

Sant Baba Puran Singh Ji of Kericho, known affectionately as 'Baba Ji' for his saintliness, stands as one of the most eminent and influential Sikh saints of the twentieth century.



He was born in 1898 in the Punjab village of Gura, India and belonged to a family which had long engaged with and served great holy men of the region. Married at a young age, he placed strong emphasis on the Sikh principle of gristi jeevan, living the life of a householder, with all its responsibilities to the family and society, rather than choosing a reclusive life.

Emigrating to Kenya in 1916, he set up 'Kericho Wagon Works' in 1925 in the small town of Kericho, Kenya and focused on doing 'Kirat' (earning a living through hard work), being a father to his family and helping others in the town, notably through municipal improvement schemes, such as the renovation of hospitals, schools and churches. His civic contributions were officially recognised by naming the Town Square as Saint Puran Singh Square.

In 1952, Baba Ji's spirituality was given open recognition by the well-known saint, Sant Baba Mani Singh Ji. Thereafter, his demonstration of immense compassion and connectivity with the Divine drew thousands to Kericho. His message was not just a philosophy of words; he was a personification of the proverb 'practise what you preach'. His advice was to stay in awe of the Almighty Creator and to respect the Guru's teachings, to learn humility and respect for others by serving the sangat, to engage in meditation and prayer, and to aspire to take Amrit and become initiated. In addition, Baba Ji called for all service to be Nishkam – totally altruistic, a principle he applied resolutely to himself at all times.

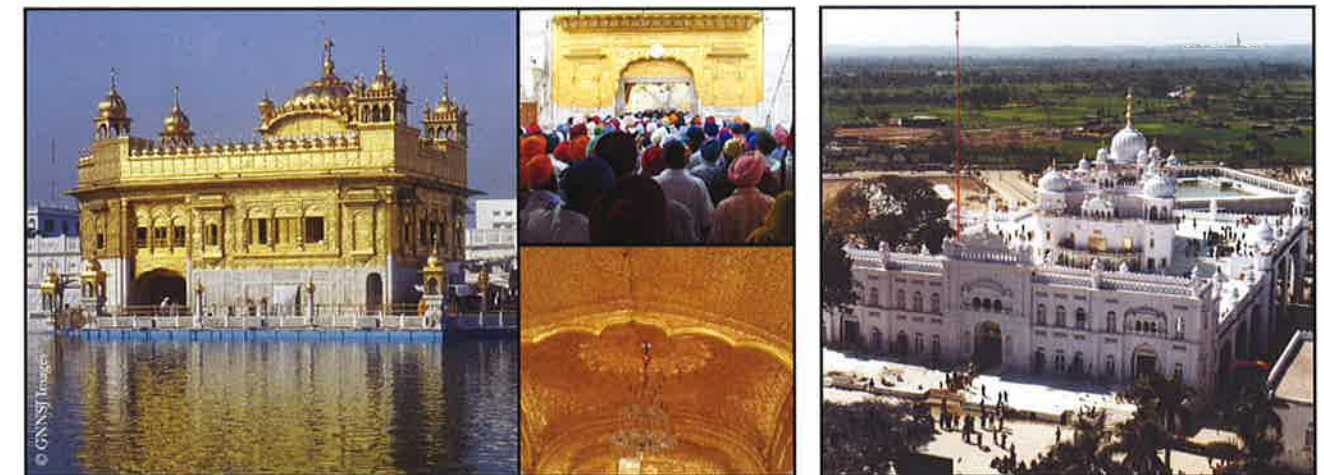
In the 1970's Baba Ji came to England, where many significant, often unprecedented events were made possible through his divine guidance. This included a historic and highly spiritual Sampat Akhand Paath, an 11-day programme of prayer followed by an Amrit Sanchaar when over 500 devotees were initiated

to become practising Sikhs. This set a pace for future years –monthly Amrit Sanchaars have since been conducted by Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha (GNNSJ), totalling to some 350 in Birmingham alone, in which hundreds of Sikhs have become initiated.

In 1982 Baba Ji endorsed and participated in a peaceful mass campaign in connection with the 'Turban Case', where a petition handed to Downing Street led to the ruling protecting Sikh rights of identity under British Law. A similar mass campaign to resolve the growing issues of Sikhs as a minority in India was held in May 1983, with a petition to the India High Commission. Just a week later on 5th June, Sant Baba Puran Singh Ji left for his heavenly abode, leaving a legacy of exemplary Sikh practice which remains the inspiration for all endeavours of GNNSJ.

Bhai Sahib Norang Singh Ji carried the torch of Baba Ji's exemplary legacy until 3rd July, 1995 after which, the same torch was entrusted to Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh Ji who is third in line of spiritual leaders of GNNSJ. Since 1978, GNNSJ has been operating as a registered charity of England and Wales, serving the Gurudwara on Soho Road, Handsworth, Birmingham where its Headquarters are based. It also has sister organisations in Leeds and London (UK); as well as in Kericho (Kenya) and Delhi / Amritsar (India).

The activities which GNNSJ engages in from its five centres for excellence in Birmingham (namely spiritual, civic, education, co-operative, and health and social care) include the promotion of intrafaith and interfaith cohesion and development of multifaith Sikh ethos education. Significant accolades have also been earned by Baba Ji's Jatha in the conservation and restoration of historical sacred Sikh shrines through Kar Sewa:



1. Sri Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), Amritsar, Punjab. [top right]: Darshani Deorbi (grand gateway to Sri Darbar Sahib) and [bottom right] inside of Darshani Deorbi 2. Takhat Sri Kesgarh Sahib, Anandpur, Punjab



3. Takhat Sri Hazur Sahib, Nanded, Maharashtra 4. Sri Fatehgarh Sahib, Sirhind, Punjab 5. Takhat Sri Damdama Sahib, Bhatinda, Punjab 6. Guru's Langar Complex, Anandpur, Punjab

The beautification of Takhat Sri Harmandir Ji, Patna Sahib, Bihar, is being planned for Guru Gobind Singh Ji's 350th Parkash Diwas in Dec 2016 / Jan 2017. Baba Ji's legacy continues.

All pictures courtesy of GNNSJ