A SOLDIER: FOR EVER A SOLDIER

The AUTOBIOGRAPHY of CAPT. AMARJIT SINGH KALEKA



A Soldier is: forever a soldier

Other Books

Battle Front-America (English)
Run bhoomi-America (Punjabi)
Oarhak Nibhai Preet (Punjabi)

Autobiography of Capt.A.S Kaleka

Soojwan Jiwan (Punjabi) Story of Martyr Satwant Singh Kaleka (Punjabi)

These books can be read on author's website: www.captainaskaleka.com free of cost

A Soldier is: forever a soldier

Author:

Amarjit Singh Kaleka

Publisher:

Gurmehar Publication, Patiala

A Soldier is: forever a soldier

Capt. Amarjit Singh Kaleka

63, Century Enclave, Nabha Road, Patiala M: 98782-39940

E-mail: captkaleka@yahoo.com

website: www.captainaskaleka.com

ISBN: 978-93-84789-76-3

© Copyright Author

Price: 300/-

Publisher:

Gurmehar Publication, Patiala

Printer:

Shaheed-E-Azam Press and Hospitality Pvt. Ltd.

Email: shaheedeazampta@gmail.com Patiala, 98146-32807

	Contents	
Acknowledgment		
Dedication		
Prefa	ce	
Introd	luction of the Author as an Army officer	
1.	Introduction	11
2.	Birth	21
3.	Childhood	26
4.	My Schools	32
5.	Higher Education	46
6.	Commissioned Officer	59
7.	Days at Mahar Regimental Centre, Sagar (M.P.)	67
8.	Mother's blessings	73
9.	Time at Jalipa and Jodhpur	77
10.	The 1965 War	83
11.	The day of forgiveness	102
12.	Cease Fire	104
13.	The Time at Ambala and in Nagaland State	111
14.	Military Police Assignment	122
15.	Sixteen Months of Unemployment	130
16.	Government College, Tanda	135
17.	Government College, Nabha	139
18.	Marriage	142
19.	My Children and their Upbringing	152
20.	Fight for Education: Battle front America	162
21.	Financial Planning	175
22.	Spiritual Growth	187
23.	My Sorrows and Sins	206
24.	My hobbies	211
25.	Springtime with Friends	220
26.	My Rivals	234
27.	Administrative Qualities	241
28.	As a Community leader	252
29.	My Ideals	255
30.	Fighting Serious Ailments	260
31.	Fighting for Justice	267
32.	Very Difficult Situations	272

288

297

305

33.

34.

35.

My Political Connections

Role Model

Soldier of God

Acknowledgement

My love for learning has been such that for the sake of my two sons' education in America, I and my wife moved to America and lived there for five years (1993-98) along with them. At the time of proceeding, I was working as Deputy Excise & Taxation Commissioner, Patiala division and my wife was working in Punjab School Education department as District Science Supervisor (D.S.S.). For the sake of education, we sold our entire land and the only house in a decent colony of Patiala city. It was a period of great physical and Psychological struggle in a land, whose language, culture and religion were totally different from ours. To survive in alien land we started with an average business. Gradually, we progressed both in business and our sons did well at their schools. The story of our struggle in America has been written in a book titled 'Battle Front America'. Later on, I wrote this book in Punjabi with almost the same theme with name 'Runbhoomi America'. The third book was my auto-biography named 'Orak Nibahi Preet' (Punjabi). Fourth book is in Punjabi on the need of wisdom in society. The book's name is 'Sujwan Jeewan'. Fifth book is written in Punjabi and is regarding my younger brother Satwant Singh Kaleka who died as a martyr in Gurdwara shootout in Milwaukee on 5 August, 2012.

The current book is the English version of my auto-biography named 'Orak Nibahi Preet'.

In this advanced age of having gone through several serious ailments, I could not have written anything without the grace of God and guidance and love of my friends.

I am grateful to Dr. Ranbir Singh Sarao, Prof. and formerly Registrar, Punjabi University, Patiala with whose moral support I could do two M.A.s in the late 60's of my life.

S. Sujit Singh Rakhra former Cabinet Minister, Punjab who was my student at government college, Nabha who always encouraged me to write for betterment of society.

I am grateful to Col. K.S. Bakhsi, A.V.S.M. (Retd.) who was my commanding officer in 1965 war when I was a youngster of 22 year in the rank of a 2/Lt. He saw my patriotic and devotional services to the country as a warrior. He has written about my qualities of head and heart.

I am grateful to S. Shiv Dular Singh Dhillon, I.A.S. Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar who despite his busy schedule has taken time to write preface for this book. I am getting inspiration from him.

I am grateful to Dr. Gurmit Singh Sidhu, Prof and Chairperson of Guru Gobind Singh chair, Punjabi University, Patiala who has always inspired me to write about my exposure and my experience in various fields of life.

I am grateful to Dr. Harnek Singh Dhot, Language Department Punjab, who always encourages me to write and ensure that I continue writing.

Dr. Avtar Singh Dhaliwal (Retd) always rendered me great service and corrects me in putting my ideas in an orderly manner. He has gone through the manuscript very carefully and always gave concrete suggestions for its improvement.

Prof. Chatar Singh Virk a friend of more than 35 years has always encouraged me and gave concrete suggestions.

I am grateful to my wife Jasminder Kaur Kaleka who is my first reader and critic who has always stood with me through thick and thin of life and always suggested improvements in my expression and also text.

Date Patiala Capt. Amarjit Singh Kaleka Addl. E.T.C. (Retd.)

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my revered parents. My father Major Pritam Singh though an Army officer was quite saintly. He laid great stress on the importance of honesty in life. The whole life he made me not only memorise but also make the Hymns of Guru Nanak a part of my life ' To take what rightfully belongs to another, is like a Muslim eating pork, or a Hindu eating beef '. While going to war in 1965 my mother Sardarni Jagir Kaur seriously advised me thus "Dear Son, difficulties are to be faced by men only. Now that you are going to the war, you are to behave like a devoted Sikh and a brave soldier." These two lessons of my parents acted as a beacon light for me.

Preface

Capt. Amarjit Singh Kaleka was, is and will always be a soldier in his demeanour, his ramrod straight stance, his smart turn out and above all his actions. It is a great pleasure to pen a few words for his auto-biographical work.

In the past more than three and a half decades of my close association with him, I lave never seen him deal with anything in his life and career in half measures. The passion and commitment that he brings to everything, has been his hallmark and as he enters his eighties, this passion, rather than diminish, has in all probability "further accentuated, as he has channelized his energies towards the path of spirituality and godliness.

Not once have I seen him wavering in his strong resolve of honesty, integrity and devotion to duty that has come to him by way of inheritance from his noble forefathers and he has steadfastly tread on this path throughout the various careers he pursued in the Army, Education Department, Excise and Taxation Department and his Business Enterprises in the USA. That he overcame all odds, be it war or peace, stands testimony to his solider spirit that has made him to take up every assignment and task as a battle to be fought and won.

The most interesting aspect is that even the journey on the path or spirituality which he has embraced with renewed vigour during the later years has also been taken up in the same spirit. In fact, the direct, candid and forceful conversations with the Master, which he tells you about, have a disarming candour about them.

This book makes a compelling read of the life story of an Officer and a Gentleman, told with the same verve and passion, with which he has, and continues to live it. May his tribe increase and flourish.

Shivdular Singh Dhiilon

formerly of the Indian Administrative Service

Introduction of the Author as an Army officer

Amarjit is an Officer and a Gentleman. He has made success of each of his diverse career choices - Army Officer, Civil Servant, Farmer, Professor, Businessman, by performing them with the highest sense of duty, dedication & service.

I met 2/Lt Amarjit in April 1965, when he reported to 2 Mahar which was under move to Jodhpur on roll in defence of Barmer sector against Sindh. In early September 1965, as CO 2 Mahar my revised assignment was changed to Khemkaran sector where Pakistan invasion had run over some miles of Indian highways to Amritsar. Amarjit's platoon leading its company was providing defence to Brigade HQ from Pakistan's Balooch unit occupying positions in occupied territory. Amarjit's aggressive actions and probes to push back enemy positions invited enemy fire from not only this position but artillery fire as well. His aggressive actions were in complete contrast to the other units who had adopted a defensive posture despite having limited manpower and ammunition. The situation was so dire that I had to carry a few boxes of small arms ammunition for his platoon. The Pakistan attack was beaten back with hand grenades and small arms. The Company Commander was wounded and Amarjit took over the charge. After the cease fire he secured the ceasefire line in Asaluttar by patrolling.

For his personal bravery and leadership, I recommended him for high gallantry award. He submitted, that the award be given to his juniors which will be of help in their career. He served with devotion till the war was over

and after leaving the army followed his dream for pursuing career in civil life. He remained college professor and later joined civil services as ETO and he retired as Addl. Excise and Taxation Commissioner, Punjab in 2001. Taking leave of his job as Deputy Excise & Taxation Commissioner, Patiala Division and selling all his property in India, the family shifted to U.S. for higher education of his two sons in 1993. Elder son, Gurmit did B.S in electrical engineering & computer science from university of Wisconsin and he is a businessman. The younger son, Gurjeet is a well-known Vascular Surgeon. Both sons are happily married to physician girls from India.

He also built successful business' in America and followed the best tradition and culture of his faith for self & family. I wish him God's blessings in his future pursuits.

Secunderabad

Col. K.S. Bakshi, A.V.S.M (Retd)

Introduction

I wrote my autobiography in Punjabi under the name 'Orak Nibhi Preet' (ਓੜਕਿ ਨਿਬਹਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ) about three years ago. On April 6, 2019, this book was released by Shri Suresh Kumar I.A.S., Chief Principal Secretary, Punjab Government and this soldier (i.e. me) was humbled by a standing ovation at the release of this book at the premises of Punjabi University, Patiala. Many V.I.Ps were a part of the function. University students from the department of Religious studies and Zoology also attended. The Vice Chancellor of the university Dr. B.S. Ghuman also addressed the audience. Sardar Shiv Dular Singh Dhillon, I.A.S., then D.C. Amritsar, who wrote the preface for this book also spoke of our decades of association with him. Shri A.S. Rai, I.G. Police, Patiala range also spoke about the spiritual ambience of the book. Books were distributed to the audience and also to the students.

After a few months a few close friends suggested me to write the same book in English. I also realised that if I do not write this book in English, even my grandchildren and other relatives living in America would not be able to know what I did in my life and what were my principles that I stood for. S. Surjit Singh Rakhra (Ex-Minister, Punjab) my exstudent from Government college, Nabha and also a close relative suggested to me not to waste time in translating the book. He rather suggested me to get it translated from someone else. I tried it being translated. The translator

wrote sieze fire in place ceasefire. You can very well realize how the other translation must have been. I consulted a few friends who educated me on the subject of translation. Professor (Dr.) Swaraj Singh a former college and University teacher with 40 years standing opined that translation was the most difficult thing in life. I at once realised that I shall have to write this book in English a-fresh. In any translation one is often tied to the words of language of the book being translated. The sense and spirit of every language is so different and is difficult to translate. From this small experiment of translation, I have learnt one thing that I shall have to write the English myself. The title of this book is -Forever a Soldier. The name of this book, shows my character, habits, simplicity, steadiness, forbearance and firmness even in face of opposition, difficulties and severe ailments.

I was born in 1943 in a family of nine siblings. My father retired as an army Major from Patiala state army when I was barely seven years old. My father was a simple, honest and educated man. In the job itself he saved in 21 years army commissioned service (1928-49) Rs 30,000, out of which he built a house in Patiala at Top Khana gate area, the place of his dreams. He also bought 125 bighas of farming land in our native village Dugal. When he retired in September 1949, he had Rs. 10,000 in cash. Circumstances forced my parents to marry my eldest brother and eldest sister though very young in 1949-50 exhausting all the saved cash. After one year of his marriage my elder brother separated from the family and my father was left with only his monthly pension which was about Rs 231 per month. In a family of nine siblings I was number five i.e. the centre.

Three sisters and one brother were elder to me and three brothers and one sister were younger to me. I was a serious boy. I observed everything meticulously.

Economic situation of our family became very tight and I was sent to average schools like Singh Sabha, Sewak Jatha, Khalsa High school and village school. Later I was sent to Mohindra College, Patiala where I finished my M.A. in Political Science when I was 20 years old.

In November 1962, there was a war in which China attacked India. Indian army faced defeat and resultant humiliation. I felt personally hurt. Out of love for my motherland I decided to join Indian army as an officer. On completion of army training I was commissioned on 3rd May 1964 in Mahar Regiment, an infantry formation.

Soon, I was a part of the 1965 war. Such a situation arose that we were out of ammunition. When, either death or running away from field were the only two options, I preferred respectable death. Army was not a career of my choice and I had joined army only to serve my motherland even at the cost of sacrificing my life. I was commanding a company and the battalion commander Col. K.S. Bakshi was about 50 yards away from me sitting in a bunker still half dug in our company position. He had been requested by our company commander, Major Kulwinder Singh to bring some ammunition and also guide the company fight. After Major Kulwinder was hit by a bullet, I was given the command of Delta company. In such a situation, my Second in Command, a Subedar advised me to retire since we were out of ammunition. I requested him to let me think over. It took me less than two minutes in deciding that we will wait for enemy standing in the trenches and when the enemy attacked us, we will go out of our trenches and fight the enemy with bayonets. We waited and waited. The enemy neither fired upon us nor advanced to attack us. These were those 100 minutes I was praying and I also requested the troops to pray and be ready to die with honour. Anyway, at about 6 p.m. help came from our tankers and the enemy ran away after the tanks fired and attacked them. When the tanks attacked their positions two Pakistani infantry companies had been sitting in a defiladed position near a pond.

After the enemy ran away, Col. Bakshi came out of his bunker and embraced me. In a jubilant mood he asked me if I would be happy with Mahavir Chakra or Vir Chakra. I humbly requested him to give award for those people who were going to stay and serve in army. On my request a Vir Chakra was given to Havildar Bhim Sen More and another award to Naik Sarkatey. I was also given Mentioned in Despatches though I was recommended for Vir Chakra later on.

I realized that a place where death seemed so certain, God saved me. This day 17th September 1965 (Friday) made me a 'soldier forever'.

A soldier is simple, dignified and with perseverance, he never gives up even in the face of disability, disease, death or any other difficulty. He holds on to his principles even in the face of opposition or loss of money or damage in career. A soldier is not a yes man. He stands his ground, stay the course and is the winner always. He is in a perpetual stage of 'Chardikala'. Clarity of thought and having single minded determination are my other characteristics. I lived an honest life. With honest money I was far behind my

colleagues but I never felt shy on that account. I was proud of being honest. I kept my chest high and gave the look of a dignified soldier.

For my marriage in 1972 I did not accept any dowry. I raised my two sons with the values (Sanskar). I made big changes in life. For the sake of love of plants I sold my ancestral land in village Dugal in 1978 and bought land in Himachal Pradesh in Kangra District in 1979. I developed this land into an orchard and named it 'Shivalik Bagh' as it lay in Shivalik range of Himalayas. I am proud to be a citizen of India and despite living in America for over 13 years I did not opt for citizenship of America as I thought India was my motherland.

Learning never ends. Learning makes one wise. I did two M.A.s in Divinity at age 67 and 70 years. I have a firm belief that learning and teaching go hand in hand. Those who are learning have to teach others. Learning goes with you on death and comes back on re-birth. That is why you see some kids very wise. For the sake of education of my two sons, I and my wife took five years of leave from our jobs from 1993 to 1998. My wife was then working as 'District Science Supervisor'. In 1993 I was working as Deputy Excise & Taxation Commissioner, Patiala Division, Patiala, an important position of our department. Being brave and soldierly I did not take much time in deciding to go to U.S.A for the sake of education of my sons. Being honest we had no money. We sold our land in Himachal Pradesh and the only house in Patiala city in New Lal Bagh, area.

During my stint in Excise & Taxation department I travelled a lot by buses as an E.T.O, A.E.T.C and also D.E.T.C.

and never felt shy. At Ludhiana once, where I was working as an E.T.O. during the years 1977-80, a sale tax advocate asked me my salary. I informed him that it was Rs. 1100 per month. In neighbouring office, another officer of our department sat. The advocate further informed me that my neighbouring officer makes this much money in one day, what have you to say? I said, "God has made him an officer and a tax collector. In place of doing justice and recovering proper tax from them keeping dignity of his office, he has become a beggar by choice. I pity him."

Starting with birth in large family of nine siblings and average economic conditions I and my family have grown financially, socially and also evolved spiritually. Attainment of genuine richness was not acquired in a day. It occurred with God's grace giving me birth in a good family and getting me married to a respectable and genuine girl. Cooperation of my sons in everything we did, boosted my morale. It took many decades of dedication to reach this position. To start with I was not a pure soul. But with God's grace and Guru's guidance I have become really rich. Now my mind is free of doubt and fear. I am not afraid of death. I have realized that I am a soul and my real home is God's home and I am ready to go there. Only I have to write something, remember God and pray to him and serve society.

Being prepared at any time for any situation has been my character. Even at this age and with so many serious ailments, I keep a .315 bore rifle and .32 bore revolver that gives me confidence and I feel like a soldier.

I have been diabetic since 2012. During the years 2014-16 I faced several ailments and had to go through

heart surgery, cancer and hernia operations. As a follow up of my cancer in urine bladder, I had to go for systoscopy test ten times. Systoscopy is tough and is like an operation itself. I battelled with all ailments with the spirit of a soldier. I was an average student and went to average schools but slowly with hard work and perseverance and steadiness I progressed as a student. These qualities I always held them close to my heart.

In June 2017, I started writing. In about two years I wrote five books and distributed them. It is my way to serve the society. I am of the view that even if 500 people get some benefit from my books, ideas and thoughts, I think I shall consider myself duly rewarded. I raised my kids to be honest gursikh beings. I taught them the ethical values of life. As soon as I saw them well settled in America, I distributed businesses and houses in America between them and came to India. I believe in one's independence. Independence is very healthy for any being. I needed independence. I and my wife are living in Patiala city in a house that we built in 2000. We are living a pious and dignified life full of gratitude and prayers.

I was also non-believer in God for a few years of my life. In 1987, a nearly fatal accident turned me towards God and by 2000 I was fully convinced that God was there. I got baptised in 2001. In 2008, Guru Nanak Dev Ji blessed me with his vision and that completely changed me.

This book is 6th in the series of books that I wrote. The first five books were, 'Battle front America' written in English about our experiment in America from 1993 to 1998 and 2002 to 2010. The second book is a Punjabi version of the same experiment. Third book is my autobiography in

Punjabi named 'Orak Nibahi Preet'. 4th book is 'Sujhwan Jiwan' a book on wisdom in Punjabi. Fifth book is regarding my younger brother who got martyred in America defending the Sangat fighting the attacker, Michael Page at Gurudwara Oak Creek in Milwaukee on August 5, 2012.

I have been very fortunate to have so much experience and exposure to many places, situations, difficulties and professions. I saw five professions i.e. army soldiering, college teaching, an officer in Sales tax and Excise department, business in U.S.A. and farming in India. I am now writing with a speed and wish to share my knowledge with society that I love. I feel that I owe a lot to society.

Having written a few books, my perspectives have changed. Now, I realize that readers are interested more in knowing how I faced challenges in life at different stations of life. Surviving with paltry salary in the neighbourhood of prosperous officers in Excise & Taxation department, sometimes my well-wishers thought that I was left far behind others. Some relative, sarcastically commented once upon my wife, "you do not look like the wife of an E.T.O." Once travelling on a scooter, I stopped at a road side tea shop near a canal. Another person also a customer asked me where I was working. I told him, the Excise & Taxation department. He asked, "are you a clerk or an inspector?"

This book is not a translation of my autobiography in Punjabi. I have added some more chapters and shortened other unnecessary details. The aim is to give you details as to how I faced music at the hands of corrupt officers and how I fought injustice like a soldier. 20 years after

retirement, I am still a soldier i.e. honest, brave, grateful and proud of my innings.

Parents have a big role in every body's life. My father gave me the concept of utmost honesty and my mother blessed me to act bravely while going for war in 1965.

My father was a devoted Sikh and memorised lot of Gurbani. His own life was full of truth, honesty and dedication. He often uttered a shabad by Guru Nanak Dev Ji,

ਹਕੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੂਅਰ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ॥ ਗੁਰੂ ਪੀਰੂ ਹਾਮਾ ਤਾ ਭਰੇ ਜਾ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੂ ਨ ਖਾਇ॥(SGGS-141)

Saith Nanak: To grab what is another's is evil, As pig's flesh to Muslim and cow's flesh to the Hindu. The preceptor for his follower shall intercede. Only when the latter has eaten not carrion.

My father uttered this shabad several times and made me not only memorise but ensured that I made it a part of discipline of my life. While leaving for 1965 war, my mother advised me to act bravely in the face of enemy. Their teaching had a great impact on my person and I have become a soldier forever.

In the evening of my life, I realise that honesty itself is incomplete without courage. I have seen in life, meek honest officers not being able to point out discrepancies in corrupt officials working under them. That honesty I feel is in incomplete. Without courage, honesty is only half the picture.

Fear does not frighten me. Death also seems so natural to me. By now I have realized that I am a soul and do not die. I know I have come to the world for upliftment of my soul. Guru Nanak saith in the Japu ji Sahib,

ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਥਾਪਿ ਰਖੀ ਧਰਮਸਾਲ ॥ (Japu ji Sahib) Lord has created the earth as the place for Rightous Action. This earth is not a permanent abode or home. We are here only to live a life of honesty, humanity and responsibility. At one's death, body made of five elements of earth gets immense in earth either by cremation or by burial of a body. Soul is an element of God, and on physical death of a body, soul goes to its home and joins Parmatma, its real source.

I have also added a chapter, 'The officers' to include brief details of my ex-colleagues / other officers of other departments. The word 'The' has been added to express their exclusiveness. The story of my life shall be incomplete without respectable reference to them.

In the coming pages/chapters, I welcome you to go through the story of my life unfolding itself.

Birth

My paternal family are the natives of village Kaleke near Barnala city. Chaudhary Maluka Kala founded this village in around 1640 A.D. The village Kaleke also was blessed by 6th Guru Shri Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji who visited village Kaleke several times, though Guru Sahib was mainly headquartered at village Daroli near Moga. Maluka and Baba Phul (grandfather of Baba Ala Singh) were good friends. Both were brave and were followers of Guru Hargobind Ji. Soon they became close friends and this friendship changed into relationship when Ala Singh (phul's grandson) aged 18 was married to Fatto 11 years old girl granddaughter of Chaudari Maluka in 1707 A.D.

After the death of Banda Singh Bahadur in 1716 and weakening of Mughals in Delhi, brave Sikh people arose from villages and started attacking and controlling areas. During this period young Ala Singh made Barnala his headquarter and started enhancing his territory of influence and control. Baba Ala Singh also conquered about 300 villages up to Bhawanigarh area by 1740 A.D. My ancestors namely Chaudhary Haria and Chaudry Siria (real brother of Mai Fatto) and their cousin S. Gurbaksh Singh (later Diwan) conquered Sanour pargana and had control of over 100 villages. Both Baba Ala Singh and the Kaleka family worked independently up to 1740 A.D.

When it came to becoming a Raja, our family under the leadership of S. Gurbaksh Singh Kaleka surrendered their 100 villages of Sanour Pargana in favour of Baba Ala Singh and opted to be his Sardars. The present Patiala city fell in the area of Sanour Pargana. Baba Ala Singh founded Patiala city in 1752. Baba Ala Singh made Gurbaksh Singh Kaleka his dewan and asked him to lay the foundation stone of Quilla of Patiala as a matter of honour for the Dewan. By 1760 A.D. Baba Ala Singh and Diwan Gurbaksh Singh Kaleka and other brave Sardars conquered about 900 villages. The other two families who played a prominent role in the establishment of Patiala State were Jejis and Samejas.

All the families and the persons who took part in various expeditions were rewarded and accommodated and settled according to their contribution and political needs of newly formed state. Kalekas were asked to evacuate Sanour and were allocated villages in the Samana and Shutrana area to contain another Muslim family of Hariao Thaska. This Muslim family was having influence over about 100 Muslim villages of the area Samana / Shutrana and was not reconciled with idea of Ala Singh becoming a Raja.

S. Gurbaksh Singh got villages of Kamalpur and half village of Bahmna. Chaudhary Haria was given four villages in what is now Patran mandi area namely Dugal, Patran, Burar and Nihalgarh. Chaudhary Siria was given three villages namely Dhandoli Kalan, Dhandoli Khurad and Janaal. Chaudhary Haria had three wives and four sons. One son was Sardar Sihan Singh. We are the descendent of S. Sihan Singh whose 'Patti' held land in villages of Dugal and Burar. That is how our family moved from village Kaleke via Sanour to Dugal in about 40 years.

My great grandfather S. Maan Singh was an enterprising person. He walked on foot to Patiala and

sought a job with Maharaja Mohinder Singh of Patiala in 1870. By his honesty and wisdom, he became a respectable officer and retired in 1890 to go back to village and take care of his family responsibilities. My grandfather S. Kapoor Singh was studying in 5th grade in local City High School when Maharaja Rajinder Singh gave him a job at the tender age of ten years on the retirement of his father.

S. Kapoor Singh again by virtue of his honesty and loyalty rose to be an A.D.C. to Maharaja in 1909. In 1910, he was commissioned into army and he remained a recruiting officer till his retirement in 1928. He died in the year 1947. My father Major Pritam Singh (1906-1990) was a very brilliant boy at City High School. He was doing F.Sc medical in 1926 at Mohindra College, Patiala when he got a chance to be commissioned in the army. He knew English, Persian, Urdu and Punjabi. He spoke fluent English. He was married to my mother in 1931 and from 1933 to 1952 nine children were born i.e. five sons and four daughters. My father side family was quite fashionable and had been living in Patiala city since 1870.

My mother Jagir Kaur was married to my father in 1931 when she was only 15 years old. My father was earlier married in 1924 and 1927. But both the wives had died during delivery of a child. My maternal family belonged to village Bhaini Fatta and my Nana Ji (Maternal grandfather) S. Joginder Singh Ji was a well-known man of the area. Physically he was very strong. This family loved animals including horses. My Nana Ji had another younger brother S. Shamsher Singh who lived with him. Nana Ji owned about 300 bighas of land in village Bhaini Fatta. Before 1930 A.D. my Nana Ji had bought another 800 bighas of land near

Chak Abdula railway station in Bahawalpur State now in Pakistan. The family had leased their land in Bhaini Fatta and developed land in Bahawalpur State. They were simple and robust people with Gursikh values. My mother had two more brothers younger to her. They were Gurdev Singh and Jagroop Singh. She had another younger sister Hardial Kaur who died of cancer at a young age of 28 years. My maternal family people were fair coloured, tall and well-built but were not very educated. My mother loved Buffalos and always kept milk and butter in plenty in our house. During partition, my mother's uncle S. Shamsher Singh and his son S. Atma Singh sacrificed their lives when Muslim mobs asked them to either embrace Islam or face death. They faced death happily. My mother often remembered them and out of love started shedding tears.

I was born in Bahawalpur State at village Joginder Singh wala (named after my Nana Ji) near Chak Abdula Railway Station. My elder brother Parminder was born in 1933 followed by three sisters i.e. Rupinder (1935) Rajinder (1937) and Jaswinder (1939). Since I was born after three sisters, my birth was considered very auspicious by my parents and all connected families. My father was sent a telegram. At that time, he was a senior army captain in Patiala State army and the battalion was on training. The commanding officer asked my father about the telegram. When informed that a son was born in the family, the training was dispersed and a party celebrated my birth in an army fashion. In a few months, my father got promoted as a Major and my birth was considered doubly auspicious.

My Nana Ji named me Ghamanda Singh, thinking that I was full of pride. I was born on first Magh 1999

Bikarmi which corresponds to 13th January 1942. But by calculation mistake of some teacher of Khalsa School, Patiala where I was studying in 8th grade recorded my date of birth as 13th January 1943.

Childhood

The Patiala state came into being with Baba Ala Singh. Baba Ala Singh laid the foundation of Patiala city in 1752 AD. Its original name was Pati Ala Singh. There is no letter 'ਤ' in the English language. So, people started calling it Patiala due to increased influence of English. By 1760, Baba Ala and his wife Mai Fatto (Fateh Kaur) had collected nine hundred villages. Baba Ala's headquarter was at Barnala. He died in 1765. After that, his descendants came to Patiala city and started to rule from there. In 1947 the population of Patiala city was approximately 50,000. The Maharajas of Patiala used to think ahead of time. Maharaja Mohinder Singh established Mahindra College at Patiala. This college started functioning in 1875. This was the first college in the whole of Punjab. Panjab University did not exist at that time and this college was affiliated to the Calcutta University.

Maharaja Rajinder Singh built Baradari garden, which had twelve doors. One of the Maharaja's two wives was a British lady. The name of this British wife was Florence. She was very fond of plants. There were no aeroplanes in those days. Whenever the Maharani and the Maharaja sailed to England through France and back to India, they brought hundreds of plants from France to Patiala. France came before England via sea route. Patiala has Asia's oldest garden of ferns, which is in the Baradari Garden.

Maharaja Rajinder Singh established Chail city and

his son Maharaja Bhupinder Singh developed the cricket ground at a height of about 7000 feet above M.S.L. In the first world war (1914-1919), as General, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh sent his troops and also acted as a morale booster to the rest of the Sikh troops. Patiala State was one of the five hundred princely states of India. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh and later on his son, Maharaja Yadvindra Singh were chairmen of Chamber of Princes. The aim of this chamber was to act like a class in respect of their problems viz-a-viz viceroy of India or British Government. Bhupinder Singh popularized Patiala's turban and Patiala peg worldwide. He had India's first air craft. The Polo team of Patiala state remained World Champions in the years 1910 and 1911.

There were four infantry battalions in the Patiala state army. Those battalions were numbered First Patiala, Second Patiala, Third Patiala and Fourth Patiala infantry. There was also cavalry and artillery. The total number of troops was about seven thousand. My father was the second in command of Fourth Patiala Infantry. Because of the dismemberment of the princely states in 1949, he was retired from the post of Major at the age of 43.

The first memories of the childhood are of the summer of 1946 when I was about four and a half year old. At that time, my father had a bungalow spread over one-acre of land. The structure of that house is still in my mind. There was a government sweeper in our house who cleaned and dusted our house. He was from a Hindu family and had three wives. My mother called him Keramara. It was said that somebody had made a complaint to Maharaja Bhupinder Singh about his poverty and about his having

three wives. Keramara was said to be produced before the Maharaja. Keramara touched Maharaja's feet and on being asked about three wives, he said, "Maharaj, I am not an ordinary Jamadar." I am an employee of the kingdom of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh." Maharaja Bhupinder Singh laughed off and gave him two gold coins as a gift out of kindness.

Our bungalow was the last building on the left side while going to the military area from the Sunami Gate Road. These houses were also called the 'Bungalows' of the Majors. There were two other Majors living in those Bungalows. The first house was of Major Goswami, the second house was of Major Ranjodh Singh Grewal and third and the last Bungalow was ours. There was a large banyan tree on the back of our Bungalow. This tree was adjacent to the building of a Nihang Singh dera. Now the government has demolished all the Bungalows and made new small two-story houses therein but the Banyan tree (Bohad) still stands.

I still remember that my Nana Ji, Sardar Joginder Singh being sick, used to rest under this Banyan tree. There were two chairs and a small table beside his cot. Nana Ji was ill and he expired in our official house. His body was sent to his village Bhaini Fatta in a Lorry bus for cremation.

At that time, I saw a lorry for the first time. It was tri coloured. At that time there was a photographer in the house who was taking photos of Nana Ji. The photographer used to pull out the veil and looked at the object to be photographed. I had seen the photographer for the first time. I still remember the departure of my Nana ji and white clad women wailing sitting on the floor.

Then came 1947, the year of Partition. A few days before the Independence in 1947, Maharaja Yadvinder Singh called my father and asked him to put up a big camp at Sirhind to send Muslims safely to Pakistan. While thinking about deputing my father for this important mission, he discussed the whole issue with Gen Gurdial Singh Harika, then the Prime Minister of Patiala State. Gen. Harika was a close friend of my grandfather, S. Kapoor Singh and he endorsed Maharaja's choice. At that time the arms were issued to three orderlies in our Government house so that they could protect the family. One such orderly was Sepoy Jarnail Singh, second was Sepoy Visakha Singh and the third was a grandson of our father's uncle. His name was Jagdev Singh. Vishakha Singh was from Mansa area. He had sharp features. His complexion was white and had blue eyes. Vishakha Singh wore a beautiful turban, but he was a man of a very simple nature. His job was to help my mother in the kitchen. Second orderly Jarnail Singh was a Sidhu Jatt of Village Naiwala. As my mother and he were of the same caste (gotra), we were instructed to address him as Mama Ji (Respected maternal uncle). His job was to take us to school and bring us back from there. My mother was very fond of buffalos. We had three buffalos in our bungalow. There was abundance of milk, butter and ghee at home. Occasionally my mother used to make milk ice cream with a manually operated machine.

There was a pram in our house, which was called Baghi at that time. My father had bought this Baghi for our elder brother Parminder. Occasionally my father used to take me in Baghi and walk me around in about half an acre lawn. In 1947, there were disturbances in the country, my

father deputed a Havildar to train my eldest brother and three sisters in self-defence and taught them to fire from the .22 rifles.

I still remember that at the back side of our government house, the stubble of some fodder was lying in a standing position near the campus of the Nihangs. It was about 10 ft high. Jarnail saw a Muslim hiding in this stubble. There was a small room on the first floor of our house towards the banyan tree, whose one window was open to that side. There was also no wire gauge on that window. There was a bed beside that window. Uncle Jarnail Singh took position standing on the bed and fired a shot and the Muslim died. By the time all the elder children (my three sisters and the brother) had climbed the bed and looked through the window. I was too little and could not climb up the bed because of the bed posts being high and said, " (Mama Ji), I too have to see the Muslim man."

In 1948, while residing in the Government House, I was admitted to the Singh Sabha School at the Mall Road, Patiala. My three elder sisters were already studying there. At that time the school was up to the fourth standard for boys and the girls could study up to 10th class. At that time a separate school was started for the girls in the Singh Sabha, named Mahindra Kanya Vidyalaya after the name of Maharani Mohinder Kaur of Patiala. By 1948, my eldest sister Rupinder used to go to school on foot. Jarnail Singh used to take me and my two elder sisters Rajinder and Jaswinder to school and also bring us back. In those days, Urdu as a language was still taught in schools. The shops that have came around the Singh Sabha now, were not there at that time. Our first grade classes were taken in a

corner, where upper and lower Mall are joined together. Now this place is called Fountain Chowk.

After finishing our classes, I and my two-elder sisters Rajinder and Jaswinder used to wait and sit under a Shisham tree in front of the Lower Mall side Gate of the Singh Sabha. Sometimes we had to wait long for uncle Jarnail Singh. For the first time I saw a cycle rickshaw under the same tree. I remember when a truck load of bricks were being dropped for constructing Phul cinema, a person standing under the same tree told us that the cinema would be built there, which would look like a flower outwardly. Another incident which I still remember is that one day we all three were waiting for the orderly. At that time, a middleaged woman came and looked at all three of us. To me she said, "Son, can you do me a favour?" I was an innocent child. I was still looking at her, when she said, "offer one Anna before the Guru Maharaj, and pick up two Annas," showing me one anna coin. I did not have any idea of such things whether it was good or bad, a dishonest deed or honest, moral or immoral, but instinctively I moved my head in a way to express my unwillingness. The woman left quietly.

This simple event that occurred in my childhood became the ideal of my life and I chose the moral path.

My Schools

My great grandfather and grandfather were very fond of learning. In 1870, my great grandfather, S. Maan Singh reached Patiala walking on foot from our native village, Dugal and got a job with Maharaja Patiala. At that time Maharaja Mohinder Singh was the Maharaja. He was very passionate about Mohindra College which was near completion. S. Maan Singh met Maharaja there only. After a brief discussion, he was given a job. In a few months, impressed with his wisdom the Maharaja became very happy with Sardar Maan Singh and allotted him a government horse. Every now and then he went to the village on that given horse. In 1885, he went to village Dugal and brought his five years old son Kapoor Singh along with him. Although in those days, our village had a primary school but he might have realized that Patiala was a better place for education.

In 1872 AD, Maharaja Mohinder Singh passed away and his son Rajinder Singh became the Maharaja. In 1890, S. Maan Singh wanted to retire after working for 20 years. Those days for retirement one had to present oneself before the Maharaja and make a request. He met Maharaja Rajinder Singh and requested for retirement. Maharaja Rajinder Singh informed S. Mann Singh that he would give his son Kapoor Singh a job. When S. Maan Singh submitted that his son was only 10 years old and was studying in the fifth grade, Maharaja Rajinder Singh said, "your 10-year-old

son should be as good as any other 20 years old." The young boy was produced before the Maharaja. By talking, Maharaja Rajinder Singh was highly impressed with the boy and kept him in the job. S. Kapoor Singh became a very successful officer by virtue of his honesty, goodwill and discipline. But he was unhappy throughout his life for not completing his studies.

In 1926 my father (born 1906), was doing F.Sc. Medical at Mohindra College Patiala. My father was quite smart in studies. Till 1924 he remained monitor of his class in City High School, Patiala. In 1926, he got the chance to become an army officer. Like my grandfather, he too had to discontinue his studies. My father became a 2/Lt. in 1928 and retired from the post of a Major in 1949. During the job, he attended some army courses at number of places in which he had an opportunity to interact with the British officers. My father spoke English with confidence and was quite fluent. The British officers often asked him where he did his graduation from. When my father told them that he was only a matriculate often surprised them.

My father wanted all his children to do at least graduation. He was extra keen on my quick progress. In two years, I was made to pass four classes i.e. two at school and two by tuition at home. I did first grade from the Singh Sabha School and the second class by home tuition. For the third class, I was sent to Dhudial School and the fourth one was completed by keeping home tuition. Starting with the first class from the Singh Sabha in 1948, I passed four classes till March 1950.

Whereas the two sisters stayed back at Singh Sabha, I was moved to Sewak Jatha School. My elder sister,

Jaswinder Kaur, got promoted to fifth class in Mahindra Kanya Vidyala in the Singh Sabha building. Two-year elder sister from her, Rajinder failed in the fifth class and studied onwards with sister Jaswinder in the same school. In 1956, I and both my elder sisters passed Matriculation

There was also a Gurdwara Sahib in the Sewak Jatha school, which is still there. This school was only up to the sixth grade. The Gurdwara hall was being repaired. All children entering the fifth grade were brought in the Gurdwara Hall. There were bricks in the hall and we were sitting on loose bricks. Masterji (Teacher) gave papers to all children and asked them to draw a brick. The children who did four classes properly, knew how to draw a brick. There was another child, whom I did not know, had drawn the shape of brick. I asked him why he had drawn slanted brick. He asked me, "do you not know how to draw a brick?" The children who drew brick well were given drawing as a subject.

Some children were unable to draw the image of brick. I was also one of them. There was a room on the left side of the Sewak Jatha School as one entered where Headmaster addressed us. Headmaster's name was Gopal Krishna Kapoor. He was wearing a beautiful turban. He told us that children who could not take drawing, now could take civics as a subject. He told us that Civics taught our duties towards our community and family. I liked the words of Master Ji and I kept civics as a subject. Due to the shortage of rooms in the school building, most of the classes were held in park opposite the school building. This park was later named Master Tara Singh Park. I was the youngest child in the whole class. 90 percent of the children

belonged to refugee families who had migrated from areas now known as Pakistan. I did not understand the study of class five. One day I asked my father to get me demoted to a lower class. My father smiled and said, "You are the son of an Army officer, you have to move forward, not move backward." Well I became silent. One day, some children were talking among themselves and were asking about the vocation of each other's father. One student asked another, "What does your father do?" The student replied that his father repaired bicycles. When asked, the other student said that his father was a scrap dealer. When I was asked by these children, I told them that my father was a retired Major from Army. Both of them said, "they have been deserted from their homes in Pakistan and have been going through financial difficulties. Your father is such a big officer, you should go to Yadvindra Public School." When I came home, I told my father everything and requested him to send me to Y.P.S. My father told me that, "if we were one or two children then he could surely send me to Y.P.S. Now that you are nine siblings, I can only send you to an average school."

The practice of teachers beating the children was prevalent in this school. A skinny Master, whose name was Jai Singh, used to beat his class students a lot. I was not smart in studies, but being soft natured and perhaps an officer's son, no master ever beat me. In those days, fountain pens were very expensive. Ball point pens were not there at all. The fountain pens were not manufactured in India at that time. They were invariably imported from England. The price of a fountain pen started at around four rupees. One day during a recess, there was a young man

standing in the park and selling white pens. In place of rubber tube, ink was directly filled in this pen. The price of this pen was 12 annas. I found this price too low, I ran home in the interval time to get money. I remember that I was breathless and I very eagerly asked for 12 annas from my father and bought this pen. Two days later the pen's ink began to leak. My hands and clothes got spoiled with ink.

I studied at Sevak Jatha School from April 1950 to April 1952. There was another student in the fifth class who was much elder, bigger and bolder compared to all the students of the class. His name was Bhag Singh. He was son of a transporter. All the students used to sit on the mats. At that time the holder was dipped in ink to write. In those days, in addition to glass inkpot a new kind appeared. The new kind of inkpot was of iron and was called 'Chor Dawat'. Its structure was such that even on dropping the ink did not spill from the inkpot. One day my ink got dried. I asked for ink to write from my classmate Bhag Singh who was sitting next to me. He said, "It will cost you one paisa for a single dip." It amounted to two annas the same day. It was 12 paisas according to new money. I was a child of shy nature and could not ask two annas from my parents. The next day I went to school. On reaching the school, my bully class mate Bhag Singh asked me for two annas. When he did not get two annas, he added two more paisas as interest. Within a few days this figure grew to six annas.

My mother kept the money here and there and often forgot. One day she kept one rupee note at some place. I stole that rupee and cleared the account with Bhag Singh. I spent rest of money slowly on other days. Subsequently, my mother kept a five rupee note and I stole

that also. I spent some money and kept the remainder in glass jars in our kitchen. My mother used to keep pulses stored in big glass jars. The very next day, my mother was searching for that five Rupee note. The thief behaves differently. Seeing guilt on my face, my mother asked me, "Have you stolen the money?" I said, "yes." Soon, I took out one-rupee notes from all the pots and gave it to her. My mother advised me to ask for money when I needed and said," you could have asked me or your father." After this, it was God's grace that I never again stole any money from my house or anywhere else. Afterwards, If I ever needed money I asked my parents.

From this episode, I have learnt that the child should also be given some pocket money in commensurate with his/her needs.

The parent should keep in touch with the child's teachers. If my father had been in touch with teachers, he could have been able to protect me and save me from the torture of an elder bully like Bhag Singh. When we sent our sons to Yadvindra Public School, Patiala, we were in touch with their teachers and discussed the progress of their studies, games, friends and their behavior etc.

One more thing the parents need to know is who the friends of children are. It is very important. If children's friends are careless, then it is natural to have a bad effect on your children. Our house was in New Lal Bagh Patiala adjacent to Yadvindra Public School. We knew the children 's friends and also their parents. The sons of large landlords were not interested in any career in job or business as they had to manage their ancestral land only. I have heard many big landlord relatives saying," we are sending the child to

school just to grow youthful." On the other hand, we were preparing our children for business or job, that's why we wanted our children to have friendship with children who had to do business or jobs in life and who were ambitious.

In the year 1952, in the seventh grade, I was admitted in B.N. Khalsa High School, which is still near Patiala railway station. This school was situated on the site of S. Deva Singh orphanage. At that time the existing bus stand was not there. There was a small canal at this place. At that time there were many small bus stands in many different areas of Patiala city. As buses used to ply from Bahera Road Patiala for Sunam and Samana, and to Chail from Topkhana Gate.

At that time, S. Nanak Singh was the head master of this School. He used to always wear three-piece suits in the winter. His bicycle was of the Releigh Company, which was always shining and had clean looks. There was a double chain cover and a costly bell on his bicycle. On parking the bicycle in front of the office, Vishakha Singh, who was a peon, used to clean the bicycle with a cloth. There was Mall road on one side of the school and on the other side, which is now bus stand, it was unused Government land. On the third side of the school there was also an empty ground, where later on Tata Motors Company setup their workshop. The site of Tata Motors was about two acres, which had date palm trees.

During those days, at BN Khalsa School, there was practice of beating the children and our head Master Nanak Singh was very fond of it. S. Nanak Singh used to ask, Visakha Singh, peon to bring canes of palm. I still remember Visakha Singh cutting a small uneven stick from

the date palm tree and smoothening it with the help of a knife which he always kept in his pocket. It soon became a fine cane. I have been beaten only once by Nanak Singh. One day, I did not know what happened that all the school students were made to stand in a few lines and each student got four canes as punishment. I had never been beaten and when my turn came, I pulled back my hand. The stick hit Nanak Singh's knee. After that I do not know how many canes I got out of his anger. One impression of that punishment stick is still visible on the inside of my right thumb, which is a permanent memory of Khalsa School. Later on, I learnt that at the behest of Mohindra College boys, our school boys had left the school as a part of the general strike.

There was another English teacher Giani Bachan Singh. I don't know how much knowledge he had, but he was also very fond of beating the students. I started to understand English and civics at this school. I did not have any science subject and was very weak in mathematics.

Another spiritual thing happened at Khalsa School. An intelligent, middle aged man was wandering in our school. I felt that I knew that person, and his name was Giani Kartar Singh. He started teaching our class after two or three days. He told us that his name was Giani Kartar Singh and that he would teach us Punjabi and religion. Giani Kartar Singh was a very good man. After passing the seventh grade in April 1953, I was in the eighth grade. In those days after the month of April, the students got two months of vacation. Home work was given, which was to be checked after the end of the summer vacation.

In 1953, my father planned to move to our native

village Dugal along with whole family. From 1950 to 1952, a communist party movement started in our region, which took possession of the lands of the big landowners and used to give it to their tenants. Similar efforts were attempted at our land too. Our tenant (Mujara) Jagta Ram was a noble man. He asked my father to come to the village and take over the land. In addition, primary school of our village had been upgraded to 8th standard. In the first week of July, 1953 we moved to our native village, Dugal. Both I and my elder sisters Jaswinder and Rajinder were admitted in the eighth grade at Dugal School. We had eight children in 8th class. Another boy of our village, Lal Singh a cousin was from Chotti Dugal. He was nearly 20 years old and had full beard. Another cousin was Bhagwant Singh, who was about four years elder to me. There were 3 more boys from neighboring villages like Ladvanjara in our class.

There was no building for our new school. A school of four class rooms had been running for the last 100 years in the village in a very old and small building. In 1920, Honorary Magistrate of our village Sardar Tek Singh had built the Gurdwara Building. The people of the village started school there. I and my two elder sisters, Rajinder and Jaswinder studied in Dugal school for almost 7 months since August 1953 and passed the eighth grade in April 1954.

