could count on their help. "The whales will come to you when you need them," he had said. "You can trust them to be there."²⁶⁴

Two months later, at sea some sixty nautical miles west of Eureka, California, the daring environmentalists found themselves right where they wanted to be. Watson and Hunter were in a motorized inflatable dinghy struggling to keep pace between a pod of eight sperm whales and a pursuing Soviet whaler.

As the gunner pointed a five-foot-long grenade harpoon menacingly over the bow, the Greenpeace rubber raft followed precariously behind the tiring leviathans, the ship's rusting steel prow trailing ten feet behind. For

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ten, fifteen, twenty minutes, it continued like that, the bodies of the two men shielding the fleeing whales from the persistent aim of the harpoon man.

When all at once the dinghy's motor sputtered out, the whales continued, instinctively it seemed, for the safety afforded by the Greenpeace mothership. Two more racing dinghies with cameras and outboards flouted the waves to fill in where the one had left off. Then, as a protective dinghy dipped into a trough between the waves and one whale, a female, rose up on a swell, the cunning gunner struck his target.

Blood, shudders, and screams of pain poured into the salty air. As six members of his pod continued their escape, a bull whale turned, recoiled beneath the waves, then defiantly raised his sixty-ton frame high into the air in the direction of the killer on the ship's deck, who by this time had hurriedly loaded another lethal missile. It was only a millisecond before the harpoon had violated the massive head of that grief-stricken creature, splattering blood and brain and flesh in all directions.

Now there were two whales struggling and crying together in the briny sea. Suddenly, the male recovered its strength and sank below the surface. The trail of blood and bubbles indicated he was approaching the flimsy dinghy with Watson and a photographer perched warily inside. They had been warned of the possibility that an enraged whale might attack their frail boats to vent their rage against humanity.

The distance between whale and dinghy diminished, then the wounded beast raised the front quarter of his enormous length out of the water to survey two tiny men in their miniscule rubber floating thing. Watson's experience of what happened next is etched indelibly in his memory:

With a shock, my eyes met the left eye of the whale like Odysseus facing the Cyclops. That one eye stared back, an eye the size of my fist, blackish brown and with a depth that astonished and gripped me. This was no brutish creature. This was no dumb animal. The eye that I saw reflected an intense intelligence. I read the pain and I read understanding. The whale knew what we were doing. This whale had discriminated. That message was beamed directly into my heart by a mere glance. Fear there never was, but apprehension vanished like a crest upon a wave. I felt love both from and for. I felt hope, not for himself but for his kind. I saw a selflessness of a spirit completely alien to our primate selves. This was a being with an intelligence that put us to shame, with an understanding that could only humble us. And the most shameful message of all passed over to me; forgiveness.

In an instant, my life was transformed and a purpose for my life was reverently established. Contact lasted only a few seconds, but it seemed like much longer. The whale became quiet and began to sink back into the cold embrace of the sea and death. As he slowly slid back, I could see the life fading from his eye. I followed that rapidly extinguishing sparkle of light as the cold briny waves doused the final spark and the soul of a majestic greatness departed, leaving only a mammoth corpse behind.

Many whales have died during my lifetime, all victims of the ruthlessness of my species. It had all been academic. This was different. It was a death witnessed and attended by my shipmates and me. Between that unknown whale and myself, a bond had been established. I would honour this great being with my service. I would side with his species in opposition to my own.²⁶⁵

The grief shared by everyone on the expedition was only mitigated by the knowledge they had helped save six of the original eight whales taken under their protection. The sea shepherds also now had with them incontrovertible film footage and hundreds of photos documenting the ravages of the Soviet whaling fleet.

The significance of the activists' dramatic efforts to save the whales and expose their human predators was highlighted when they sailed into San Francisco harbor. There, the American media was anxiously waiting, reporters crowding together, demanding details of their expedition. Several minutes on the CBS television's evening news with venerable media icon, Walter Cronkite gave the best kind of publicity to their efforts. The story and visuals of the Greenpeace expedition were picked up and reported around the world. Overnight, the plight of the whales and the wanton practices of the whalers became a matter of widespread popular concern.

That fall, the increasingly media-savvy Greenpeacers prepared to fight the forces of environmental desecration on a third front. Over the winter, they planned a bold campaign to stop the annual slaughter of seal pups on the ice floes of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence on Canada's east coast. In March, Watson, along with newly-elected Greenpeace president Hunter, Garrick, Dr. Spong and a dozen more eco-commandos arrived in a hostile situation. The locals resented any outside interference in their traditional hunt.

The Canadian government had also mobilized, passing a perversely named “Seal Protection Act” to thwart the Greenpeace’s announced tactic of flying over the seal herds and inoculating the babies with harmless, but indelible dye. The tactic would have rendered their pelts worthless and thereby saved the lives of the pups. The law prohibited anyone flying lower than 600 meters (2,000 feet) over the herds or landing within .8 kilometers (.5 miles). An amendment even prohibited picking up and moving one of the helpless, white furry pups.

The campaign picked up again the next year. In 1977, Watson welcomed the arrival of French film star and animal rights activist Brigitte Bardot (1934-), a great addition to the media campaign. She alone attracted an entourage of at least forty-five European journalists. A photo on the cover of France’s premier magazine of Bardot snuggling cheek to cheek with a white seal pup proved instrumental in the European Common Market banning Canadian seal pelts.²⁶⁶

The phenomenal growth of the environmental movement led to internal divisions based on differences of style and personality within Greenpeace. With the election of a new president and the adopting of a new outlook, Paul Watson quit what he felt had become an increasingly unwieldy and hierarchical organization. Over time, the co-founder was able to take comfort in the fact that Bob Hunter, David Garrick and most of the other visionaries who had made up the original Greenpeace also retired from the organization.

After a brief hiatus of writing and teaching, Watson founded the “Sea Shepherd Conservation Society,” a much smaller, cost-effective apparatus inspired by his own activist orientation. During his expedition to Newfoundland, he had considered the advantages of using a sturdy, low-maintenance boat, rather than renting expensive and weather-sensitive helicopters, to access the seals on their sometimes-flimsy ice floes. Now, Watson’s first project was to buy a deep-sea fishing trawler and convert it into a conservation enforcement vessel. When it was fitted and ready, Watson sailed the boat he called the *Sea Shepherd* to the scene of Newfoundland’s seal hunt.

On three subsequent visits, Watson and his crewmates repeatedly put their own lives in danger to publicize the horrors of the seal hunt. Adapting the tactic they had used with Russian whalers to the ice floes of Newfoundland, they placed themselves physically between the hunters and hunted. On one occasion, they carried through with their plan of spraying over 1,000 baby seals with organic dye, rendering their valued fur coats unsaleable. The sea shepherds paid for their stubborn defense with beatings and jailings at the hands of unfriendly sealers and police.

The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society also targeted another danger to the mammals of the seas: pirate whalers - ruthless enterprises bent on ignoring international agreements and hunting whales into extinction. Paul Watson’s first target was the most notorious privateer of all, a ship call the *Sierra*. Japanese-owned with a Norwegian crew, that one ship alone had killed more than 2,000 whales. Every week, it destroyed another ten whales, including mothers, infants and endangered species. Watson had a gut feeling he could find the *Sierra* and put an end to its ugly career.

Setting out from Boston July 3, 1979, with the whole Atlantic before them, the crew of the *Sea Shepherd* came upon the illegal whaler just two weeks later, off the coast of Portugal. With a volunteer crew of just two, Captain Watson pursued and rammed the *Sierra* – twice – the second time tearing a crippling forty-foot gash in her hull.

There followed a frenzy of public relations. An unexpected bonus came from watching the transformation of Knut Hustvedt, the seaman who had served as the *Sierra*’s harpooner. On NBC television, he defended the actions of the *Sea Shepherd*. In his words, “It was the only way we could have been stopped.” The Norwegian admitted to at first being angered at losing his livelihood. He also acknowledged he had never before thought of whales as intelligent creatures. “When I saw people willing to take such risks to protect them, I began to think about what I was doing. I will never kill a whale again.”²⁶⁷

A few months later, Paul was dozing in a Quebec courtroom as a prosecutor droned on unintelligibly in French about his breaking the Canadian law “protecting” the seals. A bailiff tapped Paul on the shoulder and led him to a phone in the hall outside. On the line was a government official. A chill went up Paul’s spine as the voice on the phone told him the *Sierra* had been sunk. A well-placed limpid mine had burst a hole in its three-inch hull. The guard on duty at the dock had not even heard the explosion. Within ten minutes, the ship had sunk beneath the waves, never to hunt again.

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Paul Watson's mysterious allies would strike twice again that year, sinking two Spanish-owned ships whose crews had been exceeding the legal whaling limit. Another pirate whaler was withdrawn from the whaling business and sold to a Korean company as a fishing boat just two weeks after a reward of US\$25,000 was posted in the Canary Islands for anyone sinking it.

Many of Paul Watson's colleagues at Greenpeace condemned his tactics. Some called him a terrorist. Yet, the founder of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society could take pride and comfort in the knowledge that in one year his movement had been able to shut down every illegal whaling operation in the North Atlantic, something toothless international whaling regulations and soft diplomacy had been unable to achieve. Without a single human casualty, the lives of hundreds of whales had been saved and generations more would be born.

In the course of their Portuguese adventure, the *Sea Shepherd* had been impounded by Portuguese authorities, then discretely scuttled by its crew. Without a ship, Captain Watson, as skilled in the mass-media universe as he was at sea, sold the movie rights to the *Sierra* ramming story to Hollywood and used the money to buy a nearly identical replacement. The newly refitted and repainted vessel was then called *Sea Shepherd II*.

Paul Watson's next expedition was by far the most dangerous yet. Sailing his new ship from Scotland across to Virginia, then through the Panama Canal to the Bering Strait, he aimed for the ruddy shores of Siberia – Soviet Siberia. Watson's intention was to personally investigate his hunch that the Russians were violating International Whaling Commission regulations. Those rules allowed for the killing of Pacific grays for the subsistence of its aboriginal population. Given its small population of Siberian natives and the large numbers of whales being killed and slaughtered, Paul and some members of the IWC suspected there was foul play at hand, but no one had ever been able to prove it.

Since the Soviet government would never allow any observers to observe its whaling stations, Paul reasoned, he would just have to go uninvited. The strategy was not without its detractors. Greenpeace's president spumed, "Watson is more stupid than I thought if he thinks he can take on the Russians and win." A state department spokesman intoned a similar condemnation for a *Los Angeles Times* reporter. The Soviets signaled their concern by sending a pair of spies at night to film the *Sea Shepherd II* while she docked at Alexandria, Virginia.

Moreover, aside from a generous \$5,000 gift from a D.C. schoolteacher and matching grant from the Fund for Animals, money for the expense of the voyage was hard come by. Finally Paul hit on the idea of charging \$1,000 per crew member for the privilege of risking life and limb on an invasion of Siberia. Within a few days, allowing time for the once-in-a-lifetime offer to percolate through the east coast media, there were fourteen instant crew and enough cash to weigh anchor.

As it turned out, Paul's hunch had been right. After a two-month voyage, he and two others arrived at a Siberian outpost where, before their eyes, huge hunks of whale meat was processed and sent by conveyor belt to the denizens of a sizeable fur farm. Some Soviet entrepreneur had set up an operation of some fifty sheds filled with cages of hundreds of mink, sable and fox, and fed them on cheap whale meat – all in violation of the international rules governing the whale hunt.

Having satisfied themselves that they had obtained enough incriminating film of the illegal operation, Paul and his crew began to pull away from the gentle surf and gravel of the Siberian coast. It was then that the expedition became dangerous. They were spotted and suddenly found themselves pursued by a Soviet freighter, a navy ship and two helicopter gunships. Many maneuvers and much bravado ensued. At one point, the captain of the navy *Kommunist* stopped his ship broadside directly in front of the *Sea Shepherd* - until he realized the dauntless disposition, a certain madness, of his whale-loving adversary, and pulled out of the way just in time.

By this time, the *Sea Shepherd II* was closing on Alaskan waters, but still precious miles away. The quick-moving *Kommunist* pulled alongside the ship of Canadian, Australian, West German, Scottish, English and American environmentalists. Only sixty feet (twenty meters) separated the ships when the Soviets pulled the tarpaulins from the deck guns at the front of the ship. The freighter, which had also been in hot pursuit, fell discretely behind.

With a slower ship and no guns, and not wishing to lose another ship or be consigned to a Siberian prison camp, Captain Paul Watson resorted to a desperate two-fold tactic. The pilot was ordered to ignore every threat and maintain full speed in the direction of Alaska. The crew were instructed to stand their ground on deck and to continue smiling and waving, hoping to confuse their antagonists. Time was running out.

Just then, a cheer went out. Even the Soviet sailors were distracted and pointing excitedly at the water. The seamen had stopped their attack preparations to watch a giant California gray whale surface and spout between the two ships. In the leviathan's commanding wake, the *Kommunist* deflected to the starboard, as the *Sea Shepherd II* veered instinctively to the port side. The friendly visitor stayed a few moments as the space between the two boats opened, then once again submerged beneath the waves.

Watson and the *Sea Shepherd II* continued full speed until an island, Alaska's Saint Lawrence Island, loomed into view. The Russians fell behind. First the ships, then one helicopter, then another, pulled away.

It had happened just as the orca expert Dr. Paul Spong had promised when he had pleaded on the whales' behalf six years before. The merry crew of the *Sea Shepherd II* had been rescued in their time of need. They had been saved by the whales.

Since *Sea Shepherd II*'s brush with danger off the Siberian coast, Paul Watson has continued to sail into harm's way with a combination of moxy and good fortune, as well as a well-honed sense of the media. His 1986 campaign against the annual whale hunt in the Faeroe Islands resulted in the BBC's award-winning documentary "Black Harvest." Later that year, Sea Shepherd agents sank half Iceland's whaling fleet in Reykjavik harbor and destroyed its whale processing station. Two years later, Sea Shepherd film footage of the killing of dolphins on a US tuna boat led to the creation of a "dolphin-safe" tuna label.

Watson's work against the drift-netters that strip-mined the oceans, recalcitrant seal hunters and the remaining whalers made for more confrontations. When a UN resolution banned the practice of drift-netting, a Sea Shepherd agent sank a Taiwanese vessel that had failed to comply. Norwegian whalers were scuttled as well. Watson also continued to work to end the seal hunt that had revived in Newfoundland, offering help to initiate a non-lethal sealing industry based on brushing the molted fur of baby seals. He also brought in journalists and had a video made with actress Michelle Yeoh, targeting the Asian seal-penis aphrodisiac trade, the main economic driver behind the hunt.

The achievements of the *Sea Shepherd Conservation Society* won Paul Watson acclaim and added responsibilities. In 1995, he was voted the Eugene Rogers Award by the United Nations Association of Canada for his work in defense of the British Columbia environment. Four years later, Watson received the Earth Trustee environmental award in a United Nations Earth Day ceremony.

In 1991, *Sea Shepherd* was made an official auxiliary to the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard. The organization began to provide conservation patrols for the sensitive Galapagos ecosystem in 1999. That same year, *Sea Shepherd* Europe volunteers helped rescue wildlife after oil tankers broke up off the coasts of France and Turkey. In 2000, Brazilian *Sea Shepherd* volunteers participated in a similar operation near Rio de Janeiro and started government-sanctioned anti-poaching patrols along the country's southern coast.

When Paul Watson has annoyed governments or people, as on occasion he has, he has remained unapologetic. Once a man approached Watson in Vancouver's Stanley Park and condemned his sinking of whaling ships as criminal and reprehensible. Paul asked his accuser's name. It was John.

"Well, John," Paul said, "when we planned this campaign, we didn't sit around and ask ourselves, 'I wonder what John's gonna think if we sink these ships, or maybe we should ask John what his opinion is.' Frankly, John, we don't give a damn what you or anybody else on this planet thinks. We didn't sink those ships for you. We did it for the whales. It's the whales we care about, John. Not you."²⁶⁸

Paul Watson is a man on a mission. His vision is a transformation of our global reality from one centered firstly on profit, then on humans, and that discounts all other forms of life as irrelevant, to a biocentric paradigm, a world where humans care about others at least as much as they care about themselves. It could be a long shot. But Paul Watson, the green warrior, has accepted the odds and made it his life's purpose to win for the whales and seals and other marine life – or die trying.

The Pope from Wadowice

Karol Wojtyla (1920-2005, pope: 1978-2005) grew up in a devout Catholic home in the small southern Polish town of Wadowice. Regardless of his family's religious practice and the reigning prejudice of those times, Karol had many Jewish friends. His family's landlord was Jewish. At his school, when it came time for soccer

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and the boys split off into the Catholic and Jewish teams, but Karol Wojtyla often joined the Jewish team if they needed a goal. Some of his lifelong friends would be Jewish.

Karol grew up with an intimate acquaintance of death. His mother died of a heart inflammation at the young age of forty-five, while he was only eight. His only sibling, an elder brother, died of scarlet fever three years later. He was just twenty when his father succumbed to illness in 1941. Karol himself suffered a brain concussion and nearly died during the world war, when a passing army truck struck and knocked him to the ground. Karol was saved by a German officer in a command car who stopped and washed the blood from his head and face, then sent him to hospital on a lumber truck.

Karol Wojtyla's inborn spiritual sense took a turn for the priesthood during the war when he met Jan Leopold Tyranowski, a tailor with a devout Catholic heart. From Tyranowski, Karol learned "that one can not only learn about God, but that one can live through God."²⁶⁹ Between shifts at the quarry where he worked nights, Wojtyla attended classes at a secret seminary. In November 1944, he was tonsured, the first step on the way to priesthood. The following April, Wojtyla became assistant instructor of the theological faculty at the university in Krakow.

Many factors conspired Karol Wojtyla's quick rise through the ranks of an historic church that claimed for itself a universal mission. Wojtyla was intellectually bright. His academic performance was always at the top of his class. He was frequently inspired with a spiritual and humanitarian passion, as shown by his extensive outpouring of poems and plays, written in his native Polish. Moreover, he was articulate in Latin, Italian, Spanish, German and French. Wojtyla also possessed the unusual gift of an active social life, while remaining deeply private, centered in his prayer and meditation. Those around him recognized he was capable of exerting immense mental and physical effort, when required. Karol Wojtyla was lucky, as well, to have a number of influential patrons who guided and supported his religious career.

Wojtyla went on to be ordained in 1946. He was made bishop a dozen years later, archbishop of Krakow in 1964, then cardinal three years later at the relatively young age of forty-seven. In 1978, when the papal electors found themselves deadlocked, with both the favored conservative and liberal candidates lacking the necessary support of the assembled cardinals, Karol Wojtyla was elected on the sixth ballot, the first non-Italian pontiff in 456 years, and a first-ever pope from Poland.

As Pope John Paul II, he would not succeed in reconciling the liberal and conservative camps in his church. His embrace of other religions, vastly expanding on the ecumenical work of his recent predecessors, John XXIII (1881-1963, pope: 1958-63) and Paul VI (1897-1978, pope: 1963-78), earned him the displeasure of conservatives who considered themselves more catholic than the pope. John Paul's objections to the ordination of women priests, birth control and liberation theology similarly alienated liberal Catholics.

To judge from his actions, this pope did not so much care to reconcile with his opponents as to make the church an active and positive global force for peace, life and human dignity. To this end, Pope John Paul II reached out in an unprecedented way to world political and spiritual leaders. As a part of his campaign, he traveled extensively abroad, a poignant change from the old days when the pope of the Roman Catholic world remained sealed off in the Vatican for the duration of his term.

The pope's background as a humble laborer in a working class family and his experience of Nazi and Soviet-style repression left an indelible mark on his papacy. As a "people's pope," he declined the papal crown and the pompous splendor of being carried on a sedan chair above the heads of the faithful. After his inauguration, one of John Paul's first acts was to demonstrate his accessibility by mingling with a few hundred journalists in an unscheduled, chaotic and first-ever, papal news conference.

John Paul II's Polish roots also made him uniquely able to influence the gradual, peaceful demise of communism in Eastern Europe. His visits to Poland during the crucial transitional years when there seemed to be a real possibility of Soviet invasion and general bloodshed gave its people courage and inspiration. He was also able to develop a working partnership with the country's leader, General Wojciech Jaruzelski (1923-). It has been widely speculated that the attempted assassination of the pope in Saint Peter's square in May 1981 was a vile attempt to put an end to his significant influence in soviet Europe.

The pope also focussed on remedying his church's dubious scientific legacy. John Paul II arranged an official reexamination of the famous case of Galileo, who had been tried and condemned by church officials in 1633 for insisting that the Earth revolved around the sun, and not the other way around. The Galileo Commission

admitted church officials had erred in condemning Galileo. It also recommended that in future the Catholic church should “disassociate the essentials of faith from the scientific system of a given age.” In 1992, the pope formally pronounced the great astronomer innocent of the charges brought against him. As well as accepting the commission’s recommendations, John Paul II hoped to expand the Vatican’s celestial outlook by authorizing the construction of a state-of-the-art telescope in collaboration with the University of Arizona.²⁷⁰

With his first papal audience which he granted to a childhood Jewish friend, John Paul II began undoing an unfortunate legacy of church-sponsored holy wars, inquisitions and indifference to the sufferings of other peoples. In 1986, he paid an official visit to the Rome synagogue, the first time a pope had ever entered a Jewish house of worship. Afterwards, the temple rabbi remarked that while the distance between the Vatican and synagogue was only a few kilometers, it had taken 2,000 years to be covered by a Roman pope.²⁷¹

In 1993, the pontiff interceded in a bitter dispute between Jewish organizations and Carmelite nuns who had established a shrine adjacent to the infamous Auschwitz concentration camp, ordering the nuns to move their shrine. John Paul II also established diplomatic relations with Israel that year. In 1997, he convened a conference of fifty Catholic scholars to explore the roots of anti-Jewish prejudice among Christians, admitting that in the past the church had promoted “erroneous and unjust interpretations of the scriptures” that had fed religious hatred.²⁷²

The Roman Catholic head also extended the proverbial olive branch to Muslims. Sensitive to the suffering and death inflicted on Muslims by the Gulf War, John Paul II personally conveyed a wish for peace and goodwill to all the world’s Muslims at the end of the traditional fast of Ramadan in 1991. The pope held discussions about improving Muslim-Christian relations internationally with Iranian President Muhammad Khatami, president of the 55-nation Muslim Conference, at the Vatican in 1999. John Paul II also met with one of Sunni Islam’s highest religious authorities, Grand Sheik Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, in Egypt the following year.

The pontiff’s most dramatic gesture to promote peace and understanding between people of differing faiths was when he invited the leaders of the world’s religions to Assisi, Italy to pray for peace. The first gathering was held in 1986, some fourteen years after Yogi Bhaijan had first proposed the idea to Pope Paul VI during a visit to the Vatican. The World Day of Prayer for Peace has been celebrated in some form each following year.

To those who objected to his interreligious work, John Paul II replied in *Redemptoris missio*, “The Church sees no conflict between proclaiming Christ and engaging in interreligious dialogue... Dialogue should be conducted and implemented with the conviction that the church is the ordinary means of salvation and that she alone possesses the fullness of the means of salvation.”²⁷³ Elsewhere, he says, “A Christian finds it of the highest interest to observe truly religious people, to read and listen to the testimonies of their wisdom, and to have direct proof of their faith.”²⁷⁴

In light of the approaching third millenium of Christianity, the pontiff urged fellow Catholics to critically examine the church’s treatment of other peoples. During visits to the Americas and Australia, he admitted the church had played a role in the destruction of native cultures and encouraged aboriginal peoples to keep alive their distinctive languages, values and customs. In 1992, on a tour of an historic slave port in Senegal, John Paul II condemned the cruel practice of slavery. In 1998, he convened an international symposium to study religious persecution during the Catholic Inquisition. During the pope’s millennial visit to Israel, he openly apologized for all the past faults of Christians.

Since 1990, many animal-lovers have seized on a passing reference by John Paul II they interpreted as indicating a change in church doctrine and a recognition of animal souls. It was in his general audience of January 3, that the pontiff acknowledged how the original Greek translators of the Old Testament had used twenty-four different terms to translate the Hebrew word *ruah*.

Indeed, in a given text, it is often not possible to determine the exact meaning of the word. One may waver between wind and breath, between breath and spirit, or between created spirit and the divine Spirit. This multiplicity, however, has a certain wealth, for it establishes a fruitful communication between so many realities.²⁷⁵

At his next weekly audience, John Paul II picked up on the same subject without dispelling the ambiguity of the Biblical meaning.

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When the Book of Genesis speaks in chapter two of the creation of the animals (v. 19), it does not hint at such a close relationship with the breath of God. ...Other texts, however, admit that the animals also have a vital breath or wind and that they received it from God. Under this aspect man, coming forth from the hands of God, appears in solidarity with all living beings.²⁷⁶

Perhaps the pope would have liked to say more, but was held back by the ponderous weight of tradition. In any event, the little John Paul II managed to say seemed for many to go a long ways toward healing the Aristotelian split between humankind and other living beings.

Six years later, the pontiff acknowledged the preponderance of evidence pointing toward the truth of Darwin's theory of evolution. This was a significant development. The last time this subject had been brought up in a papal address, Pius XII had described it as a serious hypothesis, but one that remained unproven. While John Paul II said the church could accept that man descended from nonhuman ancestors, he reserved for man the privilege of an "ontological leap" through which mundane primates became humans imbued with spiritual possibilities.²⁷⁷

While the pope has shown himself to be a master of intellectual subtlety, he has also on occasion employed bold words and gestures. In 1994, John Paul II became the first pontiff to openly condemn the Mafia's cult of violence and intimidation. It is also a credit to his suppleness of spirit that he could meet with Poland's General Jaruzelski and the Soviet Union's Mikhail Gorbachev to help assure a peaceful transition from authoritarian rule, and still not hesitate to criticize the subsequent abuses of "savage capitalism" in eastern Europe and elsewhere.

John Paul II has been outspoken in his criticism of the "culture of death," with its inherent inequality and exploitation, its "opinion makers" with their convenient notions of right and wrong, its abortion and thoughts of euthanasia. Moreover, when the US government imposed punishing sanctions and began a concerted diplomatic offensive against neighboring Cuba, the pope deliberately put himself in the line of fire, making a first-ever papal visit to Fidel Castro's island nation in 1998. Afterwards, President Clinton toned down his rhetoric and awarded his holiness a Congressional Gold Medal anyway.

Diplomat, theologian, poet, traditionalist, innovator and activist – these are some of the essential attributes of John Paul II, first pope of the new millenium.

Four for Peace

The unfolding course of destiny is nothing, if not surprising. It brings together the unlikely and separates the familiar with unsettling regularity. The following is an account of four individuals, four highly distinctive personalities, who came together for the cause of world peace.

One began life as the son of a shoe salesman in a small town. After a stint as a successful lifeguard, then a radio sports announcer, he began a career as a film actor that spanned fifteen years and fifty films. During the 1950s, as head of the Screen Actors Guild, he played an active role in purging alleged communist influences from the motion picture industry. From the movies, he became a recognized television personality. Afterwards, he served two terms as governor of a large and populous state in the US.

As president of the United States, he oversaw a dramatic reshaping of American society, marked by a shrinking middle class, tax breaks for the wealthy, and deep cuts in social spending. He also managed the largest peacetime military buildup in American history. Referring to the Soviet Union as an "evil empire," this president orchestrated a spiraling nuclear arms race in the face of a critical and spreading peace movement.

Another participant was a former philosophy teacher. Her lawyer husband went on to become a prominent politician. They had one daughter. Her extensive studies of living and working conditions in her country's agricultural sector influenced her husband's governing policies.

The husband was born on a large collective farm. His first job was driving a combine harvester, which he did for four years. At twenty-one, he studied at law school, then went on to hold a number of political posts. Over the years, and with the patronage of an influential party leader, he rose through the ranks, becoming the leader of the world's largest country within a couple of weeks of his fifty-third birthday.

The youngest and most dynamic member of his administration, he set out to resuscitate the nation's stagnant economy. He called for modernization, increased worker productivity and more efficient management. He also encouraged unprecedented freedom of expression among his people and set about a fundamental democratization of his country's political system.

The fourth participant in this fateful initiative was the daughter of a used car salesman and a stage actress. When her mother remarried, Nancy was adopted by her stepfather, a neurosurgeon. Eventually she became a successful film actress in her own right.

In 1952, she married the president of the Screen Actors' Guild and fulfilled her lifelong ambition of having a successful family. They had two children, plus a couple of stepchildren from his earlier marriage. When a dynamic new leader took charge of the Soviet Union, she suggested her husband meet with him as soon as possible to bring a halt to the nuclear arms race. Reluctantly at first, he did.

The leaders of the world's two superpowers, poised on the brink of nuclear annihilation, met tentatively in Geneva in 1985. One more meeting was scheduled for Reykjavik the next year. The philosophy teacher lectured Nancy about the virtues of communism, while the political leaders of the world's two opposing camps played strategic hardball.

At the end of the Geneva summit, after the two men had met privately, they surprised all their advisors, many of them hawks with no interest in disarmament, by announcing they had exchanged invitations to meet twice more. They would continue their discussions in Washington in 1987 and the following year in Moscow.

Over the course of their meetings, the two leaders came to like and respect each other. At a state dinner in the Kremlin, the Russian leader turned to Nancy and said, "you know, your husband and I have a certain..." and here he was obviously groping for the right word.

"Let me help you," she said. "Chemistry?"

"Yes, chemistry."

"I know you do. I'm very aware of it, and so is my husband."

"It's very rare."

"I know that, too."

"I'm familiar with your constitution," said the Russian statesman, "but I wish your husband could stay on for another four years."²⁷⁸

The two men had signed a landmark treaty to rid the world of the most dangerous class of weapons. The INF (Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces) treaty eliminated all 2,600 nuclear missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 miles stationed in the United States, Europe and the Soviet Union. The work of disassembling the warheads began in August 1988 and was completed June 1991.

In December 1988, the philosophy teacher arrived in New York with her husband, who was to address the United Nations. This time, she did not lecture about the virtues of the communist system. She admitted Soviet childcare was not perfect. "It might have made more sense to keep the child at home for the first few years."²⁷⁹ She had been busy the past two years helping children contaminated by the Chernobyl nuclear accident. Eleven years later, she herself would die of leukemia likely contracted during her heroic efforts with the radiation victims.

After serving his second term, the American president would retire to a quiet life at his home and ranch in California. Four years later, he would completely withdraw from public life, as his mind came slowly undone, afflicted by a disease that eats a person's sense of what was and is. But he would not be alone. Nancy would remain stoically, lovingly at his side.

For his part, the leader of the not-so-evil empire would be overtaken by powerful forces he himself had set in motion. Unpopular at home, but immensely respected abroad, he and his wife would remain under house arrest for three terrible days, during a failed military coup in 1991. After returning for a few months as a weakened authority, he would quit the Communist Party and resign the presidency of the Soviet Union.

Then, capitalizing on the respect and goodwill of non-Russians, he founded a think tank for global concerns near San Francisco in 1992. The next year, to build on the promise of the Earth Summit in Rio de

Janeiro, he started Green Cross International in Geneva, Switzerland. Much of his work has involved focussing world attention on issues of sustainable development and desertification, and the resolution of potential conflicts over scarce water resources. Since 1994, he has been especially involved in efforts to establish an Earth Charter to promote biodiversity and sustainable development through the United Nations.

Toxic Psychiatry

Peter Breggin (1936-) gained his first experience of the twentieth century phenomenon he would later describe as “neither pure science nor medicine,” but a “mishmash of philosophy, psychology, religion, law enforcement, and politics as well as social engineering and big business, and occasionally science and medicine” as an eighteen-year-old Harvard freshman visiting the Metropolitan State Hospital in Waltham, Massachusetts. The year was 1954 and the asylum in Waltham was typical of hundreds of mental hospitals spread across the country.

Within a year of Breggin’s initial visit, a record 559,000 Americans were committed in these institutions, a testament to the influence of psychiatry, a field that hardly existed 150 years before. Yet, these asylums did little more than warehouse their growing numbers of inmates. With a typical ratio of several hundred patients for every doctor, therapy was simply not a possibility.

Nothing could have prepared Breggin and his fellow students for what they found that day on the women’s “violent ward” of the hospital, a long and narrow cement dungeon. The first and most lasting impression was the terrible, nauseating stench that pervaded the place. The women could easily have passed for concentration camp inmates – undernourished, silent, stone-faced with sunken eyes. Absolutely no one socialized with anyone else. It was as if each one was ashamed and afraid of the others.²⁸⁰

When Peter Breggin inquired about the stifling summer heat and bone-chilling winter conditions in the hospital, a staff psychiatrist blandly assured him that schizophrenics did not suffer from extremes of temperature like “normal people.” When he asked about the drastic insulin and electroshock therapies patients were subjected to, Breggin was informed the procedures “only killed their bad brain cells.”

During one visit, a male orderly mistook one of the students for an inmate and threatened that if she did not grant him sexual favors, she would be left in one of the hospital’s dreaded back wards. Luckily, a fellow student rescued the student from the predator.

Though Breggin was just an undergraduate, he could readily discern that the violent treatments and abuse he observed served only the hospital staff’s narrow interests, and certainly not those of the patients. The grinding, impersonal regimen rendered the helpless inmates docile and easier to control.

For a full year, the undergraduates visited the inmates every week. The students organized social activities. They cleaned and painted the wards. They took patients on outings and saw to it that they had clothes that fit and proper glasses. With the growing presence of volunteers, there were less instances of abuse.

By the end of the program, eleven of the fourteen hardcore patients who had been given weekly one-to-one care by Breggin’s group were discharged from the hospital. All of them had spent countless years in the asylum. Just three returned in the next year or two, making for an impressive record, considering the hospital hardly ever released its long-term inmates.

Just about this time, the rise of a new generation of powerful tranquilizers known as “neuroleptics” swept the field of psychiatry. Enthusiasts speculated “wild, screaming, unapproachable patients” soon would become a thing of the past. A respected English psychiatrist testified how one of the new popular medications “tore through the civilized world like a whirlwind and engulfed the whole treatment spectrum of psychotic disorders.”²⁸¹ Under the influence of the new psychiatric medications, even very disturbed individuals began to be discharged from institutions to lead apparently normal lives.

The rise of drug-based treatments caused the canceling of the volunteer program at Waltham’s Metropolitan State Hospital. Many other programs where personal interaction had been the essential key to recovery were also shut down. In Europe, the heartland of modern psychiatry, doctors outpaced their American counterparts in adopting the new biopsychiatric approach, favoring physical interventions of drugs and electroshock over psychoanalysis and other interactive therapies.

Success stories filled the media. Some psychiatrists were reported using neuroleptics and electroshock therapy even to relieve their own depression and mental malaise. Red brick asylums everywhere discharged thousands, then tens of thousands of inmates.

Even as the new era of biopsychiatry was loudly proclaimed, Dr. Breggin harbored doubts about the drug therapies. He was struck more by the robotic indifference of patients under the influence of neuroleptics than with any supposed improvement. In his view, the various proclaimed remedies for mental disorders were vastly overrated.

Peter Breggin's study of these toxic substances showed that they worked by profoundly disrupting the normal functioning of the brain. Their effects proved to be unpredictable and understood only in the vaguest of generalities. To varying degrees, they were proven to be addictive. They also frequently triggered side effects, such as spastic twitching or impotency, and were capable of producing long-term and irreversible changes in the brain.²⁸²

Dr. Breggin reasoned that, given the paramount complexity of the brain, with its billions of cells and trillions of interconnections, scientists were far from having a full picture of just how it operated, exactly what did what, and how things hung together. He questioned the very issue of the eliminating emotional suffering, the touted objective of biopsychiatrists and their arsenal of biochemical prescriptions. Breggin asserted that drugging only served to stifle a person's psychological and spiritual life. Rather than numbing people to their pain, he contended it would be wiser to work to consciously "untangle that twisted energy" and "redirect it more creatively." In contrast to the blandishments of the biopsychiatrists, Dr. Breggin proposed that "the degree to which we suffer is the degree to which we are alive."²⁸³

In 1982, Breggin and other advocates of psychotherapy faced a difficult challenge. Forty-two year old Dr. Rafael Osheroff had checked into a hospital suffering symptoms of depression. He then complained to the staff when he was not been treated with psychiatric medications. After seven months of psychotherapy and no improvement in his symptoms, Osheroff was transferred to another clinic. There, he was put on a regimen of tranquilizers and antidepressants. Once his symptoms had improved, Osheroff was discharged only to find his world had disintegrated. His wife was gone, he had lost his hospital accreditation, and his partner had ousted him from their joint practice. Osheroff sued the hospital for malpractice.

In the landmark case, the plaintiff claimed the hospital had been negligent in persisting in the use of psychotherapy as the sole treatment for his depression. The arbitration panel awarded Osheroff \$250,000. The case established a patient's right to medication, even if the supporting science was less than perfect and taking the drug might have unintended and damaging consequences. As the case showed, remaining gravely dysfunctional for a prolonged period also could have unpleasant side-effects.

The history of medications to treat disturbances of the mind goes back to ancient times. Various herbal preparations have served this purpose, as has alcohol. The use of cotton oil and other purgatives as laxative cures of mental illness dates from before the Middle Ages and was vouched for into the 1920s. Coca and a range of opiates had been widely used in the latter half of the nineteenth and the early years of the twentieth century, until their availability was restricted by law. The 1890s saw the introduction of bromide sedatives. Barbiturates entered the market in 1904 and, under various names, reigned supreme until the 1950s. Then Miltown, Valium, Trofanil, Prozac, Ritalin, each was to have its splashy introduction, its testimonials and subsequent media frenzy.

According to Breggin, the dark side of the proliferation of all these remedies is how the pharmaceutical industry, in alliance with biopsychiatrists, has managed to expand its influence and immense profitability by lowering the bar on how we define mental illness and strategically marketing not just drugs, but "niche maladies." Since the late 1980s, the drug industry and their helpful prescribers have campaigned to increase their patient base with public relations tools like "Mental Health Awareness Week." On these occasions, they have liked to cite figures like "close to thirty percent of the American public has a mental disorder and therefore needs treatment."²⁸⁴

While in the nineteenth century, psychiatry focussed on psychotic inpatients, by the early twentieth century, interest had shifted to merely neurotic outpatients. Nearing the end of the century, psychiatry began increasingly seeking patients with "subthreshold symptoms," people mildly and temporarily disturbed in one way or another, the sort of people ordinarily seen by family doctors or not seen medically at all.

Most disturbing is the industry's slick marketing of trendy new maladies along with their made-to-order prescriptive medications. Typically, a corporate-sponsored "disease awareness" campaign focuses on a mild psychiatric condition with a large pool of potential sufferers. Companies fund studies that prove the drug's efficacy in treating the affliction, a necessary step in obtaining FDA approval for a new use, or "indication." Prominent doctors are enlisted to publicly affirm the prevalence of the malady. Public relations firms launch campaigns to promote the new disease, using dramatic statistics from corporate-sponsored studies. Finally, patient groups are recruited to serve as the "public face" for the condition, supplying quotes and compelling human stories for the media. Many of these groups are heavily subsidized by drugmakers. Some operate directly out of the offices of drug companies' public relations firms.

The expert management of public perceptions through wide-ranging media presentations of "depression," "panic disorder," "social phobia," "obsessive-compulsive disorder," "generalized anxiety disorder," "multiple personality disorder," "posttraumatic stress disorder," "social anxiety disorder," and "attention deficit disorder" made these syndromes phenomenally profitable sources of revenue. By putting clients on "long-term prescription therapies" psychiatrists hooked them up with drug companies' balance sheets for years and decades, many of them for the remainder of their lives.

Significantly, each edition of the authoritative *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* published since 1952 by the American Psychiatric Association has proclaimed the existence of increasing numbers of maladies of the mind. While the 1968 edition offered up some 180 disorders in its 134 pages, the fourth edition, published in 1994, proceeded to catalogue 297 individual maladies in a tome more than 500 pages in length. According to one scholarly observer, "the sheer endlessness of the syndrome parade caused an uneasy feeling that the process might somehow be out of control."²⁸⁵

Dr. Breggin founded the Center for the Study of Psychiatry and Psychology (CSPP) in 1971 as a focal point for resistance to the movement for physical inventions in psychiatry. These included drugs, electroshock and lobotomies. More recently, Breggin has openly protested the collusion of the giant pharmaceutical companies and the powerful US National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), especially their targeting of youngsters as an impressionable new drug market.

The first big challenge for CSPP came in 1991, when President George H. Bush proposed a "violence initiative," a government program of experimentation on poor, urban, and mostly black children designed to demonstrate the genetic causes of violent behaviors. The scheme reminded Dr. Breggin of how psychiatrists, obsessed with similar theories of "inferior genes," had organized Nazi Germany's first extermination camps to eliminate over 200,000 people they classed as "incurably diseased" or "useless eaters."²⁸⁶

The chief proponent of the scheme, Frederick Goodwin, the director-for-life of the National Institute of Mental Health, was actually quoted making disparaging comparisons between black youngsters in America's inner cities and monkeys living in a jungle. Breggin and his wife, Ginger capitalized on those remarks to build an effective coalition among African Americans in Congress, the media, health professionals, teachers, and the public. Together, they managed to defeat the dehumanizing government initiative. The successful campaign also caused the resignation of the NIMH head.

Despite their signal victory over the powerful NIMH, Peter Breggin and other nonmedical psychotherapists could not help appreciating the growing influence of psychiatrists who preferred biology-based remedies over "talking therapy." Breggin and David Cohen, a professor of social work and independent drug scholar, described some of the traits of the new mental health professionals in their book, *Your Drug May Be Your Problem*:

Now that the profession is controlled by its biological wing, it attracts doctors who feel more comfortable writing prescriptions than relating to people. These tendencies, in turn, are reinforced by their training in clinics and mental hospitals, where they are taught to exert power and authority over patients and other professionals and where they learn to lock up people against their will, to administer electroshock, to write orders for solitary confinement and restraint, to control every aspect of the patients' daily routine, to prescribe toxic drugs while denying their devastating adverse effects, and to generally maintain an authoritarian and distant relationship with their patients.

As a result, psychiatrists tend to seek power... The mental health lobby, funded by drug companies and lead by organized psychiatry, is one of the most powerful in the nation's history.²⁸⁷

The next indication of the tremendous influence of the new psychiatry came in June 1999, with the opening of the White House Conference on Mental Health in Washington, D.C. Flanked by President Clinton and Vice President Gore and their wives, and attended by leading media figures, one biopsychiatrist after another rejected any possibility that “bad childhood trauma,” “inadequate parenting,” or even “absent fathers” could have any part in the increasingly obvious crisis among many of America’s youth. Instead, the doctors matter-of-factly advised the nation how many millions of youngsters were troubled by genetic and biological brain diseases that made them mentally distressed and potentially violent.²⁸⁸

Dr. Breggin later pointed out that, despite the president’s proclamation of a new program to identify and medicate increasing numbers of troubled children, schools across America had already been vigorously identifying at risk youngsters and referring them for psychiatric evaluation. Millions of children were already taking some form of medication with their morning orange juice. Significantly, the two young men who stunned the nation when they killed or wounded thirty-five students and one teacher at a Colorado high school two months before – and were the immediate catalyst for the president’s announcement – had already been assessed and were receiving psychiatric drugs when they became violent.²⁸⁹

In *Reclaiming Our Children*, published that same year, Breggin openly condemned the presidential initiative. Rather than putting a higher priority on children’s needs, especially their needs for more meaningful adult relationships,

the administration provided a windfall to the psychiatric and health professions, to the pharmaceutical industry, and cover for schools and communities that want to control children without providing for their genuine needs. By locating our children’s problems in their supposedly flawed brains rather than in our obviously flawed society, the White House Conference took adults off the proverbial hook, while dangling our children on its point.²⁹⁰

Dr. Breggin’s arguments against medicating children into submission are many. There are unpredictable side effects, including suicide, violence and psychotic tendencies.²⁹¹ There is the possibility of permanent damage in a still-maturing brain. It is also much harder to come off psychiatric drugs than it is to start taking them. Then there is the personal stigma of growing up believing one has a defective brain. Overall, Breggin returns to the raw fact that many parents and educators today find it more expedient to subdue young people than to join with them in meaningful and satisfying relationships.

With four children of his own, Dr. Breggin continues to champion the cause of youngsters misunderstood, then profited from, by a psychiatric regimen that has lost much of its human touch. It resonates as something more than a rhetorical flourish then, when this founder of an organization widely known a voice of conscience in the field of psychiatry urges parents, educators, physicians and mental health professionals to widen their circle of concern and consider all children as their own.

Dharma and Destiny

Krishna Kaur Khalsa is a vibrant and talented yoga teacher living in Los Angeles. After a successful career as an actress, singer and dancer in the New York theatre scene in the 1960s, Krishna Kaur stepped aside to reflect on the purpose of her life. She decided that she wanted somehow to improve the lot of her disadvantaged African American community not only for a few hours, as in the theatre, but forever.

Seeking some strategy to begin this ambitious project, and with only her conscience to guide her, Krishna Kaur sampled various styles of worship and meditation and a number of spiritual practices. For a year, she went to Africa to connect with her ancestral roots. Sometimes her experiences created more confusion than clarity about her destiny, her identity, and how she was to serve.

Somehow, whenever Krishna Kaur found herself needing focus and direction, she would find herself in front of someone’s bookcase, where her eyes would fall on a book about yoga. Then for several hours, she would sit and devour that book. When Krishna had finished, she would come away spiritually refreshed and set out again in her search. Without her knowing it, those periodic wellsprings of ancient wisdom were beginning to define her life.

The Good of All

My studies on the philosophy and practice of Yoga gave me so much comfort and clarity about who I was, that upon leaving Africa, I concluded that I was not a child of Africa, nor of America, but I was a child of the Universe. I deeply felt that I belonged everywhere and nowhere. It was further clear to me that this was to be my path and my religion would be one that acknowledged the One God and that all faiths were an expression of that Oneness.²⁹²

Returning to the United States, Krishna Kaur immersed herself in the most invigorating and ambitious of all yogas. Within a few months of being in Africa, she accompanied her teacher, Yogi Bhajan, on a tour of Punjab that culminated at the Golden Temple. The pilgrimage, beset with unscheduled twists and turns, was as physically and mentally challenging as it was spiritually uplifting.

Back in America, Yogi Bhajan sent Krishna Kaur out from his international center, near the glitz of West Hollywood and Beverly Hills, to the ghetto of south central Los Angeles. He instructed her to set up an ashram of her own where she could share with African Americans the healing yoga and empowering lifestyle of the founder of the Golden Temple, Guru Ram Das.

Terrified at first, Krishna Kaur nonetheless went out and found a place where she could teach, all the while focussing on relaxing and allowing God to work through her. Inspiration came from a twisted and rusty metal fork she used to loosen the earth around the plants in her garden. “If this old fork can be useful,” she thought, “then surely God can find some use for me, too.”

To pay rent, Krishna Kaur made and sold sandwiches. Evenings, turbaned and beaming, she gave classes in Kundalini Yoga. When someone would object that yoga was not a part of black culture, she would smile. From her own experience, Krishna Kaur could see there was no need to go to Africa. The know-how she shared with her students was universal. It was culture-blind. And it worked.

Soon, Yogi Bhajan added to her responsibilities by making her a minister of divinity. Eight years later, in 1980, Krishna Kaur made another pilgrimage to Amritsar. It was the birthday of Guru Ram Das and she found herself sitting right inside the Golden Temple singing the Guru’s hymns with an entourage of American Sikhs, surrounded by thousands and thousands of celebrants.

When the music stopped, the tour leader nudged Krishna Kaur to take to the mike and lead the large congregation. She held back. No woman had ever led the chanting in the Golden Temple – although for no good reason anyone could think of.

When the man who had just finished playing also coaxed her to come forward, Krishna Kaur’s reluctance melted away. She took full possession of the microphone, the moment and the sacred temple. For all women everywhere, for all Sikhs, and for people of every color, she sang for precious minutes on a day commemorating the life of a most humble servant of humanity.

Back again, in Los Angeles, after her historic debut at the Golden Temple, Krishna Kaur plunged herself with renewed vigor into teaching and working and all the thousand details of building spiritual community. In the mid-80s, she was active in the movement to end the nuclear arms race. In the 90s, Krishna Kaur founded the International Association of Black Yoga Teachers. She also established a board and care home for mentally disabled adults. In 2003, she returned once more to Africa, this time to share the bounty of her empowering new lifestyle with an eager circle of students in Ghana.

Without a doubt, Krishna Kaur’s most ambitious effort to date has been to teach and organize Kundalini Yoga classes for imprisoned youth. In the US, where police and the courts imprison more people per capita than in any other country in the world, half of all prisoners are Afro-American. Krishna Kaur aims to correct that tragic imbalance, to bring courage and clarity to the many discouraged and misguided young men and women. In her words:

Many of these brilliant young souls are frustrated with the life they have inherited. They are powerful little warriors who want to help usher in the Age of Aquarius. They are a “no nonsense” generation that looks for the guidance of their elders and we need to be there for them.²⁹³

Krishna Kaur Khalsa, it seems, has found her calling.



The world is a small place now, mapped out in amazing detail. We are bound together by satellites and cyberoptics, trade and treaty, culture and climate. There are *kimonos* in Rio and *sombreros* in Moscow. There is *bhangra* in Lagos and *quiche* in Boston. International organizations, both governmental and nongovernmental, strive to safeguard our interests. Today, even people of differing religions generally have a kind word to say to each other.

The people of the world exist united as never before. Our languages and tribes are less. Never mind that there are more jargons, and factional interests still endure. Never mind how politicians use our shared media to manufacture unnatural fear and animosity during elections and times of international instability, while advertisers forever ply the art of concocting artificial needs.

Global power begets global responsibilities. Increasing freedom requires ever-greater vigilance to safeguard it. Growing wealth demands equitable new methods of distribution.

Elitism, excepting the new techno-wizards we need to run all our gizmos and the pop stars we created to watch and dissipate our boredom, has become a thing of the past. Popular culture, popular education, popular opinion rule the day. With so much we have in common, we should now be able to focus on what makes us distinctly human.

This body is a perfect rendering of timeless spirit.²⁹⁴

- Guru Nanak

Human by Design

What the Guru Saw

During his extensive travels, the Guru met people of many cultures with many differing customs and attitudes relating to the body and its appearance.

In India, the Guru encountered brahmins and pundits. They had distinctive caste-marks painted on their foreheads and sacred strings hung across their chests. Saffron robes of various shades identified the Hindu holy men. Some shaved their heads, but kept a tuft of hair on top of their head. Others wore their hair long, woven into a braid or gathered up in a topknot.

Bearded Muslim sheiks, *pirs*, and mullahs dressed in distinctive white or blue and wore caps or various types of turban. Muslim women might commonly be covered and veiled from head to foot. In the Middle East, the Guru encountered tonsured Christians in traditional black robes. Rabbis, with skullcaps, long sidelocks, and scriptural passages tied to their left arm and forehead during prayers, were also not unknown to the Guru.

Some read the Vedas. Still others recite the Torah, Bible and Quran.

While some dress in blue robes, some dress in white.

Some we say are “Muslim.” Others are known as “Hindu.”

There are many faithful who yearn for paradise,

And yet other believers who crave heaven.²⁹⁵

The Guru visited with shaven-headed Buddhists in ochre and yellow robes. In Tibet, lamas wore large, stylized hats, while in Sri Lanka monks went bareheaded. In jungles, the Guru met tribal peoples wearing wild skins and amulets.

In mountains and forests, the Master spoke with wandering ascetics of various sects. Some wore long, matted hair. Others shaved their heads. Some wore loincloths or skins. Some dressed in special robes. Many ascetics had weighty earrings suspended from their ears. Some carried with them staves and begging bowls. Many coated their bodies with ashes. Some made a show of cleanliness, while others made a point of never washing. Some hung sacred symbols around their necks. Others adorned their skins with religious tattoos.

Many Hindu, Muslim and Christian ascetics delighted in torturing their bodies. Some deprived them of food and drink. Others endured ordeals of heat and cold and sleeplessness. The Guru met a few *fakirs* who, years ago, had raised their arms skyward or balanced on one foot until their limbs had become rigidly fixed in that posture. Zealots demonstrated their indifference to pain by mutilating their bodies in this or that way. Jain monks engaged in a stringent course of self-denial. They plucked out all the hairs of their body, even their eyebrows, and ate only the food left by others.

Guru Nanak was not partial to any of the religious traditions of his time. Once, when he set out on a long teaching tour in the East, the Master dressed in a style that borrowed liberally from here and there and nowhere. Over a mango-colored jacket, the bearded Guru wore a white scarf and a bone necklace. A saffron mark on his forehead and the hat of a Muslim ascetic complemented his unconventional garb.²⁹⁶ From his dress, no one could guess his religious affiliation – which was good because, of course, he had none. The Master’s singular appearance was designed to inspire comment and conversation wherever he went.

Years later, when Guru Nanak set out for Mecca, he wore the traditional blue robe of a Muslim pilgrim. In his one hand, he carried the staff of a travelling ascetic and under his arm a collection of hymns he himself had written.²⁹⁷

The Master made light of acquired cultural differences – props and costumes, colors and insignia – that distinguished one sect from the next, distinctions often treated with utmost gravity by their members. Instead,

Human by Design

Guru Nanak immersed himself in universals: his humanity, his identification with his Creator, and the innate sanctity of the elemental human form.

Let contentment be your earrings, modesty your begging bowl,
And meditation the ashes you apply to your body.
Let the realization of death be your patched coat,
Contenance the way of your body,
And trust in the Infinite your staff.
Consider all humanity as the members of your sect.
To that One - I bow, I bow.
Original, most sublime, beginningless, absolute –
From age to age, It is the One.²⁹⁸

Akaal Moorat

As a spiritual master and unique teacher of humanity, Guru Nanak presented an image of sheer simplicity and utter universality. His very appearance – his sparkling eyes, his noble beard, his majestic bearing - conveyed a sense of consummate inspiration.

The Guru's enlightened understanding led him to keep his body intact and to decorate it with a plain robe and simple turban. In our scientific day and age, we might say that, by not shaving or otherwise altering the essential details of his body to serve some social custom or personal whim, the Guru was honoring the dictates imprinted in his own DNA - the culturally unbiased, molecular blueprint of just what an adult male *homo sapiens* ought to physically appear like. In the Guru's eyes, the immortal soul residing in an uncompromised human form exuded a certain grace and integral beauty, not unlike that of the great Krishna, handsome avatar of Indian tradition.

Your eyes are lovely and your teeth beautiful.
Your nose is becoming. How long is your hair!
Your glowing body is formed of molten gold.²⁹⁹

The Guru's concept of *Akaal Moorat*, the timeless depiction of immortal spirit, or the human form as the "image of God" has profound resonance in numerous religious cultures. During the European Renaissance, Michelangelo gave creative expression to that potent prototype on the ceiling of the Vatican's Sistine Chapel, where the Creator, august and bearded, reaches out his hand to his youthful likeness in Adam, the primal man. William Blake's visionary art depicts both God and man as handsome, powerful beings adorned with full complements of primordial hair.³⁰⁰

According to surviving sculptures of the classical Greek and Roman eras, Zeus, Poseidon, Hermes, Dionysus and the other adult males of their pantheon shared the same bearded aspect. Thor and the Norse gods were similarly distinguished.

The great prophets of Judaism, Christianity and Islam - Abraham, Moses, and Muhammad - kept long hair, beards and turbans. Tradition tells us Jesus also kept his hair. As a devout Jew, he would likely have covered his head as well, though in those days most Jews remained bareheaded, so as not to single themselves out for persecution from the Romans.³⁰¹

In Chinese culture as well, the image of the timeless sage with a full head of natural hair figures prominently. Confucius and Lao-tsu, the fathers of Confucianism and Taoism respectively, are always depicted as bearded with their hair raised into a distinctive Chinese headdress. In Eastern art, other prominent teachers of the Taoist and Confucian traditions are similarly distinguished.

In traditional Japanese culture, long hair is considered to be endowed with spiritual potency. The male and female Shinto gods, Izanagi and Izanami, who created the islands of Japan and all the nature spirits, are depicted with loosely flowing hair.³⁰²

India's ancient code of living, the Laws of Manu, offered a student entering a spiritual hermitage three choices. They might shave their head as a mark of renunciation, or keep their hair either plaited in a braid down their back or tied into a "rishi knot"⁹ on top of their head.³⁰³

Guru Nanak's predilection for keeping his body intact should not then be surprising. Why should the enlightened Master wish to quarrel with the intrinsic wisdom of splendid Mother Nature, expressed in his own physiology? Why should he oppose the practical genius pervading every living detail of creation and honored through the ages?

Unlike the ascetics, Guru Nanak recognized the mind, not the body, as the crucial arena where the soul might stake its efforts and either win or lose the game of life. Rather than something to be deprived or tortured, the Guru appreciated the body as a sacred trust, a home for the eternal soul. Like a faithful servant, it could be a great help along the way. It uniquely embodied the precious opportunity of human life. According to the Master, the mysterious and wonderful human body was an instrument to be cherished, looked after and dedicated to good purposes.

This body you have obtained was made for you.
If you use it to do good works, joy and delight will be yours.
All the world is engaged in coming and going.
Practicing good in this world,
You will obtain a place of honor.
O Nanak, then you may swing your arms in joy!³⁰⁴

Any way you look at it, the body is a mind-boggling case of inimitable engineering. A grown human body is a sophisticated arrangement of some 30 trillion cells of many varieties and functions. In the brain alone, there are more cells than stars in the sky. Each of the 100 billion of so is connected through neurons with a thousand others. In that amazingly intricate design exists the miracle of embodied awareness.

In a minute, your lungs might breath twenty times. Over your lifetime, they might take in 800 million breaths. In an hour, your vital heart muscle manages about 100,000 pulsations. By the time you are seventy-five, your heart will have sent blood coursing through your veins around 2.7 billion times.

Some 60,000 miles of blood vessels form an immense network, nurturing, healing, integrating, the body's trillions of cells. For so long as they live, these cells are in a constant state of interaction and flux.

Living cells also have the power of self-replication, governed by their specific DNA. The proper replication of cells is in itself a prodigious affair. Even the double helix of the DNA of the relatively simple chromosome of the *E. coli* bacterium is so tightly wound that it contains 300,000 twists in its 1,100 micron length. That filament is so fine that a piece connecting Earth with the Sun would weigh just half a gram.

Using this elaborate system, the cells of the mouth are renewed every few days, their more complex cousins in the brain once a year. When the time comes for propagation of life in the form of a newborn, a cloud of up to half a billion sperm emerge so one or two might coalesce with a single egg. The egg is the largest of cells in the human body, 85,000 times bigger than a single spermatozoa. At precisely the right moment, the sperm and egg cells have their chromosomes reduced to half their regular number so when united the normal number of chromosomes are restored.

The human body is a finely calibrated and highly efficient instrument. Its every detail has been purposefully attuned to its environs over many millennia. Every cell serves as an integral part of the whole. Each has its commanding purpose. Practically nothing goes to waste. If there is general disagreement as to just exactly what the overall purpose might be, it should not take away from our appreciation of the intrinsic beauty of the body's many realms and the sheer wonder of how they manage to function so well together.

The prolific and magical nature governing this universe can also be unforgiving. Those who fail to respect her laws can be mercilessly expunged from the living web of creation, with no chance of appeal. It is sobering to think that of the estimated 500 million species to have co-inhabited this blue-green planet, 99% have faltered and failed, leaving only a fossilized record of their visit on Earth. For all the well-known and sometimes risky foibles of human behavior, the body we have come to know and love survives as living testament to a job well done.

⁹ *rishi* knot: a knot of hair tied on top of the head, as commonly worn by Indian sages known as "rishis."

The Body of Realization

Guru Nanak was a master of spiritual anatomy. He revealed to his disciples secret gates and channels and vortexes of consciousness in the body. Knowledge of these elements, how to use them, and how to maneuver from one to the next, gave the Master a special appreciation of the unique value of the human form. Understanding how to manage the combined energies of body and mind, the disciple could become free of them both, free of the bondage of desire and conceit, cause and effect, free of the force that impels countless returns to this world of suffering and delusion.

Unlike ascetics who despised and abused their bodies, Guru Nanak respected the body for its mysterious wisdom and awesome potentiality. According to the Master, the truly wise triumph over the limitations of the body not by neglecting or torturing it, but by studying its rhythms and capabilities, then learning to work in harmony with it.

Those who listen, gain knowledge of yoga and the secrets of the body.³⁰⁵

Moreover, Guru Nanak taught that it was only through lifetimes of good deeds and meditation that anyone ever obtained the good fortune of being born a human. Taken in this light, a life in the human body was not to be taken lightly. If an opportunity like this slipped by, another might not chance along for a very long time – a virtual eternity in human terms.

After wandering through all the forms of incarnation,
Now you have obtained this rare human birth.³⁰⁶

Even the angels adore this human form,
So apply this body to God's loving service.³⁰⁷

The Guru advised his disciples to exercise vigilance and dispassion, and offered them a simple lesson in the body's subtle geography. A wise disciple should consciously manage the life-force coursing through their seventy-two meridians, remain mindful of their nine orifices, or "gates,"³⁰⁸ and focus their energies higher up, at the "tenth gate," the crown chakra at the top of the head.

Those who guard their nine gates and restrain their rushing about
Find a true home at the tenth gate.³⁰⁹

There is one body sack.
Seventy-two are the channels that hold it together and it has but a single exit.
One who rests content in the body's nine regions is a real yogi.³¹⁰

The path to the highest centre, also called the "city of God,"³¹¹ winds its way through the undulating coils of three subtle channels. These three run up the spine in a pattern represented symbolically by the mythical caduceus, the healing rod identified with Mercury and with today's medical professions. The straight central course is called *sushmana*. On its either side are *ira* and *pingala*, the two channels identified with the left and right nostrils and the emotional qualities of the moon and sun. The lunar *ira* is considered cool and receptive, *pingala*, its solar counterpart, fiery and active.

While ordinarily, the breath alternates every few hours between the *ira* and *pingala*, the yogi attuned to these subtle currents will focus their energy in the neutral *sushmana*. This is the place of the intuitive mind, the zero mind. Neither active nor reactive, it exists in a perfect calm.

The right and left nostrils are the twin chambers of the body-instrument
Which resonate the wonderful Word.³¹²

True is the Word of the perfect Guru.
Holding one's awareness in the *sushmana*, the mind is easily attuned.³¹³

These three begin at the base of the spine, then intersect and join together six times in total during their ascent to the higher regions. These consecutive meeting places represent an inner spiritual hierarchy, a series of focal points of spiritual energy, each one more subtle than the last. They are known both as chakras, literally "wheels" or "cycles," and as lotuses.

At the base of the spine, the *muladhara* center represents the most primal earthly instincts: the urge for control and security. The second *svadhisthana* chakra embodies the faculty of self-expression and relationship. *Manipura*, the third, manifests the force of confidence and commitment. *Anahata*, at the heart, focuses the ability to be compassionate and caring. The throat chakra, or *vishuddha*, represents the power of effective verbal communication. The sixth, the *ajna* or “third eye” serves as the center of intuition and higher intelligence.

The highest place of convergence for the intertwining *ira*, *pingala* and *sushmana*, at the *ajna* chakra, is sometimes called the “confluence of the three holy rivers.” This is in reference to the traditional pilgrimage site in India where the Ganges, Jamuna and Saraswati rivers join. Turning within, the devotee is encouraged to “bathe in the sacred waters” at their brow point, where the three subtle channels converge.

Bathing at the sacred pilgrimage place where *ira*, *pingla* and *sushmana* converge,
The true disciple overcomes the tumult of nature’s three dispositions.³¹⁴

The rising kundalini force must penetrate three *granths*, or knots, on its way up the spine. Each represents a fundamental obstacle to the rising spirit of illumination. The first *granth* is at the *muladhara*. It objectifies the deep-rooted fear of forgiving and letting go of the past. The second *granth* at the navel point, *manipura*, represents the challenge of mastering the metabolism of one’s physical being. The third *granth* at the heart centre represents the human reluctance to love without reservation and without expecting anything in return, trusting the true Guru to take care of the details of one’s living.

Beyond the six chakras, at the tenth gate, is the seventh and most awe-inspiring lotus of them all. When the kundalini rises to this ultimate height, there is an experience of unspeakable bliss. The lotus of a thousand petals, or *sahasrara*, is the place of trust and surrender. It is from here that the nectar of divine consciousness flows through the awakened being.

The kundalini rises in the gathering of disciplined saints
And the face of the Guru radiates perfect bliss.³¹⁵
At the heaven of the tenth gate, there are countless melodies,
Constant bliss, and pervading truth.
Nanak declares, Meeting the true Guru,
The vagrant, restless mind comes home.³¹⁶

From this place of fearless calm, the disciple’s hectic, chaotic life reorders itself. The five senses are kept in check. The energies of the ten “novices” – the senses plus the five instruments of action: hands, feet, mouth, urinary organ and anus – are disciplined and applied to only wholesome occupations. Doubt and misgivings are gone. Ease and joy rule the day.

I have come to hear the way of yoga from the Guru.
The true Guru revealed it to me through the Word.

Pause and reflect.

Every moment, I honor the One who pervades the nine continents of the body.
I have made the Guru’s teachings my earrings. Now I hold the one formless Lord in my mind.
The five disciples are united and live under one command.
When the ten novices became obedient, I was rendered an immaculate yogi.³¹⁷

While some religious traditions condemn the body, seeing it as little more than a stinking tomb for the eternal soul, the disciple of Guru Nanak treats the body with reverence befitting a living temple of God. By taking good care of it, nourishing it with meditation, vital breath, water, a little food, and occasional rest, then applying it to good works, life may become fruitful, and the body retain its youthfulness even into old age.

Rage and obsession have left this body.
Hypocrisy and doubt have been done away.
Gone is the agony of self-conceit.
In their place is peace. Healthy has become my body.
By the Guru’s Grace, O Nanak, I have recognized God, the Ocean of virtues.³¹⁸

Life, after all, may be long or short, but the purpose turns out to be the same. The body is given so good deeds might be done on Earth, karma might be paid, and the soul return afterwards to its true home in purest grace.

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To a disciplined saint, the body is not a hindrance, but an instrument. Life is not a burden, but an opportunity. God is not a stranger, but an intimate companion, an abiding presence ensconced right inside the blessed body.

Ishnaan

Guru Nanak encouraged his followers to bathe their bodies after rising and before sitting for their morning meditation. The Guru himself had his deepest experience of God-realization during a long immersion in the River Bein when he was about thirty years old. The Guru disappeared for two days. His family and neighbors expected Nanak had drowned, when instead he emerged with a bright glow about his face, speechless, still in a state of utter *samadhi*¹.

This love of bathing eventually showed itself in the digging of numerous wells and pools for the use of the Guru's disciples. The first of these was a massive well constructed under the supervision of the third great teacher, Guru Amar Das. This was followed by the famous pool surrounding the Golden Temple in Amritsar and numerous others. Today, even at the Hemkunt Sahib temple high in the Himalayas where the adjoining waters are glacier-fed, taking a dip in the sacred pool is a customary part of Sikh pilgrimage.

In Guru Nanak's milieu, as now, bathing was an integral part of many religious practices. Brahmins took their ceremonial bath each morning before their daily worship. Hindus of all castes pilgrimaged to sixty-eight traditional holy sites. Some of these, like Benares and Allahabad and Rishikesh, were considered especially blessed by their proximity to the Ganges River. All of them had places for pilgrims to bathe as an act of ritual purification.

Muslims, though their customs are rooted in the arid sands of Arabia, also adhered to a strict regimen of cleansing their bodies before entering a place of prayer or touching their holy Quran. The faithful performed their ritual ablution five times daily, washing the body parts in a specific order, all the while reciting sacred verses. When no water for bathing could be found, a Muslim would make do by rubbing their body with earth, even a stone.

Theravada Buddhist monks washed in their monastery pool before meditation. Shinto devotees rinsed their hands and mouth before approaching a shrine. Among the Jews, women before marriage and after menstruation, and converts too, were required to bathe their entire bodies. Christians all had their watery rite of baptism, some going to far as to immerse their entire bodies in a river or pool. Before celebrating the Eucharist, priests regularly washed their hands.

While bathing, in one form or another, enriched the lives of peoples from the Lakotas of the American plains to the Bagandas of east Africa, and baths adorned ancient cultures from Mohenjodaro to Rome to Japan, there were also contrary currents alive and smelling bad back in Guru Nanak's day. Some contrarians took pride in remaining unwashed, believing that by not bathing they had freed themselves from the restraints of a glib society obsessed with mere appearances. Some of these social dropouts kept themselves nude, a distinct possibility in India's gentle climate. Others coated their bodies with a whitish layer of ash.

Christian Europe, too, had its day of ashes. On Ash Wednesday, at the start of the Lent season leading up to Easter, their priests marked the foreheads of the faithful with a cross of palm ashes. Novitiates and Christians guilty of particularly heinous sins, dressed themselves in coarse sackcloth, covered their heads with ashes, and remain unwashed for the duration of Lent. The unbecoming looks and smells, along with the embarrassment and sheer discomfort were meant to remind one and all of the repulsiveness of vice and sin.

Inside the convents and monasteries, life was governed by the rules of Saint Bernard (1090-1153). Since neglect of the body was considered a virtue, bathing was not a high priority among the religious. According to the rules, all monastics washed their hands and head each day before the mid-day meal. Some orders also required the residents bathe twice a year, within the confines of the abbey. Anyone leaving to luxuriate in a hot bath outside, however, was usually not allowed to reenter the monastery gates.

¹ *samadhi*: a state of profound oneness; the most advanced stage of realization.

Throughout Europe, washing hands before and after meals a part of regular social decorum. Baths, which for ordinary folk meant an outing to a bathhouse, were usually infrequent. There were exceptions however. Italy, with its tradition of Roman baths, maintained a culture of cleanliness we might readily appreciate. Turkey was famous for its baths. The bathing culture of Moorish Spain developed a high level of aesthetic and technical sophistication. Before its capture by the Christians in 1236, Cordoba alone had 300 bathhouses. In southern Germany and Switzerland, people through the centuries frequented natural hot springs for reasons of health and social interaction.

In France and England, however, notoriety surrounded the public bathhouses. They were known as places where people engaged in casual sexual encounters. For this reason, they were liable to be condemned from the pulpit. In the early 1500s, the establishments also came to be dreaded as places where people might contract infections and epidemics like the plague. This was the reason for laws passed by England's Henry VIII (1491-1547, king: 1509-47) and Francis I (1494-1547, king: 1515-47) of France, banning the bathhouses altogether.

During this period, public hygiene outside of the palaces and monasteries took a turn for the worse.³¹⁹ Typically, Spain's Queen Isabella (1451-1504, queen: 1474-1504) boasted that she had only bathed twice in her life: once when she was born and again before she married. Widespread was the belief that bathing disturbed the body's equilibrium, weakening it and making it vulnerable to sickness, even death.

As the common nakedness of the bathhouse came to an end, there began a new emphasis on artifice, on dressing and covering up. Those who could afford it, toned down the stench of their unwashed bodies with expensive perfumes. This was the era of linen undergarments. Aristocrats changed theirs daily, wealthy merchants every three to seven days. Greasy hair was treated by powdering it with bran, then leaving it overnight and combing it out in the morning. Lice were believed to issue from within the body. They were patiently removed by a close friend, a servant, a mother or a spouse.

With the public baths closed, real bathing enthusiasts were left to bathing in rivers and in natural mineral spas. Some, including French royalty, spurned the fashion of the time. French kings went with their entourages to swim in the Seine and the Marne. Doctors praised the invigorating and toning properties of cold water. By 1688, large numbers of Parisians were emulating their royal betters – bathing *au naturel* in the Seine.

Around 1750, as a part of the general movement away from artifice and toward things natural, water began to be cautiously reintroduced as an essential element of maintaining bodily hygiene. The Enlightenment philosophers – Rousseau, Voltaire and Locke – played central roles in this movement challenging the shibboleths of the old regime. Eventually, nature resumed her rightful place in the affairs of men. Gone were the constricting garments and skyscraper wigs. Gone were the arsenals of cosmetics. Returned was simple soap and water.

Around this time in Britain, John Wesley coined the phrase “Cleanliness is next to godliness.” Wesley was ministering to the working poor who, without fine perfumes and linen undergarments, endured miserable, unsanitary conditions. Wesley the Methodist – whose rigorous methods were to become lost on his followers – prescribed bathing not just as a course of hygiene, but as a natural tonic and aid to circulation. He prescribed cold baths as a remedy or course of prevention for more than fifty afflictions – everything from sprains and swellings to asthma and sciatica, even leprosy and cancer. Despite Wesley's ministering, it was another 100 years before most Europeans began to consider bathing beneficial to a person's health.

The cholera epidemic that swept through England in 1832, killing some 50,000 people, occasioned a new appreciation of the importance of good hygiene and sanitation. Advances in the understanding of microorganisms and their role in disease helped speed the transition. In a matter of a few years, overgrown metropolises like London and New York had replaced their stinking cesspools with intricate sewer systems and public bathing facilities.

Guru Nanak insisted a whole person should keep themselves clean both without and within. Neither a smelling, diseased body, nor a dirty, decrepit mind could be considered of much use.

As it turns out, showers and baths have more than a hygienic function. A morning shower wakens the mind and refreshes the body. While a warm or hot bath can soothe and relax hardened muscles, a brisk shower can be extraordinarily rejuvenating. A rain of icy water makes the skin tingle and flushes the outer layer with warmer blood from deep inside. This flushing action removes deposits from the circulatory system's tiny

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capillaries. It also stimulates and invigorates the internal organs, the heart, kidneys, lungs, liver, and affects the secretion of their associated glands, changing the vital blood chemistry.

After a couple of minutes – and this varies from place to place since a shower in Los Angeles bears only the faintest resemblance to a Montreal shower in February – the skin may glow and tingle from the change in circulation. Afterwards, the body should be vigorously rubbed down with a generous expanse of towel. Taken as an exercise or therapy, a cold shower or bath has a deeply relaxing and rejuvenating effect.

Over time, taking a purifying bath at the Golden Temple came to be an important part of Sikh culture. During the days of the mid-eighteenth century, when oppressive armies occupied Punjab's towns and combed the countryside, capturing and putting Sikhs to death, intrepid devotees would still brave the odds to take a quick sip and dip in the holy waters. To stop them, the temple was once destroyed and the sacred pool twice filled in, in 1746 and then in 1757, only to be dug out and restored each time.

Coexisting with the outer discipline is the practice of bathing the mind in the soothing stream of meditation. Sometimes Guru Nanak also referred to “bathing” in the dust of the feet of saints. This highlighted the purifying virtue of associating with and serving people of open hearts and loving minds. Then again, the Guru was not beyond poking fun at those who hoped to gain liberation merely by soaking their fetid bodies in sacred waters.

If a person could obtain salvation solely by bathing their body,
Then what about the frog who bathes every day?
Like the frog, so the beguiled mortal is reborn again and again.³²⁰

Disposing of It

For all the pleasures and opportunities afforded those living and conscious in a human form, once the vital signs of life are no more evident in that same body, the ages old question arises: What now? What is to be done with lifeless remains, be they of a stranger or a beloved?

When the soul leaves its physical abode, it leaves a corpse, vacant and unfeeling. Neither can the lifeless body continue for long as it is. In the absence of the unifying influence of the resident consciousness, it is only a matter of hours before the body's elements begin to decompose. The muscles stiffen and soon the body exudes the distinctive odour of death. Left to nature, all that remains after a few weeks or months of decay and disintegration is a mass of hair and bones.

Guru Nanak used the image of the pathetic, lifeless corpse as a symbol of a wasted life.

The body of an egocentric who does not care to associate
With a saint of holy discipline is a corpse already.
Circulating from womb to womb, their life is consumed by suffering.

Pause and reflect.

Though they might wear all kinds of becoming costumes,
Those souls serve as wretched scarecrows on the field of life.
All bodies may be used for some good purpose,
But fruitless is the body of a person who neglects to meditate on the Name.³²¹

In his extensive journeys abroad, Guru Nanak witnessed a variety of funeral customs. The Master himself did not embrace any of these defining practices, recognizing that distinctions between peoples sometimes served more harm than good. Moreover, in the Guru's cosmic understanding, once the spirit had left the body, what remained was but a lifeless shell. It has already served its purpose. It had been cast off and was of no more use to anyone. How people disposed of another's inert remains was a matter of no great significance.