For the ninth class we three siblings came back to our Patiala house. Now the environment at Patiala had changed altogether. Earlier, the parents used to live in Patiala, which gave us lot of moral support. Both elder sisters got admitted in Mahindra Kanya Mahavidyala, which was in Singh Sabha Gurdwara building. I got admitted in my

old Khalsa School. S. Nanak Singh was still the Head Master and the rest of the staff was the same. I was good at English and civics but I was weak in Mathematics. Mathematics had two parts i.e. first part was Algebra and Arithmetic and the second part was Geometry. In tenth class, my father engaged S.D. Girls school Headmaster, Sita Ram Sharma for tuition for me and my two sisters. Sitaram was about fifty years old and he used to teach us at our home. At that time my father used to pay him Rs 60 per month as tuition, which was considered big sum in those days. I got benefitted from his tuition in the sense that my Mathematics improved. One day, Giani Bachan Singh in Khalsa School asked me affectionally, "Kaka, your English has improved a lot, are you going for tuition somewhere". Master Sita Ram had already warned me that many a time the teachers say that you study in our school and keep tuition somewhere else. As I was already alerted, I told him that my elder sisters were very good at studies. They go to tuition and teach me.

Master Joginder Singh used to teach us mathematics. He was lame from one leg, because of which people used to call him Dudda (lame). But he was very healthy and used to play basketball etc. He later went to Khalsa School, Mumbai. One day he gave us a test. I got 80 out of 100 in Mathematics. The rest of the students wondered how I could get so many marks. Well, I alone was tested again and I got about the same marks. Then Master ji was satisfied that I had really improved in Mathematics.

In the tenth class, school teachers felt happy beating the children, but I was a person of exactly different nature. The topic that I understood, I could solve that easily. My handwriting was very beautiful. What I did not understand

was the Geometry. My marks in Mathematics and Geometry were average. The Geometry class was in the afternoon. To avoid Geometry class, I started bunking the school. After April, 1955, I bunked school for about four months. My way of bunking was that the attendance was recorded in the morning. The timing of school were 7 AM in summers and 10 AM in winters. After attendance, all children were brought to school ground for prayer along with their bags. The boys of tenth class stood in the last line. Ardaas was performed after the school prayer. When the students used to bow down at the time of ardaas, I silently skipped out of there. This process continued for several months. Skipping classes, I went to Gurdwara Dukhniwaran Sahib. Sitting along the banks of the Dukhniwaran Sarovar adjacent to Modern school wall I enjoyed red rose flowers on that side. I enjoyed the fragrance of flowers, mainly marigold and red rose. I used to do homework whatever I understood. One day a Sevadar from the Gurdwara Sahib asked me, "Kaka, do not you go to school?" I said that at our school, the teachers beat a lot and I do not like being beaten up. The Sevadar said, "then why you study here?" I said," I don't want to lag behind from rest of class boys." My method of studying was, first I used to practice the example given in the book, then solve rest of questions. When I continued bunking the school for several months, the headmaster called my father to school. I alongwith my father met headmaster Nanak Singh. He told my father that for several months I was present in the morning but absent in the afternoon. I told him the whole truth that I absented after the school Ardaas, I didn't stay at school for five minutes even. He asked why I did not attend school. I told him that the teachers beat a lot. I do not like to be beaten up. There was a government school in Patiala, by the name of City High School. There was no beating in that school. I asked my father to get me admitted there. At my insistence, my father went to Khalsa School's head master to get school Leaving Certificate. Headmaster said that, "if the children of Khalsa families will not study here, who else will.?" My Father came home agreeing with him and I had to spend the rest of time in the same school.

Another interesting thing was that we used to take coined money from home. We used to keep coin on the railway line and when the train passed, the coin's size became bigger.

While studying in matriculation, in the month of September 1955, I had told my parents that I did not want to study at all and I would do farming instead. In October 1955, my father took me to our village but I was unhappy. In the village, we held about 200 bighas land. 10 bighas land had trees which our servants were cutting daily. My father had employed some laborers also in addition to our permanent help. The water of our well was not clean. So, my father asked me to bring water from the well of a neighboring farmer. Even the servants had been instructed to be tough with me so as to make me desperate. I used to bring water from neighboring well with much difficulty. The laborers used to drink half the water and throw the rest. My father instructed me once saying that," you have to stay in the village now. So cut the trees with an axe." I tried cutting down some trees. I developed blisters on my hands. I used to sit on the bullock cart to come from the fields. Our farm was about three kilometers away from the village. It had been 20 days since doing so. Exhausted one day, I told my mother that, "I was feeling it difficult. Give me another chance to study again. I want to go to Patiala." First of all, my father did not agree and said "He has ruined his life by coming to the village, let him repent. I will get him married in two or three years. I wanted my children to study so that they can become officers but if farming is in their fate then what can I do." I requested my mother to help me to go to school at Patiala. I also said, "I will continuously study for one hundred years now." On my mother's request, my father agreed and brought me back to Patiala.

A close relative of ours was a judge at Patiala and was living in our house at Top khanna road.

He sent his orderly with me to school. At the instance of Judge Sahib, the school re-admitted me. The school headmaster told the orderly that they will not send my fee for annual exams because my lectures were short." So came the month of December 1955. My father arranged tuition for all the three siblings. My algebra and arithmetic got better and English also improved. Now it was time to send the fee. Judge Sahib sent a message to the headmaster that the fee for Amarjit has to be sent. The school headmaster said, "bring medical certificate." Well, my fees were sent., our examinations took place in March 1956. Sita Ram, who taught us tuition at home, was superintendent of our center. I felt at home. I passed tenth with 379 marks. It was 3 marks less than the second division. Elder sister Jaswinder scored second division. Elder sister from her Rajinder scored 338, which was a poor third division.

Once while studying at school, some students of Mahindra College came to our school. They were

requesting shutting down all the schools. I asked a college boy, "brother, how much is the punishment for student in your college." He said that there was no beating in the college. I said, "then it is heaven." This was the end of my school journey which was rough and tardy.

Higher Education

In the year 1956, we all three, two sisters and I passed matriculation examination. As my sister Rajinder got less marks, she got admitted in JBT. The other elder sister Jaswinder got second division and she took Arts and was admitted in Government College for Girls. I requested my father to get me admitted in Mohindra College. My father was very fond of my studies. He bought for me a new Eastern Star Cycle, new clothes and new shoes etc. At that time I was not even confident of wearing pants. I wore a light brown kurta and white pajama. My father sent me to get admission on my own. He asked me to meet any 35-40 year old professor and get the whole information.

I went to Mohindra College in early May 1956 to get admission. The building of this college looked very impressive as compared to Khalsa School. On the backside there is a huge playground. Some NCC trucks were parked there. At that time approximately 3000 students were studying in the College. I had to get admission in 11th class, which was known as FA first year. FA was of 2 years and BA was also for 2 years. In Mahindra College there were classes of F.Sc and B.Sc apart from B A. The classes for F.Sc and B.Sc were held in a different building. M.A. studies were available in those times in 8 subjects. I found the atmosphere of Mohindra College very cordial and convenient. I took a form from the office and went to the staff room. As advised by my father I started to look around

for a professor who was around 35-40 years old for guidance. In the meantime, a professor approximately 35 years old came out of the staff room. His name was Krishan Kant. As per my family sanskars. I affectionately wished him Sat Sri Akal with folded hands and asked for his time. The office of Mohindra College, Principal's room, Girl's room and staff room of professors were all in the same block connected by a veranda. Professor Krishan Kant took me to the staff room. He politely told me that English was a compulsory subject for FA. When he told me that mathematics was not a compulsory subject, my joy knew no bounds. He told me that one language was compulsory, so I opted for Punjabi. Civics was one of my favourite subjects ever since 5th grade. So, I opted for History and Civics. I took Hindi as an optional subject, which was of 50 marks. I regularly went to Mohindra College with one notebook. In those days approximately 150 cycles were parked in the cycle stand.

At that time only two Professors owned scooter/motorcycle. Professor Hardyal Singh Gill, who was professor of English and an NCC officer as well, had a Lambretta scooter, with registration number PNT-2049. This scooter was parked on one side of the the huge porch of Mahindra college. Professor Harbaksh Singh had a motorcycle of BSA Company. He used to park his motorcycle in the cycle stand. There used to be a shed in the cycle stand which was right in the front of the porch. There was a provision of parking upto 50-60 cycles in this shed. Most of the teachers parked their cycles in the Shed. Professors and Students who did not find place in the shed

parked their cycles outside the shed in adjoining open space. The cycle stand was under a very big Pipal tree.

In those days Mohindra College was such a popular institution that apart from the students from its surrounding cities, several students came from Ferozepur, Rajasthan, Jind and Kaithal (now Haryana) for higher studies. The city of Samana had no college. So, students from Samana came to Mohindra College by buses on regular basis. In our 11th class FA Part 1 Arts, approximately 600 students were enrolled. On the very first day of the college Bal Krishna Singla and Shanti Saroop became my friends. Shanti belonged to Bhawalpuria community and used to come by bus from Samana. His family was in medicine business. After passing matriculation from a Samana School, Bal Krishan Singla had shifted to Patiala. His father Lala Roshan lal had shifted his business and residence to Patiala in 1956. The elders of Bal Krishan Singla were Commission agents in food grain. The commission agents business has lot to do with farmers. By the grace of God Bal Krishan Singla is still my fast friend even after 66 years. In such a long tenure of friendship we never found fault with each other. Another friend who met me during B.A. was Baldev Singh Kabarwal. Baldev Singh belonged to Saini caste and his father was a retired Subedar. His elder brother worked at Patiala. After 2-3 years Shanti Mehta went to England and then further moved to America. He retired as a senior officer from some Bank and never met us again like he was lost for us. Even now we are unaware of his whereabouts. Sardar Baldev Singh Kabarwal expired approximately three years back. Bal Krishan Singla shifted to Panchkula from Patiala approximately 25 years ago but still we are in touch with each other.

At college, Professor Om Prakash Bhardwaj was our English teacher. Likewise professor Gurcharan Singh, professor B.K Kapoor, professor Janak Singh and professor Satish Verma taught us History, Civics, Punjabi and Hindi optional respectively. The biggest relief was that in college days study was not a burden as compared to school time. The professors of the collage were more smartly dressed compared to Khalsa school masters. All the professers were very good to talk to. After some days I opted for Economics and left history. Professor Rajbans Kaur was our Economics teacher. We never had a chance to be taught by a lady teacher before. In our class there were approximately 95% students who used to say 'yes sir' at roll call as they were not habitual of saying 'yes madam'. My roll number was 338. After 3-4 days Madam was annoyed and she told all the students that those not saying 'yes madam' will be marked absent. After some days all the students developed the habit of saving 'Yes Madam'.

On 10th May, 1956, on Thursday at approximately 11' o clock, I was standing near the building where presently there is a Gurdawa Sahib. In those days this entire building used to be a canteen and the canteen contractor was Malawa Ram and it was known as the canteen of Malawa Ram. At that time I was standing all alone and a divine voice whispered in my ear, "Amarjit Singh you are going to be a big officer, so pay attention to your studies." I was astonished and looked all around as to who had called me. But there was nobody except me. This voice had such

an impact on me that I started going to college regularly where as in Khalsa School I used to bunk classes. I was fully attentive in my studies. I had five subjects. For every subject there was a separate note book which I used to keep in a file cover. For every lecture I used to reach on time no matter how far the classroom was situated. At the end of the year the professors used to inform us about lectures. Out of 200 lectures my lectures were 198-199. During this time I found Professor B.K Kapoor as the best and efficient among all the professors. In a very short time he became my favorite professor. He left for his heavenly abode at the age of 101 years in the recent past. During his last days I visited him and also lent my shoulder during his last rituals. Professor Janak Singh was also of very elderly age. He did not wear very clean clothes. Rajbans Kaur Walia had recently done her M.A. and left after delivering the lecture. I passed my FA in 1958 with 3rd division securing moderate marks. In May, 1958 I took admission in BA. In BA there were four subjects i.e. one subject less. English was a compulsory subject. Apart from English I opted for Political Science and Economics and took Punjabi as an optional subject. During the first Prize Distribution Ceremony of BA part-I, I was quite surprised when I got first prize in Economics subject, while I was not even hoping to score good marks. I got three books as a prize. But standing 1st ultimately proved harmful to me. In the year 1960, the college witnessed a huge strike organized by students of the college. There were no classes for more than one month. In those days Amariit Singh Dhillon was the President of students union. The main demands for the strike was to construct a college canteen

and a cycle stand. The number of cycles was continuously on the rise in the college due to which students were facing problems to park their cycles. I thought that as I was very good in economics and 13 questions will be there in the exams out of which 5 were to be attempted. I thought that I would prepare only from the first part of the book. There will be 6 questions from that part from which I was to attempt 5. I had the idiotic confidence. So, I prepared from the first half of the book and as per my assumption I was totally ready for exams. But exactly opposite happened and there were very few questions from the first part of the book whereas most of the questions were from the latter half of the book, resulting which I failed in Economics. Though I passed in English and Political Science but overall I failed. It was very painful for me. From this incident I learnt the lesson that one should have reasonable knowledge of the entire book. I passed the following examination held in April next year. I got 74 in English, 75 in Political Science and 68 in Economics. Punjabi was an optional subject in which I secured 20 marks out of 50. Though I passed but I missed second division by 13 marks.

After completing B.A. in 1961, I wanted to pursue M.A. My father said, 'My son, you should do B.Ed. I can only afford the expenses of B.Ed.' In those days B.Ed was for one year. My younger brother was doing Veterinary Surgery at Hisar University and my father had to bear his expenses also. Though we had lot of land in our village but income was not enough. The family was large but his monthly pension was a mere Rs. 231. My father was facing financial problems. On his advice about doing B.Ed., I requested my

father to let me do M.A. and I assured him to complete two years of M.A. with in the expenses of one year B.Ed.

First, I took admission in M.A. English. Prof. Kuldeep Singh Batra was the Head of English Department. He used to teach us one period. He was a handsome person of moderate height. He had brown beard and moustache and beautiful eyes. His English was excellent. He asked me to read about 25 books during the holidays.

I wished to do M.A. English but I stepped back due to two reasons. The first was that my father did not have money to bear the expenses of my studies. The second one was that I was a very slow reader. I used to read everything very slowly and understand it. After a day decided to shift to M.A. in Political Science.

The very next day I met Prof. B.K. Kapoor and took admission in Political Science. Prof. B.K. Kapoor knew me from the last few years. He welcomed me and I did my M.A. under his guidance. In the entire two years of M.A. I bought only two books. One book was of political theory by Prof. Warvam Singh and the second one was Public International Law by Prof. Tandon which I bought for Rs. 8 and 10 respectively. Apart from this I never purchased any book during M.A. While I was doing my M.A. I found a sudden change in the attitude of Professors. They treated us more like friends than like students. I had a very affectionate relation with another Professor whose name was Prof. Harbaksh Singh. His wife taught us Economics in F.A. and B.A. Prof. Harbaksh Singh's social life was quite interesting and he was always well dressed. He belonged to a rich family. He had a nice motorcycle and car. When ever we as a class asked him for a cup of tea he would happily take the class to the canteen. But he was not as serious as Prof. B.K. Kapoor. There was another Prof. by the name of Prof. K.C. Khanna who was my favorite teacher. During my M.A. he was transferred to some other college from Mohindra College Patiala. I had not much interaction with rest of the Professors. With Prof. B.K. Kapoor we had even family ties. I used to keep in touch with Prof. Kapoor and Prof. Harbaksh Singh even after I joined Army and later in civil job.

Prof. Kapoor was my all time favorite teacher. He had a great love for our country, India. During the summer he used to wear pressed white Khadi shirt and a white pant of cotton. In winters he did not have many suits but whatever he wore was neat and clean. His house was at 90-C, Model Town, Patiala. I, alongwith my family visited his house several times. He was very fond of roses, which were in abundance at his house. Prof. B.K. Kapoor was a very serious personality. In summer days a one rupee note was visible from his khadi shirt pocket. He used to come on a cycle. His wife Nirmal was a house wife. He used to give the lecture for complete 40 minutes. He brought the slips of main points with him so that nothing is left uncovered. I was under his immense influence so much so that when I became a Professor (1971-74) I too adopted the same method. The only difference was I used to teach for 30 min. and after that I made the students revise the main points on a black board. Perhaps I was the only Professor of Political Science who used to write on the black board. I used to explain each and every detail from the black board to the whole class. Prof. Kapoor and Prof. Om Parkash Garg (Economics) still wore khadi clothes. A few years back Prof. Kapoor passed away at the age of 101 years. His sons could not reach India from abroad to perform his last rites. Myself and one of his another students Prof. Abhimanyu Khanna performed his last rites. Like Prof. Kapoor, whatever I did in my life, I did it very seriously and meticulously.

I did my M.A. Part I from Punjab University. There were 11 students in our class. Only 2 students got second division in our class. A girl name Aprajita who secured 222 marks and I got 202 marks. In those days getting second division held much importance. The students securing second division were treated like friends by the professors. I frequently visited Prof. Kapoor and Prof. Harbaksh Singh for my queries. They treated me in a friendly manner. In May 1962 the classes of M.A. final started in which now there were only 8 students left. 4 boys and 4 girls.

In November 1962 war between India and China broke out and India suffered a heavy defeat. I already had the spirit of patriotism in me. I personally felt hurt. At that time my thinking was that my country needed brave youth. Our Indian Army suffered heavy losses at the hands of Chinese Army. During this period one day I went to meet Prof. Harbaksh Singh in staff room to ask something. It was perhaps the first week of December 1962. He was sitting with some old friend. His friend was dressed up like a military officer. He was discussing with Prof. Harbaksh Singh about the days when he was studying and the second world war started." Some students were very good in studies and their thinking was, why they should join the army. They already had good marks and a good civil service was not a

problem for them. The students who joined army remained there till the war was over and after that returned home. The British Government had put a ban on the recruitment in civil departments due to war. Once the war was over, the size of the army was cut down and advertisement was given for filling the vacancies in the civil departments while recruiting the posts were kept reserved for the officers who came back from army. The students who were proud of their good marks were sitting idle for many years. The students who dared to join the army, first got the superior experience and earned money and then they were the one who were offered civil services. These were the most wise students."

I realized that the God has sent this message for me. I also started to think about joining the army. In those days the age limit to be recruited in emergency commission was 20 to 35 years. At that time I was not even 20 years old. On 13 January, 1963 I attained the age of 20. The same morning I reached the building of Army Headquarters, Mall Road, Patiala at 9 a.m. and asked for a recruitment form. A captain was distributing forms over there. He asked me about what I was doing. I told him that I was doing my M.A. When asked about my father I told him that my father was a retired Army Major. I filled up the form and submitted it. On 20th March I got an interview call at Sangrur and I was selected. There were two interviews those days for Emergency Commission. First was preliminary and the second was final. The interview at Sangrur was preliminary held before a Brigadier at Sangrur.

By the end of March, I suffered from measles. On

16th April I was to go to Meerut for final interview. Due to ill health I could not go and instead sent a medical certificate. In the mean time my M.A. was also complete. I did not receive any interview letter until July. I again wrote to army authorities that my health was quite good now and I was ready for final interview. My interview was held in August 1963 and I was selected. My training started from 15th October 1963 at Officer Training School Poona and on 3rd May 1966 I had become Commissioned Officer with a rank of a Second Lieutenant.

My studying style was totally different from other students. I took English medium in B.A. and M.A. As my schooling was in Khalsa School so my English was not very good. I wanted to study in English medium which helped me through out my life.

In M.A. I used to note down the main points when the professors were delivering their lectures. They referred to the books of scholars. I used to get those books issued from the library. In this manner I prepared the lesson with the hard work of two-three days. In this project half of the contribution was of Prof. Kapoor and the rest was my hard work. I noted down the language of the scholars from their books. Until M.A. I lived alone in my house at Patiala. After marriage the elder sisters had gone over to their new homes. My younger brother was doing Veterinary Surgery from Hisar University. It was only me who was taking care of our house at Top Khana Gate. My father came in the beginning of every month to receive his pension and gave me Rs. 60 for the entire month. From the very childhood I developed the habit of writing down all the expenses. One

particular month my father told me that he was financially very tight and he gave me Rs. 40. I thought that I was living all alone in such a big house so I gave a room on rent at Rs. 20 per month. The tenant became our friend and later on retired as a Colonel from army. His name is Col. Sucha Singh. He is a native of village Kulvanoo. His native village and that of mine was a few Kilometers apart.

In the morning I prepared my breakfast and had my lunch at Grand Hotel Dhaba on my way back from college. This dhaba was situated between my house and Mohindra College near Karhah Wala Chowk. Desi Ghee from village was always available. In the evening I used to take some Ghee for dinner to put it in my dal etc. After college hours I was back home by 12 O' clock noon. Before this I had my lunch. At that time some of my friends were already waiting for me as they were my neighbors. We used to play cards at my house from 12 to 3 O' clock. I was very fond of having tea in those days. We had only one ceiling fan at our house which was installed in the drawing room. We had tea and friends played cards till evening in the drawing room. I used to fall out of this group at 3 P.M. and went upstairs for study till 6 P.M. We had big veranda of tin on the roof of our house which protected the beds etc. from rain. There was no fan in this tinned accommodation. Perhaps there was one bulb. There was a single bathroom in the entire house which was constructed right under the stairs in those days. After having tea with my friends I left for the first floor with a thermos of tea and studied there continuously from three till six in the evening. I did my studies on regular basis so my notes were ready by December end. Our syllabus was complete by January. By 6 O' clock in the evening I went for a walk of approximately one hour and after having my dinner I returned back by 8 O' clock. By 9 O' clock I went to sleep. When during the months of January and February the students were having a tough time in studies I used to stroll in the compound of hostel of Mohindra College in a relaxed manner and met old friends. Many of my college friends left their studies and joined family businesses at Adalat Bazaar and Qila Chowk. All of my friends and their families liked me. They never missed an opportunity to meet me. Many people running old shops also knew my father and my grandfather.

Commissioned Officer

Those days three types of Commissions were available in the army at the officer level entrance. The first was NDA Commission in which a national level test was conducted for the candidates with the academic qualification of matriculate or more. This test was conducted by UPSC. Once the test was passed, an interview was held and the trainees were sent to NDA Khargvasla near Poona. After spending three years at NDA, these cadets went to IMA Dehradun for one year. Thus, a young boy of 15-16 years became a commissioned officer at the age of almost 20 years after spending four years in training.

The next type of Commission, was known as direct Commission. Mostly candidates attempted exam after passing their B.A. and after training of one year at IMA at Dehradun they became officers. In this lot most of the youth were the ones who had attained a 'C' certificate of NCC.

The third Commission was known as Emergency Commission. This Commission was started post India China war of 1962 so that the officers can be recruited immediately to enhance the strength of the army. The required educational qualification was FA and the age limit was from 20 to 35 years. After the war with China the Government of India recruited approximately 10,000 Emergency Commissioned Officers. Such recruitments were also conducted during the second world war.

After the elimination of Emergency Commission, the Government of India initiated Short Service Commission. Apart from these, there were Commissions for the Engineers, Doctors, Law graduates and highly educated officers who got commissions in AEC, EME, MES, AMC, Army Dental corps and D JAG etc.

I was recruited as an Emergency Commissioned Officer on the basis of my interviews at Sangrur and Meerut. My army training started at officer training School, Poona from 15th October, 1963 and continued till 2nd may, 1964. During this period, we were given 15 days of holidays after three months of training. Then I was commissioned on 3rd May, 1964.

My father was an army officer and physically he was very strong. After my MA he had called me at our native village Dugal and gave me tough training for several months as I was not a sportsman. The details of my training at the village was as follows: We had three farming lots in our village. I was to take breakfast in the morning and was to have a round of all the three fields before returning home. It was almost 10 k.m. On my way I had to take water only. I had to cover the entire distance running. I reached home in nearly two hours by about 10:30a.m. After having a healthy lunch I went to sleep. Along with lunch I was served with a preparation of Desi Ghee called Tehla which was a mixture of almonds, khas-khas, Desi Ghee and milk. It helped me with a sound sleep and made my body strong and youthful.

The second phase of the training started in the evening. At about 3 O' Clock I had to walk down to Patran and back. It was approximately a distance of 6 k.m. With in three months, this walking distance was gradually

increased to 30 k.m. On the last day of the training I started from my village at 3 in the afternoon and reached the town of Ghagga. Through out the entire journey I had water only once. With same brisk walking I returned to my village at about 8 O' clock in the evening. Once the training was over, my father told me that now I was ready for my training at Poona.

Training at Poona: I reported at Officers Training School, Poona on October 15th 1963. The weather at Poona was quite pleasant. The training was divided into three parts. Physical training was conducted for nearly 45 minutes in the morning. Then there was Parade after the breakfast. The third part of the training dealt with weapon training. Sometimes we participated in cross country also. In the last phase of the training we had to run in our uniform with rifle, water bottle and 08 packs on our back for ten miles. This training was conducted both during the day and night. At final stage of training at night we had to cover 30 k.m. in cross country to reach near the area of a fake enemy. Though normally one cadet had only one rifle but in a section, where there were 11 cadets, there was also a light machine gun which was quite heavy. 11 cadets had to carry it turn by turn. Although this training was for officers but we were trained as if we were soldiers. Once I asked my training Havaldar Ajit Singh, "Sir you are going to make officers out of us, then why we are being trained as soldiers?" He very affectionately replied, "After becoming an officer you have to control the army in which there will be junior commissioned officers, non-commissioned officers and the other ranks. If you have done the entire training yourself then you will be well aware as to which task was difficult and to what extent and you will give orders with responsibility."

When we ran, we felt exhausted. But when we stopped, a few breaths made us feel fresh again. That was the beauty of weather in Poona area. I completed the entire training with utmost sincerity. Major Z.K. Wadia was our company commander. He was a Parsi Officer and was from armed corps. He had a handsome face and brown mustache. He used to come on a Para cycle. There was another officer named P.K. Mehta who was a captain then and he later retired as a Major General. Captain Kulkarni was the Infantry Officer. Major Z.K. Wadia had a very pleasant nature and was very good in communication skills.

The companies were formed in our training. Officers cadet, were addressed as gentleman cadets (G.C). The name of my company was Arjun company. Brigadier Apji Randhir Singh was the commandant of the O.T.S. He was a very religious minded person. He wrote down the names of all the companies by his own method. A was written as Arjun instead of Alpha. Similarly, B was Bhisham instead of Bravo and C was Chetak in place of Charlie. Everyday 10 cadets were invited at brigadier's house for tea. The training in charge of each company was a Subedar. As my name started from letter A so my number was 2001. The gentleman cadets who were brilliant and had NCC background, their rank could go up to Sergeant. Once I was appointed as a Lance Naiak for one month. I did my training with complete sincerity. Many instructors asked us to take round of the trees. My lean body helped me very much. I never had played a sport so I was not among the best cadets during the training.

Parade: Subedar Major Harnam Singh was from Guards Regiment. He had a strong built body and was of fair color. He commanded our parade while standing in front of all GCs of the course. He was a follower of Sikh faith and was very strict with those Sikh cadets who used to trim their beards. After some days 80% of the Sikh boys started to grow their beards, and I was also one of them. There was a Gurudwara Sahib in our training school where we used to go on Sundays.

When we were about to be commissioned on 3rd May, 1964, Major Z.K Wadia, our training company commander told us about the virtues of hard work and judicious spending. He explained us that we become rich only by saving. Though I was already a hardworking person still I was quite impressed, the way he explained to us about economizing. He further said, "If you are a second lieutenant you should ride a cycle and be happy. Even if you purchase a car with difficulty then you will not able to save anything from your salary because of the expenses of car. If you will not save anything then how can you become rich." So, I made a permanent note of this valuable advice and spent my entire life with controlled spending. Till the age of 60 years any work which could be done on a cycle I did by going on foot. Where a scooter was required, I preferred cycle. When the family had to go somewhere then I used the scooter. The result of this moderate life style was that during my army service of six years I was able to save Rs 20,000 from my salary of forty thousand rupees. When I left the army, my colleagues had not more than 2-3 thousand rupees with them. The tenure of my field posting was very short. I was able to help my father with this saving. As my father had a large family to support and also due to the studies of children so by the time I joined army in 1963, he had incurred a debt of Rs. 7000/-. I paid off this debt by 1967 in only three years of serving in army. After that before being released on 1 March, 1970 I saved another Rs. 14,000/-. When I was released from army I had Rs. 10,000/-in cash and owned a scooter.

During my training I had friendship with two boys of my company. One was Major Jhanda Singh and the other was Kashmir Singh Gill. Another boy named Narinder Sharma from Delhi was also my good friend. He was commissioned in ASC. After becoming the officer, I had no contact with him. Major Jhanda Singh is a resident of Patiala. When I joined the civil service, he came into my contact again. I also helped him purchase a plot at Patiala. S. Kashmir Singh Gill, after getting discharged from army in approximately six years, returned to civil life and like me he was also selected as an Asst.Professor. In 1972 he got success in PCS examination and was appointed as Assistant Excise & Taxation officer of our department. But after some months, he left Excise and Taxation Department to rejoin the college service and later on retired as DPI (College) i.e. head of the department at State level. I am in touch with him.

We all came to know about our allotted regiments units by 25th April 1964. I was allotted Mahar regiment whereas I had opted to be allotted to J and K regiment. When we were filling our choice, somebody spread the rumour that four battalions of J and K rifles were going abroad. Attracted by the idea many GCs filled their preference for J and K rifles. Only our friend Sergeant Karan

Singh got this regiment. The rest of us got regiments which we never filled. During the training, Colonel Vishnu Sharma who was subordinate of my father during his service had come to see me. Major Rajinder Singh Grewal who was an officer of 15 Punjab regiment was also with my father. Two battalions of Patiala State were merged in Punjab regiment. First Patiala was merged into 15 Punjab and second Patiala was merged into 16 Punjab. He wanted me to join Punjab regiment. Colonel Vishnu Sharma was transferred to Gorkha regiment from Patiala regiment. He wanted me to go to Gorkha regiment. At that time I did not have much awareness. I was allotted to Mahar regiment and was transferred to Mahar regiment Sagar (MP). On 1st May 1964 we were provided with required railway documents. Piping Ceremony: - On the eve of 2nd May 1964 the ceremony of our commission took place at midnight 12.01. On this occasion the parents or siblings of many cadets came to attend the piping ceremony. The pips were already put on the cadet's both shoulders but they remained covered with a flapper. At 12 in the night the lights were switched off for a few minutes. During this time the flappers were taken off and after 5 minutes when the lights were switched on, the hundreds of GC's were seen transformed into officers. Both the shoulders had one pip each. The parents and siblings of all the cadets very fondly witnessed

The commandant in his brief speech said, "Now you have become officers but only time will tell that who will be a good officer among you." Another strange thing which we

their sons and brothers turning into officers. My parents could not come as they lived far away. The parents and the

siblings of only 10% officers attended the ceremony.

noted that the instructors who used to bully us and gave orders till May 1st, 1964 were not seen on 3rd May. All the officers went to their families on a 15-day vacation. The entire railway station was crowded with young officers only. All the officers were catching their destination trains in order to meet their families and friends waiting for them.

Days at Mahar Regimental Centre, Sagar (M.P.)

After being commissioned from OTS Poona we had a vacation of 15 days. After spending my holidays at village Dugal and Patiala, I joined Mahar Regimental Centre, Sagar (M.P) on 18 May, 1964. There were many other young officers at Mahar Centre, Sagar of my training batch EC 8. Some of officers were allotted to Mahar regiment and sent to battalions. The newly commissioned officers were kept at Centre for some time and then sent to battalions. Seven new officers out of EC8 were sent to Mahar Centre. By the time we joined approximately 35 new EC officers had collected in the Centre.

There was an old English type building situated at a hilltop in Sagar which was at that time about 80 years old and it served as our officers mess. There were some barrack like buildings in front of officers mess from where the battalions commanders of the training companies had offices. The new officers were appointed as commanders of the companies formed for the training of 50-60 soldiers. Though the rank of battalion commander in those days was of lieutenant colonel but the rank of training battalion commander was that of a Major. Major B.K. Patole was the battalion commander of the company in which I was appointed as a training company commander.

The newly constructed buildings which were situated about half k.m. away from the officers mess was accommodation for young officers. A long veranda linked the quarters of all the officers. In each quarter there was a small drawing room and a bed room. A small veranda and a bathroom were situated on the backside. Every officer had an orderly who was a recruit himself. Recruit was a person who got a few months training to become a soldier. After the completion of the training he got the uniform, salary and other facilities of a soldier. As the number of young officers was very high compared to the accommodation available, two officers were allotted one quarter.

A very few officers had scooter or motorcycles. When we had to go somewhere, we used to go on a cycle. There was a small market in the centre in which there was a cycle shop. One could take a cycle on rent from this shop. In those days the rent of the cycle was 25 paise per hour. Whenever an officer had to go somewhere, they sent their orderly to get a cycle on rent. Apart from this, the orderly took the laundry and got it cleaned from the washer man, polished the shoes and starched the turban. Though our regiment was of Maharashtrian people but now many Bengalis were also recruited.

Major B.K. Patole was from Maharashtra and was promoted as an officer from lower ranks. He was a simple person. He wore old fashioned loose pants. In 1947-48 the British officers returned back to England and the Indian soldiers got the opportunity to become officers. During this time many such soldiers from lower ranks were commissioned and Major B.K. Patole was one of them.

Second lieutenant Gurdeep Singh Sandhu who resided in the adjoining quarter was a resident of village Nakta near Bhawanigarh. He was very strong physically. As he belonged to my area I developed familiarity with him. One day his orderly made a minor mistake. Gurdeep slapped the orderly. After one or two days, the orderly developed pain in his ear and he went to hospital. The doctor told him that his ear drum had ruptured. The doctor gave this information to Major B.K. Patole. Major Patole called Gurdeep Singh Sandhu and asked him about the entire incident. Gurdeep Singh Sandhu told that he only slapped lightly and he never imagined how could a recruit be so weak.

One day battalion commander asked Gurdeep that he had such a strong body, he might be doing some exercise. He replied that he did not. He told that his father S. Gian Singh Nambardar was a very strict person. Whenever he sent me from village to fields he used to say, "Take a heap of 80 kilos fodder on your head and don't walk, but run. That was my exercise. There was a pond in our village to take bath in which I used to swim. I saw the swimming pool for the first time in army only."

Bamori Incident: -

There was another officer whom I liked very much but never met him after one year. His name was Jagjit Singh Walia and he was a second lieutenant. This officer belonged to a decent family of Kaputhala and was good natured and humble. We both were sent to Bamori on 16th July 1964 to conduct the training of our two companies. Village Bamori was situated at about 30 km from Sagar city. The

Government of India had purchased around 40 acres of land at village Bamori. The soldiers of our regiment used to go for training there. There were two companies over here, the commander of the first company was second lieutenant Jagjit Singh while the second one was under my command. These companies had a 15 day stay at Bamori. An officer tent was put up at a hilltop for me and Jagjit Singh and there was a small 40-pound tent accommodating bathroom etc.

The recruits were trained every day for PT, Parade and weapon training. One day a Subedar brought two recruits to me. The recruits complained that villagers have beaten them. At that time, I had no experience in this field. Had it happened today I would have gone to the village for investigation and would have thoroughly made myself aware about the whole incident. Only then I would have given it a thought. But at that time I didn't do any of these. I surrounded the village with all the soldiers of the company. The villagers were scared. I said in a ferocious voice, "if the soldiers would be afraid of you then how will they face the armies of China and Pakistan." The training of the recruits was over and we came back to Sagar. On 6th August 1964 Major Patole, called me and informed that the villagers have made a complaint through their M.L.A. to Defence Ministry which has been forwarded to us. He asked me about the whole incident. I told him, "Sir, this is absolutely right. I did all this because if our soldiers are afraid of civilian people then how could they fight armies of China and Pakistan. I took it to be an insult of the army." Major Patole told me to always take a decision after proper investigation.

On 15th September 1964 an M.L.A. from Bengal

accompanied a recruit to rejoin the Centre. He was a recruit of my training company. The soldier was an offender who came two months late, after leave was over. Company commander had the power to imprison the recruit. I told the havildar to put him in the quarter guard. The M.L.A. met me. At that time, I was not aware about the importance of an M.L.A. I always thought that a second lieutenant was also a big gun. I told the M.L.A. that, "this soldier was an offender. So, we will punish him. If you will interfere in our work then we will imprison you also." Hearing this the M.L.A. was so scared that he left with in no time. Apart from these two such incidents, the rest of the time went smoothly.

Our mess offered food at very cheap prices. Mahar Centre, Sagar owned many acres of land. Whatever grains we produced was available for the mess at very low price. Colonel Rohinkhedkar was the commandant of the centre. He was a Maratha officer. He had a very good physique. He was also promoted from the ranks and was about to retire.

On joining the Centre, we, the officers were told to meet the colonel. The colonel advised us to save a lot of money. He said," presently your responsibilities are less but once you will be married your expenses will increase." He had also put a ban on the liquor expenditure of the officer. He did not allow officers to consume liquor for more than Rs. 40 per month. If any officer was found having more liquor, the mess management reported it to the colonel. In 1965, mid of the March I came home on annual leave. Annual leave was of 60 days. In those days my parents resided at village Dugal and the house at Patiala was locked.

While I was spending my holidays, a small war took place with Pakistan in Run Kutch area. I received a letter during holidays that I had been transferred from Centre to 2nd Mahar battalion and my entire luggage will also be sent to the new place. They also sent me a railway ticket. I had to reach Barmer railway station via Delhi and Jodhpur.

Mother's blessings

In April 1965, a small battle took place in Run Kutch, Gujarat, Rajasthan Pakistan border. There were some Indian posts in the Rann of Kutch that the Pakistani army had occupied. On annual leave for two months in the company of my parents and siblings, I was happily spending holidays in the village. I received a letter from the Army Headquarters, that I have been transferred from Mahar center Sagar to 2nd Mahar battalion. I also got a railway ticket. After the holidays were over, I was ready to go to the new regiment. There was danger of full-scale India Pakistan war.

On May 15th 1965, I had to leave for Patiala from my village Dugal. At that time, my two younger brothers Satwant, Gurwant, and the youngest sister Harinder lived at village Dugal. From Patiala Railway Station, I had to go to Barmer via Delhi and Jodhpur.

At 11 o'clock, my mother and my three siblings came to see me off at the Dugal bus stand. A worker employed on our farm lifted my luggage on his head. At that time, to go to Patiala from Dugal, first one had to go to Patran, which is three kilometers from Dugal. Patran Mandi is a very large junction, from where buses plied for Patiala, Chandigarh, Jakhal, Jind and Delhi. My father had gone somewhere that day. We reached Dugal bus stand. When the Bus from Sangrur was just coming to the Dugal Bus Stand, my mother took me aside. She said to me, "Kaka, (Dear Son) listen

carefully. You are going to war. Grief and pleasures come only to men, do your job seriously." When I heard this, I too became serious and said to my mother, "Mother, I shall fight for honor of our family and do my job seriously and responsibly."

I boarded the bus at Dugal and later at Patran. After that train's journey started. I reached Barmer, Rajasthan in about one and half day, where a JCO of 2 Mahar battalion in truck had come to receive me. After traveling for half an hour, we reached a village named Jalipa. 2 Mahar Battalion was situated there. Mother's blessing had a great effect on me. When the war of Sept. 1965 started and the time of testing came, our ammunition was exhausted and there was no other choice but to die or flee. At that time, mother's blessings worked a lot, which is written in detail in the chapter, War of September 1965.

Blessings and wishes have no colour. But when these are fulfilled the life become colourful. This blessing of my mother was more powerful then the fire power of Pakistanis soldiers.

On November 16, 1996, my mother died at Milwaukee, W.I. (United States). My three younger brothers had been living in the US for a long time. I and my family too were living in United States since 1993 for the education of our two sons. All the ceremonies were completed in the city of Milwaukee. My younger brother Satwant Singh (martyr) had gone to Patiala for Bhog ceremony of my sister's father in-law S. Kartar Singh (father of S. Surjit Singh Rakhra). Mother's dead body was kept in the freezer. My mother's cremation was performed on Satwant Singh's arrival in America. One brother of our nine

brothers/sisters had died in 1988. The husband of Rupinder Kaur, the eldest sister, S. Harnek Singh refused to go to America. All the other brothers and sisters were present at our mother's funeral. We all four brothers were living within a radius of nearly a hundred miles. The elder sister, Rajinder lived in Boston, near New York. The younger sister Harinder Kaur reached at ceremony from Rakhra, Patiala.

In the United States, the dead body is taken in large black car (limo). There are two or more police vehicles ahead of it. Relatives, siblings and well- wishers travel behind lemo. About three hundred men were traveling in more than one hundred cars. Mother's cremation took place at the Capital Drive crematorium. It seemed that the mother of nine children was a very virtuous soul, who lived a complete life and was going back to her eternal home.

There is no red light for such a convoy. After reaching Crematorium the dead body was placed on a high platform. All the fellow relatives and friends attended Ardaas. Bhai Najar Singh (former Ragi Sh. Darbar Sahib, Amritsar) performed Ardaas. After that the dead body was taken to the basement. In the end, there were only us, the four brothers. The organizer asked us whether any other ritual was left. Younger brother Dr. Jagjit Singh said that the eldest brother in our country performs the ritual of fire. They said," the body will be put in the fire machine. You can press the switch from outside." Being eldest among four brothers, I performed this ritual. A day later we got my Mother's ashes. We brought Mother's ashes to India and immersed it in flowing water at Gurudwara Kiratpur Sahib.

There at Fondu Lac Road, Akhand Paath Sahib was performed at Gurdwara Sahib Milwaukee. The four

brothers lived at different places at that time. I and my family lived in Madison city, the second brother Dr. Jagjit Singh was in Chicago, Satwant Singh lived in Milwaukee, and Gurwant Singh in Racine.

Satwant was the president of the Gurdwara at that time. On the day of bhog, there were many people from faraway places. All the family members thought that being the eldest son, I would pay homage to my mother. Paying homage, I drew the attention of all the Sangat to the 15th May day before the 1965 war when I was happily spending my annual holidays at village Dugal and I was called back because of the war. At that time, Mother blessed me at the bus stand Dugal before boarding the bus and said, "Kaka, listen carefully. Grief- pleasures come only to men, work seriously and responsibly." I too became serious and promised my mother and I said, "I will fight for honor of the family and work with seriousness and responsibility." Within a few months, the war was at its full and an occasion arose, when our ammunition was exhausted and there was no choice but to die or flee. There the mother's blessings worked more than rifles, guns and cannons. Without ammunition, this person (self) stood like a rock in front of enemy as besides teachings of Gurus, mother's blessings was with me.

Time at Jalipa and Jodhpur

The time at Jalipa was about two months and Jodhpur's time was about a month and a half. 2 Mahar battalion commander was Lt. Col. KS Bakshi. He was very jolly, medium-sized, fair complexioned and self-confident person. He wore thick glasses. His face was somewhat like the college professors. Currently he is 97 years old and lives in Secunderabad, Telangana. On arrival in 2nd Mahar, I was introduced to the CO. He welcomed me to the battalion and deputed me for one-month training.

My one-month training began and I was also made the Platoon Commander of the Delta Company under Maj. Kulwinder Singh, Company Commander. Major Kulwinder was commissioned through NDA. At that time, he was 28 years old. His parents lived in Delhi. He used to speak very good Hindi and English. He tied beard in Patiala state style. Lt. Arun Verma was the Adjutant of the battalion. He was also an NDA commissioned officer. His father was a retired IAS officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre. Arun Verma was egoistic. He was tall and had large moustaches. He was a habitual smoker and a heavy drinker. There was another officer, Major Barjinder Singh Deogan, whom I liked very much. He was a Brahmin from Punjab, who started his career as a soldier. He was very jolly natured. At that time, he was about 32 years old. He had cut hair. Another officer was, Ramesh Kapoor, who was very beloved and virtuous person. He was a captain and was company commander of

Charlie company. There was another officer, Lt. Hukam Singh who was a Jaat from U.P. He was very jolly and brave person. He was commander of Bravo Company. There was another officer Baldev Singh. He was also a Brahmin and had come from Punjab leaving the job of a Kanugo. He was a Keshdhari Sikh and was very jolly. Whenever we used to go to mess for meals, we used to listen to Baldev Singh's jokes. In Alpha Company, the Commander was Major Vikas Sood, who became the Lt Colonel in 1966 and became the battalion commander of 2nd Mahar after Lt. Col. Bakshi. 2/Lt Charan Das Kainth was the most handsome officer in the battalion. He was from Punjab and became my best friend. Later on, Charan Das became Additional DGP Uttar Pradesh after being selected as IPS. For some personal reasons, he committed suicide while in service. Second Lt. Dalbir Singh from Hoshiarpur, who was from a Rajput family, also became my good friend. Col. Bakshi used to call him 'Yamla'.

Lt. Col. Bakshi was very intelligent. At Jalipa, the weather was very hot. For our whole battalion, water was brought from Barmer city. Officers got a bucket of water from the tanker with which they had to fulfill their daily needs. The water was even less for junior ranks. Our mess was built like a bunker by digging the earth. The roof was thatched, and a ramp like passage was made for entering in the mess. In front of entry a window of bushes was built and during day water was sprinkled from the outside so the atmosphere remained cool. One day while eating meals in the mess, my fork fell down. The next day, Lt Arun Verma, the adjutant called me to the office and said, "Your fork fell down while you were eating food yesterday." I replied that

only a fork had fallen, not the rifle. Actually, the job of the adjutant is to maintain the link between the coy and the rest of battalion." Arun Verma was proud of being an NDA Commissioned and I was proud of being an M.A. His father was a retired IAS officer and my father, grandfather and great grandfather were also retired civil and army officers. Within a few days, our mutual conflict increased a lot. One day, I told Arun Verma that a second Lt. is not supposed to salute a Lt. He asked me how did I know it. I told him since 1910 my grandfather and father had been army commissioned officers. Subalterns were not supposed to salute each other. The mutual conflict increased to the limit that one day I told Arun Verma, "If you go out of the army you will not be able to get the job of a clerk, as the clerk also requires a typing speed and if I go out of the army, if not a college professor, then at least I would get a job of a school lecturer." He got angry with me and told Colonel Bakshi to transfer me to the administrative company. Now I became an administrative company commander before going to 1965 war.

There were six companies in each infantry battalion. Four companies were direct fighters called rifle companies and also have fixed names, Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta. One company was Support Company which had supporting weapons like Rocket Launchers, Machine guns etc. The sixth company was the Admin Company, which worked for miscellaneous jobs. It has medical and laundry services. The orderlies of all the officers were also under this company. I started P.T. of the Admin Company in Jalipa. Col. Bakshi's orderly was in the same company. Medical platoon during the War, plays band during peace. Cooking and

sending food in the war was also the job of this company.

In the first week of June 1965, the Army Headquarters sent a letter, aimed at the survey of emergency commission officers to see how many officers were not willing for Permanent Regular Commission. In our regiment, I, Charan Das Kant and Baldev Singh, wrote that we were not interested in staying in the army. In about July, 1965 our regiment came back to its Peace Station, Jodhpur. It seemed that the fear of the war had diminished.

Meanwhile our Brig. Commander, Brig. Bant Singh got the report from our battalion regarding unwillingness of 3 officers. On seeing this report Brigade Commander, asked Col. Bakshi, "Your three officers have written that they do not want to stay in the army. What is the matter? Col. Bakshi said, "there is a party of all the officers of brigade in our mess today and you can meet the three officers there." I do not know whether Brigadier Sidhu met second Lt. Charan Das and Baldev Singh but he surely talked to me. In the party, Brigadier Sidhu asked me why I did not want to stay in the army permanently and if did not like army why did I join the army? I said, "the army is a great service to me and if I perform this service by even sacrificing my life, then I will consider that I have done my duty well and walked from the world a victorious man. The career of the army as a job does not suit me. If I am in the army, I will retire as a Major at the age of 48. At the age of 48 children are very young. And how will I settle them with a meagre pension. "

During our stay at Jodhpur, we had a great time. There were five large rooms adjacent to officer's mess, in which we all the unmarried officers of 2 Mahar lived. Our mess was on the bank of the lake. On its other side was the

Umaid Bhawan, the palace of former Maharaja of Jodhpur. Bicycles were available on rent and whenever we had to go to the city, we hired a bicycle. Captain Kapoor and Lt Hukam Singh used to treat me very well.

An Officer 2/Lt Om Prakash Gaur, who was my roommate, was the intelligence officer of the CO. We had a great mutual understanding. In those days there was fashion of wearing thick bracelets (Kadda). He asked me my bracelet as a gift from me. I gave him my bracelet. He was a native of village Palam which had come into Delhi airport (now called Indira Gandhi International Airport). Previously the name of this airport was on the name of Palam village. Later this International Airport was named after Indira Gandhi (former Prime Minister). Once I demanded Rs 380 from him as a loan. Meanwhile the war started. He died in the Khemkaran area on September 12, 1965. I came in the holidays and asked about the Palam village. I wanted to return his loan. By going to Delhi, I came to know that Palam as a village did not exist now and it had all become Delhi. I did not know whom to return the money? At last, when I was 60 years old, I performed Ardaas of 101 dollars in Gurudwara Sahib in Appleton city, Wisconsin, America in the name of 2/Lt Om Prakash Gaur. So, I paid off his Rs 380 with interest in the house of God.

On about 1-2 September 1965, war meetings began to take place. In these meetings five company commanders who had to go to war were four rifle companies and a supporting Weapon Company.

One day when the emergency meeting was going on in a large hall of officer's mess, I, who was not part of the meeting, but was a wine member* whispered in the ears of

Col. Bakshi, "Sir, how much of whisky we have to carry to the war." There was laud laughter at this. Perhaps the participating officials might have thought the talk of whisky as 'out of place'. I said in a serious manner, "we are going to war, will we not celebrate after victory in the war?" All the officers became serious at once. I further said, "I plan to take two ammunition boxes full of rare whisky to the war." Col. Bakshi complimented my enthusiasm.

Note:- * Wine member is a young officer deputed to take care of liquor accounts of the officers' mess.

The 1965 War

By the end of August 1965, the clouds of the war between India and Pakistan became overwhelming. By 1-2 September 1965 we were asked to be ready for the war, but we did not know which area to go to. On 5th September 1965, our regiment was ready and sent by train starting from Jodhpur railway station. Only unmarried officers including me were laughing. The wives of married officers wore black glasses so that people could not see their tears. A day before the war, Colonel Bakshi gave the officers, a party at his in-law's home. Col. Bakshi's in-laws family lived in Jodhpur city. I took two whiskey bottles as a wine member to their home. Food arrangements were made by the in-laws of Colonel Bakshi. We were very excited. Lt. Arun Verma, who was the adjutant, said, "I will lift two Muslims and bang one against another. "It seemed possible by his height. Captain Ramesh Kapoor was a serious person and a very good officer. He did not talk like this. When the train started to run, the wives of married officers walked for some time along with train on the railway platform. On the other side of the railway station were the quarters for lower ranks of our regiment. From there, the wives of the soldiers also walked and ran for about half a kilometer. We could hear their cries. We were four officers, Charan Das Kant, Dalbir Singh, Baldev Singh and me in one coach. We were laughing loudly. Out of us four, only Baldev Singh was married. But despite marriage, Baldev's nature was like that of an unmarried officer. Train started around eleven o'clock in the morning. We still did not know which city to go to.

First train stop was at Hissar (now Haryana) railway station. A Nihang Singh was standing there with his wife. Perhaps the Nihang Singh was blind. He had a stick in his hand. Nihang Singh's hand was caught by his wife. The train stood for about an hour at the Railway Station. This Nihang Singh was saying loudly, " either come home victorious or be a martyr." Fighter soldiers sitting in each coach were carefully listening to the Nihang Singh seriously and probably felt that even the age did not diminish Baba's courage and zeal. An army officer was posted at the main railway stations who was called an R.T.O. He delivered the Army's orders to our Colonel Sahib. The army moved according to those directions.

The train stopped at Bathinda after Hissar. It was September 6. The train had to stay there for three hours. Our train arrived at around 12 in the afternoon. A local trader had arranged meals for thousands of people on Bathinda Railway Station. The meal comprised, the flour poories and dry potato vegetable. I also ate some food and put some food in my pouch. There were two pouches with the belt of every soldier. These pouches were about 10-12 inches long and four inches wide. Their depth was about 3 inches. These were often used to keep grenades or bullets. I kept four flour Roties/Poories in each pouch. A water bottle was tied on the back or on the side. This bottle was made of iron and had a warm cloth stiched on it. This was the same type for all the soldiers. At that time, sten guns were given to officers. There were rifles from JCO down to the soldiers. There was a single light machine gun for each section of eleven soldiers. This part of the section was known as light machine gun section. There were three soldiers in it, and they carried the machine gun turn by turn. This light machine gun could fire single shot as well as automatic. This was the best and effective weapon of the section.

A rifle company had three platoons. Each platoon had three sections. Section commander was often a Naik. The sub-section commander was a Lance naik, who used to handle light machine gun group. The Platoon Commander was often the Naib Subedar or Subedar. But sometimes new officers were also appointed as platoon commanders. In a coy. there are other ranks also besides three platoons, who helped coy commander in command and control, such as the coy. Haviladar Major and Quartermaster Havildar. The rifle coy.'s strength was around 120.

There were huge weapons in the support coy. It had also platoons like RCL Platoon, MMG Platoon and Mortar Platoon. RCL Platoon had RCL Guns which were fixed on a jeep. These were meant for blowing the enemy tanks. Likewise, the rocket launcher platoon was equipped with 3" rocket launchers. In addition, there were medium machineguns in the support coy. Any platoon/part of this coy could be attached to any rifle coy with the orders of the Battalion Commander.

We were at Bathinda railway station from 12:00 am to 3:00 pm. I got permission from Col. Bakshi to visit my sister's relatives who lived near the railway station. Here I stayed only for half an hour. After meeting the relatives, I rushed back and reached the railway station. The train moved at three in the afternoon. The RTO asked our

battalion to go to Kotakpura railway station. Kotakpura is not far from Bathinda. We reached Kotakpura in about an hour. Kotakpura R. T. O conveyed the superior command's order to our battalion commander that there were 50 civilian trucks for us. From there we had to go to Harike. At 5:30 in the evening we moved from Kotakpura and reached Harike at about 7p.m. Harika was 15 miles away from the battlefield. We went to a landlord's farm two miles ahead of Harike Patan. Col. Bakhshi was making planning with the commanders of Rifle Companies. We came to a new area and we became a part of 4 Mountain Division. Major General Gurbaksh Singh was Commander of the Mountain Division. Each division had some brigades, usually three. We were made part of 62 Mountain Brigade whose brigade commander was Brigadier Davinder Singh Sidhu. There were two other infantry battalions in our Brigade. They were 4 Grenadiers and 7 Grenadiers. On 8th September our battalion was deployed near the village Cheema.

In rear headquarters, which had two officers, was deployed 5 km behind the village Cheema. Lt. K.K. Sharma was appointed the commander of rear headquarters. Being an Administrative Coy. Commander, I was posted there as well. In the war, the Administrative coy.'s work was to transport cooked food. The work of Medical Platoon was dressing the injured soldiers in the war. This platoon also had stretchers. If a soldier was severely injured, then with the help of the stretcher, he was taken to hospital. On 9th, 10th and 11th September, our four rifle companies and a support coy. were established in Cheema area. These companies started recceing around the enemy's area. The coy. or battalion alone does not do recce. Brigade

Headquarters and Division Head Quarter also receive information about the enemy's territory and its activity.

On 12th Sept. our two companies (Bravo and Charlie) were organised to throw out a coy. of the enemy. Then the Bravo coy.'s commander Lt. Hukam Singh was asked. I don't know what the power in Hukum Singh was. He was not afraid of death at all. Hailing from Meerut, this Jat officer had the power of electricity. Hukam Singh agreed to go to war. Then Captain Ramesh Kapoor, who was the Commander of the Charlie Coy. was asked, "Let me get you Paramvir Chakra said the Col." He said to the colonel very humbly, "Sir, we have to fight the enemy and I am ready to fight." Our two companies, Bravo and Charlie, were ready for the war.

Both Lt. Hukam Singh and Captain Ramesh Kapoor along with their fighting strength advanced towards the target. Col. Bakshi, who was the Commander of the Regiment, also supervised the fighting companies in the war. My beloved friend 2/Lt Om Parkash Gaur, the intelligence officer of Colonel Bakshi, was with Col. Bakshi.

The information was that at the attacking place there was a Pakistani coy.. Two companies were enough to clear the area of the enemy coy but something else happened. In the morning of September 12, 1965 at about 10:30 a.m, two companies with a capacity of about 200 were mobilized and organized under the command of Col. Bakshi. Col. Bakshi and his Intelligence Officer were observing our companies. The place that was attacked, there were no soldiers in the targeted area. Later it was discovered that the Pakistan army had already known about our plan. It was the position of a battalion. To fight a

battalion, at least two battalions were needed. The whole battalion of Pakistan moved elsewhere from there. Tank Support also moved from there. When two companies of 2 MAHAR went to that place, they found nothing and on reaching there, faced bullets from left, right and front. Saber jets also came down and started dropping a bombs at our troops. The fire of artillery fell on that place. In this fight our two coy. commanders, Capt. Ramesh Kapoor and Lt. Hukam, 2 JCOs and 38 Jawan were killed. Almost the same number of soldiers were captured and injured. CO and his intelligence officers 2/Lt Gaur were watching. An arty shell hit Lt. Gaur and he was torn into pieces. Maj. Deogan saw my gifted bracelet falling down from the sky.

On 9th, 10th and 11th of Sept. I and Lt. K.K. Sharma used to take cooked food and distributed to the regiment. On September 12, 1965, around 10.30 Lt. Sharma went to distribute cooked food. The regiment was at war front at that time. He came back at 12 o'clock and said, "Amarjit, I could not find the regiment. "He asked me to go. I sat in front of a one-ton truck and took food and went to the area where the regiment was established for the last three days. There I could not find any soldier of our regiment. Nearby in a large mud room an artillery major was sitting. He was of a carefree nature. He was a tall and well-built Sikh. I asked, him the whereabout of our regiment. He advised me to go towards Cheema village bus stand. Further he said," your battalion has suffered heavily. You shall meet them on the way."

I started moving towards Cheema Bus stand. Going towards Cheema, I saw Lt. Arun Verma, our battalion adjutant coming back in one of our jeeps. His hand was

covered with a blanket. Seeing me, he stopped his Jeep and told me that an enemy's bullet had hit his hand. He was looking very happy and said in Hindi,"Laut ke budhu ghar ko aye." He may have felt as if he had got ridden with much less damage. 2/Lt. Davinder Mohan Daveshwar also got injured and was also admitted to the hospital. Lt. Verma's charge of adjutant was given to Lt. K.K. Sharma.

There was a very big Banyan tree at Cheema bus stand. There was a big wooden bed (Takhat posh) under this tree. There I met some regimental officers, returning from war. First of all, I saw Maj. Deogan. He said, "Amarjit, very bad had happened today. Your beloved friend Gaur was blown away in artillery shell. I have seen the bracelet given by you flying in the air. Whole battalion is retreating." Deogan was fond of eating good food especially chicken. I gave him food. He said he could not eat in this tragic moment. Jawans were coming back thoroughly demoralized. I was also very sad and I left all the utensils at that place and reached my place in rear headquarters.

On reaching back, Lt. K.K. Sharma told me that at about twelve o'clock Pakistani aircrafts attacked rear headquarters and burnt all the vehicles. Now we were left with the only vehicle in which I had carried the food. But the army arranged convoy of vehicles overnight. By 13th morning there were lot of vehicles. The equipment which was lying outside was also destroyed completely. Being wine member, I had brought two ammunition boxes full of whisky and had them buried under the ground. They were intact.

On September 12th evening, I received a message from Col. Bakshi to join him. I reached Col. Bakshi on

September 13 at 11 o'clock in the morning. The bunker of Brigadier Sidhu was on Cheema Bhura Kuan Khemkaran Road. Khemkaran, which is a big city, was in the possession of Pakistan. The Karimpur village was also in the possession of Pakistan. The village Bhura Kuan, which was between Karimpur and Cheema, was doubtful whether Pakistani army was there or not. Col. Bakshi's headquarters was at a farm of a very healthy Sardar near the village Asal Uttar. This farm house became our battalion headquarters. During the war, the owner of the house visited Col. Bakshi and opened all the rooms in the house. "All things are yours," he said, "I am ready to bring you whatever more you want." *

On the evening of 13th Col. Bakshi was a bit sad. He asked me saying, Amarjit, what should one do if the five sons of a father die in war? I said, "Sir, drink whiskey, eat chicken and kill 10 sons of the enemy on the following day. It's just a matter of die and kill, there is no philosophy in war." He got some encouragement from me on this matter and realized that there was excitement and valor in this new officer. Mahar Regiment was the Mahar Community's Regiment. Mahar people are from Maharashtra region and in one regiment there are close relatives and siblings. The soldiers who died, were related to the ones who were living. The prisoners and the wounded are also considered dead in the war. Unless the lists appeared, nothing was known as to who was alive and who was martyred. The courage and zeal for war was at the lowest ebb in our soldiers. I was again made the Platoon Commander of the Delta Coy.

Note: - ** I met this farmer again in 1980 in Amritsar. At that time, I was Assistant Excise & Taxation Commissioner in charge Amritsar District. I told him that we still remember

him and we are grateful for his services during 1965 war.

On the 14th September 1965 Col. Bakshi called me at about midday. He gave me instructions and said, "You have to go to Bhura Kuan etc. Village and have to recce if the enemy was in the village."

There were two types of patrolling in the military then. In Recce patrol one goes near the enemy and brings all the information about the activities and number of the enemy, but it could not have fought because of its low number. The second was protective patrolling. Its number was around 25 to 30. It had the capability to fight the enemy in addition to bringing the information of enemy. My task was Recce patrolling in which four soldiers were allotted to me. Two soldiers walked in the front and they were called Scouts. The officer could change their positions depending upon the situation. The officer is often in the middle and two soldiers are behind or on the side. After all the guidance, Colonel Bakshi took me to Brigade Commander Davinder Singh Sidhu aka David.

Brig. Sidhu looked to me as a rich officer in appearance. He was an armed corpes officer. Col. Bakshi and I reached his bunker. He talked a little to me. I was a young man and used to laugh a lot. He asked me, "What is your aim young officer?" I said Sir, "my aim is to capture village Bhura Kuan and send you signal Baroda, Baroda, Baroda after capture. A soldier carried wireless set on his shoulders through which we communicated with our battalion headquarters and others formations. Bhura Kuan was not too far from the village Cheema.

After briefing by the Brigadier at about three o'clock in the afternoon, Colonel Bakshi walked about a kilometer

with me and my team to see me off for the mission. After going about a kilometer, I handed over my ID card to Col. Bakshi. Col. Sahib asked, "What is this? I said, "Sir, if a commanding officer is going to see off a 2/Lt. for a kilometer, then I can understand how much responsible and a risky task will it be. If I am martyred, then the enemy will not be happy that they killed an officer." The Col. did not agree with me and gave me back my identity card. I also asked Col. Bakshi, "If my men run away in fear, can I shoot them? If I shoot them for the good of the country and you only get me court martialed, what would my parents think about me. They are bound to think that Amarjit committed some serious lapses that he has been sent back from the army." The colonel began thinking seriously and said, "If that happens, then I will be standing behind you."

Colonel Bakshi went back to his area. The rest of the team and I started proceeding to the village, Bhura Kuan. We went one kilometer forward and started going inside the village. The two scouts were advancing. Meanwhile one of them gave me signal to stop and take positions which we did. Crawling, I reached the soldier and asked him, "why did you stop. He said," Sir, I am seeing a Pakistani soldier, who is saying something in the other soldier's ears." He showed me two Pakistani soldiers but that was an 'Arlakhot'. The soldiers of Maharashtra of our regiment were not aware of Arlakhot. Arlakhot were dug down in land very much in those days in Punjab. The main objective of this Arlakhot was to prevent wild animals from entering the farm land, but humans could pass through it. It is made of wood and its shape is like slingshot. It looked like an English letter 'Y'. The wood bark went off in about six months and its color becomes khaki. The Pakistani army uniform color was also Khaki. So, he thought that two Pakistani soldiers were talking to each other.

Well, we soon crossed the Arlakhot and entered the village Bhura kuan. There was a Patton tank on the entry of the village Bhura Kuan, whose turret was facing India. The Patton tanks were given by the US to Pakistan. These tanks were more powerful and advanced compared to tanks with Indian army. One could see enemy from 200 to 250 meters at night. We thought there would be some men in the tank. We all surrounded the tank and I courageously mounted the tank. I picked up the cover of the tank and threw a grenade into it. After throwing a grenade, we came to know that there was no person in the tank.

At around 4:30 in the evening, we patrolled Bhura Kuan village. We did not see anybody in the village. Some stray animals were wandering. The village was seven to eight hundred yards away from the road connecting Cheema-Bhura Kuan-Khemkaran. A Kacha road of about 800 yd. connected the village bus stop to the village. We took positions between bus stand and village. we were sitting four hundred yards from the village and the road. Our position was right next to this Kacha path. I ordered digging the trenches. I conveyed to the CO, the message Baroda, Baroda, Baroda three times on wireless as required. He congratulated me on this achievement and told Brigadier Sidhu. Col. Bakshi told me that he was sending me the complete Delta coy. with Major Kulwinder Singh.

Major Kulwinder Singh and the entire Delta coy reached Bhura Kuan at about 5'o clock in the evening. Our

coy. took the position and started digging the trenches facing the village, because we were expecting the enemy from Bhura Kuan village.

On 15th and 16th, I was sent for recce with four soldiers. Near about 1000-1500 meters from our position, Pakistani companies were sitting in whose area we were sent for recce. My colleagues and I fired at the enemy's position so that the enemy could be scared and was made to take position. At that time, I saw some Pakistani soldiers running with water bottles. I looked at the map comfortably and marked it and then informed the coy. commander.

On 16th night we were sent to Recce again in another direction. A scout stopped us and he said in Hindi, "Sir, dushman ki harkat sunai deti hai (I hear the movement of the enemy)." For about one and a half hour, we lay there taking position. In the meantime, a buffalo got out of the water and ran away. So that was the enemy.

September 17, 1965 was a day of challenge for my upbringing, training, faith, Sikhism, education and army. In the morning after breakfast we were sent to Karimpur area from Bhura Kuan for Recce. The Karimpur village was completely under the control of Pakistan army. For going to Karimpur we had to pass through village Bhura Kuan. We had hardly crossed Bhura Kuan that Bombardment started. I was not sure if the bombardment was from Indian army or Pakistan army. There were two kutcha houses in the outskirts of the village towards Karimpur. A bombshell fell on these houses. Four Pakistani Jawans came out of that house and they entered the village Bhura kuan in the direction from where we had come from. It was about 11 o'clock. Even on my asking our three Jawans to take

positions, our soldiers got scared and went towards the other side of the village. I thought what I will do alone? I also followed them. At that time, I remembered George Bernard Shaw, who had said, "every brave soldier is coward at heart."

On the other side of the village, we reached near Cheema, Bhura Kuan and Khemkaran road. We were about 250 yards from the position of our coy. At the same time, we noticed that the position of our coy was under attack. We saw the backs of Pakistani soldiers firing at our coy position from a soil clog which was very high. We all four took positions in a sugar cane lot. Firing was all around. We felt that we had been also fired at. I prayed to Guru Gobind Singh Ji. At about 3 in the afternoon I felt some strength in my forehead. I was feeling very powerful. I was feeling that I could break the tank with my hands. Soldiers asked for my orders, I said, "let us reach our coy. position." There was a way to reach our coy position, by fire and move. First a soldier moved ahead and took position, then second person crossed him under his protection and took position. Like this we reached our coy position within minutes. Lt. Col. Bakshi, our Battalion commander was present there. He said, "where were you, we had been attacked." I said," we were behind the enemy." Why are you here I asked him? He told me that the Cov. commander had called him for consultation and help.

Second attack came at about 4 p.m on 17-Sept-1965: I had just arrived when our coy was attacked second time by Pakistan. Col. Bakshi was sitting in the bunker and his bunker was just half dug. We took positions. Major Kulwinder Singh was sitting twenty feet away from me. In

the meantime, firing stopped. Major Kulwinder Singh used to dress up very neatly. I saw some shirt burning on his right arm. I just asked him, "sir, what is this red sign on your shoulder?" To this he said, "My arm is gone." Soon he was evacuated for medical treatment.

Col. Bakshi asked me if I could command the coy. I said, "why not sir". At that time, I used to speak like this. After some time, the soldiers started informing me, "Sir, our ammunition has finished." Pakistanis were still firing and I went to Col. Bakshi and demanded some ammunition. He gave me two boxes of ammunition. When I was standing near Col's bunker, he asked me to take position immediately. I said laughingly," the bullet on which Amarjit is written is meant for me. The bullets on which my name is not there, those cannot do any harm to me." I was still talking to Col. Bakshi that a soldier of our cov. tried to run away leaving his position. He was near the bunker of Col. Bakshi. I had a sten gun. I fired at the soldier. Col. Bakshi in a little anger said," what are you doing?" I said, "if any one soldier fled from here then nobody will remain here. Only the two of us will remain. We will be ridiculed regardless of whether we are dead or alive." He seemed to agree with me. My bullet did not hit that soldier but he went back to his position.

Well, I soon reached my position. I threw bandoliers towards my soldiers. They said "these bullets did not fit in rifles or LMGs." I realized that we were using old ammunition (.303) whereas our new division was using 7.62 MM ammunition.

Testing time started: - The subedar sitting beside me said, "Sir we are left with no ammunition. We should retire." I did

not say anything. After a while I said in a commanding voice 'let me think'. After a few minutes I commanded my soldiers to wait for the enemy to come. When enemy will be 20 feet from us, we will come out of our trenches and shout our regimental slogan......Mahar Sainik Agey Badho Hindustan Ki Jai and fight with Bayonets till our last."

During firing an artillery shell hit my trench. My orderly was sitting on my left side. I was feeling deaf from my left ear. After every bombing, officers and soldiers checked their body parts by touching them whether all the organs were intact or not. I soon realized after touching my orderly's helmet that he was dead. I threw my sten gun and picked up my orderly's rifle and put a bayonet on it. At that time some thoughts struck my mind, which are like this before taking a final decision of fighting with bayonets and die with grace.

First of all, I thought if I fled from front, what will happen. I remembered Guru Gobind Singh JI, who had said

II SAVA LAKH SE EK LADAUN II

II TABI GOBIND SINGH NAAM KAHAUN II

(Translation, My one Khalsa shall be able to fight with one lac twenty five thousand people only then will I call myself Gobind Singh)

(Bhai Nand Lal Ji)

I thought what Guru Gobind Singh Ji would think about me that this poor guy is only concerned with his life. How he will fight with SAVA LAKH.

Second thought was that still I was neither engaged nor married. Calling me shameless, my inner voice said, Guru Gobind Singh younger sons (Sahibzadas) were only aged 7 and 9 and were children. Their age was to play among children. But they accepted death against conversion to Islam. The inner voice (soul) snubbed me for being so selfish and calculative.

Then my mother came to my mind who had blessed me prior to boarding a bus at my native village Dugal bus stand and had advised me before going to war, "grief and happiness only come to men? Work seriously". In the answer I had said," I shall die for the country and follow your advice seriously." Then I thought why I was rethinking.

Finally, I thought of my father who was living in our ancestral village Dugal. Our land was about three kilometers from our village. My father used to stop in front of the Gurudwara Sahib while returning from farm. There was a platform of about 500 sq. feet, on which some people of village used to play cards and gossip. My father used to stop there definitely. I felt that my father went there and people were saying "You were very brave but your son is a coward." My father's head will drop in shame. My internal voice asked me whether you want to make your parents proud or want to give them shame. I soon realized that I have to be brave and thought this is my place and today I will die with honor. A thought came in mind:-II PURJA PURJA CUT MARE KABHU NA CHHADE KHET II (Raag Maru Bhagat Kabir Ji, Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ang: 1105)

At that time, I had memorized only 15 steps (Pauris) of Japuji Sahib. I started reciting the prayer and after 15 steps again started the prayer. I requested the Tenth Guru thus," Hey Lord, I am about to come to you in a few minutes. Kindly bless me that I should not die with bayonet, I want to die with bullet. It is taking time now narrating all this but at

that time it came to my mind within seconds like speed of light.

So nearly an hour and a half-passed, we were waiting for the enemy. I had understood that it is better to die with dignity than live with dishonor. When a person is ready for death, his power increases ten times. Now the situation was such that the enemy was neither advancing nor firing. We could have fired if we had the ammunition. At about six o'clock, two Indian Army tanks came to our rescue. This was the help that Col. Bakshi had asked for at the time of the first attack at about 3.00 pm. The tank officer asked me the whereabouts of the enemy. I pointed my right had towards the enemy. Both the Tanks were turned that side and fired from the turret and also from the machine guns attached to the tanks. All Pakistani soldiers fled saying Alah - Huh - Akbar.

The attacking infantry company of Pakistan was later identified as troops from Second Baluch regiment. It was a great day for me, Col. Bakshi and 2 Mahar Regiment. Maj. Kulwinder the coy commander who was injured during the attack later recovered and retired as a Brigadier. My orderly was killed in this operation.

Col. Bakshi came out of his bunker and embraced me. He said, "You want Mahavir Chakra or Vir Chakra." I said, Sir, I do not plan to continue in the army. Get this award to those soldiers who will be staying in the army." I did not have any other paper, I picked out a note of one rupee from my pocket and wrote the names of Havildar Bhim Sen Ambore and Naik Sirkate. Hav. Bhim Sen Ambore got Vir Chakkar and got 50 bighas of land in Maharashtra. Naik Sirkate received the Chief of Army staff's commendation

card.

Some more time passed. In November 1965 I was getting training at Weapon Training School Mhow, M.P. I read in the newspaper that I too had received the gallantry award (Mentioned in Dispatches). When I returned to the regiment after training, I asked Col. Bakshi, "Sir, I did not ask for a gallantry award." He told me that when he went with the recommendations, Brigadier Sidhu asked about "Amarjit, who has done so much work. You did not even mention his name. I said that he has refused. Brigadier Sidhu said he is still a young officer, but you are not a young officer. Prepare and bring his case." I recommend your name for the Vir Chakra but Army Headquarters gave you 'Mentioned in dispatches' instead." Citation of the award reads like this:

"Second Lt. Amarjit Singh (Ec-57125). 2 Mahar Second Lt. Amarjit Singh was a platoon commander in D coy. 2 Mahar. The coy. established a firm base in the area Bhura Kuan on 16 September 1965. The firm base was attacked twice on 17 Sept 1965. Second Lt. Amarjit Singh who had been out on patrolling during the first attack, gained useful information about the enemy strength and direction of attack, slipped past an enemy ambush and rejoined the firm base well in time before the second attack came in. After the first attack was repulsed, replenishment of ammunition was done and the coy. commander regrouped the coy. In the subsequent attack, which was preceded by very heavy artillery fire, MMG and mortar fire, the coy. commander was wounded. Majority of his men had expended the ammunition in the forward platoons and pulled back to the depth platoon positions. It was at this juncture, this young subaltern took over the situation in the trenches of the FDL and stabilized it by rushing from trench to trench, flinging to men the ammunition which had been fetched up by the commanding officer and ordered that no man would leave his trench. When he found that he could not get artillery fire due to the damage of the wireless set, he effectively held the small arms fire of the coy. and held the attackers at bay, who had to retreat at face of a determined defender leaving some of his own wounded. The above action of the officer in the face of the enemy was of a high order and in the highest traditions of the Indian Army.

AWARDED

"M-In-D"

Vide Gazette Notification No. 76-Pres/66

Date: 27-Oct-1966

SD:-

I have a great satisfaction that I could render some service to the country. I feel good to obey my mother's words and do all this for my father's honor. For my next life, this incident greatly boosted my confidence. Even in the spiritual path I feel that I have done my duty well towards my country and have emerged as a good Sikh. There is another lesson from this that the Lord saved me from the clutches of death. I wanted to live rest of my life as a warrior of the Lord and to do good work in all fields and live a moral and responsible life and elevate my soul.

This day, a Friday on September 17 1965 has the great effect on moulding my life. I became a soldier forever. The remaining years of my life, I spent like an honest and brave person whatever the hurdles. I worked with faith, courage and patience. I faced many diseases also in the spirit of a good soldier. Now I am a soldier of God, trying to

The day of forgiveness

Saturday 18th September 1965. When I look back at the war 17 September 1965 (Friday) is a very outstanding day in my life and career and also the history of 2 Mahar regiment. The next day 18 September (Saturday) is also satisfying from moral point of view. At about 1.30 P.M. on 18 September, I got a message from Brigadier Sidhu, our Brigade Commander saying that our Helicopter people saw a soldier of Pakistani army lying injured in our area. The order was," take a few Jawans go and kill him." I and four more Jawans took rifles and put bayonets on the rifles and moved towards the area where the Pakistani soldier was said to be lying. As we moved about 150 yards from our company position, we saw a young tall Pak soldier lying in the Katcha water channel. His one leg was a hit by a shell and he could not move. On seeing all of us, the Pakistani soldier was not scared. He was looking at us with confidence. He only said "Sardar Ji, I am already half dead because even if I recover, I shall never be able to fight. I was on annual leave when my wife delivered a baby. If you spare my life, I will be able to see my daughter."

On my side I thought coming from a brave Sikh background that one never killed a defenseless man. Killing a person who is helpless was not bravery. In Sikh history I read if enemy's sword was broken, he was given another sword by Khalsa army so that he could fight. As such I asked my men not to kill him. We got a cot from the village and brought him to the company position blinded folded. He was later sent to army hospital where he must have been treated before being interrogated. It was later revealed that

-[102]-

he was a part of Second Baluch regiment, an infantry battalion of Pathans.

Whenever I remember this day, I feel satisfied with my conduct and I think that forgiveness is a great virtue. If I had ordered his killing, I would have lived with the guilt all these years that I was a butcher and not a soldier. Pakistani soldier was very hungry. We gave him food and water. Now that I have made some progress spiritually, I remember this incident and my conduct with satisfaction.

Guru Teg Bahadur Ji thought of forgiveness as a great virtue.**

"Forgiveness is the austerity most meritorious; forgiveness is the best of charities. Forgiveness is equivalent to all the pilgrimages and ablutions. In forgiveness lies liberation. No other virtue parallels forgiveness. Forgiveness you must learn." **
(Ninth Guru of Sikh faith)

On 19 Sept. 1965 (Sunday) our company was called to Brigade HQ near Asal Uttar for rest. We dug down on the outskirts of village Asal Uttar on Katcha Ratokey Road. We were at Asal Uttar till 24 Sept. 1965.

Cease Fire

Cease fire was announced on September 23, 1965, and my company was sent to Ratoke village. The decision conveyed was that wherever the troops of India and Pakistan were, they were to remain there. Village Ratoke was on the bank of a river. Its Gurdwara was with the Pakistan Army and we had the village. There was only a fifteen-foot kutcha path between village and the Gurudwara Sahib. For almost two months I stayed in this village. A few days later, Major Sood was sent as Company Commander in Delta Company, which was my company and I became his platoon commander.

Until Major Sood came, I used to meet Captain of enemy force by showing white handkerchief. On the first day, I went to meet the Captain of the Pakistani Army and saluted him. He wore three pips, just like our army. Perhaps because of my beard, I might have looked a little older. He asked me if I was a Major. He saluted me. I said," Sir I am only a 2/Lt." During the war, the Indian officers did not wear ranks, so that if an officer was martyred then the enemy could not know what the rank of the deceased was

Major Sood was somewhat scared kind by nature. We got iron sheets so that we could dig bunkers and cover them with iron sheets and put the sand bags on the roofs above the tin sheets. It was an evening time. The soldiers were laying tin sheets, then suddenly there was a loud sound. I was then standing beside Major Sood. He told me

that it was machine gun fire. I said, "Sir, it is not machine gun fire. This is sound of a tin falling on a tin." He sometimes wore two helmets on his head. I did not like him at all and he knew my mind.

Within a few days, another major was posted in the battalion. His name was Major TRK Patam. He was placed as 'D' Coy Commander as my boss in place of Major Sood. He belonged to South India and was very good natured. We had cordial relations and I respected him very much. He was senior to Major Sood and was expected to be promoted as Lt. Col. Whenever a meeting was held in the headquarters of the battalion, he deputed me to attend meeting at Asal Uttar village. He gave me the feeling of an elder brother. He admired Punjabi character for its bravery.

I have been very fond of horses since childhood. Despite a house and land in our native village, Dugal, we were residing in Patiala city. I used to go to our mother's native village, Bhaini Fata every year. My maternal family was very fond of horses and camels. The horses were used only for riding while the camels were used both for farming and riding. Three people could sit on the saddle by fixing it on the back of a camel.

In those days a landlord from the Asal Uttar village became my friend. I borrowed his mare and kept it at village Ratoke for about two months. After chaining its front feet, the mare was left open for grazing. Whenever I used to go to Asal Uttar from Ratoke for meetings, instead of walking, I used to go on this mare. I used to tie the mare with a tree near the meeting place, and after meeting I came back to village Ratoke riding this mare.

In 1965 war, six of our officers were martyred and

injured in our battalion, leaving many vacancies. The C.O. got promoted 7 second lieutenants as acting captains. I was one of them. Every week there was a promotional party in the officer's mess. Major Patam often used to send me for this party. I would go to the mess at about seven in the evening and eat dinner and enjoy whisky and come back at ten o'clock in the night. I was very fond of chilled beer. What to say of chilled beer, even fresh beer was not available. In the war of 1965, nobody saw Captain Ramesh Kapoor being martyred. So, we continued to show him as missing. Those two annumition boxes filled with Scotch Whiskey that I had brought from Jodhpur as a wine member were serving a very good purpose. One peg from each bottle consumed was saved for Captain Kapoor, and these bottles were tied to the ceiling of officers' mess. Overall, I do not know what the situation was but there were no signs of fear in me either during war or during Cease fire.

There was another incident that took place while living in Ratoke that I would always remember. There is always chaos among people in war. On 5th Sept. 1965 Pakistan had attacked Khemkaran. Residents ran away leaving their homes and animals. Animals became stray. In the end of September 1965, when we went to Ratoke, there was a beautiful horse roaming about with a saddle. Seeing a beautiful horse, I got tempted to ride it. Two platoons of our company were on a Tiba (a small hill of soil) a little distant from Ratoke village. One platoon and company HQs was in the village at a distance of about thousand yards, in which there was a well and a Halti (Persian wheel). The food of our company was prepared in the area of Halti. All the day, traffic was going on between Tibbi and the village. We had

laid anti-tanks and anti-personal mines leaving the Kacha Road from Tibi to village. Fencing wires were fixed on Indian side. There was a twenty feet muddy path from this village to our company headquarters. Before reaching the village from Tibi one road turned to the right, which went to Gurdwara Sahib. We had anti-personal mines in all the areas up to Pakistan occupied areas leaving the Kacha road going towards Gurdwara Sahib. On this road were about ten houses followed by a gap of about 15 feet. Then came the Gurdwara Sahib.

Note:- Persian wheel is called Hult or Hulti in Punjab State. The only difference between a Hult or Hulti is its size. Hulti could be handled manually whereas a Hult was driven by animals, mainly bullocks or camels.

I found this horse on the Tibi where our two platoons were deployed. I patted the horse and sat on the saddle of horse and turned the horse towards the village, where the company's langar was located. When I pulled the reins of horse to turn it to the village, horse was moving towards right side where fencing wire was mounted on poles and anti tanks and anti personal mines were laid. The horse was very strong and stubborn. Some parts of his body were torn by fencing barbed wires. The Kuthca road ran up to the village, and midway it also turned to the right towards the Gurudwara. The horse turned towards to the Gurdwara Sahib which was in the possession of Pakistan army. On the way, I saw a demolished house on the left. I turned the horse towards this house, there the horse had to stop. I left him there thanking God and learned for the future not to mess with an unknown horse.

Captain Kulwant Singh:- About 2 Kilometer from village

Ratoke was another village Chakhwalian, a platoon of Gurkha Regiment was deployed there. The platoon commander there was Captain Kulwant Singh. Often, I went to meet him riding my mare. He also kept a horse and rode it well. His platoon was attached to our company for ration. A subedar from their platoon used to come to our company to collect their ration etc.

Kulwant was a character. He was a clean shaven, public school educated Jat Sikh boy from Ludhiana area. While at Ratoke one day I got the news of his having run over a mine. I went to meet him at forward post hospital at Village Harike Patan located a few kilometers behind our forward position. His one leg was amputed and I saw him shedding tears. With tears rolling down his cheeks, he was telling me in a choked voice as to "which girl would like to marry him now." He is said to have rejected many beautiful girls. Later on, I heard that he was sent to Comd. hospital at Poona for fitment of an artificial leg.

The last time I met him was at Ludhiana in about 1979. I was posted there as an Excise & Taxation Officer working as assessing authority, ward 3. He came to know from some body about my posting there. He came to my office at about 11 a.m. We talked of the old days at Ratoke. He was given permission by Government of India to buy a Volkgswagon company automatic car from Germany in view of his disability. He was about 36 years of age then. He looked responsible now. The glow of his face had dimmed. The Chardikala of Oct/Nov 1965 of his Chakwalian days was missing. I never knew anything of him later on.

Captain Mohan, Artillery: - During our cease fire days at village Ratoke there was another artillery officer attached

with Delta company at Ratoke. He was a Mohial Brahman and his last name was Mohan. He was stocky, well-built and gave the look of a wrestler or body builder. By nature, he was relaxed and confident. As soon as, the war ended, U.N.O. sent observers to watch activities of armies both India and Pakistan side to keep peace. There were two officers watching our area. The Canadian army officer was Col. Jacob (fictitious name) and Ethiopian officer Lt. Lobe (fictitious name). Lobe visited us only once. It was only Col. Jacob who visited us at Ratoke several times. If he came to us at about 11 am, I asked my company people to prepare chicken for him for lunch. He used to like our butter chicken. Mohan was a captain and a regular officer. I did not ask him if he was the direct entry or N.D.A. commissioned. I guess that he was an N.D.A. commissioned officer. Land Mohan used to have lot of fun. Mohan was a Punjabi officer. Once Col. Jacob was coming to meet us, this was like early October 1965. I was then company commander and Major Sood had not come to command the company yet. Col. Jacob was coming to meet us. Mohan was sitting on a cot under a tree. I saw Col. Jacob coming and he was still about 100 yards away. I immediately got up and started waiting for the Col. I also asked Mohan to get up. He was so relaxed. He told me that he had seen even Brigadiers standing in attention position in his house before his father, who was then a serving Major General. That day I learnt the first lesson of wisdom that his confidence spoke of his placement in life. My placement was that of the son of a retired Major. His placement was the son of a serving Major General. The confidence level of both of us was bound to be different. After those few weeks with him I never met Captain Mohan later on.

In November 1965, I was sent for the Weapon training for 6 weeks to Mhow in Madhya Pradesh. There, I got news of my gallantry award through a newspaper. When I joined back in the end of December 1965, our battalion and officers had already built their residential areas near the Harike dam. We celebrated January 1, 1966 at Harike Patan. Any bigger function in the army, was celebrated with its own resources, which were then limited.

In January 1966 there was a letter from Army HQs. for an officer's military police course. I requested Col. Bakshi to send me on the said course. Further I told him that I was very excited to go to military police. He informed me that I had just arrived from Mhow (Madhya Pradesh) after one and a half months' weapon course. He said," I can send you on one condition if you for-go the annual leave for this year (1966)." I agreed to forgo my annual leave and went for training at CMP Centre, Faizabad (U.P) in January 1966. My training ended in March 1966. Meanwhile 2nd Mahar battalion had come to Ambala cantonment. I joined the battalion when my battalion was still sitting at the Ambala cantonment railway station.

The Time at Ambala and in Nagaland State

We stayed in Ambala from March 1966 to December 1966. In this period Lt. Col. Bakshi was transferred to Army Headquarters in New Delhi. Major Sood was promoted as Lieutenant colonel and appointed CO of our battalion. Major T.R.K Patam was superseded. He got himself transferred outside the battalion. The benefit of Ambala's posting was that I occasionally used to travel to Patiala to meet my friends and parents. During this tenure there were two major exercises. In the month of May 1966, there was an exercise in Machhiwara area of Punjab. That was the entire division's exercise. In November, the same kind of exercise took place in the hills of Nahan.

Our officers' mess was in Allenby lines. Occasionally, I and my friends Charandas and Dalbir used to go to a famous Deluxe Dhaba in Ambala Cantonment for meals. At first, we felt some hesitation. Army officers were trained to go to major hotels and not visit dhabas or eat at the rehris. The look and bearing of army officers was much different from the civilians. One day I, Charandas and Dalbir started looking at the deluxe dhaba in the cantonment area. It was a very popular dhaba at Ambala. Deluxe dhaba was written outside the dhaba and there was a picture of a chicken. A chicken was painted in the board outside and it was written in English, "Meet me anywhere but eat me at deluxe dhaba." The owner was a Punjabi, and he understood by observing us that we wanted to eat but were hesitating. He

said, "You will still be a Lieutenant." We said, "Yes, but how do you know?" He said, "the shopkeeper's eye is very sharp. Sit down comfortably, here even the army majors and other big officers come to eat." We used to eat a couple of meals in a week there.

A few weeks later, another Major was posted in our regiment. His name was Major P.K. Das Gupta. He was a Bengali officer and considered himself very big. He was married but lived alone. He was commissioned through NDA. NDA officers considered themselves superior compared to the rest of the officers. He became the second-in-command of the battalion due to his seniority. He was given charge of battalion as Col. Sood went on annual leave in the months of Nov-Dec 1966. He had done Staff Collage. This qualification added another feather to his professional career. His physical form, dress and manners showed him to be a perfect gentleman. He drank a lot and till very late at night almost every day. He took airs and to an extent he was justified.

During his officiating command the battalion was on an exercise during winter of 1966 in the Solan and Nahan hills. One evening he invited us to the Mess. It was till midnight that we ate and drank whisky etc. The next morning at 6:00 am, we had to take part in the exercise. My orderly, Sepoy Dara Singh, could not wake me up. As soon as Dara Singh woke up himself, he ran to my sleeping area and told me that Maj. Gupta was inspecting my company. I ran to the company position in a hurry, saluted him and felt sorry for the lapse. He shouted at me and said, "the punishment for you is that you will dig your trench in front of your troops." I said," I have been commander of these

people in 1965 war. I prevented these people from fleeing from the battle field. It is not possible that I dig trench in front of them as a punishment." He became silent but it is natural that he did not like my reaction. Col. Sood was not happy with me already. Lieutenant Arun Verma, who got injured in the 1965 war, recovered and re-joined the battalion. He was promoted a captain and was appointed as the adjutant. He did not like me from Jalipa days. Now there was a trio of them against me. Only confidence, valor and history of war was on my side.

The incident of Ambala: - This incident of Ambala greatly influenced me. In May 1966, the state of Haryana was not yet created and Ambala was still a district headquarters of Punjab State. At that time, the DC of Ambala was Sardar MS Gill (later on became MP and minister in the Union government). An event was organized in the Red Cross building headed by Deputy Commissioner, Ambala in which the widows of the martyr soldiers of 2 Mahar were to be honored. The martyrs' wives were crying as if they are left with nothing. That was true also. The wife who had lost her husband, had no purpose to live those days. Many of our regiment's families were from the villages of Maharashtra. Although I studied in the city but often had the opportunity to go to many villages to meet friends and relatives. The condition of widows was worse everywhere but the desperation in villages was even more. Our regiment's Jawans belonged to lower castes of Maharashtra. Think that you are of a lower caste and your husband is dead. What will be your condition: naturally helplessness and desperation.

The event started at 5.00 in the evening at Red Cross

ground. Apart from the DC, many civil officers were sitting on the dais. A lot of gazetted officers of Ambala were called. We, the army officers were sitting at the guest chairs. Each widow was being given a sewing machine. This event went on for almost an hour. Later on tea etc. was served. Army officers were meeting civil officers.

I was dishearted and felt emotionally hurt at this sight. I thought mothers sent their young sons to army. Does the country pay back by giving a sewing machine to the war widows? Then I thought about the poverty of our country. Realising that our country had no resources, then what else could the martyr's wife get? For several days, I kept on thinking about this and thought that we should have only bachelors in the army. After few years in army one should get adjustment in civil life. If a married soldier is martyred in battle, he leaves his widow and orphan children behind. I was seriously thinking of a 'Bachelors army'. After a few years of soldering, an officer or Jawan could be adjusted in civil life where one could live a happy married life.

I was so impacted by this incident that I decided that if I had to stay in the army then the battles would continue and so long as I serve in the military, then I shall have to conduct bravely. Life will remain in risk. So personally, I thought that if I was in the army or in the infantry, I would never get married. My father occasionally asked my views about my marriage, and then I used to say to my father, "As long as I am in the army, I do not want to leave a widow and orphan children behind." Many civilian friends asked me that when I come back from the army, I will be older. I often told them that I will marry according to my age. Like If I am

35 years old, I will marry a 30-year-old girl. If a relative asked if I remained in the army till 40/45 years, what would I do? I used to say," it does not matter whether I get married or not." Further they asked" how you old age will pass?" I used to say," If I give money and land to somebody, he can take care of me." A relative asked whether I will stay in the city or in the village, I would say, "in the village. Our village had an artificial lake called Bhupindra Sagar. We had a piece of land on bank of that lake. I thought of building a farm house there and would occasionally enjoy boating there." My needs were very limited.