One is consigned to the flames. One is interred in the earth. One is devoured by dogs.
One is thrown in the waters. Another is surrendered to the tower of silence.
O Nanak, who knows - how could anyone know, what becomes of them all?³²²

Guru Nanak once asked Mardana, his constant companion, who had gone with him on all his epic journeys, how he would like his remains interred. The Guru offered to have a tomb constructed for Mardana, who was born a Muslim, so his legacy might live on in the world.

Mardana replied, “When the Guru is freeing me from the burial place known as the body, why should he then entomb me in stone?”

Since the Master recognized that his disciple’s end was at hand, he instructed him to fix his mind on the Creator at his tenth gate. Mardana passed the night in meditation. Then, in the sublime hours before dawn, his luminous spirit slipped the knot of his mortal body.

Guru Nanak took the remains of his lifelong companion to the banks of the Ravi River and surrendered it to the water’s current. The Master then joined his disciples in the singing of hymns, followed by the sharing of the sweet sacrament of *prashaad*. Guru Nanak consoled the members of Mardana’s family, telling them they should not weep for their relative, who had been returned to his true home.

Majestic elephants are known to appear disturbed when they come across the remains of a member of their species. They take the trouble of covering an elephant carcass with dirt and dust as best they can with their pointed tusks. Others species grieve the death of mate. Mammal mothers especially mourn the passing of a child. While we humans are not alone in these respects, we have elaborated our parting rituals in unique and unusual ways.

Traces of bodies tens of thousands of years old have been discovered in long lost graves and burial mounds. Sometimes they are adorned by the tokens of their dear ones. In a cave at Shanidar in northern Iraq, archeologists found the remains of what must have been a well-loved Neanderthal reposing in the pollen of eight different flowers. Ancient remains are often accompanied by what once were their personal effects. Jewelry, tools, food and drink, weapons, and toys for youngsters are thoughtfully provided for what is imagined to be a long journey from this world.

It appears from funerary evidence, which is often the only indication of vanished cultures we have, that burial in the earth or a cave was the original, and for a long time the only custom, we humans took up for disposing of our dead. Sometimes, we decorated the bodies of our loved ones with a layer of reddish clay, recognizable from telling ochre-stained bones many years later. Sometimes, we fastened their bodies into a fetal pose. Sometimes, in North America, we interred their bodies with their heads to the east, to avail them of the rays of the next morning’s sun.

Among the tribes of North America who persisted with the custom of earth burial, as with Jews and Muslims of today, the remains were usually interred without unreasonable delay, in a day or two. The early Jews used caves for this purpose, and left their sepulchres unsealed for three days, just in case the assumption of death had been prematurely made. Greeks had a similar custom of waiting three days.

The bodies of Jews and Muslims, rich and poor, are treated similarly. It is customary for the corpse to be washed by people of the same gender as the deceased, then wrapped in simple shrouds. Jews have special prayers they recite at the beginning and end of the cleansing. Until burial, someone always accompanies the body.

Muslim prayers are conducted in a mosque, with or without the presence of the body. It is then taken to be buried to the accompaniment of an appropriate litany, preferably by sundown on the day of death. Like traditional Christians and Jews, Muslims believe their remains will rise again at the end of the world. Until then, the body of a Muslim is laid to rest on its right side with the face toward the holy city of Mecca.

From the beginning, Christians built their communities around reminders of their mortality. In Rome, first century Christians, like the Jews before them, dug out catacombs beneath the imperial city to entomb their dead. The much-persecuted early Christians also met secretly in the underground caverns and worshipped there with the physical remains of the departed.

This led to a long-standing Christian tradition of interring their deceased around, under and inside their places of worship. It also led to a curious style of posthumous prider. In England, it was long the custom that sinners, stillborns and suicides be interred to the north of the church.³²³ The part of the churchyard with the sunny southern exposure was reserved for the rich, the west for the poor, and the east for the clergy. Lay members were customarily buried with their heads to the west. The heads of the priests lay opposite them,

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toward the east, so that on resurrection day they might rise up and look over their flock. England's most celebrated subjects, on the other hand, had their remains carted to Westminster Abbey, there to be interred indoors with much pomp and circumstance among the tombs of kings.

Americans, their hopeful society enriched by its diversity, but only slightly less status conscious than the English, for long kept separate burial places for Caucasians, Blacks, and Indians. It was not until 1958 that California's most prestigious final resting place stopped being an exclusively Caucasian preserve.³²⁴ Jews, there as elsewhere, retained their custom of interring their dead in distinctive cemeteries with headstones marked the Hebrew year, now 5,000 and something.

One outcome of the early Christian proximity between death and worship, has been the proliferation of religious relics. Most of these are skeletal remains of saints. Inanimate objects like the manger of Jesus or a thorn from his crown were also much sought after. Many were, and continue to be reputed to have healing properties, thereby enhancing their attraction to the faithful.

The belief in the holy power of relics goes back near the beginnings of the Church. The first saint whose remains became an object of worship was Polycarp (65-151), an influential church leader who was burned at the stake for refusing to give up his faith. When church fathers met at Gangra in 340, they took the cult of relics seriously enough to threaten with excommunication any Christian who demurred. The weight of their decree was added to by subsequent proclamations at the council of Nicea (787) and Constantinople (1084). By the fourteenth century, sacred relics of all kinds could be found respectfully installed on or just behind the altars of churches across Europe.

According to the Bible, the physical body of Jesus Christ himself, potentially the greatest relic of all, escaped the predations of relic-hunters when, the Master "rose to heaven" in front of a number of followers.³²⁵ Another tradition, an oriental one, says Christ's body is securely interred in a well-known tomb, the Rozabal in the Khanyar district of Srinagar, capital of Kashmir.³²⁶ As for Mother Mary, in keeping with the doctrine of Christ's ascension and the significant cult that had grown around her over the centuries, Pope Pius XII declared in 1950 that Christ's mother was also received "body and soul" into heaven at the end of her days.

Christians were not the first to be fascinated with saintly relics. Buddhists, more than five centuries before, methodically distributed whatever bones, teeth, nails and hair survived the cremation of their great Teacher, Gautama Buddha. These relics were installed in distinctive stupas for the veneration of devotees in the neighboring kingdoms of northeastern India. Some relics eventually found their way to Buddhist temples in Sri Lanka, Burma, and as far away as China and Japan.

In Europe, excesses in the cult of relic worship became one of Martin Luther's main complaints against the Catholic Church. It was not by accident that, in the defining event of the Protestant reformation in 1517, Martin Luther nailed his "Ninety-five Theses" to the doors of a church filled with some 17,000 relics, a collection that amassed a considerable income for the local prince. Luther frequently railed against the proliferation of relics of questionable authenticity.

Certain men have impudently boasted that they possess a feather from the holy angel Saint Michael. The bishop of Mainz claims to have a flame from the bush of Moses. So in Compostella the banner is exhibited that Christ had in hell, and likewise the crown of thorns, the nails, et cetera, and also some of Mary's milk.³²⁷

Despite the rebukes of Luther and Calvin, Catholic and Orthodox Christians continue to keep and venerate and produce new relics. Even so, while traditionalists agree that relics are objects worthy of worship, they might differ on significant details. Catholics have for long believed that one test of a person's sanctity is how well their body holds up over time, whether it is "incorruptible." The Eastern Orthodox, however, take the opposite view. If a monk's flesh has not been absorbed by the elements within a few years, leaving their bare bones fit for the charnel house, fellow monks begin special prayers for their soul, since to their understanding it means they did not die free of sin.³²⁸

We have long been fascinated with the preservation of a robust, healthy appearance, not only in our middle and older years, but even in death. There must be in us some natural confusion between the incorruptibility of the soul and the inevitable demise of the flesh. Capitalizing on the sentimental attachment to the body, the morticians' science is a very ancient one.

The oldest mummies date back to the Chinchorros culture of Chile's Atacama Desert, about 5050 BCE. Long associated with Egypt, mummification was also practiced by the Incas and the native peoples of northern Arizona, the Aleutian Islands, Siberia (among the Scythians), China's Hunan Province, Scotland, the Canary Islands, New Guinea and Australia. Isolated mummified remains have been found in Texas, Tennessee and Kentucky. One sect of Buddhist monks in Japan went on having their bodies preserved up until about 1900.

The process of mummification usually involved removing the vital organs and brain from the body. What remained was washed and dried out, then stuffed, wrapped and stored in a variety of ways. As in many burial traditions, it was common for the kin to then thoughtfully leave the preserved remains of their loved ones with a store of food and personal adornments.

The last century witnessed the very public preservation of the bodies of some of the world's most powerful and charismatic political leaders. In Moscow, Hanoi and Beijing the attentions of the communist faithful, the patriotic, and the curious are every day drawn to the mausoleums of Lenin (1870-1924), Ho Chi Minh (1890-1969) and Mao Tse-tung (1893-1976). Ironically, the virtually religious veneration of their remains takes place in countries where atheism is, or until recently has been, the official state philosophy.

The widespread desire to have a beloved's remains returned home has been an incentive to the modern embalming industry. Even 2,000 years ago, the bodies of Jews were sometimes shipped over considerable distances back to the Promised Land, there to be interred in special cities of the dead burrowed into the mountains near Haifa. The bodies of kings of medieval Europe, expired far from home, were sometimes pickled the better to weather the journey to their home country. Otherwise, their flesh might be buried locally and their bones sent for interment in their native cathedral. In the same spirit, the bodies of Spanish conquistadors were commonly returned from the New World to the Old at the end of life.

The explosive demand occasioned by hundreds of thousands of deaths in the US Civil War led to the use of formaldehyde as a preservative and the beginning of open coffin funerals with life-like displays of the newly-departed. When religious authorities – Catholic, Jewish and Protestant – opposed the morticians' practices, death's technicians simply added chapels to their funeral parlors and started their own secular cemeteries, creating a lucrative, integrated business concern. The American funeral business, with its quasi-religious, ostentatious and value-added sensibilities, eventually set up operations in dozens of countries around the world.

In her classic study, *The American Way of Death*, Jessica Mitford has speculated that for a society increasingly made up of an urbanized and dislocated populace, where work and community offer diminishing returns of meaning and continuity, heaven – the great beyond – really is home and the funeral home and cemetery its earthly extension. For long, it has been common knowledge that many Americans only ride in a Cadillac once in their lives – in a hearse. A costly casket, a place in the cemetery with a nice exposure, fountains and statues and a large mausoleum or an impressive tombstone complete the desired impression of worldly accomplishment and ultimate peace.

One of the most sumptuous final resting places is California's Forest Lawn Memorial Park. It offers "long-term residents" the comforts of air conditioning and music, as well as the security of vaults said to be capable of withstanding the shock of earthquakes and the upheaval of an occasional bomb. Across the Pacific, Manila's Chinese cemetery contains 5,000 exclusive mausoleums. The most costly units have ornate furnishings, marble walls and floors, paintings, stained glass windows, bathrooms, kitchens, staircases and other embellishments. At least one boasts a stocked bar for visiting relatives.³²⁹

Not all cultures and peoples eagerly embrace the corporate model of a death of luxury. Taoist funerary tradition proceeds in two stages. First, the body is interred in a coffin for a period of ten years. At the appropriate time, the bones are dug up and cleaned, placed in a pot and sealed. Using the art of feng-shui, a Taoist priest will locate a final resting place where the bones will then be reburied and the spirit can rest happy.

Among Zoroastrians, there is a custom not to defile the basic elements - earth, water, fire and air - with a decomposing corpse. To this end, they construct special "towers of silence" some 25 feet (8 meters) high. When a member of their community dies, they place the corpse on gratings at the top of one of these towers. Vultures eagerly descend from the sky and feast on the remains. The bony leftovers fall then through the gratings for disposal at some later time.

While Buddhists generally cremate their dead or bury them with their heads to the north, in Tibet there is a shortage of kindling and not a great deal of soil. Tibetans are forced to be resourceful. While the bodies of religious

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dignitaries are kept in tombs, ordinary people's remains are fed to the vultures or surrendered to a stream, either whole or already disassembled, to assimilate with nature.

Burning is a dramatic and final end for a body. Historically, Greeks and Romans had recourse to burial or cremation. The Aryans who arrived in India some 3,500 years ago replaced the burial customs of the original people with the rite of the funeral pyre. In Babylon, the kingdom of the Hittites, Iron Age Palestine and ancient Australia, cremation was the common custom. The Saxons cremated their dead and buried the ashes in urns with tiny combs, sheers, tweezers and miniature knives. Vikings sent their heroes' remains out to sea in burning funeral boats. The people of the Baltic practiced cremation right into the fifteenth century, despite Christian laws against it.

The practice of cremation was revived in the industrialized world in the 1870s. The movement took hold after a resolution was passed at the 1869 International Conference of Medicine in Florence, Italy calling on all present to promote cremation "as an aid to public health and to save land for the living." Dr. Bruno Brunetti exhibited a prototype modern crematory at the Vienna Exposition of 1873. The Cremation Society of England, where the practice had been advocated 200 years earlier by Sir Thomas Browne, was founded in 1874. By 1876, Dr. Julius Le Moyné had established the West's first crematory in Washington, Pennsylvania. Similar ventures followed soon after in England and Germany.

Early cremation advocates faced a good deal of ingrained prejudice. Burning had for long been the exclusive fate of pagans, witches and heretics. God-fearing Christians were buried, not burned. Jews and Muslims and Christians all depended on their bodies, or least their bones, to survive until the day of resurrection. Anyone who proposed setting alight the physical remains of the faithful was taken to be downright sacrilegious.

In the Far East, too, there were objections to the idea of cremation. China's ancient culture emphasized the importance of keeping the body intact. Confucian thinking stressed the need to keep the body whole out of respect for one's parents and forebears, from whom it originated. When Buddhists introduced the Indian practice of cremating a person's final remains, Confucian and Shinto priests in Japan opposed it as "the most unfilial of acts."³³⁰

Nonetheless, in the twentieth century, a cremation industry spread through Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the US and China. After World War II, the Catholic Church relented and began to condone the practice. Even in Japan, centuries of prejudice reversed itself, giving cause to a common expression that Japanese are "born Shinto and die Buddhist."³³¹

Cannibalism is the one method of dispensing with unwanted bodies we have not yet probed. Aside from desperate people stranded on desert islands or cast adrift without food, the practice seems to have been ingrained in cultures from the Maoris of New Zealand to the Picts of prehistoric Britain and a good many cultures in between. The menu has included both intimate relations and once-feared enemies, pickled, raw and well done over a grilling spit. Though practiced in living memory among a certain tribe in Borneo, it has largely fallen out of fashion.

If there seem to be a bewildering variety of ways of treating the corpses of the lifeless in the cultures of the world, this was no less true among the tribal peoples of North America 150 years ago. Practices varied widely from tribe to tribe and place to place. Cremation was also practiced. Another custom was to allow the body to decompose on a rack for several weeks in the midst of the mourning tribe, then take the remains and bury them in urns. In some tribes, the tradition was to place a body in a canoe, then send it adrift on a lake or river. Another custom was to create an aerial sepulcher on four high poles, and to leave the body snugly wrapped on the bed created between the poles. Some BC tribes liked to offer the bodies of their newly deceased to the birds. For this purpose, they installed the corpses in the trees of a special part of the forest.

Technology offers up ever new and original possibilities. In 1997, an unmanned spacecraft launched twenty-four lipstick-sized canisters of cremated remains into space from the Canary Islands. Some of the ashes of more than 100 dearly departed have since taken the trip into what we once called "heaven." For a time, the craft glistens memorably in the night sky among the immortal constellations, till gravity draws it down to a fiery end in the Earth's consuming atmosphere.³³²

In recent decades, the science or pseudo-science of "cryogenics" has evolved as a prospect for those who would continue their life on Earth some time in the indefinite future. First put into practice in 1967, cryogenics requires a participant's body be deep-frozen soon after the stilling of their vital signs. The fanciful aim of human

cryogenic suspension is to prevent the natural process of decomposition so the body might be revived in the future, when presumably old age and disease will have become a thing of the past. For a lump sum, the handful of companies offering this service promise to maintain the client's body temperature at the extreme temperature of -321 degrees Fahrenheit (-196 Celsius). For less than half the cost, adherents of the new technology can have just their heads preserved, trusting that future scientists will have the know-how and inclination to create new bodies for them.

Skeptics argue that while the flesh might be preserved, questions remain about the feasibility of actually suspending cellular life processes by cryogenic freezing.³³³ There is also the larger question of how under any future circumstances the owner's disembodied consciousness might be induced to revisit its mortal shell, having once relinquished it. Of course, that is not a problem to concern shrewd businessmen who own and operate the cryogenic freezing facilities. By the time it really matters, they will be long gone from this Earth.

Guru Nanak himself had no desire to linger on at the end of his extraordinary life. He trusted that his spirit was immortal and his body mortal. The Master had used his time on Earth well, sharing the love and wisdom of his Creator. Having fulfilled his destiny, he felt no reluctance in surrendering his physical shell to the elements.

Guru Nanak also had no hankering to be remembered after his passing. He knew he would be remembered for his work or not at all. The great guru had spent his life telling people not to forget the important things of life – to be thankful, courageous and kind. Never had he insisted anyone should remember him. His life was not about him.

In his tenth form, as Guru Gobind Singh, the Master went so far as threaten that anyone who idolized him would be consigned to hell. He had created the Khalsa to love and serve humanity. The Master proclaimed that he actually lived in the Khalsa. There was nothing he wanted less than for his precious Khalsa to become lost in futile hero-worship or idolatry.

The tenth Master also advised his followers that anyone who constructed any building or monument in his memory would do so at the cost of having their own family line come to an end. It happened that Maharaja Ranjeet Singh heard of Guru Gobind Singh's proclamation. In the 1830s, he sent men, money and materials to the town of Nander on the shores of the Godavari River in the present-day Indian state of Maharashtra where the Master spent his last days. When someone questioned whether he knew of the caution against building a memorial, the great king replied that he certainly did and that if he could perpetuate the memory of Guru Gobind Singh at the cost of his lineage, it seemed like a very good bargain to him. But that was the inimitable Maharaja Ranjeet Singh.³³⁴

When Guru Nanak knew his end was at hand, he humbly surrendered his responsibilities to his most worthy disciple. People came to see him one last time. When the question of whether his body should afterwards be buried according to Muslim tradition or cremated in the Hindu custom was raised, the Master lovingly told his disciples, "Let the Hindus place flowers on my right and the Muslims on my left. Whoever's flowers are found fresh in the morning, may have the disposal of my body." He then had his followers sing the evening hymn he had once composed. It concludes:

The day of wedding is written.
Let us join in blessing. Give me your blessings, dear friends,
That I may join with my Master.
The call goes out to each home every day.
Remember the One who calls. That day is drawing near.³³⁵

After that, they sang the last verse of the Master's vast appreciation of the universe, the "Japji:"

Air is the guru, water is the father, great Earth the mother.
Day and night are the two nurses. All the world is at play.
Good deeds and bad resound in the court of the presiding judge.
One's own actions draw one near or far.
One who meditates on the Name
And departs after applying themselves to that difficult effort,
Nanak, their face shines and they liberate many others.³³⁶

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The Master then drew a sheet over himself, uttered “Waheguru,” and breathed his last. Early the next morning when the disciples arrived and the sheet was removed, they were astonished to find there was nothing underneath. The Muslims and Hindus then took their respective bundles of flowers to bury or cremate them. The Master clearly was ambivalent about their choice.

Later on, someone thought fit to build a shrine on the bank of the Ravi River to commemorate the Guru’s passing. That earthly marker was fittingly swept away a couple of hundred years later when the river unexpectedly changed its course.

Mutilation as Punishment

Through history, mutilating the body of one who breaks a law has often served the dual function of inflicting physical pain, while stigmatizing the offender. The prospect of combined shame and physical suffering has proven to be a powerful deterrent to participation in illicit or unsanctioned behaviors.

According to India’s ancient Laws of Manu, punishments meted out for serious offences included amputation of the offending limb or limbs. For example, anyone who grabbed and held someone of superior caste was liable to have their hands removed. Any limb was liable to be amputated, according to the nature of the offence. In Guru Nanak’s time, the removal of the nose of an adulterer was considered a particularly loathsome punishment, because of its horribly disfiguring effect and social consequences.³³⁷

Branding of offenders was also practiced. A disciple who had intercourse with his spiritual teacher’s wife, was to have the mark of a vulva branded on his forehead with a hot iron. A drunk was to be marked by the sign of a tavern. A thief was to be branded with the image of a dog’s foot, the murderer of a brahmin with a headless corpse. Brahmins were generally exempt from physical punishment, except in the case of the murder of a fellow brahmin, in which case it would suffice for them to shave their hair and live in isolation.³³⁸

In many cultures, under many circumstances, forcible shaving was a customary way of violating a targeted person’s bodily integrity, effecting a kind of social death. In sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe, inquisitors routinely shaved the heads of suspected witches before committing them to the tortures of the Inquisition, and burning at the stake. Since the power of witches was believed to reside in their hair, at least one gruesome French inquisitor was known to shave the whole bodies of his accused. In effect, since hardly anyone survived the rigorous ordeals of the Inquisition, the removal of the hair was as much a part of the execution, as it was a part of the trial.³³⁹

Slaves were made distinguished on every continent by their shaven heads. Throughout Africa, in tribes as varied as the Ila at the center and the Somali at the Horn, this was the case. In China, highland Burma, and among several South American and Caribbean tribes, slaves’ heads were shorn. In the ancient Middle East, among the early Germanic peoples, and in Russia up to the nineteenth century, this was the practice.³⁴⁰

Only in India and the Egypt of the pharaohs, did slaves retain a pigtail hanging from their crown. In old Rome, if a slave did some act of great social benefit or heroism, or if a benefactor purchased his freedom, the slave would be given a distinctive red liberty cap to wear until such time as his hair had grown in.

The Chinese Qin Dynasty (221-206 BCE) penal code exercised the deterrent value of shaming the body. Slaves and convicts might have their heads and beards shaved, as well as being tattooed and physically mutilated. Later, in the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) to the shaven head was added the additional hardship of wearing an iron collar.

In feudal Japan, a convict would be tattooed with a humiliating black ring around an arm for their every offence. About the same time, lower level members of the *yakuza*, Japan’s distinctive criminal organizations, began the custom of offering the top joint of their little finger to their superior as a token of contrition, a practice which continues today.

When amputated in apology, the severed tip of the finger is wrapped in fine cloth and ceremonially given to the crime boss. Subsequent offences require the sacrifice of the next joint or the top of another finger. To demonstrate that infractions of discipline are not to be taken lightly, many gangs keep collections of hundreds of jars of severed fingers preserved in spirits at their crime headquarters.

Islamic law, or *shariat*, serves as the penal code in Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Sudan, and is the main source of jurisprudence in Muslim majority countries. It permits the removal of hands and feet of confirmed thieves if they show no remorse for their crimes. The *shariat* however also lists a number of items for which a robber should not be made to suffer this bodily penalty. They included essentials such as dry firewood and poultry, and spiritual items: a Quran or a musical instrument. The law specifies that the value of the stolen item cannot be trifling.

In England, eleventh and twelfth century law sanctioned branding and amputations for a number of crimes. Thieves were liable to lose their covetous eyes or their grasping hands. Poachers might lose their legs. By the thirteenth century, amputation was becoming less common, although branding remained widely in use. In sixteenth century London, vagrants were especially targeted for this searing punishment. For a first offence, a vagrant might have a hot iron burned into the cartilage of their right ear. A second offence would target the remaining ear. For a third offence, the vagrant could be hung.³⁴¹

Branding remained a common legal punishment in Europe and its colonies right into the eighteenth century. Petty thieves had the letter “T” scorched into the flesh on their face as a warning to others. Galley slaves in France had the letters “GAL” branded on their shoulders. In England, “D” stood for deserter, “BC” for bad character.³⁴² In colonies in the Americas, West Indies and south Asia, slaves were routinely branded for insubordination.

The practice in the Thirteen Colonies was no less rigorous. From 1656 to 1660, scores of Quakers in New England were stripped naked, whipped, pilloried, imprisoned, branded and maimed. Four were hanged in Boston for committing the offence of worshipping in a style not approved by the Puritan majority. Once a Quaker had been run out of a Puritan town, they were forbidden from returning. The Massachusetts Colonial Records of 1657 listed the following penalties for any Quaker so bold as to revisit.

A Quaker if male for the first offence shall have one of his eares cutt off; for the second offence shall have his other eare cutt off; a woman shall be severely whipt; for the third offence they, he or she, shall have their tongues bored through with a hot iron.³⁴³

In Virginia, having the tongue bored through was a common punishment for blasphemy or libel. In Maryland, branding was favoured. Anyone convicted of blasphemy a second time in Virginia was liable to have their forehead branded with a “B.” A second-time hog thief was stigmatized with an “H” on their brow. “SL” stood for seditious libel and “M” for manslaughter. A “T” was branded on the left hand of a thief. An “R” on the shoulder was punishment for a rogue. A second-time coin forger was branded with an “F” on the cheek for forgery. Those who sold arms and powder and shot to the Indians in Connecticut had their forehead seared with a stigmatizing “I.”

Throughout the Americas, slaves were routinely branded as a form of identification up until the second half of the eighteenth century. Thereafter, it was mainly used as a punishment on runaway and insubordinate slaves. In Brazil, however, there were sizable communities of escaped slaves and the branded F on their shoulders became a badge of honor, rather than of infamy. When slave owners came to realize this, they replaced branding with a more gruesome mutilation. The masters instead severed the Achilles tendon on one foot of a recaptured slave.

The art of tattooing, rediscovered in Europe in the eighteenth century, was widely used as a means of identifying criminals and social deviants. Beginning in 1797, life convicts, perjurers and forgers in Bengal had their name, crime, date of sentence and the court by which they were convicted tattooed on their foreheads in Bengali script. This practice was later extended to lesser criminals and to other regions of British jurisdiction. By 1849, however, growing opposition to branding and tattooing from liberal elements in the government led to the abolition of the “barbarous practice” in Bengal and Madras and in all regions controlled by the British East India Company. As late as the nineteenth century, tattoos were still used to identify British army deserters.

In Russia until the reign of Catherine the Great (1729-96, Empress of Russia: 1762-96), subjects of every social class and both genders, including the elderly, were liable to suffer various forms of corporal punishment. These included whipping, branding and the rending of nostrils. A new penal code banned some of these forms of mutilation and restricted the use of others, but branding and, later on, tattooing of convicts remained a part of the Russian and Soviet prison culture into modern times.

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In Nazi Germany, where the state philosophy invested heavily in social distinctions, citizens were required to wear labels indicating which subculture they belonged to. Red triangles were for political offenders. Pink ones designated homosexuals. Gypsies wore brown triangles. A Star of David indicated a Jew. This process of stigmatization carried over into the concentration camps where inmates were routinely shaven and tattooed with an identifying number on their left forearm.

Forcible shaving came into vogue later on, in France, when the occupying German army was in retreat. Women accused of providing comfort to the enemy were summarily seized by neighbors, their heads shaven bare, and paraded through the streets to face the derision of mocking crowds.

More recently, in the late 1960's and early 70's, when long hair was considered a serious affront to established authority, longhairs jailed in America for minor offences were routinely subjected to a humiliating haircut. In the authoritarian hotspots of that era - Argentina, Singapore and South Vietnam - also in isolated incidents in Mexico and Brazil, police summarily arrested thousands of young people and cut their hair short.

Eunuchs and Eugenics

The cutting and altering of the natural function and appearance of another human's genitalia stands out as an especially peculiar case of mutilation. It is particularly noteworthy because of the primal significance of these organs in life and society. It also cries out for attention because of the sheer sensitivity of the genitalia.

Lastly, the mutilation of the reproductive organs is remarkable because of the many and varied grounds cited as justification for it. This very personal disfiguration has been decreed on a military basis. It has been imposed on a judicial basis. It has been performed to ensure the inviolability of the royal harem. It has been done on ostensibly religious grounds and to ensure cultural continuity. It has been performed out of supposed hygienic and medical considerations. It has been done for money, for art, and to serve the needs of the Church, even when the Church stood officially opposed to the practice.

In the ancient world, soldiers routinely cut off the penises of captured enemy fighters as a way of humiliating and subduing their opponents. The penises of their adversaries were often collected and displayed as trophies of war. Castrated young men provided a ready supply of eunuchs for royal palaces. The wives and daughters of these unfortunate men were often taken and forcibly married or sold off by their conquerors. Chinese and Egyptians, Assyrians and Persians, Ethiopians, Medeans, Hebrews, Romans and some tribes of American Indians all are believed to have emasculated their vanquished foes.

In times of peace, a man's sexual organs might be amputated if he were found guilty of adultery. This was the custom in the ancient cultures of Egypt, China, Babylon and among various tribal peoples. The Greeks and Romans spared adulterers, but employed castration as a penalty for rapists. Civil authorities in Rome preferred to crush a rapist's gonads between two stones, while the Greek custom was to remove the offender's testes by cutting a hole in his scrotum and painfully pulling them out.

Castration continued to be exacted for sexual offences in medieval Europe. France's most famous instance of castration involved the star-crossed lovers Abélard (1079-1142) and Héloïse (1098-1164).³⁴⁴ To stem a growing incidence of Christian men entering into relations with Muslim women in the Levant during the course of the crusades, the Council of Nablus (1120) decreed that any offender was to be castrated and the nose of his lover sheared off.³⁴⁵ Occasionally sheer vengeance, not forbidden sexuality, was the motive for this extreme measure. In England, Henry II notably ordered the priests who had sided with his counsel-turned-critic, Saint Thomas Becket (1118-1170) castrated and their testicles presented to him on a platter.

Castration remained in vogue as a punishment in cases of rape where the victim was unmarried until the late 1200s. In France, it was abolished by Napoleon, who substituted a system of fines for sexual offences.³⁴⁶ On the American frontier, the Kansas Territorial Legislature in 1855 passed a law enabling the castration of any black or mulatto man convicted of rape, attempted rape or kidnapping of a Caucasian woman. Punitive sterilization measures remained in the books in several US states well into the 1970s.³⁴⁷

Castration emerged as a treatment for sex offenders in Scandinavia during the twentieth century. In Denmark, 600 male offenders were castrated between 1929 and 1952 with the consent of the prisoner, his wife, and close relations.³⁴⁸ Chemical castration, the mandatory taking of drugs designed to suppress a man's libido,

came into law in California in 1996. Florida, Montana and Georgia followed. Texas law mandated either surgical or chemical castration for repeat sexual offenders.

Historically, there could also be honor among eunuchs. To be a eunuch in the Chinese royal household was considered a position of privilege and distinction. Even men with wives and children accepted castration to improve their social position.

Such a volunteer would appear before the palace gates, where he would meet the royal surgeon, himself a eunuch. The surgeon would bathe the penis and scrotum of the candidate in a hot liquid. He would then be asked if he would ever repent of his decision. If the candidate hesitated, he would be released. If not, his genitals were swiftly cut off with a stroke of a small, sickle-shaped knife and a pewter plug inserted into the urethra.

Once accepted into the royal household, eunuchs were forbidden to leave. Not a few achieved political prominence. The patron saint of all Chinese eunuchs was Kang Ping Tieh, who with genitals intact had been a general to Emperor Yung Lo, third to rule (1360-1424, emperor: 1403-1424) in the Ming dynasty. His tombstone figures prominently among the hundreds of markers for former guardians of the imperial harem.

(O)ne day the Emperor went hunting and left Kang to oversee Peking's Forbidden City, whose most forbidden inhabitants (to anyone but the Emperor) were the bevy of imperial concubines.

The honor was great, as was the temptation; previous generals had been executed for allegations of sexual dalliances in the Emperor's absence. Kang, certain that palace rivals who wanted him out of the way would level similar charges against him, despite his intended chastity, took into his own hand his genitalia and amputated them the night before the Emperor's departure. He secreted the severed organs deep in the Emperor's saddlebag, and, a little light-headed from loss of blood, assumed his duties as guardian of the Forbidden City.

No sooner had the Emperor returned than Kang was called to account for how he had spent his nights. To the charge that he had frolicked among the seventy-three royal ladies, Kang ordered, "Bring in the Emperor's saddle." He requested that the Emperor himself reach into a remote pocket of the bag.

The extracted organs, black, pungent, and shriveled, were nonetheless recognizable for what they once had been. The Emperor, overwhelmed by the selfless gesture, promoted the general to chief eunuch, lavished him with gifts, and proclaimed him holy.³⁴⁹

Eunuchs had been employed in the Chinese royal household since at least the sixth century BCE. The last official eunuch, aged and long retired, passed away in 1951.

The eunuchs of ancient Rome had a more colored history than their counterparts in the Far East. Often it was off-colored. During Rome's heyday, emasculated men were popular items at the orgies of dissipated Emperors. Gelded men were also in demand among the ladies, the simple reason being that a liaison with a man without testicles produced no unintended offspring.

From the seventh to ninth centuries, over 6,000 eunuchs were sold each year as slaves and lust objects in the markets of the Eastern Roman Empire.³⁵⁰ Even so, eunuchs were favored with responsible government positions in the capital of Constantinople for the same reason they were popular in Beijing. Having no family of their own, it was felt they were uniquely qualified to dedicate themselves exclusively to the advantage of the state.

The rise of Islam proved, at first, to run contrary to the interests of the emasculated and those who traded in them. When a follower asked Muhammad for permission to castrate himself so as to avoid the temptation to fornicate, the prophet was said to respond, "He who castrates himself or another does not belong to my followers, for castration in Islam may consist only of fasting."³⁵¹

While Muslims largely obeyed the letter of their prophet's edict, they did buy fully castrated slaves, who were considered ideal harem employees. By the fourteenth century, eunuch culture was flourishing in Mameluke Egypt and Ottoman Turkey. Emasculated men not only served in harems and high government positions. They also married. Rather than violate their religious prohibition on castration, Muslim slave traders sent their captives to be rendered sexless by Christian barbers, monks and physicians in Khartoum and at monasteries in Egypt that supported themselves by becoming virtual "eunuch factories."³⁵²

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Throughout history, whenever the terrible routine of castrating vanquished warriors provided trusted employees for service in the harems of the rich and governments of the powerful, it also abruptly stanching the genetic patrimony of the defeated. Then, even as the practice of making men into sexless servants passed out of style, a new ideology of human genetics led to the neutering of millions.

The term “eugenics,” meaning “well born,” was coined by Sir Francis Galton in 1883. The word came to describe a belief that the human race could be “improved” by encouraging the mating and marriage of the carriers of the “best genetic material” and the curbing of the fertility of the “unfit.” The movement was inherently racist. While habitual drunkards, criminals and the insane were considered to be genetically inferior, so were the brown and yellow-pigmented branches of the human family.

It was in the United States that human eugenics first made the transition from a philosophical movement to a respected science with government support and enabling legislation. In 1889, Dr. Isaac Newton Karlin, superintendent of the Pennsylvania Training School for Feeble-minded Children at Elwin asked and received from parents their consent to castrate inmates. Four years later, the physician in charge of the Kansas Asylum for Idiotic and Imbecilic Youth, on his own authority sterilized forty-three male and fourteen female inmates. The asylum’s supervisor was fired for his actions, but praised by *The Kansas Medical Journal* for his initiative.³⁵³

Dr. Harry C. Sharp, physician to the Indiana State Reformatory at Jefferson set a record of sorts after developing the much simplified and less physically disfiguring vasectomy operation. Between 1899 and 1907, Sharp sterilized 465 male inmates of the reformatory. Indiana’s lawmakers provided supportive legislation. In 1905, they passed a eugenic law prohibiting anyone with a mental deficiency, hereditary disease or habit of drunkenness from marrying. Two years later, the governor signed into law a measure calling for the compulsory sterilization of “confirmed idiots, imbeciles and rapists” in state institutions.³⁵⁴

In 1909, California and Washington passed sterilization laws of their own. Eventually, more than thirty states would follow. North of the Canadian border, Alberta passed similar legislation in 1928.³⁵⁵ By 1920, 3,233 insane and feeble-minded persons had been sterilized in the US, 2,558 in California alone. Twenty-four years later, California’s official total had risen to 17,012 of the 42,616 sterilizations reported nationally.

At its peak, eugenics was supported by such pillars of American society as the Rockefeller Foundation, inventor Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922), birth control advocate Margaret Sanger (1883-1966), plant-breeder Luther Burbank and a Who’s Who of US academia. A handful of dissenters, such as African American educator Booker T. Washington were left to face off against respected sources of moral suasion like the Galton Society, the American Eugenics Society, the Race Betterment Foundation, the Better Babies Movement, and the American Breeders Association.

The US Supreme Court ruled twice, in 1916 and again in 1927, in favor of compulsory sterilization. In the words of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes:

It is better for all the world if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind. The principle that sustained compulsory vaccination is broad enough to cover the cutting of Fallopian tubes.³⁵⁶

The 1930s saw sterilization laws passed in Canada, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Estonia. By far the most ominous was the passing of the “law for the prevention of hereditarily diseased offspring” passed in 1933 by Germany’s Nazi-dominated Reichstag. It ordered the compulsory sterilization of those suffering from “congenital mental deficiency, schizophrenia, manic-depressive insanity, hereditary epilepsy, Huntington’s disease, hereditary blindness, hereditary deafness, and any severe hereditary deformity.”

In the first year of the measure, some 60,000 “defectives” were sterilized. After that, annual figures were no longer published, although the goal was said to be the sterilization of 400,000 Germans.³⁵⁷ By 1940, the Nazi machine of “racial hygiene” was in full swing.

Aside from genetic criteria, citizens could be sterilized for the slightest offence. Affidavits tabled at the war crimes tribunal in Nuremberg included a case of a man who was sterilized for not knowing the birthdays of Hitler, Goebbels and Goering. A sixteen-year-old girl was taken to a clinic where she had her tubes tied for responding to the question “What comes after the Third Reich?” by saying “The fourth.” Another man had his semen ducts severed for observing out loud that Hitler and Goering themselves had not complied with the Nazi order for all Germans to procreate.

Because of Germany's severe labor shortage during the war, millions of able-bodied Jews, Gypsies and others needed to be kept alive so long as they could work, but did not reproduce. In all, an estimated 2 million were sterilized using various procedures.³⁵⁸ Some were subjected to new, experimental methods, including the use of x-rays and drugs. Many died from the experiments.³⁵⁹

From 1934 to 1945, Nazi culture had set unspeakably morbid milestones in the practice of population control. Even so, latter day eugenicists' push to reduce the birth rate in developing countries would soon exceed even the ambitious targets of the German eugenicists. After the Second World War, birth control pioneer Margaret Sanger founded the International Planned Parenthood Federation, right in the headquarters of the Eugenics Society in London. Under Sanger's determined leadership, the IPPF became the world's most powerful organization dedicated to fertility limitation.

As early as 1935, Sanger focussed on India as a test bed for her birth control theories. That year, she met Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. India's modern ascetic rebuffed Sanger's birth control theories. While the mahatma believed families should not exceed four children, he preferred self-control to the use of prophylactics or sterilization.

Within four years of M.K. Gandhi's death, Sanger had arranged a tremendous coup: a conference of her IPPF in the burgeoning heart of Mumbai. Shortly thereafter, India became the first developing country to adopt a national family planning program. Clinics were set up, mostly in the cities, all across India. State-sponsored sterilizations of women and men rose steadily from 7,153 in 1956 to 170,246 in 1963. A second, more intensive campaign of family planning saw the rate of tubal ligations and vasectomies shot to more than 3 million in 1972-3.³⁶⁰

All these efforts, however, paled in comparison with what transpired in the wake of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's suspension of civil liberties on June 26, 1975. Grants from the central government for badly needed infrastructure and services, such as roads and electricity, were made dependent on each state reaching its sterilization target, prescribed by New Delhi. Village leaders were required to serve as motivators and paid for every "acceptor" they delivered. Those accepting sterilization were also paid a small amount and given a blanket or shirt in exchange for their fertility. State governments refused loans, food rations, medical aid, and housing sites to families who balked at participation.

In Delhi, teachers were told their salaries would be linked to their ability to deliver five "acceptors" to the operating table. Teachers then coerced beggars and illiterates, saying they would be collected by police if they did not accept sterilization and name them as their motivator. The spiral of degradation increased as high achievers became eligible for prizes of televisions and refrigerators. In towns, the old and young, the newly married and the long widowed, fathers and those without issue, even those sterilized already, were picked up in prowling municipal garbage trucks and taken away for a quick operation. Children were even abducted off the streets and brought to police stations, with their parents' sterilization as the condition of release.

During the rough and ready sterilization campaign of Indira Gandhi's emergency rule, vasectomy camps employing doctors or paramedics were set up across India. Unhygienic conditions led to grizzly side effects. Thousands died from infection, toxemia, paralysis and hemorrhaging. For all the casualties, 1.4 million men and 1.3 million women were sterilized in 1975-76. In 1976-77, the total figure climbed to 8.3 million, 6.2 million of them men. No country, before or since, has achieved so many sterilizations in one year.³⁶¹

China's revolutionary government closely following India's example. In 1953, when the country's first census revealed the population stood at 582.6 million, Mao Tse-tung began to encourage sterilization. Three years later, he set up the Birth Control Office. The aim was to restrict the population to 600 million. Vasectomy was the preferred method of sterilization.

A second drive in 1962 advocated sterilization and later marriages, and tolerated abortion. An intense propaganda campaign was launched to extol the virtues of the two child family. The annual sterilization rate more than doubled from 2.9 million in 1971 to 5.9 million in 1975.

In 1979, with the continued growth of China's population, a one child per family policy was introduced. By 1980, articles began to appear in the Chinese press advocating the prohibition of marriage to people with genetic defects, including the relatively common one of color-blindness. With strong financial, schooling, employment and housing disincentives to larger families, the number of abortions rose dramatically. A majority

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of aborted fetuses were female, in keeping with China's longstanding preference for sons as heirs and providers for parents in their old age.³⁶²

Despite the emphasis on vasectomies as a method of sterilization in India and China, worldwide, more women than men have undergone operations to curb their fertility. According to 1990 estimates, the highest rates of sterilization of married women of reproductive age are in South Korea (47.6%), Puerto Rico (46.8%), Panama (37.7%), China (36.8%), the Dominican Republic (36.5%), El Salvador (36.1%), Sri Lanka (31.4%), India (31.3%), Brazil and Thailand (30.4%), and Singapore (22.8%).³⁶³ The rates are correspondingly low in the Middle East and Africa, where large families are traditionally valued. According to one estimate, in 2000 some 269 million people worldwide, 29% of all married couples, were expected to have been sterilized.³⁶⁴

In North America and Europe, other methods of birth control, especially the pill and condom, predominate. In institutions, abuses are unearthed from time to time. In some asylums where inmates are alleged to have given consent for the operation, it has been found that women who went for appendectomies later realized they had had their tubes tied. Sometimes, inmates have been released only on condition of being sterilized. Most of them regret the operation afterwards. Many feel violated.³⁶⁵

Prisoners, racial minorities, welfare mothers and the working poor, are also subject to disproportionate rates of hysterectomy and tubal ligation.³⁶⁶ Often, well-heeled doctors and social planners are prone to considering reproduction more of a privilege than a right. In their minds, that privilege corresponds to a person's wealth, class, achievement or genetic endowment.

Whether abroad, through the efforts of the International Planned Parenthood Federation and similar organizations, or at home through simple prejudice, the costs of violating people's bodies, often indiscriminately, are partly known and still as yet partly unknown. What is apparent is that the utopia of a society cured of social ills by systemic sterilization has not materialized. Indications are it never will.

Skoptsi and Castrati

The virtue of chastity is valued in practically every religious culture. Among the early Christians, chastity and asceticism were especially esteemed. Gnosticism, which presumed the body to be evil, was both a competing and commingling influence with the Church.

For some who took a dim view of sensual and sexual pleasures, castration was an appealing prospect. One Stoic teacher named Sextus went so far as to advise amputating the offending organ for those whose lust was otherwise incurable.³⁶⁷

The Roman Emperor Hadrian (76-138, emperor: 117-38) responded by making castration a capital crime both for the physician and anyone who acquiesced in their own mutilation, unless they sought and received official consent. It is to Hadrian that we owe Saint Justin Martyr's (~100/110-165/166) account of a young Christian in Alexandria who asked the governor to permit his physician to remove his testicles that he might be freed from the temptation to sin. In this case, the governor refused permission and the young man resigned himself to a celibate life with his body intact. Justin later cited the incident as an example of Christians' high standards of morality and self-denial.

Church authorities from Saint Paul to Tertullian (~150-220+) and Saint Jerome (347-420?) lent support to the view that women exerted a corrupting influence on Christian men. This kind of religious sanction led more than one earnest male to physically abrogate their masculinity.³⁶⁸ Though he lived to regret it, even the esteemed teacher and Church Father Origen (185?-254?) made himself a eunuch for his faith around the age of eighteen.³⁶⁹ A number of biblical passages lent themselves to such an understanding, the most prominent being Matthew 19:12.

For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can.³⁷⁰

As Christianity's sexual ethos evolved, castration was prohibited at the Council of Nicaea (325), to be replaced by other more subtle schemes for avoiding temptation. Saint John Cassian (circa 360-435) and others went so far as to develop a detailed regimen of foods, clothing, social contacts, sleeping habits, postures and

other aspects of daily life – all with a view to achieving that totally asexual routine monastic writers liked to call “the angelic way of life.”³⁷¹ Between 700 and 1000, the Church’s policy on sexuality was distilled into elaborate guidebooks known as “penitentials.” These prescribed the days and times and circumstances under which married Christians might in good conscience engage in intercourse.³⁷²

In eighteenth century Russia, there evolved a secret sect within Eastern Orthodoxy who revived the practice of self-castration. They were known as *Skoptsi*, or “eunuchs.” The first *Skoptsi* was André Ivanov Blochin, a sexually tormented runaway peasant. Unable to attain his ideal of sexual continence, he first cut off his testicles in 1757, then finally attained “perfection” by slicing off his penis with a red-hot knife. Blochin, who changed his name to Kondrati Selivanov, taught that Adam and Eve had developed testicles and breasts after their fall from paradise. Removing them, according to Selivanov, would restore a person to a state of sexless innocence.

The *Skoptsi* characteristically mutilated the genitalia of both male and female, young and old. *Skoptsi* boys and men might be missing their scrotum only, or both scrotum and penis. Those who were castrated before attaining maturity, were recognizable by their high voices and sparse body hair. *Skoptsi* women and girls commonly had their clitorises snipped off and their nipples excised or cauterized. Some had their entire breasts lopped off.

The *Skoptsi* spread through all social classes and may have numbered 100,000 during their “golden age” during the early to mid-1800s. Though they could no longer beget children, they were ardent proselytizers. Anyone who brought in twelve willing converts was given the rank of “disciple.”

The Tsarist government actively suppressed the *Skoptsi* and, until 1905, exiled many of them to Siberia. The Bolsheviks, for their part, tried to exploit the natural anti-establishment bent of the *Skoptsi* for their own purposes. After the 1917 revolution, however, the secular Bolsheviks proved unreliable partners for the members of the fervently God-fearing sect. Like other believers, the *Skoptsi* found themselves ridiculed in Soviet culture and media, and harassed and arrested by the police. Possibly the last three *Skoptsi* communities was rounded up, tried and sentenced for “inflicting physical injury” and “organizing counter-revolutionary activity” during garish show trials in 1929, 1930 and 1931.³⁷³

The practice of removing the gonads of Christian boys so they would retain their soprano singing voices is said to have originated in Constantinople around 1000. Saint Paul’s address to the Corinthians were cited as sanction for the practice.

As in all the churches of the saints, women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.³⁷⁴

The unearthly soprano range of the castrati made their services appealing to the Church, whose natural sopranos had been systemically muted since Saint Paul had consigned them to silence during worship. This policy was reemphasized and expanded in Europe by an edict of Pope Sixtus V in 1588 forbidding women from performing on stage.³⁷⁵

This was, however, no cultural anomaly. The prejudice against women performers was nearly universal at the time. All kinds of medieval theatre, from England to Italy, from India to Japan, used men to play the parts of women. In traditional Japanese No theatre, it is still the case.

The price of silencing women’s voices in the Church was the cutting away of thousands of boys’ genitalia. For hundreds of years, destitute families sold their castrated sons into the choirs of bishops and cardinals. Eventually, it was not only the Church that needed grown males with soprano singing abilities. On the stage, when opera began in the seventeenth century, a new demand arose for castrati with musical abilities.

Italy at that time was home to both Catholicism and the continent’s best opera. With the rise of operatic culture, parents began to seek out music teachers and schools, since it was known that a talented castrato could amass a considerable fortune touring the opera capitals of Europe. Castrating was punishable by death, except in the case of some disorder that supposedly required it and then only with the permission of the boy, but the law was never enforced. Anyone associated with the practice could be excommunicated, but the Church also turned a blind eye.³⁷⁶

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At the height of the craze, there were more castrati than the opera companies and choirs of Europe could make use of. Italy was inundated with hundreds of unfortunate men who, despite the high expectations of their parents, turned out to be only mediocre vocalists.

After more than a century of being feted in the opera houses of Europe, the castrati with their characteristically lavish soprano flourishes began to fall out of favor around 1780, as tenor and bass parts came into vogue. Eventually, women themselves began to perform female parts on the public stage. The final performance of a castrato in London took place in 1844.

Under orders of Pope Pius X (1835-1914, pope: 1903-14), castrati stopped being recruited to sing in the Vatican's Sistine Chapel at the turn of the twentieth century. One surviving male soprano just managed to use the new recording technology to make an eerie impression of his singing voice on a wax cylinder in 1903 before the cult of the male soprano disappeared altogether.

Male and Female Circumcision

Anthropologists tell us that the ritual cutting and alteration of the sexual organs is a custom with primeval social origins. It has been, and still is practiced in many cultures: tribal, traditional and modern. Altering the natural shape of a person's procreative organs has been known to serve powerful communal interests.

For members of many cultures, male and female genital mutilation has been, and remains, the essential ritual marking their passage from childhood to adulthood. In some cultures, on attaining physical maturity, a young man must shed his "female" prepuce, while a young woman must give up her "male" clitoris.³⁷⁷

Cutting away the most sensitive parts of a girl or boy's genitalia at puberty is sometimes done to discourage sexual promiscuity. Infibulation, the partial surgical closing of the vaginal opening, is still used in some Islamic countries as a way of ensuring a girl's virginity until she is married. In these cultures, there are weighty social consequences to conforming, or not conforming, to the circumcised "norm."

In the culture of Western medicine, removing an infant's foreskin has also been, and in some circles is still, considered a legitimate medical procedure to ensure the health of the baby boy and his future wife or sexual partners.

Each year, the private parts of an estimated 2 million young women and 13 million boys and men worldwide are cut.³⁷⁸ In secular and Jewish cultures, infant boys have their foreskins removed shortly after birth. In Islamic and tribal societies, the rite is performed in boyhood or adolescence. In South Korea, where circumcision was introduced by American doctors after 1945, and which today has the world's highest rate of male genital cutting, boys are usually subjected to the practice at about the age of twelve.³⁷⁹ In cultures which practice "female circumcision", the removal of all or part of the clitoris, most young women are subjected to the procedure at or before puberty, although girls five and younger have been known to be cut.³⁸⁰

Active resistance to these practices has only begun in recent times and has met with mixed results. The American public, arguably the most educated and media-saturated population on Earth, remained generally unaware of the practice of female genital mutilation until a celebrated case in 1994 captured widespread attention. In that year, a seventeen-year-old Muslim woman named Fauziya Kassindja arrived at a New York airport from the Republic of Togo, pleading for asylum. If she were sent back to her home in West Africa, she claimed, she would be forced to submit to ritual surgery on her genitals.

Kassindja languished for two years in the oppressive holding facilities of the American immigration system, while news of her ordeal spread across the country. Finally, after a second hearing, at which she was represented by an attorney experienced in issues of international human rights, Kassindja won her right to stay in the United States. In the process, female circumcision emerged from obscurity to become a matter of popular discussion. At that time, the furor surrounding the issue was so great that several American states passed laws forbidding the practice.

Elsewhere, momentum against the culturally sanctioned mutilation of young women and girls has been building slowly since the 1970s. Activists first addressed the subject as a pressing human rights concern at a 1979 international health conference in Khartoum. In Cairo in 1994, at the International Conference in Population and Development, the practice was denounced as a fundamental violation of women's rights. The chorus

of opposition grew louder still at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing the following year. With African delegates taking the lead, that global gathering's final document urged countries to pass and enforce strict laws "against the practices and acts of violence against women, such as female genital mutilation."³⁸¹

More than a dozen sub-Saharan African countries, including Senegal, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Djibouti, Ghana, Guinea, and Togo, have since passed legislation imposing penalties for the genital mutilation of girls. During 1999, in a signal case in France, an African woman was sentenced to eight years imprisonment for cutting the genitals of forty-eight girls, all less than ten years of age.

The response to the present outcry against female genital mutilation has not been uniformly conciliatory. In Italy, officials of its national health service decided to offer clitorectomies on request, reasoning that if they banned the practice, parents would have the procedure done at home with a greater risk to the health of young girls.³⁸² In Egypt, where the rate of female circumcision is about 80%, a controversy continues to brew between secular and traditionalist forces. While human rights advocates and women's groups successfully pressured the government to prohibit ritual surgery on women in licensed medical facilities in 1996, a wave of reaction from conservative religious leaders led to a judicial ruling against the ban the following year. In the heat of the emotionally charged battle, the head of one eminent Islamic institute went so far as to urge the government execute anyone opposed to female circumcision.

There are various degrees of female genital cutting, even as there are differing ideas about its value in Islamic culture. Simple "Sunna circumcision" consists of cutting off the clitoral prepuce and is analogous to male circumcision. A more radical form consists of cutting off the tip of the clitoris along with the prepuce. It may also include scraping away part or all of the labia minora. The most extreme version, infibulation or "pharaonic circumcision," entails removal of the clitoris, labia minora and majora, and the mons veneris. The vagina is then sewn shut except for a small opening to allow the exit of urine and menstrual blood.³⁸³

Whereas infibulation is designed to assure a woman's virginity until the time of marriage, the cutting away of the sensitive clitoral area is intended to curb her sexual desires. When freed from her own lust, it is thought that a wife is better able to please her husband. A woman whose genitals have been modified is thus known as *tabur*, an Arabic word simultaneously implying purity, cleanliness and circumcision. One who is not *tabur* is considered lustful, self-indulgent and peculiar. It is also commonly believed that an offensive odor emanates from the clitoris of a woman who has not been cut. In Arabic and most Islamic cultures, such a woman is considered unmarriageable.³⁸⁴

Dr. Hamid al-Ghawabi has offered another rationale for the practice. Since in Muslim culture a husband is frequently "ten, fifteen, twenty years or more" older than his wife, the doctor asks:

What happens when a husband is fifty or more and his energy flags and his vitality weakens while his wife is still under thirty and in her sexual prime? How could such a man preserve his health if he found before him a woman who still retained the full force of her youth and an undiminished sexual drive when his had lessened? Clearly in this case a man is forced to overextend himself or leave his wife unsatisfied, neither of which is advisable. But when the woman has had a partial circumcision, her sexual appetite is reasonable and the husband and wife are in a comparable state.³⁸⁵

Among the four traditional schools of Islamic law, there is a range of opinion about female circumcision. Most Shafi'i scholars, based in south-east Asia, north-east Africa and Yemen, consider it obligatory. A minority of the Shafi'i authorities, as well as members of the Hanbali school, based in Saudi Arabia, treat it as not obligatory, but virtuous. Hanafi and Malaki thinkers, who predominate in the rest of Asia and Africa, think of the removal of part of the clitoris as a mere courtesy done for the husband's sake. Some Islamic scholars note that this surgery is customary in hot climates.

Although male genital mutilation is far more prevalent than that of young women and girls, the movement to bring an end to the mutilation of boys has attracted far less public outcry. Opponents to these practices often break down on a gender basis. Nonetheless, male and female circumcision share a similar legacy of physical and emotional wounding. In both cases, the actual perpetrator of the violence is also usually an adult of the same sex as the victim.

Egyptian-born Dr. Nahid Toubia is a Sudanese physician active in struggles for both medical and human rights, and an outspoken opponent of female genital circumcision. When a radio interviewer implied that female

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and male mutilations were dissimilar, despite their shared usage of the term “circumcision,” Dr. Toubia challenged the commonly held prejudice of the interviewer:

Well, I disagree with you that it's not the case. I think there are similarities and then there are differences. I think the people who say that there are no similarities are people who don't want to address male circumcision.³⁸⁶

In the *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics*, she has written:

The unnecessary removal of a functioning body organ in the name of tradition, custom, or any other non-disease related cause should never be acceptable to the health profession. All childhood circumcisions are violations of human rights and a breach of the fundamental code of medical ethics... It is the moral duty of educated professionals to protect the health and rights of those with little or no social power to protect themselves.³⁸⁷

One difference between the genital cutting of males and that of females is that while the later is based on longstanding cultural mores, the former is sanctioned by scripture. The covenant between God and Abraham described in the Old Testament, or Torah, has implications for Christians and Muslims, since Jesus and Muhammad are both believed to have been circumcised, but especially for the traditional people of the covenant, the Jews.

God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you, throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. Throughout your generations every male among you shall be circumcised when he is eight days old... So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Every uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”³⁸⁸

The original Jewish circumcision rite, the *milah*, is believed to have consisted of only a simple cut and the removal of the tip of the prepuce. It was practiced for about two millennia, until the Hellenic period.

In art depicting athletic tournaments of that era, back when contestants competed in their natural glory, some athletes are represented without foreskins. Others are shown with theirs in various states of reconstruction.

Jews converting to paganism tried to undo their circumcisions through a surgical procedure known as *restitutio* or by using a funnel-shaped copper device, the *pondus Judaicum*, which covered and stretched the prepuce. Enraged by this new development, the leading rabbis began to practice a more severe cutting known as the *periah*. The new procedure involved removing the entire foreskin, completely exposing the glans, and thereby making any kind of cover-up virtually impossible.³⁸⁹

Pressed to offer an explanation for the need of circumcision, most rabbinical sources cite the virtue of faith, the imperative of continuity and the need for the Jewish people to remain identifiably so. Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), the foremost scholar of Jewish tradition, opined that the foreskin was also removed in order to decrease the urge toward sexual activity:

The bodily injury caused to that organ is exactly that which is desired; it does not interrupt any vital function, nor does it destroy the power of generation. Circumcision simply counteracts excessive lust; for there is no doubt that circumcision weakens the power of sexual excitement, and sometimes lessens the natural enjoyment; the organ necessarily becomes weak when it loses blood and is deprived of its covering from the beginning.³⁹⁰

The merit of removing young boys' foreskins received its first challenge within the Jewish cultural milieu of the early 1800s. Affected by the dramatic sweep of social change all around them, members of the Jewish Reform Movement questioned several aspects of their heritage that up until then had been sacrosanct. The reformers dropped kosher dietary restrictions and began to conduct services in the ordinary spoken language, rather than in Hebrew. They also dropped the practice of circumcision.

Rabbis who joined the growing movement managed to reverse many of the changes. Even so, the vigorous debate precipitated by the reformers created a new atmosphere of openness. In this new critical

ambiance, it became possible for nonconformists to have a Jewish naming ceremony for a newborn, without including circumcision in the rite.

In the first years of Christianity, there were some who advocated and others who denied the necessity of circumcision. Eventually, Saint Paul concluded that “circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing.”³⁹¹ He warned the early Christians, “beware of those who those who mutilate the flesh.”³⁹² What mattered was purity of spirit. Even so, church fathers in 487 declared January 1 a special feast day to celebrate the day of Jesus’s circumcision.

In Islam, criticism of the prevailing practice of male circumcision has been muted. In 1990, Mustafa Kamal al-Mahdawi, a retired Libyan judge, published a book in which he argued that, as a Jewish custom, originating in the superstitions of the ancient Israelites, circumcision deserved no standing in Islam. His argument was furiously attacked by the clergy and in the press.

By the summer of 1992, the furor had spread to the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina, where the priest issued a tract opposing al-Mahdawi. Many thousands of copies were printed and distributed in the author’s native Libya. Al-Mahdawi’s books were removed from shops and libraries everywhere and burned. Moreover, the high priest urged the Muslim Arab League and the Islamic Conference to organize all Muslim scholars to impose a death penalty on the author unless he retracted his apostasy. According to the religious authority, al-Mahdawi’s offence had been to deny “that male circumcision is compulsory when there is unanimity in favor of it and when Muhammad was Himself circumcised.”³⁹³

Further south in the oldest continent, the removal of the tip of young men’s genitalia as they come of age is a part of the accumulated cultural heritage of the Masai of Kenya, the Bantu of South Africa and numerous other peoples. With the revival of indigenous traditions, young men in these societies today once more go off to initiation schools at puberty. The braves return with a grasp of their culture and their duties as a man. They also come back with their private parts modified.³⁹⁴

The United States did not witness the secular cutting of male genitalia until comparatively recently. It was in 1870, that a certain Dr. Lewis A. Sayre began reporting amazing medical results from removing the foreskins of young men and boys. Dr. Sayre reported curing patients afflicted with maladies ranging from paralysis to fever to tuberculosis in this way. While the wave of wonder cures eventually subsided, the practice of removing the male prepuce found new supporters in the movement for hygiene and sanitation sweeping American cities in the 1880s. A circumcised penis was considered cleaner than a naturally intact one.

Numerous other theories in support of circumcison subsequently emerged. About 1910, doctors speculated that the wives of men whose foreskins had been removed experienced a lesser rate of cervical cancer than the wives of the uncircumcised. In the 1940s, higher rates of prostate cancer were observed among gentiles than among Jews, leading to renewed debate. As recently as the late 1980s, a widely reported study suggested that intact boys were ten times more likely to have urinary tract infections than boys who had been circumcised. Various other reports suggested removal of the foreskin could decrease chances of penile cancer, fix adhesion of the foreskin to the glans penis, and even help prevent AIDS. All of these aspersions have since been discredited.

Only in English-speaking countries and South Korea has circumcision ever been widely adopted for purely medical reasons. In South Korea people are only slowly overcoming their belief that genital cutting is a significant and valuable import from the West. In recent decades, doctors in Britain, New Zealand Australia, Canada and the United States have been steadily moving away from the practice. In Britain, where the rate is lowest, it dropped to less than 1% ever since the national health care system stopped paying for circumcisions about 50 years ago. In America, where the rate in the 1960s was around 95%, 58% of boys, about 3,300 a day, are still subjected to this abuse. It remains America’s most common surgical procedure, costing its citizens between US\$500 and US\$800 million a year.³⁹⁵

The lucrative little operation remained unquestioned, its physiological consequences unstudied, for more than 100 years. The unlikely hero who turned the tide of unquestioning conformity was a San Francisco area mother training to be a nurse-midwife. The following is the account of her first experience of infant circumcision:

We students filed into the newborn nursery to find a baby strapped spread-eagle to a plastic board on a counter top across the room. He was struggling against his restraints – tugging, whimpering, and then crying helplessly.

No one was tending the infant, but when I asked my instructor if I could comfort him, she said, “Wait till the doctor gets here.” I wondered how a teacher of the healing arts could watch someone suffer and not offer assistance. I wondered about the doctor’s power which could intimidate others from following protective instincts.

When he did arrive, I immediately asked the doctor if I could help the baby. He told me to put my finger into the baby’s mouth; I did, and the baby sucked. I stroked his little head and spoke softly to him. He began to relax, and was momentarily quiet.

The silence was broken by a piercing scream – the baby’s reaction to having his foreskin pinched and crushed as the doctor attached the clamp to his penis. The shriek intensified when the doctor inserted an instrument between the foreskin and the head of his penis, tearing the two structures apart.

The baby started shaking his head back and forth – the only part of his body free to move – as the doctor used another clamp to crush the foreskin lengthwise, where he then cut. This made the opening of the foreskin large enough to insert a circumcision instrument.

The baby began to gasp and choke, breathless from his shrill, continuous screams. My bottom lip began to quiver, tears filled my eyes and spilled over, I found my own sobs difficult to contain.

During the next stage of the surgery, the doctor crushed the foreskin against the circumcision instrument and then, finally, amputated it. The baby was limp, exhausted, spent. I had not been prepared, nothing could have prepared me, for this experience. To see a part of this baby’s penis being cut off was devastating. But even more shocking was the doctor’s comment, barely audible several octaves below the piercing screams of the baby: “There’s no medical reason for doing this.”

I couldn’t believe my ears, my knees became weak, and I felt sick to my stomach. I couldn’t believe that medical professionals, dedicated to helping and healing, could inflict such unnecessary pain and anguish on innocent babies.³⁹⁶

For telling parents about the risks of circumcision, Marilyn Fayre Milos was soon dismissed from the hospital where she worked. Milos, herself the mother of three circumcised boys and an uncircumcised grandson, went on to found the National Organization of Circumcision Information Resource Centers, “dedicated to making a safer world [and] to securing the birthright of male and female children and babies to keep their sexual organs intact” in 1985. NOCIRC has since grown into a network of 110 centers in dozens of countries.

The anticircumcision movement stresses how all forms of surgical manipulation of an intact and healthy infant’s body cause needless trauma and violate Hippocrates’s sacred dictum, “First, do no harm.” Moreover, some of their unintended consequences can be horribly devastating. In America, complications occur in 2-10% of circumcisions. They include inadvertent removal of the entire penis, infections leading to impotence, massive brain and kidney damage, quadriplegia and, in up to 200 instances each year, death.

The pilfering of baby foreskins in hospitals was cast into further disrepute when it was found that hospitals routinely sold these tiny pieces of flesh to pharmaceutical companies that used them for research purposes, or as raw material for a kind of breathable bandage.³⁹⁷ Activists eventually succeeded in having this practice banned in the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Numerous conscientious doctors and nurses also became active in the movement against infant genital mutilation in the United States. In 1993, three nurses at the Saint Vincent Hospital in Santa Fe, New Mexico refused to assist in infant circumcisions. They were soon joined by another twenty nurses. Frustrated with the bias of the American medical establishment toward neonatal cutting, a number of conscientious doctors authored well-written pamphlets, journals and books against the practice. Doctors Opposing Circumcision (DOC) was formed in Seattle in 1996.

That same year, the *British Journal of Urology* published a paper entitled: “The prepuce: specialized mucosa of the penis and its loss to circumcision.” The article, co-authored by three physicians from the Health Services Department of the University of Manitoba, only served to substantiate the medical case against the mutilation of infant boys. Their study concluded that infants suffer more tissue loss than most parents envisage from their preoperative counseling and scientifically confirmed that the operation impairs the overall sensitivity of the penis.

In America, the trend against circumcision has spawned an organized effort to undo the damage done by the pediatricians. Doctors at first dismissed foreskin restoration as nothing more than a neurotic obsession.

Since the early 1980s, however, support groups, do-it-yourself kits, surgeons specialized in penile reconstruction, and sympathetic therapists have emerged to help untold thousands of American men in the painful work of undoing the damage done.

To Assist, to Replace and to Heal

In the play of Sophocles (496-406 BCE), *Oedipus Rex*, the sphinx of Giza posed a riddle to passers-by. It went: “What, in the beginning of life, moves on four legs, at the middle on just two, then at the end of life moves on three legs?” The answer, of course, is a human who first crawls, then walks, then hobbles along with the aid of a walking stick. The antiquity of this account serves to give us an idea of how long it has been that we humans have used tools, variously simple and ingenious, to compensate for our physical deficiencies.

The first written account of an artificial limb goes back to 484 BCE. The Greek historian Herodotus tells of a sage named Hegesistratus condemned to death by the Spartans. In order to escape from his chains, the philosopher removed part of his own foot, then later had a prosthesis made out of wood.

In those days, the preferred method of conveyance for people of privilege was to be carried by others. From the Far East through Egypt, Rome and the Incan capital of Cuzco, people in hierarchical cultures conveyed their great and mighty in stylish palanquins of varying sizes and descriptions. The importance of the one being transported was clearly apparent by the number of bearers assigned to them. One laboring in front and another behind would signify a person of modest rank. Personages greatly esteemed would have four or more retainers carrying their palanquin.

The first evidence of a chair on wheels takes us to China around 525. For many infirm, a kind of wheelbarrow was their source of mobility. Invented in the third century, the versatile wheelbarrow arrived in Europe in the twelfth century. Light wheelchairs that could be hand-propelled date from the 1860s, when they were widely used by veterans of the American Civil War.

Back in Europe’s Middle Ages, the same metalsmiths who made suits of armor for soldiers going into battle also crafted prostheses for those who lost their arms and legs. While wooden pegs and stumps were common among the poorer classes, the smiths also designed and fashioned limbs of iron suitable for maneuvering a horse, a shield and sword.

Before the discovery of the tourniquet, chloroform and antiseptics, amputations were hazardous undertakings. A surgeon had only about five minutes and a writhing patient on whom to perform. Many grim warriors bled to death on the field or succumbed to a slow death from infection.

One French army surgeon, Ambrose Paré (1510-1590) contributed both to the practice of surgical amputation and the design of limb prostheses. According to the drawings of Paré, artificial noses were made of gold or silver for the rich and of paper maché for the poor. Paré devised a number of prosthetic devices, including the first articulated knee joint.

In the sixteenth century, cosmetic prostheses for eyes and ears were known, although few could afford them. They were simple in design and used clips to hold them in place. Shakespeare (1564-1616) gives evidence of their existence:

Get thee three glass eyes:
And, like a scurvy politician, seem
To see the things thou dost not.

King Lear to the Earl of Gloucester, *King Lear*, Act IV, Scene VI

Teeth for those who lost their own through various misfortunes have been crafted since ancient times. The Mayans, who ordinarily liked to decorate their teeth with semiprecious inlays, are known to have implanted carefully sized pieces of shell to replace missing teeth. The Romans had mastered the art of dental bridgework and installing gold crowns. Chinese dentists managed full dentures and silver amalgam fillings as early as the twelfth century.

Western dentistry for long relied on purloined or hunted substitutes for missing teeth. The most common denture base was hippopotamus ivory. The replacement teeth themselves were preferably human, though carved

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cow's teeth, elephant tusk, and walrus tusk were also used. Battlefields from Waterloo to Gettysburg provided great quantities of human teeth. Mortuaries, graves and dissecting labs also served as harvesting grounds for shady dealers. For a time, teeth were transferred directly from the mouths of living volunteers into the gums of the toothless, although transplants never lasted more than a few months.

In the 1770s and 80s, Paris dentist Nicholas Dubois de Chémant (1753-1824) developed and refined the science of fitting and making porcelain dentures. By the close of the eighteenth century, craftsmen in France and Germany were fashioning life-like porcelain eyes, teeth, chins, noses and obturators. Within 100 years, specialist shops would have display cases filled with hundreds of porcelain eyeballs readymade for the customer. During World War II, because of the difficulty of obtaining imported prostheses, US manufacturers began to make their own artificial eyes out of plastic.

As materials technology advanced, new substances began to be tried. For a time in the nineteenth century, rubber was the favored substance for facial prostheses. Next came light and malleable celluloid, then aluminum. In 1913, gelatin prostheses were introduced. Their drawback was they needed to be reformed each day from a cast.

Since the Second World War, plastics have been used for facial prostheses. Easily shaped, with good carrying characteristics and aesthetics qualities, they have replaced almost all other materials. In more recent years, light, durable titanium and skin compatible glues have emerged that have been successfully used for implants and other uses. Artificial joints and heart valves are now commonplace.

In 1949, researchers at IBM working to serve the flood of war amputees, devised the first electric arm.³⁹⁸ Research is ongoing to improve the interface between artificial limbs and the nerves, muscles, bone and skin that support them. Scientists developed the first artificial heart in 1982. Pacemakers are now commonplace. Even the working part of the ear, the cochlea which transmits sound to the brain, has been successfully reconstructed. Researchers using microcomputers developed a moveable eyelid in 1998 at Berlin's Charité, Campus Virchow Clinic.

The cutting edge of technologically influenced medicine seems to be in the creation of a prosthesis for a part of the brain. A man-made hippocampus is being developed and tested by Dr. Theodore Berger and his associates at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. The hippocampus is one of the most ordered and studied parts of the brain. It encodes experiences so they can be stored as long term memories elsewhere in the brain and is of natural interest to those doctors treating victims of Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Berger has been nearly ten years developing a silicon chip prosthesis. If the experiment using living slices of rat brain is successful, he plans to test it on live rats, then on monkeys. According to Dr. Berger's plan, in a human, the tiny chip would be lodged on the skull, rather than inside the brain.³⁹⁹

While artificial, computer-assisted prostheses may point the way to the future and the advent of bionic humans, the transplant of biotic material already has a considerable history. The first blood transplant had been performed in France in 1667 by Jean-Baptist Denis (1640?-1704). The controversial doctor infused a feverish and drowsy patient other physicians had left to die with twelve ounces lamb's blood. Despite the patient's complete and rapid recovery, subsequent experiments proved less conclusive. A subsequent ban on the practice left blood transfusions to be rediscovered by doctors repairing the casualties of bullets and shrapnel and twentieth century bayonets.

Bone transplants have been recorded as early as the seventeenth century. According to one account, the skull of a dog was used to repair a deformed human cranium in 1668 in Holland.⁴⁰⁰ According to records of the Russian Orthodox Church, the head of an aristocratic soldier was similarly repaired using bone from a dog's skull in 1682. The operation was a success, but condemned as unnatural by the Church.⁴⁰¹

The next important development was the first transplant of human skin in 1881. In 1906, in Germany, Dr. Edvard Zirn performed the first successful cornea transplant. While World War I doctors had transferred blood directly from donor to casualty with mixed results, increased understanding of its properties led to the creation of blood banks in the 1930s and vastly widened the scope of transplant technology.

The first human organ transplants followed years of animal research. The year 1954 saw the successful implant of a kidney from a healthy man to his identical twin at a Boston hospital. In 1967, the first heart transplant took place in Capetown. Within years, bone and marrow, liver, lung, intestine, blood vessel, heart-lung and pancreas transplants were so routine that they no longer merited any mention or comment in the news.

The practice of organ transplantation has brought with it unprecedented moral considerations and a new definition of death. Brain death has been adopted in medical parlance to describe the end of life in the body. This has been widely accepted in the West, but less so in Japan, where it remains a subject of controversy.

One of the practical outcomes of defining death as the cessation of brain function has been the practice of legally “harvesting” organs from the apparently deceased, yet there are significant cultural differences surrounding this practice. In Japan, organs may only be taken if a patient has indicated the willingness to donate them and their family does not overrule their wishes. In North America, organs may be removed from bodies legally recognized as dead if the individual’s wish to be a donor can be reasonably assured. Families are not legally entitled to overrule this intent. In several European countries, on the other hand, the presumption of intent allows doctors to procure organs for transplant from the body of someone brain dead unless there is a signed document indicating they have specifically opted out of organ donation.⁴⁰²

Japan’s Shinto and Confucian traditions have always maintained the essentially sacredness of the body, and that it ought to be kept whole and intact.⁴⁰³ Another factor in Japan may be that death remains more of a social and a family-centered event than in the West, where today it tends to be isolated in a medical setting. Scholar Margaret Lock has surmised that the medieval Christian belief in the life-giving powers of the relics of saints might play a role in what she has called the “promiscuous commodification of the human body in the service of European medicine.”⁴⁰⁴

While the technology of organ transplants is old news and arguments over brain death and overly aggressive harvesting may continue indefinitely, the human dynamics behind these gifts of life can be truly inspiring. Organ transplants transcend all the distinctions that ordinarily divide and bind us: differences of race and gender, nationality and religion. In apartheid South Africa, one of the first transplants created the anomaly of a “white” retired dentist with the heart of a “colored” man. In another striking case, in September 2002 the organs of a Jewish teenager killed in a Tel Aviv suicide bombing were donated by his family with no restrictions on the choice of recipients. One of Yoni Jesner’s kidneys found its way to a young Palestinian girl suffering from a debilitating kidney disease. Seven-year-old Yasmin Abu Ramila had been waiting two years for a suitable transplant.