Nagaland:-

At the end of December, 1966, 2 Mahar battalion was ordered to move to Nagaland where we had to deal with the underground Nagas as part of the 8 Mountain Division. Kohima was the headquarters of the 8 Mountain Division. The headquarters of the battalion was to be Merankong. Brigade Headquarters was at Makokchong. The residents of Nagaland were under the influence of Christianity. They wanted to live as an independent country. They had developed an underground army, with which the Indian army was going to fight. Nagas got arms and training from China. This peculiar situation was different from the general battle. For example, we were fighting in Khemkaran area (Punjab) in Sept. 1965. Situation was clear, the friends were behind us and enemy was in the front. Friends used to give food, and they gave every kind of news of the enemy. The enemy was in front with whom we had to fight.

We were going from Ambala to Nagaland in the train. It was to be about two days' journey.

On the way, our battalion commander got the

information that we also got to manage an airborne company location. Airborne means, the company's equipment or ration was to be dropped by Airoplanes. The name of this village was Laungchong. There was concrete road from Mariani to Makokchong via Merankong. Mariani was the last railway station in Assam state after which we had to go via road. Makogchong was our brigade headquarters. Merankong was to be our battalion headquarters and was about half way There was a muddy road from Merankong to Laungshong which was in the woods and was airborne. Now the problem arose, who was to go to this dangerous place? All company commanders were asked repeatedly whose company would be sent to Longchong. All the officers said to Colonel Sood, "Sir Amarjit is a warrior. You request him, he will go happily." Near the Siliguri railway station, I received a message from Colonel Sood inviting me to meet him in his compartment. When the train stopped at some station later, I met Lt. Col. Sood in his compartment. He treated me with dignity, offered whiskey and began to say all the good words about me. I said, "Sir, I am a free person. I will happily go. You need a brave person to go to Longchong and I need freedom."

I was appointed the Commander of the Delta Company and sent to Longchong. It was the same delta company that I had commanded during the 1965 war. I reached Longchong with about 110 soldiers. Longchong was a small village. The village was on a high hill and the company headquarters was on the other hill. There was a school in the village, whose headmaster used to attend to the school only for a day or two. He was the only person in this area who knew a little bit of Hindi. I used to invite him to

my room (BASHA) for tea. Basha was a structure built with the help of bamboo and straw, which the people of Nagas used to build within hours. Within minutes, they used to make the doors by tearing the bamboo. Basha could be very small and at the same time very big. Occasionally I used to visit the headmaster in school. He was a Naga man in his mid-thirties and knew some Hindi. He used to offer me tea at his School. I called him to my Basha and entertained him with tea and Pakoras. I also gave him a bottle of Rum as a gift. Besides, I had no other friend.

Between the village and our position was a table top that was our helipad. Each helipad had a number, which was shown by placing emptied iron tins upside down. Our helipad no. was 100.

Whenever Ration used to arrive from Jorehaut (Assam), we used to create smoke by firing grass etc. With the help of the smoke, the Air Force Officers used to drop the ration etc. Pulses and sugar, etc. were packed in double sacks kept half empty, so that the sack did not tear on falling. The living goats or sheep were put in a wooden crate in twos and dropped by parachutes. Sometimes the ration fell at other places. After that, we used to inform Jorehaut through telegrams as to what we got and what we did not.

We were supplied with Rum for bad weather. Bad weather is called inclement weather in army language. According to my ideals, the soldiers were not allowed to drink too much. I did not like to give the soldiers more than enough. That's why in our Coy store there was always enough Rum. Generally, every soldier was allowed to take one bottle of Rum in the holidays. I used to allow the soldiers to take three bottles home because it was their

ration only. Officers were not supposed to drink Rum. I never drank even a drop of Rum.

After some days, I felt that it was very difficult to spend time here. We started playing kabaddi in the evening. There are raw hills in Nagaland. We used to dig soil and put over the slope and make the place even and suitable for playing kabaddi. My hands and back were very strong. I used to play Kabbadi very well. For our protection against Naga rabels, we used to put light machine guns on both sides to avoid attack by underground Naga army. First aid box was placed, so that in case of any injury, first aid was available.

I bought books of Shakespeare from Jorehaut (Assam) and used to read them. I had got built a small verandah in front of my Basha from where I used to enjoy the beauty of hills and also clouds moving around lower hills. I enjoyed this scenery amid reading Shakespeare and also enjoyed drinking tea.

I used to prepare various types of meat. I often asked for a leg piece and made experiments on it. At first I was hesitant but after some days I thought that if I did not talk to anyone, I would go mad. I asked Subedar Shivaji Bhonsle to call two or three soldiers. I started playing cards with them. So, life became interesting.

People of Nagaland were under influence of Christianity. Almost every major or small town had a church. Because of my social nature, one day I went to the church at Longchong. Three or four soldiers were with me. Two or three underground Naga Army boys were already sitting there. I told my soldiers that we will not fire first but if they shoot, we will surely reply, but they did not fire. After

that I realized that it was not safe for us to go to a church. These Naga people considered the Indian Army as a foreign army. Naga people were fighting against Indian army for its independence.

In the first week of April, 1967 Brigadier Sukhpal Singh, our Brigade Commander came for our inspection. Col. Sood was with him. Brigadier was very happy to see my work and confidence. I said, "Sir, I do not have beer but a bottle of Scotch whiskey is lying." Brigadier said, "Do you drink only Scotch whiskey, then I said," Sir, I've been off-drink for three months. If you want I can open it for you." Brigadier said, "Are you a rich officer?" I said, "Absolutely not. My father and grandfather was army officers but we are not rich." Colonel Sood was not much happy hearing my praise. Brigadier Sukhpal Singh said to colonel sood, "we need a good officer at Mariani. You appoint some other officer here. Send him to Mariani so that administration should get better there."

Within days, I came to Mariani. It was rear headquarter of the Brigade. There was much indiscipline here. Mariani was a railway junction. The army offciers, JCOs and Jawans stopped there to come up to Nagaland or down to other destinations by rail. Our job was to leave and bring soldiers from the railway station, Mariani. When they assembled there, we had to send them to battalion headquarters. Mariani was a small town. Our mess was about 100 meters from here. We, two officers stayed in the mess permanently. There was a Flying Officer N. Desai of Indian Air Force in addition to me. Mess was of our Mahar Regiment. Naik Shinde was in charge of Mess. It was a transit place and men and the officers used to stay there for

two or four hours only. For JCOs there was a different Mess. For NCOs and Ors, there was a langar.

In rear HQ at Mariani, there was lot of indiscipline. One day I was giving some instructions that a soldier of 2 Mahar picked up a stick and threatened me. I ordered the arrest of the soldier. A subedar of 2 Mahar was standing there. He did not arrest the soldier. Perhaps the subedar standing close was also interested in watching the show.

I came to my office and closed the door. I jumped out of the window and reached our officer's Mess. From my living accommodation I picked up my private .12-bore shot gun lying at my living quarter located in the officers mess and then came back again. By then the Subedar had arrested that Jawan and put him in Quarter Guard.

Now the three top officers of the our battalion, Colonel Vikas Sood, Second in Command Major PK Das Gupta and Captain Arun Verma, Adjutant started conspiracy against me so that I should get maximum damage. In such a situation, I thought that I should take help of Colonel K.S. Bakshi. I wrote a detailed letter spread over four pages to Col. Bakshi. I wrote that I was being harassed. I further wrote that all of them wanted my court martial. They are concocting a story that," I abused the soldier. Annoyed by the abuse, the soldier picked up a stick, and by doing so, I have brought dishonor to the officer's community. Action should be taken against this officer and show him the way out of the army by way of a general court martial."

One day while sitting in officers mess Colonel Sood said to me, "You do not even bother to wish me." I said, "Wish is for a friend not for an enemy." You are harming me,

but I am a brave man. What do you think, I will go to Punjab." "What would you do then?", he asked.

I said," I will join the Naga army and will fight against you." After that he never asked me to wish. The soldier who showed me the stick was sentenced to one and a half years jail and was court martialed.

My fear was true. The trio had sent such a report to the Army headquarters seeking my court martial. With the influence of Colonel Bakshi, Col. Sood was directed that," there is no need of court martial. The officer had got gallantry in 1965." It was directed to decide the case at Local Level. Local level meant brigade headquarters or division headquarters. Divisional Commander, General NC Rowle gave me warning. Thus, my Mahar Regiment's journey was over.

Col. Bakshi wanted me to continue serving the battalion. He also told me in the letter that Kalka military police post was a post of Lt/ Capt. This meant that if I was not a substantive captain with six years commissioned service, I would have to accept the rank of lieutenant. At the same time, he told me that I would incur a financial loss of Rs. 230 per month. I was very fed up with the job at 2nd Mahar battalion. I requested Col. Bakshi that in the military police I would be comfortable and will also study for a civil career. I was transferred to Kalka Military Police with the help of Col. Bakshi, where I spent the last two and a half years of military service happily.

Military Police Assignment

I was posted as second-in-command at 106 Common Zone Pronost Unit. This unit was situated at Kalka. There were two posts in this unit. One was officer commanding which was the post of a major. The second post was second-in-command which was the post meant for a Captain/Lieutenant. Capt./Lt. meant if I was not a substantive Capt. i.e. 6 years of commissioned service, I would have to be in the rank of Lt. Since my service at that time was 3 years, I remained a Lt. till my release in March, 1970. On release, my commissioned service was 5 years and 10 months only. So, I had to be Lt. only. In infantry battalion an officer was promoted captain only after 3 vears. Col. Bakshi wrote me a letter that I had to suffer a loss of Rs 230 per month in addition the loss of rank. I requested him to get me transferred to Kalka and I will be very thankful to him and will bear the loss of Rs. 230. My expenses were not much.

My first boss at Kalka was Lt. Col. Gurdial Singh Kler. An officer with 24 years service became a time scale Lt. Col. Such a Lt. Col. worked against the post of a Major. He was an officer promoted from the lower ranks. He was a person of progressive thoughts. He had a house at Jalandhar and also some land near there. He was strict in nature but a good officer. He had three sons who became high ranking Army and Air Force officers. His wife belonged to a decent family. He had a Standard car which he kept very clean. After every

two-three days, the couple used to go to visit Pinjore Garden about 5 k.m. away from Kalka.

The routine at the Kalka was very relaxed. The officers mess was very big and located across the road from our unit office. The officers' quarters were another 100 yards away. JCOs and ORs living accommodation was all a stone throw. I utilized my free time in studies and prepared for the examination of IAS which were held in the years 1968 and 1969. On both the occasions I was selected for the interview but could not get into the merit list. But hard work and knowledge never goes waste. These studies helped me to become a professor in 1971 and in 1972, I stood first among my ex-military colleagues in Punjab civil services examination. I then joined as an ETO in 1974 and later on retired as Additional E.T.C. Commissioner, Punjab in January 2001.

There is another incident at Kalka which is worth mentioning and which occurred due to my ignorance. At every major railway station and junction one Army officer was deployed. He was designated as an RTO. The Kalka railway station also had one such officer whose name was Major Harbhachan Singh (not real name). Col. Kaler had gone for 60 days to his home city Jalandhar to spend his annual leave of 1968. The charge of Kalka military police naturally came to me being 2nd in command. In other words, I was the Officer Commanding of the Unit. Major Harbhachan Singh held grudges against one Major Kuldeep Khanna. Major Harbhachan Singh wanted to harm major Kuldeep Khanna through me. He came to my office and very politely and affectionately said to me, "I need your help in a matter." I was always very prompt in work and I expressed

my willingness to help him. He further said, "Major Khanna is my enemy and through you I can settle scores with him." Our military police unit had deployed eight traffic check posts from Chandi Mandir (near Kalka) up to sugar sector on Shimla road and beyond till Tapri. These posts were used by us to check the movement of the officers and jawans including usage of vehicles and also if they carried certain goods and material beyond the legal limit. It was approximately 250 kilometers of stretch which we had to manage. Often the officers used to carry whisky which was above their quota according to rules. The military police invariably did not check the officers but we could legally check them. According to the tip of Major Harbhachan Singh, Major Khanna was about to carry whisky more than the fixed quota. I ordered TPC Kalka to check the luggage of major Khanna and to recommend the action to be taken against him. Major Khanna crossed Kalka TCP two days late. Our employees at Kalka military check post told Major Khanna that they have been waiting for him for the last two days. Major Khanna wanted to talk to me on this matter. He was very nervous and wanted to meet me. In the mean time I also realized my stupidity that Major Gurbachan Singh was using me to trouble Major Khanna. I thought why I was doing so for Major Gurbachan? I also got nervous and called Major Khanna to have meal with me at our officer's mess and felt sorry for my stupidity. I learnt the lesson that I should not have become a tool for causing harassment to Maj. Khanna, whom I even did not know.

During this very time my subordinate, Subedar Gopal Singh said, "Sir, I can teach you how to hunt. There is lot of game in the jungles of Nalagarh." I and Subedar Gopal

Singh started to go for hunting every day for two hours in the official jeep in the afternoon. In the meantime, Col. Kler re-joined his duty. By now our habits had become spoiled to an extent. Without informing him, we took the official jeep and went on hunting. There was some problem with the jeep near Nalagarh. Subedar Gopal Singh started to check the vehicle. He opened the bonnet. I was in the jeep repairing the trigger of my gun. This .12 bore shot gun was gifted to me by my father and was somewhat old. The triggers of such old models were on the outer side. The gun was loaded and suddenly it fired. The air cleaner took the brunt of the burst while some pellets hit the upper parts of legs including testicles of Subedar Gopal Singh. I got worried about his health. I wanted to take him to Command Hospital, Chandigarh for treatment. In those days I was attempting IAS written examination which were held in Sept-Oct in those days. People started to assume as if I had become a Deputy Commissioner. On our way to Pinjore and Kalka, we discussed this issue seriously. I thought If I take Gopal Singh to Command Hospital at Chandigarh, they are bound to report the matter to civil Police. Maybe I could be jailed, I was very afraid even to think of that. On the other hand, I was hopeful of entry into I.A.S. Within minutes I decided that Jail or I.A.S., his treatment was very important morally. I have been a moral person.

Before we reached Pinjore Subedar Gopal Singh took the driving seat and drove to Kalka. Here there was a military doctor, Captain Suri who was my friend. I narrated him the whole incident. Dr. Suri said, "I will treat him here only. You get some chloroform from the market." The chloroform was used to make the patient unconscious.

Kalka was a small city, so I could not get chloroform. Gopal Singh was a brave person. He said, "Just give me a couple of shots of whisky and go ahead with operation." The things went the same way. In the meanwhile, someone informed Col. Gurdial Singh Kler of this accident. First of all, I was ordered to deposit the gun at Quarter Guard.

Now the next problem was that how Gopal Singh shall attend the parade the next day. Gopal Singh had a high regard for me and he didn't want Colonel Kler to insult or embarrass me. Subedar Gopal Singh reached the parade in full uniform. Colonel Kler also reached and pointing towards me, he said, "he had nearly killed you." Subedar Gopal Singh had a deep respect for me, he said, " Colonel sahib, he is also senior to me like you. Don't say him anything in front of public." Gradually the things settled and life came back to normal. The lesson I learnt was that I should not have misused the official vehicle. Also, I bow my head to the bravery and loyalty of Subedar Gopal Singh. The way gun shots were taken out of his body one by one. Still some shots remained in his body. He hailed from a village of Karnal Distt. He was a Virk Jatt Sikh.

Gurdial Singh Kler retired in 1969 and Col. Ranjit Singh, an artillery officer was my new boss. Subedar Gopal Singh was transferred. Subedar Om Prakash took his place. I used to spend two months of vacation at Kalka only. I prepared for my IAS exams at my government accommodation and also took coaching at Chandigarh. In the year 1968 and 1969 I appeared for IAS examination and interview as well. After the interview conducted on 20th February 1970, I had to undergo medical and the result was expected in the months of April or May 1970. I was highly

optimistic of my selection.

A few months prior of being released from the army, on advice of some officer, I applied for Army Education Corps on the basis of my M.A. degree. My interview was in January 1970 and along with it came my release order. There were also the instructions from the army that the brave army men should not be released. I could have given the application on the basis of bravery but I didn't.

For some time, I considered to join Army Education Corps. I discussed it with one of my friends Captain Vinay Rawat, with whom I resided at Kalka. Rawat suggested, "If you are willing to teach then why soldiers, why not teach the boys and girls in some college?" I agreed with him and didn't go for interview on the fixed day.

On 1st March, 1970 I picked up my belongings and came to my parental house at Patiala. I reached Patiala at about 4 p.m. My orderly Sep. Anil Bose accompanied me to drop me at Patiala. Havildar Ajit Singh was driving the military police jonga (Jeep). Reaching Patiala, I found that my father was already there. He was surprised to see my luggage. While saluting me the orderly was in tears. My father asked me if I had come on annual leave. I replied in affirmative. He said, "There is something you are hiding from me." Then he questioned how can an orderly be in tears if you are on vacation. I told my father that I could tell him each and every thing if he did not get angry. He assured me that he would not. I said, "I am back forever." He was not upset. He just said, If I had continued in the army, I could retire as a Brigadier. I told him that I would have retired as a Major only as ten thousand officers were recruited in one go during the emergency in which I stood at number seven thousand. The possibility of being martyred was more than that of being promoted. Then he started to think about my marriage. He said, "You are now about 28 years old. You are still unmarried." I told my father that I will get married only after I start earning. Then he started worrying about my job. I said, "Respected father, I have Rs. 10,000, which are sufficient to support me during the unemployment of about 4 years."

What I brought home: - I got decorated in the war of 1965 and got approximate 40000 rupees in salary of 6 years. I was able to save 20000 rupees out of this. I sent Rs. 7000/- to support my father from 1964 to 1967. My father had incurred a debt of Rs 7000 for our education. The sum of Rs 7000 relieved him of the debt. My parents were relaxed and so was I. I had a feeling of satisfaction that I served my country without any selfish motive. I was ready to sacrifice myself in war. When Col. Bakshi asked me if I would be happy to be awarded with Mahavir Chakra or Vir Chakra, I had said, give the awards to those people, who are going to stay in Army. I had suggested the name of the Hav. Bhim Sen Ambore, who got Vir Chakra and also 50 Bighas of land in Maharashtra. That feeling even now satisfies me like nothing else.

Now when I recall Colonel Bakshi saying 'take your positions', I feel like stupid. I had then said, "I have to deal with only that bullet which has my name written on it. I have no concern with rest of the bullets. Now when I go through the splendid history of the bravery of Sikhs in the battles then I consider how they took position during the wars and battles. There were weapons like swords and other ammunition and shields were used to protect themselves.

In 1968 I bought a Lambretta scooter which was a great achievement for me. Apart from this I also had Rs. 10,000 in cash. I was more than satisfied. My physique, which was below average before joining army, was now healthy. I developed a feeling of love for my body. My body became tough and muscular. For a young man it was a great feeling at that juncture of life.

Sixteen Months of Unemployment

I deposited my savings of Rs. 10,000 from my army days in a Post Office at Patiala, situated near Kaur Ji Di Haweli on my release. Every first of each month I used to withdraw Rs. 250. My monthly expenditure went like this - Rs. 20 for part time servant, Rs. 30 were for scooter expenses and the rest of Rs. 200 were for my miscellaneous expenses.

My maid used to clean two rooms which I used and cooked lunch. In dinner I cooked porridge and had omelette in breakfast. I was always very fond of having tea. I was also very particular about cleaning. I sprinkled the courtyard of the house and government land outside with water. I kept my scooter clean. I also used to say Prayers. At Patiala I was not much busy.

I was very fond of Palmistry. In village also people used to ask me to read their hands. One day my father said to me in a lighter tone, "My son, you are a fortune teller, please tell me when you are going to get a job?" I told him that I will do that. I measured my career line with an inch tape which is also known as Surya Rekha. There were about three lines in it. I informed my father that I have to do three jobs. I joined the army at the age of 20 years. The retirement age of a civil job was 58 years. The career line was of 38 years. I found the gap in between. According to that gap I was about to get a job after 16 months. I said while laughing, "father I hope to get a job in 16 months."

The days passed. I spent my first 2-3 months of unemployment mostly at Patiala. I also went to my maternal village Bhaini Fatta for a brief period. My maternal relatives took good care of me. There I also used to fulfill my hobby of horse riding. I went to fields as per my own will. In the 3rd week of April 1970 I was on my way to Patiala with my maternal uncle. We stopped at a tea stall at Sangrur for a tea break. My younger brother Satwant (now martyr) was already there on that tea stall. He whispered in my ear, "Brother, the result of IAS came in the newspaper yesterday but you have not made it." I was in a state of shock. It was difficult for me to ride the scooter to Patiala. As I approached Patiala Flying Club I told myself that the people who are not army officers or IAS officers also make their living. It was like a new energy to struggle once again.

One of my close relative was a judge at Patiala. In those days Canada was open for all, like one could go by simply buying a ticket and the visa was processed at the airport only. After a few months, one could be absorbed in Canada as per one's educational qualification. My relative got my passport ready in about 15 days. I started to give a thought regarding going to Canada and also pondered to complete my Ph.D. as well.

In June 1970 a post of lecturer in Political Science at Khalsa College, Patiala was advertised. The president of the governing body of the college was known to Judge Sahib, my relative. Judge Sahib told me that he could get me appointed as a professor. Somehow it didn't happen. My interview was conducted at Khalsa College on 9th July, 1970 in which I was not selected. I was very much disappointed. But by the grace of God I have a great virtue to recover out of sorrow with my own efforts and regain strength. If the

wish of a person is not fulfilled it is natural to become sad. But at a later stage, I realized that everything happened for one's betterment.

I told my childhood friend Anupider Dhillon that I would spend the night at his place. Anupinder was the son of a rich landlord. He had two elder brothers. The eldest one went to America in 1962 and settled over there. Another elder, Sarupinder studied Engineering at Thapar College, Patiala for about two years which he left due to some reason and started doing M.Sc. Mathematics. Anup's father owned 1000 Bighas of land. 300 Bighas were at the back of Punjabi University, Patiala and the rest 700 Bighas were at their paternal village Kharak Singh Wala. His father's name was S. Shivcharan Singh and I used to call him Uncle. Anup had a huge house in the city. In one portion there was the family of Sarupinder. A big courtyard was there in the center. On one side of the house another house was constructed which was given on rent and there was a room on the first floor of this house in which I and Anup used to spend hours together. Both of us frequently slept at each other's houses.

That night I bought 2-3 bottles of chilled beer from the wine shop at Karhah Wala Chowk. After having dinner, we went to sleep by 10'O clock at night. The next morning the newspaper brought new hope. There was an advertisement of PPSC in the newspaper of 10th July, 1970 for the posts of Asst.Professors and there was twenty percent quota for Ex-servicemen. Among those two posts were in the subject of Political Science. S. Gurbhagat Singh Sidhu was our immediate neighbor and his son Parminder was my childhood friend. S. Gurbhagat Singh Sidhu was Assistant Secretary in Punjab Public Service Commission. I

met him and applied for the job in time. Our interview was held in September 1970. My favorite teacher Prof. Harbakhash Singh from Mohindra College came for the interview as a subject expert. The result was declared in February 1971 and I was selected. I got the joining letter in June. On 17 July 1971 I joined as Lecturer (now called Assistant Professor) at Government College, Tanda.

After spending 2-3 months at Patiala I thought about going to my village Dugal. But then I thought that people at village will make fun of me that I was expelled from army as I must have committed some irregularities. Then I thought that my entire family lives there so I must go. By the end of July 1970 I shifted to village. My parents held a highly respectful position in village. I had a great regard for all my relatives and elders. In our house there was a tradition to bow head to the women and touch feet of senior relatives, so whichever house I visited, I used to do the same with elderly people.

In March 1971 an imported tractor was allotted to us from army quota. The price of the tractor was Rs. 22000 and with cultivators its cost was around Rs. 25,000. I took the property papers and met P.S Sindhu who was the Manager of Punjab Sindh Bank (Gur Mandi Branch, Patiala). I was growing my beard in those days. I showed him the property papers. He asked about what I was doing. I told him that I was unemployed. He then asked about my educational qualification. I told that I was M.A. Political Science with second division. He said that since I was a Gursikh boy, he can get me appointed as a Bank officer. I refused saying that I had no aptitude for 9-5 job and did not like calculation.

Regarding loan, he asked for two eminent people as witness to sanction the loan. I requested S. Shivcharan

Singh father of Anup and another relative S. Gurbachan Singh Jeji to sign as witness. They did so and my loan was sanctioned. We had to contribute Rs. 7,000 in the loan. The bank loan was of Rs. 18,000 which was to be repaid in three years. My father didn't have seven thousand rupees. He said, "son you have got money, so you deposit." I said that he had to be repay this amount from joint account. This amount was to be interest free. I needed this money for my marriage etc. My father agreed to this. I deposited seven thousand rupees in the bank. The bank issued me a cheque of Rs. 25,000. I drove the tractor to my village Dugal. My father was not hoping to get the tractor in such a short time. I also got busy with tractor. The people also thought that we have made some progress. In September 1970 another employment opportunity came my way when vacancies of Inspectors of Excise and Taxation Department were advertised. I also applied. First, there was a written exam following which an interview was conducted in December 1970. Sh. P.K. Kathpalia was the Commissioner, Excise and Taxation Department at that time. In the interview he asked me as I had been a military officer so what importance did the job of an inspector hold for me? I felt that from his tone as if I wanted to be an Inspector to earn money through corrupt means. I answered that this ordinary job meant nothing more than the livelihood for an unemployed officer. He was silent and I thought I could never hope to get a job with an answer like that. The result was declared in February 1971 and I was selected. I was asked to join as Inspector in August 1971 but I had already joined as Professor on 17 July 1971 at Government College, Tanda.

Government College, Tanda

On the basis of my selection through Punjab Public Service Commission, Patiala, I was appointed as an Assistant. Prof. (Political Science) at Govt. College Tanda, (Hoshiarpur Distt). Tanda was a rural college and many of the teachers came from neighboring big cities like Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur. I joined as such on 17 July 1971. Prof. Duggal was Head of the Deptt. (HOD) of our Political Science Department. Other teachers of Political Science Prof. Karnail Singh and Prof. Bhagat. were already there. I and another lady, Kiranjit Kaur joined in this batch. We became five teachers of Political Science. This job was quite easy as compared to army. Initially I used to teach mostly in English. Some students approached Principal & requested to be taught in Punjabi. As I had done my B.A. & M.A. Political Science in English medium only, so it was a bit difficult for me to teach in Punjabi. But after practicing for a few days I developed confidence and started teaching Political Science in Punjabi language. The whole year went very well.

In September 1971 some posts of PCS Executive were advertised for which I was qualified to appear but at that time I was enjoying to be a teacher. Some of my colleagues advised me to appear in PCS exams but I was not willing. I started to feel that this profession was most suitable for me. Major Jiwan Tewari was the Principal of Government College, Tanda. He appointed me the Hostel

Warden and that solved the problem of my living accommodation. There were few students living in the hostel.

The Excise & Taxation Commissioner office was asking me to join as a Tax Inspector at Ludhiana. I was not interested as I had joined the better job already. I gave no objection if the next incumbent was appointed. So, one M.P. Singh joined as taxation inspector in my place.

Two colleagues became my good friends over there. One was Lal Chand Sharma who lived in a rented house in Tanda. He taught History. Second was Gulzar Singh who taught Philosophy and started to live with me in the hostel on my request. There was a large room in the hostel which we converted into drawing room and the second room was our bedroom. The dining hall of the hostel served as our dining room. There were lot of things in the hostel which were used by us. Therefore, we did not have to purchase anything. The classes of Arts group of the college were held in the premises of Government School, Tanda. This school was approximately two kilometers away from the college and was situated right in the middle of Tanda city. It was an old and huge school belonging to British period and was spread over many acres. The classes of Science and the hostel was in the newly developed portion of the college premises which was in 40 acres. Myself & Prof. Gulzar came to arts college from hostel on my scooter. Principal Jeewan Tewari was a Major of NCC and felt happy in being addressed as a Major. I was also from the army so he had a great regard for me. In 1971 the Indo-Pak war started. Though I had left the army but my vigor was still intact.

We organized a Blood Donation Camp at our college.

Blood donation was not very popular in that region. I, while addressing all my four classes said that in the last war I was ready to shed my blood but now I had so many students. I still remember the scene when I and three other professors were donating blood, the students were keenly watching us from the window glasses as if we were going to be martyred.

I was quite social. All the students, whether from Arts or Science group, were comfortable & at ease while talking to me. My standard was also better than other teachers. Firstly, I was the only professor having a scooter and secondly due to army background, my dressing sense was good. Our blood donation camp was successful. As this camp was organized for the first time, a student said, "Sir, my mother says that you have donated the young blood to soldiers now what are you left with."

In December 1971, war started with Pakistan. I had a licensed 12 bore short gun. I went for a recce in the surrounding areas along with 20 or so students. The Air force installed a huge radar near our college hostel. For almost 20 days, till the war continued, I went with the students. They had sticks in their hands. I had not forgotten my army culture. While walking we saw a dim light about three acres away from roadside. I thought that the person was signaling. The spies used to communicate through such signals. After 2-3 days we surrounded the field and captured the person. He was even wearing an imported underwear. Our doubt become even stronger and we thought he must be a Pakistani spy. There was an Air Force Camp in the premises of our college. We handed over this doubtful person to Air force. All the students were quite

jubilant that they had captured a Pakistani spy. Next day when I came back from the college, curious to know about him, I went to Air force officers. The Air force officer informed me that, "he was not a spy. He was smoking cigarette secretly."

After my marriage on 18 June, 1972 I requested to be transferred to a college near Patiala. The then Education Minister S. Atma Singh was known to my close relatives. At his recommendation I was transferred to Government College, Nabha. We resided at our Topkhana house at Patiala for the next five years from 1972 to 1977.

Government College, Nabha

I was transferred to Government College, Nabha in 1972. Like Tanda College it was also a rural college. The slight difference was that Nabha City used to be the Head Quarters of old Nabha State. Most of the professors at Nabha College came from Patiala. S. Umrao Singh, the Principal of Nabha College was once my Punjabi teacher at Mohindra College. The husband of one of the sisters, Professor Grewal was also in Nabha College and was settled at Nabha. One day the Principal called a meeting of all the professors. While addressing the professors he said, "My dream is that all the professors of the college be dressed in white shirts & shorts and should conduct Physical training of students and play." When he finished his statement, I immediately responded, "Sir, there is already a specialist professor Director Physical Education (DPE) for Physical training. The government has appointed me to teach Political Science." Though my argument was right but he didn't like it. He said to me, "Gentleman, ask your wife to pack up your things." In other words he was threatening me to be transferred. I was quite hurt as I was doing my duty with complete dedication.

My method of teaching was different from other professors. The new classes used to start in the month of July. I covered the entire syllabus from 15th August till end of December. The next one month of January was spent on revision. The written tests were conducted during the

months of February. I checked the written papers and suggested improvements. In the month of March I emphasized on the most important questions and made the students write them and memorize them. By the Grace of God, not any of my students ever failed. I considered that if this was the sorry scenario in this occupation also like other jobs then why not I go for some important civil position. I was also repenting why I missed chance of not applying for PCS Executive exam which was advertised in September 1971.

I had good fortune that the very next day a corrigendum of PCS Executive exam by Government of Punjab was published in which application date was further extended. I was sure that this corrigendum was meant for me. I immediately applied and started seriously preparing for the competitive exam. I requested the Principal for two months leave. He asked me as to who would teach the students in my absence. In those days Principal had the power to appoint a professor on temporary basis. I asked Professor Narang who was in touch with the college for teaching part time. On being told there was no post, I informed him that I was going on two months leave.

I took the leave from 1st November 1972 to 31st December 1972 and started preparing for exams. As I had attempted IAS examination in 1968 & 1969 so my preparation was good. P.C.S. exam was held on 29, 30 & 31 December 1972. As an ex-army person, I had to attempt four papers only i.e. English essay, General English, General Knowledge & Punjabi.

I felt that I did well. I rejoined my college on 2nd January, 1973. I met the Principal who asked me whether I

could clear the exams? I replied with a great confidence and said, "I will not only pass the exams but will get selected also." In the question paper of General Knowledge out of a total 100 marks 40% questions were from political science. The result was declared in March. In those days marks could be confirmed. The total marks were 325. I secured 204 out of 325. With 63% I stood first among army candidates. Two ex-army officers who were then way behind me in written examination were given maximum benefit in interview and were placed at 1st & 2nd place. I was placed at 3rd place in the final list. The first two officers joined PCS. I was selected as an E.T.O. For some years I felt hurt as I was deprived of my due right of being PCS Executive as I was given only 124/200 marks in the interview whereas the officer at 1st place was awarded 176/200.

On 11th July 1974 I joined training as ETO, Patiala. This ended my tenure with the Education department. The students still remember me for those three years spent at the two Colleges. Actually, I taught them well and also treated them as my younger brothers & sisters. One of the students was S. Surjit Singh Rakhra who was later on married with my sister. Another was Ramesh Kumar Singla who is a Political leader at Nabha. One was S. Kaler who later on retired as a Session Judge. Several other students remained in touch with me for a long time.

Marriage

When I returned home after release from army in March 1970 at the age of 27 years, the biggest concern of my father was my marriage. Once my father said laughingly that he got married for the third time when he was 26. My father's first marriage was in the second week of April, 1924 when his matriculation result was announced. His first wife expired within one year. The second marriage was solemnized in 1927 and the second wife too expired within a year. My father got married for the third time in 1931. He was 26 years old then. I told my father that times have changed. Career was now more important than getting married. I also told him that I will get married only when I started earning. If I am 30 now I will get a girl of 25-26 years old and even if I turn 35 then I can get 30 years old girl. I promised my father that the day I get a job I would give an advertisement in English Tribune within 15 days and in about six months I will get a suitable match. Keeping my promise, I gave the advertisement in the first week of August, 1971. I got 30 replies out of which four seemed suitable to me. In these four letters one was from the parents of my wife Jasminder. My father knew the family of my in-laws and their good reputation. There was my uncle S. Sukhdev Singh in our village Dugal to whom people referred to as Kothi Wale. In reality this family was not only the most landed in our village or area but also in the entire Patiala State. Uncle Sukhdev's father S. Kirpal Singh was an Honorary Magistrate and had agricultural land in a few villages. My in-law's family was related to S. Sukhdev Singh. Though he was cousin of my father in relationship but he always used to bow his head in front of my father whenever he met him. He also told my father about this noble family.

I was a college professor and it was my wish to marry a college professor. The advertisement in the paper was also given on the same lines. I got a letter from a University professor. It seemed to me that the girl was Ph.D. and was a teacher at Punjabi University, Patiala. The status of a University professor was much higher than that of a college professor and academically she was more qualified than me. I did not want to be a victim of inferiority complex by marrying a girl more educated than me. One of her sister was a professor in Rajpura College. I requested her father that his elder daughter was more educated than me so if he could consider about his younger daughter than it would have better for both of us. When I was a lieutenant in 1964 her father was a Subedar in Army Education Corps. I never got a reply from this family.

On the advice of my father I wrote a letter to the family, now my in-laws. My father was very enthusiastic about my marriage in this family. My in-laws belonged to an old Jagirdar family of Doraha, Punjab. S. Sukhdev Singh Mand, (My father-in-law) whose aunt (father's sister) was married to Col. Sadan Singh, a renowned person of Patiala.

I told my father that there were two drawbacks in this girl. First was that she was a school lecturer and not a college prof. But the pay scales of a lecturer and a professor were equal. The second was that I wanted that my wife should be 5'3" or 5'4" tall. Her height was two inches below

what I wished. My father said, "my dear son it takes generations to earn name and reputation. This is a noble family. You see the girl and if you find her even average looking then go ahead." Obeying my father I went to market and purchased a ring worth about Rs. 100 for roka. On 15th April 1972 I went to see the girl along with my mother and eldest sister Rupinder Kaur. The house of my in-laws was in the mid of Patiala city and was double storied. There a was a shop on the ground floor which was given on rent and there was also a sitting room. The first floor had three rooms and a kitchen. On arrival at their home, first came Sardarni Satwant Kaur (Mother of the girl) who very clearly asked us if we had any demand of dowry etc. My mother replied that one who gives the daughter gives everything. I found my mother's reply somewhat indirect or diplomatic. I don't know whether what I said was right or wrong. I said, "we have no demand." We had everything given by God. After sometime, her mother came with my would be wife and served us tea. After this meeting the mother and daughter went upstairs.

We were left alone. We started to discuss among ourselves. My elder sister said, "The girl is just average." I said, "Sister, I got a job at the age of twenty and it has been 7-8 years now. Have you ever suggested a good girl for me?" She said 'no'. The second thing is that if the girl is average even I was not some prince. Let me start my family now. Our father is already too worried because of the delay in my marriage. Then I asked my mother. She said that she had forgotten her glasses at home. I told both of them that my father had advised me to present the ring to the girl as acceptance of the relationship even if the girl is average.

Girl's mother came to us after about 15 minutes. My mother then told girl's mother, "we like the girl. We want to gift her a ring as our approval." My mother-in-law (would be) again went upstairs and returned in about 10 minutes. She said, "The girl has started weeping. You can give this ring to me and I shall make her wear." We gave her the ring and came back home.

As we were just back from this ceremony, mother of my friend Anup, who was our neighbor (to whom I called Maasi Ji) suggested her niece's name from her Parental village Kera. She also told me that the girl was the only child. She had forty acres of land in her name. She also told me in a snubbing tone that I cannot buy even two acres of land in my lifetime as a professor. I replied politely, "Aunty, I and my mother have already said yes to a girl and we are true to our word." Aunty said, "Son, at this moment yes or no means the difference of forty acres." I said, "Aunt, I cannot commit such a sin. The girl we have said yes to must be having future dreams. How can I break her heart?" My aunt remained silent after this. After some days we came to know of the marriage of the girl with forty acres was fixed with Prof. Paramjit Singh Khaira, who was my colleague at Nabha college. Khaira told me, "My in-laws were giving Shagun to me but they were remembering you." This was also a test which I cleared by the grace of God and teachings of Guru Sahib.

My marriage was fixed on 18 June 1972. My would be father-in-law S. Sukhder Singh used to visit me almost every day. After taking care of the wheat crop at my village I came to Patiala in early May 1972. In those days the summer vacation was for about two and half months. The

preparation for the marriage started. My younger brother Jagjit had gone to America a few months before marriage, due to which he could not attend the marriage and nor did we put much pressure on him. Two brothers Satwant and Gurwant looked after farming in our village. Satwant remained in village to look after the land while Gurwant came to Patiala to attend my marriage. My childhood friend Anup had also left for America a few months ago. I invited my two friends, Prof. Gulzar Singh and Prof. Lal Chand Sharma who were my colleagues at Government College, Tanda. I had Rs. 6000/ as my marriage budget in which I had to make all the arrangements. Gold was quite cheap in those days. My fast friend Somnath Mittal had two shops. One was Cloth shop and the other was for Jewelry. We purchased marriage clothes worth one thousand rupees and the same amount was spent on gold. My in-laws asked me about the estimate of people coming as a Barat. I told them that the number will be around thirty. As I was in the Army, I liked band. So, I booked a Band Party of Dharampura bazaar. There were 11 members in Band Partv.

Then there was the arrangement of sweets. In those days arrangements were made at home to prepare the sweets. Milk, Maida and Sugar etc was collected in bulk to prepare jalebis, ladoos and burfi etc. I thought differently. Our home was very close to Adalat Bazar and Anardana Chowk. I got hold of a big wooden box for sweets and laid newspaper at its bottom. I placed 2-4 large plates. The guests started to come. My maternal grandmother Sardarni Nihal kaur, uncle S. Gurdev Singh and his wife Hamir Kaur came from my maternal family. I had some unpleasant argument with my paternal grandmother, so I did not invite

her, both the brothers of my father and his two sisters for which I still repent. The guests made fun of me by saying that no sweets maker (halwai) was there, so from where the sweets will be arranged. I told my father that everything will be arranged within no time. You want to eat it from halwai or me? I had bought some kilos of sweets from the market. I did not like to copy others at all. I filled the plates in the box with sweets. Every time something was about to finish, I made up the stock from the market. In my circle of friends and relatives it was a new thing. Now more than 90% families living in cities follow this practice.

Purchasing Clothes: Our relatives suggested to me that I had not arranged an Achkan (a long Indian coat with round collars). An Achkan was a must for marriage those days. In place of an achkan, I tied a sky-blue turban with matching bush shirt and pant. My childhood friend Bal Krishan Singla came to my house. I requested him that only thirty people were going in Baraat out of which 11 were a band party and the rest were family members and relatives. I asked him to directly reach my in-laws house. You can well imagine how close friend he must be who agreed happily. When Bal Krishan reached there, we were having lunch. In those times Anand Kaaraj was solemnized in a Shammiyana (Tent) and after its completion the place was opened for Baratis and food was served there. The marriage was complete and there was an expenditure of Rs. 6700. There was a debt of Rs. 700 for clothes from Somnath Mittal which I paid back in 2-3 months out of saving out of my monthly salary.

After some days my father-in-law visited our Topkhana residence and offered me thirteen thousand rupees. I asked him, "Pita Ji, what is this for?" He said, "my

son we had earmarked Rs 40,000 for this marriage. Whatever shaguns we presented you were not accepted by you. So, a sum of Rs 13,000 saved is yours. You can buy a scooter, motorcycle or a plot." I said we already had a house and a scooter. We are contented and honest people and we are happy that we could help you save Rs.13,000. You should purchase a plot from this amount and it will be helpful in the marriages of your two younger daughters. My father-in-law purchased a 500 yards plot on Sirhind road, and was able to marry both his younger daughters out of the sale proceeds of this plot.

The Family of My In-laws:-In the year 1716, after the martyrdom of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, the brave Sardars started to exert control over limited areas. Before 12 Misals were constituted 159 Sardars possessed various big and small estates. In those times my in-laws family had under their control eighteen villages of Doraha region under its possession. With the passage of time thirteen Misls came into existence. With the coming of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, except for Phulkian Misl which accepted British protection, all the other Misls were assimilated under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Maharaja Ranjit Singh became a great emperor. In 1839 Maharaja Ranjit Singh died. Two battles were fought between the British and Sikhs. By the year 1849 Punjab was completely under British Rule.

After coming to power the biggest problem before the British was of ex-soldiers of Maharaja's army who had weapons as well as the will to fight. In the arrangement of 1858, British contacted all the major landlords and Jagirdars and instructed them either to cultivate the land and pay tax or opt for pension and their lands will be

allotted to the ex-soldiers. The agriculture was very primitive. The vast tracts of land held by big Zamirdars/Jagirdars could not be cultivated by them. While some Jagirdars retained some land as a grazing ground for their horses, the others surrendered their total land in lieu of pension called Jagir. The landlords gave away lakhs of acres of land to the British and started taking pension in cash. These lands were allotted to the ex-service men of the army of the Maharaja. The soldiers surrendered the weapons with British and became cultivators. The canal network was laid in Punjab. The brave ex-service men turned into successful prosperous peasant proprietors.

My in laws areas fell under British control. Annoyed by their non-participation in Anglo Sikh wars, the Britishers forfeited 15 of their 18 villages. In 1858 my in-laws family gave away the remaining three villages to the British under the agreement of an annual Jagir of three thousand rupees. Their families were living at village Lopon (near Doraha). My father-in-law's only Aunt (sister of his father) Prem Kaur was married to Colonel Sadan Singh. Col. Sadan Singh had his house and land spread over many acres, from present day fountain chowk to Polo ground between lower and upper mall. Gurdwara Singh Sabha, Fremasons hall and Army buildings came up on land previously owned by Col. Sadan Singh. At that time the father of my father-in-law was only six. Colonel Sadan Singh brought his six year old brother-in-law S. Prem Singh from Lopon and kept him at Patiala. So this family shifted from Lopon to Patiala city.

S. Prem Singh, (my wife's grandfather) had two sons namely S. Sukhdev Singh and S. Mahinder Singh. When S. Sukhdev Singh had just passed his tenth class from Khalsa

School, Patiala, his father died. He had no other choice then to do some job. In the Jagir of Rs. 3000 in 1858 the share of S. Prem Singh came down to Rs 300 per annum, which was a meagre amount now. My father-in-law served as a Patwari for some time. After that he joined as a Cashier and Accountant in Animal Husbandry Department, Punjab. His mother Sardarni Ajmer Kaur belonged to village Basiark near Samana. She was the only child of her parents. She had five hundred Bighas of land. The family was run with the joint income of land and salary. S. Sukhdev Singh and his wife Satwant Kaur Grewal were responsible and wise people. They had six children and all of them retired as class I officers. My wife, Jasminder Kaur was eldest of them, who was sent to Birla Institute of Science and Technology, Pilani (Rajasthan) to study M.Sc. Botany in 1967. The expenditure of the study and hostel of my wife was equal to the salary of my father-in-law. One can well imagine the importance of education for this family.

Satinder Singh was younger to my wife who was commissioned in army as an officer and later retired as a Colonel. He is married to the daughter of S. Kartar Singh Majhail who was a well-known advocate of Patiala. He is living a retired life in the Tricity area. Serving the needy is his passion. The next sibling is Shavinder Singh who retired as a senior officer from State Bank of Patiala. Then came Paramjit Singh Mand who was working as a Librarian in GNDU, Amritsar and then migrated to Australia. The fifth child is Dhanwinder Kaur who was a prof. in Women College, Patiala teaching Linguistics and is now settled in Canada. Her husband is a senior executive in the Company of Chela Ram in Nigeria.

The youngest child of my in-laws is Dr. Balwinder Kaur, who is a Dermatologist. Her husband Dr. Prabhdev Singh Brar runs Eye hospitals at Kot Kapura and Bathinda. He is highly reputed doctor of the region. Balwinder Kaur Mand is working at Medical University, Faridkot. The couple is God fearing and are philanthropist.

All the six brothers and sisters are married in good families and their next generation is also doing wonderfully well in academics and life.

My Children and their Upbringing

We were blessed with two sons within less than three years of our marriage. First son Gurmit was born on 17th March 1973 and the second son Gurjeet on 17th February 1975. Their names were taken from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and the letter we got for both was 'G'. They were named as Gurmit Singh and Gurjeet Singh respectively. We brought up both of them with utmost affection, sincerity and diligence. The family of my in-laws had a major contribution in the up-bringing of both the kids. My father-in-law S. Sukhdev Singh resided in Patiala in those days.

At the time of our marriage, my wife Jasminder Kaur had been teaching as a lecturer at Victoria Senior Secondary School, Patiala for the last few years. There were two shifts in this school. She taught in the first shift. This school was near the house of my in-laws. She left from our Topkhana house at about 6 in the morning in the cycle rikshaw. She dropped both boys at her parents' house and went to school. Then in the same rickshaw she picked-up the kids in the afternoon and reached back home. From 1972 to 1974, I remained Professor at Government Ripudaman College, Nabha. Then from July 1974 to December 1975 I underwent ETOs training at Patiala. After joining at Ludhiana for few months I got myself transferred back to Patiala. This post at Patiala was of ETO Central enforcement wing and entire Punjab was under its

jurisdiction. Before my transfer to Ludhiana in July 1977 and after my marriage we had stayed at 281/3 Topkhana Gate, Patiala, the house constructed by my father.