Yasmin’s family was as gracious in receiving as Yoni’s was in the offering. Her grandfather expressed gratitude to the Jesner family and said he hoped one day to meet and thank them personally. Ari Jesner told reporters, “I don’t exclude the possibility of a meeting but... the wounds are all so open. We are very much in mourning.”⁴⁰⁵

Another evolving area has been the treatment of imperfect eyesight. The Chinese, the Italian Salvino delgi Armati (?-1317) and the Englishman Roger Bacon (1220-1292) have variously been credited with the invention of eyeglasses. Before that, the Roman Emperor Nero (37-68, emperor: 54-68) is said to have used a concave gem set in a ring to see the games at the Coliseum.

Over the centuries, monocles, bifocals and sunglasses – functional, fashionable and prescription - and have been created to address the needs of those who would see and be seen. In the last decades, corrective surgery has also been added to the arsenal of doctors who heal cataracts, near-sightedness, far-sightedness, wandering eyes, astigmatism and a host of other ways that eyes can go wrong. With 40 million people suffering from cataracts and more than 80 million near-sighted in the US alone, it adds up to a multi-billion dollar business.

Only in the 1880s did one ophthalmologist begin to delve beneath the growing tide of eye disorders to address the underlying cause. New York ophthalmologist William Bates (1860-1931) weathered the opposition and outright hostility of his colleagues, who considered eye problems to be genetically predetermined. Instead, through his thousands of experiments and his own clinical experience, Bates found how people used their eyes affected how well or poorly they could see. Moreover, he trained his patients to see the world anew with improved vision. Many Bates patients eventually discarded their glasses altogether. Today, Bates method practitioners world-wide are teaching a holistic approach that is changing the deterministic paradigm of the vision industry, one person at a time.

Hair Culture

Human hair is something of an enigma. How can it take up so much of everyone's time caring, coloring, combing, shaving, styling, waxing, brushing, and adorning it in so many ways? Besides being a conduit for our tireless vanity, what purpose does it serve?

Most of what we know about the physiology of hair comes as an outcome of simple observation. At birth, hair is extremely fine. In childhood and youth, head hair grows naturally thick and long. At puberty, hair develops around the genitalia and in the armpits, and thickens on the arms and legs. Boys entering manhood typically sprout gentle beards and mustaches. During pregnancy, most mothers find their head hair grows in very thick. After childbirth, it falls out in clumps. During a serious illness, it may thin out appreciably. In old age, hair naturally becomes less and turns to white.

After extreme trauma, some people are known to have had their hair turn white overnight. Soldiers have been known to experience such nightmarish conditions in war as to make hair literally stand on end and become bristle-like, then remain that way for the rest of their lives. Women with demanding and competitive careers have also been shown to run an increased risk of hair loss. For some 40% of men and 10% of women, a genetic disposition toward loss of hair and baldness can be a cause of concern.

Virtually the whole body, except for the lips, the soles of the feet and palms of the hands, are covered with hair. Most of this coating is fine and downy. Every single hair is wired to the sensory nervous system, which explains how a person's hairs can tingle or stand on end radiating pleasure or alarm.

In the womb, from about three months after conception, the entire body is covered with a soft, downy coat of lanugo hair. This is usually shed four weeks before birth. As the body matures, hairs of different lengths and functions distinguish themselves. Strands on the brows and eyelids and in the nose are short and coarse. Brow hairs catch sweat, while eyelashes and hair in the nostrils specialize in keeping dust and insects from the moist, sensitive eyes and trachea. Tendrils under the arms and in the public regions are longer and softer, to prevent chafing of sensitive skin areas and to allow sweat to drain from the body. Beard hairs may vary in type and length from man to man. Most remarkable are the hair on the crown of the head which, left to nature, grow longest and fastest.

In all, there are estimated to be 90-150,000 strands of hair on the average human head. Red hairs are thicker and therefore less abundant than average. Blonde hairs are the most plentiful, but also the finest. Black hair is in-between.

An unusual survey by the Gillette razor company showed that American men shave an average of 5.33 times each week – religiously on workdays, hardly on weekends. This means, over his lifetime, the average man resolutely scrapes nearly eight meters of stubborn hair from his face.

According to a 1990 survey by Gillette, 92% of women over thirteen shave their legs. On average, they use their razors just under ten times a month to shave more than nine times as much skin area as a man. Others shave just below the knee. Waxing introduced from Europe, and electrolysis and lasers are also used.⁴⁰⁶

In popular thinking, hair culture is hardly considered a matter of vital significance. It is thought of as a matter of aesthetics, like the decorative sprig of parsley on a culinary offering. Generally, except insofar as it affects our vanity, we take hair matters very lightly.

It should not surprise us that there is little hard, scientific knowledge about the function of human hair, since most original research is funded by military and commercial interests. The military is looking for ingenious technologies to destroy and disable. The cosmetics industry has an interest in feeding our insecurity about how we appear to others by developing shavers, hair color, hair replacement therapy and the rest. Neither group has any vested interest in knowing exactly what hair does or why humans should have such a natural abundance of it.

Through history, the fortunes of long, natural hair have varied from time to time, and place to place. Around 500 BCE, it was customary for men and women in Greece to wear their hair long and tied up in a knot on the top of their head. 100 years later, it became the norm for men to cut their hair short, while retaining their flowing beards.

About 100 years later, beards and long hair fell out of fashion. Diogenes (d. ~320 BCE), known as the founder of the cynic school of philosophy, is said to have walked the streets of Corinth looking for an honest man. If he spotted a fashionably shaven Greek youth, the formidable Diogenes would approach the young man and challenge him, “Have you shaved because you are disappointed you were created a man instead of a woman?”⁴⁰⁷

The beardless fashion originated in neighboring Macedonia. There, the conqueror, Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE) had ordered the soldiers of his army to remove their beards so enemies might not grab hold of them in the heat of battle.

A few centuries later, a Greek thinker living in Rome named Epictetus (circa 55-135) had this to say about the enduring aesthetic of the beard:

Is there anything more useless than the hairs on the chin? But hasn't nature made use even of these in as becoming a manner as possible? Has it not through them distinguished the male from the female? Does not the nature of each one of us declare from afar, “I am a man: on this basis approach me, on this basis talk to me. Look for nothing further, just consider the tokens.” Again in the case of women, just as in their voice nature has mingled a softer note, so too it has removed the hair from their chins. But no, you say: “The animal ought to have been left without distinguishing mark, and each of us should announce on his own account, “I am a man.”” But how fair and becoming and noble the token is! How much fairer than the cock's comb, how much more magnificent than the lion's mane! For this reason we ought to preserve the signs of god, we should not do away with them or, so far as in us lies, confuse the sexes that have been thus distinguished.⁴⁰⁸

Further east, the art and literature of Babylon tells us of that civilization's long held custom of men maintaining beards and long hair, elaborately pleated and gathered together at the back of the head or worn up in turbans.

In contrast, Egyptian classical culture favored shaving the head and face, except at times of mourning. Women used beeswax to remove the hair from their legs. Priests were required to shave their head every day and their whole body every third day. They also bathed twice each day and twice more during the night. In contrast with their thoroughly glabrous priests, pharaohs and other people of distinction made extensive use of wigs and false beards.⁴⁰⁹

In Hebrew society, a luxuriant growth of hair on the head and chin was seen as a sign of manly grace. The Talmud described the beard as “the adornment of a man's face.”⁴¹⁰ Baldness was dreaded since it was often a sign of leprosy. Priests especially were expected to keep their hair long and covered. The Torah prescribed just how the priest was to dress, with a fine linen turban, along with a robe, tunic, cummerbund and undergarments to cover their private parts.⁴¹¹

Elsewhere, Jewish men were told not to “round off the hair on your temples nor mar the edges of your beard.”⁴¹² The very orthodox understood this to mean leaving the entire beard intact. Others interpreted it to mean only leaving the hair just below their temple uncut. Today, members of this latter group may readily be identified by the long wisps of hair growing unshorn on both sides of their heads.

A special class of Jews called “Nazarites” took a vow to neither drink wine, nor touch the bodies of the dead (i.e. meat) nor cut their hair. In earlier times, being a Nazarite was a lifetime commitment. Later on, it involved only an abstinence of some fixed duration. Samson, whose great strength led to his seduction and his subsequent destruction of a large temple, was a life-long Nazarite. The sect died out in the Middle Ages.⁴¹³

In Babylon, Egypt, and all classical cultures, women kept their hair long, braiding it in various ways and perfuming it with fragrant oils. Gold dust might also be sprinkled on the hair to produce a golden shimmer. A full, thick head of hair was considered an attribute of an ideal bride. It was never cut except, as in Jewish society, as a sign of deep mourning or degradation.⁴¹⁴

In Rome, where women ordinarily lavished as much attention on their “crowning glory” as women anywhere, there was also a special class of women without hair. They were six daughters of Rome's leading families who dedicated their lives to Vesta, goddess of hearth and home. On giving their vows, these honored virgins had their heads shaven and were clothed in immaculate white. The special calling of these nuns was to maintain the sacrificial fire in the temple of Vesta.⁴¹⁵

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The fathers of the Church, who worshipped the longhaired Jesus, were themselves depicted in art and iconography with flowing beards. The New Testament patriarchs however considered long tresses appropriate for women only. Their objection to long hair on the heads of Christian men likely had its roots in the pervasive influence of Roman culture. To clinch their argument, the Church fathers cited the words of Paul the apostle.

Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory?⁴¹⁶

For several centuries, the length of a priest's hair was a matter of strife and controversy. In 456, a church council ordered Christian priests everywhere to cut their hair to a "moderate length" like the clerics of Rome or be expelled from the Church. The intention was apparently to assert the supremacy of the imperial religion and to distinguish Christians from the hairy "barbarians" who lived outside.

Clearly, the edict was an unpopular one, since it needed to be followed up by another in 506, which authorized the use of force to cut the hair of unwilling priests. This was followed by a clarification issued in 572, that the hair should be short and the ears exposed, and further orders from Rome excommunicating longhaired holdouts, in 721 and 743.⁴¹⁷

About this time, tonsure, the shaving of the head of a religious became a significant rite of the Christian church. For centuries, a monk or priest in the Western church would be characterized by a ring of short hair around the top of their head to symbolizing Christ's crown of thorns. A nun would have her hair cropped short. In the main Orthodox tradition, the head would be shaven completely bald, while in faraway Goa, the priests kept a brahmin-like tuft on the top of their head.

Before the arrival of Roman armies, long hair predominated among the Celtic and other peoples of central and northern Europe. The Roman historian Pliny referred to "hairy Gaul." When Julius Caesar conquered that land, he ordered the hair of his new subjects cut off.⁴¹⁸

The Frankish peoples, who 300 years later retook France and Germany from the Romans, and the Saxons who reconquered Britain, considered hair to be an aspect of a person's natural prestige and honor. The Franks and Saxons took hair matters seriously enough to create laws to punish anyone found impugning the dignity of another by laying hands on their beard.

The wergild in Anglo-Saxon and Germanic law was a system of fines imposed for various injuries. Not only physical suffering, but also the pain of loss of dignity was accounted for. Accordingly, a fractured rib was assessed at three shillings, while the loss of a front tooth might cost an offender six. A broken thigh counted for twice as much. But the loss of a beard called for a hefty fine of twenty shillings.⁴¹⁹

For centuries, their long hair was a distinctive trait especially of Frankish kings. After Louis I (778-840, king: 814-840), the influence of Christian priests took over the hair fashions of the French for a time. During the tenth century, the hair of the men of the royal court was cut at the height of the ears and fell regularly around the head. By the time of invasion of England in 1066, the conquering Normans wore their hair very short.

The subdued English naturally resented their new lords and showed their displeasure by resembling as little as possible the cropped and shaven Normans. This was a difficult era for longhaired rebels, however, for it was decreed by the pope that persons with long hair should be excommunicated while living and not prayed for while dead.

This edict was enforced by church authorities throughout Europe. Wulstan of Worcester (1009-1095, bishop: 1062-1095), the one bishop kept in his post by William the Conqueror, was especially zealous in his mission and said to carry a small pocket knife with him wherever he went. According to a contemporary source,

...whenever any body offending in this respect knelt before him to receive his blessing, (the bishop) would whip it out slyly, and cut off a handful, and then, throwing it in his face, tell him to cut off the rest or he would go to hell.⁴²⁰

That Europe's fighting best were off in the Levant battling Muslims while the church made its assault on man's natural physiognomy, could not have helped matters much. In the absence of heroes, the staid burghers were shamed into not only cutting their hair close, but shaving their faces. William Fitzosbert, or Longbeard (d. 1196), with his beard down to his waist, stands out as a singular rebel in the traditional Saxon mould.

By the end of the twelfth century, the stringent influence of church and monasteries was falling off. Hair was cut short at the top of the head, but allowed to fall in long locks behind. Sometimes hair was kept smooth at the top. Other times, there would be a roll in the front, a tuft shaped like a flame or a simple topknot.⁴²¹

Beards and tresses fell in and out of favor in the courts of Europe. There was continual tension between the dictates of the church, expressions of royal prerogative and cultural mores.

This ebb and flow did not pass without notice by men of letters. In light of the Counter-Reformation, one Johan Piers Valerian published a treatise in Paris and London in 1533, which was actually an essay to an influential cardinal, arguing on behalf of priests being allowed to keep their beards. Fifty years later, Antonius Hotoman took up the same argument for everyman. Where Valerian had written of the Hebrews and Christ and his disciples, Hotoman emphasized the significance of the beard as distinctive marker separating men from women and children, and priests from other men. His *Pogonias sive De Barba* (in Greek) was several times republished in the early seventeenth century.

In *Much Ado About Nothing* (1590), Shakespeare gave his character Beatrice a few words on the subject: “He that hath a beard is more than a youth, and he that hath no beard is less than a man.” In the next century, historian and statesman, Edward Hyde, the First Earl of Clarendon, first gave “barefaced” its connotations of “shameless” and “without scruples.”

The divide between the haired and the hairless came into sharp focus during the English Civil War (1642-51), when the puritanical Parliamentarians led by Oliver Cromwell were aptly called “Roundheads,” while the royalists led by the bearded Charles I were known as “Cavaliers.” The Roundheads were certain they could read a man by the hair on his head. For them, the more abundant a man’s hair, the more scant his faith, and the balder his head, the more sincere his piety.⁴²²

Orthodox Christian Russia for long cherished the tradition of the beard. While Roman Catholic priests were notably shaven, the Orthodox religiously kept their facial hair. This state of affairs continued up until the time of the ambitious Patriarch Nikon (1605-1681, patriarch: 1651-1658).

In an effort to unify the Eastern and Western churches under his authority, in 1653 Nikon altered several elements of traditional Orthodox worship to conform with Western practice and issued an order compelling all priests to shave their beards. While most Russians complied with the patriarch’s order, many thousands of traditionalists considered the patriarch to be none other than the Antichrist. Excommunicated in 1667, these “Old Believers” fled to the forest hinterlands north and east of Moscow, where they established communities and continued to practise their original faith.

All this time and through the Middle Ages, European women traditionally left their hair long and uncut, although they might use a tweezer on their eyebrows. Modest, conservative fashions prevailed. Chaucer expressed a timely sentiment in his poem “The Romaunt of the Rose” where he personified “Beautee” as a woman who uses no “paynte” and leaves her brows unplucked.

Fetys she was and smal to see;
No wyndred browes had she,
Ne popped hir, for it needed not
To wyndre hir or to paynte hir ought.
Hir tresses yelowe and long straughten,
Unto hir heles down they raughten.
Hir nose, hir mouth, and eye, and cheke
Wel wrought, and all the remenaunt eke.^{s423}

Through the Middle Ages, European women’s hair remained modestly covered. Bonnets and headdresses of various styles were used until the Renaissance. Around 1400 in Italy, then later in France, and soon all over Europe, women began tentatively to display their long, pleated hair. In Elizabethan England, a head of hair dyed red like the queen’s became a conspicuous fashion statement.

^s Fetys: pretty; smal: small; wyndred: plucked; browes: brows; popped: trimmed; hir: her; wyndre: decorate; paynte: paint; straughten: stretched; heles: heels; raughten: reached, cheke: cheek; Wel: well; remenaunt: rest; eke: as well.

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Renaissance hairdressing was greatly influenced by the fashions in vogue at the royal court of France, especially during the period of King Louis XIV (1638-1715, king: 1643-1715). The women of Versailles wore their hair high on their head, with feathers to decorate large curls, or rolled back from the forehead in a pompadour.

With the increasing influence of the French court, beards fell out of favor throughout Europe. Only in distant Russia, did the aristocracy keep their beards, partly out of defiance and partly out of hatred of things not Russian.

Then in 1705, Tsar Peter I “the Great” (1672-1725, tsar: 1682-1775), in one of his several stratagems to align his country with the West, imposed a tax on every noble Russian beard. Gentlemen were to pay 100 rubles a year and issued a small copper coin with a luxuriantly bearded face with the year on the one side, and the Russian eagle on the obverse, to be kept with them at all times. A priest or serf was required to pay a kopeck each time they passed the gate of a city.

While Peter the Great was taxing Russian beards, men of status in the West, including priests and officials of the Church, began to wear extravagant powdered wigs. This was the beginning of a custom carried into the twenty-first century by members of Britain’s House of Lords and judiciary, and still in vogue in several former colonies in the Caribbean, Africa and South-east Asia.

While the lordly British kept to their pretensions of class, in France and America, revolution meant the end of extravagant, aristocratic coiffures. To distinguish themselves, revolutionaries allowed themselves disheveled shoulder-length hair, while radical women cut theirs short. In deference to the new estimation of natural virtue, ladies began to gather their hair into a simple bun at the back of their heads. Then, when Napoleon made the transition to short-cropped hair, the fashion was set for a generation or so.

The Victorian era brought more changes. Men’s beards came back in style. Statesmen, scholars, clergy, tycoons, royalty and generals were all wearing them in a variety of shapes and sizes. This lasted for about sixty years, or a couple of generations. By the onset of World War I, the smooth-shaven look had returned to favor and hirsute men of fashion everywhere unceremoniously hacked off their manly adornments.

The new beardless fashion was especially embraced by the members of the Mormon Church, known as the “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,” based in Salt Lake City, Utah. After decades of being persecuted as heretics and even threatened with attack by the US army, the Mormon leadership made a decision around 1890 to leave their past and conform with America’s prevailing cultural norms. Gone was their polygamous family unit, which was widely condemned as scandalous. Gone, too, were the beards of the Latter Day Saints.

Thereafter, the LDS churchmen became widely known as “clean-living, clean-looking and clean-shaven.” The eleventh president of the Church, President Harold B. Lee (1899-1973, president: 1972-73) decried the keeping of a beard in no uncertain terms. When a woman pleaded on behalf of her husband, a gentleman distinguished by a beard like a former day prophet, Lee countered that a man “must not have the appearance of evil or rebellion if he is to get a recommend to go to the temple.”⁴²⁴

Victorian women, meanwhile, were counseled about how to dress and present themselves as ladylike in books that were newly being published. According to an essay on *Womankind* by Charlotte M. Yonge, published 1889, how a woman cared for her hair was an indication of the quality of her femininity. The crucial time was when a girl grown to womanhood no longer allowed her hair to hang loosely over her shoulders, but put it up in a roll on top of her head. This was generally recognized as a sign of maturity and marriageability. While the task of putting up the hair daily was delegated to maids by upper-class women, Charlotte Yonge advised her readers of lesser means that “no girl whose life is to be spent without a maid should be content till she has learned to make her edifice firm, and graceful as nature will permit.”⁴²⁵

While some women dutifully followed the well-intended advice, New England reformer Abba Goold Woolson (1838-1921) chaffed at the restrictions of Victorian fashion and cultural mores. Woolson made the following wry observation in *Woman in American Society*, published in 1874.

Long tresses being (also) declared a glory to women, she heaps upon her head such a mass of heavy, cumbersome braids, and skewers them on with such a weight of metal hair pins, she can dream of heaven only as a place where it will be permitted her to wear short hair.⁴²⁶

Woolson's shorthaired "heaven" dawned in the West soon after World War I. For western women, short tresses, short skirts, dating and smoking were contiguous with their obtaining the right to vote and hold a regular man's job. The invention of the permanent wave by Charles Nestle in 1906 offered fashion-minded women a "new look" and became the basis of a whole new enterprise, the "beauty parlor."

The development of "women's razors" coincided with the fashionable exposure of bare shoulders and legs, and made it de rigueur for women to also shave their underarms and legs.

In traditional European cultures, it has long been custom for married women to cut their tresses short. In orthodox Jewish society, the practice has been for a married woman to shave the hair from her head altogether and cover it with a scarf, even a wig.

Islam maintains its own distinctive ethic regarding hair. Of ten *fitrahs*, or hygienic observances, four have to do with hair. The first two teachings are that the moustache should be clipped, so it does not enter the mouth, and that the beard should not be cut. Some people believe these injunctions were created to distinguish his followers from the fire-worshipping Magians, whose custom it was to keep long moustaches.

The four traditional Muslim schools of jurisprudence differ in their views on the application of the first two *fitrahs*. The Hanafite school based in west Asia, lower Egypt and Pakistan, and the Malkite school of north and west Africa and lower Egypt, approve of trimming or shaving in moderation. The Shafites, mostly in Indonesia, and the Hanbalites of central and northern Arabia consider such alteration completely forbidden.⁴²⁷

The other two related *fitrahs* prescribe pulling the hair out of the armpits and shaving the hair of the genitals. As for the hair on the head, there are various traditions about how long the Prophet kept his hair. Shaving, trimming, cutting and growing are all permitted, although it is customary to cover the head as a mark of respect, especially during prayers and among guests.⁴²⁸

Traditionally, hair and beards may be died with henna, but not colored black with dye. Wigs are forbidden. Eyebrow-plucking is also considered unIslamic. While make-up is allowed, it is thought important that a woman first appreciate her own natural beauty.⁴²⁹

The custom of body sugaring appears to have been born out of a Middle Eastern bridal ritual. The night before their wedding, Lebanese, Palestinian, Turkish and Egyptian brides had all their hair except eyebrows and hair removed by the bridal party. According to lore, the bride maintained her hairless body throughout her marriage as a symbol of cleanliness and respect for her husband. Sugar-based hair-removal formulas have since spread far beyond the Middle East.⁴³⁰

Tribal cultures around the world have cherished countless hair styles and customs. African modes have ranged from long, matted locks to heads shaven bald. Among the Ashanti of Ghana, dreadlocks have been the characteristic emblem of priests, madmen and royal executioners. Priests of the Borana Galla people of Ethiopia never cut their hair. Among the Masai of Kenya, young warriors grew their hair long, until they ceremonially entered the class of elders, at which time their mothers removed their plaited locks. Masai men and women could both be found with their heads shaven or their hair plaited and naturally long. Women of some of Congolese tribes vied with each other to create elaborate fan and basket-shaped hairstyles, which they shaved off on the death of their husband.

In North America, Iroquois warriors were once known for their distinctive haircut: a narrow ridge of hair running from the front to the back of the skull, with the sides of the head shaven. Braids were worn by men and women alike in tribes, such as the Cheyenne, Assiniboine and Piegan, where naturally long hair was the norm. Apache, Hopi and Oglala Sioux men kept their hair loose and sometimes used a hair band. The custom of tying the hair into a topknot was not unknown among the Blackfoot of the prairie grasslands.

Tribal women of North America liked to keep their hair long and to adorn it in various ways. Usually, they made their hair into plaits. Sometimes they decorated them with feathers. Young Navaho women created striking hairstyles by forming their long hair into two snail shell-like shapes, one on each side of her head.

Other noteworthy cases of tribal people keeping their long hair occurred among the Aztecs and Maoris, two vastly separate civilizations, yet both deserving mention. Among the Aztecs of Mexico, the priests wore elaborate headdresses and kept their hair loose and unshorn. Across the Pacific, in New Zealand Maori chiefs and warriors also retained their natural crowning glory, sometimes raised in a topknot.

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For thousands of years, uncut hair wound into a topknot was an important symbol of Chinese civilization. In his *Analects*, Confucius (551-479 BCE), praised a general who had defended China from invasion from the central Asian steppes by saying, “But for Guan Zhong, we should now be wearing our hair unbound, and the lappets of our coats would button on the left side.”⁴³¹

A sixteenth century Jesuit missionary testified as to how greatly the Chinese valued their natural hair:

They are proud to have a great head of hair. They let it grow long and coil it up in a knot on the crown of the head. They then put it in a hairnet parted in the centre to hold and fix the hair in position, wearing on top of it a bonnet made of horsehair. This is their ordinary headgear, although their captains’ bonnets are of another kind made of finest thread and underneath a hairnet of gold thread. They take a good time each morning in combing and dressing their hair.⁴³²

The time-honored practice of keeping the body unshorn, with the hair tied up on the head came under attack after the Manchurian invasion of China in 1644. The new Manchu rulers, for their part, were faced with the formidable challenge of trying to govern a large, proudly conservative and visibly foreign populace. Their solution was a far-reaching campaign designed to undermine their Han Chinese subjects’ deeply ingrained sense of cultural superiority.

A decree called on all men to adopt the Manchu hairstyle, shaving their foreheads and braiding their hair into a queue. Manchu clothes and caps also came into style. Rulers of the new Qing dynasty and their collaborators enforced the law without mercy. Local governments sent out armed barbers to find men still retaining their long hair. Those who refused to comply with the new order were immediately put to death, and their heads hung on poles as an example to others.

Peasant rebellions shook the countryside. In cities along the lower Yangtze River, militias were organized to protect communities from Manchu repression. Tradition-minded scholars tried to remain out of sight behind their villa walls. Eventually, by compromising the educated class and ruthlessly repressing the peasantry, the Qing dynasty took root. The Manchu hair braid remained the fashion for the next two and a half centuries.

By the early years of the twentieth century, the hirsute arguments of the Chinese took on a different tone. The previous 100 years had witnessed imperial China’s decline due largely to the influence of Western powers. The Manchus, for their part, had retained their separate identity by living in garrison cities and outlawing intermarriage with ethnic Chinese. China’s humiliation at the hands of colonial forces, along with festering anti-Manchu resentment, led to widespread agitation against the government.

A symbolic target of popular rage was the Manchu braid. Many radical leaders, impressed by the science, technology and military prowess of the West, chafed at traditional modes of dress, inferring that until the Chinese people adopted Western hairstyles and clothing, they would not be able to freely study and assimilate empowering Western values.

Overseas Chinese, Christians and students were in the forefront of the anti-Manchu movement. Even so, they kept up appearances by wearing artificial hairpieces. Some did this to avoid public ridicule. Others did it to keep their jobs with the government. Nonetheless, the idea of reform steadily gained in popularity.

A constitutional commission sent abroad in 1905 attempted to convince the Empress Dowager to adopt a queue-cutting policy. In 1911, after the Wuchang Uprising and in the face of continued pressure from westernized intellectuals, the court approved a bill earlier passed by the people’s assembly to eliminate the wearing of the queue. In 1912, Sun Yat-sen, the provisional president, signed a degree giving people twenty days to cut off their queues.

Many Chinese celebrated the fall of the Qing dynasty and happily had their age-old symbols of submission, cut off. Among the well-to-do educated and business classes, traditional fashions were also jettisoned, creating a huge demand for imported Western clothes and hats.

The queue-cutting measures were not universally well received, however. Some Chinese still preferred Manchu tradition over foreign ways. In many parts of the country, officials sent soldiers or police into the streets to forcibly cut people’s hair. Conservative groups militated against the hair-cutting decree, inspiring weeks of mutinies, strikes and riots across the country. At least one group returned to coiling their hair on tip of their heads and wearing customary Taoist robes and headdresses.

Traditional Japanese culture has always attributed spiritual power to long hair. To this day, there are numerous sayings, customs and folk beliefs that attest to the belief in the potency of human hair.

In many parts of Japan, women who had just given birth were prohibited from tying up their hair. During dangerous storms, seamen from north Japan would cut their hair and offer it to the sea god. Many Japanese shrines and temples have enormous ropes made from locks of human hair. These locks were donated by wives and fiancées during times of war, to assure their husband or lover's safe return.

Clay burial mound figures of the fourth and fifth centuries show men with their long hair parted in the middle and formed into loops over the ears. Women gathered their hair up in a loose loop resting on the top of the head and fastened in the middle.

The fifth to the eighth centuries saw significant borrowing from Chinese and Korean cultures. A 604 order required all courtiers to wear a formal headdress in accord with Chinese imperial custom. In 682, the Emperor Temmu decreed that all men and women in the court must tie their hair up. As a result, men began to pull their hair up into a topknot at the back of the head. When in ceremonial dress, women of the aristocracy wore their hair in an elaborate knot piled high on the head with a floral ornament at its base.

The warrior, or samurai, class that came to power in Japan in the fourteenth century developed its own distinctive variations on the traditional hairstyles. Men continued to wear their hair in topknots, but to reduce the heat under their helmets, samurai began to shave from their forehead back in a circular pattern before setting off to battle. They also shaved off their beards. What hair remained was allowed to fall straight down.

When not at war, the samurai gathered their hair into a knot at the back of their head. By the sixteenth century, this style became so well established that the warrior class wore their hair this way even in times of peace. Other classes, merchants and commoners, also adopted it, although the shapes of their topknots still distinguished the samurai from the townsfolk. Most Japanese women at this time wore their hair long and straight, although women of the poorer classes tied their hair in back for practicality's sake.

During the long peace of the Tokugawa shogunate (1603-1867), men's hairstyles remained largely the same, while women's hairdressing became increasingly artistic. Women raised their hair onto their heads into the elaborate formations now recognized as distinctly Japanese. Some styles used special frames placed under the hair to create a desired effect.

Westernization took its toll of Japan's unique hair fashions when in 1871 a government order encouraged all men to cut off their topknots. Afterwards, Japanese men's hairstyles began to differ little from their counterparts in the West. Japanese women's hair fashions continued to flourish into the early twentieth century, but were eventually overtaken by European styles. A remarkable feature of this development was the establishment in 1885 of the Western Women's Hairstyle Association.⁴³³

In today's Japan, the most obvious carryover from that country's historic tradition is found in the quintessentially Japanese sport of sumo wrestling. All the competitors of the highest rank keep their hair long and tied in a knot. A special ritual takes place whenever a sumo grand champion retires, where his hair is publicly shorn.

Buddhist physical culture, which reached Japan and Korea through China, is something of an anomaly in these countries. In allowing their heads to be shaven, Buddhist monks and nuns submitted themselves to a humiliation similar to that traditionally inflicted on a criminal. In the Confucian context, with its emphasis on filial piety, shaving the head was frowned on since it entailed willingly disfiguring the body one had been given by one's parents.

From 841 to 846, there was a sustained revolt against Buddhist culture in China, led by Emperor Wu-tsung (814-46, emperor: 841-46). More than 4,600 monasteries had been destroyed and 260,000 monks and nuns returned to lay life. The motives behind the anti-Buddhist movement and official persecution were many, not the least of which was the emperor's desire for the land and wealth of the monasteries. Significant also was a widespread resentment of Buddhist practices that opposed traditional Chinese values.⁴³⁴

In ways both subtle and overt, the spread of European secular culture worldwide undermined traditions that considered the body sacred and inviolate. Where the clamor for Western modes and ideologies was not so enthusiastic, mission schools performed the necessary work of alienating the young from their visceral sense of the divine. On five continents, mandatory schooling meant children of once-proud nations were taken from

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their grandfather's cultural patrimony, made to speak a foreign language, dressed in ill-fitting Western clothes, and shorn like so many sheep.

With the British defeat of the armies of the kingdom of Punjab in the late 1840's, even the disciples of the great Guru Nanak felt the oppressive weight of alienation. Their erstwhile maharaja, just nine years old, was taken to England as a ward of the British crown. Mission schools began operating with active government support. Young men converted to Christianity. Some cut their long hair and discarded their turbans. Often, there were well-paying government positions or educational opportunities waiting for them.

A few great souls sensed a contrary wind. Charles Darwin (1809-1882), the great author of the theory of evolution, himself respected the natural wisdom of his physical form. The master naturalist allowed his beard to grow unhindered.

Another visionary based in England retained his long hair and a full beard. The ideas and predictions of Karl Marx (1818-1883), while not entirely correct, proved to have an incalculable effect on nations, peoples and economies through the twentieth century.

In Russia, the great writer and philanthropist who gave the world a timeless legacy in the form of *War and Peace* and other works, in his middle age decided to keep himself unshorn. A sympathizer and supporter of the Old Believers, Count Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) was his name.

In Bengal, another prolific writer and humanist, the author of *Gitanjali* and countless other poems and songs, made up his mind during a long ship voyage to England to chuck his old razor overboard. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) remained handsomely bearded and longhaired for the rest of his life.

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), the Irish-born author and social activist, considered the greatest English playwright of modern times, looked in the mirror one fateful day and decided he would rather devote his time to writing than scraping endless stubble from his face. He is well remembered as a wry-witted bard with a wispy white beard.

Then, in the early 1950's a subculture of bearded and longhaired poets took shape in and around San Francisco. The members of this avant-garde group distinguished themselves by their nonconformist ideology, their alternately Buddhist and hedonist inclinations, and their flow-of-consciousness style of art. Their individualism, expressed in their appearance, their lifestyle and their art, exuded a deep disdain for the facile niceties of social convention. The better-known "beatniks," were Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder.

The largely apolitical beatnik movement evolved an activist bent in the mid-1960s. A sometimes-chaotic amalgam of black civil rights movement, anti-Vietnam War activism, psychedelia and high-flown American idealism spawned the longhaired hippies of Haight-Ashbury in 1967's "summer of love." Concurrently, the Black Panthers, with their schools, food programs, guns, berets and frizzed-out Afro hairstyles challenged the oppressive mood of America's inner cities.

Woodstock, "three days of love, peace and music" in August of 1968 saw 300,000 American youth, disenchanted with their society's operative values of power and greed, become a formidable social force in their own right. *Hair*, the popular musical that started on Broadway and played in twenty cities worldwide, sold audiences on the flagrantly ostentatious, with a longhaired youthful cast and one famous scene in the buff.

Darlin', give me a head with hair, long beautiful hair,
Shining, gleaming, steaming, flaxen, waxen,
Give me down to there hair, shoulder length or longer,
Here, baby, there, momma, ev'rywhere, daddy, daddy,
Hair, hair, hair, hair, hair, hair, hair, hair,
Flow it, show it, long as God can grow it, my hair.⁴³⁵

from the *Hair* theme song

The intergenerational standoff of those times was memorably captured by Yippie activist Jerry Rubin (1935-94) in the following dialogue from his book *Do It!*

"Aunt Sadie, long hair is a commie plot! Long hair gets people uptight – more uptight than ideology, cause long hair is communication. We are a new minority group, a nationwide community of longhairs,

a new identity, new loyalties. We longhairs recognize each other as brothers in the street. Young kids identify short hair with authority, discipline, unhappiness, boredom, rigidity, hatred of life – and long hair with letting go, letting your hair down, being free, being open...”

“But, Jerry...” Aunt Sadie stammered.

“Aunt Sadie, long hair is our black skin. Long hair turns white middle-class youth into niggers. Amerika is a different country when you have long hair. We’re outcastes. We, the children of the white middle class, feel like Indians, blacks, Vietnamese, the outsiders in Amerikan history. ...Long hair polarizes every scene, Aunt Sadie. It’s instant confrontation. Everyone is forced to become an actor, and that’s revolutionary in a society of passive consumers...”

“...Aunt Sadie, you won’t believe this, but you’re uptight about your body. Man was born to let his hair grow long and to smell like a man. We are descended from the apes and we’re proud of our ancestry. We’re natural men lost in a world of machines and computers. Long hair is more beautiful than short hair. We love our bodies. We even smell our armpits once in a while.”

...Aunt Sadie and I weren’t getting very far. It was sad that the two black sheep of the family couldn’t identify with each other.

“Jerry,” Aunt Sadie said, getting up to leave. “Just remember one thing: there are two classes in the world, the bourgeoisie and the working class. You’re either on one side or the other. It has nothing to do with hair. If only you’d get a haircut. You’re only hurting yourself...”

I embraced her, took the \$20 she gave me to buy “some nice clothes,” and waved good-bye. “Watch out, Aunt Sadie!” I shouted as she left. “Some of the most longhaired people I know are bald.”⁴³⁶

Soon after, one Bob Marley (1945-1981), a charismatic Jamaican musician with a number of popular hits to his name, began a journey into the world of Rastafarian culture. Along with shunning alcohol, tobacco, meat and salt – and taking up marijuana as a sacrament – Marley allowed his hair to grow, uncombed and uncut, into natural “dreadlocks,” so named for non-believers’ aversion to their appearance. Marley’s music and persona helped Rasta culture, with its distinctive look, spread into North America, Europe and Africa.⁴³⁷

Most Rastafarians have Africa in their genes. They aspire toward a life that is natural, enobled and sanctified. Leaving the hair to grow satisfies their feel for naturalness. Rastas are also conscious that having it grow out, gives them the appearance of a lion with his distinctive mane. This is important to the Rastas since they are conscious of the Negroes’ humiliation as slaves in the Americas, yet equally proud of their African heritage. Rastafarians revere Haile Selassie (1892-1975, emperor of Ethiopia: 1930-36, 1941-74) as a messiah figure. One of Selassie’s titles was “Lion of Judah.” Rastafarians find their sense of sacredness in two verses in the Old Testament they accept as applying especially to them. One is the injunction (Leviticus 19:27) not to cut their beards. The other is a verse from Numbers (6:5):

All the days of their nazirite vow no razor shall come upon the head; until the time is completed for which they separate themselves to the Lord, they shall be holy; they shall let the locks of the head grow long.⁴³⁸

In a talk Afro-American novelist Alice Walker (1944-) gave during a visit to her alma mater, she shared with the students her own experience of the relationship between hair and spiritual evolution. It all began during a long period of introspection.

Why was it that, when I meditated and sought the escape hatch at the top of my brain, which, at an earlier stage of growth, I had been fortunate enough to find, I now encountered a ceiling, as if the route to merge with the infinite I had become used to was plastered over?

One day, after I had asked myself this question earnestly for half a year, it occurred to me that in my physical self there remained one last barrier to my spiritual liberation, at least in the present phase: my hair.

...I remembered years of enduring hairdressers – from my mother onward – doing missionary work on my hair. They dominated, suppressed, controlled. Now more or less free, it stood this way and that. I would call up friends across the country to report on its antics. It never thought of lying down. Flatness, the missionary position, did not interest it. It grew. Being short, cropped off near the root,

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another missionary “solution,” did not interest it either. It sought more and more space, more light, more of itself. It loved to be washed, but that was it.

Eventually I knew *precisely* what hair wanted: it wanted to grow, to be itself, to attract lint, if that was its destiny, but to be left alone by anyone, including me, who did not love it as it was. What do you think happened? (Other than I am now able, as an added bonus, to comprehend Bob Marley as the mystic his music has always indicated he was.) The ceiling at the top of my brain lifted; once again my mind (and spirit) could get outside myself. I would not be stuck in restless stillness, but would continue to grow. The plant was above ground!⁴³⁹

In *Iron John*, his classic study of the mythic dimension of modern male psychology, poet and culture guru Robert Bly (1926-) offered his own impressions of the primal significance of natural hair.

The mythological systems associate hair with the instinctive and the sexual and the primitive. What I’m suggesting, then, is that every modern male has, lying at the bottom of his psyche, a large, primitive being covered with hair down to his feet. Making contact with this Wild Man is the step the Eighties male or the Nineties male has yet to make. That bucketing-out process has yet to begin in our contemporary culture.⁴⁴⁰

...whether the haired people are symphony conductors with flowing hair, or corporate men with medium-cut, gray flannel hair, so to speak, or the real pruners of extravagance, the fundamentalists who favor crewcuts or shaved heads, the amount of hair allowed suggests how far the instincts are curtailed and the spontaneity curbed...⁴⁴¹

In the days when longer hair had not yet found acceptance in America’s close-cropped culture, one Yogi Bhanjan cited the influence of a passing comet, Kahoutek, traditionally a sign of changing times. He reminded his students that the word comet itself meant “longhaired,” in reference to the trailing corona of the heavenly body.

Yogi Bhanjan advised his students, many of them already keeping naturally flowing locks, that their hair served a purpose. In his words, “God didn’t just have some extra hair lying around, then stuck it on the human head!”

According to Yogi Bhanjan, the hair served as antennae, drawing vitamin D and subtle energy especially for the brain. To maximize its benefits, he suggested his students wind their hair up into a knot like an induction coil or radio antenna on top of their heads. To keep it clean and modest, he recommended covering it with a thin cotton head cover, such as a turban. Evenings, he advised the hair be let down, combed and braided, preferably with a wooden comb. Such a comb would create no electric discharge in the hair.

Yogi Bhanjan also advised his students not to wear their hair over their foreheads. According to him, the forehead bone is porous in order to admit light to the pineal gland. He advised that wearing the hair in bangs interferes with this natural transmission of light to the brain’s master gland.⁴⁴² The hair on a man’s chin, on the other hand, served to insulate his lunar center, helping to keep him constant in the face of waxing and waning emotions.

The yoga master and devotee of Guru Nanak also recommended keeping the hair under the armpits and on the legs, where most women, conditioned by social norms, shaved. According to Yogi Bhanjan, the hair under the joints served to strengthen the body’s natural electromagnetic field. Shaving the hair from the armpits negatively affected the conjunction of the sympathetic, parasympathetic and central nervous systems in that area. The fine hair on the legs related to the functions of the pituitary gland and the electromagnetic field of the lower spine.⁴⁴³

Through the history of *homo sapiens* and from culture to culture, there have been many ideas about what do with the natural complement of hair that adorns our very human body from head to foot. Perhaps the least adverse effects we might garner from hindering nature’s intention to deliver us a splendid bouquet of long, silky hair are: all that time lost in vainly resisting our chromosomal destiny, and the dissipation of bodily energy and nutrients in alternately growing, then removing, our own hair.

Then again, if the yogis are right and hair has a function correlative to our nervous system, the body’s electromagnetic field and the higher functions of the brain, we must all be fundamentally poorer in its absence.

Skin Art

Tattoos and other types of skin markings have existed for many thousands of years. The primeval “ice man” discovered frozen in the Italian Alps in 1991 was tattooed. According to scientists, he must have lived sometime between 3300 and 3200 BCE. Tattoos have also been found on Egyptian mummies dating from about 2100 BCE. While classical Greek culture never adopted tattooing as a form of bodily ornamentation, their literature and artifacts indicate an awareness of the practice among their northern neighbors, the Thracians. The discovery of the frozen body of a tattooed warrior in western Siberia tells us the practice also existed in the Scythian culture around 500 BCE. Tattooing must have also been in vogue at some time in ancient Israel, since there is a Biblical injunction (Leviticus 19:28) against the practice.

European explorers in Africa were amazed at the ways tribes and families identified themselves with distinctive scarring and tattooing. Three oblique cuts on one cheek and a cross on the other, for example, distinguished the members of the Mahee tribe. The Nyambanas of southern Africa were characterized by a row of knobs, like pea-size warts, from the upper part of their forehead to the tip of their nose. The tribal mark of the Bunns consisted of three slashes from the crown of the head down the face toward the mouth. The ridges of flesh stood out in bold relief. In central Africa, the Bornouese had twenty scarred lines on each side of their face, from the corners of the mouth towards the angles of the lower jaw and cheekbone. In addition, they had one cut in the center of the forehead, six on each arm, six on each leg, four on each breast and nine on each side above the hips, ninety-one in all.

Cultures on every continent also developed traditions in which pictorial body art might serve an array of purposes other than tribal identity. A design or representation might simply adorn the bearer. It could be an indication of success, power, nobility or nobility.

By representing an animal, the wearer hoped to embody its distinctive characteristic. In the North American Indian tradition, the bear indicated strength. In the Japanese tradition, the carp represented courage and steadfastness. On some Pacific islands, people would wear representations of shark teeth to guard them against attack. In northern Africa and South America, various designs were employed as a magical defense against hostile spirits and diseases.

On the Indian subcontinent, indigenous tribes had their own distinctive tattoos, prominently featuring tigers, birds and monkeys. In Rajasthan, traders and ironsmiths distinguished themselves by unique designs engraved onto their faces. Some lower caste Hindu women decorated their arms, feet and foreheads with religious motifs, such as conches and lotuses. In Punjab, the male members of a notorious wandering tribe, known as “Baurias,” made themselves recognizable by three brands on their body, while female members employed five tattoo marks on their face.

The Picts of ancient Britain tattooed their bodies. The body of the Saxon King Harold (circa 1022-1066) was identified after the Battle of Hastings by his tattoos, one of which was the name “Edith” written on his heart. The practice disappeared from Europe with the rise of Christianity.

Thus, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Europeans were deeply intrigued and enchanted by written accounts and illustrations of exotic aboriginal people, their skins adorned with pictures and designs. Hapless tribal peoples were toured and exhibited in cities and palaces as freaks and curiosities.

European interest in tattooing took on a new bent in 1770 when explorer James Cook returned from the island of Tahiti. Cook and his crew were fascinated with the indigenous body art from which the present word “tattoo” is derived. On a second voyage, many of the crew had their own bodies decorated in a style similar to the Tahitian warriors, whom they admired.

While missionaries in indigenous cultures discouraged the “primitive” practice of tattooing, late eighteenth century Europe was enthralled with the ideal of the “noble savage.” Struck by idyllic accounts of life among the Tahitians, many people in dreary Europe adopted the decorative custom of the islanders with unbridled enthusiasm.

In Japan, the tradition of tattooing goes back at least as far as the third century CE, when a Chinese account of the islanders noted: “Men both great and small tattoo their faces and work designs upon their bodies.”⁴⁴⁴ Centuries later, the tattooing of the whole body had become the identifying characteristic of

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members of Japan's distinctive *yakuza* gangs. Enthusiasts might have their entire bodies covered with resplendent designs of dragons, fish, gods, flowers, snakes, and famous lovers.

As access to Japan became possible in the nineteenth century, western ships regularly brought local Japanese tattoo masters on board, where they would busy themselves for two or three days tattooing officers and sailors alike. The fad spread quickly from deckhands to famous royalty. Czar Nicholas II of Russia and George V of England (then the Duke of York) were tattooed by the famous Japanese artist Hori Chiyo. The first professional tattoo shop opened in London in 1870. The first tattoo machine was patented there in 1891. Tattoo parlors subsequently sprang up in all the major cities of Europe and America.

Women were not to be excluded from the tattoo fashion. Lady Randolph Churchill, wife of Lord Randolph and mother of Sir Winston, wore patriotic tattoos commemorating the royal coronation of 1901. By 1910, red lips, pink blushes and dark eyebrows were being engraved on the skins of women of society. This development coincided with the growing acceptability of makeup. What in the 1890s had not been 'nice' to admit using, by 1909 was being openly sold over the counter in London.⁴⁴⁵

By this time, the tattooing fad had reached its peak. Concerns emerged that syphilis could be spread through unhygienic tattooing practices. Tattooing had also developed a reputation as a crude, low-class art form. A twelve-year study of tattooing practices of men in the US navy completed in 1914 revealed that, while 60% of the subjects were tattooed, traditional patriotic and seafaring motifs had become less popular. Lucky numbers and dates, mottoes and wordy tributes to lost comrades or past glories had instead become the favored themes among American seamen. Tattoos had also become more erotic. Where "belles" in nineteenth century depictions would have been clothed, more recent tattoos featured nude women. Considered unsuitable for its armed forces, US military authorities began to discourage the practice.

Patriotic tattooing enjoyed a revival during World War Two and the Korean War, but outside the armed forces the tattoo had become a symptom of disaffection and alienation. Convicts, motorcycle gang members, prostitutes and other social deviants were recognized as clients of the tattoo parlor. For them, a tattoo made a statement of defiant independence. With countless individual variations, the tattoo proclaimed to the world at large, "This body is mine, to do with as I please."

As a result of the evolving popular perception of tattooing as a health risk and an art form for sociopaths, tattoo parlors were banned in a number of American cities during the 1960s. The same decade saw the beginning of a proliferation of new styles. The old standard themes gave way to an era of custom designs. Serving still as rites of passage, tattoos began to express membership in new communities – punk, gay and lesbian - as well as new languages of dissent.

In an increasingly impersonal corporate culture, today's tattooist stakes out a claim for inviolable space. In a culture of endless innovation, the tattooist makes a claim for permanence. In a society hell-bent on the commodification of virtually everything, the tattooist makes an artistic statement on the only thing they know is theirs: their body. In a culture of comfort and convenience, the tattooist bucks the trend and undertakes a painful initiation.

Remodeling the body

The practice of reshaping the body to conform to a culturally determined ideal is and has been widely practiced in cultures primitive and modern. The remodeled body can serve as a status symbol, distinguishing the privileged upper class from ordinary folk. Where conformity to some artificial ideal becomes the cultural norm, the visible contrast between members and non-members can be very conspicuous. Outsiders may find themselves cruelly ostracized.

Even the skull, the centre of human intelligence, has been deformed to conform with certain culturally acquired preferences. Deliberately flattened or elongated craniums are historically associated with the Mangebetu tribe of the Congo and the tribes native to the southern and central coasts of British Columbia. They have also been recognized among the royalty of ancient Egypt. Examples have even been found in rural parts of France, Belorussia and the Caucasus into the twentieth century.

In every case, the skull is conditioned since early in life, while the bones are still malleable. An infant might be fastened to a cradle board. In childhood and youth, the head is molded between two boards or by tying a cloth tightly around the head, until the desired result is achieved.

The outcome can be a flattening of the forehead or the back of the head or an elongated skull. While the result might pique the curiosity of a visiting anthropologist, within the society where it occurs, it is either taken for granted or prized as a mark of distinction.⁴⁴⁶

As for the neck, the Padaung women of Myanmar are famous for their culture of artificially elongating theirs to incredible dimensions. By wearing a coiled brass ring, they are able to distend their necks up to a length of 15 inches (38 cm). Three or four thoracic vertebrae may be pulled up into the neck in the process.

Ancient Incas, Australian aborigines, and various tribes in Africa and Melanisia have been commonly known to remove one or both of their incisors. Chipping or filing the teeth into points or various designs has been practiced in Africa, Mexico, Central America, Vietnam and Indonesia. Incrusting the teeth with precious stones or metal has also been practiced in Southeast Asia, India, Mexico and Ecuador.

The enlargement of the lower, and less frequently the upper, lip for the insertion of a decorative plug or other ornament was common among the Indians of the Northwest coast of North America and among the Inuit. It is still practiced by the tribal peoples of central Africa and among lowland Indians of South America. The women of the Sara tribe of Africa are famous for their vastly enlarged lips, which are slit, then stretched with saucer-shaped plugs.

A related custom, the perforation of the nose or ears for the insertion of a decorative piece of jewelry, is and has historically been practiced in many cultures worldwide. In some cultures, the ears of little girls are pierced shortly after birth to allow for earrings.

America has been home to a newly distinctive piercing culture since the early 1970s. Piercing and related forms of body modification started in the sadomasochistic subculture of California, although punks and the broader homosexual population also gravitated to this new form of body art. Gradually, a small network of individuals began to expand and professionalize their activities, marketing special jewelry for piercings, developing new techniques and disseminating information.

By the late 1990s, what would be considered purely “decorative” piercings – rings through the pinna, tragus or lobe of the ear, or through the nostrils, eyebrows, navel or tongue – had become fairly commonplace. The more “erotic” piercings – through the nipples or genitals – had also become widespread in certain social milieux. Most unusual were other forms of bodily modification, such as stretching, tongue-splitting, genital modification, metal implants and branding.

Finger and toenails have also been objects of attention. In America, nail polish was created using a formula similar to that used for car paint in 1925. The artificial nail followed in 1934. Nail art, tiny painted motifs sometimes including jewels or crystals, came into vogue in the 1980s, although its origins date back some 7,000 years to ancient China.

The historical Chinese custom of foot-binding began about 500 CE to appeal to the Chinese sense of the aesthetic. Bound feet came to be known as “lotuses.” This painful culture of beauty was passed from mother to daughter up until the early years of the twentieth century.

Little girls first had their feet tied tight between the ages of five and seven. Through months and years of pus, blood and pain, there emerged the desired three-inch foot. In order to achieve this deformation, the bones, muscles and ligaments were terribly compressed and mangled together.

This tradition finds its expression in the popular folk tale of Yeh Shen, a peasant girl who overcomes her cruel stepmother and stepsisters to be chosen as the bride of a prince. The prince’s fixation on Yeh Shen’s tiny feet reflects the origins of the tale in sixth century China. The English rendition of the story is known to us as “Cinderella.”⁴⁴⁷

After the Manchu invasion of China, there was an attempt to ban foot-binding. A decree of 1642 imposed heavy penalties on anyone who continued the custom. Twenty years later, a similar law was passed. The father of any girl born after 1662, whose feet were found to be bound was to be flogged forty times if he was an official, or exiled if a commoner. If a commoner pleaded ignorance of the law, he was to be flogged forty times and made to wear a large, square wooden collar as a sign of his offence. These measures proved very unpopular

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among the Han Chinese, already burdened by the strict enforcement of the Machu ban on their traditional hairstyle. Three years later, the Manchu rulers were forced to rescind the law and accommodate the local custom.

Resistance to foot-binding cropped up occasionally during the 1700s. One noteworthy instance concerns a gentleman who had been counseled to wed a certain educated young woman. She obviously cherished an independent spirit, since despite the nearly universal incidence of foot-binding, her feet had grown to their natural dimensions. As a way of knowing her heart, the suitor asked the young woman to compose a poem. She wrote:

Three-inch bowed shoes were non-existent in ages before,
And great Kwanyin¹ had two bare feet for one to adore.
I don't know when this custom began.
It must have been started by a despicable man!⁴⁴⁸

Contact with the West through trade, wars and missionary endeavors caused a general re-evaluation by the Chinese of many of their traditional customs and beliefs in the mid-nineteenth century. In this atmosphere of increasing self-criticism, the Manchu government passed yet another edict against longstanding practice in 1847.

The establishment of the Unbound Foot Association in Canton in 1894 reflected growing popular opposition to the crippling custom, led by liberal intellectuals and missionaries. By the 1920's, the changing role of women in the new, forward-looking republic ensured the end of foot-binding in China.

People everywhere like to be admired for their good looks. A handsome appearance, whatever that might mean in any given social context, enhances one's marriageability and inspires others' confidence. In some respects, however, contemporary western culture does differ significantly from traditional societies.

The urbanization and commercialization of the United States, especially in the early years of the twentieth century, has created a culture of strangers. When America was a mostly rural society, Americans lived, like people in traditional cultures around the world, in established communities where they were familiar with and to the other members of their immediate society. By comparison, today's Americans who pull up their roots and move every seven years on average, have no ancestral home, no particular geographic identity. They no longer consider themselves an integral part of a large network of family, extending from hearthside to hearthside and over the span of generations, as people in traditional cultures do.⁴⁴⁹

Traditional considerations of family honor have long ago faded into obscurity in the mind of a modern American. Typically transient and urbanized, they have no clan. With just a few exceptions – such as the Rockefellers, Kennedys, the Vanderbilts – a family name in American society is merely a functional moniker and no longer a badge of distinction or an indelible mark of disrepute.

If an American is recognized at all in these days of fleeting encounters and impersonal urban culture, it is likely to be because of their physical appearance. They may be noticed and remembered for their conformity or nonconformity to certain consensual standards of beauty. In personal relationships and in business, outward appearances have assumed unprecedented importance. This pressure continues unabated into middle and old age, as the media bombards the mind and senses with endless images of nubile and handsome men and women.

In this image-conscious reality, who can afford to look old? Whether to help find new relationships or to keep up old ones, denizens of today's "ornamental culture" understandably spend a large part of their national wealth on cultivating their physical appearance. Women in America alone are estimated to spend \$20 billion on cosmetics each year and more on diets, hair care, clothes, fitness programs, and esthetic surgery.⁴⁵⁰

One aspect of this phenomenon that well exemplifies the rise of ornamental culture is the bodybuilding movement. The modern culture of bodybuilding differs from the classical Greek in that the original Olympians focussed on the performance of actual athletic feats such as javelin throwing, wrestling and archery. The contests also had a practical significance, for human physical prowess was an important factor in times of war.

¹ Kwanyin: Buddhist goddess of mercy.

While the Romans disliked the nudity of the Olympics, and debased the original contests until they became grand spectacles of man and beast, slave and gladiator, they also took up some aspects of the physical culture of the Greeks. Throughout Rome, inspiring statues celebrated the grace and power of the well-proportioned human form. For ordinary Romans, the practice of physical exercises became fashionable as a prelude to that most popular pastime, an afternoon at the public bath.

After Rome, the first gymnasiums opened in Brussels in 1840, then in Paris in 1849. The first athletic club opened in New York in 1868. In 1891 the first weightlifting contest was held in London.

The attraction of men with extraordinary physiques was at first limited to circus sideshows, but by 1890 Eugene Sandow (1867-1925) was touring the world, posing and demonstrating his physical prowess. Sandow was a dedicated enthusiast and promoter. He invented metal barbells and published the first bodybuilding magazine. German-born Sandow became a naturalized Englishman and instructor to King Edward VII.

The development of a synthetic form of testosterone, a male growth hormone, in the 1930s was to have large repercussions for future Charles Atlases. By the 1956 Olympics, Soviet athletes especially were using the drug to perform at exceptionally high levels. An American doctor then created a more selective form, known as anabolic steroids. By 1965, the drug had pervaded both the bodybuilding universe and the world of Olympic competition. Ten years later, the International Olympic Committee banned the use of steroids in Olympic competitions, but not before it had developed a culture and a legacy of its own.

Steroids enhanced physical performances and created a new esthetic of grotesquely exaggerated physiques. The unintended consequences included lowering of the pitch of a user's voice, acne, abnormal enlargement of male breasts, and blocked circulation (leading in extreme cases to amputation of the legs, even death). Among users, steroids are also known to be responsible for "roid rage," inexplicable episodes of unmanageable anger.⁴⁵¹

From its roots in ancient Indian culture as a remedy for accused adulterers whose noses had been removed as punishment, and its history as a treatment for diminished syphilitic noses and devastating wounds of war, plastic surgery has become a common ingredient of today's American lifestyle. The number of cosmetic medical procedures in the United States are estimated at between 4.6 and 4.9 million annually and growing.⁴⁵² About 11% of these operations are on men and 65% on individuals with family income less than \$50,000 per year.⁴⁵³

Liposuction, the surgical removal of fat deposits, which was introduced in 1982, has become the most common treatment in the repertoire of cosmetic surgeons. Other popular treatments are breast augmentation, surgery to eliminate drooping eyelids and puffy bags below the eyes, facelifts, nose jobs, skin resurfacing, tummy tucks to reduce waist size due to obesity, male hair transplants, cheek implants, chin implants, and even buttock implants.

Underlying the growing urge among Americans to conform to a certain esthetic ideal are some dubious cultural prejudices. It is instructive to know that the first wave of elective plastic surgery took place in the closing years of the 1800s amidst a growing wave of xenophobia. The operation of choice then was rhinoplasty, remodeling of the prominent features of the Jewish or Mediterranean nose.

These biases continued as racial theories and ideologies gained currency. They effectively altered immigration policies in the United States and Canada. After first putting strict limitations on Asian immigrants, legislators set quotas that favored northern and western Europeans over "racially inferior" stocks from southern and eastern Europe.

In this context, there is a striking similarity between the fate of the 376 mostly Sikh passengers of the *Komagata Maru*, who embarked to Vancouver in 1914, only to be forced back to British India and the 933 Jewish refugees, who escaped the horrors of Kristalnacht aboard the *Saint Louis* in 1939, only to be refused entry to Havana and Miami, and ultimately condemned to return to Nazi Germany.

This prejudice of racial stereotypes has proven widespread and obdurate. In Tokyo, by the early 1960s, there were 108 surgery clinics serving 200,000 Japanese women wanting the "Elizabeth Taylor look." The most common operation transformed the typically single-fold oriental eyelids into double-fold western-style ones. From Singapore to Seoul, operations to make modest-sized breasts and typically oriental noses conform to the Hollywood model became increasingly popular. One Saigon plastic surgeon prided himself, according to a 1973 article in the *New York Times*, in his ability to remove "natural Asian defects" in an hour.⁴⁵⁴

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The years of American military involvement saw an accompanying explosion of westernized faces and bodies among young women of South Vietnam. The reunification of the war-torn country was followed by a nation-wide study of natural Vietnamese physiognomy, including the shape and form of the eyes, for the benefit of esthetic surgeons. Regardless of this laudable effort, because of the ubiquitous face of western culture, the remaking of traditional oriental eyes and noses remains at the centre of the practice of cosmetic surgery, even in communist Vietnam.

In America, the best-known makeover in recent years has been that of black pop star, Michael Jackson (1958-). In the course of numerous surgeries, the world-renowned celebrity managed to make himself look “partly child, partly adult, partly masculine, partly feminine”⁴⁵⁵ – and hardly black. In the words of social historian Elizabeth Haiken, “Jackson looks less like his presurgery self and more like Elizabeth Taylor than either patients or surgeons in previous generations would have believed possible.”⁴⁵⁶ His remade lips, nose and chin, and lightened complexion, which Jackson attributes to a skin condition, do not bode well for ordinary Afro-Americans who must each day bear the pressures of racial stigmatization.

Jackson’s living antithesis is Barbra Streisand, (1943-) the wealthy and influential American singer, whose career began in the 1960s. In spite of the media’s preoccupation with her nose, Jewish-born Streisand defied convention and carved out a highly successful career without cosmetic surgery.

While Americans are daily inundated with endless images of bland, flawless, youthful, beauty, and told emotional fulfillment and financial success depend on their emulating these qualities, another kind of beauty is gradually claiming its rightful place. As one commentator put it:

As the case of Streisand makes clear, we have begun to deliver ourselves from the tyranny of such ethnocentric norms in the last decades of the twentieth century; so that looking Niggerish or Kike-ish no longer seems as freakish as it once did, and the children of ‘lesser breeds’ no longer eat their hearts out because they do not look like Dick and Jane in their Primers.⁴⁵⁷

Yet the forces that urge Americans on to a utopia of perfect physiques and model complexions is deeply rooted and obdurate. In a defining presidential address delivered at the annual meeting of the American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery back in 1954, President William Milton Adams told his colleagues:

Comparatively few people who need our plastic surgery find their way to our doors. To be convinced of this fact, one has only to walk a block down a busy street; probably one of every five persons one meets will have some defect which could be improved or completely corrected by plastic surgery.

In all seriousness, the president continued:

It is as just and natural that any one with a structural defect should wish to have it corrected as it is that they should seek correction of an abnormally functioning gallbladder or other organ of the body. The very fact that such a person seeks correction of a defect indicates a higher order of intelligence and a sane and realistic attitude toward his abnormal anatomy.⁴⁵⁸

But what, indeed, is a defect? In Holland, the historic home to all kinds of freedoms and permissiveness, Sunny Berman, herself a former fashion model and actress, produced a documentary that visibly illustrated the endgame of the “beauty industry”. It aired on national Dutch television in 2007.

In *Beperkt houdbaar [Perishable]*, Bergman tells the true story of a teen girl who happened upon a pop-up that took her to porn site on the internet. The girl’s chance discovery of porn anatomy made her feel insecure. It eventually led her and her mother to the office of a cosmetic surgeon more than willing to make for the young woman a “designer vagina” just like the ones she saw on the porn site.

Bergman points out that the creation of unreal standards of feminine attractiveness is yet a new phenomenon. 100 years ago, a handful of fashion magazines did broadcast the print images of attractive women subliminally hawking everything from cars to canned soup to lingerie. And there were film divas, to be sure, but by today’s standards, those films were few and far between because the industry was still in its infancy.

Today we are simply inundated with digitally enhanced images of female attractiveness. These “hyper women” stare at us from massive billboards on the side of buildings and peer out demurely from video screens, glossy magazines, television, the tiny screens on our cell phones, and ads juxtaposed to capture our attention all over our commercial universe. Is it any wonder that a recent survey quoted by Bergman in her film indicates that 80% of women are unhappy with their bodies?

It may be time to re-examine our models of beauty, desirability and success. After all, why do we acclaim the Cindy Crawford and Claudia Schiffer as the models of our age, and not the Mother Therasas and Ralph Naders? Why is our hard-driving, prophylactic culture so obsessed with nubile symbols of fertility?

According to Elizabeth Haiken,

...in cosmetic surgery, medical and cultural values have intertwined to produce a practice that subverts our most cherished hopes even as it seems to fulfill them, that is both cause and consequence of a loss of faith in the possibility of transformation on a broader scale.⁴⁵⁹

But before we, too, abdicate, let us speculate on the following scenario: if every magazine that denounces ageism made a point of using models with graying hair and crow's feet; if every personnel manager who complains of the prejudice against older men hired one; if every middle-aged man who ran a personals ad requested a woman his own age, rather than one a minimum of five years younger; if every woman took her cosmetic budget for a year and sent it to Emily's List^u, that alien entity called "society" might start to look more malleable.⁴⁶⁰

Beauty and the Breast

The warm-blooded, generally hairy and live-bearing creatures of the world share a number of notable characteristics. As it happens, the one scientists picked for naming the entire genus, from blue whales to lemmings, and bats to *homo sapiens*, is the fact that we have mammary glands from which the mothers of our every species feed their young. For this reason, we are known as "mammals."

Among our particular species, female breasts have come to play a significant role in everything from fashion to advertising, art and pornography. In western culture in particular, there is little that catches the eye or engages the emotions like a woman's breasts. The politics of the breast are highly-charged and commercially exploitable, yet also intensely intimate and personal, for they are connected with our deepest emotions, our sense of security, nurturance and self.

In ancient cultures, such as Babylonia, Egypt and Israel, most mothers breast-fed their children for three years. The Quran instructed that even in the case of a divorce where the father has custody, the mother should be retained and compensated for breast-feeding an infant. If this became burdensome, hiring a wet nurse was allowed.⁴⁶¹

In classical Greek and Roman societies, wealthy mothers liked to engage a wet-nurse, rather than breast-feed. In Greece, the *duola* was kept on for six months. The same attitudes and practices pervaded medieval Europe where aristocratic women were thought to be too delicate to suckle their own children. There were always plenty of impoverished women willing to suckle the children of the rich for room and board or a small stipend.

The practice provided large families of heirs for wealthy families. By giving their infants over to be suckled by another, the natural birth control mechanism of the mother, which inhibited the return of her menses while she breast-fed, soon dissipated, rendering the new mother fertile, once again. As a result, upper class European women might have upwards of eighteen children in a lifetime. The poor, who married late and suckled others' children, became pregnant far less often.

A popular movement against the practice of wet-nursing took hold first in France, shortly thereafter in Italy, then slowly throughout Europe in the mid-eighteenth century. Philosophers, political writers, government officials and physicians led the momentum for reform, based on the emerging idea of a mother's important nurturing role in the psychological development of a child. Foremost in this movement was Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). In his influential treatise on education, *Emile*, he wrote:

There is no substitute for maternal solicitude. She who nurses another's child in place of her own is a bad mother, how can she be a good nurse? ...Do you wish to bring everyone back to his first duties? Begin with mothers. You will be surprised by the changes you will produce. Everything follows from this first depravity... (But) let mothers deign to nurse their children, morals will reform themselves,

^u Emily's List: an organization women political activists

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nature's sentiments will be awakened in every heart... Thus from the correction of this single abuse would soon result a general reform; nature would soon have reclaimed all its rights. Let women once again become mothers, men will soon become fathers and husbands again.⁴⁶²

The next cultural assault on the natural nutritive role of mothers' breasts was the invention in the 1860s of "infant formulas." At first, individualized formulas made up of specific combinations of nutriments, were only prescribed by doctors and formulated for malnourished infants on a case by case basis. Soon, however, products like Nestle's Milk Food began to be mass-produced and marketed.

In a related development, new methods of food processing allowed mothers to buy tins of human breast-milk on the open market. Begun in America on a for-profit basis, the small-scale industry was later redeployed as a cooperative to serve the needs of mothers unable to nurse their infants.⁴⁶³ Manufactured "baby foods" also helped women integrate themselves into the workforce.

Not content with marketing to women in the affluent countries of the northern hemisphere, large manufacturers of milk substitutes expanded their operations to Africa, South and Central America, Asia and Polynesia in the 1960s. By infiltrating the local health care systems, providing gifts and financial support to doctors and hospitals, outfitting their saleswomen in nurses' costumes and having them dispense free advice, advertising and samples at supposed clinics – the multinationals methodically set out to win the hearts and minds of mothers around the world.

A Western, modern and healthy image of bottle-feeding, was conveyed by featuring chubby Caucasian babies on labels, in attractively illustrated mother books, and on posters and in calendars. According to many observers, bottle-feeding came to be perceived by poor mothers as a status symbol, and they would even express their own milk into the gutter because they believed that by using "powdered milk" instead, their babies would grow up looking like the one on the label.⁴⁶⁴

The following statistics provide a sense of the business success of the formula producers. In Chile in 1960 over 90% of infants were being breast-fed. Just eight years later, the figure had fallen to below 10%. In Mexico, 95% of children were being breast-fed at the age of six months in 1960. After six years of aggressive marketing by Nestle and other multinationals, that figure had dropped to around 40%. While 80% of three-month-old infants had suckled their own mother's milk in Singapore in 1951, that figure was only 5% in 1971.⁴⁶⁵ According to reliable estimates, the total world market for commercial infant formula in the mid-1970s had reached some US\$ 4 billion, with annual growth of 15 to 20%, and sales in "developing countries" accounting for about half the total.⁴⁶⁶

Criticism of the marketing of breast milk substitutes dated back as far as 1939. In that year, Jamaican-born Dr. Cicely Williams (1893-1992) delivered an address called "Milk and Murder" to the Rotary Club of Singapore. Dr. Williams offered a stinging rebuke to formula manufacturers: "(I)f your lives were as embittered as mine is, by seeing day after day this massacre of the innocents by unsuitable feeding, then you would feel as I do that misguided propaganda on infant feeding should be punished as the most criminal form of sedition, and that these deaths should be regarded as murder."⁴⁶⁷

Dr. Williams was far ahead of her times. Her remarks were not published until forty years later. It was not until the late 1960s that Dr. Williams found a knowledgeable corroborating voice. In 1970, Dr. Derrick Jelliffe's findings on the detrimental effects of marketing practices on infant health in the Caribbean led to a special meeting sponsored by the Pan American Health Organization and the banning of mass media advertising of formula in Jamaica.

The crisis gained wide international attention in 1973 when a hard-hitting article was published in *New Internationalist*, a monthly magazine published by two British charities, Oxfam and Christian Aid. Their opposition focussed on three areas. The first extolled the nutritional formulation of breast-milk, evolved over eons, as the best possible food for human babies; the positive emotional bonding between mother and child as a result of mothers nursing their babies; and the important relationship between breast-feeding and child-spacing.

A second argument focussed on the deadly effects of marketing infant formula in so-called "developing countries" where the requisite clean drinking water, income and literacy for the safe use of the product were lacking. Researchers found, in country after country, that mothers without safe drinking water could not afford the fuel to boil water and feeding utensils, let alone a refrigerator to keep prepared foods safely. They also found that just providing enough formula for one infant absorbed between 10% and 80% of the average wage, leading

many mothers to overly dilute the formula. Illiteracy also proved to be an obstacle, since most mothers could not read directions, even in their native language.

A study carried out in Punjabi villages in the 1950s showed that of twenty infants who were not breast-fed from birth, only one survived past six months of age. Worldwide, an epidemic of infants fed over-diluted, contaminated feeds from an unhygienic bottle, rather than the nutritious and pure breast milk intended by nature, added up to an estimated one million baby deaths annually from diarrhea and malnutrition.

A final argument targetted the economic aspect of treating ten million infants afflicted by malnutrition and diarrhea due to inadequate feeding practices. Worldwide, economists estimated the cost at US\$1 billion per year. Moreover, they calculated the world loss in production of human breast milk in 1977 at 12 billion liters (3 billion US gallons), to which they attributed a value of US\$6 billion.⁴⁶⁸ The cost of importing an equivalent value of breast milk substitute would be a significant loss in terms of a country's foreign exchange. Added to this was the impact on national resources of additional births due to the loss of contraceptive protection conferred by breast-feeding.

Given that, according to a UNICEF estimate, at least 98% of mothers were capable of breastfeeding and given the consensus, acknowledged even by the formula manufacturers, that breast milk was better, cheaper and safer than anything a mother can buy, a vigorous campaign began to take shape to oppose the practices of the multinationals.⁴⁶⁹ The battle was centered in North America and it took several forms.

A crucial aspect of the overall effort was a widely-publicized boycott of Nestlé, the Swiss food giant with the largest share of the formula market internationally. To enforce the boycott and raise public awareness of the issues, a number of organizations sprang into being. Many were supported by activist Protestant denominations. There followed a flood of publications and media coverage of the benefits of breast-feeding and the risks of formula feeding.

The increased awareness of the issues among pediatricians, public health workers and specialists in international development issues led a United Nations committee to create the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes in 1981. Finally, three years later, Nestlé signed a truce with the International Nestle Boycott Committee and the Infant Formula Action Coalition. The settlement saw the multinational agree to stop all its various efforts at promoting breast-milk substitutes in developing countries, although it insisted on continuing to advertise them in Europe and North America.⁴⁷⁰

Quite apart from the main controversy, the La Leche League, formed by a small group of Catholic women in Illinois in 1956, quietly and informally worked to educate and help women breast-feed their children. The efforts of that original gathering, which over thirty-five years grew to more than 3,000 groups in forty-eight countries, proved influential in reversing the trend away from breast-feeding in industrialized countries.

Yet, even the significant world-wide shift in medical opinion about the values of breast-feeding has been hard-pressed to change the habits of women faced with widespread cultural bias against the practice, as well as economic pressures for a mother to wean her infant quickly and return to the workforce. Even in largely rural India, where women once breast-fed their children for three years, now the average is about half that.⁴⁷¹ In the United States, where the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breast-feeding for an entire year, after the first month, the share of American women who do so is down to 67%. By the time six months have passed, that figure has shrunk to a mere 30%.⁴⁷²

The benefits for children, cited by US Surgeon General Dr. David Satchel, are several. One boon is the well-documented link between breast-feeding, mother-child bonding and mental health. Breast-feeding is also shown to reduce a baby's risk of diabetes and allergies. A decreased rate of sudden infant death syndrome has also been associated with breast-feeding.

For the mother, the proven benefits include reducing postpartum blood loss, delaying the resumption of the menstrual cycle, speeding up the return to her pre-pregnancy weight and, over the long term, decreasing her chances of developing breast or ovarian cancer.⁴⁷³

Another development that has undermined the essential mammalian virtue of breast-feeding is the practice of surgical breast enlargement. From its beginnings in the 1960s, helping women traumatized by the removal of one or both breasts due to cancer regain their sense of wholeness and self-esteem, the practice of cosmetic surgery involving implants has evolved to become a highly profitable industry. About 80% of women undergo reconstructive breast surgery for cosmetic reasons only. By 1990, 2 million American women had opted to have

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silicone implants to cosmetically enhance the size of their breasts, and 130,000 women were opting for the operation every year: an industry worth US\$450 million annually.⁴⁷⁴

The industry promises to turn ordinary women into stunning visual equivalents of the lasciviously buxom showgirls the men in their lives ogle daily in films, magazines and television. If the allure of surgical “breast enhancement” is considerable, so are the risks and critiques of the practice.

In the United States, surgeons advertise without alluding to the pain and risk, charging huge sums. Half their clients are low-income women. Not only do most of these women jeopardize their ability to breast-feed their babies (though it is possible in some cases), a woman may also lose the sexual and sensual feelings she might otherwise feel through her breasts. If a nipple has been surgically repositioned, the delicate nerve structure leading to the hypothalamus and the complex endocrine system involved in arousal are unlikely to function as before. Imagine thousands of men having part of their body reshaped surgically and losing all function just so it could be gazed upon and handled by women! The tragedy of fashion is that a woman can lose the little illusion of power that she has paid for so dearly in money and pain.⁴⁷⁵

The cultural pressure for many women to go under the knife is tremendous, especially since western doctors have begun to classify small-breastedness as a “disease,” remediable by simple surgery.⁴⁷⁶ This newfound pathology referred to by Western health practitioners as “micromastia” (small-breastedness) can take on interesting dimensions when seen from a historical or cross-cultural perspective.