In April 1977 my elder son got admission in Our Lady of Fatima School, Patiala. There was a very intelligent and wise officer at Head Quarters of Excise and Taxation Commissioner. Though his rank was of an ETO but we treated him like a senior because of his age and wisdom. His name was S. Jai Singh Sidhu. He advised me that I must acquire the experience as an Assessing Authority. Therefore, I got myself transferred to Ludhiana. I could not be transferred to Patiala district in field as Patiala was my home district. We started to consider about the transfer of my wife. Circle Education Officer of Patiala Division was known to me. He told me that a post of lecturer in Biology was lying vacant at a Senior Secondary School at Khanna. He assured me that he could transfer my wife to Khanna and later on get her transferred to Ludhiana.

I got my wife transferred to Khanna without even consulting her. I assumed that I will get her transferred from Khanna to Ludhiana. When I finally informed her about her transfer to Khanna, she was taken aback and was surprised that she had to live in Khanna, a Mandi town.

We took a rented accommodation in Gurdev Nagar, Ludhiana @ Rs.300 per month and my wife started travelling from Ludhiana to Khanna. After about two months, we realized that the care-taker we kept for the children was not taking good care of them. I got my wife's leave sanctioned. We were caught up in a financial crisis. Our lifestyle became tough. While in Patiala we were quite comfortable with Rs. 2000 per month as our joint salary.

Here it was only my salary which was eleven hundred rupees with which we had to survive. Three hundred rupees were spent on house rent only. Finally, we realised that we had to keep children, house and service of my wife at Patiala. Only I had to travel. My friend Amarjit Singh Sidhu who was an ETO at Ludhiana helped me to get my wife transferred to Multipurpose School at Patiala.

My wife joined Multipurpose School in 1979. Our close relative Sardarni Rupinder Kaur (Massi ji) took the responsibility of the kids and we took a rental house in her neighborhood @150 rupees per month. In 1979 both my sons got admission in Y.P.S. At Ludhiana, I left the rental house and got instead a rental room in Prince Hostel and shared it with another ETO. Prince hostel was nowhere near its name. It was an ordinary working men's private hostel.

On September 1, 1980 I was promoted as Asstt. Excise & Taxation Commissioner and transferred to Amritsar as a district head. Though all the four members of our family were at one place i.e. Patiala but now I had to travel more. My travelling had to be about 580 K.M every weekend. On Saturdays and Sundays I stayed at Patiala only. It was very difficult to travel by bus but I was quite strong. Children had a stable life. We had several relatives in Patiala city. We got continuous help from my in-laws. Now my problem was how to get back to Patiala. In March 1981, the excise auctions in Amritsar went very well for which I got appreciation. In the same year I requested the department to transfer me from Amritsar to our departmental training School at Patiala. I was appointed at Amritsar by Sh. R.C Kapila then Excise & Taxation Commissioner Punjab and he was not in favor of my transfer. But listening to my family circumstances he accepted my request and in October 1981, I joined Training School at Patiala. This post remained vacant frequently and it was vacant at that time too.

After a few days the Commissioner of Punjab Sh. R.C. Kapila was transferred and Chowdhary Hari Ram took his place. I requested him to change my home district. I had sold my land at district Patiala (village Dugal) in 1978 and purchased some land in Kangra (Himachal Pradesh) in 1979. My request was accepted and Kangra became my home district. So now district Patiala was also open for me. In December 1982 I was transferred in district Patiala as AETC in charge the post held till the mid of 1987.

I was in good books of Chowdhary Hari Ram. He got me allotted a government accommodation. I left the rented house and shifted to 29-E, PRTC colony. Now I started thinking about constructing my own house. In December 1984 a close relative of mine moved to Patiala from America. He started construction business in Patiala. He came to meet me in my office. His name was Malwinder Singh Bhinder, who later on constructed first A.C. Market in the cities of Patiala and Ludhiana. I don't know how God inspired me that I said to Malwinder, "God has sent you from America to build a house for me." I took a loan of Rs. 80 thousand from Housefed. I also sold around 10 Tolas of gold for Rs. 30,000. Thirty thousand I took as non-refundable from my P.F. account. I handed over the entire amount of Rs. 1,40,000 to Malwinder Singh Bhinder and also told him to spend this amount Judiciously. I said,"If the spending exceeds the given money you will get the money, but it can take time." There was no income coming from the land in Himachal. Rather money was being spent on its

development. Finally, Malwinder made us a one bedroom house at our plot 46-C, Lal Bagh in January 1986. The total expenditure was to the tune of one lakh ninety thousand rupees. I owed him Rs. fifty thousand. He was a close relative (brother-in-law of my brother-in-law Col. Satinder Singh), so he could wait for some time. We shifted to our new house in January 1986. Though it was a small house but having our own lawn and plants gave us a feeling of satisfaction. Even bigger satisfaction was that it stood on the foundation of our hard earned money and labor. It was a great feeling to own a house. The big advantage was when the vice Principal of YPS sent his mason at my place to build door in my house connecting it to the school. The security of our children gave us immense satisfaction. We got connected to Y.P.S. Some of the School teachers became our friends. We as a family often went inside Y.P.S and walked a lot in its ground, spread over many acres of land.

In this very house we kept a horse which was borrowed from a friend Harjit Singh Grewal of village Ajnali. The children became happy and they also became aware about the expenses and hard work needed to afford a horse. I was very particular about maintaining accounts. I asked the children that if they want to keep the horse with a business point of view then they must keep track of every single penny spent on the horse. In those days the expenses on the horse came to Rs. 700 P.M.

I was very fond of green lawn and plants. The younger son Gurjit liked animals mainly dogs and birds. My driver Gurdev Singh once brought some rabbits for him. I thought that Gurjit's attention would be diverted towards animals which could adversely affect his studies. After

some days I asked Gurdev Singh to take away the rabbits. Gurjit aka Mana wrote a poem, "Bring me my rabbits back, let me have what makes me happy." Gurjit was twelve at that time. The poem had a deep impact on me. I thought that after a few years when we will go to America, who knows what our circumstances will be over there. I allowed Gurjit to bring home whatever animal/s he wanted to keep so that his no wish remains unfulfilled. My plants and grass were almost destroyed but he gradually brought in many birds and animals. Children from neighborhood often visited us to enjoy the sight of those birds and animals.

In June 1986 I took leave of three months and visited America. The main motive behind this tour was to ensure if we can be successful over there and live with dignity with our turbans and uncut hair. My father lived at Topkhana house at Patiala from 1982 to 1990. He was not happy at my decision of migrating to America. All my younger brothers were already settled in America. The elder brother Parminder Singh, after his retirement as Tehsidar in Himachal was living in Indora city. Otherwise also he had no interest in our family.

S. Narinder Singh Walia's house was right in front of our house at New Lal Bagh, Patiala. He was an Inspector in our department at that time and later on became an E.T.O and retired after me. His brother-in-law Ravi's house was adjoining his house. I still remember that in 1989 we heard 3-4 gunshots from Ravi's house. Dr. Ravi had died on the spot. We heard her wife crying. His kids also studied with our kids at Y.P.S. Patiala.

A few houses away was the house of S. Baldev Singh Brar then S.P. posted at Patiala. Both his sons and a

daughter also studied at Y.P.S. His children were quite friendly with ours. The next neighbor was S. Gurbhajnik Singh, a PCS officer who was also posted as SDM, Samana. His three kids also studied at Y.P.S. Our kids frequently used to go to Y.P.S. to watch movies etc. which were shown outdoors. They carried Odomos to protect themselves from mosquitoes. Mrs. Khanna's house was in front of our house (through Y.P.S. entry) and she was a teacher in Y.P.S. Her son was a good friend of my sons. They frequently talked about Titu, who ran the school canteen. Titu's burgers were very famous. Sardar I.D.S. Grewal, the vice Principal of the school was my close friend. He visited our house occasionally. Mr. Sharma was their Bursar. He was quite a friendly person. There was another teacher S. Sadhu Singh Deol for whom I hold deep regards. He also came to visit us frequently.

My elder son Gurmit opted for horse riding and NCC in the school. I was working as AETC, Patiala. In the evening I went for a walk along with the kids in Y.P.S. campus. My wife took care of the cleaning and cooking etc. In those days our family was non-vegetarian. I was very fond of chilled beer. Fish was my favorite non-veg food. I used to buy almost all the groceries myself. Since, I grew up in Patiala city, many shopkeepers knew me personally.

Gurmit passed his tenth grade in 1989 from Y.P.S. Patiala and got admission in pre-engineering in Mohindra College. He always complained me about the bad odor coming from his class fellows in Mohindra College as they came from villages. I told him, "My son the sweat has no bad odor rather it is fragrance. Secondly we should learn to live among the common people." This I used to teach both

the sons. In army the common people were soldiers under me. If you will do farming then common people will be your workers. Gurmit passed out his pre-engineering in 1991 and appeared for competitive exams. He could not get a seat anywhere in Punjab. As we had to migrate to America in 1992, so I sent him to workshop in order to make him skillful in maintenance of cars in America.

In 1991 Gurjit passed 10th with 78% marks. He was interested in a Medical career. He also got admission in Mohindra College. In 1992 he was still studying when we left for America.

Whenever a guest used to visit our house, we encouraged both the sons to sit with us. A friend asked what's the logic behind it? I said, "This is their training." Whenever some business man came to my house, the sons prepared tea for him. While having lunch, if the gardener was doing his work at our house we ensured to ask him for lunch. Otherwise also the backdoor of (Y.P.S.) our house made us quite popular. Many students used to park their scooters etc. at our house and attended the school as in those days Y.P.S didn't allow children to come to school with a scooter etc. We treated the friends of our kids with love and served them with tea or food.

Before leaving for America, we arranged a Gatka teacher for our sons to train them in this art. Apart from this we made them learn Kirtan. My in-laws and parents were quite old. Inviting them for lunch or dinner was a common practice. I and my wife's siblings made a big number; five on her side and eight on my side. All these relatives used to visit us with their families. We also used to send the kids to them. My parents lived at Topkhana house. My father never

visited us uninvited. He was an old Army officer and was quite fond of whiskey. Gurmit and Gurjeet felt happy looking after my parents and in laws.

Whenever we visited our Himachal Farm I planned in such a way that we all went together and stayed there. It was a joint land between me and Bal Krishan Singla It was an open place of 56 acres and the kids cheeks got red in 2-3 days only. There was a river nearby our farm. It had lot of fish. The local people sold us fish @ Rs. 2 per fish. One of our relative S. Umrao Singh, who was my far-off maternal grandfather, once asked me, "Son, you are such a big officer, will you send your kids for farming?" I replied, "Grandfather, a person should know the household business in order to sustain our self in case of an emergency." At that time, we were planning to give land to one son while second one could be starting some business.

In October 1992, our family left India to permanently settle in America. I got leave for two weeks only. At that time, I was Deputy Excise and Taxation Commissioner, Patiala Division. I had to hold auctions of Liquor vendors to be held in March 1993. My wife got leave for six months. My elder son Gurmit started to work and earn in U.S.A. The younger one, Gurjit got admission in 12th grade at Horlicks School, Racine (Wisconsin). My wife also worked there for six months.

In July 1993 I and my wife took leave of five years and went to America. We helped the sons and they helped us. They started to study with complete concentration and we started a small business. Time flew and our sons completed their studies and we all learnt doing business. Gurmit completed his engineering and took over our business in

June 1998. His wife is a doctor and the lovely couple has two kids. After eighteen years of studies, Gurjit has become a vascular surgeon. His wife is also a doctor and they too have two kids. Both my sons are simultaneously leading their family as well as business lives successfully. Their roots are their childhood during which we nurtured them with warm affection. We taught them everything. We inculcated the virtues like honesty, hard work, patience and meditating God's Name into them. All their success is due to these virtues.

While in America, four of us (I, my wife and both the sons) did ten businesses and purchased two houses in fourteen years (1994-2008). Then we sold one house and five businesses. In 2010 we distributed all the remaining five businesses and one house Judiciously between both the brothers and came back to India in December 2010 and started living a complete retired life.

Fight for Education: Battle front America

We had only two properties in India. One was an orchard of 31 acres in Himachal Pradesh state and the other was a house at New Lal Bagh, Patiala. In November 1990 I was promoted as Deputy Excise & Taxation Commissioner from Assistant Excise & Taxation Commissioner. After spending some time as Deputy Excise & Taxation Commissioner Appeals Ferozepur division at Bathinda, I was appointed Deputy Excise & Taxation Commissioner, Patiala Division. The coincidence was such in September 1992 that the day we bought four air tickets worth Rs. 96,000, I received my orders as Depyty Excise & Taxation Commissioner, Patiala Division. Our flight was on 7th October 1992. The minister of our department S. Shamsher Singh Dulo was very happy with me. I asked leave for six months from him. My wife also applied for leave of six months from her department. Mr. Dulo called me at his Government Banglow and said to me, "You should come back soon after leaving your children as the auctions are to be held in March 1993 & you have to conduct them." I got leave for fifteen days only. My wife's leave was sanctioned for six months as requested. On 7th October 1992, I, my wife and our two sons left for America.

The flight to U.S. – Our plane from New Delhi to Chicago in America had to take off at about 5 a.m. All of us checked in at about 3 a.m. & proceeded further. Our immigration

papers were checked and we were asked to go ahead. Since, I had to be back in 15 days my elder son Gurmit was more responsible (19 years old) and asked for my advice. I said, "My son, all our relatives/friends who are settled in America are doing well. We too hope to get good going. But what I think is that if we use education, technology & dollars of America & remain attached to Sikh philosophy of Guru & churning both of these will be a great deal for us." Both the kids followed this advice & both of them are true Sikhs. In the year 2016 & 2017 they got baptized with Amrit and have turned Amritdhari.

In the meantime, we reached the Departure Lounge. The elder son again asked if there was any other advice. I told him that this advice was very important but I felt shy being a father. I told them they are youngsters and in this age, one was possessed with powerful sexual urge. If they could spend some years with patience and self-control then we could marry them with suitable girls from respected families in India. The kids fully complied with this advice. Both were married in respectable families in the years 2000 & 2003 with doctor girls from India.

My three brothers and a sister were already settled in America. The elder sister was in New York and a brother younger to me, Dr. Jagjit Singh was in Chicago. Another younger brother Satwant Singh was at Milwaukie, a hundred miles away from Chicago. Jagjit was a veterinary surgeon. He held a shopping complex in Chicago city. Satwant lived in a modest house and owned a small gas station in south Milwaukee area. The youngest brother Gurwant was in Racine city which is close to Milwaukee. He too owned three businesses. I stayed with our children for

about 15 days. We spent few days with Jagjit and the other days with Satwant & Gurwant.

We had twenty thousand dollars with us. We were very clear about what to do. The admissions in the schools were over, so we had to approach School Board for admissions. We showed the documents of the sons to the school officers. The elder son had done what was then called plus two in non-medical. The younger was studying in plus two in medical. I wanted the elder son to be admitted in 12th and the younger one in 11th standard so their English gets in tune with other American students. But the school administrator did not agree with me. He asked the elder son to prepare for University and younger to get admission in 12th. I requested my younger brother Gurwant to let my younger son stay with him for a few months so that he can pass out 12th grade. Gurwant agreed to let Gurjeet stay with him which was a big relief for me. Gurjeet got admission in Horlicks High School, Racine. I told my wife and elder son to look for a rented apartment near Satwant's home and start some work.

I returned to India after fifteen days. My three brothers arranged a rental apartment for my wife and elder son and also paid the rent for three months to help us. After six months when my wife returned to Patiala in April 1993 she told me that she was earning four hundred dollars per month over there, which were not enough. "You have to go with us", she argued. I told her that "I was Deputy Excise & Taxation Commissioner, Patiala Division & it was a very important post." She said, "If we want our children to be spoiled in America then both of us need not to go to America. If we want them to study in America and also

inculcate moral values in them then I and you have to go."

Another big problem I was facing in the government sector was that in 1992 I was selected as an IAS from among the non-P.C.S. officers but the notification of I.A.S was not issued by Government of India. The letter for notification was to be recommended by Punjab Government to Government of India. It was such a time when I felt I was being torn apart physically as well as psychologically. I had no idea as to what to do. The government selected four other officers & issued their notification in 1993 and my name was not even considered. I remained in stress for few days but soon I realized that God had done something which was good for me. Some officer friends advised me to file a petition against the government in Punjab and Haryana High Court. Though injustice was done to me but I felt as if God had resolved my problem. The benefit of not being an I.A.S resulted into the higher studies & progress of my kids. I also progressed economically and spiritually.

I took five year leave on 15th August, 1993 & started my preparations for leaving for America. Our land was already sold. Mr. N. S. Walia an inspector of our department whom I had helped to become an E.T.O. lived opposite our house. I gave him the keys of my house and left for America. We lived in the same apartment which my brothers had arranged for my wife. My elder son was earning one thousand dollars per month. Our younger son Gurjeet was studying in Racine city and there was no government fees for his studies as in America the education in a Government school was almost free of cost. At that time, we had twenty thousand dollars with us which included seven thousand dollars which I borrowed from a friend in Australia. Our

apartment was on Good Hope Road in the City of Milwaukee. Crime was a big problem in that area. I asked my younger brother Satwant to look for a house in some other area closer to his residence. He arranged an apartment for us which was near the Airport of Milwaukie City. It was an area dominated by white people and was very neat & clean. In this house we were able to make our livelihood in one thousand dollars. On 3rd September, 1993 both my sons started to go to University of Wisconsin, Milwaukie. The elder son joined Engineering & the younger one took admission in Pre-Medical. The engineering in America is of four years as in India, but the student had an option to complete it before time by taking summer classes. Pre-Medical could be done after 12th Grade & before M.D. Pre-Medical also took four years and then there was an America level competition. Where ever the matching of the student took place one could study M.D. in that college or University. We were in a new country so I asked both my sons to be serious in studies. They worked very hard.

We were surviving on the money we had in deposit. We stayed in this apartment till March 1994. We had a good social circle. We went to Milwaukie Gurdwara Sahib on every Sunday. We met many people over there. Whenever we were invited to any function at my brothers or friends place, we definitely attended it. We were happy in America but we had no business for earnings. I spent a few months hoping that my brothers would help me in this matter but by December 1993 we realized that we had to take the initiative ourselves.

One of my childhood friends Anupinder Singh Dhillon was also living in Milwaukee city. He came to

America in 1972 but still was engaged in petty jobs. His wife Jinnee, a white American, was also in some ordinary job. Whatsoever business we bought was a moderate business (Gas Station) in partnership with S. Tarnam Singh Dhillon, who was a person of Indian origin. It was in Stoughton City near Madison with a total population of around eight thousand. This business had average sales but somehow, we had to make a start. At the time of taking over this business, our deposits receded from twenty thousand to twelve thousand five hundred dollars only. I asked for twelve thousand five hundred dollars as a loan from my younger brother Dr. Jagjit Singh who was in Chicago. He was kind enough to help us. We took over this business in partnership with Tarnam Singh on April 3, 1994. Both the partners had to contribute on fifty-fifty basis. We purchased the business in \$ one lakh ninety thousand and the down payment was thirty-five thousand dollars. The installment was fixed at seventeen hundred dollars per month. It was decided that I, my wife and kids will be working in the business and will take twelve hundred dollars per month for our services from the business itself. After three-four months we realized that we could handle such a business on our own.

Now we were left with only one property in India. That was a house at Patiala which could be sold to generate money. This house was in my wife's name. I came to Patiala in June 1994 with Power of Attorney from my wife and sold the house within two months & by August 1994 I was back to America. Since these were vacation months for our sons, they and my wife took care of the business. I paid back seven thousand with interest to my Australian friend from

the amount I got by selling the house. My younger brother S. Satwant Singh (who got martyred in Milwaukee) gave me a cheque of \$ 42 thousand. In September 1994. We leased this business at Stoughton at \$ 3300 per month, taking goodwill at \$ 10,000 on September, 1994.

By end of 1994, we became free from business at Stoughton. The inventory of this business belonged to us, therefore we got \$ 20,000 as its cost value. I returned twelve thousand five hundred dollars to my younger brother, Dr. Jagjit Singh from the amount we earned from this business. Now we had 55 thousand dollars cash and an experience of six months. We started to survey Madison city for business possibilities.

A big company of Madison city namely 'Stop & Go' had put up two businesses for sale. Madison University was the top university of Wisconsin State. We wanted our children to study at Madison University and it was academically more reputed compared to university at Milwaukee. The population of Madison city was around two lakhs. Madison University had 42000 students & a faculty of over eight thousand teachers. On 22 December 1998 we took over this business in Madison. This business & the building cost us one lakh thirty thousand dollars. To purchase this business, we contributed \$ 45,000 as down payment and took a loan of \$ 90,000.

We ran this business successfully till 1998. During these years my younger son Gurjeet cleared his Pre-Medical in December 1997 and by May 1998 the elder son Gurmit graduated as Electrical & Computer Engineer. Both my sons, apart from their studies, helped us in business also on everyday basis. We purchased a house in Madison city in

1995 (sold in 2001). We started negotiations with a lessee regarding handing over the business at Madison also. Both the kids felt that that rental income will not be enough as the installment of the house at Madison was also thirteen hundred dollars. Gurjeet said, "Father you have so much experience. Get us some other business."

We got another opportunity in the mid of February. A gas station was on sale in Appleton city. The city of Appleton was at a distance of over one hundred miles from Madison. The seller, Dale was demanding two lakh fifty seven thousand dollars. The sale of the business seemed fine to us. The deal was finalized at 2.5 lakh dollars. We handed over our business at Madison city to an Indian operator S. Tehal Singh on contract basis & got free from Madison City.

On 1st April 1998 I and my wife reached Appleton for business while both the sons were still in Madison city. It was a moderate gas station but for us it was the largest business so far. This business strengthened our economic condition to a great extent. Its income helped us to buy a plot and build a house at Patiala. My elder son completed his studies and came to Appleton on 17th May, 1998. I and my wife were sure that he will do a business in accordance with his education. One day Gurmit asked me if he could do the same business that we were in. I said to him, "Son, we have no problem. Rather I am happy that you will handle the business well." We had to borrow fifty thousand dollars from our relatives to purchase this business. Our 5 years leave was to be over in July 1998. We returned to India on 10th June, 1998 and discussed with Gurmit that we were under lot of debt, so he had to work hard and pay back loan responsibly. After exactly one year when we again went to America, our joy knew no bounds when the neighborhood was all praises for Gurmit. He had returned the debt of fifty thousand dollars in 6-7 months.

When I had gone on long leave to America in 1993, I was Deputy Excise & Taxation Commissioner, Patiala Division & when I rejoined again the department appointed me as Deputy Excise & Taxation Commissioner, Appeals, Patiala. After one month I won the Military seniority case at the level of Supreme Court of India. I was promoted as Additional Excise & Taxation Commissioner and retired as such in January 2001.

We had no house in Patiala so both of us lived with my in-laws family till March 2000. After about one and a half year we constructed our new house. My younger son Gurjeet served in hospitals for one year and also helped in business. In 1999 he got admission in M.D. at Memorial University, Newfoundland, Canada. He completed his M.D. in 2003 and returned back to America. In 2008 he completed his Residency in Surgery from University of North Carolina, Greenville & in 2009 he completed his Fellowship in Bariatric Surgery from the same university. In 2011 he completed his Fellowship of Vascular Surgery from Case Western University Cleveland, Ohio. After that he has been continuously serving in the hospitals. Presently he is practicing Vascular Surgery at Aurora Hospital in Oshkosh city.

Marriages of the boys

On 7th October 1992, while leaving for America I had advised both the boys to practice self restraint for a few years. I had assured them that we will find suitable girls for

them and get them married in time. The elder son completed his studies in 1998 and he was 25 then. When we came back to India we gave an advertisement for marriage in the Newspaper & in 1999 he got engaged to a girl of his choice who was a doctor. In April 2000 the marriage of Gurmit was solemnized at our new residence. In the same year we gave an advertisement for Gurjeet, our younger son. His preference was that the girl should be beautiful. He got married in 2003 to Doctor girl. Both of them are leading a happy life with their spouses & both have two kids each.

In 2002 Gurmit gave the Appleton business on rent and purchased a new Gas station in Fond Du Lac city. In the meantime, 9/11 happened in which the Muslim extremists blasted the two major American building by crashing airplanes. The American Government as well as people became hostile towards Muslims. Several Sikhs too fell victim to this hatred. As Sikhs also wore turban, the people out of ignorance took them to be Muslims.

I retired from the job on 31 January 2001. The State Government was gracious enough to extent my service till two years but I had declined. In August-September 2001 the elections were held at Maharani Club, Patiala. I was an active participant in the activities of the club. Some friends suggested my name as Presidential candidate and I made up my mind to contest election. The elections were held in September 2001. I got one thousand four votes out of a total seventeen hundred votes polled.

Because of 9/11 the hatred towards the Sikhs in U.S.A was increasing as the people out of ignorance took them to be Muslims. Checking was going on everywhere.

Gurmit informed me about this sorry situation. My wife took pre-mature retirement in January 2002.

We again left for America and rejoined our sons on 15th April, 2002. The gas station at Fond Du Lac was a very good business. It had the facility of car wash etc. It's appearance was also very attractive. We had purchased this business for \$ 3,62,000 and we sold it for \$ 4,90,000 dollars vide a Newspaper advertisement. We also helped the buyer of this business to get a loan.

Truck Stop:- On 1st April, 2003 we purchased a huge business in Oshkosh City. This business was spread over ten acres. It had a parking space for more than 100 trucks & cars. It had a Store of 5000 square feet which accommodated a Restaurant of about 2000 square feet. We had to take heavy loan for this business in which our bank officer friend Mark Sterr helped us. In 2002 the gross profit from this business was to the tune of 5,32.000. We not only increased the profit of the business but also were able to cut down the salary expenses. This business elevated our social status even more and we were counted as eminent business family of the area.

In 2004 we sold our Madison business for \$ 1,86,000 which we had purchased for \$ 1,30,000 in 1998. We saved \$ 1,00,000 from sale of this business. Now we needed a decent house. In 2005 we purchased an excellent house near the truck stop which cost us about five lakh dollars. The house was spread over 11 acres. In 2005 we purchased three more businesses apart from this house.

So in our journey of progress we never forgot three things. First thing was hard work and second was honesty. We paid all our taxes in time and never evaded a single

penny of tax. We showed genuine cost of every business we purchased or sold. Thirdly, we always remembered God. We took Guru Granth Sahib, which we deem Supreme Power, with us while leaving for America in 1992. We used to say prayers & Ardas every morning & evening. With the blessings of the Almighty our faith remained intact. I, my wife and our sons lived as Gursikhs. We never got disturbed in bad times and were thankful to God for the good times. In 2007, I took retirement from business in America and was more oriented towards Guru. I had a glimpse of Guru Gobind Singh ji in 2006 & in 2008 had Darshan of Guru Nanak Dev ji. In 2008 I appeared in M.A. exams in India. I completed M.A. Divinity in 2010 & M.A. Sikh Studies in 2013.

While living in America our kids lived a life of a Gursikh and wore turban at university. They were good students also. They led a high and pure moral life. Once 2-3 persons were engaged in a heated argument in 1996. One of them, Dr. Gurwatan Singh Miranpuri said to my elder son Gurmit, "You also say something." Gurmit replied, "Uncle it's between elders so what can I say." Dr. Gurwatan was quite impressed.

In 1998, when I asked Gurmit for his marriage for the first time, he said, "Can't we wait for another 5-10 years?" I told him, "My son, there is a particular age for marriage. It doesn't depend on how rich or poor we are. Our business is going fine. There is no limit to progress in business." Just hearing this he said alright, as you wish. I again asked him about what type of girl he preferred. His reply was even better. He said, "Daddy, nobody else can be a worthy friend & well wisher as you are. I will marry wherever you say. I

only have to sit there. Then he said, "See if you can find a doctor girl." We saw only one girl who was a doctor, discussed it with her parents and married Gurmit with her. The younger son was also married in similar fashion at Patiala in 2003. By the grace of God both the boys are leading a happy & prosperous life along with their families.

I & my wife are quite happy with whatever we have done. We left our stable life in India & ran business in America for the sake of the studies of our kids. With the blessings of God our hard work & honesty paid. We bought 10 businesses & purchased two houses from 1994 to 2008. During the same period, we sold five businesses and one house. In December 2010 we returned to the Punjab, land of our Gurus while leaving our sons in America and are now spending peaceful & contented life in our favorite city Patiala. Every single moment we are immersed in the Name of God & Guru. In other words, we are leading a complete life.

(Note: The Author has written two books which are available in English & Punjabi languages on their American experience in detail. In English the title of the book is 'Battle Front America' and the Punjabi version is titled as 'Ranbhumi America'. These books contain comprehensives details of our experiences in America. These can be read free of cost on Author's website www.captainaskaleka.com. These books have around 150 pages along with photos.

Financial Planning

I wish to divide my financial progress in the following five phases of my life.

- 1. From childhood to joining army (1943 to 1963)
- 2. Army Job (1963 to 1970)
- 3. Prof. and Excise & Taxation job (1971 to 1992, 1998-2001)
- 4. Business mainly U.S. period (1992 to 1998, 2002-2010)
- 5. Final phase December 2010 onwards.

Every person's financial training and progress starts from parents or grandparents from whom one inherits some property. My great grandfather S. Mann Singh was farming at our ancestral village Dugal and also took up a job with Maharaja Patiala which he pursued for 20 years ending 1890.

Those days the family had land in the villages of Dugal and Burar. Total land was about 500 Bighas. But agricultural methods being primitive, the income was just meagre. He had three sons.

- 1. Sant Singh (1877-1944)
- 2. Kapoor Singh (1880-1947)
- 3. Bhola Singh (1883-1950)
- S. Sant Singh died issueless and youngest son Bhola Singh never married because of his saintly nature. On retirement of S. Mann Singh, Maharaja Rajinder Singh gave his son S. Kapoor Singh a job in the palace when he was merely 10 years old. S. Kapoor Singh served the palace in various responsible capacities till 1910 when he was

commissioned in Patiala state army and worked as a recruiting officer till his retirement in 1928. S. Kapoor Singh was honest, enterprising and very loyal. He started his career as a Nafar and rose to be an A.D.C. to Maharaja and attended Maharaja Bhupinder Singh at his coronation at Shimla by the Viceroy of India in 1909 A.D. He was dressed very well and was very urbane. He did not take interest in village land and sold family land at Burar. He only remodeled his house at village Dugal and built a house called Haveli near Mie Ki Srah in Mohalla Sui Grah at Patiala.

He had two marriages. First marriage took place when he was 23 years and his first wife Sardarni Sadda Kaur was a native of village Aliser. She gave birth to only son, Pritam Singh in 1906. She stayed at Dugal and took care of her in laws S. Maan Singh and his wife Sardarni Jaswant Kaur. She died in 1929. S. Kapoor Singh married second wife in 1911 when he was recruiting officer at Bathinda. Second wife Nihal Kaur belonged to a prosperous landed and business family of Bathinda. Her father and only brother Waryam Singh owned 1200 Bighas of land near Bathinda city and had shops in the city. Additionally, the family was into money lending business. This was a love marriage.

Sardarni Nihal Kaur stayed with S. Kapoor Singh throughout. My grandfather was very fond of education and brought my father to Patiala from Dugal, while he was hardly six years old. Nihal Kaur delivered two sons and two daughters. S. Kapoor Singh started a bus from Samana to Bhawanigarh via Dugal which ran for 20 years (1920-1940). The Pakki Beehi at Dugal was built by him out of his personal savings. At Dugal our family is known as family of Pakki Beehi wale. This Beehi was built in the year 1937. At the

time of his death in 1947 he left behind 117 Bighas of land at Dugal and three bed room house in Dugal and a Haweli at Patiala.

My father was very intelligent and hard working. He was sent to City High School for studies. He was a class monitor for the last five years of his education till he matriculated in the year 1924. At that time, he spoke fluent English and had very good knowledge of Urdu, Punjabi and Persian. As he spoke fluent English, class fellows started calling him an 'Englishman'. In 1926, when he was doing F.sc (medical) at Mohindra College, he got an opportunity to be commissioned in the army. After completing training, he was commissioned in 1928 as a 2/Lt and retired as a Major in 1949. His starting monthly salary in 1928 was Rs. 150 and on retirement his salary was 1000 per month. Out of his saving he purchased 150 Bighas land in village Dugal. He also built a decent house near Top Khana gate and at retirement had a saving of Rs. 10,000.

Ten thousand rupees was a huge amount in 1949-50. At that time, my Father had to marry two children, both premature and unwanted. All the saved money was exhausted on these two marriages. Pension was not enough for our family and income from the village land was just meager.

Elder brother Parminder (1933) was only 17 years old and was studying in tenth class. My father had to marry him on moral grounds. Our uncle Sardar Devinder Singh, Sub inspector in Police was engaged to Balwant Kaur, daughter of S. Bachiter Singh of a good family of Ruldu Singh wala. My uncle preferred marriage with Darshan Kaur, sister of Rani Chand Kaur. My uncle asked his mother to

send refusal to Ruldu Singh wala family cancelling proposal of marriage. The girl's father on being informed was mentally upset and came to my father. He intimated my father that it will be difficult for him to face his village people. He will commit suicide on the way. He placed his turban on the feet of my father. He prayed to my father to accept his daughter for my brother Parminder, who was just a young boy. My father, many times, explained to him that his son Parminder was very young, and his education has still not been completed. Realizing the moral responsibility of a father, my father agreed to this marriage.

My elder sister Rupinder Kaur (born 1935) was still studying in class 7, that a rich, highly respectable and landed family of Patiala approached my father for my sister's marriage with their son. In these two weddings, all of my father's savings were exhausted.

In 1953, my father took seven children, including me, to village Dugal and the period of financial crisis started for our family. My father and mother were living in the village and lived for 29 years (1953-1982) there. My elder brother took his wife and seprated after three months of job. From childhood, I started thinking about helping my father. My father was very fond of education, so all the children were studying at different places. Till the end of my education (1963), my father was under a Debt of Rs 7,000.

I was commissioned on May 3, 1964, and in the next three years, I saved money and returned every single penny of my father's debt. Even though my salary was Rs 460 p.m. when I was commissioned, I used to save more than rupees 200 per month. In 1967, I started saving money for myself and I saved Rs 14 thousand, out of which there was a cash of

Rs 10,000 and a lambretta scooter.

A strange coincidence that my father also had Rs. 10,000 worth of saving on his retirement as that of mine.

Based on the interview for the job of Asst. Prof. by Punjab Public Service Commission, I got government job and I joined Government College Tanda on July 17, 1971. My monthly salary was five hundred rupees there and with benefits of the army service it rose to seven hundred rupees per month.

After one year, I was married in June 1972 and on the basis of my request I was transferred to Government Ripudaman College, Nabha. I and my wife started living in the city of Patiala. My wife Jasminder Kaur was already working as a lecturer in Biology at Victoria Senior Secondary School, Patiala. Her salary was Rs. 600 p.m. She was in the same pay scale as that of mine i.e. 300-25-600.

After some time we thought we should save some money from our two salaries. Our relatives and friends also began advising us that we did not have any children and we should save. By 1976, we saved about twelve thousand rupees. Emergency was declared in 1977 and the prices of residential plots also dropped substantially. The rate of plot of seventy rupees per sq. yard came down to Rs 50 per sq. yard. My wife and I thought that if we did not buy a plot now, we'll be stupid. I bought a plot of 270 (35x70) square yard at Raghbir Nagar, Patiala for Rs 14,770 by borrowing some money from my father-in-law.

What I wanted in life?

My ETO's training ended in 1975. I was posted as an ETO enforcement in Patiala. In 1976, I thought, what I wanted, I should write. I took a copy and a pen and started

writing, that now I was an ETO and wanted to be retired as DETC. We had a two hundred seventy-five sq. yards plot at that time and I wanted to have at least five hundred sq. yards plot for a house. We thought that there should be house in 200 yard and in rest of the place there should be a lawn. I have been fond of lawn and gardening ever since childhood.

I wished and wrote to have an old Fiat car by the age of fifty years. At that time, only two cars were more prevalent, one was Fiat and the other was Ambassador. I thought that after 58 years of age on retirement, we should be able to buy a new Fiat car which will be enough for the rest of our life time. At retirement, we should have a savings of Rs. 1,00,000 which will be enough for our post retirement life.

I had fifty bighas of my share of land. Our rest of relatives had more land. I also wanted at least one hundred fifty Bighas land. I wrote all my dreams in a copy and started thinking seriously about them. It did not take much time to meet these needs. My elder brother was a Tehsildar in Himachal Pardesh. His share was five acres of land in village Dugal. In 1975, he sold his share of land. By selling this land, he bought 18 acres of land near Indora town in Himachal Pardesh.

In 1972 my brother Jagjit migrated to the United States and became a US citizen in 1976. He sent sponsorship to the rest of the brothers and sisters. In 1978, my youngest brother Gurwant, who was farming in the village, went to America. My elder brother Tehsildar advised me that the whole family was going to the United States what would I do in the village Dugal alone. He

advised me to sell land at Dugal and buy land in Himachal. In Dugal 10 acre land was in my name which was not much superior, that's why I had got double the land. I was very fond of garden and I wanted to plant a garden in my land. In April 1978, I took S. Hakam Singh Dhillon, an officer in the Horticulture department from Patiala to see my land in Dugal. I showed him my land. It was a hot and dusty day. He advised me that my land was not suitable for a garden. He told me if I wanted to plant a garden then it should be in Jammu and Kashmir or Himachal Pradesh because of favorable weather conditions there.

Purchasing land in Jammu and Kashmir was not allowed then. It was difficult to get land in Himachal. Then I remembered my brother who used to ask me to come to him in Himachal after selling the land. In 1978, with the permission of my father, I sold my fifty bighas of land for Rs 60,000 and started searching for land in Himachal. My elder brother Parminder Singh was a Tehsildar in Himachal Pradesh, so he had lots of contact with people and he had a lot of knowledge about land etc. My childhood friend Bal Krishan Singla told me that if I was searching land in Himachal, then I should keep him in mind too. In November 1978, we selected a piece of 56 acres of land. The price of this land was Rs. 1500 per acre. I bought 31 acres of land which was valued at 53000. Bal Krishan bought remaining 25 acres of land. In the year 1980, we started developing the land jointly. Bal Krishna Singla was economically more comfortable. My wife and I spent one of our two salaries for development of the garden and were meeting domestic needs with the second one. We were happy to develop garden that would keep us busy after retirement and would be security for our sons.

There was a relative of Bal Krishna who wanted to buy our Raghbir Nagar plot. I told him to sell this plot and buy me a five hundred yard plot in New Lal Bagh, Patiala for 99 years. In 1979, we sold our plot @ two hundred rupees per yard. The 99-year New Lal Bagh plot was selling at half the price of good area free hold plots. 99-year lease was a new thing for the people of Patiala. Every buyer was saying, what will happen after 99 years. Bal Krishan had bought some land from a dera in New Lal Bagh and was selling plots. I offered to buy a plot of about 500 sq.yd. I had to give 1000 rupees to Bal Krishna Singla after the final settlement. He sold my 272 sq.yd plot to his relative and gave me 500 sq.yd plot in New Lal Bagh (#46-C)

In early 1985 we started thinking of building a house at Patiala. In July 1985, we started building our house at New Lal Bagh and we finished it in January 1986. We built the house after taking a loan of Rs. 80,000 from Housefed Punjab. We also sold ten tolas of our gold for Rs. 30,000. We also took Rs. 30,000 non-refundable loan from provident fund. A relative, S. Malwinder Singh Bhinder built the house for us for Rs. 1,90,000. We owed him Rs. 50,000. In 1985, we had bought an old Fiat Car with a loan of 40 thousand rupees from the government of Punjab whose number was PBM 5252, which had run about 50,000 kilometers. On 16 November 1987, this car met with an accident. The insurance company gave me fifty thousand rupees as compensation and allowed me to sell the accidented car. From this amount we gave 50,000 rupees to the builder of the house and sold car for 12 thousand rupees.

On September 1, 1980, I got promoted as A. E.T.C.

and was posted as in charge Amritsar district. My target was to become DETC, which was just one step away. All dreams that I wrote were realized in about ten years. In 1986 my house was built in New Lal Bagh, which was a decent colony of Patiala. My land increased from 10 acres to 31 acres in 1979. My job was going very well. Besides promotions, I was also gaining reputation for being honest. I became DETC Appeals in 1990. In January 2001, I retired as Additional Excise and Taxation Commissioner which was also quite above my target. In 1990, we sold our land for Rs. 8 lakh. My share out of eight lakhs was five lakhs.

I had seen money thrice in my life. For the first time in 1978, when ten acres of ancestral land in Dugal village was sold for Rs 60,000. The second time a few lakh rupees at the time of sale of land in Himachal Pardesh, in 1990-92. Third time after 2010 when we finally came to India as fully retired. Apart from this, rest of the time it was hand to mouth. In all this time, we have never had a servant at home. Whenever a businessmen came to my house, my wife used to prepare tea with her own hands and my two children Gurmit and Gurjeet used to serve the tea. Sometimes my officer friends used to ask me If I did not find it hard without a servant and further my children who studied at the YPS, served tea to traders. I replied that it was God's grace that made me an officer. It is the grace of God that rich businessmen come to this middle class man's house. I replied that with honesty only this type of standard was possible and I was not ashamed of it. Rather I was proud of it.

After selling Himachal's land, whatever money we got was deposited into a US bank account, which was

opened in 1992 itself. Thirteen thousand dollars were a little too less. I got \$ 7,000 as loan from a friend from Australia and deposited in my account in U.S.A.

When In 1993 we took a five-year leave and went to the US, at that time we had twenty thousand dollars in our bank account. We arrived in the USA in September 1993 and studies of our children started. We used to spend money very wisely and judiciously but still we had an expenditure of one thousand dollars per month.

In April 1994, we got a small gas station in partnership with an Indian-origin man. We had only barely twelve and a half thousand dollars at that time. I borrowed twelve and a half thousand dollars from my brother Jagjit. In April 1994, we started our first business.

In just a few months of business, we started realizing that we could do such a business ourselves. We had a house in Patiala City, which could be sold. The house was in the name of my wife. I took the power of attorney from my wife and came to Patiala on June 1, 1994 and sold the house for sixteen lakh rupees. I returned \$ 7,000 to my Australian friend from the same amount with interest. But carrying this money to America was a major problem. My younger brother Satwant (Martyred 2012) helped me. He told me to let your money remain in my account. My elder sister Jaswinder stayed at Patiala only. We added her name in our savings account. Satwant's in-laws had a large family. Satwant used to attend one or two weddings every year in India. He spent our money in India and gave us \$ 42,000 by way of cheques in U.S. Dollars.

From 1994 to 2010, we purchased ten businesses. Apart from the bank loans, in all these businesses, my

brothers, relatives and friends helped us. I took loan worth thirty thousand dollars from my younger brother Satwant twice. I took ten thousand dollars in 1998 from my father inlaw's younger brother S. Mahinder Singh Mand (England). We took sixty thousand dollars twice from one of our relatives, S. Bachan Singh Gill. It is also worth mentioning the names of two bank officers who have generously helped us in all our loans. Godwin Amagashi helped us with a loan in December 1994, when no banker knew us. Since March 1998, until 2010 Mark Sterr helped us a lot. During the years 1995-2005, we purchased two houses apart from ten businesses, out of which five businesses and a house were sold. In 2010, we both, husband and wife decided to return to India. In Patiala City we had already built a house in 1999-2000, with a lot of help from our business in U.S.

In 2010, when we came back to India, we had an FD, the amount of which was six lakh rupees. In 2008, I and my wife started getting a pension of \$ 1220 on the basis of US income tax laws which is still available. In addition, we both get pension from our jobs in India. We feel very comfortable economically. While coming to India, my wife and I had distributed all the property in U.S between both sons. Both of our sons are very responsible and with their families come to India to see us. We are living very comfortably in our native city Patiala and have always thanked God.

Without the land, we felt inconvenient for some years. But now that we are old enough, we are feeling that if we had land, who would have taken care of it after us. Both the sons and their families are very busy in America. They hardly spare time to visit India. The five hundred yards house in our city is enough for us. With God's grace, our

hopes and anxieties have come to an end. We are living a life of gratitude and patience. Prayers to God sustain us. We take care of our garden at home. We spend our savings on donations. We also distribute books written recently to the readers in society free of cost. In other words, we are living a wholesome life. My elder son, Gurmit calls us twice a day from U.S. My younger son calls us once in a week. I often tell them that, "nothing could be better."

Spiritual Growth

I would like to divide my Spiritual travelogue in five phases. The first phase was from birth (1943-1963) to joining army. The second phase is of Army period (1963-1970). The third phase is from 1970 to 1987. Fourth phase covers a time span from 1987 to 2001 and the fifth phase is from 2002 till date.

1. 1st Phase - We were five brothers and four sisters. I was at number five. My elders include the eldest brother Parminder (1933), sisters Rupinder (1935), Rajinder (1937) and Jaswinder (1939). The eldest brother got married at a tender age in 1949 and after being appointed as Sub-Inspector Consolidation, he started living separately. We can say that he left the family. Later on he was transferred to Himachal Pradesh. He sold his share of land at our ancestral. village and purchased land in Himachal. He retired at age 53 years and died at the age of 55 years. The eldest sister Rupinder was also married in 1950 when she was hardly 15 years old and she expired at the age of 83 in January 2018. Sister Rajinder was married in 1959. Presently she lives in Chicago, America. Sister Jaswinder got married in 1958 and she lives in Patiala city. All the three elder sisters are widowed.

Three brothers and one sister are younger to me. The brothers are Jagjit 1944, Satwant 1947 and Gurwant 1950. The youngest sister and the youngest child of the

family Harinder Kaur was born in 1952. My younger brother Jagjit passed his matriculation in 1959 from B.N Khalsa school, Patiala and then did F.Sc Medical from Mohindra College. When he was studying veterinary surgery he had an opportunity to join Indian Air Force in 1963-64 as a pilot officer. He wanted to be a fighter pilot. During the Nagpur training he forgot to drop the wheels while landing the aircraft. His training officers recommended him for Navigation. It was the year 1965. India was locked in war with Pakistan. I as a part of 2 Mahar Battallion, an infantry was involved in the said war in the Northern part of India. Jagjit started to consider that though the salary was same in the Navigation wing but his dream to fly the aircraft was shattered. He didn't like to sit with the pilot and navigate. He had come on a vacation and was having discussion with our parents. He also wrote me a letter. I advised him not to do anything half heartedly. I asked him to leave Air Force. He did so and started to complete his veterinary course which he had left in between. He completed graduation in Veterinary Surgery. After a brief stints of the job in Bathinda and Sangrur districts, he joined M.Sc. Pathology at Punjab Agriculture University, Ludhiana. He got immigration to U.S.A. on the basis of his education and experience. In February 1972 he left for America and vowed to take whole family there. He sponsored eight brothers and sisters for migration to America. Six siblings reached America one by one. All of them achieved a considerable financial progress in America.