During the “roaring twenties,” for example, flat-chested women were considered most fashionable. In France today, plastic surgeons have found that the most desired breast size is smaller than what it is in the United States. In Brazil, members of the country’s moneyed class go for breast reductions. A Brazilian girl may be given the surgery as a present on her fifteenth birthday. One plastic surgeon has openly speculated that Caucasian Brazilian families are driven by a motivation to distinguish themselves from large-breasted Blacks of the poorer classes. On the other hand, neighboring Argentineans, in whom macho Spanish blood flows strongly, like to accentuate sexual differences by going for big-breastedness.⁴⁷⁷

The first serious rumblings against the medical breast-enhancement industry began to surface in the early 1990s. Doctors were deluged by thousands of women who had undergone silicone injections and implants and since developed a variety of illnesses: fatigue, pains, rashes, hair loss, memory loss, swellings of an indeterminate nature.

Investigating these allegations, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), responsible for the healthful administration of all surgical and other medical types of devices in the United States banned the further sale of silicone implants in 1992. According to the FDA head, Dr. David Kessler, the implants were not banned because they were known to pose a risk, but because the manufacturers had not fulfilled their legal responsibilities to collect data on the question.⁴⁷⁸

By 1994, 18,000 cases had been filed against the four manufacturers of silicone implants. In response, an unprecedented US\$ 4.2 billion settlement was reached covering women alleged to have contracted any of eight diseases covered in the suit. Critics said the amount was inadequate to cover the long-term care of victims. By the next year, the number of litigants had swollen to 400,000 and the chemical giant, Dow Corning, was forced to file for government bankruptcy as protection from its creditors.

Under pressure from manufacturers, the medical community and the public, and in the light of conflicting evidence, the FDA later revoked the ban on most forms of the implants, while issuing a cautionary note to the public. According to the FDA’s product information update, published in September 2000, there remain legitimate concerns that implants might contribute to auto immune diseases, where the body’s immune defenses attack the body’s own cells. Lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, polymyositis, dermatomyositis and progressive systemic sclerosis are in this category. There are also suspected causal links with fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome.

FDA studies also showed that up to 64% of women with implants were unable to breast-feed, compared with only 7% of American women in a similar study who had not been fitted with implants. The report acknowledged there was no way of detecting silicone in breast milk. A study to detect silicon came to a grinding halt when researchers could not find enough women with implants still able to breast-feed. Other reports, not cited by the FDA, recorded cases of esophageal damage in the infants of mothers with implants.⁴⁷⁹ The

conservative FDA report ended ominously, saying the effects of surgical breast implants on infants either in utero or from ingesting silicone in breast milk remained simply unknown.

Changing Gender

Another controversial area of plastic surgery is the specialty of transsexual operations. They are performed today in either of two instances.

In the one case, when a newborn's genitalia are visibly ambiguous, when for example an infant is born with a penis, a testicle and an ovary, the surgeon might operate in such a way as to render the infant's physical characteristics either entirely male or unequivocally female. Historically, those rare individuals known as "hermaphrodites" or "androgynes" had for long been allowed to determine for themselves, at adulthood, their sexual orientation. This tradition changed in the late Victorian era, with the proliferation of public medicine, surgical anesthesia and antisepsis.

Surgeons are also known to change the defining sexual attributes of an adult who feels their inner disposition does not match their outer gender – that they have been born with the wrong body.

The first case of an adult sex-change procedure was recorded in Germany in the early 1930s. In Dresden, a Danish painter named Einar Wegener found sympathetic doctors willing to relieve him of his physical and psychological trauma. Wegener suffered from abdominal pains, a frequently bleeding nose, and the compulsion to dress and act as a female persona whom he called "Lili."

Wegener had first dressed as a woman when a model failed to appear for a scheduled sitting for his artist wife. This Lili eventually became a companion to his wife and an escape from masculinity for Wegener. Over the course of several months, in 1930 and 1931, Wegener underwent three operations. First, there was major abdominal surgery to obtain ovarian grafts to effect his hormonal sex change. Then, Wegener submitted himself to castration. Finally, there was an operation to provide a vagina for Lili. This last procedure was not successful, as Lili died on the operating table of heart arrest.

With continually improving surgical and hormonal technologies, other operations followed in the late 1940s. The case of George Jorgensen (1926-89), a former American soldier, captured the world's attention when in 1952 he became physically transformed into Christine Jorgensen. In 1965, one of the United States' foremost medical institutions, John Hopkins Hospital, officially announced that it would devote its considerable prestige and resources to transsexual surgeries and case management. By now, thousands, if not tens of thousands, of such operations have been performed.

Since the recognition of "gender dysphoria," malaise over one's given sex, as a pathological condition and sex conversion as a medical solution, clinics offering this service have opened in several US states and elsewhere. Psychologists refer and screen candidates for treatment and surgery. Urologists, gynecologists, endocrinologists and plastic surgeons all play a part in the medical treatment, while lawyers legally attest to the postoperative patient being a woman or man.

One expert described the paradigm of the transsexual as technology-centered, highly individualistic, and largely asocial. Others see it as a leap into the future.

Transsexual people redesign their bodies in the same way that some future bioengineer might redesign the human body for optimal functioning on a heavy planet, or for underwater living. They monitor the cutting edge of medical and other knowledge and apply it to themselves, usually without the help and often without the permission of family, friends, clergy, teachers, governments, and helping professionals. They use hormones, plastic surgery, and electrolysis to fashion their bodies into a form that they find more acceptable than the ones their genes designed them for, and then they wear those bodies, venturing into society and creating a place for themselves.⁴⁸⁰

For all the bravado, the sex change operation is still not a perfected science, nor is it without its detractors. Opposed to surgical intervention with infants are those who argue against a bipolar male:female universe and for the right of ambiguity. In the adult case, many transsexuals feel the screening for the procedure, where candidates must pass a battery of psychological and physiological tests and be waitlisted for an average of two years, is unnecessarily restrictive and biased against them.

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The physical results of the surgery, while nominally satisfactory, still fall short of the “real thing.” There are six conventional methods of vaginoplasty, yet even with the best technology, an artificially constructed vagina is liable to have transplanted tissues die, become infected, or shrink. And there are other problems. Its size may be smaller than desired. It may require artificial lubrication. Significantly, it cannot conceive, carry or deliver a child.

An artificial penis is even more difficult to construct. The cosmetic results are often poor. Moreover, a functional member must be able to become erect and to urinate. Both these actions are hard to replicate. All attempts at mechanical means of erection have difficulties related to the implantation of foreign materials in the human body. The use of cartilage tissue for rigidity creates the problem of the constantly erect penis, definitely not a natural outcome.

The greater difficulties of female-to-male reconstruction may be a factor in the statistic that there are about three times as many male-to-female as female-to-male operations.⁴⁸¹

A Body Too Big

For close to 100 years, thinness has been a fixation in Westernized cultures. For most women and a minority of men in these societies, it has become an obsession. For a few million, this all-consuming desire to be thin has developed into a debilitating disease from which 5% to 20% will die, many under the age of thirty.⁴⁸²

The syndrome known as “anorexia nervosa” was first identified in bourgeois households in England, France and America in the 1870s. What doctors found in many families was a battle of wills between typically possessive Victorian parents and a self-possessed daughter of marriageable age. An 1873 description of the disease cited “real or imaginary marriage projects(s)” as a common contributing factor in the disease.⁴⁸³ In thousands of families, as the ideal of romantic love gradually supplanted authority as the basis of family relations, these clashes became intense, even fatal.

Another dynamic lying beneath the surface of anorexic behavior is modern-day choice fatigue. In this case, food serves not just as a source of nutrients, but as a symbol. In affluent Westernized societies with their characteristic surfeit of decisions and choices in every realm of life, the anorectic chooses not to choose, and survives by eating very little or nothing.

A clinical psychiatrist with thirty years experience in Houston, Hilde Bruch authored a defining book on the disease “affecting the daughters of well-to-do, educated, and successful families” that in the 1980s was fast becoming a “real problem in high schools and colleges.” She wrote:

Growing girls can experience... liberation as a demand and feel that they have to do something outstanding. Many of my patients have experienced the feeling that they are overwhelmed by the vast number of potential opportunities available to them... and (that) they had been afraid of not choosing correctly.⁴⁸⁴

The public, visible aspect of the current culture of emaciation has its origins in the early 1900s. Those years saw a shift away from Victorian social values, with their emphasis on the importance of a young woman’s redeeming personal virtues, and toward the flapper culture of bobbed hair and short dresses, where thinness, sexiness, and freedom were prized above all.

1908 saw the introduction of new slim and straight haute couture fashions from Paris. Up to that time, dressmakers made garments to fit those who would wear them. A visit to the dressmaker to be fitted was a regular part of a Western woman’s routine. From then onwards, the dictates of the Paris fashion houses and the demands of the burgeoning readymade garment industry, meant that women’s bodies had to fit their dresses, rather than the other way around.

The new cult of slimness equated wit, sensitivity and social status with a slender physique. The corpulent were to be despised or pitied for their supposedly dull character and homely disposition. Diet books proffered advice to help American women out of their predicament and into their stylish, new clothes. The author of America’s first diet best-seller, a woman physician with a practice in Los Angeles, put it bluntly, “How anyone can want to be anything but thin is beyond my intelligence.”⁴⁸⁵

Generations of svelte stars and starlets on movie screens, in magazines and on television, served to emphasize to women and men alike the utter desirability of being slim. By 1985, dieting in America had grown into a \$5 billion a year business complete with slimming formulas, packaged meals, diet teas, books, tapes, videos, spas, “fat farms” and organizations created for the sole purpose of helping their members reduce body weight.

The sheer irrationality of the rage for skinniness can be measured by a survey of 33,000 women aged between eighteen and thirty-five. Out of the sample, 75% felt they were fat, although only 25% were actually overweight. Even in the group that was clinically underweight, 45% thought they were fat!⁴⁸⁶

Via American popular culture, anorexia nervosa has spread worldwide. It been traced to well-educated, middle-class Chinese girls receiving treatment for diet disorders at the Beijing Yingdong Sanitary Weight Loss Center. Even young women in idyllic Fiji, known historically for their striking physical beauty, are rejecting their island’s traditionally voluptuous body type for the lanky fashion of the West.

Anorectics typically subsist on 200 to 400 calories per day. Some may eat only one food, such as crackers or celery. Others may not allow themselves to be seen eating and steal their food from the refrigerator, unseen, at night. Bulimics, who binge, then purge their bodies by vomiting or using a diarrhetic, may consume an astounding 8,000 calories at a sitting, then resume their fast for a few days more.

Treatments are varied and not always effective. They include drugs, psychoanalysis, family therapy, peer counseling, support groups, social skills training, assertiveness training, art therapy, psychodrama, hypnosis, relaxation techniques, movement therapy and nutritional education. When all else fails, force-feeding is used to bring the body weight up from a dangerous level.

Analogies have been made between anorexia and the practice of women saints in medieval Europe. Fasting, in those days, was a socially approved sign of belief and a path to spiritual purification. In medieval Christian society it also seemed to be one of the few areas where a woman might rightfully exert her strength and project her personal will: in the realm of her body.

Like medieval culture, our modern one idealizes a kind of spiritual perfection. To the mystic of the Middle Ages, it was a typically Christian purging of the body and soul, a rigorous subjugation of the flesh in order to become a bride worthy of Christ. The modern day martyr who daily starves her emaciated body also strives for a kind of glory highly prized, yet difficult to access.

Although her cultural world may be rather limited, circumscribed by pop icons and fashions of excess, her passion is comparable. Like a medieval saint, the modern anorectic holds no fear of death, caring only for the absolution of her failing flesh. Like a fasting saint, she, a being of spirit and ultimate purpose, spurns the gross and seeks her strength in sublimity. She, too, performs her penance, fasting at mealtimes, and sacrificing her mortal life, in her own way, at the altar of her beau ideal.

A Culture of Wanton Surgeries

The history of innovative new surgical practices in the United States and elsewhere reveals a flawed medical culture. Often this culture is crude in its assessment of the dignity of the individual and hasty in its determination of the body’s capacity to heal itself using conservative measures. These alternative treatments might include a healthful dietary regimen, herbal supplements, physical exercise, meditation and prayer.

In recent years, there have been improvements over the old days when a surgeon was a virtual god operating beyond the pall of public scrutiny. Even so, medical convention is still arguably inclined to favor the health of the medical establishment - insurance companies, health authorities, pharmaceutical companies, hospitals and doctors - over the well-being of patients.

After circumcision, the commonest surgical procedure in the United States today is the hysterectomy. The earliest accounts of hysterectomies are contained in a text by a Greek physician renowned in the second century. At that time, the operation was used to remedy cases of an inverted uterus. This is a rare, but dangerous, complication of delivering a baby, where the uterus falls out of the pelvis. Upside down and inside out, it becomes swollen and discolored. The mother is liable to go into shock and die.

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One remedy is to expertly and quickly replace the womb back into the pelvis. If there is then no infection, the woman stands a good chance of survival. The other treatment is to cut away the entire womb. This is a hysterectomy.

After the decline of the Roman empire, there are no more records of this operation anywhere until early renaissance Germany, Italy and Spain. In the nineteenth century, especially after the advent of anesthesia and antiseptics, the practice of vaginal surgery entered a new phase. Doctors operated increasingly, and with growing confidence, to remove tumors or cancerous growths, and to excise wombs that had become prolapsed or otherwise diseased. In 100 years, their survival rate grew from a risky 10% to almost 90%.

Unfortunately, while growing numbers of doctors recognized the possible utility of the procedure and became skilled at it, even they admitted some of those operations to have been unnecessary. The hysterectomy became a regular cure-all for all kinds of “women’s diseases.” Anything from mysterious vaginal discomfort to mental malaise, from “hysteria” to sexual incontinence, was liable to be fixed by the removal of the offending organ, the womb.

The voices of nineteenth century critics of the wholesale practice were drowned out by the authoritative assertions of doctors from both genders and the desperate appeals of women seeking a cure for a variety of ailments. For every scathing dismissal, there seemed to be an account of the amazing curative effects of removing the ovaries or excising both ovaries and the vagina in a full hysterectomy.

In the 1870s, Dr. Robert Battey of Rome, Georgia was considered the father of ovariectomy. Battey guaranteed husbands they would find wives “tractable, orderly, industrious, and cleanly” after his operation. In his career, Battey removed more than 2,000 sets of ovaries. By 1906, an estimated 150,000 American women were going about life without their reproductive organs.⁴⁸⁷

Forty years and many hundreds of thousands of operations later, a sharp rebuke to the growing practice of removing women’s reproductive organs was delivered in the form of a paper by an outspoken Michigan gynecologist. Dr. Norman Miller’s article, “Hysterectomy: Therapeutic Necessity or Surgical Racket?” was based on a survey of midwestern American practitioners and published in the prestigious and widely-read *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*.

Subsequent studies published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (in 1953) and the *New England Journal of Medicine* (in 1976) agreed with Dr. Miller. They showed that in from 25% to 43% of cases, hysterectomies were performed in the United States on grounds that ranged from dubious to nonexistent.

The American experience contrasts with the medical culture in other industrialized countries. The US annual rate of hysterectomies, which crested at 740,000 in 1975, remains at 617,000 (in 2004) the highest in the world. It is double the rate in Britain, and much higher than the rate in France, where an holistic approach using vitamins and herbal supplements is favored.

Part of the problem in America appears to be the profit motive. Financial planners specializing in doctors’ issues advise obstetricians that performing a hysterectomy on a woman, as she moves beyond her reproductive years, is a last and highly profitable transaction not to be missed. Naturally, hospitals also benefit when their beds are filled with pliant victims of conventional medical practice.

Besides being reluctant to pass a potential paying customer onto a practitioner of some other specialty, most American surgeons are woefully ignorant of alternative, less invasive remedies. An appreciation of the intrinsic emotional, spiritual and integrative values of a woman’s womb also seems to be lacking among many gynecologists. This viewpoint was most baldly put forward by the head of the obstetrics and gynecology department of a large New England hospital. In a 1971 editorial for *Obstetrics and Gynecology*, the most-read professional journal of gynecologists of that time, Dr. Ralph C. Wright wrote:

The uterus has but one function: reproduction. After the last planned pregnancy, the uterus becomes a useless, bleeding, symptom-producing, potentially cancer-bearing organ and therefore should be removed.²⁴⁸⁸

A respected New York gynecologist and author, Dr. Ivan Strausz, challenges the defining words of the editorial:

The more one looks at his sentences, the more objectionable they appear. There is no decency here, nothing to suggest that a person is being discussed and not one of her organs, one she may regard with

the same pride men invariably bestow on theirs. The woman in question has lost her voice as well as her choice. If she has a hysterectomy, she may become one more uninformed victim of a useless and potentially dangerous custom, which benefits the medical establishment more than the patient.⁴⁸⁹

Moreover, insists Dr. Strausz, because of medical advances, cancers of the cervix and endometrium can be diagnosed early and treated with better chances of success than previous to World War Two. Back then, one out of forty American women died of cervical, endometrial or ovarian cancers. Today, only ovarian cancer remains as a threat, occurring in slightly over 1% of women and impossible for doctors to prevent or treat effectively.

Operating involves risks. Because of surgical complications and anesthetic mishaps, about one out of a 1,000 women die while having a hysterectomy. A woman who is having her ovaries removed also increases her risk of heart disease and osteoporosis, both of which present a far greater statistical threat than ovarian cancer.⁴⁹⁰

Other potential outcomes of surgery are also unpleasant, even life-threatening. Bowel obstruction is an abrupt and life-threatening emergency that must be corrected immediately by skilled surgery. Infections requiring postoperative treatment are also fairly common. Beyond the physical challenges, for many women, the lost of her uterus is a cause of short or longer term depression or anxiety.

In recent years, there has been an increasing number of publications and women's health organizations offering alternatives to the surgical establishment with its heroic measures and its catchall slogan, "When in doubt, cut it out." Cross-cultural studies have shown the benefits of less radical surgeries, such as myomectomies, excising the ovarian tumor, but leaving the ovaries intact. Herbal remedies, vitamin therapy, exercise, and various drugs are less invasive than hysterectomy. While in some cases of interminable vaginal bleeding, an operation is the only realistic medical option, conservative doctors estimate that in most instances a woman's best interests are served by not having a hysterectomy.

In the United States, caesarian sections account for about 24% of all births, making it the third most common type of surgery.⁴⁹¹ The National Health Insurance Corporation of South Korea reports that fully 43% of all births there are by C-section.⁴⁹² In Brazil, where the operation has become an integral part of that country's hospital birthing culture, 60% of babies are born this way.⁴⁹³

The operation, which involves delivering a mother's baby through an opening cut into her abdomen, has its origins in the Roman Empire. The law of those days required that if a mother died in childbirth, the infant should be removed from her womb and saved.

Like hysterectomies and many other surgical procedures, caesarian sections on a mother experiencing a difficult labor were rare until the late nineteenth century. By the 1920s, they had become more common, although blood loss and infections still made the operations risky. Only after the development of blood banks and antibiotics during the Second World War did caesarian mortality rates drop significantly.

By 1970, caesarian births had become commonplace, accounting for 5.5% of all births in the United States.⁴⁹⁴ Within fifteen years, that rate had more than quadrupled.

There are five known reasons for the growing incidence of caesarian sections. One is the effect of technology on the birthing process. Studies show that where x-ray devices are used to track a labor, the rate of difficult deliveries doubles, with a consequent rise in caesarian sections. Another significant factor is that once a mother gives a caesarian birth it becomes harder for her to give birth naturally. Many caesarians are repeaters. Myths that normal births ruin a woman's sex life also play a role in bumping up the rate of C-sections. A fourth element is that caesarian deliveries are much quicker, and therefore more lucrative for a doctor, than a natural birth. While a surgical birth can be over and done with in half an hour, a natural delivery may take up to twelve hours, or more.⁴⁹⁵ The fifth and most significant element is the fear of malpractice suits among gynecologists. In the event of any kind of complication, an American gynecologist is liable to forego the risk and induce a caesarian birth.

All that being said, there are certain cases where a caesarian is justified. A fetus may have a head too large for its mother's pelvis. An older mother with health complications who has previously had a caesarian may also be a reasonable candidate for a C-section. Likewise, a distressed embryo with a dangerously high heart rate.

Most breech births are now delivered by caesarian. The rate skyrocketed from 11.6% in 1970 to sixty percent in 1980.⁴⁹⁶ However a fetus weighing less than eight pounds should be able to take the vaginal route

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without undue difficulty, provided the gynecologist or midwife has mastered the required skills. The C-section also does not increase the survival rate for fetuses over five and a half pounds. Moreover, the mortality rate of a mother who undergoes a caesarian is two to four times greater than the rate for a conventional delivery.⁴⁹⁷

While hysterectomies and caesarian sections are typically female procedures, one operation more commonly performed on men is coronary artery bypass surgery. From its humble beginnings in 1964, the practice became so widespread that by 1985 there were a 250,000 bypass procedures in the US⁴⁹⁸ Today that figure has grown further to an estimated 400,000 each year.⁴⁹⁹

The heart bypass started off as a specialized procedure designed to help patients suffering from excruciating angina attacks caused by a lack of oxygen flow to the muscles of the heart. However, as increasing numbers of surgeons learned the technique and “bypass units” were set up in hospitals across the country, the practice became a virtual industry touting benefits for all kinds of heart patients. More conservative opinion estimates that just 10% of patients suffering from some kind of coronary ailment are benefited by a heart bypass.⁵⁰⁰

Candidates for bypass surgery are generally not told is that they can expect to lose some of their mental sharpness as well as their ordinary ability to remember things from the operation. Post-operative depression is also a factor in about a third of patients. Despite their desire to do so, most people who undergo bypass surgery are unable to return to work. An important ten year study by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute went so far as to state that there appeared to be no increase in quality of life or survival rate of surgical patients, compared with a matched group treated with more conservative measures.⁵⁰¹

When Dr. Richard Ross, the dean of John Hopkins University Medical School was queried by a US government health subcommittee about the continued popularity of the bypass operation, despite all the contraindications, he responded simply, “We are dealing with a multi-million dollar enterprise that is very hard to turn off.”⁵⁰²

Another surgery which remains widely practiced despite a good deal of opposing evidence, is the cutting out of the tonsils. In American medical culture, it usually happens in childhood.

A well-known experiment in New York City in 1934 showed how even the recourse of a second opinion could not stem the ingrained prejudice of doctors used to cutting out young people’s tonsils. In the initial survey of 1,000 school children, it was found that 61% had already had their tonsils removed. The remaining 39% were sent to a group of physicians, who recommended that 45% of these children have their tonsils out. Those not recommended for surgery were then examined by a second group of physicians, who advised a further 46% of the young students submit to tonsillectomies. When the rejected children were put to a third examination by yet another group of doctors, a similar proportion were again recommended for surgery! By the end, only sixty-five children were left, and the study had run out of physicians at the large free clinic to conduct any further examinations.⁵⁰³

The perennial popularity among doctors and parents of the practice of cutting out children’s tonsils and adenoids belies a general ignorance of the function and value of these glands.

The tonsils and adenoids perform several useful functions. They are part of a circle of lymphoid tissue in the mouth and nose which acts as a protective barrier against infection. Not only do they block and strain out foreign organisms mechanically, they also on exposure to bacteria and viruses produce antibodies – specialized body proteins which disable invaders and assist body cells called phagocytes to engulf unfriendly germs. DeWeeses’s *Textbook of Otolaryngology* declares that T & A does *not* decrease respiratory infections – in fact, it increases susceptibility to respiratory infection, especially in very young children, by removing the organs producing immune factors. The popularity and acceptability of the T & A is remarkable in the face of massive evidence of worthlessness.⁵⁰⁴

Like every other kind of surgery, the removal of the tonsils has risks attached to it. Children and even adults die from unintended consequences. Deaths can occur from anesthesia problems, uncontrolled bleeding and various postoperative problems, such as breathing vomit into the lungs. One person dies in America each day as a result of a botched tonsillectomy.

Advocates of surgery tend to be oblivious of numerous natural remedies for an inflamed throat. They also often fail to take into account the fact that as children grow older and their immune systems develop antibodies, respiratory infections grow less and less.

All doctors agree that when the tonsils or adenoids are so inflamed that they seriously restrict breathing and swallowing, surgical intervention should be an option. Those opposed to tonsillectomy differ only in their judgement of the percentage of inappropriate or unnecessary operations. The estimates of medical researchers and doctors range from 50%⁵⁰⁵ to 86%⁵⁰⁶ and peak at 99%.⁵⁰⁷

Critics allege everything from teeth to gall bladders, appendixes, prostates, spleens, stomachs, even lengths of intestine are far too commonly removed in the North American medical culture. It is well established that surgery rates are usually lower in Europe. One accredited study showed the incidence of gall bladder removal to be five times higher in Canada than in England and Wales.⁵⁰⁸

Researchers have found the rates of surgery to vary not only from continent to continent, but from region to region and town to town. Significant factors are, naturally enough, the lack or abundance of surgeons, the physician's desire for profit, regional variations in attitudes about various surgical measures, and the degree of awareness on the part of the recommending physician of the pros and cons of surgery, and any alternative treatments.

Heroic efforts at remedying a situation, such as surgery, always have risks attached to them. Things can go terribly wrong. This was famously illustrated by a Florida man named Willie King, who recently checked into a hospital to have a leg amputated. It was not until the operation was well under way that a nurse realized that, because of an error in the hospital's computer system, the wrong leg was being amputated.⁵⁰⁹

Then, there is the systemic problem of how doctors are compensated for their services. In the preface to *The Doctor's Dilemma*, famed playwright George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) deplors the fee-for-service arrangement, alleging that it encourages bad practice. In his words:

It is not the fault of our doctors that the medical service of the community, as at present provided for, is a murderous absurdity. That any sane nation, having observed that you could provide for the supply of bread by giving bakers a pecuniary interest in baking for you, should go on to give a surgeon a pecuniary interest in cutting off your leg, is enough to make one despair of political humanity. But this is precisely what we have done. And the more appalling the mutilation, the more the mutilator is paid. He who corrects the ingrown toe-nail receives a few shillings: he who cuts your inside out receives hundreds of guineas, except when he does it on a poor person for practice.⁵¹⁰

Lobotomy

Lobotomy falls into a special category of efforts to improve the human condition by altering physical details of the body. Unlike some practices, such as tattooing, circumcision or shaving the hair, lobotomy is a recent innovation without a legacy of deep cultural underpinnings.⁵¹¹ It has been performed both on willing subjects and those less than willing.

The purpose of the lobotomizing procedure is to effect an improvement in the mental outlook of the subject. Unlike cosmetic surgery, having a tattoo done or a going in for a new hairdo, any of which might improve a person's self-image, and thereby their state of mind, a lobotomy alters the nature of experience by physically manipulating the workings of the brain.

The first surgical lobotomy was done in 1935 by Egas Moniz (1874-1955), a Portuguese neurologist. Fourteen years later, when this procedure had become widespread, Moniz was rewarded with the Nobel prize for medicine.

The perceived need for some surgical means of treating the mentally ill arose out of the desperate situation in mental hospitals at that time. Most of them housed hundreds of mentally unstable inmates in appalling conditions of neglect. Any kind of therapy for the patients was out of the question due to a dire lack of psychoanalysts. In New York State, for example, the ratio of inmates to physicians in 1934 was typically about 200:1. For many inmates, being committed into a mental hospital was a one-way ticket to oblivion.

The rise of industrial society with its incumbent growth of impersonal asylums and their stagnant, miserable populations, had impelled a doctors to experiment with innovative therapies. One such treatment, pioneered in the 1850s, was the use of low charges of electricity to stimulate the nervous systems of patients

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suffering depression or “nervous exhaustion.” Hydrotherapy, which competed with electrotherapy as a treatment for the nervous system, used baths, douches, wet packs, steam, sprays and hoses.

In the 1920s and 30s, doctors experimented with drugging manic-depressive or schizophrenic patients into prolonged states of sleep, usually between one and two weeks, but sometimes as for long as a month. This treatment had the unfortunate side effect that about 5% of patients were liable to die from pneumonia or circulatory collapse.⁵¹² In the 1930s, some doctors experimented with inducing their patients into a cathartic state of coma using drugs. Others explored the therapeutic benefits of convulsions induced by electrical shock.

Lobotomy had its precedents in the 1890s, when surgeons in Switzerland, England, America and Latvia intervened directly into the brain to attempt to treat cases of paralysis. Although the results were generally inconclusive, and one doctor was forced to discontinue his work when a patient died after surgery, those pioneering efforts left the impression that it was feasible to safely operate on the human brain.

Beginning in the late 1800s, hysterectomy was also considered a kind of psychosurgery, a procedure to alleviate “mental instability” attributed to women during the menstrual cycle or following pregnancy. There were also widespread attempts to treat mental disorders by the removal of one or another of a patient’s endocrine glands. As late as the 1920s and 30s, castration was thought to be a “form of therapy for neuroses, perversions, sexual crimes, sexual abnormalities, mental disease and even tuberculosis.”⁵¹³

Lobotomy, as originally practiced by Moniz, required one or two holes be cut into the top of the skull. A sharp instrument, rather like an apple peeler, was then inserted into each hole and from one to six “cores” made by turning the device, essentially crushing the nerve fibers in its path. A later development, the “transorbital lobotomy,” involved inserting a pointed instrument into the brain through the ocular opening, above and inside the eyeball.

Essentially, although it was not understood at the time, the operation damaged the sensitive neural pathways between the cerebrum in the front of the brain, where thinking processes are centered, and the inner limbic system, the emotional center. In effect, the patient’s thinking was physically severed from their feelings.

For a time, lobotomy, like the other radical therapies that had been devised, enjoyed popular and medical acclaim. As early as 1937, a front page article in the *New York Times* proclaimed lobotomy as a new “surgery of the soul.” Its advocates claimed psychosurgery could relieve “tension, apprehension, anxiety, depression, insomnia, suicidal ideas, delusions, hallucinations, crying spells, melancholia, obsessions, panic states, disorientation, psychalgesia (pains of psychic origin), nervous indigestion and hysterical paralysis.”⁵¹⁴ Stories of amazing recoveries, even testimonials from lobotomized patients, published in papers and magazines, large and small, fed a general curiosity, as well as a desperate sense of hope among some elements of the population.

In 1948, a neurosurgeon at Yale speculated that if only 10% of patients occupying beds in psychiatric wards could be sent home, the American taxpayer would save nearly \$1 million a day.⁵¹⁵ That same year, 5,000 lobotomies were performed in virtually every country there were neurosurgeons.

Against the general swell of enthusiasm, and even as the man who had pioneered the lobotomizing procedure was awarded the prestigious Nobel prize, some singular voices opposed the trend to lobotomy. While there was a consensus that the procedure did, in fact, pacify those who underwent it, two main objections were raised. Some neurologists and psychiatrists, practitioners accustomed to looking for organic causes of disease and treating the body rather than the mind, began to object that lobotomies were not specific enough in their treatment.

Nolan Lewis, director of the New York State Psychiatric Institute and professor of psychiatry at Columbia University warned that while lobotomy was considered a measure of last resort, in actual fact, many surgeons operated on a patient without even a preliminary psychiatric examination. These doctors, he found showed “an utter lack of respect for the human brain.” Moreover, Lewis pointed out that the part of the brain destroyed, depending on the type of lobotomy, often had no relation to the mental illness being treated. Lewis also alleged that a great many unsuccessful lobotomy cases had not been disclosed. He even questioned the definition of what might be considered a successful outcome:

Is the quieting of a patient a cure? Perhaps all it accomplishes is to make things more convenient for the people who have to nurse them... The patients becomes rather childlike... they act like they have been hit over the head with a club and are as dull as blazes... It disturbs me to see the number of zombies that these operations turn out. I would guess that lobotomies going on all over the world have caused

more mental invalids than they've cured... I think it should be stopped before we dement too large a section of the population.⁵¹⁶

Psychologists and psychoanalysts, who preferred to work through a patient's problems using psychotherapy, voiced their own distinctive concerns:

When the treatment of victims of severe mental disorders by diffuse decortification and destruction of some of their human abilities is sanctioned on the grounds of social expediency, and all other methods of therapy are discarded as impractically difficult, one may well be concerned for psychiatry.⁵¹⁷

Another critic, the director of a large mental hospital in Washington, D.C. pointed out that the condition of many patients worsened after surgery. Even among the successful ones, those who could be sent home, few managed to hold onto jobs, and psychological studies showed their imaginations and problem-solving abilities to be much reduced.⁵¹⁸ By the late 1940s, there was a growing consensus in medical circles, expressed by the chief of the US Veterans' Administration Neuropsychiatric Service in the authoritative *New England Journal of Medicine*, that psychosurgery did no more than replace a psychosis with an organic brain defect syndrome.⁵¹⁹

Thousands more patients were lobotomized every year, until 1952. After that, a rising chorus of informed dissent, plus the creation of a new class of psychoactive drugs which produced some of the same modulating effects as psychosurgery without the extremely disassociative, zombie-like state of the lobotomized, ensured that the practice was widely curtailed.

Even so, psychosurgery was proposed in the United States during the 1970s and 80s as a technique for the control of social violence, such as the race riots of the late 1960s. Advocates proposed treating violent criminals and members of racial minorities they typified as prone to antisocial behavior. This, naturally, sparked a lively debate on civil rights.

Today, lobotomy is considered as a last resort for patients with otherwise untreatable violent, anxious or depressed dispositions. Yet, even now, a criticism offered some fifty years ago rings true:

The psychosurgeon is indeed treading on dangerous ground when he decides that a patient without a soul is happier than a patient with a sick soul.⁵²⁰

Unusual Fruits of Peculiar Science

No twenty-first century overview of the body would be complete without an appreciation of the role modern technology has played in the creation of unpredictable, sometimes tragic, variations of the God-given human likeness to which we are accustomed.

The explosion of the atomic bombs over the populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as the exposure of a great many people – civilians, scientists and military people alike – to dangerous amounts of radiation at test sites from the Nevada desert to the south Pacific, and around nuclear facilities from Chernobyl to Three Mile Island, has posed the possibility of mutations in the human genetic code.

During the Gulf War of 1991 some 320 to 350 tons of depleted uranium (DU) in more than a million rounds of ammunition were fired by American and British troops in encounters with Iraqi troops. The DU was valued for its capacity to penetrate armor and other defenses. Afterwards, some 300 tons of radiologically and chemically toxic DU debris littered the battle zones of the Persian Gulf.

DU is cited as the main factor in the thousands of American and allied troops afflicted by Gulf War syndrome. Moreover, there are people actually living in Kuwait and southern Iraq among the expended DU ammunition, and eating food grown in fields littered with DU. They suffer from elevated rates of cancer, congenital abnormalities, genetic defects, infertility, and various stress-related and infectious diseases. It has been found that if DU or its derivatives reach the blood of pregnant women, it can pass through the placenta and cause damage to the fetus. A significant increase in the number of children born with various genetic malformations, including missing limbs, ears, and eyes, has been reported in the afflicted area.⁵²¹

Another unforeseen outcome of atomic science is the tens of thousands of cases of cancer as a result of x-ray exposure. While nowadays, a patient at the doctor's or dentist's is snugly covered in a blanket of lead insulation, in the 1950s and 60s, no such precaution was taken. Doctors enthused with their unprecedented

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powers to see inside the body liberally used x-rays to probe the mysteries of everything from acne to the developing fetus. The inadvertent result of these low level exposures ranged from childhood leukemia to cancer of the lymph nodes, thyroid gland and thymus. A gaggle of other serious health disorders have been implicated as well.⁵²²

In the Minamata region of Japan, in the 1950s, hundreds of people began suffering and dying from nervous disorders, while mothers gave birth to children with severe brain damage and crippling limb abnormalities, with no one knowing the reason. After years of study, the “Minamata disease” was traced to the fish of Minamata Bay. A chemical plant had been dumping highly toxic mercury waste near a fishing village since 1932. The mercury eventually found its way up the food chain into the susceptible nervous tissues of humans. Although the dumping was stopped and fishing in the bay banned for twenty years, the prolonged Minamata dumping left a legacy of death, disease and deformation.

Synthesized drugs, too, have been hazardous to people’s health. Diethylstilbestrol, known as DES, was sold to millions of women from 1938 to 1971. Doctors thought, mistakenly, that the new compound was helpful in preventing miscarriages. Twenty years later, it was learned that the daughters of women who had taken DES were especially susceptible to vaginal cancers and infertility. Many had abnormal reproductive tracts, while male offspring were marred by a high incidence of cysts on their testes and other unusual genital developments.⁵²³

In 1954, development of a drug advertised as a non-toxic sedative created an unprecedented wave of thousands of “thalidomide babies.” These babies were born with all kinds of variations on the typical human form. They presented a challenge to their families and entire societies – even as legislators and regulators in a few countries pushed for more stringent safeguards on new “wonder drugs.”

While most thalidomide babies did not survive childhood, about 5,000 live on today. Some conduct what we would recognize as productive lives. Others are mentally or physically shattered. For many of them, a “foot” is not a foot, a “hand” not necessarily a hand. Some have no arms. Some no legs. For some, their toes emerge surprisingly out of their hips. Imagine a quick-witted two-foot tall adult, a writer, without limbs. Imagine seeing the world through a single eye, hearing without ears.

Like thalidomide, Merrell Dow Pharmaceutical’s Bendectin was prescribed to pregnant mothers for morning sickness beginning in the mid-1950s. Betty Mendici sued the drug manufacturer for damages in 1977, two years after giving birth to her son David, born with a number of deformities, including a shortened right arm, a malformed hand missing two fingers and a concave chest. By the time Merrell Dow stopped selling Bendectin in 1983, after a rising tide of lawsuits and adverse publicity, an estimated 115,000 newborns had been affected with one or more physical defects. At the same time, the drug firm orchestrated a public relations campaign decrying “the loss of a valuable drug” and blaming “these litigious times.”⁵²⁴

The rush to market inadequately tested medications continues to be fueled by the desperation of the ill and the greed of investors. As recently as 2000, Alosetron was released into US and Canadian markets with much fanfare. It was “proven in clinical trials to be safe and well-tolerated, and to rapidly and significantly relieve pain and bowel function in patients with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).”

Just nine months after approving Alosetron, the American Food and Drug Administration was forced to withdraw the medication. Some patients had developed ischemic colitis, a potentially catastrophic condition in which bowel tissue is damaged by a lack of oxygen from a constriction of blood supply. Any improvement sufferers had experienced from the drug disappeared a week after stopping the medication. At least one victim’s entire colon had to be removed because of drug-induced colitis. There were also reports of deaths.⁵²⁵

Ubiquitous, man-made chemicals in the environment also play havoc with our ordinary sense of wholeness and wellbeing. In a recent study, the bodies of a group of volunteers were found to host an average of ninety-one industrial chemicals. Seventy-six of these substances, including PCBs, are linked to cancer. Most of the chemicals did not even exist just eighty years ago. The effects of this experimental cocktail are simply unknown.⁵²⁶

The millions of gallons of dioxin-based defoliants sprayed on Vietnamese hardwood forests, dense mangrove jungles and vast expanses of cropland by American warplanes from 1962 to 1970 not only deprived their enemies of vital camouflage and food. The most-used chemical, known as Agent Orange, caused a devastating harvest of disease and genetic dysfunction. Linked with immune deficiency, nervous-system

disorders, birth defects, disruption of the endocrine system, liver damage, blood diseases and skin problems in 20,000 U.S. war veterans, Agent Orange eventually led to a \$180 million class action legal settlement on their behalf and a government program to compensate thousands more. Back in Vietnam, far more serious contamination led to an estimated 400,000 combatants and noncombatants suffering illness or death, and harrowing birth defects in some 500,000 children.

Those same awful consequences: children without genitals, with deformed spines, heart defects, born deaf or blind or mentally retarded, are a part of daily life now in some developing countries where impoverished workers use industrially poisoned well or river water for their cooking, drinking and washing.

In Bhopal, India, the disastrous leak of toxic chemicals from that city's Union Carbide plant in 1984 created an ongoing legacy of death, disease and deformity. The leak of deadly methyl isocyanate and a secret cocktail of other gases killed 8,000 people within days and injured half a million. An estimated 150,000 people directly affected now live with chronic diseases of the lungs such as asthma, emphysema and tuberculosis. Thousands more have cancers of the breast, lungs, bone and stomach attributed to the gases. Children born to gas-affected mothers immediately after the disaster and since, have been found to have cleft palates, three fingers, all their fingers joined, one extra finger, one testicle, different skull shapes and Down's syndrome. Children exposed to the gases or born to exposed parents are notably smaller than average.

While less dramatic, since the 1970s there has been a growing awareness of the health effects of mothers who drink alcohol while they are pregnant. The resulting fetal alcohol syndrome has distressing physical and mental symptoms. Typically, these children are born with abnormally small heads. More than 50% have damaged nervous systems. The same percentage have hearing difficulties. Poor muscle control is also common, as are defects in the heart, joints and limbs.

The children of fathers exposed to toxic environments are also worthy of concern. The daughters and sons of male smokers are at increased risk of having brain cancer or leukemia. The offspring of firemen are prone to heart defects, while the children of workers regularly exposed to spray paints, metal fumes and certain solvents are known to have abnormally high rates of cancer and birth defects.

Meanwhile, genetic engineering goes about creating featherless chickens, tomatoes that are part salmon and, probably soon, salmon that are part tomato. No doubt, soon the pragmatic marriage of business and science will also be promising us robust, faultless children we can order to our liking. This is a future deserving of our careful consideration.

Science fiction imagery has long typified Earth's future generations as hairless techno-geniuses contending with strange-looking characters from outer space. If we trust the clever conjurers of genetic wish lists once too often, we might one day find those aliens with the florescent skins and probing tentacles are our grandchildren.

The Creation of Khalsa

Now, let us leave the present and the future for a time and go back to around 1699 at the fort of Anandpur in the foothills of the Himalayas. Guru Gobind had just sent out a call for all his able-bodied men to come and join him for the spring holiday of Baisakhi. Those were dangerous times and it would have been too dangerous for Sikh women and children to risk travelling over the roads and highways patrolled by Mughal soldiers. The Master told his men to bring their arms and come with their hair unshorn.

When all had gathered, there were about 80,000 disciples of the Guru camped around the Anandpur fortifications. There was hymn-singing and meditation, feeding and looking after everyone and, of course, lots of catching up on news. The Master took the stage. People were all around, wondering what he would say that day.

The Guru spoke of their tradition, going back to Guru Nanak, and the values that bound them. He spoke of the challenges Sikhs had met and overcome. He described the political situation, the continued policy of repression practiced by the Mughals, the temples destroyed, those who had lost their lives.

The men well knew they were living in dangerous times. On their way to Anandpur, they had been careful to avoid troublesome soldiers and religious zealots. The men were also very aware of Guru Arjun's martyrdom and Guru Gobind's own father's sacrifice to uphold the faith of the Hindus.

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The Guru spoke for some time. After a while, many of his disciples lost the sense of exactly what he was saying. They were just happy to be with their Guru, listening to him speak, hearing the soothing intonations of his voice. They had traveled for days or weeks from the south, the west, the east. It was good to be there, they thought, in the safety of Anandpur with their fellow Sikhs and their Guru.

Suddenly, there was a change in their Master's voice. He looked very serious, his hand on his sword and his sword in the air. What did he say?

"I want someone's head. I need someone to give me their head. Who will give me their head?"

A shiver went through the crowd. What was this?

There was a long pause while the Guru paced the stage, all the while looking out into the crowd, into 80,000 pairs of eyes, the eyes of his disciples.

At last, one lone Sikh from the front could not stand the silence any more. He approached the stage. The Guru spotted him, brought him in front of everyone.

"Greetings, Brother. Have you come to give me your head?"

"Yes, Master. It is yours."

"Then come with me." The Guru led his disciple into a tent by the side of the stage.

A minute later, Guru Gobind returned. Now there was blood on his awful sword. "I need another volunteer. I want another head. One is not enough."

The crowd trembled. What was he asking? A head? Another head?

The Guru waited.

Finally, after what seemed like an endless silence, another brave Sikh came forward and joined the Master in his tent.

It was not long before the Guru was back, flailing his thirsty sword in the air. "Which of you is a real disciple of mine? Who will give me their head?"

This time, there was an audible murmuring at the back of the crowd. Mostly, people were stunned. A few slipped away.

"Is there anyone else here who will offer me their head?"

Just when it seemed no one was going to come forward, another disciple joined the Guru at the stage, then in the tent, and did not come out. The Guru did.

"Give me another head!" he said.

The murmur grew louder. Some Sikhs were petitioning the Guru's mother, trying to persuade her to intervene. She looked almost as troubled as they did, but she would not intervene.

"Another head!"

At last, another Sikh came forward, trembling a little, his hands folded. The Guru took him into the tent.

"Who's next? Who is brave? Who will give me their head?"

There were heated arguments in the crowd. In the back, people were simply melting away. In the front and middle, the hum of voices grew louder each minute. Another man came forward. Someone tried to stop him. He neatly dodged and made it to the Guru's side.

"You have decided to give me your head?"

"Yes, Sahib."

"Are you sure?"

"I am. Please accept my head."

"Then come."

The Master ushered his disciple into the tent and then did not come out again for some time.

The arguments continued and then, eventually, subsided as everyone wondered what was going to happen next. Everyone's eyes were fixed on the tent, its flap closed. There was no way of knowing what was going on inside.

An eagle glid easily in the cloudless sky. Few people noticed. Most people's eyes were looking straight ahead.

It may have been twenty minutes. It felt like days before the Guru once more ventured out of that tent. Then, to everyone's joy and surprise, out came the five disciples, beautifully dressed in new, golden tunics with handsome turbans on their heads, their faces all aglow.

"These dear men, these loving disciples, have made me very proud," began the Guru. "They have risen to the most difficult challenge, the challenge of death and test of faith, and emerged victorious. I salute them."

"We are entering a new chapter now, where we will have to stand for our beliefs and not run. Many of us may die for our beliefs, but we can no longer hide, and in fact once we accept the need of standing, we can no longer die. We will no longer be fit to die, but will live as a sovereign nation under God.

"I would like you to understand, and to understand deeply, that there is very, very little difference between us. You are in me and I am in you. You may say I am your Master, but today I took great inspiration from you.

"Our discipline is the same. Our life is the same. And today, I would like to crown this sacred relationship by making us one in appearance also.

"I asked you, all of you, to come to Anandpur with your hair naturally long. It has been our tradition since Guru Nanak, that the Master should live in his complete form as the Creator made him, and now I would ask you, too, my perfected disciples, to acknowledge and to live in that tradition. No more be a slave to fashion or culture. Keep your hair and beard as they are naturally given. They will serve to identify you as a man of God equally to those who will need you, to those who will love you, and to those who will seek to be your enemies. Welcome them all. This is no time for being timid."

In the end, the Master embellished his special disciples with five physical articles of faith: naturally long hair, a wooden comb to take care of it, breech-style underwear, a steel bangle, and a sword, auspiciously known as a *kirpaan* or "instrument of kindness." He also gave them a code of conduct: to rise and meditate before sunrise each day, to abhor intoxicants and meat, and to renounce adultery. He then initiated them in a fitting ceremony, and afterwards received his initiation from them. Later on, thousands of those who had missed their chance earlier, also took these vows and entered what was to be known as the Order of Khalsa – the Pure Ones.⁵²⁷

The Battle of Chamkaur Sahib

The physical likeness of the members of the Guru's Order with their distinctive long hair, turbans, and weapons, would soon have an unexpected and important consequence.

In December of 1705, vastly outnumbered and surrounded by thousands of Mughal forces, the Guru, his family, and the couple of hundred Sikhs who had survived the siege of several months, left the Anandpur fort at night under a promise of safe passage. The Guru had gone along with his starving disciples' pleas to escape, while warning them their enemies could not be trusted to honor their word. As he had anticipated, the small contingent of Sikhs, weakened by their ordeal, was soon set upon from every direction by tens of thousands of soldiers.

Some escaped by crossing a river. Others penetrated the darkness of the surrounding forests. The survivors of Anandpur separated and fanned out across the rugged terrain. Less than 100 remained to accompany the Guru and his two eldest sons. Some stayed back to perform a holding action, allowing the Master time to reach to safety.

Meanwhile, news arrived that a fresh contingent of Mughal soldiers marching from the capital would be arriving within a day, placing the Guru and his remaining defenders between two hostile armies. The first night

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out of Anandpur, the Guru took shelter with his remaining Sikhs in a fortress-like house with a high surrounding wall and prepared for a desperate defense.

The next day, the defenders fought off wave after wave of attackers from all four directions. Small groups of Khalsa saint-warriors would emerge to engage the sea of enemy with consummate skill and daring. One by one, each group would be overcome by the sheer numbers of their assailants.

By the end of the day, only the Guru and five of his loyal devotees remained. The rest, including his eldest sons, had given their lives holding off the hordes of Mughal fighters. It was clear that, at this rate, they could not survive another day.

At this juncture, the five unanimously ruled that the Guru should attempt to escape from their predicament. Seeing his disciples all in agreement, the Master himself consented to the plan. Three of his followers would also leave the fort. One Sant Singh would wear the Guru's regal plume and armor, while another Sangat Singh would remain to fight at his side.

The Master insisted that they would not abscond in silence. He was a great believer in fair play. The Master extinguished with two well-aimed arrows the torches illuminating their defenses. With two more arrows, he eliminated the torch-bearers. The Guru and his designated Sikhs then emerged from their enclosure into the enfolding darkness.

The Master found his way up a small hill and clapped his hands to rouse the surrounding soldiers. Then he shouted, "Here goes the saint of India!" From the three other directions, the Guru's disciples also yelled out, creating more havoc and confusion for them to make their escape into the night.

The next morning, the Mughals resumed their assault on the little fort, which eventually they overran. Great was their celebration when they captured a brave defender dressed in the Guru's distinctive regalia. Terrible was their disappointment when they later realized how they had been tricked. Truly, by creating the Order of Khalsa, the Guru had taken at least 50,000 forms.

Their Scalps, But Not Their Hair

In the days after Guru Gobind Singh, a great struggle for power swept the plains of Punjab. The Master had, shortly before passing away in 1708, charged one Khalsa to bring to justice those who had for years tyrannized that region. From the Jammu hills north of Punjab, Banda Singh waged a relentless guerilla war against the autocratic Mughals.

The government, for its part, did all it could to wipe out its enemy and their sympathizers. Since the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh were so readily recognizable, with their long hair and beards, this led to a number of imperial orders being issued. In 1711, Emperor Bahadur Shah (1643-1712, Mughal Emperor: 1707-12) decreed that all those employed by his government must shave off their beards. He hoped in this way to separate more malleable Hindus from staunch followers of the Guru who would never, even under threat of death, shave the hair naturally assigned to their bodies.

A later order commanded that no non-Muslim should be allowed to have a long beard. Anyone found breaking the ban was to have their beard pulled out. This law was proclaimed throughout the land and then put into effect by huge soldiers who went through the streets and bazaars accompanied by barbers with filthy water in dirty basins. They made a point of shaving off the beard of anyone they found with maximum insult to their personal dignity. Many Hindu princes, officials and other dignitaries left their beards at home before visiting the royal court.

Eventually, the might of the Mughal army was brought to bear against Banda Singh and his guerilla army. In 1716, they were surrounded and starved into surrendering. Then, the rebel leader and his nearly 800 followers were paraded through the capital before being executed. Despite humiliation and torture, not one of them surrendered their faith or their hair.

Zakaria Khan (d. 1745), the governor of Jammu, had taken particular pride in accompanying the captive Sikhs to Delhi. When he became governor of Punjab in 1726, he unleashed a campaign of terror against the Sikhs, who remained fiercely independent of the Mughal raj. Columns of soldiers were sent into remote hills

and forests to locate and capture the remaining Khalsa. Sikhs guerilla bands responded by harassing the government and raiding its caravans and treasuries.

Rewards were offered: a blanket for cutting off a Sikh's hair, ten rupees for providing information on the whereabouts of a Sikh, fifty rupees for a longhaired Sikh scalp. In this way, thousands of Sikhs were captured and killed, while survivors were driven deeper and deeper into the wilderness.

By 1739, Zakaria Khan was so confident of his efforts that he openly proclaimed his victory over the Khalsa. Since Sikhs were no longer visible, he assumed that he had killed them all and eliminated their supporters. One Bota Singh, who lived in the forest not far from Amritsar, happened to hear the governor's boast and decided to do something to teach him a lesson.

To proclaim the continued existence of the independent Khalsa spirit, Bota Singh positioned himself on Punjab's major roadway. There, with nothing more than a bamboo club to enforce his authority, he began to collect a modest toll from every person passing by. He also sent a saucy note to the governor:

Bota Singh writes this note today.
Here on the road with a club I stand.
Dollar per cart, quarter per donkey, is my demand.
Tell your sweet sister Khano what I say.

When Zakaria Khan received the news and the cheeky communication from the Sikh highwayman, he was both surprised and offended. The governor sent 100 horsemen to apprehend the Khalsa.

Bota Singh, however, would not surrender. Despite a promise that he would be pardoned, the lone Khalsa chose to stand his ground and fight, which he did until at last he was overcome.

One account relates Zakaria Khan's frustration at his inability to finally exterminate the Sikhs. He complained:

"From where do the Sikhs obtain their nourishment? I have debarred them from all occupations. They realize no taxes. They do not farm, nor are they allowed to do business or join public employment. I have stopped all offerings to their Gurdwaras. No provisions or supplies are accessible to them. Why do they not die of sheer starvation?"

A sworn enemy of the Sikhs, named Harbhagat, gave the governor this reply:

"There are Sikhs in this world who would not eat until they have fed their brothers. They may themselves go without food and clothing, but cannot bear their comrades' distress. They would pass the winter by fireside and send them their own clothes. They would sweat to grind grain and have it sent to them. They would do the hardest chores to earn a small wage for their sake. They migrate to distant places to eke out money for their brothers in exile.

"In the village of Puhla there lives one Taru Singh. He tills his land and pays the revenue to the officials. He eats but little and sends what he saves to his brothers in the forest. His mother and sister both toil and grind to make a living. They eat sparingly and wear the coarsest homespun cloth. Whatever they save, they pass on to the Sikhs."

Hearing this, the governor sent a detachment of soldiers to Taru Singh's village to arrest him and bring him to the capital, Lahore. When the Sikh heard the approach of the governor's men, he came out of the village. Wishing to spare his neighbors any sort of hardship, he surrendered peacefully to them. Taru Singh was imprisoned and tortured. After some time had passed, he was presented before the governor.

Taru Singh, a young man of 25 years, presented himself defiantly before Zakaria Khan with the Sikh salutation, "Waheguruji ka Khalsa! Waheguruji ki Fateh!" (The Pure Ones belong to God! Victory be to God!) He went on to harangue the chief persecutor of the Sikhs:

"If we till your land, we pay you your rightful share. If we do business, we pay taxes. What is left after our payments to you is for our bellies. What we save from our mouths, we give to our brothers. We take nothing from you. Why then do you punish us?"

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The governor was enraged by Taru Singh's boldness. He had expected the Sikh to have become more submissive from his prison ordeal. Zakaria Khan presented him with the choice of converting to Islam or being put to death.

Taru Singh remained defiant. He replied, "Why should I fear for my life and become a Muslim? Don't Muslims die? Why should I abandon my faith? May my faith endure until my last breath!"

After Taru Singh had spurned temptations of land and wealth that had been offered to him, he was sentenced to suffer the humiliation of having his insignia long hair shaven off. Taru Singh's reply to the sentencing was that he would give his scalp, but not surrender his hair. Accordingly, barbers removed the scalp from his head.

Taru Singh smiled at his moral victory. He was then given over to a Hindu family of Lahore, who looked after him during his final days.

The governor, however, was not able to rejoice over Taru Singh's bloody martyrdom. According to historical accounts, the bold Sikh and the cruel governor passed from this Earth the same day: July 1, 1745.

The traditional Sikh prayer keeps alive the memory of Taru Singh, Bota Singh and the thousands of courageous men, women and children who "kept their faith to their last breath" and "gave their scalps, but not their hair."

In God We Trust

"You can't work for us. I'm sorry."

These are the words every breadwinner dreads to hear. Shatterers of hope. Deniers of opportunity. Renders of hearts.

"It's company policy. We don't hire people with beards."

In the West, for long it has been the Sikh male's dilemma. The orthodox Jew's dilemma. The scourge of the bearded man.

It was 1975 in St. Louis, Missouri, and Gurutej Singh Khalsa (1950-) had just been refused another job in the field he felt called to serve in: law enforcement. Time and again, he had applied, applied, reapplied and been refused. Gurutej Singh was gifted with every qualification. He was physically fit, an excellent marksman and intelligent – yet it was as though he was being systematically denied employment.

Although he was the student of a visionary teacher, Gurutej Singh could not have known that thirteen years hence Sikhs in Britain would be legally permitted to ride a motorcycle without a helmet. Or that in fifteen years, in another landmark ruling, Canada's national police force, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (R.C.M.P.) would make allowance for Sikh members to keep their beards and turbans, and aboriginal "Mounties" to keep their long hair in braids. Or that in another thirty years, the New York and Los Angeles police forces would be issuing uniforms to bearded and turbaned Sikhs.

There was history, too. The very first Sikhs in the United States had arrived in the early 1900s. These hardy Punjabis had worked in the lumber mills and provided cheap labor on California farms.

Most people in the USA and Canada had been unfriendly to these new arrivals from the East. Racists called them "an avalanche of death from the Himalayas."⁵²⁸ Labor unions resented their cheap labor. In 1917 and again in 1924, the US Congress passed legislation prohibiting Indian laborers from entering the country. The Supreme Court ruled in 1923 that, while Asian Indians were indeed Caucasian, and therefore exempt from already existing restrictions applying to Chinese and Japanese immigrants, they could not be granted citizenship because of their coffee-colored skin.

Existing so far from their spiritual homeland exacted a discernable price in the lives of most Sikh immigrants. With few exceptions, the highly visible Sikhs of Punjab willingly gave up their distinctive beards and turbans to submerge their identities into the American social melting pot. So it was that when Asian Americans were finally enfranchised and Dalip Singh Saund was first elected a judge, then in 1956 to serve in the House of Representatives, he was known as the first Asian American Congressman, but hardly recognizable as a Sikh.

At Yogi Bhajan’s urging, Gurutej Singh moved to the small New Mexico town of Espanola, where he continued his dream of serving as a law enforcement officer. In 1979, he graduated with the highest academic marks and the best range scores from the New Mexico Law Enforcement Academy. The very next day, the class valedictorian met with Santa Fe’s newly elected chief of police. The chief gave Gurutej Singh the usual message. With a beard and turban, he was not qualified to be a police officer.

His pride wounded and his dream still unfulfilled, Gurutej Singh sought out the wisest man he knew. Yogi Bhajan heard his story, then told Gurutej Singh, “Why do you want to say ‘Yes, Sir!’ all your life? Let’s start our own company. Then *we* will hire the police and the army officers and they will say ‘Yes, Sir!’ to you!”⁵²⁹

By the turn of the year, with a loan of \$1,500 and a business-wise partner in Daya Singh Khalsa, Akal (meaning “undying”) Security was founded. The office was Gurutej Singh’s living room. Their first client was a housing project on an Indian reservation.

The company grew. Within a couple of years, it was garnering articles in the New Mexico newspapers. From afar, the New York Times proclaimed: “Sikh Guard Service is a Tough Force in NM Security.”

Akal Security earned a reputation for the outstanding training of its recruits. It also provided innovative training for existing police forces. When Gurutej Singh’s dream-come-true started soliciting and receiving government contracts, business started to grow dramatically. For two years running, 1985 and 1986, Inc. Magazine listed Akal among the fastest growing private companies in the US.

As of this writing, Akal Security is the fifth-largest security firm in the United States. It is the largest provider of security officers for federal courthouses, with contracts for 400 buildings in forty-four states. As well, the company provides security for ten army bases and eighteen airforce bases, and the Baltimore-Washington International Airport. Employees number 13,000. The company has contracts worth nearly \$1 billion, and growing.

Despite his humble means – Gurutej Singh and other Akal Security executives earn modest salaries by US standards – he ranks with other turbaned and bearded American business success stories. The richest is said to be Didar Singh Bains, multi-millionaire California fruit-grower, who in the mid-1980s and the bloom of success, began to cultivate his own natural crop of hair. Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany the world pioneer of fibre optics, arrived in the United States in 1955 and claims to have never been discriminated against for being a Sikh – though he surmises it may have been because he only dealt with higher level officials in science and academia.⁵³⁰ Sant Singh Chatwal, once a trained fighter pilot in the Indian navy, turned down an offer by Ethiopia’s Haile Selassie to fly for his airline – if only he would cut his hair and beard, and remove his turban in the presence of the emperor. Now based in Manhattan, multimillionaire Sant Singh owns Hampshire Hotels and Resorts and is the founder of the Bombay Palace restaurant franchise.

All said, Gurutej Singh’s faith in himself and his principles have paid off handsomely. His company logo proclaims “Service above Self” and “In God We Trust.” In Akal Security, America’s well-known credo is richly and handsomely manifest.



It is a new day, the dawning of a whole new era, but that knowledge contains little comfort, for with that understanding comes a woeful realization: while our constitutions tell us we are free, our bodies are today subjected to the crudest hawkeries. What we was ours, is ours no more. Our intrinsic beauty and essential charm has been bought and sold from under us, not once, but many, many times. It has been modified and commodified to no end.

And if the science of medicine and the gloss of advertising has filled the body temple with petty traders, the deep-seated insecurity they have awakened in us has spoiled the inner sanctum, our essential self-image and sense of worth, beyond recognition.

Has anyone seen a poodle lately just being a poodle – and not dressed up all in ribbons and booties and fluffed and trimmed to feed our manufactured idea of “poodle-ness”? Does anyone even have any idea what a

Human by Design

natural poodle would look like? So it is with us. What woman today will not feel naked without her make-up? What man considers himself respectable without a shave?

There is nothing wrong in dying, and there is no shame in not being mistaken for a movie star or in having one's body grossly deformed, if only we can maintain our self-respect and human decency. The charm of innocence, the calming presence of real courage, the glow of unconditional love – these attributes have yet to be mass-marketed in some neat, easy-to-use format.

Beauty is a spirit. It can be befriended, cultivated, nurtured. Beauty will grow if it is joined to a worthy cause. True beauty is not traded in the marketplace. It cannot be bought or sold for money. It never was, nor ever it shall be. This we must yet learn.

“Ungsung Wahay Guru”

In every cell of me, there is God.

– traditional Sikh mantra

From Grace to Mastery

At times, this world can seem a pretty barren, God-forsaken place. After all, how long ago was it that Moses walked the Earth? Buddha? Zarathustra? Lao-tsu? Jesus?

By 456, the Church Fathers were already in a reactionary mode: cutting hair, banning divination, and declaring heretics. Muhammad, whom his followers claim as God’s final prophet, lived nearly 1,400 years before us. In human terms, that comes to some fifty-four generations! By Guru Nanak’s time, even the fertile Hindu imagination had not produced a single holy scripture, a Purana or Upanishad, for 700 years.

When the great Guru shared his living inspiration with his disciples, he was consciously re-writing a story that had become stale in the retelling. By breaking with the conventions of the established religions and directly empowering people of all castes and walks of life, women and men alike, Guru Nanak was profoundly recasting the spiritual paradigm. As a result, people were transformed. Society underwent a fundamental shift. The Guru himself must have been deeply moved to witness the spread of this living inspiration.

The Guru’s approach was deeply anti-hierarchical. Rather than establishing yet another religious bureaucracy, he directed his students to find their spiritual communion right at home, in the temple of their mind and body. To this end, Guru Nanak conveyed the essence of the most profound, empowering yoga.

This body of six chakras is the home of the detached mind and heart of the yogi.
In this consciousness, intuition is awakened and the mind attuned to the celestial sound.
It is the sound unearthly in which my mind is absorbed.
Through the Guru’s teachings, my heart and mind are filled with the True Name...
Those who live by the Word are no longer of this world.
Awake to the Guru’s wisdom, they shed their vulgar thinking.
Night and day, they live absorbed in that wisdom.
Within them, they realize the state of liberation while yet alive.⁵³¹

Not everyone was destined to take up the Guru’s teachings. But when a poor orphan, a peanut vendor in the streets of Lahore, was transformed into a gracious King of kings, the minstrels of the Guru’s court could not contain their sense of wonder:

Blessed, blessed is Guru Ram Das.
The One who created you, himself has embellished you.
Complete is the miracle. The Creator himself has become your support.⁵³²

When Guru Arjun organized and codified this universal consciousness in the form of the Shabd Guru, he included devotional songs written by his own disciples on the same pages as his own. The tenth Master went further. In his two surviving compilations, the Dasam Granth and Sarab Loh Granth, there is often no way of telling what the Guru wrote and what was composed by the fifty-two poets of his court. As he and his followers wholly shared one inspiration, the Guru clearly saw no point in differentiating between their works.

In honor of the empowering outlook of the tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh, the acclaimed poet Bhai Nand Lal wrote the following refrain:

Great, great is Gobind Singh.
Himself, he is the Master and himself the disciple!⁵³³

For 135 years, the function of Guru had remained in the Sodhi family, the lineage of Guru Ram Das, the once-found orphan. On Baisak^v, the tenth Master broadcast the call to self-mastery, far and wide. Creating the Khalsa, the pure ones, from men of every caste, he referred to them only in the highest terms:

Khalsa is my special form. I live in the Khalsa...
Khalsa is my perfect, true Guru.⁵³⁴

There is more to life than our thoughts and worries. The world is magical, but we don't see it. Events happening all around us are full of promise and significance, but we don't recognize them. Our life is precious, yet we don't truly value it. Death is inevitable, though we try hard to ignore it.

Guru Nanak's engaging inspiration is conveyed in his timeless words of inspiration and through the details of his daily discipline. Anyone who deeply meditates on the Shabd Guru and puts their heart into his empowering *sadhana* can realize the universal consciousness shared by all the saints and prophets for themselves. This is the magic and magnificence of the Guru's way.

Last Things First –

In Guru Nanak's outline of life, endings have a certain natural preeminence. Because they are certain, as certain as beginnings and more easily anticipated, they make for a rock-solid philosophical foundation. There are many things we may strive for in this life, but never obtain for ourselves. Not so death: everyone gets one of their very own. Of this, we may rest assured.

Guru Nanak was not grim about death, that final slipping off into the great beyond. Sometimes, he called it "the marriage of the soul-bride." In this analogy, the soul bides her time on Earth, like a young woman, until on that great wedding day the handsome groom takes her from her parents to his home in the afterlife. Before her marriage, the wise bride immerses herself in prayer and study, so that she might enjoy happiness in her new home, understanding just who her spouse is, and how to please him in this lifetime.

The following is an excerpt from Kirtan Sohila, customarily recited on the death of a disciple:

Listen, my friends, I beg you. Now is the time to serve the saints.
You will earn spiritual profit here and your life tomorrow will be sweet.
This lifetime grows shorter each day and night.
Give your heart to the Guru and settle your affairs.

Pause and reflect.

This world of flux and anxiety is crossed by those who know the Creator.
Those who are awakened, drink the essence of spiritual understanding
And gain the unspeakable wisdom.
Purchase only that commodity for which you came here
And, through the Guru, God will live with you.
In your own home, you will easily find the mansion of peace
And not wander lost in rebirths again.⁵³⁵

Remembering the inevitability of death can add a sobering dimension to life itself. Death makes trivialities the more trivial, human greatness, the more grandiloquent. It reminds us not to become too comfortable where we are, and to fear our conscience, the inescapable judge.

All our addictions and false comforts find their end at death's door. At the last moment, when our life flashes before our eyes, only an easy conscience can help us.

^v Baisakhi: the holiday celebrated April 13, commemorating the creation of Khalsa by Guru Gobind Rai in 1699.

When tested, the fifth Guru submitted to horrible torture and death, rather than compromise his conscience. The tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh was surrounded by death on every side: his father and four sons martyrs, his mother dead of grief, many of his disciples killed in battle. The Guru never despaired. He held his head high until the end. It was Guru Gobind Singh who gave the Khalsa Order their code of conduct, and fittingly designated it the *rehit maryada* - "living in memory of death."

Death is certain, and while a martyr's death is not assigned to everyone, the demise of the hateful, selfish ego is a welcome development for all. From the death of conceit comes the birth of something truly magnificent: a pristine consciousness with no fear, even of the bodily separation we call "death." The Guru called it "the experience of deathlessness within oneself" - *Amrit*, the immortalizing ambrosia of the truly masterful. The Guru shared that *Amrit* with his disciples, then on Baisakhi day, in a ritualized form, his five most loving disciples gave that *Amrit* to him.

Living in the Neutral Mind

The world we know is divided into two hemispheres, east and west. Even the brain has two sides. The left side excels at linear, verbal modes of thinking. It expresses itself best in math and logic. The right hemisphere is adept at spatial, nonverbal concepts. Art and emotion are its best subjects. When these two worlds, each with their own inherent logic, come in conflict, leaving us torn between them, we say we are "of two minds."

Peace of mind and essential insight can be realized by going beyond these minds, to a third. The third is *shunija* - the neutral mind. Accessing the "zero mind" is an essential part of Guru Nanak's original teaching, much as zero has been an essential part of Western mathematical thinking since it arrived in Europe from India in the Middle Ages.

Of the three minds designated by Yogi Bhajan, the positive mind correlates somewhat with our understanding of the functions of the right hemisphere of the brain. It is expansive and practical, constantly seeking the means to pleasure and fulfillment. The positive mind may be characterized as constructive, risk-taking and active.

In contrast, the negative mind is governed by the impulse to survive. For every pro presented by its polarity, it puts up an objection. By its nature, the negative mind is conservative and reactive.

Between those two polarities, the bifurcated universe of negative and positive, exists the essential quality of nothingness. This is the domain of the neutral mind. The zero mind takes a long view of things. It is unaffected by the tempest of emotions or the rigidity of dogmas and doctrines. It is aloof from the polarities of compulsion and revulsion, fear and obsession. The neutral mind is liberating and wholly present. In its assessments, it is dispassionate and nonreactive. That mind which "doesn't mind" readily finds meaning, purpose and implication.⁵³⁶

Zero, the "something which is nothing" has a long history as a potent and magical tool of transformation. In medieval Europe, the advent of cipher enabled astronomers to make the advanced calculations that shifted the center of the solar system from the Earth to the sun. Zero and one together comprise the syntax at the heart of artificial intelligence. In meditation, it offers up the possibility of sound judgement, insight and intuition.

We use our intuition more than we imagine. Of the billions of actions we take in a day, a majority are governed by habit. Most of the rest are guided by our unconscious desires. Some are intuitive. Only a few, we really stop and think about.

Guru Nanak's prescription for accessing the pure intuition and guidance of the neutral mind engages the sublime power of the breath. He went so far as to designate air as guru. This should not surprise us altogether, given our western traditions of holy spirit and inspiration. Both terms come from *spiritus*, which is Latin for breathing.

Breath has a number of significant attributes. Like life itself, it may be engaged consciously or unconsciously. Doctors estimate that one of three adults does not take in enough air to sustain ordinary health. There are many outcomes of unhealthy, shallow breathing. Heart and lung problems, mood disorders, immune deficiency, liver and digestive problems may all be linked to poor breathing.⁵³⁷

From Grace to Mastery

Many of these disorders originate in a basic inability to relax. One who develops a practice of breathing consciously and deeply, can truly inspire themselves. Physiologically speaking, breathing exercises affect the molecules of emotion, known as neuropeptides, that are based in the lungs. These mood-altering substances serve to subtly shift the body from its stressful, potentially degenerative, sympathetic mode to a relaxing, self-healing state attuned to the parasympathetic nervous system.⁵³⁸ This calm and centered healing space is the realm of the neutral mind. To engage this process, slow and deep breath from the navel is most effective.

When the mind resides in a steadfast heart,
The enlightened one lives in a constant awareness of the origin and root of all being.
At that time, the breath remains centered in the navel.
The enlightened one finds there the essence they have been seeking.⁵³⁹

In deep meditation, where the brain waves have settled into a beta pattern and the two hemispheres are in sync, the light of intuition dawns through the medium of the neutral mind. In that supremely receptive state, insight and revelation may come from anywhere: subconscious recollections, the here and now, or distant associations. Sometimes, it is the subtle voice of God.

From the True Guru, I learned reflective awareness.
In the neutral mind, I found my oneness with everything and my self at home in Truth.⁵⁴⁰

The neutral mind reveals a priceless treasury of insight and purpose, humor and inspiration. Better listening engenders better communication. Patience offers greater opportunities. Compassion fosters better relationships. Fearlessness invites creative new approaches. There, between life and death, in the mind of perfect contemplation, life takes a turn for the best.

Kirtan –

Whenever Guru Nanak set out on his long teaching expeditions, he was always joined by his childhood friend and disciple, Mardana. When the Guru poured out songs of wisdom and wonder, Mardana would accompany the Guru's voice with the sounds of his stringed *rabab*, an eastern version of a rebeck. Together, they enthralled their listeners with meaning and melody, sound and substance, the message and inspiration of the Guru's songs.

In Baghdad, home to an austere form of Islam which frowned on any sort of music, one Pir Dastgir is said to have engaged the Master in a discussion about the merits of music. At first, the respected Muslim scholar objected that music disturbs the mind and inclines it toward vice.

The Guru insisted, "Music focuses and softens the mind. A mind affected by music can be guided in any given direction. It melts the heart, making it compassionate and loving. It broadens horizons, produces emotion, and inspires the listener to do good. It purifies cravings. Everyone - elder, youth, child or animal - loves music. Music occurs naturally. In the flow of water, the waves of the sea, and gusts of wind, there is music. Birds sing. Sweet sounds exit from a man's throat. Ears have been made to appreciate music."

The scholar of Baghdad objected, "But music adds to the indulgences of man! It lives in the houses of immoral and depraved people. It has produced beggars and prostitutes."

Guru Nanak advised the respected *pir*, "These outcomes are not the fault of music, which possesses immense power of changing the mental disposition. It creates balance and harmony in a person. Even poisonous serpents are enchanted by pure, wordless music. When words are added to music to appeal to our sensibilities, the lyrics can be of two kinds: degrading or uplifting. If music is separated from low inclinations, it turns out to be clean and pure.

"There are three forms of admiration and praise of God. One consists of thinking of the Infinite One and concentrating on Its attributes. A second is admiring the Infinite with written and spoken words. The third, and best, is to sing the praises of the Infinite and engage the natural devotion of the heart."

Pir Dastgir inquired, "Can we not do without music?"

The Guru replied, "Music is unavoidable. It bursts out of man like a fountain. It cannot be stopped. It is spontaneous. Everyone in the world sings. The farmer sings at the handle of the plow, the sailor at his oars, the

laborer at his work, the girl at the spinning wheel. Some sing at a low pitch and others high, but sing they must when their heart puts them in a mood to sing. Since singing is a must, then why not sing what is good and what elevates the man and brings him nearer to God? If you do not sing the praises of the Infinite One, the same music will be used by people for bad purposes."⁵⁴¹

The fifth Guru was an accomplished and many-faceted artist. As well as designing the Golden Temple, he was himself a great poet and musician. As a musician, he invented a bowed instrument called a *sarinda*, which he played to accompany his voice. He also trained musicians to play in the various ragas.

The Harimandar was designed by the fifth Guru as a sacred place for the performance of the most inspiring songs and music he could find or himself create. The Guru solicited contributions from all over India of the most uplifting spiritual lyrics and melodies. He selected work from the popular verses of Kabir of Benares (1398-1448), the Maharashtran saint, Namdev (1270-1350), the itinerant Sheikh Farid (1173-1265), the twelfth century Bengali saint Jaidev and twenty-four other luminaries, including his predecessors in the Sikh lineage and himself.

The Guru was in such awe of this divine poetry, that each night while the work of compilation was going on, he would retire the sacred verses to his bed and himself sleep on the floor below. The final result came out to a lyrical tome of about 1400 pages (later added to by the tenth Guru to make 1430 pages), known to us as the Shabd Guru.

It was the fifth Guru who composed the following line, immortalized in the Shabd Guru:

In this unruly age, devotional music presides in the heart.⁵⁴²

Music entrains our bodies and minds in a profound and elemental way. Through the power of recording and broadcasting technology, music - all kinds of it - is more pervasive than ever before. There is romantic music. There are sad and happy songs. There is music associated with advertisements. There are movie and television soundtracks. There are anthems and martial music, symphonies and ballads. Finally, there are songs of the soul.