The entire family was happy at my birth since I was born after three sisters. My father was a very honest person but at that time he was not under much influence of

Gurbani. My mother belonged to a Gursikh family and used to do prayers etc. As our family was big, we didn't get the care as compared to the kids in small families. I did my matriculation at a young age. I passed my M.A. at the age of 20. I was lucky not to get the company of friends who took alcohol or cigarette etc. but neither I came across the religious minded people. Like ordinary children we too were focused on the career after the studies. My father wanted me to be an army officer and I was also eligible to appear in N.D.A. which had Maths and Physics as compulsory papers. I was weak in Maths and never had studied Physics. When I was doing my M.A. in 1961-62 my interest in studies further increased. Like other boys I also used to trim my beard in the college days. The atmosphere at that time was like this only. The Sikhs who came from Pakistan, most of them were Arora Khatris. They didn't cut their hair and beard. Most of my friends were local Banias. I learnt wisdom from them. For memorizing Japu Ji Sahib, my father used to give us money as encouragement. It was due to this encouragement only that I was able to memorize 15 Pauris of Japu JI Sahib. I lived at Topkhana house in Patiala during my college studies.

2. Army - When I joined the army my hair on the head were intact but I used to trim my beard. In 1963 I went for training at Officer Training School, Pune. There were 600 officer cadets under training out of which 25% were Sikhs. The Parade was held under the command of Subedar Major Harnam Singh. He belonged to Guards Regiment and folded his beard upwards as was the tradition in Patiala State. He used to touch his stick on the beards of cadets who trimmed their beards including me. It meant as a reminder for

keeping my beard uncut. Many cadets stopped trimming the beards and I was also one of them. On 3rd May, 1964 I was allotted to Mahar Regiment and I was transferred to Mahar Regiment Center, Sagar, Madhya Pradesh. I was posted there for approximately one year. There also I tied my beard in the same fashion. In April 1965, I was transferred to Mahar-2 which was in the battle field of Ran-Kachh area. Later on Indo-Pak war took place in September 1965. I did well in the war and was able to show bravery. This was the first time in my life when I saw death face to face. At this moment I remembered three personalities. First was Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, who had said,

Swa Lakh Se Ek Laraaun. Tabi Gobind Singh Naam Kahaaun.

(Bhai Nand Lal Ji Vaar)

Then I remembered my mother, who had advised me while I was boarding a bus from village Dugal to join the war. She had said, "my dear son, happiness and sorrow are parts of life, do you job with complete responsibility." Next I remembered my father. Although my father spent many years in Patiala only and his service was also here but he was quite attached to the village. People respected him for his honesty and humility. I thought that it is better to die while fighting bravely rather than run for life like a coward. It would have humiliated my father in the village. Then the next thought was that my parents had nine children. We have to elevate their (parents) status, not to let them down.

In January 1968, I got my hair cut but kept a light beard and wore turban for three months. By April 1968, I started to question myself that if God did not exist then what is the use of religion? It was Vaisakhi on 13th April, 1968. This festival still held much significance in my life. On 14th April 1968 I called the Company barber and asked him to clean shave me and I started wearing a cap.

In 1969 I came to my village during annual leave. My mother condemned me for what I had done. She said, "Son, look at your roots and your family background. The people who wanted to convert us into Muslims wanted only to cut the hair of my brother and Chacha Ji and not their legs." My mother's uncle S. Shamsher Singh and his only son Atma Singh were asked either to embrace Islam or face death. The family had land in Bhawalpur State and during partition of India were coming to Bathinda side when they preferred to die rather than become Muslims. I felt ashamed of myself and assured my mother saying, "Mother, please forgive me this time, whenever I will return from the army, I shall never cut my hair." I attempted I.A.S. examination twice i.e. in 1968 and 1969. My Medical was on 20th February. After 21st February, 1970 I never cut my hair and kept my promise.

3. 1970 to 1987 - This period starts with my 16 months long unemployment phase. During this time, I learned farming in my village. The beard grew fast but hair on the head took time. I started to fold my beard upwards as I used to do in army. I started taking interest in farming in my village and helped my father for about 16 months.

I became a professor in 1971 and served for three years as a professor. I appeared for P.C.S. examination in 1972. On the basis of this exam I was appointed as an E.T.O in 1974. I continued as an ETO at Patiala and Ludhiana till 1st September, 1980. In 1980 I got promoted as Assistant Excise and Taxation Commissioner, Amritsar district. I got myself

transferred to Patiala in 1981. From December 1982 to July 1987 I remained Assistant Excise and Taxation Commissioner In-charge of District Patiala.

In 1982 My father and mother had permanently moved to Patiala and started living in their house at Topkhana, Patiala. My father was then 76 years old. All my three brothers had migrated to America. I had sold my share of land in 1978 and purchased land in Himachal. My elder brother Parminder (Tehsildar) had already sold his share in 1975. All the three brothers mortgaged their lands and brother Satwant Singh who was looking after the farming also migrated to America. The period during 1982 to 1990 was very important for me and my father. My father used to pray a lot. He was free from all his responsibilities and he spent most of his time in reading Gurbani and meditating on it. My father used to wake up at three from his childhood. In 1986 I built my own house at Lal Bagh, Patiala and my father was very happy. I did all my service with complete honesty. During 1982-83 to 1990 I and my father talked about spirituality. (My father left us on 29th May, 1990).

During the period of 1982-90 One day I asked my father, "father, will I get salvation?" My father asked, "For what?" I proudly said, "I do my job honestly." He replied, "everyone is supposed to do that. You are doing the same thing which every other officer should do. You are doing nothing extraordinary. You are famous because rest of the officers are not honest. It is like that some illiterate person makes a platform with bricks and asks the people how his palace looked. You only have a strong platform but unless it is strengthened with the bricks of Gurbani and plaster of

Simran it cannot turn into a palace. But one thing is sure that your base is strong. If you will place brick on it, it will stick. The people who are dishonest are sitting on a weak platform. Their platform cannot hold the bricks. So, make it sure to go ahead with strong bricks of Gurbani plastered with Simran, your entire life shall be come meaningful."

In 1926 my father had fractured his leg while he was riding a horse during the army training. The horse fell into a well. The horse broke his neck and died instantly. My father broke his knee. His knee was in plaster. During years of his job (1928-1949) he walked without s stick. At the age of about 50 years he started limping and walked with the help of a stick. My father used to sit in the drawing room of Topkhana house and read religious books (Sainchis) for two hours while sitting on a chair. I understood my father and loved him a lot. Sometimes I took liberty with him. Once I said, "father, the Gurmukhs pray while sitting cross legged on the floor." He never minded what I said. He said, "My son, the Almighty knows that one of my leg is broken."

He did Path with determination. At another occasion I asked him, "When you come out after the Path is over, your ears, forehead and cheeks are red like burning coal. What is the reason behind this?" The answer he gave me was very spiritual and serious. He said, "Son, when the youth of a person is over, all the good and bad karmas he had done in his life become the history of his body. It is the karma due to which a person is criticized or appreciated. I have never committed a sin in my life." Once I asked him, "You are such a religious person why you couldn't get rid of drinking and meat etc?" He replied, "If I couldn't get hundred out of hundred, I will surely score seventy percent. There are

hardly any people in the world who start reciting the Name of the God at the age of five years. I started to memorize the Path when I was 5-6 years old and memorized 16 Ashtapadis of Sukhmani Sahib at a very young age. It is also right that I am not fully Gurmukh worthy of salvation but I am sure that I will get a 1st division."

I also increased my prayer hours during these days as my life was quite stable. I had purchased a 31-acre orchard in Himachal as per my desire which was one of the reasons behind my satisfaction. I was also contented to have a house on five hundred square yards constructed in New Lal Bagh Colony. My children were studying in Y.P.S. According to me, my life was smooth.

4. 1987 to 2001- The year 1987 was lucky for me as many changes occurred in my life in this year and afterwards. Till 1987 I was eating non-vegetarian food and enjoyed chilled beer every day. I thought that doing my job honestly was a complete life in itself but in reality, I was miles away from it.

The incident of 16th November, 1987 (Monday) - At New Lal Bagh Colony, Patiala, Doctor Tandon was our neighbor who became friends with me. A friend of mine S. Jarnail Singh was an E.T.O. at Chandigarh. Doctor Tandon got the allotment of a Maruti car which was to be delivered at Chandigarh. Doctor Tandon wanted to take me along to get some benefits from the dealer because of my departmental connection. I had an old Fiat car which I had purchased in 1985. It didn't start for at least 1-2 hours. Somehow it started at 11 a.m. and we started for Chandigarh. Tandon was driving my car. I was sitting as a co-passenger. My wife Jasminder and Mrs. Tandon were sitting in the back seat. At about 12:45 we were near Banur when the right tyre of a

truck coming from the other side busted and suddenly it started turning towards right and hit the right tyre and side of our car. I thought that I was going to die. Another thought that came to my mind was that all I had done so far was collecting taxes for the state only, never recited the Name of God. In the meantime, our car turned further to left and came to a halt. There was a deep cut on my tongue and blood spurted out on Dr. Tandon. My wife was sitting in the back seat. She came out and stopped a car which was on its way from Patiala to Chandigarh. I had been Assistant Commissioner of Patiala district for the last five years, due to which all the traders/businessmen knew me. This businessman was on his way to Panchkula. He stopped at my wife's request and told her that he was going for a meeting. He dropped us at Banur and after getting us first aid he arranged a taxi for us for Patiala. I was unable to speak for ten days. Many people came to see me at home. If somebody talked to me, I responded and wrote something. After exactly ten days my speech was back, I started speaking while still lisping.

On 27th November, 1987, I washed my hair and was sitting in the lawn to dry them. My father-in-law used to visit a Baba ji. I just remembered this Baba Ji and strongly urged him to see me at 5 p.m. Neither I telephoned him nor did I send him any message. But Baba ji, who ran a small shop, later told me that he saw me requesting him. At five in the evening Baba ji was right in front of my house. Baba ji had never visited my house before. My wife welcomed him. I asked Baba ji how I could help him. Baba ji said, "Today you need my help, not otherwise." I said, "Yes! I remembered you." He said, "I came to know about that." I asked him to at

least show me some glimpse of God. He told me that I could see everything. Then he said, "Inside your house, you have The Guru Granth Sahib, but as you take meat and drink liquor etc. how can you see the God? You have to improve your food habits." I completely stopped drinking and meat for the coming six months. I started visiting Baba ji. Whenever I met him, he always asked me about drinking and meat. His advice was getting more and more effective. Earlier sometimes I started to drink and took non-veg sometimes I left it. I left alcohol and meat for five years i.e. till 1998 and then restarted in April 1998. After exhausting my five years of leave ex India we returned to Patiala (India) in June 1998.

We had also called Baba ji in 1995 to America where after spending few weeks with us, he went to California area. He stayed there for about ten years. We remained in touch with him through telephone. One day Baba ji asked me about my drinking and eating meat. I said, "Baba ji I don't have that strong willpower. Only you can help me get rid of it." He told me to continue for another 1-2 years then he would help me. In 2001, I decided to get baptized with Amrit. On the occasion of Vaisakhi I got baptized with Amrit at Anandpur Sahib. So many years have passed now but I never even thought about drinking or eating non-veg food. 5. From 2002 to till date- The elections of Rajindra Gymkhana Club were held in September 2001. I was an active participant in the activities of the Club. Members encouraged me to contest for President's election. I told my wife, "I do not eat or drink anymore." She jokingly said, "You should now serve the drunkards for one year." I won the elections with securing one thousand and four votes out of seventeen hundred votes polled.

In those days the Muslim extremists attacked two major American towers. The entire America became hostile towards Muslims. The Sikhs had to pay heavily for this anger. My elder son Gurmit who was doing business after completing his graduation in engineering also wore a turban. He had a Mercedes car. The American police officers considering him a Muslim used to stop his car and trouble him. Gurmit talked to us every day to discuss his problems. I and my wife got quite worried. My wife was to retire in 2003 but due to this unpleasant incident she took premature retirement in January 2002. We locked our house at Patiala and once again moved to America in 2002. My son had rented a two-bedroom house in Fond Du Loc. Here I became more religious minded and started memorizing Gurbani.

Sometimes I felt that I was sixty years now but I still did not learn Bani by heart. I started to memorize Gurbani by heart. I used to sleep on floor of the dining room and listened to Path for the whole night. In the next six years I memorized the Path of Jaap Sahib. It is an altogether different feeling to learn Gurbani by heart and to read it along with meanings. In 2002, for the first time we experienced a fragrance while reciting Gurbani. It was a totally different kind of fragrance. I thought it to be from some incense sticks. My sons Gurmit and Gurjit were also listening to the Path. I experienced a divine joy. I asked both of them if they experienced something. The younger son said he experienced the fragrance but elder son didn't feel it.

Our business at Fond Du Loc, which we purchased

for \$3,62,000 in September 2001 was sold in January 2003 for \$4,90,000. With this profit we purchased a Truck Stop for a price of \$14,50,000 in the city of Oshkosh. In April 2003 we also rented three bedroom house in the city of Oshkosh.

In 1998 we had moved from Madison to Appleton. We wanted to sell our business property at Madison called 'Stop-n-Shop'. We couldn't sell our business. Initially the tenants were troublesome; they misguided any prospective purchaser who went there. Finally, we got rid of the tenant. I went to the room which was Sanctum Santorum of Guru Granth Sahib ji and prayed for the sale of the business at Madison. The very next day I got a call from a Jew. We had a telephonic talk regarding business. I quoted \$ 2 lakhs as selling price and his offer was of 1.75 lakh dollars. Finally, the deal was struck at 1.86 lakh dollars. The registry was done in September 2004 and after paying bank loans etc. we were able to save one lakh dollars out of sale of this business and property.

Our faith in God and Guru became even more strong. I again went to Guru Sahib's room and prayed saying, "Maharaj, we don't know how to do business. We purchase a thing worth \$ 10 for \$ 15 and sell a thing of \$ 10 in \$ 8. Please make us invest wisely whatever we have saved." When I did the Ardas, I saw three tube lights on the back wall of Guru Sahib's room. Two out of them were big ones while one was small. I got a feeling that we will get three businesses in the future. I told this to both my sons. The younger son Gurjit said how could we get three businesses with only one hundred thousand dollars with us? I said, "Dear son, this is the command of the God and His command is final." In the year 2005 we purchased three

businesses and an eleven-acre house with those one lakh dollars. For more details you can read 'Battlefront America' which tells how infinite the Guru is. He has the power to make businessman out of innocent farmers like us.

On 9th May, 2005 the registry of the house at Oak ridge, Neenah was completed. For the first time we opened the lock of the house as the owners. I, my wife, elder son, his wife and daughter were present on this auspicious occasion. We thanked the Almighty for His blessings. As we opened the door, it was the grace of the Lord that we saw a cloud right over our house, it rained only on our house and passed off. We shifted all our luggage to our new home. In the mid June 2005 we organized Sehaj Path and Kirtan for Greh Pravesh. It was attended by about 200 relatives and friends who came to wish us good luck. The Kirtan was sung by Bhai Nazar Singh former Ragi at Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. I asked him to sing the following Shabad:

Dehu Sajan Asisrian Jeo Howe Sahib Seo Mayl. (Raag Gauri Deepaki Mahal 1, (SGGS 12)

He was living in Milwaukee city. On telephone, he asked me why I wanted to listen to this Shabad on this auspicious occasion? I replied, "As I have got everything, now I wish to meet the Lord." The house was very good so it was natural that some people will be jealous. But I told everybody that this was the garden of Guru Gobind Singh ji and we were the gardeners and watchmen of this place.

We converted a big room as Sacred Sanctorum for Guru Maharaj and used to pray in the mornings and evenings. While doing Path there I again felt a fragrance. Now I knew that it was the blessing of God or some blessed spirit has came to encourage me.

From the very childhood I had a feeling that Tenth Guru will give me Darshan in my village Dugal when I shall be of the age of 64 years. At that time, we had land at Dugal which later on I sold to purchase land in Himachal. I prayed to Guru Ji, "Now we have sold the land and live in America. You don't need a passport." I also requested to have a glimpse of four Sahibzadas. On 7th March, 2006 I was blessed enough to have a glimpse of Guru Maharaj and four Sahibzadas.

Well, time passed until I came across another auspicious day of my life came. January 13, 2008 was my birthday. At about eleven, my wife was working in the kitchen. The elder son went to work and granddaughter went to school. My elder daughter in-law Gunmeet, was doing residency at Marquette (Michigan). There was around five hundred square feet of living room where we used to sit and enjoy warmth of fire place. I got a glimpse of Guru Nanak Dev Ji in that living room. At first, I saw two legs and then it became a complete body. It was an embodiment of Guru Nanak, Guru Nanak Patshah blessed me with both hands and in a few moments He disappeared. This incident changed my life altogether. I was now convinced of the existence and power of God. I was delighted at the sight of Guru Sahib. My way of thinking changed, you can say that my life became ever blissful. There was joy and happiness in my spiritual life. I started living in bliss all the time. Our worldly needs were fulfilled. Infact the Lord gave us what we did not ask for. As Kabir writes in the Guru Granth Sahib,

> Kaho Kabir Jan Janya Jou Janya tau man manya (SGGS 656)

written in Gurbani is absolute truth. There is nothing but truth. I started thinking about doing an M.A. in religion. I spoke to my close friend Dr. Ranbir Singh Sarao. Half the preparations I had started in the US. I came to India for a few months in February 2008 and completed my first year M.A. Religious Studies, I returned to the United States in the month of May. Now I was free from the responsibilities of home. Both the sons were married and were wellestablished. We began to feel that God listens to us. For example, our youngest son did not have any child. My wife asked me to organize Sahaj Paath or Akhand Paath Sahib at Patiala. After getting free from my M.A Part II exams and in June 2010, Patiala, I organized Paath at Patiala and prayed for the child. My younger son and daughter-in-law lived about 1500 miles from our house in America. About four months passed. After moving to the United States, my wife and I thought of organizing another Sehaj Paath in October 2010. I prayed for the child with great humility and affection before the Guru Sahib. I was standing in the Ardas that I got the answer, "your Ardaas has been accepted." My wife was standing near me, I told her about it. She asked me to pray again even then. We started Paath with full devotion and feeling. A few days later my daughter-in-law told my wife that,"she was five-month pregnant. We have not told you because sometimes the fetus may abort." We recited Sehaj Paath and we realized that our prayer is accepted at Guru Ghar. This enhanced our devotion for our Guru. My wife and I have so far felt that both of our children are fully responsible and are well-established in their jobs.

My mind was completely convinced that what is

At the end of 2010 we came back to India after

distributing property between them.

From 2010 onwards - We reached India on December 10th. One of my friends, who is retired General, advised me to play golf. I learned golf and started playing. It was not difficult for us to spend time in Patiala. Patiala's wedding and other activities kept us busy. I took holy nectar (Amrit) in 2001 and my wife took it in 2002. My wife was already very spiritual. Spiritually she was ahead of me. There was a lot of ego in me since my childhood. Ego is very hard to kill. My honesty and job in the younger age made me egoist. When you boast of your virtue it becomes ego which is a vice.

Shahid Satwant Singh Kaleka

In 2012, my younger brother, Shaheed Satwant Singh Kaleka got martyred while savings the devotees at Oak-Creek Gurudwara Sahib (Milwaukie). Hundreds of well-wishers came to mourn at our home. I did not allow any relatives to cry on the sacrifice of my martyr brother. I told them not to cry on the martyrdom of martyrs. Martyrdoms are celebrated. Crying diminishes the value of martyrdom. Nearly 12 thousand people attended the Bhog ceremony at Patiala. A bhog ceremony was held at our native village, Dugaal, which was attended by four thousand people and the then Chief Minister of Punjab Mr. Parkash Singh Badal addressed the gathering. The village school in which Satwant had studied, is named after him. His photo is embellished with Sikh martyrs at the Sikh Museum, Amritsar.

In 2010, I completed my second MA. In 2013, I completed third M.A. in Sikh Studies. I got first division in third M.A. I had got second division in my other two M.As.

In 2014, I was preparing to enroll for Ph.D. that my body felt another shock. In February 2014, I was playing golf with one of my friends, I heard a voice saying, "we have to extend your life." I started thinking that I was well. What has happened to my health? I closed my eyes and asked who wanted to extend my life then I saw my own image in which I was worshiping bare headed after bathing. A few days later I was returning home after playing golf. I had a Honda City car, which I was driving. I saw a strange ugly man sitting on the back seat. He was wearing a green cap on his head and a mask on his nose. I looked at that person and soon I felt that his nose was like me. When I recognized the face, it disappeared. I understood that my age shall be extended though an operation and my face will be like that image after operation. I had been suffering from breath problem since December 2013. I often visited Dr. Sudhir Verma. His father was a colleague of mine and out of regards for me he never charged any fee. So, my wife and I decided to visit another doctor. On March 10, 2014, we visited Doctor Taneja. He did my ECG and Echo. Both of my reports were fine. When I complained to the doctor about breathing problem, he said that he did not even understand it. I asked him permission to play golf, and he allowed me to play golf. I went to play golf on March 11 and after playing five holes, I remembered my childhood friend Dr. Dang. I took appointment and met him at about eleven o'clock. Doctor Dang was a doctor of medicine, but he was a wise and experienced doctor. He said to me, "You are suffering from Angina which is only felt after exercising. He advised me to go to Fortis hospitals or some other good hospital. We went to Max Hospital, Mohali the next day i.e. on 12th March, where they did my ECG and angiography. Angiography reports revealed that three arteries were 99, 97, and 95% blocked. My wife asked doctors if we do not have surgery, what would be our future? The attending doctor said, "maybe he lives for ten years or maybe you can come back to our hospital today." We thought it was ok to get a bypass operation. We did not feel scared because God had already informed us. I was operated on 13th March 2014 and on 19th March I was discharged from the hospital.

A few days later I heard the voice, "Four". I told my wife that I will have four operations. My cancer surgery was done in March 2015 in the following year. I prayed to God, 'Oh Lord, you have given me a good home and parents in this life. I realized it now and then requested to give me some more time. The voice I heard in Punjabi in a few seconds was "eleven years". Two and a half years later, reminder came in English in a commanding feminine voice, saying 'eight and a half years'. Now I am working very hard. I am not scared, but it was encouraging to me that my father, Waheguru and Dhan Guru Nanak, are happy with me and remember me. I have been relieved of expectations. Now in the remaining time I have to remember the Lord and think about him. This is the only purpose of my life. I am quite satisfied with my accomplishments.

I pray to the readers that if a person like me can make spiritual progress by getting out of the all the worldly vices, then all of you can also achieve this goal. Do not waste time, take advantage of every breath and it is our moral obligation to earn it. My father Waheguru and Guru Nanak Ji have explained the purpose of life. Now my only aim is to explain the same to you. I am not a saint or a scholar but I

am a serious person who has made progress with hard labor and honesty. I have distributed most of the money between my sons. I will serve the society till my last breath. Now I have come to realize that every moment is very precious. I hesitate to meet and talk to negative people. It seems logical to spend time with people who want spiritual progress or who are already on that path. I want to do all this through contemplating, speaking and writing. The purpose of my life is to make you understand the purpose of your life. May God bless.

My Sorrows and Sins

Before a cadet is commissioned into the army, he is asked as to which Regiment/Corps he wants to join. We were trained at Officer Training Pune (O.T.S) among others by two of my father's ex-colleagues who served in Patiala State army with my father. One of them was Colonel Vishnu Sharma. Since he was an officer in the Gorkha Regiment, he wished me to join them. The other officer was Major Rajinder Singh Grewal from the Punjab Regiment, who advised me to join the Punjab Regiment. If one's father was a part of a certain army regiment, it's natural that the son would wish to join the same regiment. But I wasn't aware of the significance of this custom then. There was a rumour at that time that four Battalions of the 'J&K' Regiment, which was an infantry, would be sent to other countries. It so happened that every cadet of our Arjun company opted for the J&K Rifles. Only the lone Rajput boy, Karan Singh was allotted this regiment from our training company. The rest of us were allotted into regiments we didn't know anything about. I was allotted the Mahar Regiment. This was a regiment of the Harijans of Maharashtra. I felt that these people lacked Courage, Bravery and Valour during the war of 1965. I developed a dislike for them. I would often curse them in anger and it was a sin on my part. Forgiving a sin is God's deed, I can't say how this sin would be forgiven. Now that my mind has progressed spiritually, I realize that we all human beings are souls emanating from God, the father soul and are therefore brethren.

I was with the Military Police, Kalka from the mid of March 1967 to February 1970. That unit had two officers. Lt. Col. G.S. Kler, was the Commanding Officer and I was the Second-in-Command. During the summer of 1968 Lt. Col. G.S Kler proceeded on annual leave. The command of the unit came under me when he went on leave. Gopal Singh was a Naib Subedar. He was a brave Jat Sikh of the Karnal district of Haryana. Gopal Singh came to me during Colonel's absence and said, "Sir, I can teach you how to hunt." I had a .12 bore shot gun gifted by my father. This gun was Belgium made and my father had bought it 1938 from an English man, an army Captain also serving Patiala state army. It had two hammers outside. Thus, we took a Government Jeep and went to the forests of Nalagarh to hunt. Soon, It became a routine.

After completing two months of leave, the C.O rejoined. I took Gopal Singh to hunt in the jeep without Col's permission. Between Pinjore and Nalagarh the Jeep developed a snag and Gopal Singh was trying to set it right. Opening the bonnet, he was inspecting Jeep's engine. I was sitting on the front seat (co-passenger). I was inspecting my gun. One of its hammer was loose and I was trying to tighten it. One of the trigger accidently got pushed and it fired. I did not know that the gun was loaded. The bullet penetrated the air filter and hit Subedar Sahib's upper legs. A few pallets hit his testicles and some hit his upper thighs. He was a brave man. I was taking the IAS exam during those days. My life would have become complicated if he were admitted into the military hospital. The whole case could have implicated me in many ways and I could even land in

bigger trouble. On the one hand I could see my entry into IAS, on the other I could see myself in the Civil Jail. I am also a brave man and I decided that his life was more important. I wanted to seek medical treatment from the Military Hospital of Chandigarh for him. I was driving the Jeep and told him of my intention to take him to Command Hospital at Chandigarh. We were coming back to Kalka and were near Pinjore.

He requested me to halt. He started driving the Jeep and decided to get treatment from some doctor at Kalka. Reaching Pinjore, he turned the vehicle towards Kalka. At Kalka we explained the situation to a young doctor Captain Suri with whom I was quit friendly. Dr. asked me to bring some Chloroform but this drug wasn't available at Kalka, may be it being a small town then. Gopal Singh told us to just give him half a bottle of Whisky and start the operation. I realized that a government issued vehicle is not to be used for game. Ignoring my job in order to indulge in hunting was one of my sins. It is Subedar Gopal Singh's greatness that despite my fault, he joined the parade the next day. Col. Kler started reprimanding me in front of the unit. Gopal Singh came to my rescue and said, "Sir, he is our senior officer just like you are. You shouldn't rebuke him in front of us." Well, the situation came under control and Gopal Singh's health improved. I am indebted to him for defending me without caring for his own life or health.

During my job at the Excise and Tax Department I often took the obligation of utilizing business people's vehicles. I am guilty before God for this as well.

There was a roughness in my nature during service in the army. I think there were two reasons for this. I stayed alone at Patiala during my studies, away from my parents, for seven to eight years. Therefore, I was deprived of their love and influence and thus developed irritability in my personality. Secondly, I prided myself for being an M.A. as very few people pursued M.A. in those days.

My ego got a hit during my days in the army because of my failure in the IAS exams twice. I then spent 16 months on the village farm with my father. My ego got further deflated.

I had a good three years run being a professor. I spent one year at the Government College Tanda and two years at the Government College at Nabha. After much struggle I learned that pride and ego bring the downfall of a man. On the one hand I had pride over my bravery during the war of 1965, on the other I had the weight of my sin over abusing my juniors. I later realized that during the war of 1965, God protected me from death and that I should use my life for good deeds. Even though I only spent three years as a professor, I taught all my students with humility and treated them well considering them as my younger brothers and sisters. I have now realized the importance of humility over ego.

I was appointed as an E.T.O. in the year 1974 based on my performance in the Punjab Civil Services Examination. After being in enforcement for a time, I worked as an Assessing Authority and E.T.O. Excise at Ludhiana for three years. I fulfilled all my jobs with honesty and determination and happily fulfilled my responsibilities. I never shied away from offering tea to colleagues, traders and lawyers. I was financially weak but not emotionally weak and never felt poor. My wife was a reason for this

feeling. Her salary was not only helpful in our hard conditions, but she herself had great spirituality and wisdom. All our life we only kept a servant for a year or a half. I felt it my duty of offering tea by my own hands to the trader/houseguests. But the real turn in my life came with my second brush with death in the year 1987. The accident made me realize that I have done nothing but collected tax for the State until that moment in life. I turned to God and spiritualism. I took amrit in 2001 and my wife did the same the next year.

In the seventh stanza of the Japji Sahib, Guru Nanak Dev Ji writes that It is a sin when one neglects to utter the name of God and forgets being grateful to Him. This is the final stretch of my life. I must improve myself spiritually. I spend most of my time remembering God. I spend much less time on social and others matters.

My hobbies

I have had many interests since childhood. Gardening was one of my first hobbies. I loved colorful flowers and fruits. I think this hobby was mine only since nobody in my family was very fond of flowers except me. The household was big and the resources limited. There was another kid in my neighborhood who was fond of plants like me; Anupinder, my childhood friend who was one year younger than me and also one class junior in school.

I can never figure out the dry and dispassionate life, those people lead who do not have any interests or hobbies. I love all kind of plants. I find the fragrance of the jasmine flowers to be quite relaxing and pleasant. The form, fragrance and color of a rose have always fascinated me. My love for plants has not declined even after living for more than three fourth of a century, in fact it has only risen further. Watering, trimming, occasional fertilizing and making supports out of sticks is pretty much my daily routine for the hobby. I think of them as the first thing I do in the morning and the last thing I do in the evening. Spraying the dusty leaves refreshes me.

In 1974-75, my father divided his 37 acres land among all my brothers. 10 acres of land came to me. This 10 acres land was really just 5 acres since it was full of sand and the land was uneven. The one merit it had was that there was a 5 horse power tube well installed therein. I took this land which was equivalent to a 5 acres land because both I

and my wife earned and so we didn't have any financial dependence on the land. I thought that we would save money and use it to improve the land and plant a garden there.

I planted Eucalyptus plants surrounding the land in 1977. Eucalyptus was a trend in Punjab in those days. But these plants dried up in the summer. I took an expert in horticulture to show him my land the following year. He advised me to buy a land in either Jammu & Kashmir or Himachal Pradesh in order to fulfill my interest in gardening. Thus, in 1978 I sold the land for Rs. 60 thousand with my father's permission and bought 31 acres of land in Himachal with the help of my elder brother who was a Tehsildar in Himachal Pardesh State. My close friend, Bal Krishan Singla, also bought 25 acres land in the same lot.

In 1980, I and Bal Krishan Singla started jointly developing our 56 acre land into a garden. We named it 'Shivalik Orchard' as it was located in Shivalik range of Himalayas. The sole purpose of this land was to build a big garden. I planted close to ten thousand plants in this garden. By 1988 thousands of Eucalyptus trees were planted on outer boundary of the land as a wind breaker. Inside there was the garden of Pear, Litchi and Malta plants. This garden was a significant part of my life because of my immense love for plants. This garden was situated 281 kms away from Patiala. I didn't have any kind of vehicle for years. I used to make up borrowing vehicles from my relatives and friends. Every Friday I used to finish my government work, head out at 5 or 6 in the evening and reach my farm at around 10 or 11 at night. There was a river on the way which had to be crossed with the help of a ferry to reach the farm. On Sunday, I returned to Patiala at about 10 in the night after starting at 4 in the evening from the Orchard. These 10 years (1980-90) were happily spent. Travelling did not tire me. On Monday, I was back to office with a bang.

We used to think that we would spend all our time living in this farm land, roaming in this garden after retirement. We thought we would manage this garden and do Path-Pooja there.

We were forced to sell off this garden before moving to America. The garden was sold at a price much lower than its actual value. But selling it for cheap didn't hurt me as much as breaking off my hobby did. By the grace of God, we got a house at 2655 Okridge Road, Neenha, America in the year 2005. My age-old love for gardening was reignited as we moved into this house. This house had a 5 acre lawn and 6 acre pasture land. We bought a John Deer tractor with which I used to mow the lawn. A farmer naturally has an affinity with tractor rides but this particular tractor felt more like a jeep. We have 18 "islands" in this house which have various kinds of plants planted on them. The Hydrangea plant was the best of the bunch. This plant died in snow during the winters but is then reborn once spring comes. We only need to water and fertilize it during the summer from April to August. It comes in two colours; white and purple. I planted roses as well, but those didn't grow very well. Unfortunately, we do not have motiva, raat ki rani and jasmines there. The house has a few Apple and Pear trees. I fully indulged into my plants in this house until 2010. Even in the 500 sq.yrd. house at Patiala, I love my small garden.

Horse riding has been one of my interests since childhood. This hobby has been passed down to me. My great grandfather was a great rider. My grandfather was a good horse rider and a hunter. My father stood first in Tent Pagging in Patiala state sports in 1949.

I used to visit my Maternal relatives' home at village Bhaini Fatta to fulfill my horse riding interest. My relatives there had a liking towards horses and camels. In 1965 war after ceasefire on September 23, 1965 I borrowed a horse from a local farmer of Asal Uttar. I was at village Ratoke for few months as a platoon/company commander. I kept the horse at Ratoke and our battalion head quarter was at village Asal Uttar. I often went to attend meetings at Asal Uttar on horse. During meetings and mess parties, I tied the horse to a tree. Lt. (later Col.) K.K Sharma named me Chakwalian (lancers). Going forward in time, I encouraged my kids to take up horse riding when I got them admitted in the Yadvindra Public School, Patiala. Horse riding is very good for one's physical strength.

My third hobby is to wear clean clothes. This habit only saw a rise during my army days. Army folks always wear clean and proper clothes. I had three sets of uniforms while in the army. I used to wear one of them, the second one would be on the hanger and third one would be with the washer man. I never wore faded out uniforms. As soon as the colour of my uniform started to fade, I passed it on to another soldier of a physique similar to my own. The soldier would get it coloured and managed with it for a long time.

This passion stayed strong even after leaving the army and becoming a professor. The students would often compliment my attire. It stayed strong even after my time at

the Excise and tax department and living for such a long time in America. People in America rarely dress up in formal suits and tie but I often dressed as such. I liked wearing clean and matching clothes. I wear matching clothes even when I go for walks.

Walking is my fourth hobby. My childhood home was in an area very close to the Yadvindra Public School, located in the stadium covering about 20 acre of land. I used to go on walks there every morning and evening as I grew up. During my studies for B.A. and M.A. I would study and prepare for exams in the stadium. There used to be roses planted in one corner of the Stadium. Studying while sitting on a bench near the roses gave me joy. My habit of walking is responsible for my good health throughout my life. I don't neglect going on a walk even though I am surrounded by several ailments now.

My fifth hobby is talking. I had a heart operation in 2014. I was aware of every doctor, nurse and patients in the room at that time. I used to constantly chat around with them. My operation underwent on 13 march 2014. One day I was taken out of the I.C.U. and into a room, where we were four patients. One of them was the bhai ji of the Gurudwara Sahib. He was half my age but had a heavy boddy. I joked, "Bhai Sahib, do you give the Kadah Prasad to the devotees or do you consume it yourself?" There was a woman from Punjab-Himachal border who complained about her husband's habit of smoking the hookah. She wondered if that was the reason behind her heart problems. The mind given to me by God has helped me think smart and think of the welfare of others since childhood. I would encourage the chachas and tayas (Uncles) in my village who were

illiterate to study. Once a chacha commented, "What's the use in studying now when I am already 35?" This nature of mine made me well loved everywhere all my life. Since childhood, there were only one sibling in our household who was less talkative. I loved to indulge in mimicry. There was a Gurudwara devotee group in my neighborhood. People used to ask me to mimic the Bhai Ji. At college, my class fellows often asked me to mimic Dr. Goverdhan Lal Bakshi, our Principal during the years 1960-62.

My sixth passion, studying and teaching, evolved during my pursuit of M.A. I wanted to pursue masters in English. I scored 74 marks in English in B.A. which was considered very good at the time. I even attended the English lectures in M.A. One day, Prof Kuldeep Singh, the head of department, recommended close to 30 books to be read during the summer vacations. Our financial position was not good at the time. I had promised my father that with minimum expense I will finish my M.A. I joined M.A. in Political Science. My devotion for God started in 1987. My soul is now a tree full of flowers and fruits representing the love for God. Other passions work in conjunction to this. My biggest passion right now, which is the basis for my life, is my devotion to God and Guru. I am deep in that love always.

My interest for learning did not deteriorate with my age. In 2008, I had arrived in America after taking my exams for MA in India that Bhai Nazar Singh from Milwaukee came to the Gurudwara Sahib at Appleton city to conduct a Kirtan. I took out 100 dollars out of my pocket and gave it to him. He said, "What is it for?" to which I replied, "Bhai Sahib, you must teach me to play Harmonium." He looked at my face for some time. A natural reaction, I was a 65 years

old man with a white beard. I said, "Don't look at my white beard, look at my feelings. I have no intention to compete with Bhai Harbans Singh Jagadhri wale or Lata Mangeshkar. With my learning the instrument, I only want to learn it for myself and sing the Baani." He was impressed and started teaching me.

It was around April-May of 2010 that I took the exam for MA final in religious Studies at Patiala. My childhood friend General Gurjeet Singh Sidhu encouraged me to play golf and even arranged an instructor for me. The instructor was around one third of my age. His name was Gurinder Singh. On the very first day I told my instructor, "Sir I am a very good student. You can tell me anything. Don't have any kind of hesitation." He taught me golf in almost six months.

Now that I am learning to write I constantly interact with people younger than me. I am learning as a proper student. My current teacher Prof Gurmeet Singh Sidhu (Punjabi University) is 25 years younger to me. I am passionate about learning and thus he is my teacher and I am his student.

Turning toward spirituality occurred in 1987 when I met with a nearly fatal accident. It was at this moment in life that I turned to spirituality under the influence of some Godly personalities and the grace of God and Guru. I got baptized in 2001. After retiring from business in 2008 I did two M.A. in Divinity and started reading books on divinity.

I also loved eating and cooking. I was a member of the Maharani Club. I was voted the president of the club in 2001. I was baptized with the Amrit during the Vaisakhi of 2001 and abandoned this hobby.

I loved singing the Gurbani since childhood. I started

playing the instrument while living in America at the age of 65. I sing for the upliftment of my soul. Now that I am over 78 years age I have bought an Ektara. I shall say "Waheguru" by myself and listen it myself.

I started playing golf at the age of 68. I became good at the sport in two years. Illness has brought it to a pause for the time being but I will play it whenever I get the chance. There is a golf course close to the military cantonment in Patiala. I am a member of this course being a former soldier. I not only get to breathe in open air in the golf course, but it also makes me nostalgic about my training days in Poona, when we used to run around in shorts. Often a soldier would salute me thinking I was a soldier. There are benches around where we would often sit down to relax and remember God.

A heart operation in 2014, then an operation for cancer in the march of 2015, operation for hernia in 2015 and another operation for cancer in 2016 occurred in a row. I was rid of the fear and sufferings of all my operations by June 2017. My passion for learning was reignited. I wanted to enroll for Ph.D. I met the head of Religious research at Punjabi University, Dr Gurmeet Singh Sidhu in the month of June. He encouraged me greatly saying that I can get a Ph.D. easily. He told me to write about the Sikh Identity. I asked for a year of time. I want to write about everything I can remember about my life. I would appear before him the next year. I hope I would be able to write about spiritual things as soon as I am done writing my life story, about America and about my younger brother Satwant Singh Kaleka (Martyr) until June or July 2019. I cannot imagine the sorrowful days and the rough nights of people without hobbies. I have received all of that by the grace of God. Where people of my age and my ailments are spending their days on a chair or in the bed, I am living a life full of passions. I am in Chardikala. We have many relatives and friends in Patiala. I have met some of my friends through my grandfather and father. Some of them were made during my lifetime. I fully support them in their hardships. I love my friends and they love and respect me. My two sons and their families are a sport to me psychologically and spiritually.

Now I consider it a waste of time to do anything outside of God and Guru. My only ideal in life is to improve my spiritual life until the last breath of my life.

Springtime with Friends

I have highly valued friendship and relationship since my childhood. I have noticed during my long time spent in society that people often confuse acquaintance with friendship. Friendship is based on love, respect and trust. Trust is an important pillar of friendship which keeps it stable and progressive.

There are no formalities in friendship. There is no hesitation either. Friendship means support under all circumstances, good or bad. I have been fortunate enough that God has always graced me with good friends. None of my friends have ever betrayed me, rather they have always supported me like pillars. I test a person for years before making him a friend. It's only after that I move forward.

It is said in England that an Englishman offers his hand in friendship with great reluctance; but when he does, the bond lasts for generations. I can say that there are three friends with whom I have such a bond.

Friendship means equality. We can learn this from the tale of Lord Krishna and Sudama. Lord Krishna was a king while Sudama was a poor Brahmin. A person who takes a friend's financial status into account when making friends can never be a true friend. A good friend is one who supports you at every step of the way. A friend helps you in life and always prays for your betterment. A good friend stands beside you even in the darkest hours of your life.

Friends don't laugh at you in your time of need,

rather they start thinking seriously of solutions to get you out of your desperate situation. Even relationship by marriage or by blood is only successful if there is an element of friendship in it. We often see in life that siblings go to court against each other for division of land and other properties and wouldn't see eye to eye. Such a situation arises only if there is no friendship within the relationship. Hence the only successful relationship is one in which friendship has a significant place.

Before I start listing out my friends, I would like to present an excerpt from my younger brother Dr. Jagjit Singh Kaleka's book of poems, "Raab, Ghar te Guwandi". (God, Home and the Neighborhood)
Friendship

ਦੋਸਤੀ ਉਹ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਰੂਹ ਦੀ ਉਡਾਨ ਹੈ ਦੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਵੰਡਣਾ ਸੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਛੱਡਣਾ ਇਹ ੳਹ ਪਹੀਆ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਧਰਾ ਸੱਚ ਹੈ ਜੱਕਾ ਭਾਈਜਾਰਾ ਤੇ ਆਪੇ ਦਾ ਬਲੀਦਾਨ ਹੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਦੋਸਤ ਕੋਈ ਬੋਤਲ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਅਧੀਆ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਵੇਖਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ੳਸ ਵਿਚ ਕੀ ਵਧੀਆ ਹੈ ਕਝ ਦੋਸਤ ਮਿੱਠੇ ਤੇ ਨਮਕੀਨ ਨੇ ਕਝ ਬਲਵਾਨ , ਕਝ ਦੌਲਤਵੰਦ ਤੇ ਕਝ ਅਕਲ ਦੇ ਮਹੀਨ ਨੇ

ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਔਖਾ ਹੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਦਾ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਮੋਹ ਦਾ ਵਧਾਉਣਾ ਫਿਰ ਦੇਣੀ ਉਹਦੀ ਘਾਲਣਾ ਕੋਇਲ ਦੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਾਗਾਂ ਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਾਲਣਾ ਲਹ ਦਾ ਹੈ ਸਕਣਾ ਤੇ ਹੱਡਾਂ ਦਾ ਬਾਲਣਾ ਬਿਰਹੋ ਦੀ ਤਪਸ! 'ਚ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਹੈ ਸਾਤਨਾ ਮੁੱਕਦੀ ਹੈ ਗੱਲ ਇਕੋ ਇਹ ਮਨ ਦਾ ਹੈ ਮਾਰਨਾ ਦੋਸਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਨਜ਼ਮ ਮੈਂ ਜੋ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਰਿਹਾ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਹੱਥ ਜੋਤ ਇਕ ਅਰਜ ਮੈਂ ਇਹ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਫੱਲ ਪੰਖੜੀ ਤੇ ਬਰਸੀ ਹੋਈ ਤਰੇਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਕਰਜ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਰਜ ਨਹੀਂ ਤੇ ਫਰਜ਼ ਭੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਸ ਇਕ ਰੂਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਮੇਲ ਹੈ।

Anupinder Singh Dhillon was my first friend I made as a child. He was one year younger to me in age and also my junior in B.N. Khalsa School by one class. He lived right across our place near Top Khana Gate. This family moved from their village named "Khadak Singh Wala" of Mansa district. Their old village used to be Dhilwan. Anup's great grandfather was a soldier in the Bikaner army and slowly rose to the rank of General. He had many achievements in battles. The Raja of Bikaner wanted to give Khadak Singh

two villages in Rajasthan as a gift for good work. S. Khadak Singh instead only wished to get one village in his own region of Mansa. The Raja of Bikaner requested the Maharaja of Patiala to give Khadak Singh one village in the Mansa region. Accepting the request, Maharaja Patiala gave Khadak Singh about 5000 Bighas land close to Mansa. The village was founded on the said land and it was named "Khadak Singh Wala". General Khadak Singh had a son. The son married four wives. The fourth and the youngest wife wished to reside in Patiala. So, a house was bought at Topkhana Patiala. Besides this house, 300 Bighas of land was purchased at Mehmadpur (behind University) for game. Thus, this family came to Patiala by 1951. Anoop's father S. Shivcharan Singh was the youngest son of his father from his fourth wife.

Anup had two elder brothers. Surjeet Singh was the eldest. Sarupinder Singh was middle of the two. Since Anup's mother and my mother had the same sub- caste (Sidhu) I addressed her as Maasi ji and Anup's father as Masad ji. Anup was not very keen about studying. Anup's father had a total of 1000 Bighas of land besides his house at Patiala. Anup was quite proud of this land. Anup did not pay much attention to his studies but played chess since his childhood. His father moved between village Khadak Singh wala and Patiala. The land near Punjabi University, Patiala was in village Mehamdpur. The father managed this land from Patiala.

Anup used to wake up at half past eight in the morning. There used to be Babu Ram's Milk shop at Topkhana Chowk. He sold milk while sitting on a platform called 'Chauntra'. Anup would visit the shop while wearing

a muffler and played chess with Babu Ram. Being a teenager, Anup would just stand on the road while Babu Ram would be sitting on the platform (Chauntra) in his shop. Someone was always be playing Chess with Babu Ram the whole day.

I joined F.A. in Mohindra College in 1956. Anup too joined the college the next year. Anup was very handsome and tied his turban beautifully. He made the girls glance at him. His parents bought him a Royal Enfield Motorcycle at an early age. This led to his increased activity. I cleared M.A. in 1963 and returned from the army in 1970. The same year Anup completed his M.A. in Economics in the third division. He spent many years failing in F.A. and B.A. classes.

Anup was fond of watching English films. I started earning at an early age and he would ask for some money to watch some English films. My earning combined with my saving habit resulted in my life being stable As a school boy Anup would get annoyed with me sometimes and would stop talking to me for days together. I felt its pain in those days as he was my only friend then and I loved him more than he loved me, I now feel.

Anup got engaged to a doctor girl in 1970. The girl's father was a Senior Officer in the Punjab police. Anup asked for my advice. I advised him to go ahead. I also advised him to go to U.S.A and do Ph.D. in Economics. He went to America in 1971. India's M.A. wasn't recognized in America. Our M.A. was of 16 years in those days while it was of 17 years in America. He needed to do one more year in order to balance it out. He studied for some 3 months. He discontinued the studies and became a taxi driver. After six months he got a haircut and started hanging out with

American girls. After a year or two he started thinking about marrying a girl named Jinny. The doctor girl's family over here in India started to get worried. When Anup's parents informed the girls's folks about them breaking off the engagement, the girl's father died of a heart attack.

I went to America in 1986 to conduct a survey before moving to U.S.A. When I moved to America with my family permanently in 1992, I often met Anup in Milwaukee city. His wife Jinny, was a kind lady but she was physically weak. Anup suffered from Parkinson's disease and the disease took his life in 2003. He had no kids. His elder brother Sarupinder living in India had committed suicide in 2000 and the eldest brother Surjit passed away in America. After Anup's death, his wife stopped picking up our calls. Thus, my connection with Anup was completely broken after his death. His eldest brother lived in U.S.A, was married, divorced and died there in a poor condition.

Bal Krishan Singla: In 1956, Lala Roshan Lal's family moved to Patiala from Samana. Lala Roshan Lal's family was often called the "Gajewaasia Family" since they belonged to village Gajewas. In 1956, his father Lala Roshan Lal started a commission agent business in Patiala. This family has been in this business for generations at Samana and has been known for their honesty and goodwill. I still remember the first day at college when Bal Krishan Singla wore a white Kurta Pajama and we met each other warmly. He had a gift for Management. His financial status was much better than mine. There was another friend who came from Samana. His name was Shanti Sarup Mehta. He used to daily commute between Patiala and Samana. His father was a chemist at Samana.

After some time, Baldev Kabarwal who moved from Ropar became our friend. His father was a retired Subedar. His elder brother was an officer in the language department, who was allotted a Government house close to the railway station, Patiala.

Bal Krishan's speech has been friendly. We couldn't find even one fault in each other since 1956. We developed a Garden at Himachal from 1980 to 1992 jointly. I used to manage the farm and keep the accounts. After managing the farm for three years, once I visited Bal Krishan at his shop. I took the ledger with me. He opened the account book and he closed it immediately. He proceeded to say, "I have looked at the transactions, you don't cheat anyone. How could you be cheating me." He returned the account books instantly.

Once, I stayed in the farm for a month to look after it and didn't record expenses saying, "we don't need to keep accounts where there is so much love between us." Bal Krishan replied, "Accounts help maintain the love." People who do not maintain accounts, ultimately end up fighting. If there is some loss in business, the parties would blame each other. Thus, it's important to keep accounts. Since Bal Krishan was financially richer than me, his investment in the farm was higher. On sale of garden, I made the account and gave him his share. Friendship moves on to next generation if there is love among our wives and children.

Bal Krishan's wife Shalu was my colleague at the Government College when I was an Asst. Prof. She taught Zoology while I taught Political Science. One of Bal Krishan's relatives saw her for marriage, but he rejected her. The person had studied in America. He told about this girl to Bal

Krishan who told about it to me. Shalu was a tall woman. I talked about her to Bal Krishan with patience. I told him that the girl was Gold. Being tall was a positive quality. The two got married in 1974. The couple had two sonsThe elder was named Lalit and the younger was named Litesh. The two studied with my sons at YPS, Patiala.

Bal Krishan's father used to call me "kaka" and I used to call him "Pita ji" (respected father). Bal Krishan's elder brother Sant Ram was the political secretary to Giani Zail Singh (then C.M. Punjab) and later on an MLA from Samana and MP at Patiala. Sant Ram respected me and my honesty a lot. Sant ram's son Vijayinder Singla worked as an MP at Sangrur and is now a Cabinet rank Minister in the Punjab government. After the passing away of Bal Krishan's father I attended his funeral at Haridwar.

About two decades ago Bal Krishan Singla and all of his family moved to Chandigarh area from Patiala for pursuing business in Jewelry. The family currently resides at Panchkula. Although we don't meet a lot nowadays, we make sure to meet whenever Bal Krishan comes to Patiala. I still feel sad about his having left Patiala. May God grace everyone with a friend like Bal Krishan. Prominent people of Patiala look at my 66 years old friendship with him with great respect.

While studying for MA I found two friends in Jagpal Singh Tiwana and Somnath Mittal. Jagpal Singh Tiwana had moved to Canada about 50 years ago. He came to visit us in America and stayed with our family over for a week. Somnath is a Jeweler in Patiala. Somnath's father Sri Jamunadas and his elder brother were acquainted with me and my father.

During my army days from 1965 to 1966, Charandas Kaint, Baldev Singh and Dalbir Singh became my good friends. Professor Gulzar Singh and Professor Lal Chand became good friends during my days as a professor at govt. college. Tanda Lal Chand Sharma died thirty years ago. Gulzar Singh retired as Principal, resides at Chandigarh area. While at the Government College, Nabha I made close friends with Professor Upinder Singh and Professor Sadana.

There are four stages of friendship. 1. Acquaintance, 2. friendship, 3. The years long tests of friendship and 4. Camaraderie.

I have heard officers say that such and such officer or contractor is a good friend of mine. I replied, "Bhai sahib, the relationship is purely professional. He wants a job done and you are to do the job. The alliance remains as long as you are in this service." I still remember how I worked as AETC Patiala district for many years and later joined as DETC Appeals Ferozepur division at Bathinda. Although DETC Appeals was a higher position and I gained it after much hard work and litigation. The official gardener of A.E.T.C Patiala refused to attend to my house at Lal Bagh after my transfer from AETC Patiala. My mind was very clear about these things. I used to say that this is just a transfer, such acquaintances would fall even shorter as I would eventually retire.

With the declaration of Emergency during 1976-77, the plot prices fell down in Patiala. A plot usually sold for Seventy rupees per yard came to be sold for 50 rupees per square yard. We had saved Rs. 8200. The plot was priced at 14000 Rupees. I borrowed Seven Thousand rupees from my father-in-law. My wife said to me, "test whomsoever you

want, our job is done." I asked my college friend Baldev Singh for seven thousand rupees for six months for "hello testing". Although he had more savings than me, he refused. One can see who stands with you in time of crisis. Similarly I approached a close lady relative, who was quite wealthy. She answered, "Kaka, there is no money at hand as it's lying in fixed deposit." Friendship is like a piece of gold. The nature of friendship is revealed in the time of crisis, similar to how gold comes out clean in fire. The real test of friendship is how much a friend is willing to share happiness as well as sorrow.

During my unemployment days post-army (1970-71), I was introduced to two new friends by Anupinder. One was named Balrajinder Grewal and the other was named Harjeet Singh Grewal. Harjit's father was Major Hardial Singh who was a friend of my father. Harjeet's grandfather General Jaswant Singh (Rangar) was a well-known officer in Patiala. This family had a big house near Sunami gate. After 1970, the family moved to their village Ajnali near Gobindgarh and the house at Patiala remained locked. It is during 1982 that I was at AETC and we needed accommodation for our office. I requested Harjeet for a place telling him that we needed a place. He started thinking about me immediately. He thought that I needed the house for myself. This is the sign of good friendship.

Harjeet Singh Grewal had a Mercedes car. My elder son had a wish to ride in this car for his wedding in 2000. Harjeet lent me his car along with a driver and instructed the driver not to take a penny from me. I had a hard time making the driver accept a sum of Rs 3100 as shagan.

It was my younger son Gurjeet's wedding two years

later. The ceremony was to be conducted in a few days. My wife, my younger son I arrived in India for a mere two weeks. I was unable to hand out Harjeet his wedding invitation personally so I had to send it through a driver. This got Harjeet worried immediately and he started wondering "why Kaleka Saheb didn't come himself." But there are no grievances in friendship as it is based on wisdom and understanding. Some other relative might have developed a grudge. But that's the difference between friendship and kinship.

We meet many people in our lives, mistaking most of them for friends. But those people tend to have selfish tendencies. A person makes some three or four true friends in his life. My friend IDS Garewal who was the vice principal of YPS was a wise man. He left this world 25 years ago. One day a discussion about the number of friends came up, he said, "if you can count the number of friends you have on your fingers, you are a lucky man." I am often reminded of that discussion and I can feel the depth of this statement.

During my life of service, I found one businessman friend. He name was S. Iqbal Singh Sethi. He died at an early age in 1994. He was brought into the liquor business by S. Sarabjeet Singh, then D.E.T.C. Patiala division, (who later became IAS and eventually a DC at Amritsar). I was an AETC at Patiala during 1982-83. Sarabjit Introduced S Iqbal Singh to me and requested me to protect him. S Iqbal Singh respected me and treated me like an elder brother throughout his life. When I was about to leave for America for five years (1993-98) he invited us to dinner at his place. He started crying loudly saying, "I haven't studied a lot, if I had studied upto ten or twelve classes I could have

accompanied my big brother to America and worked there." While I was in America, Iqbal often asked me if he could help us in dollars. I thanked him. I didn't seek his help and instead sold all my property in India to make a living in America. Friendship is unselfish. A person who misuses his frindship can never be a true friend.

A friend is aware of your situations better than you. During 1983-84, I was thinking to approach the High Court in order to get Military seniority. Bal Singla had a discussion with me on the matter two days ago at a marriage where we had met. He asked me about the expenses. I told him that I plan on getting in contact with the lawyer Rameshwar Sharma. He would do the job for four thousand rupees. The next day, without asking me, he gave Rs.4000 to my steno Vakil Chand in my office. This is the pain of friendship. Ofcourse I returned the money later on.

In my old age, I have two friends in Patiala, I have known them for years now. One of them is S. Manmohan Singh Ghuman. He is in his 94th year. He had been a clean officer who started his carrier as an Excise Inspector in 1954 and retired as a Joint Commissioner in 1988. His grandfather General Gurdit Singh had been the Prime Minister in the state of Patiala and had the title of "Raja". Another friend is S Balarajinder Singh Garewal whom I have known since 1968. He joined our department as an Inspector and retired as an ETO. Now I spend most of my time with them and their families in Patiala. The two were born in January just like me. I was born on 13 January, Balarajinder nine days later on 22 January and S Manmohan Singh on 31 January. Our three families celebrate the birthdays together.

In the world of writing as I have entered in 2017, my new friends are much younger. Prof. Gurmit Singh Sidhu (Punjabi University, Patiala) and Dr. Harnek Singh Dhot of Language Department. who are guiding me and also goading me to write are about 25 years younger than me. Prof Avtar Singh Dhaliwal is a truthful guide. Prof. Chatar Singh my friend of over 30 years is of great help. Prof Mohinder Singh Salh (Political Science) also gives positive ideas that help me in going forward. Prof. Tarika Sandhu about half my age also helps me in latest trend in writing. S. Shiv Dular Singh Dhillon I.A.S. former D.C. Amritsar also gives me timely inspiration. Inspiration is not one time affair. "You need it on regular basis" says another friend. S. Rajeshwar Singh Harika (a.k.a Laali Ji) now settled in Delhi. He is also 25 years my junior in age. His grandfather Gen. Gurdial Singh Harika was P.M. of Patiala state during partition days. Gen. Harika and my grandfather S. Kapoor Singh were very good friends.

Another family friend is S. Gursharan Singh Jeji I.P.S. (Retd.) whose father S.Harchand Singh Jeji was a close friend of my grandfather. S. Harchand Singh used to address my grandfather as Mama Ji (respected maternal uncle). S. Gursharan Singh Jeji address me as 'Chotta veer' (younger brother) so affectionately and his presence reminds me of this familial friendship spread over 125 years. HIs elder son Ravi clicks with me well. Ravi's wife Manjit, hailing from S. Dalla's family of Sabo Talwandi is a likeable person. His younger son Dr. Amrit is a Psychiatrist in Birmingham area of U.K. Amrit is also a seeker of truth and is very divine.

My mind has started to shift from worldly matters to spiritualism. I had a clear vision of Guru Nanak Dev Ji in the

year 2008. I have two more friends added in the list of true friends. These two are Guru Nanak Dev Ji and God. These are the friends who accompany us both in this life and afterlife. These are not only my friends but also my comrades. My love for Guru Nanak Dev Ji and God is not one-sided but reciprocal. Life is meaningless without such good friends. As the saying goes, "yaraan naal baharan" (Springtime with Friends).

My Rivals

I was a good and humble student at school and college level and was very humorous. I had lived at my home in Patiala almost alone for eight years starting out in my 9th standard and ending at MA. My parents and siblings resided at our native village Dugal. I joined the army with a feeling of patriotism. I considered it my duty to fight as an infantry officer. Infantry is right on the front in face of the enemy. Infantry is often called the queen of battle. I don't know about the 'Queen' remark but the job definitely had been very risky.

I could have joined Army Education Corps based on my educational qualification. For me, army was not a job but a service of the motherland. My one year at Mahar Regimental Center, Sagar went off well starting from May 1964. In March-April 1965 I was at my village Dugal enjoying annual leave with my parents and siblings that I received my transfer order from Mahar Regimental Centre Sagar (M.P) to 2nd Mahar battalion. In May 1965, I joined 2 Mahar at the village Jalipa near Barmer in Rajasthan. At that time Lt. Col. K.S. Bakshi was the battalion commander of the 2nd Mahar. He was a pleasant person. I was appointed a platoon commander in the Delta Company. Delta Company Commander was a Delhi native, Major Kulwinder Singh. Major Kulwinder Singh was commissioned into the army through NDA. Lt. Arun Verma the adjutant was the son of an IAS officer from Madhya Pradesh and he was commissioned through NDA as well. An Adjutant was Commanding Officer's staff officer. He helped the commanding officer with his correspondence and acted like the right-hand man of the commanding officer. He was a link between commanding officer and the other officers of the battalion.

In those days, NDA commissioned officers and Emergency commissioned officers were differentiated. One could say that the NDA commissioned officers were considered number one. The direct commissioned officers were considered next to them and the emergency commissioned officers were considered still lower. In a few days, a few emergency officers of the second battalion became my good friends. These were Baldev Singh, Charandas Kaint and Dalbir Singh. We all the four stayed together and laughed a lot. One day while eating in the mess, the fork fell from my hand. Lt. Verma called me to his office next day and started snubbing me. I didn't have much humility then. This was due to three reasons. First, I hadn't yet evolved spiritually. Second, I was away from my parents for so long that I missed their learning, care and love. Third, I only went into the army for a while for my country's service. I was proud about having passed MA. Being an M.A. was considered a big deal at that time. The fact that both my father and grandfather were officers also gave me confidence bordering on ego. The problem was that there was a clash of Pride. He had the pride of being an NDA commissioned and his father being an IAS. I joined the army out of patriotism and didn't have the need for the job of army. Arun Verma only expected me to ask for forgiveness naturally. But we were both quite young. Such persons tend to be courageous. The issue flared up so much that one day I told him that Subalterns (Second lieutenant, lieutenant and captain) do not salute each other. Arun Verma said, "How do you know that?" to which I replied, "My grandfather was commissioned in 1909 and my father in 1928. This is the reason I have knowledge about these things." One day I told him that he was only a matriculate and even to become a clerk one needed to have some speed in typing. Whereas I could become a school lecturer if not a college lecturer with my education. The gap increased so much that he got me transferred from the Delta Company to the Administrative Company. We became opponents for no real reason, just ego.

Maj. Vikas Sood quarreled with me during the war of September 1965 in regards to exchange of some maps. The war ended on 23 September 1965. After the cease fire he was appointed the commander of the Delta Company. I had to work under his command. In a few months time, as we were allotted a peace station and the battalion moved to Ambala cantonment in March 1966. Major Sood was promoted Lt. Col. and became battalion commander of 2 Mahar. Lt. Col. K.S. Bakshi was posted to Army head quarter. Major T.R.K. Pattam was senior to Major Sood. Because of his supersession, he was posted out on request. In order to set our relationship right, Lt. Col. Sood treated me with whiskey at his home while at Ambala. Our relationship improved again.

While the 2 Mahar was in Ambala cantonment, we were part of Division level exercise at Nahan (H.P.) etc. Col. Sood was on leave and Major Das Gupta was officiating as the commanding officer. Although he was married, Das Gupta lived alone due to some personal reasons. He drank a

lot. One evening, in order to give him company, a few officers and I sat with him in the mess and kept drinking till midnight. It was the orderly's duty to wake me up in the morning. It so happened that my aide Dara Singh overslept and so couldn't wake me up. A messenger soon arrived and told me that Major Das Gupta was conducting inspection of my company and I was to report immediately. I dressed up as quickly as possible. On reaching the company position, I saluted the major. I explained him the reason behind my late arrival and apologized. Major Das Gupta said, "Your punishment is to dig a trench in front of your company". I replied, "this is not possible. The company which I prevented from fleeing; I can't do something of this sort in front of the same people." Das Gupta stayed silent on hearing my reaction but naturally was not happy at my reaction. As I moved to Nagaland along with our battalion in January 1967. Colonel Vikas Sood, Major Das Gupta and Captain Arun Verma was a natural trio against me.

The whole battalion reached Nagaland in January 1967. The battalion received the location of an airborne company. No company commander was prepared to command the airborne company. Since I was a brave and a free man, I took the responsibility as soon as it was offered. This company was provided pulses, rice and meat through air dropping. Due to bad weather conditions, the troops were issued Rum. I advised the troops that drinking alcohol frequently was not good for their health. I permitted the Jawans to take three bottles of rum instead of one when they left on annual leave since it was their own ration. Lt. Col. Sood caught wind of it and demanded three hundred bottles from me. I refused on the spot. I said, "Sir, the rum is

the property of the Jawans. I haven't taken even a single drop." A few days later Brigadier commander fixed inspection of my company. Brigadier Sukhpal Singh and Col. Sood visited my company for the said purpose. Brigadier sahib applauded my administration. He said, "Mariani Rear Headquarters has trouble with discipline. They need a good officer there. Why don't you send him there?" In accordance with the Brigadier's orders I was sent to Mariani.

One day I was travelling from Mariani to Jurhat. The tire of the jeep got punctured on the way. We didn't have a spare tire. The area was dangerous. I told the driver to keep driving. When we reached Mariani, the tire was completely torn apart. I thought I would just get a tire from some Kabari shop and get it fitted in the jeep. At the time I did not know that every army tire had a specific number. An enquiry was called against me. I was ordered to pay Rs. 250 for the tire, which was deducted from my pay. The enquiry was headed by Major PK Das Gupta our 2IC. Even in this incident I didn't ask for forgiveness, which I should have. He would have become milder. In fact, I asked him to take action. Naturally, the report was made against me.

Anyway, with the help of Colonel Bakshi, who had an important assignment in Army headquarters, I got out of that unit and joined the military police unit at Kalka. Lieutenant Arun Verma was later on transferred to RAW where he died due to tongue cancer. Colonel Sood became commander of six Mahar battalion and got caught in a mine blast during the war of December 1971. He died of pneumonia in the hospital. He remembered me before dying and sent a Jawan to me at Tanda. He probably wanted

to meet me and apologize. At that time, I was a professor at the government college Tanda. Major PK Das Gupta later became Brigadier but was retired under unpleasant circumstances.

After 16 months of unemployment, I got the job of Asst. Prof at Government college and served for three years at Govt colleges at Tanda and later on Nabha. My time as a professor was a pleasant one. I had no issue with anyone in the entire tenure. I taught the students as if they were my little brothers and sisters.

During my time at the excise and tax department, some rival factions were formed because of my honesty. They were not my enemies but people with different perspectives. Hence our paths were separate. I supported the honest officers and punished the dishonest ones. I issued four "Adverse Entries" during my career and got a bad mouthing ETO transferred.

Honesty has its own distinct fragrance. It can result in popularity. The officers or workers who are not honest in the department tend to feel jealous of you. They want to have their stable income but on top of it they want popularity. But it doesn't happen. Hence, they become rivals. Being honest, I was entrusted to conduct a number of enquiries. Sometime those involved were officers of my own rank. I reported against them without any hesitation.

Some rivals were made due to military seniority. I acted like a crusader and fought for military seniority at the level of Punjab and Haryana High Court and the Supreme Court of India. Although the other officers also got benefits of army seniority but I had to face my troubles alone. For the other former soldiers, I became the precedent and they

all got promoted.

Some rivals were formed due to my name coming up in the IAS notification. But now I feel that obstacles in my non-notification for the IAS was a blessing from God.

Now that I have evolved a lot on a spiritual level, I have realized that our biggest enemies reside inside us. They are lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride. Now that my body has turned 80, all the foes have slowed down. But three little thieves still cling to this aged body. These are Hope, Craving and Worry. Now I don't want to beat down my enemies since my objectives are of a higher level now. I by forgiveness am cleared of all rivals. Even now there are individuals who speak ill but I forgive them. I pray to God for removing their ignorance and may He bless them with wisdom. Now I defeat my enemies through the blessings of Guru Ji and God. Now I believe in the existence of God completely. My mind does not waver even for a second. Whenever a person bad mouths me, I simply say Gods' name four times and get over the tension. I pray to God and Guru Ji at every moment. This is a civilized and effective way to fight the enemies. Reading soulful books give me serenity and I fight evil individuals by becoming a God's man. In order to combat I must hold on to humility. We can make enemies even being humble too since perspectives and objectives can differ among individuals. At a young age, I faced the enemy alone. Now my power to face the enemy has increased manifold as I have the support of my dear God and Guru Ji. Additionally, I now feel if there is some injustice in the world, the God (Almighty) is there to rectify since his justice system is perfect.

Administrative Qualities

Administration, which is also called management, starts as soon as a person is born and keeps on happening until after one's death. Let's consider the birth of a baby for example. First of all, we need clothes and medical care for him/her. Starting with the care for the baby and his mother until the person breathes his last breath, the process of administration keeps on going. The first thing that happens when a person dies is the process of administration and that includes deciding on the process of his funeral and the rituals that need to be conducted and the functions afterwards.

A wise person knows how to conduct oneself in life, marriage, job or livelihood and thus lives one's life as a successful person. He conducts his education, job or business in a good manner. He behaves well with his relatives, friends and neighbors and acts like an important member of the society. Marriage adds more needs to the process of settlement, like dealing with the new relatives. Having made wise administration in regards to the difficulties in society an individual manages the working of his family perfectly. Good parents train their children to make them wise and responsible. Those kids live a successful life based on these virtues. We can't deny the importance of money but when it comes to administration, Insight and Wisdom have much importance. A person who can take good decisions is like a gem for himself, his family,

the society, the State and even God on the spiritual path. These people are close to God because of their virtues and genuine deeds.

The person is better known by his virtues and good deeds like honesty, kindness and prayer at all places and he is also closer to God and get His grace.

Karmi Aapo Aapni ke nede ke dur II (Japu Ji Sahib)

Management has been in my blood. Sometimes I feel like I was an administrator in my previous life also. Doing everything with discipline and putting in the required efforts is a birth trait of mine. My father retired from his job as an Army Major in September 1949. His monthly salary of One thousand Rupees came down to a monthly pension of Rs two hundred thirty one. We left the one-acre large official bungalow and moved to our 250 sq. yd. house at Topkhana which was built by my father in 1944-45.

This was a shock, not just for my father but for the entire family. My father had Rs. ten thousand rupees of savings at the time of his retirement, a large amount at that time. Due to some circumstances, elder brother Parminder (1933) and a sister younger to him Rupinder (1935) had to be married at a young age. These two marriages were solemnized in 1950 and my father's cash savings got depleted. He got orderlies for two months after retirement because of his goodwill with serving officers. This facility also ended in November 1949. Soon my parents realized that with meagre pension, everybody in the home had to work hard.

Sister Rajinder (1937), (who lives in Chicago now), started helping my parents in household work at the age of

13. Our Parents looked worried. We had three buffaloes at that time. I was only seven years old then. I said to my father, "I can bring the fodder for the cattle, if only you allow me use the bicycle." There was only one old bicycle in the house. My father was surprised and said, "but you are so little, you don't even know how to ride the bicycle." I replied, "Father, I can walk with the cycle. I can keep the fodder sack in the middle of the cycle. I would load the fodder in such a way that it's weight was distributed almost equally over both the sides. I would keep the sack empty in the middle." I started doing this job. I would have the large sack filled half and get the shopkeeper to carefully place the sack on the cycle in the manner described. Then I walked the cycle home.

Karah wala Chowk was about 200 Yds from our Top Khana house and this fodder shop on Pili road was another 200 Yds. Pili Sadak (road) is connecting Karah wala chowk going towards the fort (quilla). Karah wala chowk to Fort road was ascending The work went on for around twenty days. One day I thought of learning to ride the bicycle. I would let the cycle run downhill from the Pili road towards the Karah wala Chowk. I learnt to let the cycle run by keeping my left foot on the pedal for the first two days. In those days city's population and traffic were both low. Scooters were not there yet. In a few days I learnt to ride the cycle by applying "kainchi" (riding it by hanging on to one side) and putting right leg on the other pedal through the triangle of the cycle. In seven days, I started to gain more confidence. It was a really happy day for me when I rode through the slope of Ghah Mandi (towards the Karah wala chowk) by sitting on the cycle's seat for the first time. It was a great thrill.

As I have previously mentioned, I studied for MA by purchasing two books for Rs. 18. I have lived all of my life through hard work, honesty and patience. I started moving towards spiritualism in 1987. A nearly fatal accident made me turn my face towards God. My soul which was a mere plant in those days has now grown into a fruit bearing tree.

I wanted to pursue Ph.D after completing MA in 1963. I was just thinking about Ph.D. when the Indo-China war broke out in November 1962. There was a huge outcry in the country. I had a great zeal. My youth would have been meaningless if my country had to face defeat. Due to zeal I joined the army and more so infantry which is in front in all the wars. I joined the army in October 1963 and got commissioned in 1964. I faced the Pak enemy in 1965 war when I became a part of 2 Mahar Battalion. On 17 September 1965, our company commander Major Kulwinder Singh was injured. I got an opportunity to command the company. I was scared for a little while. Our ammunition had run out. It was felt as if the enemy could attack our company position at any moment and trample us. The commanding officer of our battalion Col. K.S. Bakshi was sitting in our company position at a little distance from me. But the decision to fight or retire was on me. Our Subedar Saheb advised me that we should leave the position and retreat. But I turned a deaf ear to his advice because I had the blessing of God and the history of generations behind me.

I remembered Guru Gobind Singh Ji, who had uttered these words,

Sawa lakh se ek ladaun II Tabe Gobind Singh naam kahaun II (Bhai Nand Lal Ji Waar)

Note: I have described the incident in detail in "The war of 1965".

I was training at the Training Course Mhow (Madhya Pradesh) in November 1965. I read in the newspaper that I have been awarded 'The Mentioned in Dispatches'. I worked in the Military Police Kalka for two and a half years and took the IAS exam twice. The time at the military police was very peaceful and rewarding.

I got released from the army in March 1970 and returned home. I had saved twenty thousand rupees out of forty thousand while in the army. I helped clearing my father's debt of seven thousand rupees. I used the rest to buy a Lambretta scooter. I brought ten thousand rupees home in cash. My father wasn't particularly happy with my release. I promised my father that, "I won't be a burden on him. I would live on Rs. 250 per month and this money would take me through four years of unemployment." I lived on Rs. 250 a month with a cool mind. Out of these 250, 200 were spent miscellaneously. Twenty rupees went to the part time servant and thirty was the monthly petrol expenditure on the scooter. I cooked the breakfast and dinner myself. The servant cooked the lunch and cleaned two rooms.

These were my management skills which kept me out of trouble throughout my life. These abilities have helped me remaining honest throughout. These are the qualities which have helped me in all of my professions: the army, being a professor at the college and the excise and tax

department. Whenever there was a function to be conducted in the college, I was asked first and foremost. When I was at the government college Tanda, none of the professors was ready to take up the job of the Hostel Warden. I became the first warden at the hostel and supervised it well. I was a professor for three years from 1971 to 1974. The first year was at Government College Tanda and two at Government College Nabha.

During the war of 1971 as a prof. at Tanda, I motivated four hundred students to donate blood. Three other professors and I donated our blood. I told the students that I was playing direct role of warrior in the Indo-Pak war of 1965. Only a bottle of blood is needed to be given now. In wartime, I formed a group of twenty students and did recce around the hostel. The students showed considerable courage and zeal. Once, a few professors at the hostel got drunk and created nuisance. I considered it a warden's duty to make a complaint to the Principal. The concerned professors became angry at me. They didn't speak with me for some time. But I am satisfied that I fulfilled my duties with complete honesty.

The management skills truly came into use when I was in the excise and taxation department. Although I was supposed to work in the department for 27 years (1974 to 2001) but in reality I only worked for 22 years since I went on a five years leave for America. All of the qualities in my person saw full development during my time in this department and I used my knowledge and abilities for the welfare of the department and society. I worked with passion and honesty. For serving at Ludhiana, Amritsar and Bathinda, I only travelled in buses. While working at

Ludhiana I made good reputation throughout Punjab. Based on my good reputation I was made the Assistant Excise & Taxation Commissioner on 1 September 1980 and charged with the administration of district of Amritsar.

I was 38 years old when I was transferred to Amritsar. I had developed clarity in my personality till that time. As it happens to every district head, I was being asked for favours. I respectfully told my senior officers that I did not believe in things like that. This angered some of the senior officers. The chief minister at the time S Darbara Singh was the Excise and Taxation Minister. He appreciated my honesty and conveyed his support through Sri Brij Bhushan Mehra who was MLA of Amritsar and the speaker at the Legislative Assembly. JS Kaumi who was the DETC in the Jalandhar division was my boss. After a few days later S Surinder Singh Giani replaced him. Giani Ji had been my boss at Ludhiana. He was also an honest officer. My methods for management and work were simple. Officers were always to come at their workplace on time. I would stand with the register every morning at nine 'o clock. I would give honest officers 'Outstanding' entries. I would train and inspire the newly appointed officers. I would offer them tea in my office in order to motivate them. I would even use my contacts to get their personal jobs done. I had the power to give dishonest officers the 'Adverse' report. I exposed the corruption of two officers while at Amritsar. It was in March 1981 that tenders of alcohol were auctioned for the first time. It's a test for an AETC to conduct annual auctions. I didn't have much link with Excise Contractors, but there was a significant increase in excise income.

In order to live with my family and kids I was on my

request transferred to Training School at Patiala in 1981. In a few months, I was transferred as AETC incharge Patiala division. I was the incharge of the Patiala district from 1982 to 1987. This transfer proved useful for both the government and myself. My childhood friends would come to me looking for solution of their business or personal problems. I happily entertained their requests. My native village Dugal is in the Patiala district. It was at this time that I built the house at New Lal Bagh in Patiala and developed the garden in Himachal. I never left the station without station leave. I exposed two corrupt officials at Patiala as well.

I never hesitated from field work even as a senior officers. Some E.T.O.s of Patiala district came to me with their problem. A few corrupt transporters used to smuggle rice from Punjab to other states in 1985. They would keep weapon guarded vehicles in front of their goods and take the goods without paying tax and would not stop when commanded to. I went and stood at the GT Road, I stationed two Government vehicles in both the directions of the road so the culprits could be captured at a moment's notice. There were no sales tax barriers in Punjab at the time. Other than this my time went on in bliss. I trained and empowered many honest officers. Mr Jarnail Singh Retired DETC, Mrs Surinder Kaur Riar Retired PCS, Mr Shivdular Singh Dhillon (IAS) now D.C. Amritsar are some of them. I taught all my officers to drive Jeeps. I taught them the skill to take the official vehicles without a driver to conduct raids. I encouraged them to park the vehicles at their homes. Taking along a driver for making a raid, the information was invariably leaked.

I moved to the Gurdaspur district for the sake of selling my garden in 1987 but I had to return to Patiala in a few months for the sake of my father who had returned to India from U.S. to breathe his last. My father died on 29.05.1990

Admission of Inspectors in the Excise and Tax Department:

We had to admit around 50 excise and tax officers in our department in 1989. I was given the sole duty to conduct the exams by the Excise and Tax Commissioner Mr Bhagat Singh. From getting the papers printed to conducting the exams all the way until getting them marked, I fulfilled every duty with efforts and honesty. At that time there was corruption prevalent in the Public Service Commission exams. A kind soul saw the report of our examination and said that the Commission should learn from our department and conduct examinations in this fashion. The excise and tax commissioner and the Government of Punjab wrote me a long appreciation letter for the examinations I conducted. It felt like the examination was for me as much as it was for the inspectors. My honest and impartial conduct annoyed some relatives and friends.

I joined as DETC in the Patiala Division in 1992 where I successfully conducted Excise auctions in 1993. At that time In the Patiala division, there used to be Ludhiana one, two, three and other than these Patiala, Ropar and Sangrur districts. Ludhiana and Sangrur districts were big on Excise revenue. Captain Amarjeet Singh Chopra was the district AETC in the Sangrur district. There was an ETO Excise at Sangrur who didn't think much of the AETC. He would exert his dominance at every chance he got. I talked about him to

the Commissioner. He said, "You are well familiar with Vizir sahib, why don't you approach him directy?" Why not get him transferred elsewhere. I visited Vizir sahib at his home at Khanna city. S. Shamsher Singh Dulo, the Hon'ble minster respected me for my integrity. During the winters of 1992, I spent almost the whole day at his home. He told me in the evening that he had received calls about the ETO from four cabinet rank ministers and it was difficult for him to transfer the said E.T.O. (excise). I talked about the matter with the Commissioner. By the grace of God I got wisdom and wrote to the Excise & Taxation Commissioner a D.O. letter. I wrote that the Revenue for the previous year for Liquor was Rs. ten crore in Sangrur. I could give an increase of 30%. But if the ETO stays at Sangrur I could not guarantee any increase. Commissioner Sahib got the letter and within a few hours the ETO was transferred. The ETO spited me throughout life. But I have learnt to bear the spites and not to develop grudges myself. I am just satisfied that I managed my division well and made an indiscipline ETO leave Sangrur. Over all in March 1993 my division gave a decent increase in excise revenue.

Time Spent in U.S.A:- I had to move to America for my children's education in 1993. I lived in America by selling my dream project, Shivalik Bagh, 31 acres of Garden in Himachal Pardesh and the house at Patiala near the stadium. I returned to Patiala after the five years of leave. There was still two and half years of job left. I retired as an Additional Commissioner in 2001. We built a medium level house in Patiala in 1999-2000 and it is here that my sons got married. We lived as a family in America and never forgot our values and culture. We worshipped God and undertook

our daily rituals every dawn and dusk and conducted our businesses with total honesty. Our sons grew up with Sikh values. They never went on dates etc. They either studied at the university and home or helped us in business.

It is with these qualities of administration that I and my wife sustained our self in America through our personal discipline. We bought ten businesses and two houses in 14 years. We lived honest lives and never evaded tax. We sold five out of the ten businesses and one of the two houses. When I and my wife realized that our sons were able to take care of themselves and were self-sufficient and could take care of their families in 2010 and we distributed the property in U.S. between them and returned to Patiala permanently.

Management is the key to success in life. Whether it be at home, in family or regarding life itself, every person should be skilled at it and pass on these skills to children and others.

As a Community leader

Leader is not a rank or a title. You lead by your self-example. That is how you become a leader. In my case, these qualities came to the fore in September 1965 war when my company commander got hit by an enemy bullet and I was immediately elevated from a platoon commander to a company commander. The detailed story is already given in the chapter for 1965 war. The company was out of ammunition and the only choice for me was either to retire or to die in the face of enemy. I chose to die a respectable death. I made the right choice. My services were appreciated. Bravery is also being honest and loyal to the country at the cost of your life. I proved as an honest leader and a good leader of men.

My honesty and qualities of leadership even as a young boy were recognised by my father when I was just 18-year-old and my father gave me the power of attorney to be able to decide all family affairs including sale, mortgage or distribution of property among the family. As a college Professor, I was made a hostel warden at Government college Tanda.

In Excise and Taxation department (1974-2001) my quality of leadership was easily recognised. I became famous as an honest officer in about two years time. While being posted at Ludhiana as assessing authority and E.T.O (Excise) all the 40 E.T.O's unanimously chose me as their president to project their demands. As an additional E.T.C.

again I was unanimously elected as president of the senior officers association.

On retirement I was elected president of Rajindra Gymkhana and Maharani Club in September 2001. Out of 1700 votes polled I got 1004 votes and my competitor, a well known Orthopaedics surgeon of Patiala scored 696 votes. Somehow, I had to go to America to join my sons there because of 9/11. Americans developed against hatred Muslims and more so against Osama bin Laden. Osama bin Laden wore a turban. All Sikhs wearing turban were mistaken for Muslims.

On our final retirement in the year 2010, I started taking interest in our Pensioners association. Soon I was made a Patron of association. I also remained the president of the association. I led them by my example of financial help and also other day to day guidance. So far as the pensioners have held 11 annual conferences and I have always played a key role in their success.

In the year 2012 S. Gursharan Singh I.P.S. (Retd.) and General M.S. Chehal, president and the secretary estate respectively approached me for serving Academy of Sikh religion and Culture. I was made a member and now I am its vice president.

In 2015 I was made a member of Gurdwara Shri Guru Singh Sabha, Mall Road, Patiala and now I am its convener on religious affairs (Dharmik Committee).

In my house hold, I supported my father get out of debt in 1967. I supported my eight siblings. By my habits of hard work, savings and investment, I have progressed financially. In 1993, I took the initiative of going to U.S.A. By my qualities of leadership, we were able to educate our

sons in U.S. and also establish business. Because of my qualities of leadership based on genuineness, honesty and fair dealings, we became known as dependable customers by the banks in USA. We dealt with. U.S. oil company, a big gas wholesaler, who started trusting us and sold us businesses. We sold the five businesses out of ten that we purchased and made profit. Soon the goodwill of our family reached reasonable heights and the oil companies started approaching us for selling their businesses. At my recommendation, the banks gave loans to needy Indian people, who were new to U.S. and those qualities made me the natural leader of our area in U.S.A.

My sons and their families accept me as their leader. When we were leaving for U.S. in October 1992, I advised my sons to remain Gursikh while living in U.S.A. They did so. In recent years (2016-17), I advised them to be 'Amritdhari'. They accepted my advice.

My Ideals

I was taught honesty by my father who got it from my grandfather and great grandfather. They have been honest and loyal officers. Because of these qualities they had the opportunities to work at posts of higher responsibilities. Whether it's a Monarchy or a Democracy, honest individuals are needed everywhere. The only difference between my father and I was that I was more organized. Being born and raised in a family alongside eight siblings, I realized early that family should always be small.

I could not study in the Yadvindra Public School, Patiala because of financial constraints. Hence, I wished from my heart that my kids should study in a prestigious institution like YPS. I realized when I was in the army (1963-70) that people who studied in good schools often had more self-confidence even with lower education like F.A. or B.A. I honestly admit that even with a higher qualification like M.A. I was less confident. I was far-sighted since beginning and didn't hesitate from taking risks. All of my life is based on this ideal. I was in the army for six years and cleared my parents' debts and also saved money for my marriage. In other words, after joining the army in 1963, I did not put pressure on my father even for one paisa.

My father wanted me to get married at the age of 21 or 22 but I only wanted to get married after I had become self-dependent. It is my great luck that my wife is likeminded who was not only kind and honest but also

passionate about studying. My in-laws gave good education all of their children . The expenditure of my wife Jasminder's studies and hostel at Birla Institute of technology and Science, Pilani in the year 1967-68 was the same as the full salary of my father in-law. One can imagine the wisdom of that family. My wife has always supported me in each and all decision.

Although honesty landed us in limited financial resources, we succeeded in everything by careful planning. We had some trouble paying the fees of YPS school for the education of our kids during 1990-91 but in return we found the satisfaction of our kids getting good education. When the time came for our children's higher studies, we sold all of our land and properties and moved to America. We had limited expenses at home but our kids studied in good schools and colleges.

Our discipline brought hard work and happiness in our lives. None of us ever backed down from washing dishes or preparing food. We only kept a servant for a year or two. My 77 years old wife still does all the work. While I was in job in Excise and Taxation department, many of the rich business people visited our home. My wife often made tea, either I or my sons served the tea.

We wanted to progress in life. Our hard work and saving gave us both progress and good reputation. My wife started out as a Lecturer and eventually became Principal. I started as an ETO and rose to the highest the rank in the department which was the Additional Excise and Taxation Commissioner.

There is just one regret I have in life. I was selected for IAS from Non-PCS In 1992. I was kept at the top rank in

the interviews by UPSC. But the government of Punjab didn't send my name for notifications. But since we progressed a lot in America, it seems like it was all a part of God's plan. If I had stayed at my job and even become IAS at some point, we may not have achieved the same level of progress and respect as we have at present. Our two sons may not have had the same level of education. Now I know for sure that God always does justice. God's justice is the real deal and it is greater than the Society's justice. I did everything in my power to get the Society's justice and approached C.A.T. and later the Punjab and Haryana High Court, but never succeeded, maybe I was late in reaching out for Justice.

At the time when our children went to the YPS school, they went on foot or on bicycle. My elder son Gurmit once said to me, "Respecteed father, children of so and so ETO of your district go to the school in their car, whereas we go on foot or on the bicycle." I laughed in reply, "I am hammering golden nails into you." Gurmit asked, "What are these golden nails?" I said, "Golden nails is a proverb in Punjabi meaning the best deal. I further said, "I am teaching you Hard work, honesty and diligence. So that you evolve into a dignified personality. A plant needs water and manure to grow. We are raising you on honest money. It's not my fault that the other officers aren't doing what I am doing. I am doing the right thing." Further my intuition made me say, "the days are not far whom you will be roaming about in a Mercedes car. What you will see those children rotting in U.S.A." God even showed this to us in America in 2003 A.D.

I joined the department as an ETO in 1974. Eight

other ETOS and 29 assistant ETOs joined along with us. 25% of the 37 officers died due to overdrinking. Now that it's the evening of my life, I have plenty of time to look back and ponder upon the struggles I have faced in life. We aren't far behind dishonest people even at a financial level. We never made our kids attend tuition in our entire life. My wife and her sisters helped in the studies of our sons.

The one thing that helped us in our lives, was our limited ambitions. As an example, it was in 1976 that I wrote that I wanted 500 sq. yd. of urban plot, thirty acres land, the rank of Deputy Excise Commission, an old car when I turn fifty, one lakh rupees for my retirement and a new Fiat car on retiring. We accomplished this target in around five years. We saved twelve thousand rupees in cash by 1976. The prices of plots went down when the Emergency was declared. We bought 270 yards of a plot @ of 50 rupees per sq yard at Raghubir nagar. The price rose in two years to 200 rupees per sq yard. The plots at New Lal Bagh were 99 Sala lease and much cheaper than usual. Virtually we sold our plot at Raghubir Nagar and bought five hundred sq. yd. of plot at New Lal Bagh with the same money. We had 10 acres of land at my native village Dugal which with my father's permission sold for sixty thousand rupees in 1978. We bought 31 acres of land in Himachal. We got a loan from the government and bought an old Fiat car. Whatever I had thought until that point got fulfilled in those days. I kept this viewpoint throughout my life. These ideals made our lives happy. While in America in 1993 we realized that two thousand dollars a month was average income and ten thousand dollars a month was rich as per our needs and dreams. We started to earn ten thousand dollars a month in April 1998. This added to our contentment. We taught the same discipline to our sons. Our younger son Gurjeet studied for eighteen years in America. Other than support and help from our side, there was the loan of 1.25 lakh dollars. He has been working in a hospital for the last eleven years and earning good money. He has cleared all the debts and has been living a stable life. His wife is a doctor and they have two kids.

Elder son Gurmeet studied for four years and is now doing business. He is a diligent and honest businessman. We took a loan of \$ 25000 for his studies which he has cleared. He was married at the age of 27 years. His wife is a doctor and they have two kids.

In 2010 we divided our five businesses and a house between both our sons and returned from America. Both the sons are Amritdhari. In other words, both the sons are well-educated, earn well and they have high ideals. All this is made possible by the teachings of Guru Ji and the blessings of God. The two sons are rich even by American standards. Their own kids are being raised with good values and teachings. A person's success is not just his own. It's a success for his family as well. Our own success includes their success also.

The thing is that a lot of people in this world think only on a surface level. We have taught our sons to think on a spiritual level. A person who learns from his conscience and lives his life accordingly, he succeeds in all phases of life whether it's social, financial or spiritual. Both the sons are living honest, conscientious and responsible lives and I and my wife are grateful to God for these blessings.

Fighting Serious Ailments

In 2010, I completed my second MA. In 2013, I completed my third M.A. in Sikh Studies getting first division. I had got second division in my first M.A. which I did at the age of 20 in 1963. In 2014, I was preparing to enroll for Ph.D. that my body felt a shock. In February 2014, I was playing golf with one of my friends, I heard a voice saying, "we have to extend your life." I started thinking that I was well. What had happened to my health? I closed my eyes and asked who wanted to extend my life then I saw my own image in which I was worshiping bare headed after a hair bath.

A few days later I was returning home after playing golf. I had a Honda City car which I was driving. I saw a strange ugly man sitting on the back seat. He was wearing a green cap on his head and a mask on his nose. I stopped my car and looked at that person and I felt that his nose was like mine. As soon as I recognized the face it disappeared. I understood that my age shall be extended and the only solution was my heart operation and my face will be like that image after operation.

I had been suffering from breath problem since December 2013. I often visited Dr. Sudhir Verma. His father was a colleague of mine and he never charged fee from me. So, my wife and I decided to visit another doctor. On March 10, 2014, we visited Doctor Taneja another cardiologist of Patiala city. He did my ECG and Echo. Both of my reports

were correct as per his observation. When I complained to the doctor about my breathing problem, he told me that he did not even understand it. I asked his permission to play golf, and he allowed me to play golf saying, "your heart pulse rate is about 60 which is very healthy. You can play."

I went to play golf on March 11 and after playing five holes, I remembered my childhood friend Dr. Dang. Mr. BS. Grewal was my partner that day. I asked Grewal if we two could go to see Dr. Dang. He agreed. I took appointment and met him at about eleven o'clock. Doctor Dang was a medicine specialist, but he was a wise and experienced doctor. After examination, he said to me, "You are suffering from Angina which is only felt after exercising." He advised me to go to Chandigarh Fortis or some other good hospital. I and my wife went to Max Hospital, Mohali on next day i.e. 12th March.