Each day, we choose our music, one song at a time.

Spiritual Community –

In the course of his extensive travels, Guru Nanak found many, many people who had long ago lost their childlike sense of wonder and happy engagement in the world. They spent their lives immersed in the pursuit of the fleeting pleasures of fame and sensual gratification. Many more abandoned their families to live in caves or wander in forests, far from the hum and bustle of ordinary life.

When a group of recluses whom Guru Nanak had found in his travels asked him how life was back in the world, he related the social anarchy of that day:

While spiritual adepts keep to themselves, isolated in the mountains, who will rescue the world?
 Yogis without wisdom, night and day sit around applying ashes to their limbs.
 Without the discerning and compassionate light of Guru, the whole world is drowning.
 O God! In this Dark Age, there are joints of human flesh and bone in the mouths of dogs.
 The rulers are committing atrocities. Everything is upside-down.
 The protective fence has turned against the crop and is devouring it!
 The mouths of ordinary people, ignorant and uninformed,
 Are filled with falsehoods and fabrications.
 The disciples devise tunes, and their masters please them by dancing in many ways.
 The followers go nowhere, while their gurus visit them in their homes.
 The priest has fallen to bribery and corruption, and thereby lost his authority.
 Woman and man love for money,
 And mind not where that money has come from or where it has been.
 The whole world is filled with outrageousness.⁵⁴³

From Grace to Mastery

Rather than blaming and shunning civilization, the Guru set an example of living among the common people, actively working to improve things, while daily cultivating his own inspiration. Guru Nanak advised his disciples to build meaningful relationships of love and service in the context of community.

The Guru showed that God lives not only in temples and on distant mountain heights, but also in cozy homes. Moreover, the routine challenges of family life can prove to be at least as rigorous as the ordeals of the spiritual adepts. At home and in community, the Guru instructed his disciples to learn to live for one another.

The Guru's community-building efforts were not always easy. Once, in the time of the second Guru, there was a drought. As it happened, in the same town there lived a man who cherished an unholy jealousy of the Guru's influence.

As the reservoirs dried up and cattle around the town of Khadur died for lack of green pasture, people suffered in many ways. A group of townspeople approached the reputed miracle worker. The people asked him to make it rain.

The resentful ascetic told the people that if they expelled the Guru from the town, he would bring rain. Otherwise, he said, "Let the Guru make it rain for you."

When the townspeople approached the Guru, he advised them to be patient and accept their current dilemma as a part of God's infinite plan.

The people then told the Master what the ascetic had said. He responded very humbly that if they thought his going would help them achieve their objective, he would leave their town willingly. Baba Buddha, one of the Guru's most unfailing and dedicated disciples was incensed at this turn of events, but the Master urged him to forgive the others and restrain himself.

So it was that the second Guru left Khadur. When he had gone some distance, he sat down under a tree. Even there, he was not left alone. The farmers had been warned not to welcome him, so he continued on through seven successive villages, until he finally found a place in a forest where the neighbors were not influenced by the arrogant ascetic.

Meanwhile, the townspeople congregated around the man who had promised them rain. All his efforts and every mantra, however, could not summon the longed for sight of rain clouds in the shimmering summer air.

After a time, the people of the town began to complain, "On your account, we have fallen out with the Guru. When he was here, we always had enough, even of delicacies, to eat from his kitchen, but now we have expelled him, and still no rain falls!"

After a time, the people were convinced of the hypocrisy of the so-called holy man. They beat him up and went to find the Guru to beg his forgiveness. When the people located him and related what had happened and how they had beaten up the imposter, the Master felt sorry and rebuked his disciples for treating him so harshly.

There was much celebration in Khadur when the Guru returned. It was not to be the last challenge to the faith and community-spiritedness of the Guru's followers, but they had learned well the lesson offered by the Master. No rival of the Guru ever again set foot in the town of Khadur.

Our very concept of community has changed radically over the years. We have for long been moving from communal life where lineage, clan and place were our defining characteristics. In much of the world today, birth, illness and death are experienced in soulless, secular institutions. Many people's education and work is far removed from family and community members. Even their light moments of entertainment – watching television, seeing a movie or surfing the internet – are experienced alone.

According to one pioneer of the women's movement, Germaine Greer (1939-):

The most effective medium of consumerism is the nuclear family: it is the only target our fabulous marketing machinery can reach, and therefore its first job is to create it. It is created out of restless young adults who slip the hobbles of kin: the electronic siren-song is being thumped and pumped in every corner of the world.⁵⁴⁴

Real communities are hard-pressed by the forces of modernity. Increasing numbers of urban dwellers know more about their favorite celebrities than about the people living right next door. All the moving and changing of addresses, pursuing the relentless trail of personal and professional advancement, weakens the essential fabric of community.

The resultant impoverishment is difficult to measure. The chances for self-actualization afforded by community are unique and vastly enrich the human dimension of our being. What ever happened to local genius? What is the value of local culture? What about grassroots initiatives? Community spirit?

Guru Nanak left the confines of his own town of Sultanpur to explore the great global village when it was neither fashionable nor easy to do so. After many years of sharing his inspiration from Mecca to Assam, and Sri Lanka to Samarkand, he returned to found the community of Kartarpur, where he spent the remainder of his days among disciples, family and his many visitors.

The Heart of Abundance

The great Guru's followers were people of many occupations. Numbered among them were emperors and farmers, scholars and soldiers, craftsmen and traders. Some lived in splendid palaces and others in simple huts. In his travels, the Guru met and stayed with all of them. If on occasion no one would offer them hospitality, the Guru and Mardana would happily sleep under a tree with the forest animals as their companions.

Wherever he went, the Guru managed to keep his cheerful disposition. In good times and bad, he remained mindful of the Giver of all things. According to the Guru, an abiding consciousness of gratitude, and not material things, was the real essence of abundance.

A man receives ten things.
Because of one not received, he loses faith.
If the Giver were to withhold that one and take back the ten,
What could the fool then say or do?⁵⁴⁵

Guru Nanak once visited a wealthy businessman who was very proud of his riches. Duni Chand was just arranging a feast for 100 brahmins on the anniversary of his father's death. The custom of feeding priests was supposed to ensure the peace of the soul of the departed.

The Guru chided Duni Chand, "It is two years now since your father has eaten anything, yet you say you are feeding 100 brahmins for him!"

Before leaving, Guru Nanak gave the businessman a needle and asked him to keep it until he asked for it in the next world. Duni Chand accepted the needle and asked his wife to put it away for him until he should need it.

When the good woman heard this, she asked her husband if he had lost his mind and told him to return the needle to the Guru. When Dhuni Chand gave back the needle, Guru Nanak asked, "If such a small and light thing as a needle cannot go to the next world, how can you reach there with all your wealth?"

When the light of understanding finally dawned in Duni Chand's mind, the Master instructed him to apportion some of his wealth to feeding the poor in God's Name. He also gave Dhuni Chand the wealth of meditation on the Name. This wealth, the Guru assured him, would accompany him to the next world.

In the time of the third Guru, a banker came with costly offerings for the Guru. Among his presents was a precious necklace of pearls and gems. The wealthy disciple wanted the Guru to wear the necklace, but the Master insisted he was too old for such adornment. Guru Amar Das was about eighty years at the time. The Guru instead put the costly jeweled necklace around the neck of his dearest disciple, Jetha.

Sometimes the Guru would take his entourage on an afternoon walk to the peaceful shores of a nearby river. On the way lived a filthy, naked *fakir*. The embittered would-be saint, who was often beside himself from the influence of drugs, loved to hurl insults as the Master and his disciples strolled by.

Each time he saw them coming, the *fakir* would launch into a tirade in a voice loud enough that the Guru would be sure to hear, "Look at him! He uses all the world's wealth for himself. The older he gets, the more stingy he is. He only gives to those who give something in return. He never thinks of poor holy men and never remembers me. I am just another beggar, like the rest. I take opium and bhang, but he never offers me any, though he ought to think of the poor. I don't care who any one is. They can be a king or an emperor. I speak the truth to their face. But when someone gives me something, I pray for them."

From Grace to Mastery

The Guru, who was an embodiment of patience, used to keep silent and pass on without responding.

One day, as the graceless *fakir* indulged in his fuming and sputtering, Jetha stopped and asked, “Why do you degrade yourself by slandering the Guru?”

The *fakir* replied, “Why shouldn’t I? The Guru has never given me anything. Here, give me the necklace you’re wearing!”

Without hesitating, Jetha removed his beautiful necklace and put it on the *fakir*.

Suddenly, the would-be holy man changed his tune. He began praising the Guru in the most extravagant language. When the Master and his devotees returned from the river in the evening, the *fakir* again burst out in complements and blessings.

When the Guru heard the *fakir’s* words, he remarked that someone must have been generous to him, otherwise he would not have changed his tone so dramatically. Jetha confessed, “O Master, I gave the *fakir* my necklace. You have given me God’s Name as a necklace. I keep it with me. This temporary necklace I have offered in your name.”

On hearing this, Guru Amar Das was greatly pleased, “Your lineage will be endless. Inexhaustible will be your wealth and flow of abundance.” Jetha went on to become the fourth Master, and became known as Guru Ram Das.

The Guru always insisted that a brimful spirit was much more valuable than all the treasures of the world. He encouraged his devotees to be unsparing in dedicating their bodies, minds and wealth to the greater common good. God, the Knower of hearts, always saw to the needs of his devotees. In mysterious ways, people always received their just deserts. There was no need of crying and complaining.

For many years, the Guru’s court was maintained in a splendid style. The Guru himself dressed in a turban decorated with jewels befitting a great raja. The Master was a haven of spiritual sovereignty in a land of violent persecution and oppression. The majesty and decorum of the Guru’s court inspired hope and confidence in the common people.

After the evacuation of the fort of Anandpur, when the tenth Master was forced to live as a fugitive in the forest to avoid capture by the Mughal army, he never forgot the real source of richness and comfort. Separated from his family and disciples, he composed the following verse:

Go and tell our dear Friend the condition of his devotees –
Without you, royal clothes torment us like some agonizing disease
And our homes become writhing snake pits.
Pitchers of water are piercing daggers
And we are reduced to the condition of beasts consigned to slaughter.
Loved Comrade, when you are here, we sleep well on a coarse mattress of straw.
When you are away, our cozy neighborhood is reduced to a lifeless inferno.⁵⁴⁶

In our own world where poverty is more studied than alleviated, and the gap between the haves and have-nots grows each year, country to country, and neighborhood to neighborhood – real poverty can be found in the most unexpected places. Let us turn again to the wise matriarch of the woman’s movement for her response to the overwrought Malthusian nightmare of a world wracked by scarcity and overpopulation:

Let us get to know Lady Poverty up close, so that we lose our phobia about the poor. If we must be afraid, let us be afraid that man, the ecological disaster, has now no enemy but his own kind. Rather than be afraid of the powerless, let us be afraid of the powerful, rich, sterile nations, who, whether they be of the Eastern or Western variety, have no stake in the future. The birth of every unwanted child is a tragedy, for itself and for the unwilling parents, but in spite of all the attention we have given the matter, more unwanted children are born to us, the rich, than to them, the poor. This may seem a paradox, but time gives proof.⁵⁴⁷

Of course, prosperity begins at home. As an attitude, it begins in the mind, the source of all our perceptions. In the words of Yogi Bhajan:

All pain in our life is our own creation. It is not meant to be. All the pluses and minuses mean nothing. *Shunija* - nothingness - is a state of consciousness where there is no plus, no minus, no wrong,

no big, no small. You will say you need clothes and shelter. Say instead, “I have no needs.” Things will come. That is the state of *shunija*. Things come.⁵⁴⁸

Since the time of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh, the Golden Temple inlaid with semiprecious stones and overlaid with more gold than any other holy site in the world, has been a visible emblem of the noble tradition of the Raj Yogi, the master of spirit and empire. The great maharaja knew that richness is less a matter of having, than feeling human enough to give – and what better object of charity could there be than a beautiful temple of God with its four doors open all of humanity?⁵⁴⁹

The Power of Woman

The first to recognize the genius of Guru Nanak was his sister, Nanaki (1464-1518). It was she who intervened when their father would vent his frustration over Nanak’s indifference to worldly things. Once her younger brother’s marriage had been worked out, it was Nanaki who arranged a job and house for Nanak and his wife to live nearby her own home in the town of Sultanpur.

The third Guru, himself with two daughters, assigned women responsibility for a number of communities of disciples. He opposed the practice of purdah, according to which Muslim women kept their faces covered in public and spent most of their lives behind walls, isolated from the world. Guru Amar Das also denounced the Hindu custom of sati, where a widow was forced to burn on her husband’s funeral pyre. His saintly younger daughter, Bibi Bhani (1535-1598), grew in distinction as she became wife to her father’s successor, the kind and noble Guru Ram Das, then mother to the fifth Guru, Arjun.

In many verses, the Guru describes the lover of the Infinite as a bride. Sometimes, he details the pangs of her separation from her Adored or her joy at union with Him.

Truth is my adornment and fear of God my mascara.
My breath is perfumed with the flavor of the Immortal Name.
My bracelets, robes and ornaments look becoming.
Overjoyed is the Bride when her Husband comes home to her.
I have charmed the Lord with the enticement of virtue
And He has come under my power. The Guru has erased my doubts.
My mansion is above all others. Leaving all his other lovers,
He has become my darling Beloved.⁵⁵⁰

While some creeds espoused celibacy and put down family life, the Guru openly advocated marriage as a path to spiritual realization. This type of wedding was not a matter of mere convention or convenience. It was considered to be an embodiment the highest ideas, achieving a state of soulful union right at home, in the middle of worldly temptations and responsibilities.

Do not say of those who sit together that they are wife and husband.
Consider them married who live as one spirit in two forms.⁵⁵¹

The Guru enshrined women in the social fabric of his spiritual community. Guru Ram Das, the fourth Master, composed the distinctive Sikh wedding as a series of vows ingeniously blending the vocabulary and imagery of ascetic yogis with the responsibilities of married life. Clearly the Guru was intending two marriages: that of the husband and bride, and also that of the married couple and the Infinite Creator.

On the historic day of Baisakhi, woman also came to play a significant role. While the Guru was chanting and stirring a steel bowl of water with a double-edged sword, intending to ritually administer it to his five beloveds to formally initiate them into the Order of Khalsa, his wife added some sugar wafers. This, Mata Jito Ji said, was to ensure the men embodied not only strength and valor, but retained their human dimension, their essential sweetness. The Master agreed, and the addition of sugar wafers became a necessary part of the preparation of *Amrit* at all subsequent Khalsa initiation ceremonies.

In an era when many traditions considered woman impure and would have pronounced a woman’s influence at a religious ceremony sacrilegious, Mata Jito Ji’s spontaneous contribution was a spiritual benchmark. After that, many women took the Khalsa vows and accepted the *Amrit* baptism, to live and participate on

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an equal footing with men in all important facets of community life. At least that was what the Guru intended, and to a remarkable extent, it turned out that way.

When the tenth Guru passed on, his two surviving consorts played a crucial role in managing the affairs of the far-flung Sikh community during long years of persecution and hardship. Mata Sundari (1667?-1747) and Mata Sahib Kaur (1682?-1747?) sent out communiqués giving encouragement and advice to devotees in outlying places, and arranging the distribution of offerings. Records of these communications show what a vital role they played in a time of tremendous turmoil, from 1708 to at least 1734.⁵⁵²

On Punjab's shifting frontier, where survival was a matter of daily concern, opportunities for education were limited for men and women alike, but a number of Sikh women distinguished themselves on the battlefield and in matters of statecraft. The most memorable are Mai Bhago (1683?-1763?), who famously turned around a dispirited group of deserters and led them into the battle of Muktsar (1705), and Sardarni Sada Kaur (1762-1832), the astute advisor and mother-in-law of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh.

Guru Nanak was outspoken in his respect for the gentler sex. In the traditional Sikh prayer, whenever the names of eleven Gurus were invoked together with the sacrifices and aspirations of the Khalsa legacy, it was the Infinite in its feminine aspect, as "*Pritham Bhagautee*," that was, and is, firstly called to mind. To those who would disrespect women, the Guru offered up the following verse:

Woman gives us birth. Woman gives us form.
It is woman we court in marriage.
To woman's friendship, we appeal. Woman is our abiding motivation.
If our one woman dies, we seek another. Through woman are all our social ties.
Why then consider her inferior, from who are born the lords of men?⁵⁵³

As the Guru indicates, through most of human history, women have played a central role in all societies and cultures. Women have served as the gateway to life and learning for all of us, she being our first teacher. In matriarchal cultures, womankind has provided the predominant social modality.

It has been said that a graceful woman nurtures and enhances everything she comes into contact with, men most of all.⁵⁵⁴ In his own life, Yogi Bhajan's saintly grandmother once instructed him on this point, saying:

"Well, grandson, women were meant to purify and sanctify everything on this Earth. Everything which woman touches becomes divine, and the only way to make something divine is to sanctify it with the Word of the Guru so that it will become pure, it will become healthy, and it will become ever-living."⁵⁵⁵

As families in the industrialized world have been shrunk, shattered and diminished by the forces of economic and social upheaval, and as children have increasingly grown up molded by the interchangeable faces of education and mass market indoctrination, women's role in society has naturally been less. Made up, packaged and digitalized, the virtual woman is oftentimes reduced to unrequited housework, serving as part-time advertising ikon, and ultimately dumped as a consumer of unrealistic expectations.

Ms. Greer eloquently contrasts the value of womankind to modern and traditional societies:

That motherhood is virtually meaningless in our society is no ground for supposing that the fact that women are still defined by their mothering function in other societies is simply an index of their oppression. We have at least to consider the possibility that a successful matriarch might well pity Western feminists for having been duped into futile competition with men in exchange for the companionship and love of children and other women.⁵⁵⁶

Yogi Bhajan devoted a large part of his teaching to confronting the harsh reality of woman's life in a culture that has been variously described as "ornamental," "prophylactic" and "a culture of death" and to the arousal of the innate guiding instinct in womankind. The yogi from Amritsar was emphatic that a people who did not respect its mothers could never find peace. He taught his female students to leave their inner "chick," and trained and inspired them to realize instead their divine destiny as the "Grace of God."

Welcoming New Life

Woman plays a unique role in the human experience. It is in her and from her flesh and blood that we all originate. This can hardly be insignificant.

According to Yogi Bhanjan, the soul enters the womb 120 days after conception. Up to that time, the conditions of life exist. It remains a matter of attracting a new soul. Those four months, when a worthy soul may be drawn to her womb, is an ideal time for prayer and meditation.⁵⁵⁷

According to Yogi Bhanjan, those first 120 days provide a vital time, a grace period for personal reflection as to whether one is truly prepared and able to be a mother to another human being. It is a big responsibility, not to be entered into lightly.

God does not place the soul in the fetus until the 120th day. There is a reason for that. Even God wants to have planned parenthood. In the Name of God, this nonsense of right to life is being laid down. There is no reason why you must bear a child if you are mentally, socially, economically and religiously unprepared. Don't bring anyone to this Earth if you cannot handle it. It is most unrighteous. As a human being, it is your responsibility to deeply search yourself to know the capacity of your nervous system, the depth of your ability to love and understand, the degree of balance between your inner thoughts and values and their expression in your environments. If everything tabulates in the positive, then plan for a child.⁵⁵⁸

At the 120th day, a woman truly becomes a mother. From that point on, she nurses the soul that has found its way into her life. It is a time of celebration to honor the new mother and the institution of motherhood.⁵⁵⁹ The occasion can be marked in any fitting way that will make the mother feel special and give her friends and family an opportunity to honor her in her new role and status. The baby shower can come later. This is the mother's day.

The mother needs extra support and encouragement during her months of pregnancy, and these should be freely given. She should get out of the house and take long walks preferably with her partner or a friend, but not alone. A pleasant stroll of five miles each day can be most beneficial.⁵⁶⁰

Physically and emotionally, the new mother will be vulnerable at this time. Those close to her should recognize this and give her the extra care she needs. Cheerful environments, special attention to her nutritional needs, and soothing massages can all help the mother make this important transition in a graceful and positive way.

From the new soul's arrival to the end of nursing is a time to abstain from further intercourse. Otherwise, sex hormones will find their way into the mother's milk. Hammering the new arrival in the womb should not be an option. The couple may find other graceful ways of servicing their sexual cravings. These should not be stressful to the soul in utero or the mother carrying her sacred charge.⁵⁶¹

During these months and up to the fortieth day after the child's birth, the new soul takes its basic character and values from the mother.⁵⁶² It is a time for her to prepare for the hard work of labor, to meditate, to keep healthy and to keep her spirits high.

After the child is born, it should be welcomed into a cozy home. This is not a time to invite over all the relatives right away. It is meant to be an intimate occasion for the mother and child, father and immediate family first to become acquainted. It is also a time for the mother's recovery from what is, after all, a very taxing physical ordeal. If a close friend of the mother or a nurse can be hired for the initial forty days postpartum to wait on the mother and take care of the needs of the household, that bit of extra help will pay dividends for years to come.⁵⁶³

It is not recommended that young children be left to sleep alone. If at all possible, they should sleep together with their parents. Until recent times, the family bed has been a near universal custom. It is still the practice of traditional households in Japan, China, India and Africa. The enduring attraction of the family bed is easy to understand. It offers companionship, warmth, and solace. There is no need for anyone to be roused out of bed for night feedings. Even the possibility of crib death, or "sudden infant death syndrome," is eliminated by eliminating the crib.⁵⁶⁴

Swaddling is nearly a lost art in our culture, which is unfortunate because it is so beneficial. Swaddling gives rest to the nervous system and is very timely after nursing and at bedtime. Infants from one or two months can be rolled up in a piece of lightweight cloth cut in a rectangle. The cloth should wind around baby a few times from shoulder to foot with his arms straight down at his sides. The cloth ought to be secured just firmly enough to ensure baby does not wriggle out. Once baby is snugly bundled up, he may be sung to and carried or put down

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to sleep. At night, infants should be unwrapped and allowed to stretch their limbs after an hour or so.⁵⁶⁵

Yogi Bhajan recommends a spacing of at least two calendar years between pregnancies. It takes that long for a mother's insides to fully recover from the strains of childbirth and be physically fit for the arrival of another soul.

No One Knows (Creation Myths)

Since the dawn of time, this clever monkey, *homo sapiens* has wondered at how things are and speculated over how they came to be. Across millennia, many nights have passed before a crackling flame, eager audiences taking in fantastic tales of good and evil spirits, chaos and the mighty creator God.

The lore of story-tellers and shamen might vary in detail from tribe to tribe, and place to place. Their tales serve to enthrall and entertain, to inspire and delight, and to fulfill the uniquely human craving for beginnings and endings and purpose in life. In Guru Nanak's travels, he became acquainted with numerous versions of the story of how all things began.

India's ancient traditions offered up various accounts. There was the myth of Brahma, the Creator who simply thought the world into being. There was another version with the primal Goddess, Adi Shakti, at the center. From her, the three main gods of the Hindu pantheon were born. Then, there was also the account of the Primal Man sacrificed by the gods, his various parts becoming all the parts of creation.

The religion of the Zoroastrians originated in ancient Persia. They believed the universe was created in six stages. First the sky was made of stone and rock crystal, then water, earth, plants, animals and humans took shape. According to one of their old stories, all living things were first the progeny of the fertile moon. Where the moon god's semen landed on the ground, domesticated plants were formed.

The Buddha's discrete silence when probed about how things came into existence meant Buddhists did not have a creation story to tell. Jews, Christians and Muslims, however, all agreed on the Old Testament account of God creating the world in seven days, Eve being created from one of Adam's ribs, then both being expelled from paradise for their disobedience.

In jungles and remote mountain fastnesses, tribal peoples had their own accounts of how the world began. Their speculations were at least as cogent and imaginative as those of the polished scribes of Benares, Baghdad and Rome.

The Guru himself, being a practical man, devoted little time to the issue of when or exactly how the universe began to unfold. For all the various accounts of creation, Guru Nanak taught that the ultimate answer could not be known by ordinary men, however clever they might be.⁵⁶⁶

What was the hour, what was the time,
What was the date or the day of the week?
What was that season, that month when this creation was formed?
The pundits could not find it even if it were written in their sacred texts.
The Muslim scribes do not know the time.
If they knew, it would be written in the Quran.
The day or the date is not known to the yogi.
The season, the month – the yogi knows none of these.
The Creator who created the creation, himself knows the time.⁵⁶⁷

When a group of reclusive yogis pressed Guru Nanak to give them answers to their ultimate questions, the Guru offered them a glimpse into the vast order of creation. At the same time, the Master showed the yogis the practical side of living in harmony with that order, recognizing the Creator's handiwork in all things.

By the order of the Absolute, we come. By that order, we go.
By that same order, we are absorbed in Oneness.
Through the Perfect Guru, we practice Truth and we realize the Word.
About the Beginning, we can only express wonder.
The neutral mind, the very soul of Being, pervaded the whole of creation.
Decorate yourself with the Guru's understanding.

The True One lives in the heart of every being.
Through the Guru's Word, the unconscious reality comes to light,
And one comes to a pure and perfect state of Grace.
O Nanak, there is nothing else for a disciple to do.
Once he has found his Guru, he must serve his Lord.
The Lord's order is amazing. The true ones recognize the ways of the Lord.
Shedding their selfishness, they become distinctive.
Those who live in truth, they may be called the True Yogis.
Out of utter formlessness came the pure form.
Then the Lord assumed both attributes and attributed existence.
Recognizing and living by the True Guru, one reaches the ultimate state.
There, one is utterly taken by and absorbed in the True Word.
There, one recognizes the One as True, and keeps one's distance from ego and duality.
When such a Yogi recognizes the Guru's Word, their heart lotus blossoms.
Living as dead while still alive, such a saint excels in understanding.
They see the compassionate Lord in all.
O Nanak, that soul comes to glory, recognizing itself in all beings.⁵⁶⁸

The Round of Rituals

Rituals pop up in all kinds of connections. Sometimes they constitute a kind of spiritual etiquette, a way of conducting oneself gracefully in a formal religious setting. Sometimes ritual acts are imputed with spiritual powers. Sometimes they just get in the way.

Wherever Guru Nanak went, he brought with him his earthy sense of realism. When he visited Haridwar on the shores of the sacred Ganges, he observed Hindu priests standing hip deep in the waters of the river. It was morning and the brahmins were solemnly scooping up handfuls of water and tossing them to the east, in the direction of the sun.

The Guru joined the priests in the river, but purposefully turned to the west, with his back to the sun, and started to offer up his own handfuls of Ganges water. It was not long before some brahmins asked Guru Nanak what purpose he hoped to serve by tossing water in the opposite direction.

The Guru answered, "But first tell me, why do you offer water to the east?"

One of the priests replied, "I offer it for the well-being of our ancestors."

"How far from here are your ancestors?"

A learned brahmin answered, "They are many thousands of miles away."

"Well then," said Guru Nanak, "since it is so far, I thought I should offer some water for the fields of my farm in Punjab, which are much nearer than that."

The brahmins started verbally abusing the Guru. They told him he was insane and that his water would never reach his farm.

The Guru responded, "You have forgotten God. Without love, your minds have gone astray. Besides, my farm is near, but your ancestors are far, so how can the water you offer them ever reach or benefit them? You say I am a fool, but you yourselves are bigger fools."

After a time, the Guru broke the silence to condemn the Hindus.

A priest objected, "How can those who repeat God's Name go to hell? In the first place, you have gone against our custom and now you have the audacity to tell us we are damned!"

The Guru replied, "It is true that if you say the Name with love, you will not be damned. When you, however, take rosaries in your hands and sit down fingering your beads, you never think of the Creator, but allow your minds to wander thinking of worldly things. Your rosaries are only for show and your turning the beads is

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all a sham. One is thinking of his business in Multan, another of his business in Kabul, another of his business in Delhi. Everyone is thinking of money!”

When they heard the truth in his words, the brahmins asked the Guru to forgive them and accept them as his disciples.

Another time, the Guru was challenged for saying there was no Hindu and no Muslim. The Master attempted to explain to a governor and a Muslim magistrate how the spirit of neither of the great religions was pleased with endless formalities and hypocrisy. The matter had not been resolved when it came time for the afternoon prayer of the Muslims.

Everyone, including Guru Nanak, went to the mosque. Inside, the judge rose and led the prayer. The Guru stood by mutely and smiled as the *qazi* recited the verses of the Quran.

When the magistrate had finished, he complained to the governor about the conduct of their unusual plaintiff.

“I did not join you because you were not praying,” said the Guru matter-of-factly.

When the judge asked the Guru to explain himself, he reminded the magistrate that just before the prayer he had allowed a newborn colt into an enclosure. While leading the prayer, the judge had remembered there was an open well in the yard with the filly. Since he had spent the whole prayer fearing the colt might fall into the well, the magistrate’s heart had not been focussed on the prayer. The Master then reminded the governor that his mind had also not followed the intentions of the prayer, since it had been preoccupied with thoughts of buying horses in Kabul.

Both the magistrate and governor were forced to admit the truth of the Guru’s observation, and to acknowledge he was favoured in the eyes of God.

Years later, a certain greedy brahmin, named Kesho, offered to manifest a powerful goddess by performing a series of elaborate rituals and ceremonies. Since the Guru’s disciples were very impressed with the claims of the priest and believed they needed the help of the fearsome Durga to be successful against their enemies, the tenth Master engaged the brahmin’s services and paid him an enormous fee.

The Guru was not in favor of contracting the priest, but to instruct his disciples, he went along, providing a quiet and remote location, and arranging the delivery of the necessary materials for a large burnt offering. The priest was pleased with the Guru’s generosity and promised the appearance of the goddess at the place allocated.

After nine months, Kesho the priest assured the Master that Durga would soon appear. According to him, the event would be heralded by an earthquake, unusual lightening and other signs in the heavens.

The Guru pressed Kesho to fix a date for the appearance of the goddess and the brahmin was forced to comply. The date came and went, however, without any unusual omens. Another date was set. Again, nothing happened.

Kesho offered that if some holy person were offered as a sacrifice, Durga surely would appear. The Guru replied, “Who might be so worthy to be offered as yourself? You tell us there are none so worthy as brahmins.”

Kesho tried to escape his predicament by offering to arrange the delivery of a human sacrifice. Again, the Guru objected, saying, “There is no need. The sacrifice is here.”

At this point, Kesho managed to excuse himself, and remained scarce for a number of days. Meanwhile, under the Guru instruction, the materials collected for the ceremony were dumped into the sacrificial pit and ignited, creating a flame that pierced the sky and was visible for miles around. Some who saw the display thought the Guru had made the goddess manifest herself.

When people asked whether Durga had appeared to him, the Guru raised his sword as witness to the omnipotent Creator. The legendary goddess was ever present in the power and the potency of spirit, he seemed to say. There was no need of feckless priests or drawn-out rituals to summon her invincible warring spirit.

The tenth Master opposed the worship of people and things, such as the tombs of saints, which were common practice in India. The Guru instead directed his disciples’ devotion to the one infinite Spirit equally within and without all things. His Khalsa were naturally surprised one day when the Guru took an arrow from his sheaf and raised it in salute as they happened to pass by the shrine of one Saint Dadu.

When they called the Guru's attention to the inconsistency of his action, the Master was pleased at their attentiveness. Although the Guru had only been testing them, he happily paid a fine for his "mistake."

Guru Gobind Singh neither gave nor expected any special personal consideration. Rituals and formalities, titles and status did not count for anything with him. A person's effort and achievement were what counted.

To those who have fallen into the habit of mindless rituals, the Guru's Word stands as testimony to their ultimate futility.

By rituals alone, one cannot become carefree,
And without an easy heart none is rid of worry and doubt.
Doubt and worry are not worn away by any rituals.
Rather, one grows tired of their performance.
The mind is engrossed in worry and doubt. By what means can it be washed clean?
The mind is cleansed when it is attached to the Word, and focussed on the Creator.
Nanak says, out of the Guru's kindness one becomes carefree.⁵⁶⁹

Naming Names

From infancy, we have been taught to attach names to all kinds of things, persons and experiences. Quite possibly, before you were born there was already a name waiting for you. Before long, our absorbent memory was retaining the names of all the significant objects of our experience: "Mommy", "Daddy", "teddy", "baby", and the like.

Every name represents a thing, a concept or being. When an exotic form of life, a distant constellation or any strange or novel discovery comes to our attention, we automatically create a name to allow us to record it, refer to it, and tell others about it. Nothing known to us exists without a name.

A name can have expansive or delimiting qualities. Many people are named after relatives. Long ago, we were named for gods or saints. Today, we all have identifying numbers: bank account numbers, passport numbers, health card numbers. We might also respond to, or choose to ignore, pet names and nicknames, formal titles and names meant solely to injure or abuse.

The Name of God, the Creator, describes the greatest, biggest concept we could ever imagine. All-knowing, All-loving, Eternal and Undying, Maker of all things, Existing in all things... this Idea is more than our little minds can ever hope to compute. This is the Name, the Word... the Concept beyond conception. Contemplating God, however momentarily, lifts us up out of our typically limited thinking, our miasma of small details and little intentions, up into a new worldview of unaccustomed elegance and grandeur where all things become magically possible.

Remembering and reciting the Name of the Infinite, the divine and exalted, is an important aspect of many religious practices. Muslims recite "Allah." Hindus chant "Ram." Buddhists appeal to a host of bodhisattvas. Christians call on Christ and his mother Mary.⁵⁷⁰

Guru Nanak placed much emphasis on the importance of reciting the Name. Unlike the teachers of other traditions, however, the Master did not prescribe meditation on an external God. *Sat Naam*, the True Name, referred to the divine nature of the disciple himself. The Guru told his disciples to arise each morning, bathe, then contemplate that Name.

In the ambrosial, early morning hours, ponder the greatness of the True Name.
Thus, your actions shall be clothed with grace
And you will see the door to liberation.⁵⁷¹

The daily discipline, the exercise of body, mind and spirit of a true Guru-Sikh was designed to render her or him, like the Guru, a human personification of timeless truth. The meaning of *Sat Naam* was never meant to be meditated on in the abstract, but to be realized and manifested in thought, word and action. Leaving his or her past identifications, the Guru-Sikhs learned to identify in their heart and conscience only with truth, delighting and living only in truth.

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The Guru taught his disciples that meditation on the Name was the highest spiritual calling. Religious traditions and practices might vary from time to time and place to place. People everywhere called the Timeless Being by different names. But the True Name, *Sat Naam*, was at the heart of them all.

You are called by your acquired Names.
But *Sat Naam* is your essential, most ancient designation.⁵⁷²

The best way to ingrain this new, but profound and ancient, thinking into the minds and hearts of his devotees was to have them constantly repeat it, reinforce it, remember it. In this way, the Guru promised they would become *Sat Naam*, no less.

O mind, recite *Sat Naam!* Ever recite *Sat Naam!*
Now and forever shines the face of one
Who constantly meditates on divine, immaculate Being.⁵⁷³

For this reason, Bhai Gurdas (1551-1636), the prolific poet and chronicler of the early days of Sikh tradition, described the mission of Guru Nanak in this age specifically in terms of the True Name.

Guru Nanak redeemed the Dark Age and taught *Sat Naam* to the world.
Guru Nanak came to redeem the Dark Age.⁵⁷⁴

The Master

It is apparent from all that we have seen that Guru Nanak represented a vast, expansive consciousness and a truly magnanimous state of being. To the extent that anything was written down or organized, it was only to retain and pass on the Guru's most precious understanding: the awareness of the Infinite in all the things, the perfect design of happenstance, the human necessity of doing good, and the sacredness of the body.

That scholars today have appropriated to themselves a limited field of purely academic interest and called it "Sikhism", and that others who call themselves "Sikh" have no interest whatsoever in aspiring to the Master's level of inspiration and would prefer just to be left alone, seems rather beside the point.

Then again, for a committed thinker, there are far more elaborate philosophies than the teachings of Guru Nanak to study. Hindu tradition encompasses six main schools of thought and numerous sects with thousands of years of scriptures and commentaries to read. Buddhism has many branches and sacred texts and a lively intellectual tradition. Judaism has a long history of scholarly analysis and commentary. Islam, for its basic simplicity, has two sects and four schools of interpretation that can be argued this way and that. Christianity has the writings of Augustine and Aquinas, Tillich and Barth. The existentialists have Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre.

Sikh Dharma, the essential teaching of Guru Nanak, differs from all these traditions in two ways. For one thing, it does not argue points of dogma. Guru Nanak well understood the finer points of the religious doctrines of his time, but did not favor any one.

The Guru well recognized that philosophy alone does not have the power to change a person's condition of life. And what a shame for the academics that the Master put down their exercise of thinking and thinking, and the extravagant pride of intellectuals!

By thinking, that One cannot be reduced to thought,
Though one may think a million times.⁵⁷⁵

Rather than coining an abstract system of beliefs, Guru Nanak prescribed a lifestyle to fundamentally change his disciples and elevate them to his own enlightened state of being. Instead of writing books or delivering sermons, the Guru composed deeply insightful songs to touch the hearts of the people he met, to heal their hardness, their skepticism, their guilt and pain. Instead of debating them, he entrained in them a rhythm and melody of compassion and sheer humanity that did not negate their sectarian differences. It just made them irrelevant.

The key to understanding all Nanak Dev, that great exemplar of human love in motion, did and taught is the institution of spiritual teacher, or guru. The True Guru is that individual who has realized timeless grace, essential purpose and present mastery in the details of their living.

The True Guru is the human face of the divine possibility living in everyone. In his unassuming way, the Guru acts as an exemplar, a divine touchstone, inspiring ordinary people to be their absolute best. By his example and through his practical teachings, he gives women and men the know-how, insight and courage to face the challenges of life. Through his words, they gain the grace and inner strength to surmount them.

While billions upon billions might yet pass their days absorbed in the pursuit of personal ambition, waylaid by occasional bouts of self-pity and beleaguered by the haunting shadows of remorse, the spiritual master rises above the calamitous sea of living selfishly. Having learned to exist for the sake of others, he donates his life to the demonstration of universal purpose, selfless love in action. The realized Master has the power to inspire by his sheer presence. His mere glance or gesture communicates with commanding eloquence, far surpassing the impact of essays and books replete with second-hand knowing.

For those who give themselves to his instruction, the True Guru provides a priceless opportunity. Like the finest of craftsmen, the Master assays his subject, then sets to work chiseling, honing and polishing his charge, bringing out the latent possibilities hidden inside, invisible to anyone lacking a master's eye. Touched by the True Guru's artful hand, the disciple sheds her accumulated habits of self-doubt, self-loathing, anxiety, lust and grief. With the Guru's blessing, she begins a new life informed with grace and the divine light of consciousness. For this reason, the devotee values the True Guru above all.

If a hundred moons were to rise, and a thousand suns appeared,
Even with such light, there would still be pitch darkness without the Guru.⁵⁷⁶

Once we have found and accepted the True Guru and taken *Sat Naam* as our spiritual name, we must begin the hard work of "cleaning house." Right away, doubts will come up from the subconscious to challenge our conscious intention: "Who do you think you are? What do you think you are doing?"

The best answer is simply to say "*Sat Naam*" and keep going.

Sometimes, old habits die hard. There is a saying, "You may make a dog king, still he will lick the grinding wheel." This dog nature and dog habits will have to go. Old habits need to be dropped and new, self-affirming ones picked up in their place.

This is not a question now of self-denial. It is simply a matter of affirming what is best in us, allowing the rest to atrophy from neglect. Darkness, after all, has no existence of its own. It manifests itself where the light is weak.

The path is purely a matter of steering toward our destiny by meditating *Sat Naam* and following the Guru's teachings. Is it easy? No, but we were born for this. If we can just hope to keep our vision clear, our spirits high and our prayers strong, we might as well get started.

How to begin? At this stage, you may have already begun. Just deciding to think of *Sat Naam* has a powerful stabilizing effect on the subconscious mind. According to the Guru, even meditating on the Name just once cancels out the influence of countless unconscious actions.

Once you are started, take nothing for granted. Everything matters. Make it matter. Be thoughtful. Give attention to details, large and small. In the long run, everything counts. Make it count for you.

Think quality, not quantity. If you say "*Sat Naam*" just once with an attitude of pure devotion, you can be liberated. Don't be intimidated by religious cranks and fanatics. Cultivate your spiritual passion and go.

Now, to test the extent of your desire to be desireless and free, the Guru set out a hard discipline. Philosophies come much easier. This is why there are not so many Sikhs. Twenty million is not a lot. And out of them, perhaps a few handful are actually practicing.

The Guru set a high standard not to accumulate a large following, to become popular and have a lot of neurotic people following him around. The Guru set that standard so a measured number of disciples could learn to approach him at his own level of grace and consciousness. It is no small thing, but it is not impossible either. History is filled with the memories of great disciples who have raised themselves to the level of their Master by dedicating themselves to their discipline.

From Grace to Mastery

Of course, our old-paradigm culture does not appreciate discipline. We like convenience. Exercise is drudgery for us, something we do in fits and starts. We like entertainment, not discipline. We take pills, not remedies.

New-paradigm thinking embraces an entirely different approach. Here, discipline is not an ordeal to be endured. Neither is the goal to attain some impossible ideal.

Discipline is a simple affirmation of who we really are. God and Guru are already inside us. We don't need to go looking for them. Our discipline simply enhances the radiance and projection already within so their light can better shine through our thoughts and words and deeds. It is a matter of attuning our bodies and minds so we can claim what is already ours: our birthright to be healthy, happy and spiritually whole.

Discipline gives the disciple self-mastery. It is the only good reason for submitting to any kind of a discipline whatsoever. Taking the master's discipline and applying it with an open heart and a willing spirit, you yourself become masterful.

The Tenth Nanak, one illustrious exemplar in of a lineage of disciples-become-masters, put it bluntly, in case anyone should misinterpret his meaning:

I love the disciplined living of my disciple,
Not the one who merely calls himself a follower of mine.

The Guru's daily discipline starts bright and early. In an era when many Indian ascetics neglected their bodies and when most Europeans considered a bath a morbid prospect, the Guru taught his disciples to rise early in the morning and cleanse their body temples.

This practice of rising in the predawn hours is found in nearly every religious discipline. It applies in Buddhist, Hindu and Christian monasteries. John Wesley, the father of Methodism awoke daily at 4 a.m. Schopenhauer advised early rising. Devout Jews rise at the crack of dawn. Muslims rise even earlier. Only the free-living existentialist Sartre could say, "Three o'clock is always too late or too early for anything you want to do."⁵⁷⁷

Rising early spares the mind the turmoil of dreaming when the subconscious is most active. Rising and meditating also allows the consciousness to make a smooth transition from the melatonin-dominated sleep state to the waking daylight hours when serotonin, norepinephrine and cortisol are in the ascendant.

Cool, clean water removes the slough of drowsiness. It flushes the circulation, inside and out. A cold shower stimulates the whole body, including the brain. At first it is a bit of a shock, but with practice, it feels healing and energizing. Beforehand, it is good to massage the whole body with a good quality oil, and afterwards to rub the skin with a nice towel. The skin should be pink and radiant.

Having bathed, the Guru would sit alone and commune with his body, mind and spirit for two or three hours. Afterwards, he would join his disciples in song and prayer before everyone set out to do their day's work. The Fourth Master composed this verse to describe his daily routine:

One who calls himself a disciple of the discipline of the True Guru,
Should rise in the early morning hours and meditate on the Divine Name.
Rising early in the morning, he should bathe, and cleanse himself in a pool of nectar.
He should chant the Name as instructed by the Guru.
In this way, all errors, misdeeds and negativity shall be lifted away.
Then, at the rising of the sun, he should sing the songs of praise taught by the Guru.
Throughout the day, whether sitting down or standing up,
He should keep his mind fixed on the Divine Name.
One who with every breath and morsel meditates on the Lord,
That disciple of the Master becomes pleasing to the Guru's Mind.
That one to whom the Master shows compassion,
The Guru's teachings are given to them.
Servant Nanak begs for the dust of the feet of that disciple of the Guru
Who himself repeats the Name, and inspires others to do so.⁵⁷⁸

Guru Nanak's tradition is based on the success of its students. If the disciple does not become a masterful, if the follower does not become a leader, then the Master has failed. Out of his sheer compassion and humility, the first Guru passed his living inspiration to his disciples, although not all of them received it equally.

Some just wanted to listen to the Guru because they liked the sound of his voice. Some just found comfort in his presence. Some liked the look of him. Others liked his songs. Some disciples liked to hear his stories. Some only wanted to be with their friends. Some liked to hear and talk about the Master's latest adventures. Some were indigent and depended on food from the Guru's large community kitchen. Others liked to discuss whatever they thought was going on.

The Guru had three basic teachings: (1) Get up early before sunrise, take a bath and meditate on the True Name. (2) Share your blessings. Money, food or inspiration - share what you have with those in need. (3) Put your ideals into practice – do the right thing, always!

Not everyone practiced these teachings. Some did them half-heartedly. They might wake up early a couple of times a week, when it seemed convenient, and provide food for the community kitchen just now and again. A few fanatics woke up earlier than everybody. When they weren't busy showing how spiritual and serviceful they could be, they were sitting apart, scowling at the rest. A lot of people came and went. It remained for the Guru, like any good teacher, to test his students.

One day, an accomplished yogi came to pay his respects. The master of discipline intended to congratulate Guru Nanak on the large number of people he had inspired away from selfishness, sensuality, and pretentious religion. The Guru replied that in reality his Sikhs were few in number, and that the yogi would soon see for himself.

The Guru and his guest then set out for the forest, accompanied by a throng of devotees, those who liked to pass their time in the Guru's holy presence. Before setting out, Guru Nanak dressed himself in dirty, tattered clothes, took up a hunting knife and rounded up some hunting dogs, ostensibly to find some game in the woods. On seeing the Guru's formidable appearance, some faint-hearted Sikhs turned and fled. The Guru continued on his way, singing the following verse.

I have a hound and two bitches.
They howl and bark night and day.
I have a big, wicked knife I stick into my prey.
O God, look at me! I am a vicious hunter.
I don't care for class or honor. I do just what I please.
My nature is perverted. I'm horrid to see.
Only your good Name can take me across.
It is my one hope and support.

Pause and reflect.

Day and night, I badmouth others.
I am a pervert and a peeping tom.
I am a lowlife. Lust and rage are my friends.
O God, look at me! I am a vicious hunter.
With my mind, I will strangle you, though I look smooth and urbane.
I am a crime world in a land of cheats.
I stand around like a clever guy, but there is a burden inside.
O God, look at me! I am a vicious hunter.
I don't know what I'm doing. I am just a hopeless case.
How can I show my face? I am ugly and unkind.
Humble Nanak offers this thought with due deliberation.
Look at me, O God! I'm just a vicious hunter!⁵⁷⁹

As the Guru sang this song, the group followed along with a growing sense of unease. As they continued, they found the path they were taking covered with copper coins. Fearing what might lie ahead of them, yet happy at this unexpected turn of events, many of the Guru's followers stayed behind to fill their pockets with easy money.

From Grace to Mastery

After those who remained with the entourage had continued a further distance, their path was covered with silver coins. Thinking themselves lucky, several more disciples left the Guru to claim this effortless wealth for themselves.

Those few who remained with the Guru had not gone very far along before they found the ground before their feet strewn with shining coins of gold. Considering themselves very fortunate, most of the few Sikhs who were left gathered up the coins and quickly vanished. By now, there were only the Guru, the yogi, two remaining disciples, and Lehna, the Guru's attendant.

Continuing further, the five arrived at a strange site in a clearing in the forest. A foul smell wafted out from beneath a morbid-looking shroud. It was surrounded by four votive lamps.

The Guru offered, "Let anyone who wants to continue further with me eat some of this."

The Sikhs shrank at the gruesome invitation. Only the Guru's attendant came forward. Lehna folded his hands respectfully and asked, "Where should I begin, Master? At the head or at the feet?"

The Master replied, "At the waist, Lehna."

Everyone else covered in disbelief.

When the Guru's disciple pulled away the sheet to begin his macabre dinner, all were amazed to find, instead of a rotting, stinking corpse, a platter of delectable Guru *prashaad*. Lehna took some of the sacred food and straightaway offered it to the Guru, saying he would eat the Guru's leavings.

The Guru replied, "You have obtained this sacred food because you wanted to share it with others. The God-given wealth man uses for himself or buries in the Earth is like rotting flesh, but the wealth a man shares with others is like sweet Guru *prashaad*. You have realized my secret. You are in my own image. I will now instruct you in the true nature of reality. This meditation is the essence of true religion." The Guru then revealed to Lehna the Mool Mantra.

You are the creation of the One,
And you are that One,
Embodiment of Truth,
Being known through your doing,
Fearless, without rancor,
Perfect rendering of Timeless Spirit,
Not bound by birth and flesh,
In and of your self,
Living, loving, learning grace.
Repeat this soulful affirmation:
As it was in the beginning,
As it is through the ages,
As it is even now,
Nanak proclaims he shall forever be true.⁵⁸⁰

The Guru told Lehna to repeat this sacred formula with a pure heart and it would fulfill his desires, bringing him happiness in this world, and salvation in the next. By its continual repetition, he said the light of God would dawn in his disciple's heart.

The Yogi who had been witness to all this then proclaimed, "O Nanak, he shall be your Guru who is produced from your own body!" The Guru embraced Lehna. He called him Angad, meaning "limb" or "extension", and foretold that he would be his successor. The Yogi, the Guru, and his Sikhs then returned to their homes.

In a short time, it happened just as the Guru had promised. Guru Nanak openly announced to his Sikhs that Angad was to be their new Guru. Not long after, the great first Guru covered himself with a white sheet and peacefully breathed his last in the knowledge that his inspiration would live on in the body of his most perfect disciple.

From Here On...

Back in 1970, early in the cusp of our new age, Margaret Mead (1901-1978), a wise woman and pioneering anthropologist, pointed a way out of the dilemma of our old destructive paradigm:

The original tale of Adam and Eve who ate the tree of knowledge of good and evil pales before the lost innocence of men who can now destroy not only the little patch of woodland that they call their own and not only many other men, but the whole earth and all men. For such a loss of innocence and such a new responsibility, we have no models either among primitive men or among ancient religions. We will have to move instead in the direction suggested by Buckminster Fuller: toward man's responsibility to the fact that he represents the highest capacity to introduce order in the known universe. We need a religious system with science at its very core, in which the traditional opposition between science and religion, reflected in grisly truth by our technologically desecrated countryside, can again be resolved, but in terms of the future instead of the past.⁵⁸¹

Religions everywhere, even the crusading monofaiths – lacking a few teeth now, but still potentially dangerous – are reinventing themselves in the light of present circumstances. Where once we had inquisitions and “holy wars”, today we have multifaith councils and amiable interreligious exchanges. Of far greater significance than the old bugaboo of whether we are descended from “lower” life forms, is the growing consensus that we – all of us – feathered and scaled and ciliated and hooved, Baptist, Catholic, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and atheist – owe it to ourselves and each other to get along. The planet we now know is too small, the web of life too finely meshed, our weapons and technologies far too lethal, for us to think or imagine otherwise.

If we really drop our defenses and our terrible hubris of being “superior humans” or “saved”, if we dare relax a bit and open up and look around, we will notice that, whatever our historic, cultural or philosophical associations might be, there today is a lot more that unites than divides us. We all cherish ideals, deep and soulful ideals. We all agree that physical life is sweet and fragile and deserving our nurture. If we examine our hearts, we will also recognize the need to surrender our chaotic, unruly and anti-social traits to realize ourselves as truly human beings. Moreover, if we are perfectly frank and honest with ourselves, we now as never before need each other's help in order to survive.

There is an enemy. There is an insidious, intractable foe, but it is not us. It is greed, selfishness, depression, apathy, faithlessness, untruth; and it is, to a remarkable extent, served by our empty, needy, homeless culture of consumption. Our needs, many of them, are synthetically cultivated and unreal. There is a lot we don't need. Often, we find ourselves taking too much and enjoying too little. As a race, we have become a burden on our mother planet.

The enemy, in large part, is the slick and crafty advertisement, the blatantly fraudulent claim that money can buy true happiness and real fulfillment. The adrenaline high, the false samadhi of belonging to the right congregation of idiots, does nothing to combat this virulent scourge. It must be fought on a wide scale, on many fronts, and that battle must begin within.

Our hearts are telling us we must simplify our lives. We must identify and address our basic needs. We have to get over our shallow, second-hand religion and find a higher calling, a deeper significance in life. Like “deep ecology”, we need to develop a deep and universal spirituality. We need to overcome our ingrained and institutionalized tendencies toward fear, passivity, apathy and belittlement. Simply put, we must learn to be far more radiant and interactive.

To succeed, it will help if we each day cultivate a sense of awe in the face of the many, many faces – some of them odd, some of them unfamiliar, all of them exquisitely unique – of creation. If we can sustain this natural awe at the boundless creativity at the heart of all things, and develop a corresponding respect for our fellow beings, life will be more enjoyable and we all will be better served. And thus, we will have realized the first paragon of peace.

From Here On...

It will also help to develop a feeling of basic trust in the future. We need to feel lucky and to develop a growing appreciation for the quirks of evolving happenstance. We need more natural exuberance in our lives and less blame. We stand to profit by learning to excel at taking lemons and making lemonade. We need to be less worrier and more the warrior – the inner spiritual kind. This will be the natural fulfillment of the second paragon.

To survive this test of our spirit we will also need to cultivate a genuine sense of enlightened self-interest. This is not the self-interest taught in today's school of business. Our greatest happiness is in sharing our own happiness and gifts, serving the good of all. Hogging and hoarding, abusing and keeping aloof is practically dysfunctional, bad for the ecology, antisocial and not very good for your health. If we come to know this truly and personally, we will have embraced the third paradigm of peace.

To truly excel, it will be immensely helpful to us if we can learn to truly embrace and accept the manifold genius that expresses itself in the wonders of our DNA and the complexity of our cells. We are human by design, no less. Moreover, each of us, without exception, looks our best when we turn on our natural radiance. It sparkles in children. It glows in brides. It lights up happy people everywhere. That kind of luster is not traded in the market of illusions. The sooner we turn our back on unhealthy models and the whole ugly industry, the more beautiful and well adjusted we will find ourselves to be. When we feel and know this in our hearts, we will have achieved the fourth paragon of peace.

Finally, it will be very useful to remember that we inevitably must die. Let us play hard, work hard, and not waste time contemplating what we will only come to regret. It will be a help to meditate regularly to access the vital reaches of the neutral mind, the dispassionate source of perspective and vital inspiration. Spirited music will help keep us going, no matter what. Let us learn soul music and sing those songs in our hearts, day and night.

Treasuring our communities, the “good” neighbors and the “bad”, can keep us human and approachable. Sensing the flow of matter and energy, and directing it to where it is most needed, will give us a heart of abundance. Recognizing and revering the ultimate power of womankind will hopefully make us all more humble, angelic and grateful for the gift of life.

To really safeguard our future, let us see that our new arrivals grow strong and gentle, knowing they are well loved. To truly enjoy our shared humanity, let us agree not to disagree over what, after all, no living person can ultimately know. Let us keep our dogmas to ourselves and share our myths only as an art form. Then, to keep our lives simple and free, let us unburden ourselves of needless formalities. Let us, instead, be fresh and present to what is.

To be and do our absolute best, let us name each other well, with inspiring and dignified names – and let us, each of us in the depths of our hearts – work at remembering always to live and speak and recognize our highest truth. Most importantly, let us not shrink from mastery. Let us live masterfully, inspiring the weak and showing the insecure the way of glory, for it is in sharing our brightness of spirit openly and without reservation that we have consummated the fifth, and greatest, of the paragons of peace.

It has been a long time, a long journey to arrive at this epochal divide. The journey from a stolid earth-centered universe dominated by men to a magically quantum and vitally biocentric vision has taken centuries – and it continues to evolve without any obvious signs of slowing down.

Over that time, our sense of ourselves – who we are, our relation to the world and the others we find here, what we will tolerate and what we will not – has profoundly changed. This shift has given rise to revolutions, toppled dynasties, reshaped our most intimate relationships. For all their efforts, the proprietors of the old paradigm, its authorities and priests, have proved largely powerless to stop it.

Now is the time for a new kind of nobility, a common touch, a graceful way, an excellence abiding. It is an end to oppressive hierarchies and twisted elites. It is a time for acknowledging and realizing common aspirations. In this time, wealth, true wealth, will be found in the heart and, to a remarkable extent, it will be measurable.

Whether we retool our old beliefs or take up with Guru Nanak, it hardly matters. What matters is that we rise to the occasion, that we learn to truly appreciate and serve one other. Of course, there are always some who will have difficulty accepting new ideas.

From Here On...

Once, Guru Nanak and his travelling companion Mardana approached the city of Multan, known at the time as a center of many spiritual teachers and their followings. As they came near to the city, the leaders sent a messenger out to receive them. The man carried a cup of milk, filled to the brim.

The leaders of Multan's religious communities, fearing through Guru Nanak's influence they would lose their followings, had sent that messenger and that cup filled to overflowing as a message to the Guru. Symbolically, they meant to say, "We have so much spiritual knowledge. We don't need you here. Go someplace else."

The Guru smiled and plucked a tender jasmine blossom from a nearby tree. He floated it in the cup of milk. The blossom was so light, not a drop was spilled, while the milk was flavored by the delicate taste of jasmine. So the Guru meant to say, "There is always room for a loving and unifying influence."

We have come together from all sides of the planet. It is small now. The creatures, our neighbors in every shape and form, have grown familiar. Outside, above us, the sky is vast. Stars and planets twinkle their awareness. The past is past. Already it is fading from memory, like an oddly disconcerting dream.

There is much that has been said here. I hope these words have given you some inkling of the shapes and patterns I have seen unfolding, systems I have understood and seen in the light of the great sage, Guru Nanak.

That these are magical times, there can be no doubt. These are also times of great individual promise. No doubt, great nations, corporations and institutions will continue in some form to exist, but the real promise, the most dramatic possibility of positive change exists right at a personal level, with singular people like me and you.

Perhaps you may find some like-minded souls to explore these paragons with. Perhaps you will like to pursue them, in one way or another, on your own. Whatever you do, you should know you are never truly alone. There is a subtle spirit that unites all of us in a conspiracy of kindness.

Sat Naam. May Guru Nanak and all the saints and angels guide your way on...

(Don't look now, but the next chapter is yours.)

References in the Shabd Guru

Part I: The Boundless Creativity of One

1)

The One called "God" creates this entire creation
And with the True Guru's blessing we receive whatever we need.
When I think of me, then you do not exist.
When I think of you, it is I who do not exist.
The wind may whip up huge waves in the great ocean,
But in the end, they are just water in water.
O Lord, what can I say about this delusion?
Things are not what they seem.

Pause and reflect.

A king, asleep on his throne, dreams he has become a beggar.
Though his kingdom is intact, still the king suffers separation.
Such has become my situation.
As in the parable of the rope and the snake,
So I have come to know the secret of the king's delusion.
Seeing various forms of gold, I used to believe they were made differently.
Now I no longer speak that way.
There is one Master of all this endless creation. He is the Enjoyer in all beings.
Ravidas says, he is as near as your hand.
Look and see: Whatever is to be, will be.⁵⁸²

2)

Everyone, in their way, imagines your attributes and domain
From their own understanding, given by you,
But none can truly say how vast you are
And none can say how this universe was first created.
From your sublime body of unearthly splendor,
You delight somewhere in taking the appearance of a beggar, elsewhere of a king.
Out of you, arise the egg-born, the womb-born, the microorganisms.
From you, the vegetable and mineral kingdoms come into being.
Sometimes you are seated in the flower of empire,
Sometimes as a yogi, aloof and alone.
All of this creation is a visible wonder,
Original, timeless, sublime and self-created.⁵⁸³

3)

Enchanting is sound, amazing its meaning.
Wonderful is life, marvelous its distinctions,
Profound is form, awesome is color.
Amazing are the creatures who wander naked.
Enchanting is the air, enchanting water.
Wonderful is the fire that works many wonders.
Magical is Earth, magical its species.
Amazing are the sensations attached to every life.
Profound the union, profound the separation.
Marvelous is the hunger, wonderful its fulfillment.
Awesome are the hymns, amazing the praise.
Marvelous the waywardness, amazing the path.

References in the Shabd Guru: The Boundless Creativity of One

Magical the distance, magical the nearness,
Amazing the vision of the divine presence among us.
Seeing these marvels, I live in awe.
O Nanak, perfect is the destiny of those who recognize the wonder of all.⁵⁸⁴

4)

The singular and the myriad, all things are filled and infused by him.
Wherever I look, there he is.
The marvelous rendering of maya is so fascinating. Very few have this understanding.
God is everything. God is everything. Without God, there is just nothing.
Just as one thread holds hundreds and thousands of beads,
All things are strung on the thread of creation.⁵⁸⁵

5)

You are my loving beloved, enchanting Lord of the world.
In worms, elephants, stones and all beings and creatures, you are.
You nourish and cherish them all.⁵⁸⁶

6)

You are the primal, original Being.
In your relative aspect, you are the Divine Doer of all things.
As great as you, there is none other.
From age to age, you are One. Always, always you are the Divine One.
You are the steadfast, eternal Doer. You are the One.
What you yourself wish, that comes to pass. What you do, happens.
You yourself, created this whole creation
And yourself, you the Creator, will bring it all to an end.
Nanak the meek sings the virtues of the Divine Doer and Knower of all things.⁵⁸⁷

7)

Like an actor, he stages the play. Putting on numerous costumes, he assumes many roles.
When the show is over and the performance comes to a close,
He is again the one original Being.
How many forms have appeared and again disappeared?
Where have they come from? Where have they gone?

Pause and reflect.

From the sea arise endless waves. From gold are fashioned countless ornaments.
I have seen seeds of many kinds being planted.
When their fruit ripens, inside them is the one original Being.
The water of a thousand pots reflects the one sky. When the pots break, only the original sky remains.
Doubt arises from the corruption of greed, infatuation and delusion.
Leaving off doubt, there remains the one original Being.
He is indestructible. He cannot be destroyed. He is not subject to coming and going.
The Perfect Guru has washed away the filth of self-conceit.
Says Nanak, my highest realization has dawned.⁵⁸⁸

Part II: Everything That Happens

1)

By thinking, the One cannot be reduced to thought,
Though one may think a million times.
By not speaking, the mind comes not to silence,

Though one might pine in constant longing.
The hunger of the hungry cannot be appeased
Even with all the goods of the world.
Your thousands of clever tricks may run into millions,
But not one has any enduring power.
So how can we realize truth and rend the veil of delusion?
Live by the order of the Creator, O Nanak,
And write your destiny by the grace of that One.⁵⁸⁹

2)

Many afflictions, hungers and constant abuse,
These too are your gifts, O bountiful One!
Bondage and freedom are both by your will.
There is nothing more anyone can say.
That loudmouth who presumes and says he knows
Should realize that, soon enough, he shall have to eat his words.
The Giver himself knows and himself gives.
Only a few acknowledge this truth.
Those who are blessed to praise and glorify that One,
O Nanak, they are the Kings of kings!⁵⁹⁰

3)

The deed and the Doer are the one Lord. There exists not any other.
Nanak dedicates himself to the One who pervades water, earth and sky.
Anything can happen.
Whatever is meant to be, comes to pass.
In an instant, a thing can be established or destroyed.
There is no end of possibilities.⁵⁹¹

4)

All living creatures are in your care.
Their every concern rests with you.
Whatever you wish is for the best.
This alone is Nanak's prayer.⁵⁹²

5)

We ought to worry if there were another Creator.
We ought to worry if someone died unjustly.
We ought to worry if something were unknown to the Knower,
But why should we worry? The Knower is simply everywhere.
We ought to worry if there were some act of tyranny.
We ought to worry if we were made to suffer by mistake.
The Guru says, everything happens by the Lord's will,
So I leave off worrying and sleep in peace.⁵⁹³

6)

A hero must first die to the world.
One who runs away, will wander in rebirths.
Whatever happens, accept that as good.
Realizing divine purpose, pettiness is seared away.⁵⁹⁴

7)

Egotism is beaten and kept in check by the Word.
I have enshrined God's Name in my heart.

Other than the One, I recognize none.
What will be, will be. There is no need to fuss.
Without the True Guru, no one finds peace of mind.
The devotee of the Guru comes to realize and personify truth.
Serving the True One and steeped in truth,
His egotism is neutralized by the Word.
He himself is the Giver of virtue, himself the contemplator.
The Guru's devotee rolls the winning dice.
O Nanak, absorbed in the Name, one becomes true,
And from the True One obtains honor.⁵⁹⁵

Part III: The Good of All

1)

By serving the Guru with devotion,
This human body is obtained.
Even the angels long for this body,
So dedicate yourself to the service of the Lord.
Dedicate yourself to the Lord of the Earth and leave the errors of your mind.
In this way, you will profit from this human life.

Pause and Reflect.

So long as you are not afflicted by the disease of old age,
And so long as death has not devoured the body,
And so long as your voice has not turned feeble,
O Human, take this opportunity to worship the Life of the World.
If you do not now dedicate yourself again and again, when will you, O Brother?
When the end comes, you will not be able to atune yourself and meditate on Him.
Whatever you have to do — now is the best time to do it.
Otherwise, you shall regret and repent, and not be carried across to the other side.
He alone is a servant, whom the Lord takes into His service.
He alone realizes the immaculate divine Lord.
Meeting with the Guru, his doors are opened wide,
And he does not again journey on the path of incarnation.
This is your chance, and this is your time.
Look deep into your own heart, and reflect on this.
Says Kabir, you can win or lose.
In so many ways, I have proclaimed this out loud.⁵⁹⁶

2)

Those who are truly learned dedicate themselves to a life of service.
Overcoming their five brute obsessions, they make their home a holy place of pilgrimage.
The tinkling temple bells sound when the mind is held firm.
So, tell me, what can the angel of death do to me hereafter?

Pause and Reflect.

When one abandons hope and desire, one becomes a true ascetic.
When the yogi practices abstinence, he delights in his body.
Through compassion, the naked hermit reflects on his inner self.
He slays his own self, instead of slaying others.
You, O Lord, are the One, but you have so many forms.
Nanak does not know your wondrous plays.⁵⁹⁷

3)

Brahma and Vishnu, sages and keepers of silence,
 Shiva and the lord of angels, penitents and beggars,
 Whoever honors divine purpose is adorned at the court of truth,
 While the proud, unyielding rebels suffer loss.
 Wandering ascetics, warriors, celibates and takers of vows –
 Through the Perfect Guru, consider this:
 Without selfless service, no one ever obtains their spiritual reward.
 Serving others is the most excellent pursuit.⁵⁹⁸

4)

Listen, my friends, I beg you. Now is the time to serve the saints.
 You will earn spiritual profit here and your life tomorrow will be sweet.
 This life grows shorter each day and night.
 Give your heart to the Guru and settle your affairs.
Pause and Reflect.
 This world of flux and anxiety is crossed by those who know the Creator.
 Those who are awakened, drink the essence of spiritual understanding
 And gain the unspeakable wisdom.
 Purchase only that commodity for which you came here
 And, through the Guru, God will live with you.
 In your own home, you will easily find the mansion of peace
 And not wander lost in rebirths again.
 O Knower of hearts and Fulfiller of destinies:
 Appease this mind's yearning.
 Nanak, your slave, wants no happiness other than this.
 Let me be the dust under the feet of your saints.⁵⁹⁹

5)

In the field of your body, plant the seeds of good actions
 And water them with the sublimely colored water of divine consciousness.
 With your mind as gardener, God's Name will grow in your heart
 And you will rise to a state of nirvana.⁶⁰⁰

6)

In many lives, you lived as worms and insects.
 In many lives, you were an elephant, a fish and a deer.
 Then again, you were a bird and a snake.
 In many lifetimes, you were harnessed as a horse and an ox.
 Meet the Lord of the universe. Now is the time to meet him.
 After long, this human body has been fashioned for you.
Pause and reflect.
 For many lifetimes, you took the form of rocks and mountains.
 Many times, you were snatched from the womb.
 In many lives, you sprouted branches and leaves.
 You wandered through every conceivable incarnation.
 Meeting the masterful saint, you have realized this life's object.
 Act selflessly, vibrate God's Name, and think of the Guru's teachings.
 Drop your pride, your lies and conceit.
 Live as though you were dead and be accepted in God's court.
 Whatever has happened and whatever will be is from you.
 There is no other. We are in perfect unison.
 They are joined, who are joined by you.
 Says Nanak, sing, sing the praises of God!⁶⁰¹

References in the Shabd Guru: Human by Design

7)

I came into this world, sent by the Divine Guru for this purpose:
To spread the spirit of goodness in every place,
And to put down those who are vile and mean-spirited.
For this very purpose, I took birth,
O Disciplined Sages, know it well in your hearts:
To prosper righteousness, protect the saints,
And completely uproot the tyrants.⁶⁰²

Part IV: Human by Design

What the Guru Saw

1)

Some go and sit in forests and answer to no one's call.
Some, in winter, break the river ice and bath their bodies in the freezing cold.
Some anoint their limbs with ashes and never wash themselves.
Some look hideous with their hair matted and disheveled.
They bring dishonor to their families.
Some wander naked, day and night, and never sleep.
Some sear their limbs in fire, hurting and ruining themselves.
Without the Name, the body turns to ashes. Then, what is the good of crying?
Those who serve the True Guru look beautiful in the Master's court.⁶⁰³

2)

The pessimists in twelve groupings and the ascetics in ten,
The yogis in their robes and the Jains who have not even the hair of their heads –
Without the Name, they all wear the noose of death.⁶⁰⁴

Akaal Moorat

1)

I have fallen in love with the Truth that neither dies, nor comes, nor goes.
In separation, it does not separate. It lives as a part of all beings.
Remover of the suffering of the oppressed, it is the true love of the serviceful.
O Mother, I have met the enchanting form of Perfection, my Guru.⁶⁰⁵

2)

When there was only the eternal Being resting in a state of ease,
Then what was there of birth, death and dissolution?
When there was only the Perfect Creator,
What was there to speak of fear of dying?
When there was only the Infinite and Profound Lord in a state of oneness,
What was there to write of the conscious unconscious?
When there was only the Master, perfect, profound and limitless,
Then who was there free, and who in bondage?
He, in and of himself, is the source of wonders.
O Nanak, by himself, He created his own form.⁶⁰⁶

The Body of Realization

1)

Through meditation on the Creator, the lotus of the mind has come upright.
Amrit pours from the sky of the tenth gate.
The Lord himself pervades the three worlds!⁶⁰⁷

2)

The living God was installed in the body's cave.
 Then began the breath in the rhythm of life.
 As the body filled with vital breath, the nine body doors were revealed,
 While the tenth was kept well hid.
 At the Guru's door, comes a loving faith.
 This door is revealed to a few devotees.
 There, they see the infinite forms of the one Lord
 And the nine treasures of the Name, revealed without end.
 Nanak says, the loving, living God was installed in the body's cave
 And then began the breath in the rhythm of life.⁶⁰⁸

Ishnaan

1)

Meeting with the perfected Master, my unholy inclinations have ended.
 The unworthy have all become worthy.
 Bathing in the sacred pool of Guru Ram Das,
 All one's misdeeds and misgivings are washed away.
 Sing always the praises of the Lord of the Earth.
 In the presence of the Master, meditate on him.
 Your fond desires are fulfilled meditating on the perfect Guru in your heart.
 The Guru, guardian of the world, is in bliss.
 Chanting, chanting, he lives in supreme ecstasy.
 Nanak, servant of the Infinite One, meditates on the Name.
 The Lord has confirmed his primal nature.⁶⁰⁹

2)

When the life is pure both from inside and outside,
 Without and within it is pure,
 Then, out of the true Guru's kindness, good deeds are performed.
 There is no botheration with falsehood. All one's hopes are fulfilled in truthfulness.
 Those who obtain the life gem are the most excellent dealers.
 Nanak says, the pure of heart live always with the Guru.⁶¹⁰

Disposing of It

1)

If we rub a lifeless body with precious sandalwood oil,
 What is to be gained from that?
 If we smear that same dead body with excrement,
 What does that lifeless body lose?⁶¹¹

2)

All are the idle occupations of life –
 Mother, father, brother, son, relations, and the woman of your home.
Pause and reflect.
 When the body and the living soul come apart,
 They will shout and cry that you are a ghost.
 They will not allow you even ten minutes
 Before they evict you from your home.
 In the created world of the living soul there is also a craving for death.
 See and realize this in your heart.
 Says Nanak, ever sing the Name of God and you will be delivered from here.⁶¹²

Mutilation as Punishment

1)

The noseless one lives in everybody.
She takes over everyone and looks out for any others.
She is the sister and the sister's daughter of all,
But the slave of her man.
My husband is very smart. People say he is a saint.
He stands over me, and none dares come near.
I have cut off her nose and her ears.
I have chopped them up and thrown them away.
Kabir says, she is the enemy of saints
And the mistress of all the three worlds!⁶¹³

2)

I have found the Perfect Guru through my good fortune.
He has given me God's Name as a mantra and my mind has come to peace.
O Lord, I am the True Guru's favorite slave!
My forehead has been branded with his seal. I owe the Guru such a debt.
He has been so kind and generous to me, delivering me across the difficult world ocean.⁶¹⁴

Eunuchs, Skoptsi, and Castrati

1)

What can the ocean's depths do to a fish, or the expanse of sky to a bird?
What can cold do to a stone, or married life to a eunuch?
You may apply costly sandalwood oil to a dog, but still he remains a dog.
You may try to educate a deaf person by reading them books of knowledge.
To show the way to a blind person, you may place fifty shining lamps before them.
You may place gold among a herd of cattle, and they will prefer the grass.
You may hammer iron, but it will not become soft like cotton wool.
O Nanak, whatever the fool might say, it always comes to nothing.⁶¹⁵

2)

If by wandering naked, one could attain a state of realization,
All the deer of the forest would be liberated.
What does it matter whether a person is naked or clothed in skins
If their mind is without the Lord of the Soul?
Pause and reflect.
If by shaving, one could realize perfection,
Wouldn't some sheep have become free?
O Brother, if one could reach salvation by restraining one's seed,
Why haven't the eunuchs attained the supreme state?
Says Kabir, listen O Men, Brothers and Sisters,
Without the Name of the Infinite, who has found deliverance?⁶¹⁶

Circumcision

1)

For the love of woman, men follow the prescribed Muslim custom.
I don't go along with it, O Sibling of Destiny.
If God had meant for me to be a Muslim,
He would have cut my foreskin himself.⁶¹⁷

2)

At every hour of prayer and at every occasion
Remember the creator Lord in your heart.
Let modesty and temperance serve as your circumcision.⁶¹⁸

Eyes

1)

O my Eyes, the Creator has placed his Light inside of you.
See none other than the Creator. See none other than the Infinite Creator,
And delightful and sweet will be your vision.
This world you see is the manifest form of the Creator.
It is this form that fills your vision.
With the Guru's Grace, we come to recognize the One,
Outside of whom there is no other.
Nanak says, these eyes were blind,
But meeting the True Guru, they have come to see the Unseen!⁶¹⁹

2)

The enlightened masters are always engaged in strife.
What can they be seeing with their two eyes?
One who is attuned to light within and to the melody of the Word,
Has their differences settled by the True Guru.
O Master of angels and men, infinite and unborn,
Truly incomparable is your Mansion.
Nanak has surrendered his being to the life of the world
And this vision grants his liberation.⁶²⁰

Ears

1)

O Ears of mine, you were given to hear the Truth.
To hear the Truth, you were attached to the body. Listen now to the True Word.
Hearing it, the mind and body flourish and the tongue is absorbed in ambrosial nectar.
The Truth is amazing and profound. There is nothing more can be said about it.
Nanak says, listen to the Eternal Word and become holy.
You were given to hear the Truth.⁶²¹

2)

O Mullah, why do you climb the minaret? The Lord is not hard of hearing.
The One for whom you cry out the call to prayer lives just inside your heart.⁶²²

Teeth

1)

In the form of Krishna, you wear yellow clothes, your teeth white like jasmine petals.
You consort with your lovers, a rosary round your neck
And peacock feathers playfully adorning your topknot.⁶²³

2)

Your face is made beautiful by shining pearl-like teeth and eyes like glistening jewels.
Their nemesis is old age. O Nanak, in old age they waste away.⁶²⁴

Hair Culture

- 1)
Kabir, you have not shaved your mind, so why have you shaven your head?
Whatever is done, is done in the mind. Shaving the head is useless.⁶²⁵
- 2)
The Guru's devotee is liberated by the Lord.
Lord Krishna is her companion.
The devotee of the Guru has found the merciful Giver of breath.
She knows no other way.
The Beautifully-haired One harbors neither hunger nor hate.
Millions of people adore his feet.
She alone is a devotee who keeps God in her heart.⁶²⁶

Skin Art

- 1)
They who harbor the five bestial predilections, becomes the five's embodiment.
They rise each day and prattle nonsense.
They decorate their bodies with religious symbols, then practice hypocrisy.
They are consumed and wasted like a lonely widow.
Without God's Name, everything is false.
Without the Perfect Guru, liberation is not obtained.
In the true court, the faithless cynic is desolate and forlorn.⁶²⁷
- 2)
In his heart is rage and overbearing conceit,
And he worships with an ostentatious style.
Taking a bath, he decorates his body with religious markings,
But the filth never leaves his insides.
Through this kind of discipline, none has ever realized the Lord.
He makes a show of spiritual devotion,
But his mind is dedicated to the cause of maya.⁶²⁸

Remodeling the body

- 1)
So many, many pregnancies end in miscarriages. Why was this one spared?
He lives in the world like someone hideously deformed.
Says Kabir, without the Name,
Handsome-looking people are just disfigured and repulsive.⁶²⁹
- 2)
People are known by their actions. This much is certain.
What limbs do and do not, speaks for the consciousness of the one who employs them.
As they wish, so they receive,
And, says Nanak, so becomes their appearance.⁶³⁰

Beauty and the Breast

- 1)
O Bride of lofty breasts,
Make your consciousness deep and profound.
O Mother-in-law, how can I humble myself before you?
My breasts do not permit me to bow.

O Sister, I have even seen plastered palaces, high as mountains, come crashing down.
Be not proud of your breasts, O Woman.⁶³¹

2)

My mind cannot live for a moment without constantly drinking
The conscious essence of God, God's Name.
This soul is like a child joyfully sucking at its mother's breast.
When the breast is withdrawn, it weeps and wails.⁶³²

A Culture of Wanton Surgeries

1)

My every hair, my mind and body, they suffer one pain.
Without seeing my Lord, sleep does not come.
The doctors and healers who examine me are perplexed.
In my heart, mind and body is the aching of divine love.⁶³³

2)

The agony of separation is my one pain and hunger.
Another torment is my knowledge of the mighty angel of death.
Another anguish is the disease consuming this mortal body.
Doctor, don't give me the wrong medicine.
Doctor, don't give me the wrong medicine.
The aching goes on and the body is racked with pain.
This kind of remedy will not work, my Brother.

Pause and reflect.

Forgetting the Master, people delight their tongues,
Then their bodies are taken over by disease.
Those of blind understanding receive their just deserts.
Doctor, don't give me the wrong medicine.
The sandalwood is appreciated for its fragrance.
A man is only appreciated so long as he breathes.
Once the breath goes, the body rots.
After that, no one takes any food.
Golden is the body and pure the swan-soul
If within there is even a particle of the Name.
All pain and disease are finished,
O Nanak, and the mortal is liberated through the True Name.⁶³⁴

Lobotomy

1)

Even if my head were removed from my body with a large saw
And my feverish body left in the frozen Himalayas,
The disease of my mind would not be cured.
There is no remedy like God's Name. I have seen and considered them all.⁶³⁵

2)

Listen, my friend and companion to my one request.
I have been wandering about in search of my enchanting, sweet Beloved.
I would cut off my head and offer it to anyone who could show me the way,
If only I might see my Beloved for a little while.⁶³⁶

References in the Shabd Guru: Human by Design

Changing Gender

1)

In the realm of the neutral mind, there sits the Yogi –
Neither man nor woman, nor can anyone tell.
Angels, humans and masterful beings find refuge in the true One.⁶³⁷

2)

In the day, there is night, as in night there is day. Heat and cold are the same.
No one else knows his state or extent. Without the Guru, there is no understanding.
In the man, there is woman, as in woman there is man.
The God-realized have this understanding.
In the divine music, there is meditation, as in meditation there is divine music.
The Guru's devotee has gained the ineffable understanding.
In the mind, there is light, as in light there is mind.
The Guru has brought the five rebellious urges together like brothers.
Nanak forever dedicates himself to those who are absorbed in the one Word.⁶³⁸

A Body Too Big

1)

All sense of unworthiness comes from self-doubt and duality.
Being born and dying is by God's will. So too is coming and going.
Food and drink are blameless and pure. They are given as sustenance to all.
O Nanak, to the devotee of understanding there is no such thing as impurity.⁶³⁹

2)

O Nanak, meeting with the true Guru, one's path becomes easy and fulfilled.
In laughing, playing, wearing, eating – the devotee finds liberation.⁶⁴⁰

Unusual Fruits of Peculiar Science

1)

How can the lame, armless, blind one run to meet the Beloved?
Let fear of God be your feet, God's love be your hands, and a meditative mind your eyes.
Says Nanak, O Artful Woman, in this way be united with your Husband.⁶⁴¹

2)

A cripple crosses over the mountain,
A fool becomes a man of knowledge,
A blind person gains insight into the three worlds
By meeting the True Guru and being purified.⁶⁴²

Part V: From Grace to Mastery

Last Things First

1)

Look and see, the world is a ghost town. There is nothing here that is permanent.
The pleasures of sensuality you enjoy will not accompany you.
God is with you. He is your constant companion. Think of him, day and night.
God is the One. Outside of God, there is nothing.
Take your love of duality and consign it to the flames.
Your friends, youth, wealth, everything is the one Lord. Know this in your heart.
Nanak witnesses that we are fortunate to merge in solace and peace.⁶⁴³

2)

Kabir, dying, dying, there is no end of dying in this world,
Yet there is none who knows truly how to die.
One who dies should die such a death that they never have to die again.⁶⁴⁴

Living in the Neutral Mind

1)

Meditating “God God” is the treasure house of God’s servants.
The divine wealth is given by the Lord himself.
Meditating “God God” is the stronghold of God’s servants.
Besides God’s, the servants recognize no other glory.
The servants are thoroughly steeped in God’s love.
In the depths of the neutral mind, the devotees are intoxicated with the Name.
All the hours of the day, they chant “God God...”
The realization of God’s devotees is no secret.
Devotion to God has liberated many souls.
O Nanak, along with the servants, many others are saved.⁶⁴⁵

2)

Home and forest are alike for one who lives in the peace of equanimity.
Low-mindedness vanishes and in its place are thankful praises.
True elevation comes from speaking the True Name.
Serving the True Guru, one finds one’s own status within.
Vanquishing the mind is the essence of all teachings.
The light of God pervades all.⁶⁴⁶

Kirtan

1)

In that house where people speak in praise and meditate on the Praiseworthy,
In that house, sing songs of joy and remember the Creator.
Sing the praise of the Fearless One.
I dedicate myself to that joyful song which gives solace without end.⁶⁴⁷

2)

Of all the ragas, that is the best, O Sibling of Destiny,
By which God comes to live in the heart.
The purifying power of all the ragas is real.
Their value cannot be appraised.
If music is not tuned to the sublime scale of raga,
Attunement to the divine order is not realized.
Nanak, those who understand the order are attuned.
They obtain their awareness from the true Guru.
Everything happens by that divine order.⁶⁴⁸

Spiritual Community

1)

Among all people, they are the best
Who give up their self-conceit in the community of disciplined saints.
Considering themselves of little account,
They shall be counted as the most worthy of all.
One whose mind is the dust of all
Recognizes God in every heart.

One who does away with their brutish nature
Sees the whole world as their friend.
To them, comfort and distress are one and the same.
O Nanak, there is no trace of merit or demerit in the truly disinterested.⁶⁴⁹

2)

As a great building is supported by its pillars,
So the Guru's word gives support to the mind.
As a stone placed in a boat can cross the waters,
So a person practicing the Guru's teachings crosses the ocean of life.
As darkness is dispelled by lamplight,
So the Guru's vision brings joy to the heart.
As in a great forest a path is found,
In the same way, the light of consciousness
Is revealed in the community of disciplined saints.
I long for the dust of the feet of those saints.
O God, please fulfill Nanak's one desire.⁶⁵⁰

The Dance of Abundance

1)

From hunger, I no longer have the strength to worship you.
Take back your rosary and give me the dust of the saints' feet.
I do not owe anyone anything.
O Lord, how can I be with you?
If you do not give me yourself, then I will beg to have you.

Pause and reflect.

I ask for two kilos of flour, and half a pound of ghee, and salt.
I ask for a pound of beans, which I will eat twice a day.
I ask for a cot with four legs, a pillow and mattress.
I ask for a quilt to cover myself.
Your humble servant wants to worship you with love.
I am not greedy. Your one Name is the only ornament I desire.
Says Kabir, now my heart is contented
And in my heart, I realize God.⁶⁵¹

2)

The world is ruined on the road of death.
None has the power to resist the false love of temporary things.
If wealth comes to the home of the most foolish clown,
Seeing that wealth, people offer their respect.
Without love and devotion, the world is gone mad.
Within all is the one Being.
He is revealed to those blessed by him.⁶⁵²

The Power of Woman

1)

The one Mother married, and in this way conceived
Her three acclaimed students,
One the creator, one the treasurer, one the giver of realization.
As God wills, so it goes, everything in perfect order.
He sees, yet none see him. How strange and amazing this is!
I bow to him, I bow –

The Original, Pure, Without Beginning and With No End,
From age to age, the One and the Same.⁶⁵³

2)

The Bride's mind is delighted when she meets her friend, dear God.
Through practicing the Guru's teachings, her heart is made pure
And she enshrines God's Name within her.
Enshrining God in her mind, her life's affairs are resolved
And through the Guru's teaching, she knows God.
The Beloved has enchanted my heart. I have found the Lord of destinies.
Serving the True Guru, she is always at peace.
God, the vanquisher of ego, lives in her mind.
Nanak, she is joined with her Guru and adorned with the Guru's Word.⁶⁵⁴

Welcoming New Life

1)

In the first watch of the night, O merchant friend,
The inexperienced mind has a childlike outlook.
Drinking milk and being fondled, O merchant friend,
The mother and father love their child.
The mother and father greatly love their child,
Yet the wiles of maya beguile everyone.
Through good fortune, the child has come.
Now is the time to secure the future.⁶⁵⁵

2)

Just as a mother after giving birth to a child, feeds and keeps him in her sight,
Indoors and outdoors, puts food in his mouth and each and every moment, caresses him.
In the same way, the True Guru protects the disciples who love their beloved Lord.
O my Lord, we are just the ignorant children of our Lord God.
Hail, hail, the Guru, the Guru, the True Guru,
The Divine Teacher who has made me wise through the Lord's Teachings.⁶⁵⁶

No One Knows (Creation Myths)

1)

When this world was yet unseen and unknown,
Then who was there to sin or perform deeds of merit?
When primal Being itself was absorbed in a state of emptiness,
Then who was there to hate or quarrel?
When neither color nor shape had yet taken form,
Then who could experience joy or grief?
When the self itself was God himself,
Then who might be said to experience infatuation or doubt?
The Self itself stages the entire drama. O Nanak, there is no other Creator.⁶⁵⁷

2)

You yourself created yourself. You yourself conceived the Name.
Next, You created the world. Seated in the world, You behold it with delight.
Yourself, You are the Giver and Creator. It is You who shows kindness.
You know everything, and give and take life by giving your word.
Seated in the world, You behold it with delight.⁶⁵⁸

The Round of Rituals

1)

Hopes and cravings are shackles, O Sibling of Destiny,
And religious rituals are the jail keeper.
From our bad and good deeds we have come into this world, O Sibling of Destiny.
Forgetting the Name, we are ruined.
Under the spell of this world's temporary fascinations, O Sibling of Destiny,
All our efforts come to nothing.
Listen, O Priest of Ritual –
That action brings comfort and joy which brings the reality of the soul to mind.⁶⁵⁹

2)

Some bathe in sacred rivers. Others pilgrimage over desert sands.
Some worship with bells and incense. Others lower their heads to Mecca.
Some study Vedas. Others read the Torah, Bible and Quran.
Some dress themselves in sublime blues. Others appear in white.
Some are said to be Westerners. Others we say belong to the East.
Some think of paradise. Others yearn for heaven.
Says Nanak, one who recognizes the will of the Creator,
Understands the secret of the holy Lord.⁶⁶⁰

Naming Names

1)

Out of all religions, the best religion
Is to remember God's Name and do good works.
Out of all religious rites, the most sublime
Is to erase the filth of false intellect in the community of disciplined saints.
Out of all efforts, the most worthy effort
Is to always remember God's Name in the heart.
Of all words, the most ambrosial
Is the sound of God's praise and speaking highly with the tongue.
Of all places, the most excellent place,
O Nanak, is that heart wherein lives God's Name.⁶⁶¹

2)

The disciple immersed in the Name is at one with all creatures.
The disciple immersed in the Name is at one with the continents and worlds.
The disciple immersed in the Name is at one with the scriptures and spiritual accounts.
The disciple immersed in the Name has the power of listening, wisdom and meditation.
The disciple immersed in the Name is at one with the Earth and sky.
The disciple immersed in the Name is at one with all the forms of the Infinite.
The disciple immersed in the Name is completely at one with all kinds of beings.
Attuned to the Name, one's ears are rendered sublime.
That person to whom the Creator kindly gives his Name,
O Nanak, in their realization of oneness, they achieve liberation.⁶⁶²

The Master

1)

The realized one finds a place of rest in the mind.
The enlightened one gains knowledge of the three worlds.
The mind of the realized one does not fuss over pleasures or hardships.
The realized one recognizes the Lord God in himself.⁶⁶³

2)

The knower of God is the giver of liberation and worldly comforts.
The knower of God, the perfect Being, sets things straight.
The knower of God is the help of the helpless.
The knower of God is the protector of all.
The whole world belongs to the knower of God.
The knower of God herself is the conscience of the world.
The glory of the knower of God is like none other.
O Nanak, the knower of God is the Lord of all!⁶⁶⁴

***An Aquarian Chronicle of Growing Understanding,
Inspiration, Freedom from Oppression and Work for the Common Good***

- 1200 ॐ Zero, the key to advanced mathematical and astronomical calculations, arrives in Europe from India, by way of Al-Khwarizmi's "Treatise on Cipher," first written in 780, then translated into Latin by Italian mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci. 1202
- ॐ The first of Europe's great universities are founded in Italy, then the center of the continent's advanced arts and learning. First is the University of Siena, followed shortly by institutions of learning in Vicenza (1204), Salamanca (1214) and Naples (1224). 1203
- 𐌹 England's King John agrees to demands from his barons and signs the Magna Carta, enshrining the rights of the citizen over the rights of the king. 1215
- 𐌶 Saint Francis of Assisi joins crusaders in Egypt and meets the Muslim Sultan, Melek el Kamil. The saint and the sultan discuss their differing views of God and religion for eight days, but Francis returns to Italy without realizing his hope of either converting the sultan or dying a martyr. 1219
- 𐌶 Physicians at Salerno's medical school defy the church's ban on dissections, referring instead to the Roman physician, Aulus Cornelius Celsus's teaching that "to open the bodies of the dead is necessary for learners." 1235
- 𐌶 English friar and scientist, Roger Bacon, recommends Pope Clement IV give the empirical sciences a place in the university, which at the time is highly biased toward theology and classical studies. The pope dies soon after, without acting on Bacon's recommendation. 1265
- ॐ The popular Sufi master, one of several founders of the Chisti Order, Sheikh Farid, passes away. Born in Punjab in 1173, he lived at various places in northern India. Three centuries later, Guru Arjun includes a number of his verses in the Shabd Guru. 1265
- 𐌶 Marco Polo sets out from Venice for the fabled orient. His nineteen year sojourn serves to lessen the vast cultural divide between two virtually self-enclosed and largely self-absorbed societies: Confucian China and Christian Europe. 1271
- ॐ Saint Namdev is born in the present-day Indian state of Maharashtra. The saint's seventy years of life are filled with poetic inspiration. Several of Namdev's verses are in the Shabd Guru. 1280
- 𐌶 After centuries of deforestation for housing and fuel, the counselors of the city of Nuremberg pass a law setting aside a preserve of several hundred acres of woodland, the Lorenzerwald, and later organize systematic tree-planting. 1294
- 1300 ॐ In northern Italy, Dante Alighieri completes the last part of his trilogy, known together as *The Comedy*. Dante writes his work, not in Latin, the literary medium of the day, but in the language of the common people. Dante also prefigures the existence of the secular state, which gives reason for his writings to later be banned by the Church. 1321
- 𐌹 John Wycliffe translates the Bible into English and makes plans for an order of preachers to take the Bible's teachings directly to the people. After Wycliffe's death, his followers, known as Lollards, gain in influence. They condemn the subordination of the Church to Rome, priestly celibacy, and what they consider idolatry in the Church. 1380
- ॐ Kabir, the unorthodox saint of Benares, is born. Beginning life as a weaver, his devotion eventually becomes his full-time preoccupation. Kabir's irreverent verses made him a popular hero and an enemy of priests. Many of Kabir's songs are found in the Shabd Guru. 1398
- 1400 ॐ The first book printed with moveable type is published in Korea. The printing press, invented separately in Europe some 40 years later, greatly facilitates the flow of information and the development of media-based popular culture. 1400
- 𐌹 Jan Hus of Prague is burned at the stake in Constance for his criticism of Church practices and the authority of the Pope. 1415

- ♁ In Italy, Nicolas of Cusa publishes a book in which he proposes, counter to the longstanding Ptolemaic paradigm, that the universe is infinite, all heavenly bodies are much like Earth or the Sun, and that Earth revolves around the Sun, not the other way around. 1440
- ⚡ Bibi Nanaki first recognises the saintly genius of Guru Nanak. His sister is considered the first Sikh. 1474
- 1500 ⚡ Guru Nanak and Mardana set out on the first of four lengthy expeditions east, south, north and west, proclaiming the oneness of humanity and the essential unity of Creator and creation. Their first journey takes the Master and his disciple east as far as the jungle rainforests of Assam. 1501
- ⚡ Guru Nanak and Mardana journey south through India to the island kingdom of Sri Lanka, returning 2 years later. 1508
- ⚡ Based on his extensive observations and calculations, Nicolaus Copernicus concludes that Earth indeed revolves around the Sun. Fearing official censure, he withholds publication of his revolutionary discovery in *On the Revolution of the Celestial Orbs* until his death, 30 years later. 1513
- ⚡ Guru Nanak and Mardana set out once more, this time to the ascetic haunts of yogis high up in the Himalayas and to the monasteries of tantric Buddhists in Tibet. 1513
- ♁ Thomas More, English humanist and statesman, publishes *Utopia*, a thought-provoking travelogue depicting an ideal society with novel approaches to prisons, education, religious pluralism, divorce, euthanasia and women's rights. More's account is soon published in most of the languages of Europe. 1516
- ⚡ Wittenberg University's professor of theology, Martin Luther nails his "Ninety-five Theses" on the door of the All Saints Church at Wittenburg Castle, then distributes copies to his students and associates, thereby starting the Protestant Reformation. 1517
- ⚡ Guru Nanak and Mardana begin their fourth and final journey, lasting 3 years. This time, they travel westward, reaching Mecca, Baghdad and Samarkand. 1518
- ⚡ After a voyage of almost 3 years, the first around-the-world voyage led by Ferdinand Magellan returns to Spain, albeit with only 18 of the original crew of 260, and without Magellan. 1522
- ♁ In his preface to the New Testament, humanist scholar Erasmus of Rotterdam argues that universal Christian virtues carry more merit than sectarian arguments. 1523
- ♁ The radical Anabaptist movement originates in Zurich and undergoes severe persecution in central Europe. Nonetheless, Anabaptist influence survives in numerous subsequent developments, including social democracy and the Baptist, Mennonite and Hutterite communities. 1525
- ⚡ Paracelsus, a devout Protestant, invites "anyone and everyone" to study medicine with him at the University of Basel. The popular doctor spurns classical medical texts in favor of his own original insights, combined with the understanding of biochemistry he accumulated over years of travel in the Middle East and Europe. 1527
- ⚡ Bartholomé de Las Casas begins his work on behalf of the aboriginal people of the Americas by writing the first of three long letters to the Council of the Indies in Madrid. 1531
- ⚡ King Henry VIII of England establishes the supremacy of the crown over the Church in England, disavowing the supremacy of the pope. 1534
- ⚡ In response to Bartolomé de Las Casas's years of impassioned pleas for native dignity, Pope Paul III orders Catholics to respect the aboriginals of the Americas as human beings capable of religious conversion. 1537
- ♁ Guru Nanak tests his disciples, then passes his responsibilities onto the most worthy, naming him Angad, the second Guru. 1539
- ✿ Francis I of France institutes Europe's first national lottery. 1539

- ⌘ A 28-year-old Belgian, Andreas Versalius publishes *On the Workings of the Human Body*. The richly illustrated anatomy text disregards traditional medical dogma and is based on actual dissections instead. 1543
- ⌘ Catholic authorities convene the Council of Trent. The 18 year long conference revises numerous doctrines and practices in response to the Protestant reformation. 1545
- ⌘ Italian Girolamo Fracastoro first theorizes that the seeds of certain diseases are imperceptible particles transmitted by air or contact. 1546
- ♠ The third Guru establishes a network of twenty-two centers, each under the authority of a devoted man or woman, to represent the teachings of Guru Nanak across the northern Indian subcontinent. 1546
- ⌘ Portugese merchants begin a lucrative business trading Mexican silver for Oriental ceramics. The so-called “china” has a broad appeal in Europe and the Middle East. European artisans set to work copying the attractive Eastern esthetic. 1550
- ♠ Michael Servetus publishes *The Restoration of Christianity*. His views are opposed by both Catholic and Protestant authorities and his books suppressed as heretical. Servetus is twice burned at the stake, once by Calvinists in Geneva and later, in effigy, near Lyon by authorities of the Inquisition. 1553
- ⌘ Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe begins to study a star brighter than Venus that suddenly emerges in the constellation of Cassiopeia. Brahe’s observation of the exploding star, and of a comet 5 years later, call into question the belief widely held in Christian Europe of the immutability of the heavens. 1572
- ⌘ India’s Emperor Akbar summons representatives of Islam, Hinduism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, as well as Christian missionaries from Goa to explain their faiths. He then declares himself the country’s final arbiter in religious matters and establishes a liberal, syncretistic religion for all his subjects. 1575
- ♠ The third Guru starts excavating the healing pool of Amritsar in which the Harimandir, or Golden Temple, is to be built. 1577
- ⌘ Italian Giordano Bruno rejects both Earth- and Sun-centered models of the universe. He advocates the peaceful coexistence of religions based on understanding and open communication. Bruno’s liberal views land him in trouble with Catholic, Calvinist and Lutheran authorities, and lead finally to his burning at the stake at the hands of the Inquisition. 1578
- ⌘ At the invitation of the fifth Guru, the Muslim saint Mian Mir lays the cornerstone for the Golden Temple, to be built with its four doors welcoming humanity from every direction. 1588
- ♠ Opera provides a vital medium and a stage for the development of popular culture in Europe. Opera companies form the basis of a new collective enterprise - after agriculture, fishing, manufacture, government, commerce and the military – the entertainment industry. 1597
- ⌘ By the edict of Nantes, Henry IV of France ends decades of civil strife by granting a large measure of religious freedom to his Protestant subjects. 1598
- 1600 ⌘ William Gilbert publishes the findings of his seventeen years studying magnetism and electricity in *On The Magnet*. In it, he surmises the Earth could be a giant spherical magnet. 1600
- ♠ The fifth Sikh guru compiles the Adi Granth from the vernacular verses of Sikh, Hindu and Muslim saints, then installs it as the centerpiece of the Golden Temple in Amritsar. 1604
- ♠ Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes publishes Europe’s first novel, *Don Quixote*. The novel provides an artful medium for social criticism. Cervantes is twice excommunicated for his irreverent art. 1605
- ⌘ The fifth Guru willingly submits to a death of cruel torture rather than agree to pay the unjust fine decreed by the tyrant Emperor Jahangir. His son and successor organizes a defensive force of 300 men and horses. 1606
- ⌘ Guaman Poma, son of an Inca noble family, pens an impressive 1,200 page critique of colonial rule addressed to Spain’s King Philip III. 1615

- ✿ Puritan scholar Thomas Gataker publishes *On the Nature and Use of Lots* amid a storm of controversy. 1619
- ℞ The sixth Guru is freed from his confinement at the Gwalior Fort and arranges the freedom of fifty-two kings also imprisoned there. 1620
- ℞ In his text, *Novum Organum*, Sir Francis Bacon proclaims the need to banish all traditional authorities and sciences based on custom and convention rather than observed truth and the exercise of reason. 1620
- ⚡ The sixth Guru founds the town of Siri Hargobindpur and arranges the construction of a mosque for the Muslims in his entourage. Here the Sikhs are for the first time attacked by the Mughal army. 1621
- ⚡ Settlers and their aboriginal hosts come together in Massachusetts for three days of feasting and entertainment to celebrate the colonists' first harvest, the first thanksgiving holiday in America. 1622
- ⚡ Dutch jurist and scholar Hugo Grotius, while a political refugee in Paris, writes *On the Law of War and Peace* in an attempt to limit the brutal excesses of war. Grotius's treatise is widely distributed. It lays the foundations of international law. 1625
- ℞ In Florence, Galileo publishes *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief Systems of the World*, in which he questions the prevailing view that Earth is at the centre of the solar system. The next year, he is called before the Catholic Inquisition. Subsequently, his works and those of Copernicus are officially banned. 1632
- ℞ Manchu authorities pass their first decree imposing heavy penalties on anyone binding the feet of young women and girls. 1642
- ⚡ Scholars begin meeting informally in London and Oxford to discuss scientific subjects. The so-called "invisible college" is given a charter by Charles II as the Royal Society of London for the Promotion of Natural Knowledge. 1645
- ⚡ Englishman George Fox achieves his enlightenment at the age 23. He and his followers value the guidance of the Holy Spirit over scripture, reject rituals, and disown all social distinctions. They consider themselves children of God. Detractors call them "Quakers." 1647
- ⚡ Andrew de Ryer, a resident of Alexandria, publishes the first edition of the Quran to be translated into a European language, French. 1647
- ⚡ Blais Pascal proposes his wager on the existence of God and introduces a new mathematical definition of probability that supercede the old sense of something considered legitimate merely because of its basis in traditional authority. 1658
- ⚡ The eighth Guru gives his life to stop a virulent smallpox epidemic. 1664
- ⚡ While working on the design of a pendulum clock, Dutch scientist Christian Huygens finds that when he places 2 of them on a wall near each other and swings the pendulums at different rates, they eventually end up swinging at the same rate. This natural tendency toward synchronization of 2 or more rhythmic cycles, known as entrainment, is later observed in such widely diverse fields as chemistry, biology, astronomy and society. 1665
- ⚡ Sir Isaac Newton discovers that colors form a spectrum derived from colorless, white light. About this time, Newton also develops a theory of gravity. 1666
- ⚡ Pir Bikhan Shah, a respected Sufi master, comes to the ancient city of Patna to pay homage to the son of Guru Tegh Bahadur, newborn Gobind Rai, who will one day be the tenth Guru. 1666
- ℞ Russia's longhaired and bearded "Old Believers" migrate to settlements in the far north and Siberia, out of reach of orthodox church and state. 1667
- ⚡ Guru Tegh Bahadur arranges a peace between the kingdom of Assam and the Mughal empire. 1669

- ☞ Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru, is martyred in Delhi, giving his life so Hindus might enjoy freedom of worship. 1675
- ☞ The penny post is introduced in London, resulting in vastly improved communication over distances for the common people. 1680
- ☞ Revolutionary upheaval in England leads to the abdication of Catholic James II, the enthronement of William of Orange, and the passage by Parliament of an historic Bill of Rights granting religious toleration to all Protestants and making the monarchy conditional on the will of Parliament. 1688
- ☞ Rudolf Jakob Camerarius publishes his finding that plants have sexual characteristics in *De Sexu Plantarum*. His thesis remains controversial for some fifty years. 1694
- ☞ The tenth Guru founds the Order of Khalsa saint-soldiers in the foothills of the Himalayas at the fort of Anandpur. 1699
- 1700 ☞ Kanhaiya administers first aid to both Mughal and Sikh casualties at the battle of Anandpur. 1705
- ☞ The tenth Guru's youngest sons, seven-year-old Fateh Singh and nine-year-old Zorowar Singh prefer being bricked alive by the governor of Sirhind to renouncing their faith. Their older brothers, Jujhar Singh and Ajit Singh give their lives fighting the Mughal army at Chamkaur. 1705
- ☞ Informed of the martyrdom of his sons, the tenth Guru consoles his wife, Mata Sahib Kaur, by designating her the Mother of the Khalsa. 1706
- ☞ The tenth Master sends Banda Singh Bahadur north from his base on the Godwari River to fight the oppressive Mughal rulers of Punjab. When he is fatally wounded, the Guru passes his spiritual authority onto the Shabd Guru and the Khalsa. 1708
- ☞ The first Mughal order requiring the forcible shaving of non-Muslims is issued. This is the beginning of half a century of government efforts to wipe out the Khalsa. The saint-soldiers seek refuge in the wilderness to survive army dragnets and bounties offered for their capture or death. 1710
- ☞ After a disastrous wreck off the coast of England, the British Parliament offers a large reward for anyone able to devise a means of reckoning one's position on circumference of the Earth. 21 years later, John Harrison devises a portable timepiece capable of keeping Greenwich Mean Time, thus allowing for the calculation of east-west longitude. 1714
- ☞ Jonathan Swift, writer and priest of the Church of England, anonymously publishes his satirical fantasy *Gulliver's Travels*. 1726
- ☞ In accord with the order of the Shabd Guru, that "he who serves most, deserves to be chief," Kapur Singh is designated leader of the Khalsa in its guerilla campaign against the Mughal raj. 1733
- ☞ Poet Alexander Pope publishes his visionary "Essay on Man" in which he posits the interconnectedness of all things. 1734
- ☞ The first encyclopedia, the massive *Yu-hai* of 240 volumes, is published in China. 1738
- ☞ Scottish philosopher David Hume publishes his *Treatise on Human Nature* in which he argues "that beasts are endowed with thought and reason as well as man." 1739
- ☞ John Wesley, taking guidance from his Bible against the advice of all his associates, accepts the invitation of fellow minister George Whitefield to go preach to the working classes of Bristol in the open air. 1739
- ☞ Pope Benedict XIV approves publication of *The Complete Works of Galileo*. 1741
- ☞ Denis Diderot publishes the first volume of his Encyclopédie. By making vast amounts of information accessible to anyone able to read, the compilation contributes to the fundamental reordering of knowledge and authority in Europe. 1751
- ☞ Jean-Jacques Rousseau publishes his influential treatise on education, *Émile* and his work on the dynamics of societal relations, *The Social Contract*. 1762

- ☞ Granville Sharp secures a legal decision that West Indies planters can no longer keep slaves in Britain, slavery being contrary to English law. Importing slaves into British colonies is banned 35 years later. That same year, the US follows suit. By 1888, ordinary slavery is banned everywhere. 1762
- ☼ Obeying their Guru's dictate, a handful of Khalsa saint-soldiers overwhelm the stronghold of Kasur and free the abducted bride of a brahmin. 1763
- ☞ A scholar named Nur Muhammad, travelling with Afghan invader Ahmad Shah Durrani during his seventh incursion into India, praises the valor of the Sikh saint-soldiers. 1765
- ☼ The Golden Temple is completely rebuilt, having been blown up by Ahmad Shah Durrani during his invasion of India, 14 years earlier. 1776
- ☼ Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier realizes that materials can exist as gas, solid or liquid and discovers the respiratory exchange of the skin. 1777
- ☼ The Second Great Awakening, a Protestant Revival which lasts to 1830, begins to sweep the United States. There is a popular shift from predestinarianism to the doctrine of free will. Humans are believed capable of influencing their salvation through good works. 1780
- ☼ A new heavenly body, Uranus, planet of revolution, is discovered by Sir William Herschel. 1781
- ☼ Sir Charles Wilkins, a director of the East India Company, publishes the first translation of the Bhagavad Gita in English. 1785
- ☞ The newly-formed French National Assembly passes a Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, maintaining "all citizens are born free and equal in rights," and safeguarding freedom of religion. 1789
- ☼ Methodists begin to Christianize American slaves. Their efforts eventually lead to an infusion of African rhythms into the hymnbook and the absorption of African musical styles such as jazz and blues into mainstream culture. 1790
- ☞ The United States Congress formulates and passes its own Bill of Rights. 1791
- ☼ The world's first school for the blind is established in Paris by France's revolutionary government. There, 31 years later, student Louise Braille improves on a number of tactile reading systems and creates the alphabet that today bears his name. 1791
- ☼ Ranjeet Singh stems the last invasion of India from Afghanistan. He then forges the Sikh confederacy in Punjab into a kingdom remarkable for the harmony among its Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and European communities. As Maharaja, he arranges the distinctive gilding of the top story of the Golden Temple. 1798
- ☼ Samuel Coleridge publishes his tale of a sailor fated to suffer for killing an albatross. It ends: "He prayeth well, who loveth well, both man and bird and beast." 1798
- ☼ In the heady atmosphere brought on by the French revolution, women return to the theatrical stage in Rome for the first time since being banned by Pope Sixtus 310 years earlier. 1798
- ☼ In Egypt, Napoleon and his troops unearth the Rosetta stone, carved in 196 BCE. Its multilingual inscriptions provide linguists their first clue in deciphering the hieroglyphics of a culture thousands of years older than their own. 1799
- 1800 ☼ William Tuke, a devout Quaker, achieves astonishing results with the mentally ill at his retreat in York, England. Tuke's "moral treatment" of exercise, work and recreation soon spreads to America. Quakers are also active in prison reform. 1800
- ☼ A passing arc of starlike brilliance over the village of L'Aigle, France leads to the discovery by scientists of some 3,000 meteorites nearby and the realization that rocks can and do "fall from the sky." 1803
- ☼ English artist and poet William Blake begins work on his greatest illuminated poem. "Jerusalem" depicts the reunion of the British people with God in a spirit of universal brotherhood. 1804

- ♠ Maria Cook of the Universalist Church becomes the first woman preacher. In the course of her difficult ministry, she visits a number of congregations in Pennsylvania and New York state. 1811
- ℞ Paraguay becomes the first South American colony to declare its independence from Spain. Within 17 years, nearly all of Latin America will consist of independent republics. 1811
- ✿ Though outnumbered, Akali Phoola Singh is undeterred in following the dictate of his Guru. He fearlessly leads an attack against a large Afghan army at the Attock River. The great Akali sacrifices his life in the bold and reckless assault and in the end the Khalsa wins the battle. 1823
- ℞ The British Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is founded by Parliament. Within decades, the animal protection movement spreads worldwide. 1824
- ♠ Though aging, ill and demonstrably deaf, Ludwig von Beethoven himself conducts the first performance of his Ninth Symphony with its Ode to Joy, “Come sing a song of joy for peace and understanding...” in Vienna. 1824
- ⌘ Scottish geologist, Charles Lyell publishes the first of his 3 volume *Principles of Geology*, in which he proposes a timeframe of millions of years for the natural evolution of planet Earth’s physical characteristics. Lyell’s studies and his conclusions are considered novel and slightly heretical in his time. 1830
- ♠ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe completes the second and last part of “Faust,” his literary masterpiece and the culmination of his life’s work. Gifted as a poet, dramatist, painter and natural philosopher, Goethe remains rooted in his Christian faith, yet appreciative of the diversity of all faiths. 1831
- ✿ In Illinois, on the American frontier, a stranger sells a barrel full of newspapers and odds and ends for fifty cents to struggling settler named Abraham Lincoln. In the barrel are a set of law books. Lincoln makes a successful career of law and eventually rises to the presidency of the United States. 1831
- ⌘ At the age of 17, Florence Nightingale hears a voice telling her she has a mission in life. Trained as a nurse, she goes to the Crimean War in 1854 and remedies the appalling conditions of wounded British soldiers. In her subsequent work, she improves the conditions of hospitals and enhances the role and effectiveness of the nursing profession. 1837
- ℞ In his *Critique of Hegelian Philosophy of Right*, Karl Marx accuses religion of being “the opium of the people.” Four years later, he formulates the political philosophy that is to bear his name. Marx goes on to become a leader in the international workers’ movement. 1844
- ⌘ In the textile town of Rochdale, Lancashire 28 working men scrape together enough savings to rent the ground floor of a warehouse and establish a co-operative store, school and free lending library. The Rochdale co-op provides the model for the international co-operative movement. 1844
- ℞ The Sikh kingdom goes to war against the encroaching British empire in a desperate attempt to preserve its sovereignty. 1845
- ⌘ Yet another planet, Neptune, is found to be a part of the solar system. 1846
- ⌘ German physicist and psychologist Gustav Theodor Fechner publishes his appreciation of the spiritual side of nature: *Nanna, or the Soul Life of Plants*. 1848
- ℞ In the opening days of its second republic, popular demonstrations force the French government to enfranchise its entire adult male population, expanding the country’s electoral base from a mere 200,000 men of privilege to include all its 9 million males. By 2004, all but four of the world’s countries have adopted some form of democracy. 1848
- ℞ The British army again crosses the Sutlej River in November to attack Punjab. After the force loses two battles and thousands of soldiers, the 80 year old Duke of Wellington offers to come out to India and lead the fight. Finally, in March the British secure the victory that allows them to annex the Punjab. 1848

☞ The first women’s rights convention is held in the village of Seneca Falls in upper New York state. 1848

♠ *A History of the Sikhs from the Origin of the Nation to the Battles of the Sutlej* is published in London. Authored by Joseph Davey Cunningham, soldier and civil servant in British India, it is the first serious and sympathetic account of the Sikh people written by a foreigner. 1849

⚡ Henry David Thoreau, New England essayist, poet and practical philosopher, publishes *Civil Disobedience*. Opposed to slavery and his country’s war of conquest with Mexico, he appeals to an authority higher than civil law. “When a government imprisons unjustly, the true place of a just man is also in prison.” 1849

☞ By a statute of Parliament, the branding and tattooing of criminals is banned in all regions controlled by the British East India Company. 1849

♠ The “Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations,” the first “world fair,” is held at London’s specially constructed Crystal Palace. 1851

⚡ The first International Sanitary Conference, precursor to the World Health Organization, meets in Paris to discuss measures to be taken against the plague. 1851

⚡ Danish scholar Victor Fausboll translates and publishes the first edition of Buddhism’s classic text, the Dhammapada in Latin with the original Pali text. 1855

♠ August F. Moebius and Johann Benedict Listing independently create the enigmatic Moebius strip. 1858

⚡ Naturalists Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace read a joint paper on their theory of evolution at the Linnean Society of London. Darwin goes on to publish *The Origin of the Species*. 1858

☞ After his country’s demoralizing defeat in the Crimean War, Tsar Alexander II institutes a number of liberalizing reforms to bring Russia out from its feudal past. The tsar frees the serfs, establishes elective local governments and modernizes the legal system. 1861

☞ US President Lincoln signs an order freeing American slaves. His action leads to civil war between the southern agricultural states dependent on slave labor and the industrial north. 1861

⚡ US author George Perkins Marsh publishes *Man and Nature*, in which he criticizes mankind’s unsettling relationship with planet Earth and calls for a restitution of harmony with nature. His popular book sells 100,000 copies within a few months. 1864

⚡ Having witnessed the horrors of the Crimean War, Henri Dunant arranges the first Geneva Convention, where sixteen nations agree to improve conditions for those wounded in war. In the same year, Dunant founds the International Red Cross. 1864

☞ Baba Ram Singh and his followers begin boycotting British manufactured goods, as well as the colonial justice, postal and rail systems. Their tactic of wearing homespun cotton clothes is taken up by Gandhi half a century later. 1865

⚡ German biologist Ernst Haeckel coins the word “ecology,” meaning “the whole science of the relations of the organism to the environment.” 1866

♠ Claude Monet’s distinctive rendering of French coastal scenes marks the advent of a new style of artistic expression marked by bright and lively coloration, with a noticeable degree of personal interpretation. Monet and his associates are labelled “impressionists.” 1866

♠ In a Massachusetts town, Mary Eddy Baker spontaneously recovers from a serious injury. The charismatic Ms. Baker goes on to found the Church of Christ, Scientist based on the spiritual integration of body and mind. 1866

♠ The Baha’i faith takes shape in Iran around the inspiration of Baha’ullah. His essential teachings are the unity of religions and oneness of humanity. 1867

- ☞ Workers of the British Trade Unions Congress hold their first gathering. 1868
- ☪ Pope Pius IX convenes Vatican I to organize the Catholic Church's response to the growing wave of rationalism, liberalism and materialism. 1869
- ☞ The International Conference of Medicine in Florence, Italy passes a resolution promoting cremation "as an aid to public health and to save land for the living." Within ten years, crematoriums are established in the US, England and Germany. 1869
- ☪ The Metaphysical Society is formed by England's poet laureate, Alfred Lord Tennyson and a number of eminent scientists, writers and clerics to "unite all shades of opinion against materialism." 1869
- ☞ The picturesque Yellowstone region of the Rocky Mountains is set aside by the US government as a national park. Within fifty years, the national park movement has spread to every continent, offering valuable sanctuary for wildlife and recreation for humans. 1872
- ☪ In the face of an onslaught of government-supported Christian missionaries, a Sikh revival movement, known as the Siri Guru Singh Sabha, begins to take shape with a small meeting of influential leaders in Amritsar. The organization promotes a combination of core Sikh values and Western-style education. 1873
- ☞ At Amherst College in Massachusetts, librarian Melvil Dewey creates a comprehensive classification system for all bodies of knowledge, subsequently known as the Dewey Decimal Classification System. 1873
- ☞ Oskar Hertwig observes the spermatozoon of a sea urchin entering the ovum. The understanding of the union of male and female nucleus and cytoplasm solves the longstanding puzzle of fertilization – although the much larger question of where life comes from remains mysterious as ever. 1875
- ☞ The International Bureau of Weights and Measures is created in Paris, where the metric system was established 82 years earlier, to standardise measurements worldwide. 1875
- ☞ James Legge publishes the first translation of the Tao te Ching, the classical text of Taoism, from Chinese into English. 1882
- ☪ In his iconoclastic book, *The Gay Science*, Friedrich Nietzsche declares "God is dead." 1882
- ☞ Led by the efforts of Sir Sanford Fleming, standard time is established around the globe at a conference of delegates from 27 countries in Washington, D.C. 1884
- ☞ Dr. William H. Bates begins his practice of ophthalmology in New York City. Through his research, Bates learns a holistic method that helps thousands relieve eyestrain and see without glasses. The Bates method grows in popularity despite resistance from the medical establishment. 1885
- ☞ The American Federation of Labor is formed to aggressively represent the interests of workers, using strikes and boycotts to force collective bargaining. 1886
- ☞ The Seattle *Sunday Star* publishes Chief Seattle's visionary 1854 speech in which he rebuts the American president's offer to buy his ancestral homeland, "How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us..." 1887
- ☞ In California, Luther Burbank begins his phenomenal career as a breeder of plants. Burbank's life work is characterized by his unbounded enthusiasm, keen sense of observation, uncanny intuition and love of his subjects. 1888
- ☪ Nearing the end of life, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Britain's Poet Laureate, publishes "Akbar's Dream" in which he acclaims the attempt of India's Emperor Akbar to create a universal religion. 1892
- ☞ John Muir founds the Sierra Club for the protection of the environment and to facilitate the enjoyment of nature in the Rockies and on America's Pacific coast. 1892
- ☞ The First World Parliament of Religions brings together delegates from ten religions for sixteen days at the site of the Chicago World's Fair. 1893

- ♠ Count Leo Tolstoy, renowned Russian novelist and spiritual teacher, publishes *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, in which he rejects sacraments, miracles, the Holy Trinity and the immortality of the soul. In their place, Tolstoy advocates basic Christian virtues. 1893
- ℞ Women in New Zealand are the first in the world to gain the right to vote. By 2004, women can freely vote in 184 of 193 self-governing states. In just three (Bahrain, Kuwait, Vatican City), the franchise remains restricted to men. 1893
- ♠ Swami Vivekananda establishes the first western mission of the Ramakrishna Order in New York. 1894
- ℞ The Unbound Foot Association is founded in Canton. By the 1920s, the practice of foot-binding is widely discontinued. 1894
- ⌘ Henri Becquerel, Marie Curie and Pierre Curie discover the phenomenon of radioactivity. 1896
- ⌘ Through his correct theoretical formulation, Max Planck initiates the era of quantum physics. 1900
- ⌘ Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose publishes the results of his pioneering comparisons of nervous response in plants and animals, even metals, in *Response in the Living and Non-Living*. 1902
- ⌘ American psychologist and philosopher, William James begins his seminal series of lectures on “The Varieties of Religious Experience” at the University of Edinburgh. 1902
- ⌘ Albert Einstein proposes the revolutionary idea that light is comprised of both particles and waves, and that matter is energy in a latent form. 1905
- ⌘ Using the newly-developed technique of radiometric dating, Bertram Boltwood determines the Earth to be about 1 billion years old, setting its creation back considerably from the Biblical date of 4004 BCE calculated by the Irish Catholic primate, James Ussher, 250 years before. 1907
- ♠ Spaniard Pablo Picasso, Frenchman Georges Braque and other innovative artists create a new kind of painting and sculpture incorporating African influences. 1907
- ℞ Mahatma Gandhi leads the Indian community of South Africa in a campaign of nonviolent resistance to oppose the discriminatory policies of the colonial government. 1907
- ✿ In British Columbia, Charles Doolittle Walcott stumbles on a motherlode of exotic-looking fossilized life forms that instill awe and confusion in the scientific community for the next 80 years. 1909
- ♠ Sufi master Hazrat Inayat Khan arrives in Europe from India and begins several years of performing classical eastern music across the continent. 10 years later, he settles in London and establishes the Sufi Order International. 1910
- ⌘ Missionary doctor Albert Schweitzer establishes a hospital in Gabon, where he remains to serve the people most of his life. 1913
- ⌘ Dr. Grantly Dick-Read assists a poor woman in London giving birth without anaesthetic. In the face of the ingrained skepticism of his profession, Dr. Read, launches a mission of educating women in Britain and the US about the possibility of painless childbirth. 1914
- ⌘ The League of Nations is founded the year after the “war to end all wars.” 1919
- ℞ 20,000 people gather at Jallianwala Bhag in Amritsar to protest British rule. Within minutes, more than 400 are martyred and 1,000 wounded by machine-gunning police. 1919
- ℞ English economist Nicolas Pigou first proposes manufacturers bear the full cost of production, including whatever pollution, sickness or environmental damage they might cause with a special “tax to correct maladjustments.” Pigou’s idea begins to receive serious consideration with the birth of “environmentalism” 50 years later. 1920
- ✿ The verdict of the Shabd Guru in Amritsar, “Upon the worthless, he bestows his grace...” causes the resignation of the priests of the Golden Temple and ensures that newly-baptized Khalsa born as low caste Hindus are welcome to participate fully in worship at the foremost Gurdwara. 1920

- ☞ The peaceful liberation of the Golden Temple from agents of the British colonial government is heralded as the “first victory for India’s freedom.” 1922
- ☞ At Guru ka Bagh, ever-larger groups of Sikh volunteers offer themselves to suffer brutal beatings at the hands of police. After three months, their widely-publicized campaign of nonviolent resistance wins them access to temple land unjustly denied to them by the government. The “martyrdom of 100 Christs” proves the power of peaceful means in the struggle against the British in India. 1922
- ☞ At Hasan Abdal, Sikh volunteers stop a train loaded with *satyagrahis* in order to feed them. Eleven are run over. Two succumb to their injuries. But the prisoners are fed. 1922
- ✿ In London, microbiologist Alexander Fleming is working with some dishes of bacteria when his nose drizzles into one of them to surprising effect. Fleming watches as lysozyme, a harmless substance in tears and mucus, kills the bacteria surrounding it. Six years later, in another serendipitous incident, Fleming discovers the powerful antibacterial potential of a mold he names “penicillin.” 1922
- ☞ Puran Singh begins his life of selfless service in the streets of Lahore. 1922
- ☞ Sikhs begin a campaign of nonviolent protests and marches to protest the forced abdication of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh. The demonstrations drag on for 2 years, with much sacrifice of life and limb. The independent-minded maharaja is not restored to his throne, but the Sikh community regains control of their places of worship from the British. 1923
- ☞ South Africa’s general, prime minister and philosopher, Jan Christiaan Smuts coins the term “holism” in *Holism and Evolution* to describe “the existence of wholes and the tendency toward wholes and wholeness in nature.” 1926
- ☞ Preeminent British philosopher Bertrand Russell delivers his celebrated lecture, “Why I am not a Christian” to the National Secular Society in London. 1927
- ☞ The husband and wife team of Joseph Banks and Louisa Rhine begin their prolific life’s work establishing the legitimacy of ESP with stringent laboratory procedure. 1927
- ☞ Hans Berger invents the electroencephalogram, which makes it possible to study states of consciousness by measuring and recording the electrical activity of the brain. 1929
- ☞ M K Gandhi sets out on a twenty-four day “salt march” to Dandi on India’s west coast to challenge British authority in its foremost colony. Within days, Gandhi and 100,000 supporters are filling British jails. Within months, Gandhi is in London negotiating independence. 1930
- ✿ To fund its hospitals, the Irish government starts up the Irish Hospital Sweepstakes. The Sweepstakes is soon one of the largest lotteries promoted internationally. Most of its tickets are sold illegally in United States and Canada where gambling is prohibited. 1930
- ☞ Afro-American Jesse Owens confounds and embarrasses his racist hosts by winning four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics. Owens dramatically ties the Olympic record in the 100 meter run and breaks records in the 200 meter run, the running broad jump and as part of his country’s 400 meter relay team. 1936
- ♪ Benny Goodman, Lionel Hampton, Gene Krupa and Teddy Wilson perform as the world’s the first racially integrated jazz group, The Benny Goodman Quartet. 1936
- ☞ Dr. Cicely Williams delivers an address entitled “Milk and Murder” to a Rotary Club in Singapore, in which she assails the lethal marketing of infant formulas in the developing world. 1939
- ☞ Sir Albert Howard publishes *An Agricultural Testament*. Based on his years of horticultural work in India, he concludes that chemical fertilizers will not be able to sustain agriculture indefinitely. His work helps spark the organic farming movement in the United States and Britain. 1940
- ☞ Swedish businessman and diplomat Raoul Wallenberg enters Nazi-occupied Hungary, where he manages to save the lives of thousands of Jews, giving them sanctuary in neutral safe houses or arranging for them to leave the country. 1944

- ⌘ The International Monetary Fund is established to ensure cooperation in stabilizing currencies worldwide. 1944
- ⌘ The splitting of the atom at Alamogordo, in the New Mexico desert, bears witness to the terrible power of small things. Quoting the Bhagavad Gita, physicist Robert Oppenheimer muses, “Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.” 1945
- ℞ The end of war in Europe heralds the freeing of hundreds of thousands from death and labor camps. 1945
- ⌘ Aldous Huxley publishes *The Perennial Philosophy*, drawing equally from the wisdom of East and West. 1945
- ℞ The end of war in the Pacific heralds the freeing of hundreds of thousands of ethnic Japanese from internment camps in their adoptive countries, the US, Canada and Australia. 1945
- ℞ Dr. Norman Miller’s paper “Hysterectomy: Therapeutic Necessity or Surgical Racket?” is published in the *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*. Subsequent studies support Miller’s critical observations. 1946
- ⌘ In Munich, Karl von Frisch decodes the meaning of the honey bees’ dance. 1946
- ⊛ Las Vegas, Nevada starts to be developed as a gambling resort. 1946
- ⌘ At the Nuremberg war crime trials, Dr. Leo Alexander for the first time sets out criteria for legitimate medical research, including the knowing consent of human subjects. 1947
- † Manmohan Singh begins to translate the Shabd Guru into English and modern Punjabi. The translation takes 12 years to complete. 1947
- ⌘ Ancient scrolls are discovered in a series of caves near the Dead Sea. The “Dead Sea Scrolls” from the community of Qumran offer a new understanding of Judaism without rabbis from a model that parallels the early Jesus movement. 1947
- ⌘ Albanian-born Mother Theresa follows her calling to live among the poor of Darjeeling, India. The next year, she founds a school in Kolkata. Her Missionaries of Charity spread to 120 countries. 1948
- ℞ After José Figueres Ferrer leads a rebel army to power in Costa Rica, defeating the army of an unpopular dictator, he disbands first the defeated army, then the victorious one. Costa Rica thus becomes the first democratic state without an army. 1948
- ⌘ Representatives of sixty-one governments join to form the World Health Organization “for the purpose of cooperation among themselves and others to promote the health of all people.” 1948
- ℞ The United Nations adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It declares all people should be free of “discrimination of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.” 1948
- ℞ Peace ensues from the retreat of Chiang Kai-shek’s nationalist forces to Taiwan and the declaration of the mainland People’s Republic of China. 1949
- † After a period as a Trappist monk at an abbey near Louisville, Kentucky, Thomas Merton enters the Catholic priesthood. His subsequent life and teachings reveal a rare insight into oriental philosophy and meditation for a Westerner. 1949
- ℞ A growing consensus against the practice of lobotomy is expressed by J.L. Hoffman in an article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that alleges the popular operation does no more than replace a psychosis with an organic brain defect syndrome. 1949
- ⌘ During a 14 hour nonstop lecture at the University of Michigan, techno-visionary Buckminster Fuller coins the term “Spaceship Earth” to depict the interdependence of all the planet’s inhabitants. 1951
- ⌘ After decades of research, the Soviet government establishes drugless childbirth as the official method for the entire country. In the same year, Dr. Fernand Lamaze, a French obstetrician, visits Russia and introduces the same method to France. It quickly spreads to other countries. 1951

- ⚡ David Brower of the naturalist Sierra Club begins to lobby to stop the US government’s planned damming of the Green River, a tributary of the Colorado. Four years later, Congress votes against the proposed Echo Park Dam, the first time a big dam is stopped by an aroused public. 1952
- ♫ After several unsuccessful starts, an 18-year-old trucker and a couple of musicians play “That’s All Right Mama” in a Memphis recording studio, thinking the mikes are off. Next day, the studio owner plays their tape over Memphis radio. The response is overwhelming. Rock and roll is born. 1953
- ⚡ Indian prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru voices heightened international concern by proposing an end to nuclear test explosions worldwide. 1954
- ⚡ Sikhs begin peaceful demonstrations to force India’s central government to grant them their promised Punjabi-speaking state. 11 years and tens of thousands of arrests later, the state of Punjab is realized. 1955
- ♫ Celebrated beat poet Allen Ginsberg rails against the Moloch of materialism, while affirming: “The world is holy. The soul is holy. The skin is holy...” during his first reading of his masterpiece *Howl* in a San Francisco gallery. 1955
- ⚡ Leading scientists and thinkers, including Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, Linus Pauling and Max Born sign a manifesto in London calling on the nuclear powers not to resort to atomic war. 1955
- ⚡ Longtime colleagues Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung and American physicist Wolfgang Pauli co-author an inspired collaboration of inner and outer science, published as *The Interpretation of Nature and the Psyche*. 1955.
- ⚡ The First World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs is held in Hiroshima, Japan. 1955
- ⚡ In Montgomery, Alabama, Afro-American Rosa Parks is arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a Caucasian fellow passenger. A bus boycott is organised by local ministers Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ralph Abernathy. After more than a year, the boycott gives equal rights to all passengers on that city’s buses and spawns the US civil rights movement. 1955
- ⚡ A small group of Catholic women in Illinois meet at one of their homes to talk about the womanly art of breast-feeding. In 35 years, the La Leche League they form grows to more than 3,000 groups in 48 countries. The educational service proves to be a powerful force in reversing the worldwide trend away from breast-feeding. 1956
- ⚡ The human consequences in deaths, birth deformities and disease, of toxic dumping in the fishing grounds of Minamata Bay, Japan are first recognized. The emerging understanding of toxic ocean pollution awakens environmental concerns and awareness worldwide. 1956
- ⚡ A popular uprising installs a new government in Hungary. The country’s newly-acclaimed leader, Imre Nagy, declares the country’s neutrality and the intention of establishing a multi-party system. When Soviet tanks enter Hungary, thousands give their lives in the fight for freedom. About 300,000 emigrate to the West. 1956
- ⚡ The first United Nations peacekeeping mission is sent to Egypt to restore peace after British, French and Israeli troops converge at the Suez Canal. 1956
- ⚡ Distinguished scientists and scholars from the Russia and the West meet informally in Pugwash, Nova Scotia for the first of a series of international meetings focussed on the dangers of nuclear weapons. The ongoing sessions are eventually named the Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs. 1957
- ⚡ American chemist, Linus Pauling presents to the United Nations a petition signed by more than 11,000 world scientists urging an end to nuclear tests. 1958
- ⚡ Neighbors of a park in downtown New York halt proposed road construction, which would have eliminated their popular social oasis. Citizen movements opposing the domination of cities by automobiles, lead to “Car-free Days” being declared in the Netherlands, France, Switzerland, East Germany, Italy, Bogota, and in 2001, by the United Nations. 1958

- ☸ Twelve nations sign the Antarctica Treaty, setting the continent aside for peaceful uses and protecting Antarctica's unique life forms and natural habitat. The treaty is later signed by 27 more countries comprising 80% of Earth's population. 1959
- ♁ Baba Jagjit Singh of Bhaini, Punjab begins to revive the dying art of classical Sikh music and instrumentation. He starts by teaching a class of five to ten-year-olds. Within thirty years, the practice and appreciation of these traditional arts is largely recovered. 1959
- ☞ In his farewell address, US President Dwight Eisenhower warns of the dangers to world peace of the growing ties between government, science, and the military and industrial establishments. 1960
- ☸ In Sri Lanka, Srimavo Bandaranaike becomes the world's first elected woman head of state. By the end of the century, women will have served as the leaders of Bolivia, Canada, Dominica, France, Haiti, India, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and Yugoslavia. 1960
- ☞ The Congo leads a wave of African countries gaining independence from colonial Europe. Seventeen years later, Djibouti becomes the final nation on the continent to achieve self-government. 1960
- ☸ At the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, presidential candidate John Kennedy asks 10,000 students whether they would serve their country and the cause of peace by living and working in the developing work. Their enthusiastic response inspires Kennedy to form the Peace Corps. 1960
- ♁ Robert Zimmerman moves from Minnesota to New York City to spend time with folk music legend Woody Guthrie. Changing his name to Bob Dylan, he performs in cafés and lands a recording contract. His repertoire includes "The Times They Are A-Changin'," "With God On Our Side," "Blowin' In The Wind," and other standards of the civil rights and antiwar movement. 1961
- ☸ While programming his computer to repeat a synthesized weather pattern, Edward Lorenz absent-mindedly enters a shortened, rounded-off set of numbers. To his surprise, over time that minute difference precipitates large and unforeseeable deviations from the original pattern. Lorenz calls this "the butterfly effect." 1961
- ☸ Responding to the devastation of wildlife in East Africa, a gathering of scientists and leaders of business and government meet in the village of Morges, Switzerland to form the World Wildlife Federation. Their stated mission is the "preservation of life on Earth." 1961
- ☸ Burmese diplomat U Thant is voted secretary-general of the United Nations, the first non-European to hold the important post. 1961
- ☞ The case of two Portuguese students imprisoned for seven years for toasting freedom in a public restaurant moves UK civil rights lawyer Peter Benenson to issue an "Appeal For Amnesty 1961" on the front page of a prominent London paper. Overwhelming international response to the appeal occasions the creation of Amnesty International. 1961
- ☸ American biologist Rachel Louise Carson publishes *Silent Spring*. In her book, Carson describes the environmental fallout from pesticide DDT and raises awareness of humanity's destructive role in the delicate web of nature. 1962
- ♁ Roman Catholic leaders gather for a historic 3-year summit known as "Vatican II" to chart a more inclusive course for the world's largest religious organization. 1962
- ♁ The Findhorn Foundation community takes shape on the sandy and windswept western coast of Scotland, exemplifying the possibilities of spiritual communion with nature. 1962
- ☸ The US Marine Mammal Protection Act is passed into law largely through the influence of dolphin researcher John C. Lilly. 1962
- ☸ Through their separate, heroic efforts, Australian Dr. William McBride, German Dr. Widukind Lenz and American Dr. Francis Kelsey discover and halt the spread of an epidemic of birth defects caused by the morning sickness drug, thalidomide. 1962

- ♫ The Esalen Institute is founded at idyllic Big Sur, California as a center to explore the human potential. It soon becomes known for its blend of eastern and western philosophies, innovative workshops, and steady influx of philosophers, psychologists, artists and religious thinkers. 1962
- ⚓ The governments of the UK, US and USSR sign the Partial Test Ban Treaty, prohibiting tests of nuclear devices in the atmosphere, underwater and in outer space. 1963
- ℞ Jessica Miford publishes her exposé of the American funeral establishment and their lucrative cult of death in *The American Way of Dying*. 1963
- ℞ After her divorce, American Betty Friedan writes the ground-breaking feminist text, *The Feminine Mystique*. 3 years later, she becomes the founding president of America's influential National Organization of Women. 1963
- ℞ 250,000 demonstrators, one third of them Caucasian, gather at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington to demonstrate their support for Afro-American civil rights. Martin Luther King delivers his memorable address: "I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down at the table of brotherhood..." 1963
- ♫ In Jerusalem, the leaders of the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions, Patriarch Athenagoras and Pope Paul VI embrace as equals. It is the first such meeting since the divisive 1438 Council of Florence, where the pope had asserted his authority over all Christians. 1964
- ℞ Nearly 800 students of the Free Speech Movement are arrested at the University of California in Berkeley, foreshadowing widespread demonstrations against the Vietnam War. 1964
- ⚓ Sweden's Prime Minister Tage Erlander proposes the creation of a peace institute. Two years later, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute is established to understand the preconditions of a stable peace and peaceful solutions to armed conflicts. 1964
- ℞ Ralph Nader publishes *Unsafe at Any Speed* and starts an international wave of consumer activism. In subsequent years, he forms a number of effective watchdog organizations to safeguard the health and quality of life of ordinary Americans. 1965
- ⚓ Swedish photographer Lennart Nilsson publishes a widely acclaimed book that pushes back the mysterious boundaries between the born and yet unborn. *A Child Is Born* is filled with Nilsson's astonishing color photos of living embryos in their womb environment. 1965
- ⚓ Elisabeth Kubler-Ross is appalled by the shunning and abuse of dying patients at a Denver hospital where she has recently begun nursing. Approached by theology students for help in a project on death as a major life crisis, she begins interviewing patients, then giving seminars on the subject. Kubler-Ross's ground-breaking work, *On Death and Dying* is published four years later. 1965
- ⚓ In the final days of war between Pakistan and India, American agronomist Norman Borlaug arranges the planting of dwarf wheat in both countries, thereby helping end famine and inaugurating the Green Revolution. 1965
- ♫ Violin virtuoso Yehudi Menuhin and sitar master Ravi Shankar join for an innovative duet at the Bath Music Festival in England. The following year, they perform again, this time at the United Nations. 1966
- ♫ Stewart Brand designs a button saying "Why haven't we seen a photograph of the whole Earth yet?" and sells it outside the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Word trickles to NASA in Florida and the next year the space agency releases photos of the emerald planet. That fateful image is adopted as an ikon of the environmental movement. 1966
- ℞ Dr. Henry Beecher of Harvard Medical School publishes an article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* citing twenty-two cases where poor and disadvantaged patients had been subjects of medical experimentation without their knowledge or consent. The ensuing public outrage results in the formulation of the 1973 Patients' Bill of Rights. 1966

- ☸ The United Nations General Assembly passes the Outer Space Treaty. It dedicates the exploration and use of outer space to the benefit of all nations, bans the deployment of nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction, and prohibits the harmful contamination of space and celestial bodies. 1967
- ☸ Representatives of eighteen countries gather in Mexico to sign the Tlatelolco Treaty, making Latin America the first densely populated region to be declared a nuclear weapons and nuclear waste-free zone. 1967
- ☸ Dian Fossey begins her 18 year effort studying and, eventually befriending, Rwanda's endangered mountain gorillas in their natural habitat. Her fearless defence against poachers eventually costs Fossey her life. 1967
- ♁ World heavyweight boxing champion Cassius Clay joins the Nation of Islam and refuses to be drafted into the armed forces on religious grounds. Renamed Muhammad Ali, he is convicted of violating the Selective Services Act, stripped of his title, and barred from the ring. The US Supreme Court reverses his conviction 4 years later. 1967
- ♁ The 3 day Monterey, California Pop Festival brings together 32 bands and solo performers, from Jimi Hendrix to Ravi Shankar to the Mamas and Papas in an unprecedented celebration of peace and music. 1967
- ☸ 150,000 protesters gather for a mock exorcism of the US military establishment at the Pentagon. Thousands of police are on hand. They arrest 647 demonstrators. 1967
- ☸ At Harvard University, Herbert Benson begins to scientifically examine the effects of meditation. 1967
- ☸ The "tribal love-rock musical" *Hair*, filled with anti-war sentiment and parodies of materialist culture, begins a popular 5 year engagement in New York's Broadway theatre district. It is staged in 20 cities worldwide, then made into a movie. 1967
- ☸ The *New York Times* and *Washington Post* publish the secret history of the Vietnam War, purloined from the Pentagon by researcher Daniel Ellsberg. The Supreme Court quashes, 6 to 3, "national interest" objections to publication from the Justice Department. 1967
- ♁ Montreal Jewish poet Leonard Cohen publishes his novel, *Beautiful Losers*. "God is alive. Magic is afoot. God is alive. Magic is afoot. God is afoot. Magic is alive. Magic never died. God never sickened..." 1967
- ♁ The trend-setting Beatles spend 8 weeks in India learning meditation from a guru. John Lennon returns bitter and disenchanted. George Harrison becomes a devotee of the Hare Krishna movement. 1968
- ☸ In Czechoslovakia, "Communism with a human face" emerges during the brief Prague spring. 1968
- ☸ Russian physicist and human rights activist, Andrei Sakharov openly calls for nuclear arms reductions and an end to the repression of dissidents in the Soviet Union. 1968
- ☸ Students take over the streets of Paris to protest against their repressive education system. "Power to the Imagination" is their slogan. The students elicit widespread support. 10 million workers shut down France's economy for several weeks. At the height of the uprising, President Charles de Gaulle flees to Germany. 1968
- ☸ Atlantic City's annual Miss America beauty pageant meets with unprecedented dissent. While feminists protest outside, a Miss Black America pageant is held across town. 1968
- ☸ Tens of thousands of students close Mexico City's university demanding better and more affordable education. The uprising is ruthlessly put down by army and police, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of activists. Some retreat to the mountains and form alliances with indigenous peoples to continue the struggle for justice. 1968
- ♁ Jazz flautist Paul Horn records the first contemplative album of "new age" music: *Inside The Taj Mahal*. 1968

☸ Yogi Bhanjan arrives in Toronto. Four months later, he begins teaching Kundalini Yoga and sharing the legacy of Guru Nanak with the “flower children” of Los Angeles and New Mexico. The following year, the Healthy, Happy, Holy Organization (3HO) is founded “for the advancement of the individual through science, education and religion.” 1968

☸ Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson calls on students to oppose environmental degradation with the same vigor they apply to the movement against the Vietnam War. Next April 20, 20 million people, young and old, fill streets, parks and auditoriums across the US to celebrate the first “Earth Day.” 1969

☞ To protest the ongoing war in Vietnam, John Lennon and Yoko Ono hold a weeklong “bed-in” at a Montreal hotel and record “Give Peace a Chance” with the Plastic Ono Band. 1969

☸ Jean Paul Changeaux isolates a receptor nerve from the body of an electric eel. The discovery of receptors, whose existence had been speculated for nearly a century, contributes to a growing understanding of the intimate relationship between body and mind, physiology and experience. 1970

☸ Responding to growing awareness of human degradation of the natural environment, the state of New York establishes a Department of Environmental Conservation, one of the first of its kind in the world. 1970

☸ Informed that one of the components of defoliant Agent Orange causes birth defects in laboratory animals, U.S. President Richard Nixon orders a halt to its military use in Vietnam. 1970

☸ Sitar-master Ravi Shankar asks George Harrison for \$25,000 to help relieve famine victims in Bangladesh. The outcome is a benefit concert in New York showcasing some of pop music’s best known artists, raising millions of dollars, and creating a model for future charity pop performances. 1971

☸ Médecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) is founded by ten French doctors determined to risk their lives offering vital medical relief in war zones and natural disaster areas without waiting for permission from political authorities. 1971

☸ Two ordained Methodist ministers, a lawyer and a businessman create the first mutual fund with ethical standards for its investments. The PAX World Fund, based in Washington, DC, does not support enterprises involved in war, tobacco and gambling. 1971

☞ A popular movement to pressure the US to abandon nuclear testing at Amchitka Island in Alaska begins in Vancouver and spawns the creation of the Greenpeace Foundation. 1971

☞ Peter Breggin founds the Center for the Study of Psychiatry and Psychology to lobby against the use of lobotomy, genetics, drugs and electroshock as tools of behavior modification and psychotherapy. 1971

☸ Astronaut Edgar Mitchell successfully conducts telepathy experiments, conveying thoughts 200,000 miles from outer space to recipients on Earth. 1971

☸ The UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites convention arranges for the preservation of distinctive and valued aspects of our global heritage. Within 30 years, 730 sites as varied as the Pyramids and the Galapagos are set aside for protection from natural or human spoilage. 1972

☸ A movement away from high-maintenance and chemical-dependent lawns and parklands to more environmentally friendly landscaping begins in the organic gardening community. 1972

☞ Meeting with Pope Paul VI in Rome, Yogi Bhanjan suggests the pontiff assemble a gathering of world religious leaders. Fourteen years later, his proposal bears fruit under John Paul II in Assisi. 1972

☸ The Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, the first treaty aimed at curtailing the nuclear arms race, is signed in Moscow. 1972

☸ US President Nixon and Soviet Premier Kosygin sign a space cooperation treaty that culminates in the first international space mission. 3 years later, the crews of a Soviet and an American spacecraft spend two days in rendezvous in space. 1972

☸ With the inspiration of its mayor, Jaime Lerner, the Brazilian city of Curitiba starts on an innovative

course by creating one of the world's first pedestrian malls. Curitiba grows to become a world leader in applying ecological principles, and one of Brazil's healthiest and wealthiest urban centers. 1972

☸ The Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention is signed in London, Moscow and Washington. With thirty years, 164 nations have signed and ratified the treaty. 1972

☸ After years of denuding Vietnamese jungles with Agent Orange, members of the US Senate and House of Representatives hold hearings on the dangers of hostile environmental modification. After intense US-Soviet negotiations, a Climate Change Convention is submitted to the UN in 1976 and signed in Geneva the following year. 1972

☸ At the Third World Futures conference in Bucharest, Romania, Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess proposes a rethinking of the human manipulation of nature and a fundamental re-examination of our relationship with nature, seeing person-in-nature, rather than a separation of people from nature. Naess calls his understanding "deep ecology." 1972

☸ The publication of a critical article in a British magazine leads to growing awareness of the annual deaths of tens of thousands of infants from the marketing of breast milk substitutes in developing countries. This culminates in a global boycott of the main supplier, a UN protocol, and a settlement curtailing the marketing of these products 11 years later. 1973

☸ Himself an inmate of concentration camps for 11 years, Russian writer, Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, arranges for his voluminous account of the Soviet Union's vast "human sewage disposal system," *The Gulag Archipelago*, to be smuggled out for publication in the West. 1973

☸ 200 American aboriginals successfully seize and hold a trading post and church in Wounded Knee, South Dakota for 40 days to draw public attention to the US government's longstanding treaty violations. 1973

☸ Pressured by widespread opposition - and the uncovering of evidence he had misled the public about the conduct of the war in Vietnam and approved covert, illegal measures against his political foes - Richard Milhous Nixon resigns the US presidency. 1974

☸ The last American troops retreat from Saigon, ending the US's twelve year military involvement in Vietnam. 1973

☸ Dr. Bernard Rosenfeld and the Health Research Group, part of Ralph Nader's Public Citizen, Inc. publish an indictment of the widespread sterilization of the vulnerable and the unwary in the US. Rosenfeld pays by having his California medical license cancelled, but in 1978 his report achieves its goals of clear federal guidelines for consent and the protection of minors from sterilization. 1973

☸ US Congress passes the Endangered Species Act, which gives the government authority to list endangered species and protect their habitat. This landmark legislation is the centre of intense controversy over resource development. It is nonetheless repeatedly extended in the US and replicated in other countries. 1973

☸ Eclectic mathematician and chaos theory pioneer Benoit Mandelbrot conceives, develops and applies fractal geometry. The exquisite forms he generates using his intuition with some of the most advanced computers of his day give a tangible, nature-like form to mathematics that for 100 years had grown increasingly abstract, removed from nature and even from physics. 1975

☸ Joseph Ling, head of the 3M Company's environmental department, creates a "Pollution Prevention Pays (3P)" program with incentives for technical staff to design out pollution from manufacturing processes. By incorporating over 3,000 initiatives over the first fifteen years, it was able to save \$537 million, while dramatically reducing toxic emissions. 1975

☸ Sikh-led protests against Indira Gandhi's suspension of democracy lead to the arrest of 140,000 and, twenty months later, to the Indian prime minister's defeat at the polls. 1975

☸ Danish engineers begin making prototype turbines with a view to harnessing that country's robust wind currents. By 2005, hi-tech windmills account for a world-leading 20% of Denmark's electricity and a thriving export industry. 1975

- ☞ Ivan Illich calls into question many of the until-then largely unquestioned practices of the medical establishment in *Medical Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health*. 1976
- ☞ Anita Roddick founds The Body Shop in Brighton, England. Her venture sets new standards of creativity and social responsibility for a business enterprise. Business quickly expands to hundreds of stores in dozens of countries. 1976
- ☞ On Earth Day in Kenya, Wangari Maathai symbolically begins planting trees with women's groups to conserve the environment and improve their quality of life. Within ten years, the movement has spawned the Pan African Green Belt Network. By 2001, Maathai's efforts have landed her in prison. 3 years later, nearly 100,000 women have planted 20 million trees and Maathai has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. 1976
- ☞ The El Segundo Blue Butterfly becomes one of the first insects to be granted protection under the US Endangered Species Act, leading to the creation of a conservation area west of Los Angeles International Airport, and the halting of expansion plans for the busy transportation hub. 1976
- ☞ In Soweto township, South Africa, thousands of high school students and their supporters march peacefully to protest apartheid. Protesters are met by armed police. 130 give their lives. 1976
- ☞ Muhammad Yunus begins his first microbanking experiment in Bangladesh. Seven years later, he incorporates his village banking project and calls it the Grameen Bank. Within 2 decades, it has spread to 35,000 villages, with spin-off banking schemes in 52 countries, including the US. 1976
- ☞ In Buffalo, New York, Lois Gibbs and her neighbors start to relate their families' serious health problems to the thousands of tons of toxic waste buried in the Love Canal beneath their homes. Their initiative precipitates a movement against environmental toxins. 3 years later, President Carter agrees to pay for the resettlement of Gibbs and her neighbours. 1977
- ☞ Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield take a \$30 course in ice cream-making, then go on to start an ice cream factory in Vermont. 7 years later, Ben & Jerry's Homemade Inc. is changing usual business practices by actively integrating ethical and social concerns into its day-to-day operations. 1977
- ☞ 348 reserve officers of the Israel Defense Forces opposed to their government's policy of violence and occupation of Arab lands form Peace Now, which soon becomes Israel's largest grassroots organization. 1978
- ☞ Spencer W. Kimball, the twelfth president of the Mormon Church, announces a revelation extending "the blessing of the priesthood to all worthy male members of the Church" including, for the first time, men of African descent. 1978
- ☞ Paul Watson and the Sea Shepherd Society begin their mission of conserving ocean life. Their first target is the pirate whaling ship *Sierra*. 1978
- ☞ At the Vatican, 111 cardinals meet in enclave to elect Pope John Paul II, the first non-Italian head of the Roman Catholic Church in 456 years. As pontiff, he takes unprecedented steps to make bridges with people of other religions. 1978
- ☞ Desmond Tutu, the general secretary of the South African Council of Churches, calls for an international boycott of the apartheid-based government in that country. 1979
- ☞ In the aftermath of the near-catastrophe at the Nine Mile Island nuclear plant, a coalition of Musicians United for Safe Energy (MUSE) perform five days at Madison Square Gardens, culminating in a demonstration of a quarter million people in New York. 1979
- ☞ The first successful Green political party is founded in West Germany. Four years later, it gains official party status by polling 5% of the national vote. 1979
- ☞ Demoted from her post as a judge in the wake of the Iranian revolution, which did not allow women judges, Shirin Ebadi retires and begins a fruitful period of writing. Fourteen years later, she begins to serve as a lawyer defending the rights of women and children and victims of the regime. In

2003, Shirin Ebadi wins the Nobel Peace Prize for her courageous work, becoming the first Muslim woman and first Iranian to do so. 1979

✞ Lech Walesa leads the shipyard workers in Gdansk in their work shutdown. They win from the Polish government the right to form their own Solidarity union and the right to strike. 1980

⚡ Yogi Bhaian sends a message in the form of a registered letter to 200 Sikh leaders warning of “terrible hardship and adversity” for all Sikhs of India if they did not start working together in the next 700 days. 1980

✞ In a spontaneous moment, Krishna Kaur Khalsa becomes the first woman ever to lead the singing of hymns in the Golden Temple. 1980

⚡ Dr. Robert Ader coins the term “psychoneuroimmunology” (PNI) to describe his realization that the mind and the nervous, glandular and immune systems work in concert, each affecting and being affected by the others. 1981

✞ Hundreds of protesters establish the Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp outside an American cruise missile base, where they stoically maintain a vigil against nuclear weapons until 2000. 1981

⚡ Alain Gisin and his associates at the University of Paris experimentally prove the revolutionary quantum theory of nonlocality. 1982

✞ Thousands of nature-lovers gather in south-west Tasmania to block construction of the proposed Gordon-over-Franklin Dam. Over three months, 1,300 demonstrators are arrested and hundreds more jailed, while across Australia tens of thousands march in protest. Two years later, in a high court case, the conservationists win the preservation of the pristine wilderness. 1982

⚡ Originally a project of the US Department of Defense, a basic internet service begins to function in a public way. The newest electronic medium proves to be a powerfully egalitarian segment of a mass media. 1983

⚡ The work of Dr. Candace Pert, Dr. Francis Schmidt and others leads to the recognition of the primary importance of the ligand-receptor system in the processing of thought and experience. Researchers describe ligands as “information substances” and “molecules of emotion.” 1984

⚡ The Indian army’s attack on the Harimandar (Golden Temple) in Amritsar and the martyrdom of tens of thousands of innocents, accompanied by the jailing and torture of tens of thousands more, occasions an international awakening of Sikh self-awareness. 1984

⚡ Pop music groups raise public awareness and millions of Western dollars to help famine victims in Ethiopia through the Band Aid and Live Aid (1985) projects. 1984

⚡ Medkar Patkar begins organizing popular resistance to the damming of India’s Narmada River among the indigenous peoples who live on the its fertile shores. 1985

⚡ The Rarotonga Treaty drafted in the Cook Islands by representatives of 12 island nations, including Australia and later agreed to by the governments of the 5 nuclear weapons states, makes the South Pacific a nuclear weapons and nuclear waste-free zone. 1985

✞ Marilyn Fayre Milos founds the National Organization of Circumcision Information Resource Centers, “dedicated to making a safer world [and] to securing the birthright of male and female children and babies to keep their sexual organs intact.” Within 10 years, NOCIRC expands into a worldwide association of over ninety centers. 1985

✞ When large popular demonstrations fill the streets of Manila and the army refuses to intervene, longtime strongman Ferdinand Marcos is forced to resign the presidency and flee the country. 1986

⚡ Carlo Petrini, an Italian outraged over the desecration of a fourteenth century piazza and the local culture it symbolizes, starts a movement to save local and regional cuisines, and the biodiversity that goes with it. By 2005, the “slow food movement” has tens of thousands of members in 40 countries. 1986

- ⌘ A meltdown at the Chernobyl nuclear power complex in Ukraine heightens worldwide awareness of the dangers of atomic energy. 1986
- ⌘ Costa Rican President Oscar Arias Sanchez brokers a Central American peace accord with the presidents of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. 1986
- ⌘ 2.4 million Americans come out to form a nearly continuous 5,000 kilometer (3,000 mile) chain from Los Angeles to New York to raise money and awareness of increasing hunger and homelessness in the US. “Hands Across America” collects \$30 million. 1986
- ⌘ Pope John Paul II convenes the first World Day of Prayer for Peace attended by representatives of humanity’s many religions in Assisi. 1986
- ⌘ US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev surprise everyone by becoming friends and signing the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. 1987
- ⌘ The Social Venture Network is founded in the US by the members of America’s leading eco-friendly companies, dedicated to the development of socially and environmentally sustainable businesses. 1987
- ⌘ A meeting of international representatives gathers in Canada to take measures to preserve the Earth’s protective shield of ozone gas. The Montreal Protocol calls for halting the manufacture of ozone-depleting substances by the turn of the century. 1987
- ⌘ A peace agreement is signed in the Soviet-Afghan war. Within 10 months, the last Soviet troops have returned to USSR, ending their 9 year struggle in Afghanistan. 1988
- ⌘ The state of Victoria, Australia puts into law the world’s first ban on animal testing for cosmetic purposes. 1988
- ⌘ In Myanmar (Burma), Aung San Suu Kyi’s National League For Democracy wins the national election, but she is arrested by the military junta and kept from holding office. Aung San Suu Kyi continues to serve as a focal point of the movement for popular rule. 1988
- ⌘ In Vancouver, Estonian-born Kalle Lassn forms the Media Foundation dedicated to critiquing and undermining the oppressive power of large corporate media. Lassn begins by publishing *Adbusters Magazine*. In 1994, it proclaims “TV Turnoff Week” the third week of April. 2 years later, the day after American Thanksgiving is declared “Buy Nothing Day.” Soon after, Lassn proposes a revolutionary “Media Carta” to give citizens and public interest groups a voice in the media. 1989
- ⌘ More than 50,000 students occupy Beijing’s Tiananmen Square. 3,000 go on a hunger strike to demonstrate for freedom from communist nepotism and bureaucracy. 6 weeks later, on the night of June 3, government soldiers and tanks clear the square, killing hundreds and arresting thousands more. 1989
- ⌘ The Human-Dolphin Therapy Center in Miami begins using the friendly skills of dolphins to facilitate the healing of brain-damaged and developmentally challenged children. 1989
- ⌘ The opening of the Berlin Wall is greeted with joy on both sides. Communist governments in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia, Albania, East Germany and the Soviet Union all collapse over the next 25 months. Rolling Stone Keith Richards attributes the fall of communism to the effects of rock and roll. All the “experts” are caught by surprise. 1989
- ⌘ After weeks of anti-government demonstrations, Lieutenant-General Hossain Muhammad Ershad resigns as military ruler of Bangladesh. A caretaker government is chosen by opposition parties. Two months later, free elections are held across the country. December 1990
- ⌘ Producer/director Debra Chasnoff creates a film on the public duplicity of electronics giant, General Electric. *Deadly Deception: General Electric, Nuclear Weapons and Our Environment* wins widespread popular acclaim. 6 months after the film’s winning an Oscar, the corporation responds to public pressure and pulls out of the business of making nuclear armaments. January 1991
- ⌘ A *New York Times* op-ed calls on US President George H. Bush to replace the White House lawn with a more ecological alternative: a meadow, wetland, vegetable garden or orchard. May 1991

- ⌘ Answering an appeal from their president, Boris Yeltsin, 150,000 Russian civilians surround the Russian parliament buildings to protect their country's fragile democracy from a military coup. The attempted coup folds when troops refuse to attack their own people. August 1991
- ⌘ Members of several indigenous peoples and other occupied nations gather in Vienna to form the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. By 2002, a handful of these will have attained sovereignty. Based in Amsterdam, the organization facilitates the cultural struggles and efforts for human and economic rights of some 53 members representing some 100 million people. August 1991
- ⌘ Representatives from 172 countries gather at the first United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. Delegates at the "Earth Summit" work to develop a plan for combating environmental, economic and social challenges facing the global community. June 1992
- ⌘ After President Bush announces a new policy requiring biotechnology companies to neither test nor label their products, British activist and author Jeremy Rifkin begins organizing effective opposition from farming, consumer and animal rights groups in more than 30 countries. US advocacy groups Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, Public Citizen and others join suit. June 1992
- ⌘ The newly independent nuclear weapons states of Kirgizstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan agree to consign their weapons of mass destruction to neighboring Russia. Within 5 years, the transfer of their weapons and those of neighboring Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus has been completed. July 1992
- ⌘ American peace activist, Jody Williams launches the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. Five years later, a treaty is signed with representatives of 122 countries agreeing to eliminate the use of anti-personnel landmines and arrange extensive aid for victims. October 1992
- ⌘ Spurred on by its CEO, MacDonaldis in Sweden undergoes an ecological makeover. The company converts to organic, non-genetically modified ingredients and renewable wind, solar and biofuel energy. In 3 years, MacDonaldis goes from being one of the country's most loathed brands to its third most popular. January 1993
- ⌘ South Africa frames a new constitution, giving the vote to citizens of all races, thereby ending 43 years of apartheid government. November 1993
- ⌘ An insurrection of Zapatistas guerillas in Chiapas begins on the first day of the North American Free Trade Agreement with the seizure of San Cristobal de las Casas and the release of rebel communiqués. January 1994
- ⌘ Mississippi Attorney-General Mike Moore launches a lawsuit to claim health care costs for smoking-related illnesses from America's tobacco companies. Mississippi is soon joined by 38 other states. With the help of tobacco insider Jeffrey Wigand, an historic settlement for \$100s of billions is reached 3 years later. April 1994
- ⌘ Faced with a massive genocide and the simultaneous withdrawal of 90% of his international peacekeeping force, Canadian General Roméo Dallaire and his 270 lightly armed and inadequately provisioned Ghanian and Tunisian soldiers manage to save about 30,000 innocent lives during the horrific 3-month civil war. April 1994
- ⌘ A \$US 4.2 billion settlement is reached between health-afflicted women and manufacturers of breast implant manufacturers in the US. September 1994
- ⌘ In Cairo, female circumcision is condemned as a violation of women's rights at the International Conference on Population and Development. A number of African states respond with laws condemning the practice. September 1994
- ⌘ The Manibeli Declaration, endorsed by representatives of 326 groups from 44 countries, calls on the World Bank to stop funding the construction of big dams until the environmental and resettlement issues surrounding them are resolved. September 1994
- ⌘ Using a new Chinese law against sellers of imitation brand name merchandise, Wang Hai knowingly purchases a series of knock-off fashion accessories, then forces the businesses to repay him. Wang Hai goes on to become an outspoken consumer advocate by forming a non-profit organization

to help consumers in China fight against false advertising, shoddy products and other corporate fraud. January 1995

☸ The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty is signed by 71 states, including China, France, Russia, the UK and the US. October 1995

☸ Separate groups of scientists recognize cultural traits both in chimpanzee communities in tropical Africa and pods of humpback whales off Australia's Great Barrier Reef. October 1995

☸ Representatives of 10 south-east Asian nations sign the Treaty of Bangkok officially making the region a nuclear weapons and nuclear waste-free zone. December 1995

☸ In Cairo, the Pelindaba Treaty is signed by representatives of 52 African countries and the five nuclear weapons states, declaring the continent a nuclear weapons and nuclear waste-free zone. April 1996

☸ World oil giant, Shell responds to widespread public pressure by issuing a revised operating charter making human rights and sustainable development an integral part of company policy. March 1997

☸ Representatives of 180 countries sign a landmark international environmental agreement in Japan. The "Kyoto accord" commits 38 developed countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to below 1990 levels by 2012, provided it is ratified by 55 countries responsible for 55% of emissions. December 1997

☸ After twenty-one years in power, President Suharto resigns as president of Indonesia in the face of widespread public protests. Vice President B.J. Habibie legislates sweeping political reforms. May 1998

☸ When a document detailing secret negotiations to give international corporations priority over the rights of governments are leaked and broadcast on the internet, 600 organizations in 70 countries vehemently oppose the draft treaty. After months of international public pressure, the pro-business Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development drops its plans for a "Multilateral Agreement on Investment." October 1998

☸ Joschka Fischer's Green Party becomes the first political party with an environmental platform to come to power on a national level. The Greens become the junior partner in Germany's governing coalition, with Gerhard Schroeder and the Social Democrats. October 1998

☸ The Russian space module Zarya is launched from Kazakhstan in the first step of the construction of the International Space Station, the biggest cooperative space venture in history, involving the United States, Russia, the European Union, Japan, Canada and Brazil. November 1998

☸ Feminist author Susan Faludi publishes *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*, an eloquent testament to the victimization of women and men alike in an "ornamental culture." September 1999

☸ The brave people of East Timor turn out to vote in a UN-organized referendum despite the intimidation tactics of violent militias. Their vote for independence ends 24 years of oppressive Indonesian rule. September 1999

☸ The World Trade Organization meetings in Seattle, widely criticized for their effects on the environment and on labor conditions worldwide, are disrupted by large-scale demonstrations. November 1999

2000 ☸ After years of negotiations, representatives of 130 countries meet in Montreal and agree to a Biosafety Protocol to regulate the international transport and release of genetically modified organisms and to protect natural biodiversity. January 2000

☸ Three months after the citizens of Cochabamba, Bolivia's third largest city, began a revolt against the privatization of their water supply, the government signs an accord agreeing to every demand, including the expulsion of the multinational conglomerate that had taken control of their public utility. April 2000

☸ The leaders of the two Koreas, Kim Dae-jung and Kim Jong-il, sign the historic South-North Joint Peace declaration in the North Korean capital. June 2000

☞ While the business elite who constitute the World Economic Forum gather behind a wall of tight security in Davos Switzerland, in Porto Alegre Brazil, 12,000 activists gather to discuss an alternative global vision at the first World Social Forum. January 2001

☞ The world's largest drug companies back out of a landmark court battle with the South African government over cheap, non-branded anti-AIDS drugs. In dropping the case, the companies agreed to sell AIDS drugs at cost price in developing countries – a discount of up to 90%. April 2001

☞ When their airliner is hijacked by terrorists determined on crashing the jet into the U.S. Capitol, the home of the American legislature in Washington D.C., several passengers attempt to overpower the hijackers. In the course of the struggle, the plane crashes in a remote field in Pennsylvania, thereby saving countless lives. September 2001

☞ After local women had besieged an oil terminal in southern Nigeria for more than a week, the owner, Chevron Nigeria agrees to hire more locals and invest in schools, water and electrical systems, and a town hall for nearby communities. July 2002

☞ The second Earth Summit is held in Johannesburg, South Africa. August 2002

☞ After 6 years of rehabilitation in Oregon and Iceland, Keiko the orca whale, once the star of the *Free Willy* movie series, arrives unexpectedly in a fjord in Norway, 250 miles from Oslo. Keiko, who loves human company more than the companionship of fellow orcas, immediately charms the residents of one the two remaining countries where the hunting and killing of whales remains an on-going commercial enterprise. September 2002

☞ Despite months of powerful threats and lucrative incentives, a majority of nonpermanent members of the United Nations Security Council, including vulnerable states such as Angola, Cameroon, Chile, Guinea, Mexico and Pakistan, refuse to sanction the US Bush administration's invasion of Iraq. March 2003

☞ The World Health Organization's 192 member states unanimously adopt the world's first public health treaty, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, designed to reduce tobacco-related deaths and disease around the world. May 2003

☞ Yielding to years of public pressure, 10 of the world's largest banks agree to abide by the World Bank's voluntary code of environmental standards, especially when making loans to dams, oil pipelines and other large projects, especially in poor countries. June 2003

☞ After an election widely considered to have been rigged, massive protests in the republic of Georgia cause the fall of the government and the inauguration of a new administration set on eliminating poverty and corruption. November 2003

☞ Civil rights groups begin a campaign to stop the traffic in weapons that fuel conflict, poverty and human rights abuses. Within three years, their effort garners the support of more than 1 million people in 170 countries and a successful vote in the United Nations to establish such a treaty. October 2003

☞ 9 countries of the former Soviet bloc and Greek Cyprus join the European Union, with its high standards of democracy, human rights and prosperity. May 2004

☞ Paul Klebnikov, editor of the Russian edition of *Forbes* magazine, publishes a list of the country's wealthiest people, noting that more billionaires worked or amassed their fortunes in Moscow than in any other city in the world. The brave editor is shot and killed 2 months later. May 2004

☞ The Detroit Zoo becomes the first major zoo to stop exhibiting elephants on ethical grounds because the majestic mammals can develop arthritis and stress-related ailments in captivity. May 2004

☞ An era of religious polarization and violence in India comes to an end with the election of Manmohan Singh, a modest and gifted economist, as the country's first non-Hindu prime minister. He pledges to alleviate the plight of the country's poorest. May 2004

☞ Tens of thousands of Ukrainians camp out in Independence Square in their capital of Kiev to protest the election of Victor Yanukovich of the incumbent ruling party as premier. The Supreme Court rules in favor of the “orange revolution” and in elections the following month, monitored by hundreds of international observers, the opposition candidate, Viktor Yushchenko wins the vote. November 2004

☞ A devastating tsunami leaves 150,000 dead and millions homeless in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, and six other countries on the Indian Ocean, occasioning an unprecedented effort by hundreds of thousands of relief workers attached to NGOs and governments from around the globe. December 2004

☞ In Belgium, 150 Jewish and Muslim religious leaders convene an international conference dedicated to Islam and Judaism as instruments of peace. The rabbis and imams call on all people to oppose hate and ignorance, and to build together a world of peace, rich in diversity, in which all faiths and their practices are respected and protected. January 2005

☞ In the central Asian republic of Kyrgyzstan, thousands of citizens storm the presidential palace in opposition to their increasingly autocratic government. President Askar Akayev flees to Russia. Internationally monitored elections are held four months later. March 2005

☞ After days of street protests, Ecuador’s Congress votes 60-0 to remove President Lucio Gutierrez from office and replace him with Vice President Alfredo Palacio. Gutierrez finds exile in Brazil. Palacio becomes poverty-ridden Ecuador’s ninth president in 10 years. April 2005

☞ Under pressure from rock stars, NGOs and millions of their citizens, the finance ministers of the world’s 8 richest nations agree to cancel up to US\$55 billion in debt owed by 18 impoverished African and South American countries. June 2005

☞ Britain’s largest Sunni Muslim group, the Sunni Council issues an irrevocable edict condemning the taking of life and especially the perpetrators of the July 7 London subway bombings that killed 55 commuters and wounded hundreds more. Similar proclamations are issued in North America and elsewhere in Europe. July 2005

☞ Jan Eliasson of Sweden, the president of the United Nations General Assembly introduces a resolution establishing a 31-nation peace-building commission to help prevent countries emerging from conflict from falling back into chaos. Through his efforts, the resolution is passed by the Assembly and the Security Council by year’s end. September 2005

☞ Evo Morales is elected Bolivia’s first indigenous head of state with a resounding plurality of 51% of the popular vote. Once in office, President Morales embarks on an ambitious program to take control of the country’s foreign-controlled resources. December 2005

☞ In Bangkok, 50,000 demonstrators demand the resignation of their Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra for his alleged corruption and abuse of power. Continued demonstrations and a voter boycott force Thakin’s exit from power in April. February 2006

☞ Despite a police shoot-to-kill order and a stringent curfew, 3 weeks of growing street demonstrations force Nepalese King Gyanendra to restore parliamentary democracy that had been suspended for 15 months. April 2006

☞ The world’s richest man, Bill Gates, announces he is stepping away from his leading role at software giant Microsoft to devote himself fulltime to reducing poverty and improving access to health and education for the world’s disadvantaged. A few days after the announcement, billionaire Warren Buffet donates \$37 billion to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. June 2006

☞ In England, award-winning music director Wasseem Mahmood’s children challenge him to do something about the stereotyping of Muslims as violent terrorists. In response, Mahmood spends the following months composing “*Yeh Hum Nabeen*” (We Are Not That) and recruiting top Pakistani pop stars to record it. Released in Britain and Pakistan in July 2007, the song is an unprecedented hit. September 2006

☞ In Sao Paolo, Brazil, the world's fourth largest urban center, Mayor Gilberto Kassab brings into force the Clean City Law directed at water, sound, air and visual pollution. The first target becomes the excess of advertising in the city. 15,000 billboards and ads on buses and large public video screens are banned despite legal challenges from advertisers. According to a poll, 70% of Sao Paolo's citizens approve of the measure. January 2007

☞ American Congressman Barack Hussein Obama announces his intention to run for the US presidency. His campaign issues are: a quick end to the war in Iraq, increasing energy independence, and improving the country's healthcare system. Running on the themes of hope and change, Obama's campaign for the Democratic Party sets numerous fund-raising records, especially for the quantity of small donations. In November of the following year, Barack Obama is elected the first African-American president of the US. February 2007

☞ Tawakkol Karman organizes weekly demonstrations for free media, democracy and social reform in the capital of Yemen, enduring imprisonment, threats and an attempt on her life. In 2011, she is awarded a Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts. Tawakkol continues to speak out for human rights, in support of imprisoned Egyptian President Morsi, and against American drone attacks in her country. May 2007

☞ Hybrid and electrical cars enter the market and quickly gain 2.2% of market share. The gas-guzzling Hummer line goes out of business two years later. 7% of motor vehicles are expected to be hybrids by 2015. December 2007

☞ Former guerrilla fighter Jose Mujica is elected president of Uruguay. The president declines to live in the presidential mansion, drives his own aging Volkswagen Beetle to work, and gives 90% of his salary to charity. In 2012, Mujica's government passes legislation to legalize the sale of marijuana, thereby weakening to influence of the drug cartels in his country. November 2009

☞ US soldier Bradley Manning releases 100,000s of secret army and diplomatic files including video of graphic videos of air massacres in innocent civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan to Wikileaks. He is arrested some weeks later while the release of the files and videos causes international scrutiny and condemnation of US actions and policies abroad. In August 2013, s/he – then Chelsea Manning – was sentenced to 35 years in prison. February 2010

☞ American computer specialist and former employee of the US National Security Agency, Edward Snowden anonymously contacts Guardian journalist Glenn Greenwald saying he had “sensitive documents he would like to share.” After initially being rebuffed by Greenwald, Snowden contacts film maker Laura Poitras and through her is able to leak information about the unprecedented, secret surveillance activities of NSA, creating uproar and discussion worldwide. December 2012

☞ In response to dramatically deteriorating air quality in its capital and industrial regions, the Chinese State Council announces stringent new laws intended to reduce by 30% pollution especially from heavily polluting industries by 2017. June 2013

Keys to the chronology

- ☞ Chance – significant instances of day to day magic
- ☞ Freedom from oppression – opposing a physical enemy
- ☞ Sheer inspiration – artistic or otherwise
- ☞ Realization of integration, interdependence, holism - scientific or otherwise
- ☞ Work for the greater common good – joining diverse interests (or influences) without a physical enemy, the enemy being ignorance or lack of cooperation

Note: The events in this chronology, numerous as they are, are not included in the index.

Glossary

<i>Akaal Moorat</i>	literally “Deathless” or “Timeless” “Rendering”, this is the term used by Guru Nanak to depict the human form as endowed with an essential beauty that transcends cultural awareness and is essentially divine.
<i>Akhand Paath</i>	a continuous reading of the entire Shabd Guru
<i>Amrit</i>	the so-called “nectar of the gods.” Essentially, <i>Amrit</i> is the living awareness that the seat of consciousness, the soul, is immortal and cannot die.
<i>Amrit ceremony</i>	The <i>Amrit</i> ceremony is the initiation into the Order of Khalsa. During the ceremony, a sacrament called “ <i>Amrit</i> ” is made from water and sugar wafers stirred with a double-edged sword as <i>Gurbaanee</i> is chanted over it, much as it was made by the tenth Master on the first Baisakhi at Anandpur Sahib.
Aquarian Age	the next in a series of astrological ages, each lasting roughly 2,000 years. In full bloom by 2012, the Aquarian Age will be characterized by a potent shift toward holistic awareness and the empowerment of the individual.
Baisakhi	the holiday celebrated April 13, commemorating the creation of Khalsa by Guru Gobind Rai in 1699
Bhai	literally “Brother”, this is a title of respect.
<i>bhangra</i>	an energetic Punjabi folk dance
dharmic	having to do with dharma, i.e. based on spiritual, ethical or religious principles
<i>fakir</i>	an ascetic holyman
<i>Gurbaanee</i>	the songs and verses of Guru Nanak and the Shabd Guru, found in Siri Guru Granth Sahib and other inspired Verses, known for their ability to guide and uplift the spirit.
<i>Gurdwara</i>	Sikh temple – literally “Guru’s door”
<i>Gurmat</i>	the teachings of the Guru
<i>Gurmukhee</i>	literally “from the Guru’s mouth”, this is a name of the script created by the second Guru especially for the recording and transmission of <i>Gurbaanee</i> .
<i>Guru-ka-Langar</i>	a community kitchen run in the name of the Guru; Usually it is adjacent to a Gurdwara, although it may also be improvised outside of a Gurdwara setting for special occasions.
Guru <i>prashaad</i>	a sweet sacrament made by cooking and chanting over a combination of water, clarified butter, flour and sugar
Gurusikh	a disciple of the Guru
<i>hukam</i>	the grand cosmic design that determines the arrangement of all things and relationships in time and space
<i>hukamnama</i>	an edict issued on the Guru’s authority; The original ones were all written and signed by the Guru himself.
<i>Ishnaan</i>	the spiritual science of hydrotherapy, especially cold water bathing
Japji Sahib	the Song of the Soul composed by Guru Nanak
Ji	a respectful form of address
Khalsa	anyone dedicated to the teachings of Guru Nanak through Guru Gobind Singh and living in a consciousness infused with <i>Amrit</i>

Glossary K-Z

<i>kicheree</i>	an Indian gruel of rice, mung beans, spice and vegetables
<i>kimono</i>	a long robe with wide sleeves and a sash, traditionally worn by the Japanese
<i>kirpaan</i>	a Khalsa sword, auspiciously known as an “instrument of kindness”
<i>kirtan</i>	uplifting, inspiring vocal music
Kirtan Sohila	Sikh evening prayer, also recited during last rites
<i>langar</i>	the Guru’s free kitchen, where all are welcome to eat and serve
<i>Onkar</i>	the creative Spirit flowing through all of creation; In <i>Gurmukhee</i> calligraphy, the character designating that Spirit.
<i>pir</i>	a Sufi master
<i>prashaad</i>	blessed food served as a sacrament, usually made of flour, ghee, sugar and water that has been prepared while being chanted over
Punjabi <i>suba</i>	a state or province where Punjabi is the main language
<i>qazi</i>	a Muslim who serves a both as religious official and judge.
<i>quiche</i>	an unsweetened custard pie usually having a savoury filling native to the French region of Lorraine
<i>raja yoga</i>	the discipline of engaging successfully in the physical world, but remaining inseparably tied to the inspiration of Spirit
<i>rishi</i> knot	a knot of hair tied on top of the head, as commonly worn by Indian sages known as “rishis”
<i>samadhi</i>	a state of profound oneness; the most advanced stage of realization;
<i>Sat Naam</i>	the “True Name” or “Truth Personified”, it is the calling of the disciple who, under the expert guidance of their Master, goes to the very root of who and what they are
<i>satyagraha</i>	new Sanskrit word derived from “truth” and “holding”; non-violent and friendly actions engaged to create social and political reform
<i>seva</i>	selfless service
SGPC	The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee or “Supreme Gurdwara Management Committee” of the Sikhs is a statutory body of elected representatives of the Sikhs concerned primarily with the management of gurdwaras under its control in India. It came to be in 1925 as an outcome of Sikh agitation for the return of control of their sacred places.
Shabd Guru	the Guru in the form of the Word, as <i>Gurbaanee</i> and particularly in the whole form of Siri Guru Granth Sahib
Siri Guru Granth Sahib	1,430 pages of pure wisdom compiled by the fifth Guru, and completed by the tenth, Guru Gobind Singh; It uniquely contains the inspired verses of Sikh, Hindu and Muslim luminaries.
<i>sombrero</i>	an often high-crowned hat with a very wide brim traditionally worn in Mexico
True Guru	a Teacher who inspires and empowers their students to live in their highest consciousness

Notes

Introduction

¹ As the Third Millennium of the new era draws near, our thoughts turn spontaneously to the words of the Apostle Paul, “When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son born of woman.” (Gal 4:4). The fullness of time coincides with the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, of the Son who is of one being with the Father, and with the mystery of the Redemption of the world... Since the publication of the very first document of my pontificate, I have spoken explicitly of the Great Jubilee, suggesting that the time leading up to it be lived as “a new Advent”... There is also a need for a better appreciation and understanding of the signs of hope present in the last parts of this century, even though they often remain hidden from our eyes. In society in general, such signs include: scientific, technological and especially medical progress in the service of human life, a greater awareness of our responsibility for the environment, efforts to restore peace and justice wherever they have been violated, a desire for reconciliation and solidarity among different peoples particularly in the complex relationship between the North and South of the world. In the Church, they include a greater attention to the voice of the Spirit through the acceptance of charisms and the promotion of the laity, a deeper commitment to the cause of Christian unity and increased interest in dialogue with other religions and with contemporary culture. (Pope John Paul II, encyclical: *As the Third Millennium Draws Near*, released in L’Osservatore Romano, November 14, 1994)

² This estimate is provided by veteran peace activist and Canadian Senator, Douglas Roche’s *Bread Not Bombs: A Political Agenda for Social Justice*, Edmonton, University of Calgary Press, 1999, p. 40. “Of the 2.25 million scientists involved in research worldwide, about 500,000 work on military research and development projects. Of physicists and engineers, more than 50 percent work exclusively on the development of weapons.”

³ For an elaboration on this point see Guru Fatha Singh Khalsa, *Badges of Bondage*, Brampton, Ontario, Monkeys Mind Press, 1996. Regarding the S.G.P.C., the foremost religious body of the Sikhs, Bhai Sahib Kapur Singh, the National Professor of Sikhism declared on January 13, 1980 that “those in control of the statutory Sikh Gurdwaras are not aware of Sikh doctrines and the nature of the institutions founded on them... The S.G.P.C. is the creation of a government statute and is elected by a college of voters, which includes a large percentage of those who are not qualified to be called members of the Khalsa and, by and large, they vote either for money or for liquor or for their groups or cliques.” Despite a rain of horrors in the 1980s and early 90s, there has been no effort at reforming core Sikh institutions.

The Boundless Creativity of One

⁴ ੴ, Shabd Guru, p. 1.

⁵ *Prochlorococcus* belong to a special group called “picoplankton”, lifeforms even smaller than conventional bacteria and barely visible even at the highest optical magnification. *Prochlorococcus* cells float passively in open water at 70,000 to 200,000 per milliliter, multiplying with energy captured from sunlight. How little scientists really know is epitomized by the fact that these organisms, arguably the most abundant on Earth, remained undiscovered until 1988. (Edward O. Wilson, *The Future of Life*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2002, p. 14)

⁶ This microbe is known as “strain 121” for its ability to thrive at 121 degrees Centegrade (250 degrees Fahrenheit). “The Unboilable Bug”, *Astrobiology Magazine* based on a National Science Foundation report, <http://www.astrobio.net/news/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=559>.

⁷ John Roach, “Rust-breathing Microbes: Miracle Bacteria?” *National Geographic News*, April 12, 2004, http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2004/04/0412_040412_pulsegeobacter.html.

⁸ Edward O. Wilson, *The Diversity of Life*, New York, W.W. Norton and Company, 1999, pp. 19-20.

⁹ David Suzuki and Holly Dressel, *From Naked Ape to Superspecies: A Personal Perspective on Humanity and the Global Eco-crisis*, Toronto, Stoddart Publishing Company, 1999, p. 23-24.

¹⁰ Wilson, *The Future of Life*, p. 14.

¹¹ Shabd Guru, p. 463.

¹² Shabd Guru, p. 1.

¹³ Shabd Guru, p. 3.

¹⁴ Shabd Guru, p. 5.

¹⁵ Shabd Guru, p. 156.

¹⁶ According to Aristotle: “The term “living” has many senses; but let us say that a thing is living even if it has in itself only one of the following: the intellect, the power of sensation, the power of producing motion and of stopping with respect to place, the power of moving with respect to nutrition, that of deterioration and that of growth... Now the power of nutrition can exist apart from the other powers, but in mortal beings none of the other powers can exist apart from this power. This fact is evident in plants; for no power other than that of nutrition belongs to them. Accordingly, living belongs to [all] living beings because of this principle, but it belongs to animals primarily because of the power of sensation; for even those beings who have no power to be in motion or go to another place but have the power of sensation are called “animals” and not only “living beings.” (Aristotle, *Aristotle’s On the Soul (De Anima)*, trans. Hippocrates G. Apostle, Grinnell, Iowa, The Peripatetic Press, 1981, [Book B, Part 2] p. 21.)

¹⁷ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, literally trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Volume II, New York, Benziger Brothers Inc., 1947, Question 64, Article 1, p. 1466.

¹⁸ *Novum Organum* (1620), quoted by Ian Hacking in *The Emergence of Probability: A Philosophical Study of Early Ideas About Probability, Induction and Statistical Inference*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975, p. 27.

¹⁹ Lynn Margulis and Dorion Sagan, *Slanted Truths: Essays on Gaia, Symbiosis, and Evolution*, New York, Copernicus/Springer-Verlag, 1997, p. 172.

²⁰ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. by David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 118.

²¹ Voltaire, “Beasts,” *Philosophical Dictionary: A-I*, trans. Peter Gay, New York, Basic Books, p. 113.

²² *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt, London, Methuen and Company limited, 1963, p. 514.

²³ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, ed. Paul H. Fry, Boston/New York, Bedford/Saint Martins, 1999, p. 75.

²⁴ Emerson’s passage is quoted from *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*, ed. Roger S. Gottlieb, New York, Routledge, 1996, p. 26.

²⁵ Charles Darwin, *The Origin Of Species*, New York, New American Library, 1958, pp. 449-50.

²⁶ Paramahansa Yogananda, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, Los Angeles, Self-Realization Fellowship, 1971, p. 361.

²⁷ Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, *The Secret Life of Plants*, New York, Avon Books, 1973, p. 148.

²⁸ Yogananda, p. 363.

²⁹ Tompkins and Bird, p. 111.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 116.

³¹ Creatures that migrate, including many fishes and cetaceans, caribou, certain salamanders and monarch butterflies, as well as homing pigeons and honeybees, even certain strains of bacteria are known to be guided by microscopic, magnetically-charged crystals. In experiments, humans, too, were found to have an inborn magnetic compass. [Becker, Robert O., M.D., and Gary Selden, *The Body Electric: Electromagnetism and the Foundation of Life*, New York, Robert Morrow, 1985, pp. 250-55.] Perhaps the real marvel here is not the innate abilities of other species to orient themselves by Earth’s magnetic field, but the wonder that most of us have lost that instinct.

³² Already mind-boggled scientists were treated to yet another surprise in 1991 when paleontologists put the Burgess Shale remains together with similarly bizarre fossils unearthed in Chengjiang, China. They then concluded *hallucigenia* could not have existed in its own right and was likely the legs of a larger prehistoric arthropod.

³³ Shabd Guru, p. 7.

³⁴ Arthur Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality*, trans. E. F. J. Payne, Providence/Oxford, Berghahn Books, 1995, p. 175.

³⁵ Albert Schweitzer, *The Words of Albert Schweitzer – Selected by Norman Cousins*, New York, Newmarket Press, 1984, p. 37.

³⁶ The Findhorn Community, *The Findhorn Community*, New York, Harper and Row, 1975, especially p. 74 and pp. 166-67, also www.findhorn.com.

³⁷ Darwin, p. 319.

³⁸ Roger Fouts with Stephen Tukul Mills, *Next Of Kin: What Chimpanzees Have Taught Me About Who We Are*, New York, William Morrow and Company, 1997, p. x.

- ³⁹ Guinness World Records Limited, *Guinness World Records 2002*, p. 100.
- ⁴⁰ Brian J. Ford, *Sensitive Souls: Senses and Communication in Plants, Animals and Microbes*, London, Little, Brown and Company, 1999, pp. 137-38.
- ⁴¹ George Page, *Inside The Animal Mind: A Ground-breaking Exploration Of Animal Intelligence*, New York, Doubleday, 1999, p. 192.
- ⁴² Fouts, pp. 184-216.
- ⁴³ Like chimp hand languages used in the wild, European sign languages evolved for the deaf over the last 150 years also vary from locale to locale.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 85.
- ⁴⁵ Guinness World Records Limited, *Guinness World Records 2002*, p. 101; *National Geographic World*, April 2002, p. 17.
- ⁴⁶ As of this writing, the very latest in this field is that plants of the same species are able to recognize their siblings. When the plants studied by Susan Dudley, associate professor of biology at McMaster University, shared pots with unrelated plants, they became greedy and aggressive in their pursuit of nutrients. The plants did this by growing 15% more roots than they do among sibling plants. <http://www.physorg.com/news100963920.html>
- ⁴⁷ Michael J. Noad, Douglas H. Cato, M.M. Bryden, Micheline-N. Jenner, K. Curt S. Jenner, "Cultural Revolution In Whale Songs," *Nature*, 30/11/00, p. 537.
- ⁴⁸ A. Whiten, J. Goodall, W.C. McGrew, T. Nishida, V. Reynolds, Y. Sugiyama, G. Tutin, R.W. Wrangham, C. Boesch, "Cultures In Chimpanzees," *Nature*, 17/06/99, p. 682-85.
- ⁴⁹ Cleveland Amory, *Animail*, Windmill Books/E. Dutton and Company, New York, 1976; Rolf Harris, Mark Leigh and Mike Lepine, *True Animal Tales*, Century/Random House, 1996; Paul Simons, *Pet Heroes*, Bath, England, Chivers Press, 1997.
- ⁵⁰ Cleveland Amory, *Animail*, Windmill Books/E. Dutton and Company, New York, 1976, p. 18.
- ⁵¹ Steve Newman, "Orphan Rescue", from Earthweek: Diary of the planet, *Toronto Star*, August 3, 2002, p. F5.
- ⁵² Kim Honey, "Hissing Roaches Recognize Familiar Touch," *The Globe and Mail*, April 30, 2002, p. A3.
- ⁵³ Rolf Harris, Mark Leigh and Mike Lepine, *True Animal Tales*, Century/Random House, 1996, p. 66.
- ⁵⁴ Page, p. 229.
- ⁵⁵ Harris, Leigh and Lepine, pp. 69-70; www.cnn.com/US/9811/06/deadelephant.
- ⁵⁶ Ford, pp. 31, 43.
- ⁵⁷ Sean Markey, "Monkeys Show Sense of Fairness, Study Says", *National Geographic News*, September 11, 2003, http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/09/0917_030917_monkeyfairness.html.
- ⁵⁸ According to British botanist Paul Simons: "Certainly, one of the greatest biological shocks of the past few years is the realization that simple organisms can have the sophisticated chemistry of a mammal and all the elements of a nervous system without nerves. Indeed, we and the plant world seem to have evolved from the same neuromotors: those in the animal kingdom evolved into nervous systems, and those in plants evolved into a simpler neural system. (Paul Simons, *The Action Plants: Movement and Nervous Behaviour in Plants*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1992, p. 236.)
- ⁵⁹ While the bulk of protoplasm we carry around is human, the vast majority of cells in our bodies are not. They belong to tiny bacterial and other microorganismic species who coexist with us so long as we breath. At the death of the superstructure (i.e. our bodies), ravenous stomach bacteria ordinarily take over, turning on the flesh and then devouring the bones – unless the body is embalmed or otherwise rendered indigestible. (Wilson, *The Future of Life*, p. 20; David Keys, "Discovery sheds light on prehistoric burials", *The Globe and Mail*, March 17, 2003, p. A5)
- ⁶⁰ Lynn Margulis and Dorian Sagan, *Microcosmos: Four Billion Years from Our Microbial Ancestors*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1986, p. 16.
- ⁶¹ This environment savior has been designated the "BAV1 microbe." Jianzhong He, Kirsti M. Ritalahti, Kun-li Yang, Stephen S. Koenigsberg, and Frank E. Loeffler, "Detoxification of vinyl chloride to ethene coupled to growth of anaerobic bacterium", *Nature*, July 3, 2003, pp. 62-65.
- ⁶² Kate Connally, "Special Report: Animal Rights – Past Rights and Wrongs," *The Guardian*, June 22 2002, www.guardian.co.uk/animalrights/story/0,11917,741908,00.html; Deborah Jones, "Do Animals Have Souls?" *The Ark – A Publication of the Catholic Study Circle for Animal Welfare*, Issue 186, Winter 2000, www.all-creatures.org/ca/ark-186soul.html;

Elizabeth Kadetsky, "Seeking the Animal Soul," *Science and Spirit*, 2001, www.science-spirit.org/articles/seeking_01.html.

⁶³ Lawrence LeShan, *The Science of the Paranormal: The Last Frontier*, Wellingborough, England, The Aquarian Press, 1987, pp. 118-19.

⁶⁴ Robert G. Jahn and Brenda J. Dunne, *Margins of Reality: The Role of Consciousness in the Physical World*, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Publishers, San Diego, California, 1987, p. 257.

⁶⁵ Larry Dossey, *Be Careful What You Pray For*, New York, HarperCollins San Francisco, 1997, p. 191.

⁶⁶ Larry Dossey, *Reinventing Medicine: Beyond Mind-Body To A New Era Of Healing*, New York, Harper San Francisco/Harper Collins, 1997, p. 72.

⁶⁷ Larry Dossey, *Healing Beyond the Body: Medicine and the Infinite Reaches of the Mind*, Boston, Shambhala, 2001, p. 256.

⁶⁸ Erwin Schrodinger, *What is Life? The Physical Aspect of the Living Cell & Mind and Matter*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1967, p. 145.

⁶⁹ Dossey, *Reinventing Medicine*, pp. 73-74.

⁷⁰ Ray Kurzweil, *The Age of Spiritual Machines: When Computers Exceed Human Intelligence*, New York, Viking Penguin, 1999, pp. 62-63.

⁷¹ Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy*, NY, Harper & Bros., 1958, p. 107. Henry Stapp, "S-Matrix Interpretation of Quantum Theory, *Physical Review*, Vol. D3 (Mar. 15, '71), p. 310, quoted in Fritjof Capra, *The Web of Life: The New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems*, Anchor Books/Doubleday, New York, 1996, p. 31.

⁷² Shabd Guru, pp. 730-31.

⁷³ It is significant here to note that in India - for long a home of advanced mathematics, science and medicine – scholars were aware of six systems of astronomy, including that of the Romans. While in the West everyone from Aristotle to Dante insisted the sun revolved around the Earth, Indian astronomers demurred. The earliest known attribution is to Aryabhatta who, in 499, calculated pi to 3.1416, determined the solar year as 365.3586 days, and stated the Earth was spherical and rotated on its axis. [*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2002, "India," 21:50]

⁷⁴ It was Unitarians who were the principle organizers of the historic World Parliament of Religions.

⁷⁵ The first Parliament was an adjunct of Chicago's great World's Fair of 1893, itself timed to commemorate the discovery of America by Columbus four hundred years before. Situated on the shores of Lake Michigan, the event was held in an electrified and incandescent "White City," conjured out of reinforced plaster of Paris.

The fair was intended by many of its organizers as an exhibition of triumphal Christianity. Though most of its organizers and speakers were Protestant, presenters were invited from far and wide, and accounted for ten of the world's religions. Aboriginal shaman traditions, as well as Mormon, Jain and Sikh traditions were not invited, while the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Khalif of Islam declined to be represented. However, Buddhist, Confucian, Eastern Orthodox, Hindu, Jewish, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Shaker, Taoist and Zoroastrian delegates took turns over the seventeen days of the conference sharing their respective traditions.

The Parliament must have stirred some unexpected sentiments. Swami Vivekananda was especially well received and went on to establish a missionary outpost in New York City. The lithe spirit of the convention was conveyed in a poem published in a Chicago journal a few weeks later, entitled "Aunt Hannah on the Parliament of Religions."

Wall – I'm glad enough I'm hum agin – kin rest my weary brain,
For I've seen an' heered so much *too* much, I guess I've heered in vain.
I thought th' Fair was mixin' an' th' Midway made me crawl,
But the Parl'ment of Religions was th' mixin'est of all!
I seen th' Turks agoing round th' Midway in th' Fair,
But our minister reproved me when he seen me peep in thair.
"Defilin' place" he called it, an' th' Turk "a child of sin";
But th' Parliament of Religions took all them heathen in.
It made me squirm a little, to see some heathen's air,
As they told us Christians 'bout our faults an' laid 'em out so bare,
But thair flowin' robes was tellin' an' th'air mighty takin' folk,
So th' Parl'ment of Religions clapped to every word they spoke.
I listened to th' Buddhist, in his robes of shinin' white,
As he told how like to Christ's thair lives, while ours was not – a mite,

‘Tel I felt, to lead a Christian life, a Buddhist I must be,
 An’ the Parl’mment of Religions brought religious doubt to me.
 Then I heered th’ han’some Hindu monk, drest up in orange dress,
 Who sed that all humanity was part of God – no less,
 An’ he sed we was *not* sinners, so I comfort took, once more,
 While the Parl’mment of Religions roared with approving roar.
 Then a Cath’lic man got up an’ spoke, about Christ an’ the’ cross;
 But th’ Christians of th’ other creeds, they giv’ thair heds a toss.
 When th’ Babtist spoke, th’ Presbyterians seemed to be fightin’ mad,
 ‘Tel th’ Parl’mment of Religions made my pore old soul feel sad.
 I’ve harkened to th’ Buddhist, to th’ Hindu an’ th’ Turk;
 I’ve tried to find th’ truth that in our different sects may lurk,
 ‘Tel my pore old brain it buzzes, like its goin’ religious mad –
 For th’ Parliament of Religions nigh put out th’ light I had.
 Must I leave all this sarchin’ tel I reach th’ other side?
 I’ll treat all men as brothers while on this airth I bide,
 An’ let “Love” be my motto, ‘tel I enter in th’ door.
 Of that great Religious Parl’mment, where creeds don’t count no more.

Written with a rustic air: Wall: Well; hum: home; kin: can; heered: heard; mixin’: confusing; an’: and; th’: the; thair: there; air: speech; thair: their; ‘Tel: Until; han’some: handsome; sed: said; heds: heads; Babtist: Baptist; pore: poor; sarchin’: searching; airth: earth;

[from *The Open Court*, October 12, 1893, quoted in Eric J. Ziolkowski, editor, *A Museum of Faiths: Histories and Legacies of the 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions*, Atlanta, Scholar’s Press, 1993, pp. 16-18]

The universal spirit of Guru Nanak was clearly in attendance at Chicago. The Parliament spawned a series of conferences that focussed on three new and vital areas of endeavor. The growing need for dialogue and exchange between representatives of various faiths was served by dozens of subsequent conferences held intermittently around the world. Ecumenical efforts within the Christian fold culminated in the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948. International meetings on the study of comparative religion, meanwhile led to the creation of the UNESCO-sponsored International Association of the History of Religions and the teaching of various religious traditions at the university level.

The first actual Sikh presence at interreligious conferences took the form of Bhai Teja Singh. During his tour of North America, Teja Singh met Unitarian Reverend Jenkin Lloyd Jones, who had been the Executive Secretary of the first Parliament of Religions. Reverend Jones arranged for the eminent teacher and scholar to speak at the World Conference of Free Christianity and Religious Progress held in Berlin in 1910.

⁷⁶ Shabd Guru, p. 223

⁷⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 988.

⁷⁸ Shabd Guru, pp. 24-25.

⁷⁹ Shabd Guru, p. 7.

⁸⁰ Shabd Guru, p. 667.

⁸¹ Shabd Guru, p. 972.

⁸² Dasam Granth, p. 11.

⁸³ Shabd Guru, p. 10.

⁸⁴ Shabd Guru, p. 489.

⁸⁵ Shabd Guru, p. 25.

⁸⁶ Shabd Guru, p. 12.

⁸⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 464.

Everything That Happens

- ⁸⁸ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥, Shabd Guru, p. 1
- ⁸⁹ “Faulty Ignition Saves Man From Car Bomb,” *Metro News*, Toronto, April 24, 2001, p. 11.
- ⁹⁰ Jon B. Rhine, “What’s Luck Got To Do With It?” *The Globe and Mail*, December 15, 1999, p. R3.
- ⁹¹ “Table Talk,” *The Globe and Mail*, November 11, 1999, p. A15.
- ⁹² Reuven Brenner with Gabrielle A. Brenner, *Gambling and Speculation: A Theory, A History and A Future of Some Human Decisions*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 139.
- ⁹³ *Reader’s Digest Mysteries of the Unexplained*, p. 76.
- ⁹⁴ *The Book of Chance*, Toronto, Ripley Books, 1982, p. 260.
- ⁹⁵ Larry Dossey, *Prayer is Good Medicine*, San Francisco, HarperSanFrancisco, 1996, p. 190.
- ⁹⁶ Shabd Guru, p. 1
- ⁹⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 5
- ⁹⁸ Shabd Guru, p. 795
- ⁹⁹ Stewart Culin, *Games of the North American Indians*, New York, Dover Publications Inc., 1975, p. 33.
- ¹⁰⁰ Deuteronomy 34:10, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, Old Testament p. 266.
- ¹⁰¹ Numbers 27:18-21, *ibid*, p. 205.
- ¹⁰² “Urim and Thummim,” *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, gen. ed. Paul J. Achtmeyer, San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1985, p. 1108; Levine, Baruch A., “Levites,” *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Mircea Eliade, editor in chief, New York, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987, 8:529-30.
- ¹⁰³ I Samuel 23: 9-13, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, Old Testament pp. 372-73.
- ¹⁰⁴ Proverbs 18:18, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, Old Testament p. 824.
- ¹⁰⁵ “Lots,” *Encyclopaedica Judaica*, Jerusalem, Keter Publishing House Limited, 1971, 11:511; “Lots,” *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, gen. ed. Paul J. Achtmeyer, San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1985, p. 578.
- ¹⁰⁶ This quote of Hippocrates is taken from Carl Gustav Jung, *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1955, p. 101.
- ¹⁰⁷ Kees W. Bolle, “Fate,” *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Mircea Eliade, editor in chief, New York, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987, 5:290-98.
- ¹⁰⁸ Deborah J. Bennett, *Randomness*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1998, p. 29.
- ¹⁰⁹ Robert E. Bell, *Place-Names in Classical Mythology: Greece*, Santa Barbara, California, ABC-Clio Inc., 1989, p. 108.
- ¹¹⁰ Donna C. Kurtz and John Boardman, *Greek Burial Customs*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1971, p. 208; The *astragalus* has a long association with humans and chance. Made from the heel of a sheep, goat, calf or deer, the bone’s four distinctively different long flat faces served as a natural implement of divination or games of chance. Also found in Arabic, Roman and Greek cultures, the oldest *astragali* have been found in Egyptian excavations dating much before 1320 BCE. [Deborah J. Bennett, *Randomness*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1998, p. 19-21]
- ¹¹¹ Deborah J. Bennett, *Randomness*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1998, p. 31.
- ¹¹² Edward Beltrami, *What Is Random? Chance and Order in Mathematics and Life*, New York, Springer-Verlag Inc., 1999, p. 3.
- ¹¹³ Charles Merivale, *History of the Romans under the Empire*, London, Longmans, Green, and Company, 1865, I:274-75.
- ¹¹⁴ Cornelius Tacitus, *The Agricola and the Germania*, trans. H. Mattingly, revised by S.A. Handford, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, Penguin Books Limited, 1970, p. 109.
- ¹¹⁵ *Ramayana*, trans. William Buck, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1976, p. 119.
- ¹¹⁶ Henry Charles Lea, *Superstition and Force: Essays on the Wager of Law, the Wager of Battle, the Ordeal, Torture*, Philadelphia, Lea Brothers and Co., 1892, p. 352.
- ¹¹⁷ *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, trans., Richard Wilhelm, Cary F. Baynes, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979, pp. 386-388.

¹¹⁸ Orysia Paszczak Tracz, “The Things We Do,” *The Ukrainian Weekly*, August 1, 1999, No. 31, Vol. LXVII.

¹¹⁹ “Rock, paper, scissors,” also known in North America as *roshambo* (named after Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau, a French general of the American Revolution) is a contest with a long history and numerous variations around the world, from Indonesia to Scandinavia. “The basics of the game consist of each player shaking a fist a number of times (“priming”) and then extending the same hand in a fist (“rock”), out flat (“paper”), or with the index and middle fingers extended (“scissors”). Each of these is referred to as a throw – paper wins against rock (“paper covers rock”), rock wins over scissors (“rock crushes, or dulls, scissors”), and scissors wins against paper (“scissors cut paper”). If each player makes the same throw, the round is stalemate, and must be replayed. [“What’s the origin of “Rock, Paper, Scissors”?” Staff report by the Straight Dope Science Advisory Board, www.straightdope.com/mailbag/mrockpaper.html]

¹²⁰ At Peter’s suggestion, the early followers of Jesus, numbering some hundred and twenty, chose a successor to replace Judas as a twelfth apostle. This event occurred in Jerusalem at a gathering after the remaining apostles had witnessed the ascension of Jesus:

(So) they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart, show us which one of these two you have chosen to take part of the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles. [Acts I: 23-26 – *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, New Testament p. 162.]

¹²¹ Saint Augustine, *The Works of Saint Augustine, A Translation for the 21st Century, Volume I: The Confessions*, trans. Maria Boulding, O.S.B., John E. Rotelle, O.S.A., ed., Hyde Park, New York, New City Press, 1990, p. 198.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Romans 13:13-14, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, New Testament p. 224. This episode reminded Augustine of a similar episode that had befallen Saint Anthony. Still a pagan, he happened to arrive somewhere just as the text was being read, “Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” [Luke 18:22, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, New Testament p. 110] The saint’s holy heart was converted on the spot, and he began to live a Christian life of dedication.

¹²⁴ George W. Gilmore, “Divination,” *The New Schaeff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Herzog, Johan Jakob, Lefferts Augustine Loetscher, Phillip Schaeff, eds., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1963, 3:450-52.

¹²⁵ Auguste-Marie Boudinhon, “Election” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1910, 5:376.

¹²⁶ “Conclave,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Chicago, 2002, 3:516-517; “Gregory X,” *ibid*, 5:480-481; Austin Dowling, “Conclave,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1909, 4:192-195; B. Forshaw and the editors, “Conclave,” *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd edition, The Gale Group in association with The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., 2001, 4:60; “Voting Cardinals,” December 31, 2004, www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/scardc3.html.

¹²⁷ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, literally trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Volume II, New York, Benziger Brothers Inc., 1947, Q. 95, Art. 8, p. 1607-08.

¹²⁸ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Rupert E. Davies, Nashville, Tennessee, Abington Press, 1989, 9:204.

¹²⁹ *The Instructor*, Book 3, Chapter 11, quoted from: *Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, ed. Rev. Alexander Roberts, D.D., and James Donaldson, L.L.D., Vol. IV, *Clement of Alexandria, Vol. I*, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1871, pp. 325-26.

¹³⁰ *The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Statutes, or To The People of Antioch, translated with notes and indices*, Oxford, John Henry Parker; F. and J. Rivington, London, 1856, Homily 15, Section 11, p. 257.

¹³¹ Al-Baqarah 2:220, *The Quran*, trans. Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, London, Curzon Press, 1978, p. 34.

¹³² Al-Maidah 5:91-93, *The Quran*, trans. Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, p. 112.

¹³³ Dr. H.C. Yarrow, *North American Indian Burial Customs*, Ogden, Utah, Eagle’s View Publishing Company, 1988, pp. 79-81.

¹³⁴ Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* [1642], Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1953, Part I, Sections 17-18, pp. 27-31.

¹³⁵ Nicholas Rescher, *Luck: The Brilliant Randomness of Everyday Life*, New York, Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 1995, p. 128.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid, p. 133.

- ¹³⁸ Lorraine J. Daston, "The Domestication of Risk: Mathematical Probability and Insurance 1650-1830," *The Probabilistic Revolution, Volume I: Ideas in History*, ed. Lorenz Krueger, Lorraine J. Daston, Michael Heidelberger, Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 1987, p. 239.
- ¹³⁹ Farrell, Jim, "500 farmers greet first hay from East," *National Post*, August 6, 2002, p. A7.
- ¹⁴⁰ Stepan, Cheryl, "Coin toss decides who keeps library job," *The Toronto Star*, March 27, 2002, p. A 4.
- ¹⁴¹ Christine Quigley, *The Corpse: A History*, Jefferson, North Carolina/London, McFarland and Company, Inc., Publishers, 1996, p. 93.
- ¹⁴² Reuters, "Jackson takes stand in trial," *Metro Today*, November 14, 2002, p. 27.
- ¹⁴³ "Ordeal," *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, third edition, Oxford/New York, Oxford University Press, 1996, 10:902.
- ¹⁴⁴ Trial by cauldron meant extracting an object, such as a ring, from a boiling cauldron. An Accused would be considered innocent if they could retrieve the item from the bottom of the cauldron and remain unscathed. Robert Bartlett, *Trial by Fire and Water: The Medieval Judicial Order*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1986, p. 29.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Laws of the Salian and Ripuarian Franks*, Theodore John Rivers, trans. and intro., New York, AMS Press, 1986, pp. 18, 182.
- ¹⁴⁶ The real anomaly among the ordeals was trial by water, where the suspect is immersed in a pool or stream. As critics of the practice in its own time pointed out, it was most odd that the innocent should be expected to sink and therefore die in the course of the ordeal, while those who survived the ordeal by keeping afloat were judged to be guilty. [Robert Bartlett, *Trial By Fire and Water: The Medieval Judicial Order*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1986, p. 74]
- ¹⁴⁷ Now Saul committed a very rash act on that day. He had laid an oath on the troops, saying, "Cursed be anyone who eats food before it is evening and I have been avenged on my enemies." So none of the troops tasted food. All the troops came upon a honeycomb; and there was honey on the ground. When the troops came upon the honeycomb, the honey was dripping out; but they did not put their hands to their mouths for they feared the oath. But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the troops with the oath; so he extended the staff that was in his hand, and dipped the tip of it in the honeycomb, and put his hand in his mouth... Saul said, "Come here, all you leaders of the people; and let us find out how this sin has arisen today. For as the Lord lives who saves Israel, even if it is my son Jonathan, he shall surely die!" But there was no one among all the people who answered him. He said to all Israel, "You shall be on one side, and I and my son Jonathan will be on the other side." The people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you." Then Saul said, "O Lord God of Israel, why have you not answered your servant today? If this guilt is in me or in my son Jonathan, O Lord God of Israel, give Thummim." And Jonathan and Saul were indicated by the lot, but the people were cleared. [1 Samuel 14:24-27, 38-41, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, Old Testament pp. 359-60.]
- ¹⁴⁸ In this practice, a key was loosely attached to the *Bible* at the first verse of Psalms: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord..." The *Bible* was then made to spin while the names of suspects were spoken. Whosever name was being mentioned when the book fell was considered guilty. [Gilmore, George W., "Divination," *The New Schaeff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Herzog, Johan Jakob, Lefferts Augustine Loetscher, Phillip Schaeff, eds., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1963, 3:452.]
- ¹⁴⁹ Samuel Butler, *Hudibras*, Oxford, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1967, Part III, Canto 3, lines 685-88, p. 297
- ¹⁵⁰ Rod Mickelburgh, "A province leaves its fate to chance," *The Globe and Mail*, August 2 2003, p. F2.
- ¹⁵¹ Gerd Gigerenzer, Zeno Swijtink, Theodore Porter, Lorraine Daston, John Beatty, Lorenz Krueger, *The Empire of Chance: How probability changed science and everyday life*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 73-74.
- ¹⁵² M. Corey Goldman, "Wireless Web everywhere," *Toronto Star*, June 9, 2003, p. D3.
- ¹⁵³ Stephen Wolfram, *A New Kind of Science*, Champaign, Illinois, Wolfram Media, Inc., 2002, p. 1192.
- ¹⁵⁴ Pierre-Simon Laplace, *Essai philosophique sur les probabilités* [Paris, 1814], trans. F. W. Truscott, 4, quoted in Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 11-12.
- ¹⁵⁵ Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 1, 13, 160.
- ¹⁵⁶ Hacking, p xii.
- ¹⁵⁷ René Vallery-Radot, *The Life of Pasteur*, trans. R. L. Devonshire, New York, Dover Publications, 1960, p. 76.
- ¹⁵⁸ Jacques-Lucien Monod, *Chance and Necessity: An Essay on the Natural Philosophy of Modern Biology*, trans. Austryn Wainhouse, London, William Collins and Sons, 1972, p.110.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 117-18.

¹⁶⁰ Stéphane Mallarmé, “A THROW OF THE DICE” in *Collected Poems*, Henry Weinfeld, trans., Berkeley, University of California Press, 1992, pp. 124-145.

¹⁶¹ Carl Gustav Jung and Wilhelm Pauli, *The Interpretation of Nature and the Psyche* – C.G. Jung, “Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle,” W. Pauli, “The Influence of Archetypal Ideas on the Scientific Theories of Kepler,” New York, Bollingen Foundation, Inc./Pantheon Books, 1955, p. 31.

¹⁶² Max Born, *The Natural Philosophy of Cause and Chance*, Oxford, England, Clarendon Press, 1949., p. 122.

¹⁶³ Ibid, p. 123.

¹⁶⁴ Henry P. Stapp, “S-Matrix Interpretation of Quantum Theory, *Physical Review*, Vol. D3 (Mar. 15, '71), p. 310, quoted in Fritjof Capra, *The Web of Life: The New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems*, New York, Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1996, p. 31.

¹⁶⁵ Henry P. Stapp, “Quantum Theory and the Physicist’s Conception of Nature: Philosophical Implications of Bell’s Theorem,” in *The World View of Contemporary Physics*, ed. Richard E. Kitchener (Albany, N.Y.: S.UNY. Press, 1988), p. 40; quoted in Robert Nadeau and Menas Kafatos, *The Non-local Universe: The New Physics and Matters of the Mind*, Oxford, England, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 196.

¹⁶⁶ Ray Kurzweil, *The Age of Spiritual Machines: When Computers Exceed Human Intelligence*, p. 63.

¹⁶⁷ R. Buckminster Fuller and Kiyoshi Kuromiya, *Critical Path*, New York, St. Martin’s Press, 1981, pp. 217-18.

¹⁶⁸ R. Buckminster Fuller, “No More Secondhand God,” from *No More Secondhand God and Other Writings*, Carbondale, Illinois, Southern Illinois University Press, 1963, p. 28.

¹⁶⁹ Leonard Cohen, *Beautiful Losers*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1966, pp. 167-68.

¹⁷⁰ Jerry Rubin, *We Are Everywhere*, New York, Harper and Row, 1971, p. 241.

¹⁷¹ American Gaming Industry: http://www.americangaming.org/Industry/factsheets/statistics_detail.cfv?id=7; Casino City directory: <http://www.casinocity.com/casinos>

¹⁷² Nadeau and Kafatos, p. vii.

¹⁷³ Wolfram, p. 969.

¹⁷⁴ Jon Elster, “Taming Chance: Randomization in Individual and Social Decisions,” *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, Volume IX, Grethe B. Peterson, ed., Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press/Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 179.

¹⁷⁵ Dasam Granth, p. 57.

¹⁷⁶ Shabd Guru, p. 1000.

¹⁷⁷ Shabd Guru, pp. 362-63.

¹⁷⁸ Shabd Guru, p. 1193. This appears to be the *bukam* cited by Arjan Dass Malik on page 40 of *An Indian Guerilla War*. He gives *Panth Prakash*, pp. 211-216, as the source of his account of the election of Nawab Kapur Singh.

¹⁷⁹ Shabd Guru, p. 638.

¹⁸⁰ Shabd Guru, p. 211. Raja yoga is the path of royalty and detachment, majesty and humility - living masterfully in, but not of, the world.

The Good of All

¹⁸¹ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ ਤਾਂ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ॥, Shabd Guru, p. 356.

¹⁸² Shabd Guru, p. 722.

¹⁸³ Shabd Guru, p. 141

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ The extreme position sometimes taken by Muslim authorities is illustrated by a fourteenth century account in which the Emperor Ala-ud-din, who reigned 1296-1316, asks a respected religious scholar and priest about the position of the Hindus in a Muslim state. Qazi Mughis-ud-din of Bayana replies: “They are called *Khirajquzars* (payers of tribute), and when the

revenue officer demands silver from them, they should without question and with all humility and respect, tender gold. If the *Mubassil* (tax-collector) chooses to spit into the mouth of a Hindu, the latter must open his mouth without hesitation. The meaning of doing such a thing is that the Hindu by acting in this wise shows his meekness and humility and obedience and respect. The glorification of Islam is a duty, and contempt of the religion in vain. God himself has commanded their complete degradation, in as much as the Hindus are the deadliest foes of the Prophet. The Prophet has said that they should either embrace Islam or they should be slain or enslaved, and their property confiscated to the state. No one except the great doctor Abu Hanifa allows the imposition of the *jizya* (religious tax) upon the Hindus, while other schools are of opinion that there is no alternative but “Death or Islam.” [Barani, *Tarikh-I-Firuz Shahi*, Bibliotheca Indica, p. 290, cited in Sir Henry M. Elliot, *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians: The Muhammedan Period, 8 Volumes*, London, Truebner and Co., 1871, (reprinted: New York, AMS Press, 1966) III:184] This extreme position is sometimes justified by citing the Quran: “Fight those from among the People of the Book who believe not in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor hold as unlawful that which Allah and His Messenger have declared to be unlawful nor follow the true religion, and who have not yet made peace with you, until they pay the tax willingly and make their submission.” [Al-Tauba 9:29, *The Quran*, trans. Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, p. 176]

¹⁸⁶ Shabd Guru, p. 1191.

¹⁸⁷ In two famous cases where popular saints challenged the brahmins’ spiritual authority, the brahmins turned the Muslim authorities against the “troublemakers.” The saints were Kabir of Benares and Bengal’s Chaitanya.

¹⁸⁸ Shabd Guru, pp. 471-72.

¹⁸⁹ Shabd Guru, pp. 951-52.

¹⁹⁰ Shabd Guru, p. 1411.

¹⁹¹ Shabd Guru, p. 783.

¹⁹² Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs, Volume I: The Sikh Gurus, 1469-1708*, New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1984, pp. 148-49.

¹⁹³ MacAuliffe, Max Arthur, *The Sikh Religion – Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors*, New Delhi, S. Chand and Company, 1978, 3:84-85, 3:90-91.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁹⁸ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs, Volume I: The Sikh Gurus, 1469-1708*, New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1984, pp. 160-161

¹⁹⁹ Shabd Guru, p. 1119

²⁰⁰ MacAuliffe, IV, p. 227.

²⁰¹ *ibid.*, p. 279.

²⁰² Dasam Granth, p. 54.

²⁰³ MacAuliffe, V:202-04.

²⁰⁴ Dasam Granth, p. 19.

²⁰⁵ Iran and Afghanistan at the time were one country.

²⁰⁶ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, Calcutta, The Sikh Cultural Centre, 1959, pp. 62-63; Gupta, Hari Ram, *A History of the Sikhs From Nadir Shah’s Invasion to the Rise of Ranjeet Singh, Volume I: Evolution of the Sikh Confederacies (1739-1768)*, Simla, India, Minerva Book Shop, 1952, pp. 288-90.

²⁰⁷ M.K. Gandhi (no relation to Prime Ministers Indira and Rajiv Gandhi) and the Sikhs had a motley history extending some 30 years. Despite some acrimony and misunderstanding, it appears each party derived a measure of inspiration from the other. While Gandhi first adopted the concept and the term *satyagraha*, in South Africa in 1906 as a means of opposing the racist policies of the colonial government there, and then applied it again in India, first in 1917, it was the Sikhs who perfected it in practice. While Gandhi was forced to call off his *satyagraha* campaigns in 1919, 1921 and 1922, and to confess to “Himalayan errors of judgement” when the mass efforts turned violent, disciplined cadres of Sikhs began in 1920 to peacefully liberate Gurdwaras and participate in India’s freedom struggle almost without a hitch. (That hitch was

at Bhai Pheru Gurdwara where - 6,372 persons already having been arrested and detained - an attempt to free the historic temple from corrupt and pro-British management was called off in September 1925 due to an unspecified “unsavory incident.”) The Sikh *satyagraha* campaign to free their main Gurdwaras, which captured the nation’s imagination and gained international coverage, was paid for dearly by the thousands of volunteers who engaged the British and their ruthless security forces. In all, forty thousand served time in jail and four hundred died from injuries sustained in various marches and demonstrations. After winning back their Gurdwaras, Sikhs bravely contributed to India’s independence movement out of all proportion of their numbers. Many hundreds were jailed, transported to hellish penal colonies, or hanged for their patriotic efforts.

It is also worth knowing that many elements of Gandhi’s program of noncooperation with the British, which he presented first at the India National Congress session of 1920 had already been in practice since the 1860s among the followers of Baba Ram Singh, a charismatic Sikh. These practices included making and wearing homespun cotton cloth, as well as boycotting British goods, schools, law courts and the post office.

Gandhi, for his part, visited the sites of the massacres at Jallianwala Bagh and Nanakana Sahib, where he offered his moral support. Gandhi also attended the first meeting of the Central Sikh League in December 1919. The League supported nonviolent means of realizing political autonomy for the country, as well as developing the spiritual, political and economic strength of the Sikh community. The Central Sikh League was established as a dynamic alternative to the Chief Khalsa Diwan, which was seen as serving mainly British interests.

Gandhi lost the sympathy of many Sikhs by his stated ignorance of their traditions. He proclaimed that Sikhs were really Hindus and that their Guru Gobind Singh was actually a “misguided patriot.” The extent of Gandhi’s religious chauvinism expressed itself most lucidly in a statement made in his last year of life: “It cannot be said that Sikhism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism are separate religions. All these four faiths and their offshoots are one. Hinduism is an ocean into which all the rivers run. It can absorb Islam and Christianity and all other religions and only then can it become the ocean.” [Mohindas Karamchand Gandhi, *Collected Works*, Delhi, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1958-c80, 90:177]

As damaging to Gandhi’s relations with Sikhs were his pleas that they should trust the Indian National Congress party to deliver their rights in a free India. In 1929, Gandhi’s Congress Party went so far as to resolve that any constitution of an independent India would take into account the needs of all its religious minorities (Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Jain, Zoroastrian, Buddhist). Twenty years later, that constitution recognized the existence of only the two dominant groups - Hindus and Muslims. Sikh representatives refused to sign it. In the 1950s, Sikhs had to start their own *satyagraha* to wrest their rights from the Congress government ensconced in New Delhi. M.K. Gandhi’s role in thwarting the Sikh people’s struggle to realize their full potential within India remains a significant point of contention.

²⁰⁸ The Sikh contribution to the India freedom movement reflected a passion for liberation that defied personal consequences and was all out of proportion to the actual size of the Sikh community. Baba Kharak Singh, the acclaimed leader of the Sikh contribution to the movement declared in 1929 that of the thirty-one patriots sentenced to be hung for their activities, twenty-seven were Sikhs. Of the 121 given long terms of imprisonment, 91 were also Sikh. [Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, Delhi, Manohar Publications, 1994, p. 261]

²⁰⁹ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 249.

²¹⁰ Michael Brecher, *Nebru: A Political Biography*, London, Oxford University Press, 1959, p. 486.

²¹¹ Ibid, p. 330.

²¹² Ibid, pp. 331-32.

²¹³ Gurmit Singh, *A History of Sikh Struggles*, New Delhi, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 1991, 2:39.

²¹⁴ Yogi Bhajan, *The Teachings of Yogi Bhajan*, New York, Hawthorne Books, 1977, p. 29.

²¹⁵ R. Buckminster Fuller, from the text of his November 27-28 1976 talks at the Symposium on Humanity, Vancouver, *New Directions*, 22:29-30.

²¹⁶ Yogi Bhajan, from the text of his November 27-28 1976 talks at the Symposium on Humanity, Vancouver, *ibid*, pp. 10, 12, 28, 30.

²¹⁷ Regina Caeli of 10 June: “For peace in Punjab,” *L’Osservatore Romano*, June 18, 1984, p. 2.

²¹⁸ Yogi Bhajan’s effusive spirit left his mortal body as this text was being edited on October 6, 2004.

²¹⁹ Subcomandante Marcos, *Our Word is our Weapon: Selected Writings*, ed. Juana Ponce de Leon, New York, Seven Stories Press, 2001, p. 17.

²²⁰ *La Jornada*, May 5, 1995, quoted by Bill Weinberg in *Homage to Chiapas: The New Indigenous Struggles in Mexico*, London/New York, Verso, 2000, p. 201.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² John Taylor Gatto, *The Underground History of Education: A Schoolteacher's Intimate Investigation Into The Problem Of Modern Schooling*, New York, Oxford Village Press, 2000, pp. xxxv-xxxvi.

²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 90. Gatto does not annotate this passage, but it is similar to two passages I have found in Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2000. The most exact approximation I found is his commentary in the chapter "What Kind of Despotism Democratic Nations Have To Fear," on p. 665. A similarly compelling passage is located on p. 86 of the section subtitled "On The Political Effects Of Administrative Decentralization In The United States."

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 329.

²²⁶ Kim Dae Jung, *Prison Writings*, Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 1987, p. 6.

²²⁷ www.crashingtheparty.org/bio.html

²²⁸ Ralph Nader, *The Ralph Nader Reader*, New York, Seven Stories Press, 2000, pp. 351-54.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²³² Michael Moore, *Stupid White Men and Other Sorry Excuses for the State of the Nation*, New York, ReganBooks/HarperCollinsPublishers, 2001, p. 212.

²³³ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

²³⁴ Anita Roddick, *Business As Unusual: The Triumph of Anita Roddick*, London, Thorsons/HarperCollinsPublishers, 2000, p. 174.

²³⁵ Anita Roddick, *Take It Personally: How To Make Conscious Choices to Change the World*, Berkeley, California: Conari Press, 2001, p. 13.

²³⁶ www.anitaroddick.com

²³⁷ Anita Roddick, *Body and Soul: The Inspiring and Provocative Story of One of the World's Most Successful Businesswomen*, London, Ebury Press, 1991, p. 226.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²³⁹ Anita Roddick passed away just as this work was being readied for printing. She had contracted hepatitis C in 1971 after a massive blood transfusion. This was in the days before blood screening in the UK. This had led to cirrhosis of the liver.

In the outpouring of tributes, I have just found the web-site for the organization she founded to help orphans from Romania and now elsewhere. It is: <http://www.childrenontheedge.org>. Her motto on the site is: "Pray for the dead and work like hell for those that are living."

I will conclude with a longer quote that gives you something of the spirit of this great soul and her work: "The original Body Shop was a series of brilliant accidents. It had a great smell. It had a funky name. It was positioned between two funeral parlours – that always caused controversy. It was incredibly sensuous. It was 1976, the year of the heatwave, so there was a lot of flesh around. We knew about storytelling then, so all the products had stories. We recycled everything, not because we were environmentally friendly, but because we didn't have enough bottles. It was a good idea. What was unique about it with no intent at all, no marketing nous, was that it translated across cultures, across geographical barriers and social structures. It wasn't a sophisticated plan. It just happened like that."

²⁴⁰ Arundhati Roy, *The Cost of Living*, New York, Random House, 1999, pp. 95-96.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

²⁴² AFP, "Booker Prize-winning author released from jail," *South Asia Insider*, 8-14 March 2002: P8.

²⁴³ David Barsamian, *The Checkbook and the Cruise Missile: Conversations with Arundhati Roy*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, South End Press, 2004, p. 96.

- ²⁴⁴ Arundhati Roy, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*, London, Flamingo/HarperCollinsPublishers, 2002, p. 191.
- ²⁴⁵ Arundhati Roy, *War Talk*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, South End Press, 2003, pp. 72-73.
- ²⁴⁶ Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*, New York, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1999, p. 373. (quoted in Roy, *War Talk*, p. 69)
- ²⁴⁷ Roy, *War Talk*, p. 48.
- ²⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 51.
- ²⁴⁹ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., *Beyond Vietnam: Address Delivered to the Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam, at Riverside Church*, New York City, April 4, 1967, http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/publications/speeches/Beyond_Vietnam.pdf
- ²⁵⁰ Arundhati Roy, *Instant-Mix Imperial Democracy (Buy One, Get One Free)*, Presented in New York City at the Riverside Church, May 13, 2003, <http://cesr.org/arundhatiroytranscript>.
- ²⁵¹ Martin Luther King Jr., *Beyond Vietnam*
- ²⁵² Roy, *War Talk*, p. 75.
- ²⁵³ Jean-Christophe Rufin, *Doctors Without Borders: The Right to Intervene*, www.coraventis.com/future/downloads/PDF/fut0201/En_1_2002_doctors_without_borders.pdf, p. 49.
- ²⁵⁴ Elliott Leyton, *Touched By Fire: Doctors Without Borders in a Third World Crisis*, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1998, pp. 159-60.
- ²⁵⁵ www.grameen-info.org/agrameen/profile
- ²⁵⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁵⁷ Michele M. Motowski, "Susan Faludi," *Contemporary Authors*, Detroit, Gage Research, 1993, 138:151.
- ²⁵⁸ Susan Faludi, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*, New York, William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1999, p. 602.
- ²⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 608.
- ²⁶⁰ According to US Justice Department lawyer Frank Marine, involved in a \$280 billion dollar racketeering case against the tobacco industry that opened in September 2004, it should come as no surprise that the Brown and Williamson lab did no research of any significance. Evidence points to a secret conspiracy hatched among the tobacco giants in 1953 to spend hundreds of millions of dollars funding bogus research to dupe the public about the effects of smoking. [Barrie McKenna, Government suit could ruin tobacco giants," *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, September 22, 2004, p. B11.]
- ²⁶¹ Peter Pringle, *Cornered: Big Tobacco at the Bar of Justice*, New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1998, p. 193.
- ²⁶² Ibid, p. 190.
- ²⁶³ Carrick Mollencamp, Adam Levy, Joseph Menn, Jeffrey Rothfeder, *The People vs. Big Tobacco*, Princeton, Bloomberg Press, 1998, p. 115.
- ²⁶⁴ Pringle, p. 315.
- ²⁶⁵ Aida Fleming of Fredericton, New Brunswick started the Kindness Club in 1959 to educate children to practice kindness with animals and people, and to respect the environment. (www.kindnessclub.nb.ca)
- ²⁶⁶ Paul Watson, *Ocean Warrior: My Battle to End the Illegal Slaughter on the High Seas*, Toronto, Key Porter Books Limited, 1994, p. 82.
- ²⁶⁷ <http://futurepositive.synearth.net/2002/05/26>
- ²⁶⁸ Bridget Bardot, "Bardot face aux Tueurs", *Paris Match*, April 1, 1977, issue 1453, pp. 65-69.
- ²⁶⁹ Watson, *Ocean Warrior*, p. 24.
- ²⁷⁰ David B. Morris, *Earth Warrior: Overboard with Paul Watson and the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society*, Golden, Colorado, Fulcrum Publishing, 1995, p. 184.
- ²⁷¹ Tad Szulc, *Pope John Paul II*, New York, Scribner, 1995, p. 112.
- ²⁷² Chris Corbally, S. J., "History of the Vatican Observatory and Its Castel Gandolfo Headquarters," www.clavius.as.arizona.edu/vo/history.html
- ²⁷³ Szulc, p. 451.

- ²⁷⁴ Paul McKenna, "John Paul II: Interfaith Giant," *Scarboro Missions*, January-February 2000, p. 8.
- ²⁷⁵ John Borelli, "John Paul II and Interreligious Dialogue," *New Catholic Encyclopedia: Jubilee Volume – The Wojtyla Years*, The Gale Group in association with The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., 2001, p. 87.
- ²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷⁷ Pope John Paul II, *The Spirit, Giver of Life and Love: A Catechesis on The Creed*, Boston, Pauline Books and Media, 1996, p. 153; original Italian: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, XIII:I, Vatican City, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1992, pp. 9-14.
- ²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-50.
- ²⁷⁹ quoted in: Francis Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*, New York, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2002, p. 161.
- ²⁸⁰ Nancy Reagan, *My Turn: The Memoirs of Nancy Reagan*, New York, Random House, 1989, p. 355.
- ²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 363.
- ²⁸² Peter R. Breggin, *Toxic Psychiatry: Why Therapy, Empathy, and Love Must Replace the Drugs, Electroshock, and Biochemical Theories of the "New Psychiatry"*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1991, pp. 4-5.
- ²⁸³ Edward Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry: From the Era of the Asylum to the Age of Prozac*, New York, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1997, p. 255.
- ²⁸⁴ Dr. David Healy, a founding historian of psychopharmacology, also observes that the view that "(B)efore chlorpromazine...the management of psychoses was not scientific, whereas afterwards it was...needs to be challenged." "For the most part, modern psychiatry is sold as a success story based on apparently good responses to treatments for its supposedly core disorders: manic-depressive illness and schizophrenia. But in fact the success rates in these conditions are much less impressive than they are commonly portrayed to be, with a greater number of bed days spent by a patient now and a greater number of detentions than in the pre-psychopharmacological era." "The strange and complex syndromes that we call manic-depressive disorder, schizophrenia, and multiple personality disorder are poorly understood and are likely to remain a puzzle for decades to come." [David Healy, *The Creation of Psychopharmacology*, Cambridge, Massachusetts/London, England, Harvard University Press, pp. 43, 388, 341]
- ²⁸⁵ Peter R. Breggin and David Cohen, *Your Drug May Be Your Problem: How and Why to Stop Taking Psychiatric Medications*, Perseus Books, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1999, p. 3.
- ²⁸⁶ Brendan I. Koerner, "Disorders, Made to Order," *Mother Jones*, August 2002, p. 62.
- ²⁸⁷ Shorter, p. 303.
- ²⁸⁸ "Peter Breggin," *Contemporary Authors*, Detroit, The Gale Group, 2001, 92:37.
- ²⁸⁹ Breggin and Cohen, p. 194.
- ²⁹⁰ Not only young people are being medicated into compliance. Hundreds of thousands of America's elderly are also daily subjected to a relentless reign of pharmaceutical control. A recent study found that fully half of all residents of Massachusetts nursing homes were being prescribed sleeping pills, antipsychotics, tranquilizers and mood-altering drugs. A trial program to educate doctors and nurses about the proper use of psychoactive drugs among the elders in their care saw a significant drop in their use. The residents did not start "bouncing off the walls" without their pills as some had anticipated. Neither was there an increase in stress levels among staff. Instead, 70% of those whose medication had been significantly reduced found they sharpened or at least retained their precious memory. [Henry Avorn, *Powerful Medicines: The Risks, Benefits, and Costs of Prescription Drugs*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2004, pp. 328-333]
- ²⁹¹ Dr. Healy observes, "Within days of suggestions surfacing that one of the teenagers had an antidepressant in his bloodstream, the APA (American Psychiatric Association) website carried a statement from the association's president, Rodrigo Munoz: 'Despite a decade of research, there is little valid evidence to prove a causal relationship between the use of anti-depressant medications and destructive behavior. On the other hand, their [sic] is ample evidence that undiagnosed and untreated mental illness exacts a heavy toll on those who suffer from those disorders as well as those around them.' All that was missing was a 'diagnosis' for the critics of the new establishment." [Healy, pp. 330-31]
- ²⁹² Peter R. Breggin, *Reclaiming Our Children: A Healing Plan For A Nation in Crisis*, Perseus Books, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1999, p. 3.
- ²⁹³ These grave side effects are made the more ominous by the big drug companies' attitude. According to Dr. Healy: "Far from recommending that pharmaceutical companies investigate drug-induced suicidality, their lawyers may have given

them advice that echoes that given to tobacco companies: that any investigation of these issues may increase claims of product liability.” [Healy, p. 374] A recent study by the Center for the Evaluation of Risks to Human Reproduction added the growing concern that Prozac passes through the placenta and through breast milk into newborns. Prozac babies have observably shorter gestations at reduced birth weights at term. [NTP-CERHR Expert Panel Report on the Reproductive and Developmental Toxicity of Fluoxetine, April 2004, http://cerhr.niehs.nih.gov/news/fluoxetine/fluoxetine_final.pdf]

²⁹⁴ “Minister of the Month,” wysiwyg://184/http://www.geocities.com/ministers_newsletter/October.htm

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

Human by Design

²⁹⁶ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ, Shabd Guru, p. 1.

²⁹⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 885.

²⁹⁸ MacAuliffe, Max Arthur, *The Sikh Religion – Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors*, New Delhi, S. Chand and Company, 1978, I:58.

²⁹⁹ Shabd Guru, p. 174.

³⁰⁰ Shabd Guru, p. 6

³⁰¹ Shabd Guru, p. 567.

³⁰² While Roman Catholic practice early on disavowed the integrity of the whole man with his Christ-like complement of natural long hair and beard, it otherwise seemed to intend the human form be recognized as sacrosanct. For hundreds of years, even as the church required its priests be shorn and shaven, it insisted no male missing any other body part, even a finger, could be consecrated as one. This tradition was first codified in 1910, but then dispensed with in the 1983 Code of Canon Law. [Charles Panati, *Panati's Extraordinary Endings of Practically Everything and Everybody*, New York, Harper and Row, Publishers, 1989, p. 291; John J. Wynne, S.J., “Irregularity” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. Charles G. Herbermann, Edward A. Pace, et al, New York, Robert Appleton and Company, 1910, 8:173.]

³⁰³ Jacob S. Lauterbach, *Studies In Jewish Law, Custom and Folklore*, n.p., Ktav Publishing House Incorporated, 1970, p. 226.

³⁰⁴ “Izanagi and Izanami”, *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, Tokyo, Kodansha Limited, 1983,3:364-365; “The Creation of Onogoro from the Ocean of Chaos,” painting by Eitaku Kobayashi in Robert G. Jahn and Brenda J. Dunne, *Margins of Reality: The Role of Consciousness in the Physical World*, San Diego, California, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Publishers, 1987, p. 339.

³⁰⁵ *The Laws of Manu*, trans. G. Buehler, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 1979, pp. 69-70.

³⁰⁶ Shabd Guru, pp. 25-26.

³⁰⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 2.

³⁰⁸ Shabd Guru, p. 1017.

³⁰⁹ Shabd Guru, p. 1159.

³¹⁰ The nine are the anus, the urinary orifice, mouth, two eyes, two nostrils and two ears.

³¹¹ Shabd Guru, p. 124.

³¹² Shabd Guru, p. 477.

³¹³ “Sitting meditating in the city of God, through the Guru’s Word, my spirit merged in the One.” Shabd Guru, p. 907.

³¹⁴ Shabd Guru, pp. 907-08.

³¹⁵ Shabd Guru, p. 663.

³¹⁶ Bhai Gurdas, Var 7, Verse 3; A similar reference may be found in the Shabd Guru at p. 974

³¹⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 1402.

³¹⁸ Shabd Guru, p. 441.

³¹⁹ Shabd Guru, p. 208.

³²⁰ Shabd Guru, p. 773.

³²¹ This was a time when ostentatious bathroom suites with hot and cold running water were built in several French and German royal palaces. Jews, whose religious obligations required them to take frequent baths, were also spared the effects of the prohibition on public bathing.

³²² Shabd Guru, p. 484.

³²³ Shabd Guru, p. 190.

³²⁴ Shabd Guru, p. 648. The “tower of silence” refers to the Zoroastrian practice of leaving the bodies of the dead on a high tower to be consumed by vultures.

³²⁵ Another Anglo-Saxon tradition was for criminals and suicides to be buried at a desolate crossroads. A stake would be driven through the heart of a suicide as a way of containing their vexed spirit. This treatment was recommended by a coroner as recently as 1784 for a woman who had poisoned a man she had been living with, then killed herself. Many of these crossroads eventually became overgrown with civic sprawl. The practice was abolished by an Act of Parliament in 1832. [Robert Halliday, “Criminal graves and rural crossroads,” *British Archaeology*, no. 25, June 1997, www.britarch.ac.uk/ba/ba25/ba25feat.html]

³²⁶ That cemetery is Forest Lawn Memorial Park. [Christine Quigley, *The Corpse: A History*, Jefferson, North Carolina/London, McFarland and Company, Inc., Publishers, 1996, p. 89]

³²⁷ ...as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. [Acts 1:9, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, New Testament p. 161.]

³²⁸ The Ahmadiyya movement, a schismatic sect of Islam, prescribes to this view. [Andreas Faber, *Jesus Died in Kashmir*, London, Gordon and Cremonesi, 1977, p. 98.]

³²⁹ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works in Fifty-Five Volumes*, ed. and trans. Theodore G. Tappert, general editor Helmu T. Lehman, Philadelphia, Concordia Publishing House/Fortress Press, 1967, 54:247.

³³⁰ Tom Weil, *The Cemetary Book: Graveyards, Catacombs and Other Travel Haunts around the World*, New York, Hippocrene Books, 1992, p. 253.

³³¹ *Ibid*, p. 90.

³³² Andrew Bernstein, Columbia University, “Fire and Earth: The Politics of Cremation in Early Meiji Japan,” www.aasianst.org/absts/1998abst/japan/j158.htm.

³³³ Brian Bocking, *A Popular Dictionary of Shinto*, Chicago, NTC Publishing Group, 1997, pp. 187-88.

³³⁴ Jonathan McDowell, “Jonathan’s Space Report No. 319”, *Spaceviews*, May 1997, www.seds.org/spaceviews/9705.

³³⁵ Christine Quigley, *The Corpse: A History*, Jefferson, North Carolina/London, McFarland and Company, Inc., Publishers, 1996, pp. 233-236; Andrew T. Chamberlain and Michael Parker Pearson, *Earthly Remains: The History and Science of Preserved Human Bodies*, London, The British Museum Press, 2001, pp. 176-178.

³³⁶ MacAuliffe, 5:246; Major Gurmukh Singh, “Nander,” in *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, third edition, editor in chief Harbans Singh, Patiala, Punjabi University Press, 1998, 3:191-94.

³³⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 12.

³³⁸ Shabd Guru, p. 8.

³³⁹ Medieval European law also commonly prescribed cutting off a woman’s nose for sexual offences. Christian and Jewish religious courts ordered the penalty for women who had sexual relations with an outsider – a Jew with a Gentile, a Saracen with a crusader. Men were typically castrated for such a transgression. Roger of Sicily (1031-1101) ordered that mothers who sold their daughters into prostitution should have their noses removed. [James Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe*, Chicago/London, The University of Chicago Press, 1987, p. 207; Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage, *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church*, Buffalo, New York, Prometheus Books, 1982, p. 182;]

³⁴⁰ *The Laws of Manu*, trans. G. Buehler, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 1979, pp. 275-76, 303-04, 446.

³⁴¹ The medieval writer Johannes Millaeus witnessed the torture of some persons at Toulouse from whom no confession could be wrung until they were stripped and completely shaven, upon which they readily acknowledged the truth of the charge against them. A woman who apparently led a pious life, was also put to torture on suspicion of witchcraft. According to Millaeus, she bore her agonies incredibly well until, under the humiliation of complete depilation, she too confessed to her guilt. The famed inquisitor Sprenger contented himself with shaving the head of the suspected witch or wizard; but his more thoroughgoing colleague Cumanus shaved the whole bodies of forty-seven women before

committing them all to the flames. (James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, 3rd edition, Part VII, Volume II, MacMillan and Co., London, 1913, pp. 158-159.)

³⁴² Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1982, p. 60.

³⁴³ John Briggs, Christopher Harrison, Angus McInnes, David Vincent, *Crime and Punishment in England: An Introductory History*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1996, p. 23; Andrew McCall, *The Medieval Underworld*, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1979, pp. 75-76.

³⁴⁴ Armando R. Favazza, M.D. with Barbara Favazza, M.D., *Bodies Under Siege: Self-mutilation in Culture and Psychiatry*, Baltimore/London, The John Hopkins University Press, 1987, p. 127.

³⁴⁵ Alice Morse Earle, *Curious Punishments of Bygone Days*, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Rutland Vermont, 1975, p. 141.

³⁴⁶ Peter Abélard was about 36 and a well-known scholar when he took Heloise, aged 17 and the niece of Canon Fulbert of the cathedral of Paris, into his private tutelage. They fell in love, married secretly, and had a son. To escape her uncle's wrath, Heloise withdrew into a convent. At Fulbert's instigation, a gang of ruffians attacked and castrated Abélard. In shame, the scholar embraced the monastic life. Héloïse reluctantly become a nun. The pair resumed their collaboration and published their love letters when Héloïse became the head of a new order of nuns, the Paracletes, and Abélard was made their abbot.

³⁴⁷ James Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe*, Chicago/London, The University of Chicago Press, 1987, p. 207.

³⁴⁸ Panati, pp. 293-94.

³⁴⁹ Stephen Trombley, *The Right To Reproduce: A History of Coercive Sterilization*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988, p. 49.

³⁵⁰ Armando R. Favazza, M.D. with Barbara Favazza, M.D., *Bodies Under Siege: Self-mutilation in Culture and Psychiatry*, Baltimore/London, The John Hopkins University Press, 1987, 146; Gunnar Broberg and Nils Roll-Hansen, eds., *Eugenics and the Welfare State*, East Lansing, Michigan State University, 1995, pp. 242, 263.

³⁵¹ Panati, pp. 300-01.

³⁵² Armando R. Favazza, M.D. with Barbara Favazza, M.D., *Bodies Under Siege: Self-mutilation in Culture and Psychiatry*, Baltimore/London, The John Hopkins University Press, 1987, p. 150.

³⁵³ Ibid, pp. 150-51.

³⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 151.

³⁵⁵ Stephen Trombley, *The Right To Reproduce: A History of Coercive Sterilization*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988, pp. 49-50.

³⁵⁶ Stephen Trombley, *The Right To Reproduce: A History of Coercive Sterilization*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988, pp. 50-51.

³⁵⁷ The Alberta law was repealed in 1972 as it was found to violate fundamental human rights. A similar law in British Columbia, the only other Canadian jurisdiction to have such legislation, was revoked in 1979.

³⁵⁸ Stephan Kuehl, *The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism and German National Socialism*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 38.

³⁵⁹ Stephen Trombley, *The Right To Reproduce: A History of Coercive Sterilization*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988, p. 114.

³⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 113.

³⁶¹ Ibid, pp. 152-57.

³⁶² Ibid, p. 218.

³⁶³ Ibid, pp. 218-222.

³⁶⁴ Germaine Greer, *Sex and Destiny: The Politics of Human Fertility*, Toronto, Stoddart Publishing, 1984, p. 369.

³⁶⁵ John A. Ross, abstract, "Sterilization: Past, Present, Future," New York, The Population Council, Research Division, Working Papers 1991 No. 29, p. 8.

³⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 2.

- ³⁶⁷ Trombley, pp. 159, 171; Gunnar Broberg and Matias Tyden, "Eugenics in Sweden: Efficient Care," in Gunnar Broberg and Nils Roll-Hansen, eds., *Eugenics and the Welfare State: Sterilization Policy in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland*, East Lansing, Michigan State University, 1995, p. 117.
- ³⁶⁸ Trombley, pp. 175-217.
- ³⁶⁹ Brundage, p. 65.
- ³⁷⁰ Ibid, pp. 64, 82-85.
- ³⁷¹ Ute Ranke-Heinemann, *Eunuchs for Heaven: The Catholic Church and Sexuality*, trans. John Brownjohn, London, André Deutsch, 1990, pp. 35-39.
- ³⁷² *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, eds., New Testament p. 28.
- ³⁷³ *Eunuchs for Heaven*, p. 86.
- ³⁷⁴ Ibid, pp. 152-63.
- ³⁷⁵ Laura Engelstein, *Castration and the Kingdom of Heaven: A Russian Folktale*, Ithaca/London, Cornell University Press, 1999, pp. 206-212.
- ³⁷⁶ 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, New Testament p. 245.
- ³⁷⁷ Ranke-Heinemann, p. 225.
- ³⁷⁸ According to *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*: "Although Saint Alphonsus Liguori (bishop of Naples, lived 1696-1787) records some conflicting opinions regarding the morality of the procedure for this purpose (of preserving the soprano voice for musical performances), the view that it was morally acceptable was never held by more than a few theologians. ["Castration," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967, 3:194]
- ³⁷⁹ J. Steven Svoboda, "The Limits of the Law: Comparative Analysis of Legal and Extralegal Methods to Control Child Body Mutilation Practices," in George C. Denniston, Frederick Mansfield Hodges and Marilyn Fayre Milos, eds., *Understanding Circumcision: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to a Multi-Dimensional Problem*, New York, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2000, pp. 328-29.
- ³⁸⁰ Ibid, p. v.
- ³⁸¹ Myung-Geol Pang, Sae Chul Kim and Dai Ski Kim, "Male Circumcision in South Korea: History, Statistics, and the Role of Doctors in Creating a Circumcision Rate of Over 100%," in George C. Denniston, Frederick Mansfield Hodges and Marilyn Fayre Milos, eds., *Understanding Circumcision: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to a Multi-Dimensional Problem*, New York, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2000, p. 66.
- ³⁸² Billy Ray Boyd gives the age of 5 years as the lower limit in his *Circumcision Exposed: Rethinking a Medical and Cultural Tradition: Rethinking a Medical and Cultural Tradition*, Freedom, California, The Crossing Press, 1998, p. 37; Armando R. Favazza, M.D. gives a wider age range for female genital operations: from 7 days to 11 years, with most are done between the ages of 6 and 10 years, in *Bodies Under Siege: Self-mutilation in Culture and Psychiatry*, p. 161.
- ³⁸³ David L. Gollahar, *Circumcision: A History of the World's Most Controversial Surgery*, New York, Basic Books/Perseus Books Group, 2000, p. 194-95.
- ³⁸⁴ Boyd, p. 40.
- ³⁸⁵ Favazza, p. 160. According to Al-Amin Dawood, pharaonic circumcision takes its name from the pharaonic period, about 1000 BCE, when it originated in Egypt.
- ³⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 162
- ³⁸⁷ Abu Bakr Abdu'r-Razzaq, *Circumcision in Islam*, London, Dar Al Taqwa, 1998, p. 34.
- ³⁸⁸ Boyd, p. 42.
- ³⁸⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁹⁰ Genesis 17: 9-14, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, Old Testament p. 21.
- ³⁹¹ Favazza, p. 157.
- ³⁹² Moses Mainmonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. M. Friedlaender, London, George Routledge and Sons Ltd., 1919, p. 378 [Part 3, Chapter 49].

³⁹³ Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commandments of God is everything. [1 Corinthians, 7:18-19, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, New Testament p. 236.]

³⁹⁴ Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh! For it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh – even though I, too, have reason for confidence in flesh. [Philippians 3, 2-4, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, New Testament p. 282.]

³⁹⁵ Gollahar, pp. 51-52. The strength of orthodox Muslim feeling in regard to male and female circumcision may be judged from the following passage from a widely esteemed authority, Ibn a-Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292-1350):

Circumcision (also) entails purification, cleanliness, adornment, improving nature, and reducing lust which, if not kept under control, reduces people to the condition of animals... That is why someone may be cursed and verbally abused for being the son of an uncircumcised woman, alluding to her lust. What beautification is better than reducing what is so too long and excessive in the form of the foreskin, pubic hair, the hair of the mustache and long nails? *Shaytan* (Satan) conceals himself under all these things, is at home with them, and lives in them. He blows into the outer opening of the urethra of uncircumcised men and the vagina of uncircumcised women, which he is unable to do when they are circumcised. He conceals himself in the pubic hair and under the nails. The foreskin is uglier than long nails, a long mustache and long unkempt hair. Anyone with a sound awareness will see that the foreskin is ugly and that removing it is a factor for improvement, cleanliness and beautification. [Abdu'r-Razzaq, Abu Bakr, *Circumcision in Islam*, London, Dar Al Taqwa, 1998, p. 96]

³⁹⁶ James Hasting, ed., "Circumcision," *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Edinburgh, T and T Clark, 1971, p. 660. Franz Kruger, "When rites of passage go wrong; South African boys are dying as a tradition of initiation falls prey to unscrupulous operators," *Dispatches*, CBC Radio, July 23, 2003.

³⁹⁷ Boyd, p. 19.

³⁹⁸ Ibid, pp. 45-47.

³⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 53.

⁴⁰⁰ Richard F. Weir, Ph.D., Craig W. Heckathorne, M.S., Dudley S. Childress, Ph.D., "Cineplasty as a control input for externally powered prosthetic components," *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*, Vol. 38, No. 4, July/August 2001, pp. 357-63.

⁴⁰¹ New Scientist, 12 March 2003, "World's first brain prosthesis," www.newscientist.com/news/newsijsp?id=ns9993488.

⁴⁰² www.cbsnews.com/stories/1998/03/02/deleted/main3970.shtml.

⁴⁰³ Judith Gunn Bronson, "Banking on Safety and Expediency: As the uses for recovered tissue grow, tissue banks are responding by offering a broad variety of allograft products" www.orthopedictechreview.com/issues/feb00/pg28.htm; "The History of Xenotransplantation" <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/425120.stm>, .

⁴⁰⁴ Margaret Lock, *Twice Dead: Organ Transplants and the Reinvention of Death*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2002, p. 3.

⁴⁰⁵ The antithesis to this general attitude is found among the criminal underworld, where the full-body tattooing is a decorative form of identification and the severing of fingers is a routine form of discipline. This clash of two cultures in Japan explains the fact that most Japanese pools and gyms exclude anyone with a tattoo of any kind. It also creates a burgeoning prosthetic market for *yakuza* wishing to leave the criminal world and achieve acceptance in Japanese society. [Charles Bodsworth, "Japan's mafia members seek 'respect'", BBC News – World Edition, May 17, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3722051.stm>.]

⁴⁰⁶ Lock, p. 298

⁴⁰⁷ BBC News, Sunday, 22 September 2002, "Blast victim's final gift," news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/2274298.stm; The Telegraph, Calcutta, India, Monday, 23 September, 2002 (Reuters), Maia Ridberg, "In death, Jew gifts 'foe' life," www.telegraphindia.com/1020923/asp/foreign/story_1225758.as.

⁴⁰⁸ Barbara Carton, "To make Gillette bristle, ask about the razor's edge," *The Globe and Mail*, August 10, 1996, p. D5.

⁴⁰⁹ Bill Severn, *The Long and Short of It: 5000 Years of Fun and Fury Over Hair*, David McKay Company Incorporated, New York, 1971, p. 24.

⁴¹⁰ Epictetus, *Discourses, Book One*, trans. Robert F. Dobbin, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998, chapter 16, verses 10-14, p. 33.

⁴¹¹ Adolf Erman, *A Handbook of Egyptian Religion*, Archibald Constable and Company, London, 1907, pp. 181, 223; “Hair”, James Hastings and John A. Selbie, eds., *A Dictionary of the Bible*, New York, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1901, p. 283; “Hair”, Sir William Smith and Reverend J.M. Fuller, eds., *A Dictionary of the Bible*, London, John Murphy Limited, 1893, p. 1266.

⁴¹² *The Talmud—The Steinsaltz Edition, Volume V – Tractate Bava Metzja, Part V*, New York, Random House, 1992, p. 121.

⁴¹³ These are the vestments that they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a checkered tunic, a turban, and a sash. When they make these sacred vestments for your brother Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests, they shall use gold, blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and fine linen... You shall make the checkered tunic of fine linen, and you shall make a turban of fine linen, and you shall make a sash embroidered with needlework. For Aaron’s sons you shall make tunics and sashes and headaddresses; you shall make them for their glorious adornment. You shall put them on your brother Aaron, and on his sons with him, and shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, so that they may serve me as priests. You shall make for them linen undergarments to cover their naked flesh; they shall reach from the hips to the thighs; [Exodus 28:4-5, 39-42, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, Old Testament pp. 106-07.]

⁴¹⁴ You shall not round off the hair on your temples nor mar the edges of your beard. [Leviticus 19:27, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Old Testament p. 150.]

⁴¹⁵ *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, New York, Funk and Wagnalls, 1904, IX:195-97.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid*, VI:158.

⁴¹⁷ Robert Schilling, “Vesta”, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Mircea Eliade, editor in chief, New York, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987, 15:250-252.

⁴¹⁸ Any man who prays or prophesies with something on his head disgraces his head, but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head – it is one and the same thing as having her head shaved. For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, she should wear a veil. For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and reflection of God; but woman is the reflection of man. Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man. For this reason a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman. For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God. Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head unveiled? Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. But if anyone is disposed to be contentious – we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God. [1 Corinthians 11: 4-16, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, New Testament p. 241.]

⁴¹⁹ Henri Leclercq, “Hair”, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1910, 7:113.

⁴²⁰ The title “Caesar,” and its derivatives “kaiser” and “czar,” ironically seem to come from the Sanskrit *kesar*, meaning “hair,” specifically the mane of the regal lion.

⁴²¹ John Lubbock, *The Origin of Civilization and the Primitive Condition of Man*, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1886, p. 474.

⁴²² Charles Mackay, *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds* [1841], Harmony Books/Crown Publishers, New York, 1980, p. 347.

⁴²³ Leclercq, op cit.

⁴²⁴ Mackay, p. 351.

⁴²⁵ Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Complete Poetry and Prose of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. John H. Fisher, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1989, p. 725.

⁴²⁶ Bishop Victor L. Brown, “Following the Living Prophet,” *Ensign*, May 1977, p. 37.

⁴²⁷ Raymond Firth, *Symbols, Private and Public*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1973, p. 268.

⁴²⁸ Abba Goold Woolson, *Woman in American Society*, Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1873, pp. 138-39.

⁴²⁹ Allan Peterkin, *One Thousand Beards*, Vancouver, B.C., Arsenal Pulp Press, 2001, p. 88.

- ⁴³⁰ Thomas Patrick Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam*, W.H. Allen and Company, London, 1935, p. 129.
- ⁴³¹ Marwan Ibrahim Al-Kaysi, *Morals and Manners in Islam*. Leicester, England: The Islamic Foundation, 1989, pp. 70-71.
- ⁴³² Marzena, *Hair Removal Through the Ages*, www.depilatory.com/ages.html.
- ⁴³³ Weikung Cheng, "Politics of the Queue: Agitation and Resistance in the Beginning and End of Qing China," in Alf Hittelbeitel and Barbara D. Miller, eds., *Hair: Its Power and Meaning in Asian Cultures*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1998, p. 127.
- ⁴³⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴³⁵ "Hairstyle", *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, Tokyo, Kodansha Limited, 1983, 3:82-83.
- ⁴³⁶ Edwin Oldfather Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*, New York, Roland Press Company, 1957, p. 227.
- ⁴³⁷ Lyrics from *Hair*, the "American Tribal Love-Rock musical", by Gerome Ragni and James Rado, 1967, EMI Music.
- ⁴³⁸ Jerry Rubin, *Do It!* Simon and Schuster, New York, 1970, pp. 93-97.
- ⁴³⁹ Timothy White, *Catch a Fire: The Life of Bob Marley*, New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1991, pp. 12, 224-225.
- ⁴⁴⁰ *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Bruce M. Metzger and Roland E. Murphy, Old Testament p. 173.
- ⁴⁴¹ Alice Walker, "Oppressed Hair Puts a Ceiling on the Brain," *Living by the Word: Selected Writings 1973-1987 by Alice Walker*, Orlando, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988, pp. 71, 73-74.
- ⁴⁴² Robert Bly, *Iron John: A Book About Men*, New York, Vintage Books/Random House, Inc., 1990/92, p. 6.
- ⁴⁴³ Ibid, p. 46.
- ⁴⁴⁴ According to Robert O. Becker, the pineal is the remnant of a "third eye" located on the top of the head in many primitive vertebrates. In humans today, the master gland is located in the centre of the brain. There, it produces a vital pharmacopoeia of chemicals to regulate the functioning of all the other glands in the body, including the workings of the brain. In a few surviving species, such as the lamprey eel, hagfish and certain lizards, the pineal registers the intensity of natural light so the animal can better alter its coloration to match its surroundings. [Robert O. Becker, M.D., *Cross Currents: The Promise of Electromedicine and the Perils of Electropollution*, Los Angeles, Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1990, p. 76.]
- ⁴⁴⁵ Yogi Bhanjan, *The Ancient Art of Self-Healing*, Dr. Siri Amir Singh Khalsa, D.C., ed., Eugene, Oregon, West Anandpur Publishers, 1982, p. 72; Yogi Bhanjan, PhD, with Gurucharan Singh Khalsa, PhD, *The Mind: Its Projections and Multiple Facets*, Espanola, New Mexico, Kundalini Research Institute, 1998, pp. 31, 46, 146; Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji (Yogi Bhanjan), "Personal Care," *Beads of Truth*, Volume III, Number 1, Summer 1991, p. 18.
- ⁴⁴⁶ David E. Kaplan and Alec Dubro, *Yakuza: Japan's Criminal Underworld*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003, pp. 14-15.
- ⁴⁴⁷ Outside the West, cosmetics have an ancient history. In China and Japan around 1500 BCE, rice powder was used to make faces pasty white. To complete the effect, eyebrows were shaved and plucked, and the teeth painted gold or black. Earlier still, in Egypt circa 4000 BCE, women used a green copper paste to shadow their features and painted their eyebrows with a mixture of soot and sheep fat. In India and some Arab cultures, painting the hands, feet and face with henna is a practice with ancient roots.
- ⁴⁴⁸ Eric John Dingwall, *Artificial Cranial Deformation: A Contribution To The Study Of Ethnic Mutilations*, London, John Bale, Sons and Danielsson, Ltd., 1931; Armando R. Favazza, M.D. with Barbara Favazza, M.D., *Bodies Under Siege: Self-mutilation in Culture and Psychiatry*, Baltimore/London, John Hopkins University Press, 1987, pp. 62-64; Istvan Kiszely, *The Origins of Artificial Cranial Deformation in Eurasia from the Sixth Millennium B.C. to the Seventh Century A.D.*, trans. Catherine Siman, London, B.A.R. (British Archaeological Reports) International Series (Supplementary) 50, 1978.
- ⁴⁴⁹ *Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story from China*, retold by Ai-Ling Louie, New York, Philomel Books, 1982.
- ⁴⁵⁰ Howard S. Levy, *The Lotus Lovers: The Complete History of the Erotic Custom of Footbinding in China*, Prometheus Books, Buffalo, 1992, p. 68.
- ⁴⁵¹ For an insightful study of the transition from traditional to modern social mores in the context of courtship, see Beth L. Bailey's *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth Century America*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1988.
- ⁴⁵² Elizabeth Haiken, *Venus Envy: A History of Cosmetic Surgery*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore/London, 1997, p. 9.

- ⁴⁵³ Pat Lenehan, *Anabolic Steroids and Other Performance-Enhancing Drugs*, London/New York, Taylor and Francis, 2003, pp. 39, 43, 50; William Taylor, *Anabolic Steroids and the Athlete*, Jefferson, North Carolina/London, McFarland and Company, Inc., 2002, pp. 80-81; "Bodybuilding History," www.bodybuildinghistory.com, "Anabolic Steroids History," www.steroids-info.com.
- ⁴⁵⁴ Figures for 2000 from the American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery and American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery estimates, quoted in Deborah A. Sullivan, *Cosmetic Surgery: The Cutting Edge of Commercial Medicine in America*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey/London, 2001, p. ix.
- ⁴⁵⁵ Sander L. Gilman, *Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Cosmetic Surgery*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999, pp. 4, 35.
- ⁴⁵⁶ *New York Times*, May 21, 1973, p. 38:1, quoted in Haiken, pp. 205.
- ⁴⁵⁷ pediatrician Benjamin Spock, quoted in Haiken, p. 176.
- ⁴⁵⁸ Haiken, p. 176.
- ⁴⁵⁹ Leslie A. Fiedler, "The Tyranny of the Normal," quoted in Gilman, p. 202.
- ⁴⁶⁰ William Milton Adams, "Problems and Opportunities in the Field of Plastic Surgery," *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery* 15 (January 1955):1-2, quoted Bernice L. Hausman, *Changing Sex: Transsexualism, Technology, and the Idea of Gender*, Duke University Press, Durham/London, 1995, p. 66.
- ⁴⁶¹ Haiken, p. 301.
- ⁴⁶² *Ibid*, p. 174.
- ⁴⁶³ In cases of divorce, mothers shall give suck to her children for two whole years, where it is desirable to complete the suckling, and the father of the child shall be responsible for the maintenance of the mother during that period... Should you desire to hire a wetnurse for your children, there is no blame on you, provided you hand over what you have agreed to pay, in a fair manner. [Al-Baqarah, 2:234, *The Quran*, trans. Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, p. 37]
- ⁴⁶⁴ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, trans. by Allan Bloom, New York, Basic Books, 1979, pp. 45-46.
- ⁴⁶⁵ This practice eventually spread to Canada, Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. Human milk banks in these countries continue to provide for the needs of infants who are premature, allergic to cow's milk, have intractable diarrhea, and those with immune deficiencies. [Baumslag and Michels, p. 56]
- ⁴⁶⁶ John Dobbing, ed., *Infant Feeding: Anatomy of a Controversy, 1973-1984*, Springer Verlag, London/Berlin, 1988, p. 6.
- ⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 2.
- ⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 5.
- ⁴⁶⁹ Baumslag and Michels, p. 153.
- ⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid*.
- ⁴⁷¹ Studies have shown that human milk is not only finely calibrated to serve the specific needs of the newborn human infant, with its rapid brain development and biological expectation of on-demand feeding, the composition of the mother's milk also evolves through different stages of nursing. [Wenda R. Trevathan, *Human Birth: An Evolutionary Perspective*, New York, Aldine De Gruyter, 1987, pp. 29-32; Baumslag and Michels, 1995, pp. 67-71.] According to studies of primates of similar adult size, length of gestation, and age at eruption of the first molar to our own species, it has been estimated that *homo sapiens* children should wean between 2.5 and 7 years of age. A study of 64 non-US, non-European societies found that most children were weaned between the second and fourth year. [Katherine A. Dettwyler, "A Time to Wean: The Hominid Blueprint for the Natural Age of Weaning in Modern Human Populations," in Patricia Stuart-Macadam and Katherine A. Dettwyler, eds., *Breastfeeding: Biocultural Perspectives*, New York, Aldine De Gruyter, 1995, pp. 44-66.]
- ⁴⁷² According to Penny Van Esoteric, an associate professor of anthropology and coordinator of the task force on breastfeeding and women's work for the World Alliance on Breastfeeding Action, the compliance of Nestlé and other baby food companies in developing countries has been less than total. [Penny Van Esoteric, "The Politics of Breastfeeding," in Patricia Stuart-Macadam and Katherine A. Dettwyler, eds., *Breastfeeding: Biocultural Perspectives*, New York, Aldine De Gruyter, 1995, pp. 156-158.]
- ⁴⁷³ Dana Raphael and Flora Davis, *Only Mothers Know: Patterns of Infant Feeding in Traditional Cultures*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1985, p. 47.

- ⁴⁷⁴ The low rate of compliance in the US may be related to the pressure on new mothers to return to work. As early as 1919, the International Labor Organization resolved that a woman should be allowed paid maternity leave for six weeks following a birth and should be allowed paid maternity leave for 6 weeks following a birth and should be allowed to nurse her child twice a day for half an hour during working hours. Over $\frac{3}{4}$ of the world's countries conform to ILO conventions and offer 12 or more weeks of maternity leave. The US is the only country in the world that does not provide paid maternity leave. In winter of 1993, in one of his first acts as president, Clinton signed the Parental and Disability Leave Act (vetoed by Bush in 1990) providing up to 12 weeks unpaid leave after childbirth or adoption, or to care for a seriously ill child, spouse or parent, or for personal illness. Employers can still exempt employees in the highest 10% of their work force and those who have worked less than 1 year or have worked less than 25 hours/week during the previous year. [Baumslag and Michels, p. 194.]
- ⁴⁷⁵ *The Medical Post*, "All Moms Should Breastfeed: Surgeon General," May 22, 2001, p. 19.
- ⁴⁷⁶ Baumslag and Michels, p. 7.
- ⁴⁷⁷ Gabrielle Palmer, *The Politics of Breast-Feeding*, Pandora/Harpers Collins, London, 1988, p. 151.
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- ⁴⁷⁹ Marilyn Yalom, *A History of the Breast*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1997, p. 236.
- ⁴⁸⁰ Susan M. Love, Karen Lindsay, *Doctor Susan Love's Breast Book*, Merloyd Lawrence Book/Perseus Publishers, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2000, p. 61.
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- ⁴⁸⁶ Hilde Bruch, *The Golden Cage*, p. ix, quoted in Brumberg, p. 39.
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- ⁵⁰⁶ Schneider, p. 91.
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- ⁵¹² George Bernard Shaw, *The Doctor's Dilemma: A Tragedy*, New York, Bretano's, 1923, p. v, quoted in Sharpe and Faden, p. 204.
- ⁵¹³ While lobotomy does stand in a unique category, it is worth noting that the practice of trephination, the removal of bone from the skull, is an ancient surgical procedure with a superficial similarity. Practiced at various times on virtually every continent, trephination was advised by Paracelsus as a last resort to cure mania. In more recent times, the Kisii, a remote tribe of African cattle farmers are known to be avid practitioners. One patient, with a tin hat and very little cranium left, is known to have undergone thirty-five trephinings. [Favazza, pp. 64-66.]
- ⁵¹⁴ Edward Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry: From the Era of the Asylum to the Age of Prozac*, New York, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1997, p. 205.
- ⁵¹⁵ Hans Maier, a prominent psychiatrist who was both director of the University of Zurich psychiatric clinic and Zurich's Urgholzli mental hospital delivered a paper to the Royal College of Physicians in London in 1933. In his presentation, "Castration: Its Psychiatric Indications and Results," Maier described the "success" he had experienced in neutering fifty patients. [Stephen Trombley, *The Right to Reproduce: A History of Coercive Sterilization*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988, p. 112] Karl A. Menninger, a leading American psychiatrist, offered similar enthusiasm for the procedure in "Polysurgery and Polysurgical Addiction," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 3 (1934): 173-99, quoted in Sander L. Gilman, *Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Cosmetic Surgery*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 272.
- ⁵¹⁶ Valenstein, p. 156.
- ⁵¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 154.
- ⁵¹⁸ "Lobotomy Disappointment," *Newsweek*, 12 December 1949, p. 51, quoted *ibid*, p. 255.
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- ⁵²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 182.
- ⁵²¹ J. L. Hoffman, "Clinical Observations Concerning Schizophrenic Patients Treated by Prefrontal Leukotomy," *New England Journal of Medicine* 214 (1949): 233-36, quoted *ibid*, p. 255.
- ⁵²² David Rioch, quoted in the *Digest of Neurology and Psychiatry* (Institute of Living) 17 (1949): 407-54, quoted *ibid*, p. 182.
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- ⁵²⁴ Robert S. Mendelsohn, M.D., *Confessions of a Medical Heretic*, Chicago, Contemporary Books, Inc., 1979, pp. 4-5.
- ⁵²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 28.

⁵²⁶ Michael D. Green, *Bendectin and Birth Defects: The Challenges of Mass Toxic Substances Litigation*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996, p. 180.

⁵²⁷ Gabor Maté, *When The Body Says No*, Toronto, Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2003, pp. 154-55.

⁵²⁸ Environmental Working Group, "Researchers Explore A New Toxic Pollution Site: People," January 30, 2003, www.ewg.org/reports/bodyburden/newsrelease.ph

⁵²⁹ It is worth noting that the momentous events of the first Baisakhi took place just outside the fort of Keshgarh Sahib. The name of the fort literally translates as "Holy Fort of Long Hair." Thus, the fort itself heralded the empowering virtue of unshorn hair as the crowning glory of the Khalsa. The Guru took the further step of giving each Khalsa the royal designation "Singh" or "Kaur" – Singh being a regal lion and Kaur being a royal princess. Thereafter, the Master himself was known as "Guru Gobind Singh."

⁵³⁰ Gurmukh Singh, *The Rise of Sikhs Abroad*, New Delhi, Rupa and Co., 2003.

⁵³¹ "Job Security," *Aquarian Times*, Winter 2005, p. 27.

⁵³² Surjit Kaur, *Amongst the Sikhs: Reaching for the Stars*, New Delhi, Roli Books Pvt. Ltd., 2003, p. 48.

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⁵³³ Shabd Guru, p. 903-04.

⁵³⁴ Shabd Guru, p. 968.

⁵³⁵ Bhai Nand Lal, Var 41, Pauri 2.

⁵³⁶ Siri Sarbloh Granth Sahib Ji, Volume 2, Bhatinda, Singh Sahib Baba Santa Singh Ji, 2001, p. 532.

⁵³⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 13

⁵³⁸ Yogi Bhajan, PhD with Gurucharan Singh Khalsa, PhD, *The Mind: Its Projections and Multiple Facets*, Espanola, New Mexico, Kundalini Research Institute, 1998, p. 128.

⁵³⁹ Dharma Singh Khalsa, M.D. and Cameron Stauth, *Meditation as Medicine: Activate the Power of Your Natural Healing Force*, New York, Simon and Schuster, Inc., 2001, p. 55.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 62.

⁵⁴¹ Shabd Guru, p. 945.

⁵⁴² Shabd Guru, p. 1038.

⁵⁴³ Bhai Vir Singh, *Sri Guru Nanak Chamatkar*, Volume 2, New Delhi, Bhai Vir Singh Sahit Sadan, 1999, p. 164-67. (Punjab); Bhai Gurdas, Var 1, Pauris 35-36.

⁵⁴⁴ Shabd Guru, p. 1075.

⁵⁴⁵ Bhai Gurdas, Var 1, Verses 29-30

⁵⁴⁶ Germaine Greer, *Sex and Destiny: The Politics of Human Fertility*, p. 254.

⁵⁴⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 268.

⁵⁴⁸ Dasam Granth, p. 710-11

⁵⁴⁹ Greer, pp. 417-18.

⁵⁵⁰ Yogi Bhajan, "Sensory Communication", *Prosperity Paths: Investing in Your State of Being*, Issue 46, August 2002, p. 2.

⁵⁵¹ Adjacent to this foremost of *Gurdwaras*, as at all Sikh temples, there is a large dining hall. It feeds about 20,000 pilgrims daily. In this way, the body and spirit both find their nourishment in the Guru's house.

⁵⁵² Shabd Guru, p. 737.

⁵⁵³ Shabd Guru, p. 788.

⁵⁵⁴ According to the custom of those days, a devoted family might offer their daughter to be married to the Guru. These betrothals were usually arranged through the Guru's mother. Traditional feelings of family honor played a significant part in such proposals. To refuse an engagement would disgrace the young woman's family and result in her never marrying.

In this way, the sixth and tenth Gurus were each joined with three holy consorts, although Guru Gobind Singh the tenth Master insisted in those dangerous times that his third wife Mata Sahib Kaur should remain issueless.

⁵⁵⁵ Shabd Guru, p. 473.

⁵⁵⁶ Adapted from Shmuley Boteach, *Ten Conversations You Need to Have with Your Children*, New York, HarperCollins, 2006, p. 98. Boteach's original version goes: "Women nurture and enhance everything they come into contact with, men most of all."

⁵⁵⁷ Taken from Yogi Bhajan's biography in progress, *Messenger from the Guru's House*.

⁵⁵⁸ Greer, p. 25.

⁵⁵⁹ Yogi Bhajan, *The Oriental Woman: Molder of Time, Space and Mankind*, (Women In Training VI, 1981) ed. Sardarni Sahiba Sat Kirpal Kaur Khalsa, Sardarni Sahiba Gurupurkh Kaur Khalsa, Sardarni Sahiba Sat Mander Kaur Khalsa, Eugene, 3HO Transcripts, 1981, p. 64.

⁵⁶⁰ Yogi Bhajan, transcript of August 13, 1976 lecture, *Women In Training*, 2:327. Yogi Bhajan's view here is in line with the classical Christian teaching formulated by Saints Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. Today's controversy around the "right to life" originates in three significant developments during the pontificate of Pius IX (1792-1878, pope: 1846-78), the longest reigning pope in the history of the church. Firstly, the pontiff in 1854 proclaimed the "immaculate conception" of Mary, thereby placing unprecedented emphasis on the initial act of insemination. At that time, theological and legal convention still widely associated the beginning of human life with the "quickenings," around the eighteenth to twentieth week of pregnancy, when the mother first experiences the child moving inside her. Fifteen years later, the pope made his defining proclamation that life originates at the moment of conception. From that point on, the church no longer differentiated between women who underwent late or early abortions. Both were excommunicated. Lastly, Pius IX decreed the infallibility of papal pronouncements, thereby setting his spiritual authority and all his proclamations and judgements beyond question for the Catholic faithful. [Daniel A. Dombrowski and Robert Deltete, *A Brief, Liberal, Catholic Defense of Abortion*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2000, pp. 58, 92.]

⁵⁶¹ The origin of this rite goes back before recorded history. In Hindu tradition, it survives as the two rites of *Pumsavana* and *Simantonnayana*. The first is usually performed in the third month of pregnancy to pray for the arrival of a worthy soul. The second, in the fourth month, is a celebration of motherhood, with prayers extended for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the pregnant mother. [Rajbali Panday, M.A., D. Litt., *Hindu Samskaras: Socio-Religious Study of the Hindu Sacraments*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 1969, pp. 60-69]

⁵⁶² Yogi Bhajan, "Pregnancy," in *The Ancient Art of Self-Healing*, Dr. Siri Amir Singh Khalsa, ed., D.C., Eugene, West Anandpur Publishers, 1982, pp. 40-41.

⁵⁶³ Yogi Bhajan, "Pregnancy," in *The Ancient Art of Self-Healing*, Dr. Siri Amir Singh Khalsa, D.C., ed., Eugene, West Anandpur Publishers, 1982, p. 41. A cross-cultural survey finds wide-ranging support for this view. Hindu scripture prohibits intercourse during pregnancy. [Rajbali Panday, M.A., D. Litt., *Hindu Samskaras: Socio-Religious Study of the Hindu Sacraments*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 1969, p. 69] Intercourse while a woman is pregnant or lactating is also frowned on in many traditional cultures of Africa, Oceania and the Americas. Nigerian nomad women wear a special leather necklace during the first 2 years after childbirth to make it known they are off limits. [Naomi Baumslag, M.D., M.H. and Dia L. Michels, *Milk, Money, and Madness: The Culture and Politics of Breastfeeding*, Westport, Connecticut/London, 1995, pp. 9-11, Judith Goldsmith, *Childbirth Wisdom From the World's Oldest Societies*, New York, Congdon and Weed, Inc., 1984, pp. 97-99.] There is as well a longstanding, and long overlooked, prohibition of sex with a pregnant or nursing mother in Western Christian tradition in the *Responsa Gregorii*. The *Responsa* is an early and widely-cited authority attributed to Pope Gregory the Great (circa 540-604). Wet-nursing, depriving a child of its own mother's milk, was also frowned on in the *Responsa Gregorii*. [James Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe*, Chicago/London, The University of Chicago Press, 1987, p. 157, Ute Ranke-Heinemann, *Eunuchs for Heaven: The Catholic Church and Sexuality*, trans. John Brownjohn, London, André Deutsch, 1990, pp. 38-39, 122-23] Thomas Aquinas, a later authority, condoned intercourse during pregnancy so long as it did not cause miscarriage. Talmudic tradition, on the other hand, sanctions intercourse up to the sixth month of pregnancy.

⁵⁶⁴ Yogi Bhajan, *The Psychology of a Graceful Woman* (Women in Training VII, 1982 Lectures), Eugene, 3HO Transcripts, 1982, p. 29.

⁵⁶⁵ The tradition of giving the mother and her newborn a special time at home is fairly universal in traditional societies. It is literally a "lying in" period, although the term has nearly fallen out of use in our hectic workaday world where mothers are expected right away to entertain guests, then prepare to rush little "Boo-boo" off to a babysitter and return to their job as efficiently as possible. In rural China, the mother and infant are kept indoors 56 days. The new mother is not allowed to do any housework, sewing, cooking, even reading. The extended family pitches in and does all the chores to allow her to

concentrate on the infant. [Naomi Baumslag, M.D., M.H. and Dia L. Michels, *Milk, Money, and Madness: The Culture and Politics of Breastfeeding*, Westport, Connecticut/London, 1995, p. 17.] Indian custom, which has come down to us in a ritualized form, designates the first days of life as a time for the mother and child to remain intimately at home. Hindu texts cited in this regard allow a lying in period of anywhere from twelve days to four months. [Rajbali Panday, M.A., D. Litt., *Hindu Samskaras: Socio-Religious Study of the Hindu Sacraments*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 1969, pp. 86-87.] In the rural Philippines, family members take care of a mother's regular farming duties for two months, so she can devote her attention almost entirely to the care of her newborn. [Dana Raphael and Flora Davis, *Only Mothers Know: Patterns of Infant Feeding in Traditional Cultures*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1985, pp. 30-31] Strong mother-infant bonding, while not a hallmark of industrial and post-industrial society, is observable not only among pre-industrial peoples, but also among other mammal species. This instinctual trait, evolved over millennia, has ensured successful socialization and the very survival of the human species up to recent times. [Wenda R. Trevathan, *Human Birth: An Evolutionary Perspective*, New York, Aldine de Gruyter, 1987, pp. 212-15, 236-38] Germaine Greer offers the following critique of the modern, clinical view of childbirth: "Childbirth has been transformed from an awesome personal and social event into a medical phenomenon, from a heroic ordeal into a meaningless and chaotic one; physical pain which we can bear has been transformed into mental stress, which we are less well geared for. The management of pregnancy, childbed and child raising was the principal expression of the familial and societal network of women, itself one of the essential cohesive elements in any society and a necessary haven to the competitive hierarchies of men... If we turn birth from a climactic personal experience into a personal disaster, it matters little that the result is more likely to be a live child. Women will not long continue to offer up their bodies and minds to such brutality, especially if there is no one at home to welcome the child, to praise the mother for her courage and to help her raise it." [Germaine Greer, *Sex and Destiny: The Politics of Human Fertility*, Toronto, Stoddart Publishing, 1984, pp. 19, 29]

⁵⁶⁶ (1) Tine Thevenin, in her extensive study *The Family Bed*, provides cross-cultural and historic support for the tradition of shared family sleeping arrangements. The move to take the infant away from his mother, and put him in a crib in a separate room with a teddy bear and an intercom, can be traced to three modern-day influences. The late eighteenth century doctrine of self-reliance insisted an individual should be trained to independence early on in life. In the nuclear family, with its dearth of helping hands in the forms of doting aunts, grandmothers, servants and siblings, mothers naturally appreciated and encouraged self-reliance among their children. The third influence was the growing fixation on cleanliness and the belief that sleeping in separate beds could be more hygienic. Though well intentioned, these developments, disrupting a custom widespread and longstanding, were not without their social and psychological repercussions. [Tine Thevenin, *The Family Bed*, Wayne, New Jersey, Avery Publishing Group, 1987, pp. 57-59.]

(2) Yogi Bhaajan: "When you were born, what happened to you? You were put in a crib with four blankets and the lights were on and you were lonely that day. I had a battle when I said, 'Every child shall sleep with its parents.' You know how many people left 3HO? A lot. Almost everybody. (People said) 'He's Indian. That's a third world country. There are no separate beds and separate rooms available. It's nonsense. He's interfering with love...' We lost almost a third of our students on that situation, but we never gave in." [Yogi Bhaajan, *Communication: Its Psychology and Practical Knowledge* (Women In Training X, 1985 Lectures), Eugene, 3HO Transcripts, 1985, p. 37.]

(3) In Thevenin's words: "...the nineteenth century had set the stage for a type of sterile child rearing which, hopefully, will not re-occur again. Within a hundred years of so, child rearing practices had changed more drastically than ever before. Unfortunately, these changes did not end in themselves. With natural body drives and needs curtailed, new and other child rearing problems emerged. Problems that had not been present before, or had been minor, now needed special attention. The expert child educators came quickly to the foreground to give their advice on child nutrition, on the child who "clung" to his mother, the child who cried, the child who balked at early weaning, the child who would not go to sleep by himself, the child who grew into an adult with psychopathological problems." [Thevenin, p. 59.]

⁵⁶⁷ Shakta Kaur Khalsa, *Yoga for Women*, New York, DK Publishing, 2002, p. 195.

⁵⁶⁸ The Guru's outlook contrasts with the Western European outlook of the last 400 years. Rev. John Lightfoot, Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University, calculated the actual date of creation by making comparisons of Middle Eastern histories and the Biblical Genesis. In 1644, he published his conclusion that God had made the world sometime on Sunday, September 12, 3928 BCE, then breathed life into Adam the following Friday at 9 in the morning. Ireland's scholarly Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656) came up with a chronology that has since been incorporated in countless editions of the *Bible*. According to the archbishop's reckoning, the world was created in 4004 BC. In an effort to keep up with scientific developments, Pius XII in 1951 linked the Genesis version of creation and the latest "Big Bang theory." [D. Brown, "4004" in *A Geological Miscellany*, compiled by G. Y. Craig and E. J. Jones, Oxford,

Orbital Press, 1982, p 2-3; Harold R. Booher, *Origins, Icons and Illusions: Exploring the Science and Psychology of Creation and Evolution*, St. Louis, Warren H. Green, Inc., 1998, p. 395.]

⁵⁶⁹ Shabd Guru, p. 5.

⁵⁷⁰ Shabd Guru, p. 940.

⁵⁷¹ Shabd Guru, p. 919.

⁵⁷² According to Moses Maimonides, the authoritative Jewish scholar, the Name (YHWH) which at one time been known to the priests of Israel, is now, in our dark and irreligious age, unspeakable. (Moses Mainmonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. M. Friedlaender, London, George Routledge and Sons Ltd., 1919, pp. 91-92, [Part I, Chapter 62])

⁵⁷³ Shabd Guru, p. 2.

⁵⁷⁴ Shabd Guru, p. 1083. Like YHWH, *Sat Naam* is a Holy Name without any active designation. It is not “the Creator,” “the Redeemer,” “the Eternal”... It is simply the Name of the One who is.

⁵⁷⁵ Shabd Guru, p. 670.

⁵⁷⁶ Bhai Gurdas, Var 1, Pauri 23.

⁵⁷⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 1.

⁵⁷⁸ Shabd Guru, p. 463.

⁵⁷⁹ A study of Christian monastery routines indicates that the earliest risers are the Benedictines at the Monte Cassino monastery in Italy. They begin their worship at 1 a.m. in the summer and at 2 a.m. during the dark months of winter. Elsewhere – at Christ Church, Canterbury, England’s largest monastery, wake-up is at 2:30 a.m. The Missionaries of Charity begin their service at 4:30 a.m. Monks in France customarily rise at 5 a.m. At the Cowly, Oxford monastery, the day begins at 5:15 a.m. In Islam, the first prayer of the day, the “Fajr”, is recited before sunrise. Traditionally, it begins when a Muslim can distinguish between a dark and a light thread. In Judaism, the Orthodox recite their dawn prayer, called “Shema” between morning twilight and the appearance of the sun’s first rays. For Buddhists the practice of early morning meditation begins with the Buddha himself, who is said to have slept one hour only, and meditated in the morning until dawn. The holy tradition of India also venerates the early morning hours, known as *Brahm Murti*, the Time of the Creator God. [David Knowles, *Christian Monasticism*, New York, World University Library/Mcgraw-Hill Book Company, 1969, pp. 212-223; Khushwant Singh, “Mother Theresa”, *Gurus, Godmen and Good People*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1975, p. 108; Dr. Mamdouh N. Mohamed, *Salaat: Islamic Prayer from A to Z*, n.p., pp. 19-20; 2003; Kaufman Kohler, “Shema”, jewishencyclopedia.com; A. Foucher, *The Life of the Buddha According to the Ancient Texts and Monuments of India*, trans. Simone Brangier Boas, Westport, Conn., Greenwood Press, 1975, p. 184.]

Methodist John Wesley gave a sermon on the subject (John Wesley, *The Duty and Advantage of Early Rising: A Sermon on Ephesians, V:16*, Dublin, J. Jones, 1802) in which he credited his improved eyesight at maturity with his early regimen.

Schopenhauer is widely quoted as saying, “Do not shorten the morning by getting up late; look upon it as the quintessence of life, and to a certain extent sacred.” Sartre’s quote is taken from the University of Toronto web-site.

⁵⁸⁰ Shabd Guru, p. 305-306.

⁵⁸¹ Shabd Guru, p. 24.

⁵⁸² Shabd Guru, p. 1.

From Here On...

⁵⁸³ Margaret Mead, “Five Who Care”, *Look* magazine, April 21, 1970, p. 37.

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⁵⁸⁴ Shabd Guru, pp. 657-58.

⁵⁸⁵ Dasam Granth, pp. 394-95.

⁵⁸⁶ Shabd Guru, pp. 463-64.

⁵⁸⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 485.

⁵⁸⁸ Shabd Guru, p. 1231.

⁵⁸⁹ Shabd Guru, p. 11.

- ⁵⁹⁰ Shabd Guru, p. 736.
- ⁵⁹¹ Shabd Guru, p. 1.
- ⁵⁹² Shabd Guru, p. 5.
- ⁵⁹³ Shabd Guru, p. 276-77.
- ⁵⁹⁴ Shabd Guru, p. 795.
- ⁵⁹⁵ Shabd Guru, p. 1140.
- ⁵⁹⁶ Shabd Guru, p. 1020.
- ⁵⁹⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 1045.
- ⁵⁹⁸ Shabd Guru, p. 1159.
- ⁵⁹⁹ Shabd Guru, p. 356.
- ⁶⁰⁰ Shabd Guru, p. 992.
- ⁶⁰¹ Shabd Guru, p. 13.
- ⁶⁰² Shabd Guru, p. 23.
- ⁶⁰³ Shabd Guru, p. 176.
- ⁶⁰⁴ Dasam Granth, pp. 57-58.
- ⁶⁰⁵ Shabd Guru, p. 1285-84.
- ⁶⁰⁶ Shabd Guru, p. 1332.
- ⁶⁰⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 46.
- ⁶⁰⁸ Shabd Guru, p. 291.
- ⁶⁰⁹ Shabd Guru, p.153.
- ⁶¹⁰ Shabd Guru, p. 922.
- ⁶¹¹ Shabd Guru, p. 624.
- ⁶¹² Shabd Guru, p. 919.
- ⁶¹³ Shabd Guru, p. 1160.
- ⁶¹⁴ Shabd Guru, p. 536.
- ⁶¹⁵ Shabd Guru, p. 476.
- ⁶¹⁶ Shabd Guru, p. 171
- ⁶¹⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 143.
- ⁶¹⁸ Shabd Guru, p. 324.
- ⁶¹⁹ Shabd Guru, p. 477.
- ⁶²⁰ Shabd Guru, p. 1084.
- ⁶²¹ Shabd Guru, p. 922.
- ⁶²² Shabd Guru, p. 489.
- ⁶²³ Shabd Guru, p. 922.
- ⁶²⁴ Shabd Guru, p. 1374.
- ⁶²⁵ Shabd Guru, p. 1402.
- ⁶²⁶ Shabd Guru, p. 788.
- ⁶²⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 1369.
- ⁶²⁸ Shabd Guru, p. 98.

- ⁶²⁹ Shabd Guru, p. 1151.
- ⁶³⁰ Shabd Guru, p. 1348.
- ⁶³¹ Shabd Guru, p. 328.
- ⁶³² Shabd Guru, p.1245.
- ⁶³³ Shabd Guru, p. 1410.
- ⁶³⁴ Shabd Guru, p. 1178.
- ⁶³⁵ Shabd Guru, p. 836.
- ⁶³⁶ Shabd Guru, p. 1256.
- ⁶³⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 62.
- ⁶³⁸ Shabd Guru, p. 703.
- ⁶³⁹ Shabd Guru, p. 685.
- ⁶⁴⁰ Shabd Guru, p. 879.
- ⁶⁴¹ Shabd Guru, p. 472-73.
- ⁶⁴² Shabd Guru, p. 522.
- ⁶⁴³ Shabd Guru, p. 139.
- ⁶⁴⁴ Shabd Guru, p. 809.
- ⁶⁴⁵ Shabd Guru, p. 461.
- ⁶⁴⁶ Shabd Guru, p. 555.
- ⁶⁴⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 265.
- ⁶⁴⁸ Shabd Guru, p. 352.
- ⁶⁴⁹ Shabd Guru, p. 12.
- ⁶⁵⁰ Shabd Guru, p. 369.
- ⁶⁵¹ Shabd Guru, p. 266.
- ⁶⁵² Shabd Guru, p. 282.
- ⁶⁵³ Shabd Guru, p. 656.
- ⁶⁵⁴ Shabd Guru, p. 931.
- ⁶⁵⁵ Shabd Guru, p.7. The Mother's three students are the gods of the Hindu trinity: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.
- ⁶⁵⁶ Shabd Guru, p. 732.
- ⁶⁵⁷ Shabd Guru, p. 75.
- ⁶⁵⁸ Shabd Guru, p.168.
- ⁶⁵⁹ Shabd Guru, p. 290.
- ⁶⁶⁰ Shabd Guru, p. 463.
- ⁶⁶¹ Shabd Guru, p. 635.
- ⁶⁶² Shabd Guru, p. 885.
- ⁶⁶³ Shabd Guru, p. 266.
- ⁶⁶⁴ Shabd Guru, p. 284.
- ⁶⁶⁵ Shabd Guru, p. 415. The three worlds are of angels, humans and demons.
- ⁶⁶⁶ Shabd Guru, p. 273-74.

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Back-talk

What do you mean by “holism,” and why do you consider Guru Nanak to be a “harbinger of an holistic era”?

Holism is a theory that the universe is a collection of interactive wholes, and that it is more than the sum of its parts. We could go farther and say that holism is also defined as an understanding of the interconnectedness of all things. Environmentalism and quantum physics are just a couple of important new ways of seeing that are intrinsically holistic. Holistic medicine, which is experiencing a tremendous surge in the West these days, is thriving by making connections that ordinary allopathic doctors were never trained to make: the connections between body and soul, food and health and the environment.

Guru Nanak was definitely a holist in that he rejected all the customary diads. There were Hindus and Muslims, high caste and low caste, gods and demons, animate and inanimate. The Guru summed everything up and said simply “ੴ” – “there is just one Creator, one creative pulse, underlying the whole of this creation!”

Moreover, the Guru lived in a religious “monoculture,” or to be more precise, he lived in a society defined by two religious monocultures, two exclusionary systems of practice and belief that were fundamentally inimicable, each to the other. For the orthodox Hindu, a Muslim was a *mlecch* (subhuman). To a devout Muslim, the Hindu was *kafir* (without any redeeming religion). Christian Europe at the time was similarly intolerant of religious diversity.

Guru Nanak bridged the divide between Hindus and Muslims by taking an approach we today can readily equate with wave/particle physics. Just as phenomena have two aspects, energy and mass, similarly a religious identity exists not just as a static fact or noun. It must also be active and actively reactive to its environments. So anyone calling themselves a “Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh...” must also live a religious life, a life informed by compassion and integrity, otherwise they cannot truly be said to be whatever they claim to be at all.

As the Guru put it while teaching in Mecca, “Without good actions, Muslims and Hindus both go to hell.” The Tenth Master only affirmed that principle when he said the calibre of his disciples’ living was dear to him, not the fact that they proclaimed themselves his Sikhs.

Our increasingly globalized culture exists on the basis of a fundamental recognition of the de facto plurality of faiths and cultures, even the beginnings of agreement on a few universal rights. All this might have been difficult for an ordinary person to imagine 500 years ago when life was very insular. It is my contention that Guru Nanak Dev not only foresaw these coming changes, but played an instrumental role in sharing the holistic and inclusionary values that we are only now coming to fully accept, and not everywhere at once.

It seems a little farfetched to include quantum physics and evolutionary biology, feminism and a critique of modern psychiatry all in a book about “the Guru’s way.” There are pages and pages with no mention of Guru at all. What do you say to this criticism?

It is time we made these connections. We must remember that in Guru Nanak’s day, many of the sciences and movements we take for granted today hardly existed, if at all. The pundits would say that all knowledge was in the Vedas – if only you could find it. What Guru did back then was give us some basic formulas. I have termed them “paragons” and based each of the five parts of my book on one. Now, in this new age, holistic realization - understanding the connectedness of things - is dawning on everyone like the rising sun. It is shining not only on Sikhs.

Backtalk

It is time we looked around and made the links, the logical and intuitive connections between what Guru said three-four-five hundred years ago and all the new science and everything else that is happening today. There are a lot of Khalsa, the unknown Khalsa I call them, out there who have caught hold of one or another part of Guru's vision, just waiting for somebody to show them the rest of the picture. It is time for us to humbly get out there and do just that. Of course, if we don't see it ourselves, then we are just irrelevant to them. Guru, on the other hand was anything but irrelevant to his times. It is my allegation that Guru and *Gurmat* remains relevant, and ever more so, in our changing times.

Isn't the usual translation of ੴ "there is but one God"? Aren't you taking some liberties in the translation here?

"There is but one God" sounds to me like some kind of anti-Hindu polemic, a formula to ward off polytheistic influences. Even from just looking at the old *hukamnamas* and the hand-written Granth Sahibs, the beauty, the artistry, the fancy with which the "*Onkar*"^w was written in those days, I know it had to mean a whole lot more than that. It doesn't look to me like an "anti" statement at all. There is far too much spirit in it. I simply cannot bring myself to believe our great Guru was so beset by Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh as to make that kind of statement and make it our first article of faith.

For my understanding of ੴ I go to the one who has made the most convincing case for Sikh values and Sikh philosophy and Sikh beliefs. That is Siri Singh Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji, also called "Yogi Bhajan." Usually, he renders the meaning as "there is one Creator of this creation", but he has also given other variations, depending on the particular point he wants to stress. Personally, I was very relieved when he laid out the entire Mool Mantra not as a theological formula, but as the qualities of a living saint. *Gurbani* says a saint and God are always one anyway. I like the approach of starting with the saint. It makes more sense to me than arguing over how many gods or angels we are willing to accept. To me, anyone can be a god or an angel. It is a matter of human calibre and simple grace.

Isn't it a little brazen to correlate the great cosmic order, the will of God, with trivial occurrences, like sheer serendipity? Isn't there something irreverent in this?

We have to appreciate the different philosophical understandings. Aristotle, for example believed in a grand design for major things, but that little things fell together pell-mell without any special jurisdiction. By the time of Maimonides, this was also the prevailing view in Judaism. Christ took another view. It was he who said there was not a hair on a person's head or a sparrow that fell from the sky without it being known to God, the Primal Cause of things. On the other hand, when a wall collapsed and number of people died, he was careful to say there was no karma attached to the event and that the people affected were not being punished for their misdeeds. It would have made him very unpopular to say otherwise.

In our own tradition, we can look to the story of when Mardana was bitten by an ant in his sleep and he responded by crushing a whole lot of them before waking. The Guru said karma works that way sometimes. There is the karma of association. Ultimately, *Gurbani* tells us ੴ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥ Everything is a part of the grand design. That includes the great and small and the micro-universes.

Why did you include non-Sikhs in part three, the section on *Sarbat da Bhalla*?

There are two or three reasons really. First off, I was looking for living Sikhs I might use in this section, Sikhs who had really made an extraordinary contribution, not just to their community, but to the world at large, and I did not find so many, not on the scale and at the level I was looking for. Most of the really good stories about Sikhs serving the greater common cause happened long ago, and that is a problem for us as Sikhs. We can only go on reciting the stories about the sacrifices of great Sikhs who

^w *Onkar*: the creative Spirit flowing through all of creation; In Gurmukhi calligraphy, the character designating that Spirit.

lived in antiquity for so long before we risk ourselves becoming irrelevant to the evolving social scene of which we are a part.

In the second place, I see *Sarbat da Bhalla*, the service of the greater common good, enlightened self-interest if you will, as having become a broadly accepted social ethic in a way it was not in times past when there was a greater distrust of the outsider, the so-called “barbarian” who did not belong to a given society. Even so, while this broadening of societal boundaries to include those of the other gender and other religions and nationalities, even other species has been general, still they are the rare exceptions who really take the ball and run with it. Those who have truly taken this new humanist ethic to heart and achieved remarkable things – I just wanted to celebrate them.

Thirdly, I thought by taking a wide view of different initiatives in a number of fields I might provide some tentative guidance to those among us who know that service of the humanity does not end with polishing the shoes in the Gurdwara or serving *Guru-ka-langar*, but don’t know where to begin the larger *sewa* out in the “real world.” There is really just so much to do, so many needs, so many opportunities, I indirectly wanted to put out a few suggestions.

In part four, about the body, you go into a lot of detail itemizing every peculiar detail of how people have shaped and reshaped the human body. There is quite a lot there. What is the point of all that?

Sometimes we take for granted what we have. Or we itch for what we don’t. I just wanted to put out a catalogue of every weirdness, every surgery, and every other thing, just so we could appreciate the simple beauty of the human body as it is, contrasted with all the cultural baggage surrounding it. Also I wanted to illustrate the madness of what peer pressure does and to put that in context. The insanity that made mothers bind their children’s feet, that made mothers flatten their children’s foreheads, that makes parents circumcise their children, that makes grown men and women go under the knife for surgery that is purely cosmetic. And, of course, there are some positive things like prosthetic devices, artificial limbs and false teeth, that have come out, also. I wanted to put this all out there for everybody to see – the good, the bad and the ugly – everything, for everyone to evaluate on its own merits.

In the fifth section, you cite Yogi Bhan in the part called “Welcoming New Life.” I know a lot of Sikhs and none of them celebrate the 120th day of a pregnancy, or sleep in a common bed with their children, and in the West very few of them choose to breastfeed. Why do you present these practices in a book ostensibly about the vision and teachings of Guru Nanak?

The world is going through a huge transition away from tradition for tradition’s sake and toward science instead. There is a global process of rationalization and it has been going on since the Enlightenment, figuring out what works and what is healthy, what serves our real interest and what does not. There has been a revolution against traditional authorities. Along the way, some habits that have been with us since time immemorial have been dropped. They were not “convenient” or they “took too much time” or there was just a lot of social pressure against it. Breastfeeding is a good example. In the West, it had almost become a lost practice before there came a renewed interest and appreciation of the many social, emotional and purely physiological benefits.

I think these practices which Yogi Bhan has recommended we have a second look at and consider reintroducing into our lives were common practice in Guru Nanak’s day, so there was no need of mentioning them in the Khalsa code of conduct, for example. In the old days no one questioned them. They were simply what was done. If you broke with tradition, you were liable to be ostracized for being perverse. Now, in our scientific day, we can re-examine and experiment with these practices and see how they make sense. I feel generally, and I speak from experience as a father, that they enhance the sense of life as sacred and contribute to the experience of a cozy home.

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Abbreviations Used in the Index

In the index above the following abbreviations have been used to help guide you through the text:

- “n” refers to a note near the end of the text. For example “345n582” is note number 582 on page 345.
- “q” refers to a quote. “288q” is a quote on page 288.



About the Author

Guru Fatha Singh Khalsa was born in Thunder Bay, Canada in 1954 and grew up in Kingston. Leaving home at sixteen to join the peace movement and hoping to find some wisdom outside of books, Guru Fatha Singh hitch-hiked his way to the exotic west coast scene. Within a couple of years, he returned east and settled at Guru Ram Das Ashram in Toronto, where he began the hard work of meditation and service under the inspired tutelage of Yogi Bhajan – Siri Singh Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji.

Guru Fatha Singh today teaches classes and workshops in the empowering, holistic tradition he has been taught. You can find out more about what he is up to at: www.gurufathasingh.com.



The Artist

The cover art is by Harimandir Kaur Khalsa of Melrose, Florida. She was chosen for this assignment because of her unique creative instincts and abilities which find their expression in everything from fantastic murals to enchanting greeting cards. You can see more of Harimandir Kaur's work at: www.harimandir.com