There they did ECG and angiography. Angiography reports revealed that my three arteries were 99, 97, and 95% blocked. My wife asked doctors if we did not have surgery, what was our future. The doctor said, "maybe he lives for ten years or maybe you can come back to our hospital today." We thought it prudent to get a bypass operation. We did not feel scared because God had already informed us.

My operation was conducted on March 13, 2014. Before the operation started, I had a sincere desire to see the Guru Sahib. There was no vision, but I got so much strength that I was ready for operation. At 11 o'clock my operation started, and I gained consciousness the next day at about 3 a.m. A medical attendant woke me up and pulled out some pipes from my body. Attendants were talking

among themselves that the wounds were dry. A male nurse asked me if I remembered my wife's name. Perhaps he was checking my memory. After several hours I was brought to the ward from the ICU. When I was in the ward, my wife told me that Gurmeet, our elder son had come from America with his whole family. I was discharged from the hospital on 19 March.

I slept straight for two months due to the operation. On April 5, 2014, I heard a voice 'char' (means four). I told my wife I shall have to face four operations. For two months I was not allowed to drive car by doctors, but I did not drive the car for three months. By June 2014, I was quite healthy and started walking. By September 2014, I started playing golf again. In November - December 2014, I realized that my health was not as good as other people had after such an operation.

Struggling with Cancer: - One day in February 2015, I went to pee. Due to lack of water, I did not flush. It was when my wife noticed blood spots in my urine. At that time, she got nervous and informed me about it. I got my urine test done. There were six to eight RBCs in it. My ex-colleague's son Dr. B P. Singh who is a prominent urologist at Patiala, advised me for ultrasound test. The ultrasound report was showing some darkness on the walls of urinary bladder. Dr. B P Singh advised me to undergo surgery.

I had undergone heart operation at Max Hospital, Mohali. I did not think any other hospital safe for the urine bladder operation. I called Dr. B.S. Roy in Max Hospital Mohali. I told him everything. He had about thirty years of experience. On March 14, 2015, my urine bladder was operated. He told my wife that it was cancer. My wife asked

him how did he know and that he had not sent the report to the laboratory even. The doctor told her that it was his experience. Later on, It was found from the report that it was a low-grade cancer. It was a small operation compared to heart but the name of cancer was more frightening. After some days, I prayed to God that this time I was born to good parents. I prayed to God, "please grant me more time so that I could pray and improve myself." Half a minute later the sound came, 'eleven years'. I thanked God and my morale was high again. There is a test after three months after the cancer operation, which is called cystoscopy. In this test machines were inserted into my bladder and it was very painful. This picture showed whether there was cancer or not. It was again checked after three months and everything was alright. The next test was after six months.

By March 2016, I got cancer again. Operation of Hernia was performd on me on 18 July 2015 by Dr. JS Dhillon of Max Hospital, Mohali Prayers were going on in the same way. I started playing golf again. Between 2015 and now I have had systoscopy tests twelve times. But by now I have understood completely why God give pains,

ਦੂਖ ਸੂਖ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਦੇਵਨਹਾਰੁ॥ (SGGS 283)

Pain is a reminder and testing for me. As a person makes spiritual progress, his tests become even tougher. As the tenth, twelfth and the BA exams have their own level. God feels that I have passed all the tests, so he sends noble souls to help me. One day when I was worshiping, I was ordered to wear a hem while worshiping. By doing so, humility is generated in the heart. We beg from God when we worship and a beggar always carries a hem in hand. This is how I was doing my daily routine, so one day a voice came

from my navel, "eight and a half years". I thanked God for remembering me. I noted the time in my diary. After cancer of March 2016, everything is going well. Now I was more determined.

Solution of worry: - I was afraid of what would happen to my wife after me. How will she live alone? One day I was sitting on the couch and God sent a soul. The soul sat on couch with me and said that you need not to worry about her. She will go two years before you. Upon hearing this, I became completely tension free.

I had another big desire. In the US, we had three Mercedes cars. As I came to India permanently in December 2010, I had a Honda city car since 2007. I wished if I could buy a Mercedes car in India too. About 7 years ago, while playing golf, I asked God to give me a Mercedes car. The voice came that, "there was no difference to me, but your ego will rise." I said, "Dear, Lord, you already know that my ego will inflate." Several years have passed. I bought the Honda BRV (SUV) car in 2016 but still there was desire to buy a Mercedes car. One day at eleven o'clock I was standing with the car (BRV) and the same soul stood behind me with the car and affectionally explained to me as a father explains to his child. I was made to understand that this car was very good for me. My desire to have a Mercedes disappeared like thin air.

Now I understand that the disease is a reminder of God. If God had to kill me, I would not have known the disease named angina in March 2014. How many deaths happen with such ailments daily? God cares about everybody but many people shut their eyes and they question the very existence of God. At some stage of life, I

was such an unfortunate man. But now I thank God day and night.

The virtues and knowledge that came in this struggle were as follows. Some vendors wandered on the trains and said do not forget the Duty, disease and debt, (Farz, Marje, and Caraz). They say, take the duty, disease and debt seriously. That is, to fulfill all your duties well. Whatever debt you have on your shoulders, it should be returned in a timely manner. Disease should not be ignored even for an hour. When I went to Dr. Dang on March 11, 2014, he told me that I had Angina, which was calm and arose due to exercise. If I had time on that day, then I could go to Chandigarh at around nine and a half in the morning. We decided to get operated. On 12th March all the preparations for the operation were completed and the 13th March operation was performed.

Every disease has two aspects, one is physical and the second is spiritual. I gave full attention to both aspects and never took the disease lightly. I have never given preference to Ayurveda or Homeopathy and never delayed the treatment. Likewise, it was at the time of cancer. In 2015, when I came to know about blood in the urine, I completed the test of urine and ultrasound the same day. After the urine report, I decided to have an operation soon. I talked to Dr. Sachin, Max Hospital. He advised us to get treatment from a known specialist Dr Rai at Max Hospital, Mohali, which we did.

The spiritual aspect: - Whatever I have done since my childhood, I really did it wholeheartedly. Apart from two unfortunate years of life when I became an atheist, I

through all the time, fully believed in God. God has been very gracious to me. Lord also takes great care of me.

By June 1, 2017, I noticed that my health was now quite well. I met Dr. Gurmeet Singh Sidhu at Punjabi University Patiala. I requested him to enroll me in Ph.D. He advised me that I had vast experience and I would get Ph.D. easily. He further said, "whatever your thoughts or ideas are, share them with the society." I bought a printer and started looking for a stenographer as well. In mid-June, I met Dr Harnek Singh Dhot, Assistant Director at Language Department and demanded an English and Punjabi stenographer from them. He called Stenography teacher S. Gurmail Singh. He told that there was Gursikh student, who knows English and Punjabi steno. Thus, with the grace of God, the process of writing started on July 1, 2017. I wrote 5 books by March 2019.

Fighting for Justice

My father trusted me a lot from the very beginning. My Father was only fifty years old in 1956 - 57 when he began to feel that he could leave at any time. When I grew be an adult, my father gave me the power of attorney regarding all the property owned by him. This meant that after my father's death, I had the right to make decisions about the whole family. All the relatives came to know of it gradually. Husband of my eldest sister Rupinder Kaur (1935) - 2018) was S. Harnek Singh. He was the grandson of Raja Gurdit Singh Retgharia, a well known family of Patiala. I used to address S. Harnek Singh as 'Jija Ji'. In common parlance father in law was addressed as Papa Ji or Bapu ji but in those days, he used to call my father as Major Sahib i.e. by his rank. One day Jija Ji said, "Major Sahib, you have given everything to Kaka Amarjit; distribute the sticks to others. My father said, "kaka Ji, I do not understand what you mean. He said, "Major Sahib, you do not live in the village. In villages, having sticks means that the you have left nothing for the rest of family. I was listening to their conversation. My father said to Jija Ji, "Amarjit is not such a child. He will not hurt anyone's interest. He will do full justice."

Time passed. I returned to Village Dugaal in 1970 after being released from Army where I had served for more than six years. I stayed in the village for 16 months. My father was healthy. One day My father gave a paper and a

pencil and said, "Kaka, you distribute the land." I divided the land in such a way that out of total 37 acres of land, I gave Big brother Parminder Tehsildar five acres of good land, the younger three brothers Jagjit, Satwant and Gurwant got five acres of good land. I kept 10 acres of Tibba land which was not fertile and it was the equivalent of five acres. Remaining seven acres of land and House at Topkhana mor Patiala went to mother's share. The elder brother Parminder sold his share of land in 1975 and I sold my share of land at village Dugal in 1978. Shortly afterwards my father consulted me and sold four acres of land for sorting out family affairs. In 1982, both the younger brothers, namely Satwant (martyr) and Gurwant had migrated to the United States, and all the land in the village had to be mortgaged. My father and mother came to Topkhana Gate house. I built a house for myself at New Lal Bagh, Patiala in 1985-86. After the whole land was divided, three more acres were left in the village.

One day my father said to me, "Kaka, there is 3 acres of common land left in the village. Tell me what to do?" I told my father that, we could not send younger brothers Satwant and Gurwant to the university. So it is their right to own this land. My father asked, if the other brothers needed to be asked? I said no need to ask for good work. My father and I went to Patran Mandi. Patran Mandi was our tehsil. We went to the tehsildar office. There we registered the land in the names of the two brothers and sent them the letter of transfer of the land.

In Patiala our house # 28/3 was near Topkhana Gate which is located on the Main Road. This house was in my father's name. This house was built by my father in 1944. In

1986 I went to the United States to make a survey and study if it was worthwhile to move there permanently. The three younger brothers living there served me a lot and took me on a tour of Canada and United States. At that time I had nothing to give them, but I kept thinking for several days how to pay them back.

I was from childhood taught to follows this shabad of Guru Nanak Sahib,

Hak Paraya Nanaka Us Soor Us Gaye II

(Majh Mahala 1, Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji ang 141). I thought, my brothers spent lot of money and I needed to return them somehow.

I figured out why not give my share from house at Top Khana Gate to them. I discussed about it with my wife and elder son, Gurmit. They agreed with me. I pleaded with my father and explained everything. My father asked, "Have you got your share?" I respectfully answered no. He lovingly said, "kaka you will get it at proper time." I said, "I want to do something today which shall become effective later on. He asked me to prepare an affidavit. I made an affidavit, which stated that my three younger brothers had done a lot for me in the United States, and I wanted to give them my share in the Top Khana Mor house in lieu of their services. My father made a new will, stating that he was relieved of his responsibility by marrying all four girls. The house belonged to five sons. Forty thousand rupees cash was given to the elder son Parminder as share from this house. Amarjit, has given his affidavit in favor of his three younger brothers Jagjit, Satwant and Gurwant. So, the house would be of three brothers after his death. I never talked to my younger brothers about it. My father died on May 29, 1990, and three brothers came to India from the United States to attend the Bhog ceremony. They had no idea about this development at the time. When they read our father's will, it was written that Amarjit Singh had given his share to the younger brothers. They were very surprised and asked, "Brother, what have you done?" "Justice", I said.

Like this, I kept special focus on this aspect during my life. In 1971 I was working as a professor at Government College, Tanda. In March April, 1972 exams, I did not allow cheating in the exam. A few days later as I was walking with Professor Gulzar Singh in the area of the college, a student who seemed to be in a bit of a drunken state, crossed us on a bicycle. He said, "Sir, we had high hopes from you." Having said this, he went away.

In the meantime, Punjab University, Chandigarh sent me some papers in Political Science of BA Part I. My Head Examiner was the Principal of a girls' college in Chandigarh. When the papers came to me, I was just married. I could not mark the papers in time. My Head Examiner asked me to send the paper soon after checking them. On the one hand, the marriage was a few weeks old. On the other hand, The deadline for checking the papers was approaching. What a foolishness, I asked my younger brother, Gurwant, to check the papers and I sent them to my Head Examiner. A few days later, head Examiner called me to Chandigarh. The principal was 45 years old and unmarried. She was asking me the questions one by one about how I gave numbers. After a while I told Madam the whole truth and regreted. After that I refused for any more papers to be sent to me from the university. I felt like I couldn't do justice.

In the Excise and Tax department, I worked for about 22 years and had the opportunity to work at good positions. I encouraged the honest and punished the dishonest.

In 1989-90 I conducted an examination for the recruitment of Excise and Taxation inspectors. I was asked to get papers printed, hold examination and get them marked. I had very close relatives who appeared in the exams. One was cousin failing in one paper. I did not oblige him. The other was the son of my widowed sister. Both the relatives were unhappy but for me justice was more important.

I used to protect female officers and employees and never let them down. On two occasions, I had to cope with the risks of my job with the senior officers. Now that it has been many years since I retired, these things satisfy me that even though I did not care about my job, I protected good lady officers. In the United States, the problems of my brothers were dealt with on the basis of justice. I put justice first in all my life's decisions.

Very Difficult Situations

It is passing through very difficult situations that one's personality is best known. How a particular situation was handled in the face of difficulties like pain, loss, insult, greed, disease or death shows your reactions. These problems can lead a person to anger or depression. One can also tide over them with confidence and courage. I went through almost all these situations and handled them with some guidance from home. My mother used to narrate the story of her uncle S. Shamsher Singh who died a martyr in 1947 during partition of India. She also used to narrate the stories of Sikh Gurus, four Sahibzadas of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, other warriors like Baba Banda Singh Bhadar, Bhai Mani Singh and Baba Deep Singh JI.

My father always uttered this Bani of Guru Nanak Dev Ji,"

Haq praya nanaka us soor us gaye II
Gur peer haama ta bharey ja murdaar na khaye II"
ਹਕੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੂਅਰ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ॥
ਗੁਰੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਹਾਮਾ ਤਾ ਭਰੇ ਜਾ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ਨਾ ਖਾਇ॥ (SGGS 141)
meaning there by that a follower of Guru Nanak shall not eat some body's share and live totally on own hard earned labour. These two personalities coupled with teaching of Shri Amarnath Gupta headmaster and Prof. B.K. Kapoor who taught me Patriotism and ideal life helped me grow.

My life as a student at school and college level did not pose any challenge to me. With the grace of God I got good friends like Anupinder Singh Dhillon, in 1952 and Bal Krishan Singla in 1956. I had a divine message in 1956 when I was in F.A. 1st year, that gave me lot of confidence. The message had conveyed me that I shall become an officer and advised me to study seriously.

I joined army and did pre-commission training after finishing my M.A. In 1963. The army training started in October 1963 at officer training school, Poona. It finished smoothly. I was commissioned on May 3rd 1964 at 21 years of age. I was allotted Mahar regiment, an infantry group of Indian army. First posting was at Regimental Centre Sagar (M.P). No untoward incident occurred there except a small one at Bamori village near Sagar city. The villagers had beaten our two soldiers while a training. On their information alone, I collected my whole training company of about 100 soldiers under training and surrounded the village. The villagers were frightened. Later on, a complaint was made to army Headquarter and it was marked to our centre. Major B.K. Patole, our training battalion commander asked me about the whole incident. I explained to him that if these soldiers were beaten by civilians, how will they stand against Pakistani and Chinese soldiers tomorrow. Major B.K. Patole was impressed with my enthusiasm but told me that I should have called the villagers and ascertained all the facts. He advised me to be careful in future.

My real problem and accomplishments occurred in 2 Mahar battalion where I was transferred to in May 1965. I was on leave when I was transferred to 2nd Mahar. The first clash occurred with Lt. Arun Verma who was the Adjutant of the battalion. The battalion was at Jalipa near Barmer (Rajasthan) Col. K.S. Bakshi was the C.O. Lt. Arun Verma was

an N.D.A commissioned officer belonging to Madhya Pradesh. His father was retired I.A.S officer. He was very arrogant. I was not arrogant but could not take arrogance lying low. Once all the officers were sitting in temporary officer mess at Jalipa. I was sitting with my close friends Charan Das Kainth, Baldev Singh and Dalbir Singh, (all 2nd Lts.). He was sitting somewhere in the middle. Col. Bakshi was sitting at head of the table. My fork fell down while I was eating. The next day, verma called me to his office and started snubbing me. I told him that I was a soldier, if a rifle would have fallen from my hands, it should have been taken seriously. The next time I told him the subltons were not supposed to salute each other. He asked me, "who told you that?" I explained him that my grandfather and father were commissioned in the years 1909 and 1928. Tussle between us aggravated. One day I told him if he went to civil life, he shall not be absorbed even as a clerk because for being a clerk, one needs some typing standard / speed and if I go back to civil, I shall become a school lecturer or I could even become a college lecturer. He got furious and got me transferred from Delta company, where I was a platoon commander to administration company as a company commander. Now I realize it was all for my good.

September 14 to 18 in the year 1965 were the most difficult and rewarding days of my life. I feel this was like passing gold through fire and purifying it. September 17, 1965 was the most difficult day for me. In the morning at about 9.00 I was sent for a reccy patrolling from village Bhura Kuan to village Karimpura. As soon as we crossed village Bhura Kuan and had hardly moved 100 meters away that an outer house came under artillery shelling. The

Pakistani jawans ran out of this building and entered village Bhura Kuan from the side we had come from. We dropped the idea of going towards village Bhura Karimpura. We want to come to our company position from the other side of the village. We were trapped behind the enemy. We saw the enemy attacking our company position. We could see the backs of the Pakistani soldiers. My prayers helped us come out of the trap. Prayer gave me courage and guidance. On re-joining the company, I saw Col. K.S. Bakshi sitting there. Col. Bakshi told me that they were under attack. As I was talking, we got a second attack from Pakistan side. My company commander Major Kulwinder Singh (later Brigadier) got hit in his right arm. He was evacuated for treatment. I was made the company commander. Soon we were out of ammunition. I walked over to Col. Bakhshi sitting about few meters away from my position in a halfdug bunker. I got some ammunition from him. Soon I came back to my position and dropped bandoliers of ammunition towards the troops. Soon I was informed that these rounds did not fit our rifles / L.M.G.s etc. A state of helplessness crept in. Subedar Shiva Ji kamble, a platoon commander sitting very close to me in a nearby trench advised me to retire. After few minutes, I ordered my troops to stay put in their positions and wait for the enemy to come closer and that we shall fight with bayonets.

I prayed to Guru Gobind Singh Ji that we may die with grace. A kind of miracle occurred that the enemy did not advance an inch from where they were located. They had everything: arms and ammunition and we had only prayers and readiness to die. It seems strange and at time miraculous why they did not advance; even five of their

soldier with rifles, one machine gun and few grenades could kill our entire company. Those 100 minutes of patient wait for the enemy were a great accomplishment for us. (The whole story of war has already given in chapter 1965 war). Here it is sufficient to say that my character was shaped for an ideal life in the coming years. I lived a fearless life later on. Once you see the death face to face and overcome it's fear, the other fears are far less important.

Col. Bakshi offered to get me Mahavir Chakra or Vir Chakra. I requested him to give Mahavir Chakra or Vir Chakra to the soldiers who are to be in the army for many more years; and who are career soldiers. At this stage when I am thinking on spiritual lines, this action on my part was very unselfish. Whenever I think about this incident, it gives me a lot of satisfaction that Hav. Bhim Sain More got Vir Chakra, 50 bighas of land in Maharashtra and retired as an Honorary Captain. With the help of Col Bakshi who had been posted out to army head-quarter I got my self-transferred to a military police unit at Kalka where I stayed till my release on 1st March 1970 and prepared for examinations like I.A.S.

Incident of Mariani:- Before I was transferred to military police, I was in 2 Mahar and commanding the Rear headquarters of our brigade, in a small city, Mariani in Assam state. All the brigade troops used to come to Mariani for further travel by rail. Similarly, officers and other officials on exhausting their leave came to Mariani for going up to Nagaland in the vehicles available there. Col. Vikas Sood was the battalion commander. Major B.K. Das Gupta was the 2 I.C. and Lt. Arun Verma who got injured in September 1965 war had recovered, become a Captain and

was made the Adjutant again. The Adjutant was already allergic to me. After Col. Bakshi was transferred to army headquarter in May 1966, Major Vikas Sood got promoted and was the commanding officer of our battalion. I was too simple, honest and also brave. After the 1965 war, Major Vikas Sood was made company commander of my company and I served under him for a few weeks at village Ratoke after the cease fire. He was a very timid person and poor specimen of a soldier. I saw him wearing two helmets in his bunker. Once two jawans were putting tinned sheds over their bunker, Major Sood got frightened and said, "I think there is enemy machine gun fire." He was very ridiculous and utterly coward. He knew my mind about him. Once I got decorated in November 1965, he started feeling jealous of me. When we went to Nagaland in December end 1966 while on the train, we got the information that our one company is to occupy an airborne position in Nagaland. He called for me. He served me some whisky and tried to patch up. Then slowly he told me his problem. I said straight way, "Sir you don't have a volunteer for that company and you know that I love freedom and I am brave man, I shall happily go there. I managed that company post very well. Our brigade commander, Brigadier Sukhpal Singh and C.O. came to my inspection. The Brigadier was very happy about the atmosphere there. Col. Sood took me aside and said,"you have lot of rum in stock, why don't you send 300 bottles to Battalion headquarter at Merankong." I told him plainly that this was not possible and that was the jawans' rum. He was not happy with me earlier also.

At Mariani there was lot of indiscipline. Some subedars were eating all the ration and selling it in the civil

market. I tried to be strict with them. One day a Mahar soldier picked up a stick and advanced towards me.. I ordered him to be put in quarter guard. After my transfer to police unit at Kalka the C.O 2 Mahar asked for my attachment with Mahar regiment to dispose the case of indiscipline against the said jawan. I joined in the proceedings. My evidence was over and the jawan was jailed to two years in civil imprisonment. I could smell from their behavior that they are going to take action against me for having said something to the jawan that infuriated him. I wrote to Col. Bakshi a four pages long letter about my ill treatment. Later on I came to know that Col Sood had requested Army Head Quarter to grant them the permission to start court martial proceedings against me. Anyhow with Col. Bakshi's influence, Army Head quarters advised the C.O. to dispose of the case at local level in view of the bravery of the officer. 2 Mahar was in Nagaland still in Tuensang area. I was sitting outside the officer mess and enjoying beer. It was like a midday. Col Sood joined me. I did not wish him. The Col. diplomatically said, " Amarjit you don't even wish me." I told the Col. Plainly," that wish was for a friend not an enemy." I further elaborated, " do you think by getting me court martialed you will throw out me out of army. Do you think I shall go to Punjab.? He asked me what shall I do. I told him plainly and confidently, "I shall join underground Naga army and fight against you and yours troops and kill you." On this, he got kind of scared and never asked me to wish him again. At the time I did not have much faith in God but even then, I behaved in a brave manner. I now realize it might be because of prayer of my parents and their wishes for me.

Release from army on 1st March 1970:- I appeared in I.A.S. examination in the year 1968 and in 1969. In 1968 exam, after the interview I lost by a few marks at the time of final selection. The second time I appeared again in October 1969. I hoped to get through I.A.S. or get any other service this time. The results were to be declared in April or May 1970. As I had become a non-optee for permanent commission vide our application in the month of June 1965, I was never called for interview for permanent regular commission. The orders for my release came in the month of February 1970 effective from 1 March 1970. On 1st March I came back home. I reached my Patiala home at about 3.00 in the afternoon. My father had already come to Patiala and he saw me with all the language. He got a little surprised when I told him the whole truth. His worry was that I was 27 years old and still un-married.

Rejection in I.A.S.:- I was very confident of being selected in the I.A.S. this time. I and my maternal uncle were travelling on my scooter coming from Barnala to Patiala. We stopped mid-way on the out skirts of Sangrur city for a cup of tea, very close to where Ranbir college is located. We saw my younger brother Satwant (martyred) there. Satwant took me aside and whispered in my ears, "Brother, the result of I.A.S. was out yesterday and I did not see your name among the successful candidates." It was the biggest shock of my life. I felt disheartened. I started thinking that I was a stupid person that I left the army without ensuring some other job. I felt I could very well stay in the army as a regular officer. It became difficult to ride the scooter but after about 40 minutes of drive near Jahaj Ghar, Patiala I recovered from the shock. My mind said those who are not

army officers or I.A.S. officers also lived prosperous lives. I was ready for struggle again.

In May 1970 I moved from our Patiala house to village Dugal where my parents and younger siblings were living. We did not have tractor at that time. I started taking full interest in the agricultural operations. Those days Canada was open. That one could go to Canada, get temporary visa at the airport and later, on the basis of one's qualification and age etc. one was absorbed and given permanent residency. My parents were against my going to Canada. They thought I was a wise person who could guide my younger siblings.

My brother-in-law was a session judge at Patiala. He knew the president of local Khalsa college Patiala. He assured me that he can get me absorbed as a lecturer there. The interview took place on 9th July 1970 and I was not selected. I had become tough enough to face set-backs bravely.

On July 10 1970 came an advertisement for government college lecturer where in two vacancies were in my subject (political science) and there was 20 % reservation for ex-army officers. I was selected and joined as such at government college Tanda on July 17 1971.

My Marriage:- My father was very keen that I should get married. I gave an advertisement in August 1971 for my marriage. My father was very interested in my wife's family for marriage. In about mid-April 1972 I accompained by my mother and elder sister Rupinder, went to see the girl (my wife). We said yes a and gold ring was gifted to the girl, as a mark of confirmation from us.

As soon as we came back home, my child hood friend Anoop's mother had called a relative to talk to me about marriage of their daughter. This girl was the only daughter of her parents and was to inherit 40 acres of land from her mother. I addressed Anoop's mother as Masi Ji (Aunt). I explained to my masi ji that we had already said 'yes' to a girl this morning only. To this, she said "dear son today's yes or no shall make a difference of 40 acres in your life. Even with all your savings you cannot buy even two acres of land." I told masi ji respectfully that we had said yes and it is very difficult to break the girl's heart. Martin Luther king had said," those who stand for nothing will fall for anything. "I am happy that despite my limited sources I did not scumb to the temptation and stuck to my guns. It was difficult decision though.

Clash with D.C. Patiala (March 1987):- In Punjab there was an Akali government in 1987 and S. Surjit Singh Barnala was the Chief Minister. Our departmental minister was S. Balwant Singh, who was also the finance minister. In circuit house, Patiala a large meeting was being held under the chairmanship of D.C. Shri S.K. Sinha. There were about 100 officers and a lot of media persons. The D.C. was saying that government wants to contribute money for baptizing the Sehajdhari Sikhs. Therefore, all the departments were asked to contribute money. I was asked to contribute Rs. one lakh. We had already given the D.C Rs. 80 thousand a week before. I explained to the D.C. that auctions were coming closer and any obligations taken from the businessmen would adversely affect our auction prospectus. I took time from him and contacted my D.E.T.C S. Amarjit Singh Sidhu and later the E.T.C Shri S,K. Naik. Both the officers did not give me any solid support.

I realized that I would have to fight battle on my own. I came back to the meeting after about 20 minutes. The D.C. again asked me and told me abruptly, "you do not have to be diplomatic on this issue. you either say yes and sit down or say no and go." I got up and said, "in that eventually I humbly say no and I humble go." I folded my hands and bowing my head, I left the place. Later on, some officer friends told me that D.C. had called the C.M. office and conveyed to S. Jai Singh Gill, then Principal Secretary to suspend me for not obeying his orders.

The next day I contacted S. Prem Singh Chandumajra, my friend who was then co-operative minister. Through him I met S. Balwant Singh, Excise & Taxation Minister who called me to his official bungalow. It was morning time about 8.30. He was walking in his lawn. He asked me if I could walk along with him and narrate the whole story. I narrated him the whole story and also asked him to raid my house as well D.C.'s house. I further elaborated by saying that I have been commissioner of a district for many years and I buy my beer from the whole seller. In addition, my wife also works as lecturer at Patiala. We also own reasonable land. My sources were more than of D.C. Patiala. My wife cooked food and we did not have a servant. It would be better if you ask some police agencies to raid my house as well as D.C.'s residence to see what we have in our homes.

I further said I have lived a very honest life in the department and I was the decorated soldier of 1965 war against Pakistan. After hearing the whole story he asked me to follow him to his office. I met him in the office of finance

minister and told him the same story. The hon'ble minister asked me if I could narrate the same story to the C.M. to which I said, "sure I can."

After a few minutes he asked me to follow his car to meet C.M. who sat in Punjab Bhawan for security reasons. After reaching Punjab Bhawan the F.M. asked me to stay in a room adjoined to the C.M's room and asked me to wait. He met the C.M in his office. S. Gurdev Singh Grewal Ex-M.L.A Samana was already sitting with the C.M. regarding some brick klins problem. S Gurdev Singh Grewal knew me from 1976 when I was E.T.O enforcement (centre wing) at Patiala. As the minister narrated the whole story to the C.M. S. Surjit Singh Barnala, S. Grewal intervened to say that S. Amarjit Singh Kaleka was related to him and that his mother is from Kaleka's village. He further said that his father, grandfather and great grandfather were all honest and dependable officers and people of the village swear by their integrity.

He further said that in place of suspending him as recommended by the D.C., if you get a report from D.G.P about Kaleka's dossier that would clarify the situation. The hon'ble C.M. called the D.G.P. In about five minutes time the D.G.P called back the C.M. saying that ,"Kaleka is an honest and dignified officer." On this the whole air was cleared. He addressed the minister saying,"ask Kaleka sahib to relax. We shall take action against he D.C."

Fatal accident:-November 16, 1987, I was A.E.T.C at Gurdaspur but had taken one day leave to go to Chandigarh to help a friend to pick up his new car (Maruti 800). This friend was my neighbor and his name was Dr. Tandon. I was not well. So I requested Dr. Tandon to drive my Fiat car (PB M 5252). It was about 11.00 am, we had crossed the town of

Banur and we were going towards Chandigarh. Our wives were sitting in the back seats. A truck coming from Chandigarh side banged on the right side and hit our car severely. It was a nearly fatal accident. The only thought that came to me at that junction was that, "I collected tax for the state only." In other words I realized I should have utilized some time praying to God.

Till this day I used to think that I was an honest officer and that I was living a complete life. My tongue was cut. We all got injuries. After first aid at Banur, we all took a taxi from Banur and came back to Patiala. For ten days continuously I could not speak. I could not even eat food. I still remember after ten days I asked my wife to make a prantha of desighee. She made a prantha and remember it felt as tasteful as during child hood I used to feel. As a child hood my mother used to make a prantha of desighee and put a piece of mango pickle rolled into prantha which was rapped in an old newspaper.

I had a hair bath in the morning. It was about 10.A.M. I was sitting in my Lal Bagh house (1985-94). My father in law and mother in law used to go to a person whom they addressed as 'Baba Ji'. I had not gone to him. But whenever I had some problem in job I requested my father in law to go to Baba Ji and get the needful done. That day I had a strange and strong urge to invite Baba Ji to my house at 5 in the evening. I did not have Baba Ji telephone number. At exactly 5 in the evening Baba Ji was before my house. Later on Baba Ji told me that at his shop he was attending to the customers and saw my face asking me to be at my place at 5 P.M. Baba Ji had never come to our house. How he reached our house is all spiritualism and much

beyond logic.

As soon as Baba Ji entered our house, I made him comfortable on a sofa and asked him" what can I do for you?" He told me in very simple language that today" you have some work with me and that I have been invited to help you." Realizing that I had called him, I changed the subject and said "yes I invited you. I want to see God, was my first question." To which he replied that you have Guru Granth Sahib in a room and outside you are drinking liquor and eating meat. This is how you want to meet God.

This was a turning point in my life and a great day for me. After this day I made spiritual progress which was not steady. I gave up on drinks and meat at certain times and restarted. 2001 was another fortunate year when I decided to be Amritdhari. I got baptized on 13th April 2001 and after that I never looked back. It has been about 21 years that have never eaten an egg or any non-vegetarian food, beer, liquor or wine. This day the Monday, November 16 1987 proved a great land mark in my evolution spiritually. I and my family made much progress. Both my sons got education in U.S.A and we built businesses in U.S.A. We became socially very respectable and financially stable. We made spiritual progress much beyond our imagination.

Ailments:- Before I discusse my ailments it is very important to tell you about my spiritual progress, I had made before these ailments attacked me one by one. January 13, 2008 is my greatest day spiritually when Guru Nanak Patshah blessed me with his two hands raised. This was in America that this miracle occurred. This darshan (vision) of the Guru Sahib changed my life forever. I started devoting more and more time to praying. I retired from my business in 2007

and distributed our house and property among sons and came back to India permanently where we have more time for ourselves. I did two M.A.s in divinity at the age 67 and 70.

I was getting ready to do P.hd in the year 2014 when the ailments attacked me one after another. But by now I have become spiritually strong and had realized that

It was the God's justice to give me any ailments. Since December 2013 I was feeling a little breathlessness. We went to 2 and 3 doctors in Patiala who advised us to go to Mohali. The details of all ailments have been given in chapter 22. Here I wish to emphasize that I got bravery from 1965 war but by prayers and darshan of Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj I had become spiritually strong enough to deal with pain with confidence. I had realized by now that it is God justice that I got what is due to me by way of ailments.

Heart triple Bypass in March 2014, Cancer in March 2015, Hernia operation in July 2015, Cancer reoccurrence in March 2016 were troublesome physically and some what psychologically but by prayers and Lord's grace I had learnt that

These ailments were due to me because of God's justice, which is perfect. I get what is due to me; good or bad. I have learnt to obey his command.

By 2017, I was back to my role of writing and was in Chardikala. From March 2015 to July 2021, I have had cystoscopy tests twelve times. These tests were painful but

with God's grace nothing is painful. On the operation table itself I remember the words 'ਦੂਖ ਸੂਖ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਦੇਵਨਹਾਰੁ' and the pain goes away.

Chapter 33

My Political Connections

I never tried to make political connections. But God so willed that some people because of my honesty, fair dealing and social behavior started protecting me and patronized me throughout. Bal Krishan Singla has been my close friend since 1956. He has two brothers. One was younger to him named Ram Singla who did a government job. Another brother Sant Ram about five years elder than him was a government official and later on became a politician. He became an M.L.A from Samana in 1977 and then M.P. later on. He became political secretary to Giani Zail Singh who was C.M. Punjab. Later on, Giani Ji became home minister and the president of India. Sant Ram was very close to him. Sant Ram Ji held me in high esteem because of my honesty.

As a close friend, Bal Krishan & his family visited my home near Top Khana gate and also New Lal Bagh Colony. I and my family also visited his place numerable times. His father, Lala Roshan lal Gajebasia also liked me and addressed me as 'Kaka' (son). I still remember when Sant Ram contested election as an M.L.A from congress party for Samana constituency, I was an Excise & Taxation Officer at Ludhiana and my salary was Rs. 1100 a month. I and my wife were to his house near Shahi Samadhan and Lala Roshan Lal Ji was talking about elections and discussing other

preparations. I took out Rs. 1100 and gave it to Lala Roshan Lal Ji, my one-month salary as contribution to the election fund. So affectionately Lala Roshan Lal Ji said," all our relatives in business are giving lot of money but your money is very precious. Just give me Rs 100 and this will lead Sant Ram to victory." Sant Ram along with his family visited my place in all the important functions and marriages of my sons. Bal Krishan had attended my own marriage in 1972.

In September 1980 I was promoted from Excise & Taxation Officer (Excise) Ludhiana to Assistant Excise & Taxation Commissioner, Amritsar district at the recommendation of Late Shri R.C. Kapila who was then the Excise & Taxation Commissioner and always admired me for my honesty. On joining at Amritsar, I started intensive checking of traders and the cinemas houses and also transport companies for tax evasion. After about a week, Shri Brij Bhushan Mehra then speaker in S. Darbara Singh government invited me to his house. He had already invited one or two senior income tax officers at his house. I still remember one of them was a lady officer and her last name was Mahajan, also known to be an honest officer. I was treated like a V.I.P. He told me that he had a friend who wanted to be an A.E.T.C in charge Amritsar district and I had promised him to get him appointed there. Now that I hear about your honesty from all business people, transporters and cinema owners, I am your supporter and "I want you to stay in Amritsar. I can get your wife transferred to Amritsar in three hours." I explained to him my compulsion that Patiala was our home town and I could not be staying at Amritsar for long. After another 15 days he again invited me to his house for a cup of tea and gave a message from S. Darbara Singh (C.M. Punjab also handling our department as Excise and Taxation Minister) saying that "Kaleka has my support." He should not bother about any congress leaders. I could easily infer whom he was referring too.

I was checking and challaning 18 cinemas in the city of Amritsar. Those cinema owners had links with politicians. In the grievances committee meeting held every month, Shri Randhawa then a revenue minister presided over the meeting. Some politicians pointed that Mr. Kaleka was Pro-Congress and waschallaning the cinemas whose owners had links with Shromani Akali Dal. Shri Major Singh Uboke an M.L.A was an Akali. In the monthly meeting I got up to say that there is no Congress family more influential then Kairon family. I had checked and challaned their cinemas. I further said in very confident voice, "while checking and challaning the cinemas I never looked at colour of the turban of owners whether it was blue or white. I have challaned almost all cinemas and after making three challans, I send the cases to the Deputy Commissioner Amritsar who has the power to suspend or cancel the license of a cinema." Ever after relinquishing the charge of the district in 1981 I remained in touch with Mr. Mehra. This political connection was very natural and I made no effort to create it. I have never met, S. Darbara Singh then C.M.

Only once I needed the help of Sant Ram Singla in 1981. I had come to Patiala relinquishing the charge of Amritsar and started working as an A.E.T.C School, Patiala. Shri Hari Ram was then the E.T.C. Patiala was my home district and those days officers were not given their home district as a field posting. Since I had sold my land in village Dugal in 1978 and bought land in Himachal Pardesh in Kangra district in 1979, I requested the E.T.C to change my home district from Patiala to Kangra and my plea was accepted. Now all places in Punjab State were open to me including Patiala.

In 1981 Patiala district was headed by a P.C.S. officer, Shri Kuldeep Singh. Somehow there was some misunderstanding between him and other E.T.O.s Chaudhary Hari Ram then E.T.C. asked me to intervene and get the whole thing sorted out between E.T.O.s and S. Kuldeep Singh. I knew all the E.T.O.s. On my intervention Chaudhary Hari Ram assured me that he will get S. Kuldeep Singh posted out. He got S. Kuldeep Singh transferred out of Patiala district and offered me the post of A.E.T.C in charge Patiala district. We had other departmental officer in Patiala, S. Harnam Singh who was to retire in three months i.e. by 30 November 1981. On my recommendation, The E.T.C. agreed and got S. Harnam Singh posted at Patiala. On his retirement I was given the temporary charge by E.T.C.'s orders. This order was to be confirmed by the government. The minister of our department was a very corrupt man. He had struck a deal to sell the district for some amount and this information somehow leaked out. I asked Sant Ram to help me. He approached the F.C.T and the minister. Sant Ram told the minister that Kaleka was his younger brother and a very honest officer. If he transferred him out and put somewhere else, may be "Kaleka can call a press conference and expose your misdeeds." The minister got scared and confirmed me at Patiala. For all other postings I never had requested any body and they happened so naturally.

In November 1990 I was promoted as D.E.T.C. appeals at Bathinda. I started travelling from Patiala to Bathinda by train / buses. After about six months I requested the then E.T.C, Shri Mishra to transfer me to Patiala against a post of D.E.T.C distillery which was lying vacant. He agreed to do so but never did act.

At that time Shri Shamsher Singh Dullon was the Excise & Taxation Minister under Shri Beant Singh Chief Minister. He was a Harijan from town of Khanna. He had two officers in mind. Anyway, he preferred me and put me as D.E.T.C. Patiala division without even my knowing it. I still remember that I went to his government house at Chandigarh. He told me that he is very happy to put an honest man as D.E.T.C in Patiala division. In October 1992 I wanted to go to America and take six months leave. He invited me to his house and said, "we want you to conduct auctions for the division in March 1993. You may go to America for few days and come back." During the auctions of 1993 he was partner in some of excise business of my

division. He never sought my help. Once I went to him and said, "Sir I had been running from Patiala to Bathinda on buses and trains, you have given me a respectable placement and you never asked me to do anything. Can I do anything in the coming auctions?" He plainly said, "Kaleka Sahib you are an honest officer and are doing everything right and shall do everything right. I am proud of you."

After I and my wife moved to America in 2002, I heard that he had become president of Punjab Pradesh Congress committee. I called him on telephone from there congratulating him. During the telephonic conversation he said," it is good day that a personality of your integrity is calling me to congratulate."

In 1987, I had a problem with D.C. Patiala Shri S.K. Sinha (A full detailed story has also given in chapter 31) S. Gurdev Singh Grewal (then M.L.A Samana) As an E.T.O enforcement central wing, Punjab, Patiala I met S. Gurdev Singh Grewal for the first time in April 1976. He came for the disposal of a challan under section 13 (3) of the sale tax act. He owned a few brick kilns. I remember he came to my office at about 9.00 in the morning and told me that he was a M.L.A from Samana and that his mother was from my village Dugal and that I was related to him. We drank tea together. When it came to disposing the challan, I said the maximum penalty under section 13 (3) was Rs. 500, would he be happy with 300 as penalty." He seemed happy. After that whenever we met each other except for Sat Shri Akal we had no other interaction. In 1987 I had a dispute on

principles of honesty with the D.C. Patiala. He wanted me to collect Rs one lakh and give him. He told me either to say yes and sit down or say no and go. In that case I said," Sir I humbly say no and I humbly go." He was furious. Later on the officers told me that he had called the C.M. and his principal secretary S. Jai Singh Gill to get me suspended for not obeying his orders. The next day I was called by the E.T.M who was also the F.M. S. Balwant Singh. I told him the whole story. He asked me if I could tell the same story to the C.M. Sure, I said. I was taken to C.M. office then in Punjab Bhawan (temporarily). I was asked to wait outside in a room and wait for my call. As the E.T.M. was discussing with C.M, S. Gurdev Singh Grewal who was already with the C.M. in connection with his business as he was a business leader. S. Gurdev Singh Grewal heard the whole story and he intervened. S. Grewal told the C.M. that his mother was from my village Dugal and people regarded their four generations who were officers with lot of respect. He said," sir that you call the D.G.P and get report of Kaleka's dossier. The C.M. called the D.G.P who confirmed in a few minutes time saying, "Kaleka is an honest and dignified officer." On this the C.M. told our E.T.M. to ask Kaleka to relax and said we will take action against the D.C. Such an odd situation was averted with Mr. Grewal's help.

After exhausting my five years leave ex-India, I rejoined my job in July 1998 as D.E.T.C appeals at Patiala. In a few days' time our seniority case came up in the Supreme Court in which there was a status-quo order passed in 1990.

This status-quo was to be vacated. I personally appeared before the Supreme Court and the Hon'ble Judges were kind enough to vacate the stay. On this I was promoted from D.E.T.C to Additional E.T.C. I was given the charge of Additional E.T.C. (sale tax). In a few days' time, the department of our Excise was transferred by the C.M. (Parkash Singh Badal) to S. Adesh Partap Singh Kairon. Strange enough that I got a telephone call from S. Surinder Singh Kairon (father of the Hon'ble minister) asking me to help the minister. In a few days I met the new E.T.M. The first few words he said were, "you did a great job as an A.E.T.C Amritsar in 1980-81 and people still remember you. You stayed in a Panchayat Bhawan for your entire term. There, the people also remember that you used to come to Amritsar by bus in the morning of Monday and go back in the evening of Friday. Our whole family is fond of you." During further discussion I said sir the post of Additional E.T.C. (Excise) is given to D.E.T.C. appeal as additional charge. He ordered my shifting from sale tax to Excise immediately because of my fair reporting. He was very pleased with me and I retired during his tenure in 2001.

Readers must have realized by now that for all these political connections, I never made any effort, yet I had a smooth sailing throughout. The only small difficulty was regarding notification of I.A.S. If I had some time, I could go to a court and get myself notified but at the time, moving to America for the sake of education of my sons was a high priority. During my entire career I never went to give Diwali

gift to these political people. In the department I went to greet two E.T.C.'s when I was an A.E.T.C. and when I was Additional E.T.C. I now realize that I should not have gone.

With utmost love and regard to honest officers and officials I hereby say that honesty is a virtue of high value. It is social virtue and also a spiritual virtue. If there are opponents in your establishment / department, It is more because of their jealousy with you and your popularity. Dishonest officials / officers want to have the money that they are already earning and at the same time they want to become famous. Unfortunately, that does not happen. Be genuinely proud of yourself be satisfied with your character and conduct. When you retire you shall look upon this period with lot of satisfaction as a great "Shubh Karman". The others will only repent for their sins and irregularities.

Role Model

Going through life everyone comes across certain teachers or other people who act as role models and one shapes one's life on the basis of their influence. Their personalities have a great influence in one's intellectual growth. One learns from them and their experience and teachings. In my life I also came across certain teachers at school and college level. Later as an army officer, I also had an opportunity to serve with some dignified and brave officers in 1965 war where I was face to face with death. Serving Excise & Taxation department from the year 1974 to 2001, I got several opportunities to see many senior honest officers guiding me on the right path. I saw some honest officers in the department serving with dignity. I also got the opportunity to train and shape the character of some officers. Without all those references, the book of my life would have remained incomplete.

Two teachers greatly influenced my life into making me an ideal and patriotic person. In July 1953 my parents after the retirement of my father in 1949 moved to our native village Dugal. I studied in the 8th class there. It was a newly upgraded school and had Mr. Amar Nath Gupta as its headmaster. It was Mr Gupta's first assignment as a headmaster. He was an M.A. B.T. He was about 23 years of age and was unmarried. He was very patriotic person and used to narrate us the story of second world war. He also remembered a poem regarding running away of German army in face of British and allied forces. He was an ideal

person. On holidays he used to take our extra class in his rented house in Dugal. I was a very serious and receptive child. In 1954 I and my two sisters moved back to Patiala. I kept in touch with him throughout my life. He recently died at Samana at the age of 85 years.

The second teacher whose personality had a great influence on me was Prof. B.K. Kapoor. He was double M.A and L.L.B. and taught me Political Science from 1956 to 1963 at Mohindra College, Patiala. He was also very patriotic and used to wear a Khadi bush-shirt. He was a simple, honest and very hard-working teacher. My decision to go to army was greatly influenced by his teachings of patriotism. While I went to army and did other jobs, I remained in touch with him. He donated all his property in charity. A few years back he died at the age of 101 years. He had two sons both living in America. I and my family visited him at his house no. 90-c Model Town, Patiala. I used to encourage my sons also to go to him and learn the idealistic way of life. Physically he was handsome and tall. He cycled a lot. He was a likeable teacher.

I joined pre-commissioned training in 1963 after finishing my M.A. and was commissioned in May 1964. I stayed in army till 1 March 1970 and served under five Cols. My ideal boss was Col. Kanwar Sain Bakhshi. I respected him the most and he treated me like his son. He is now 97 years old and living with his son, Hamir Bakshi in Secunderabad. In the chapter of this book named 1965 war, there are lot of details about him and his bravery. Here it is sufficient to say that he is truthful man and acted very bravely in 1965 war. On September 17, 1965 my company commander Major Kulwinder Singh (later Brigadier) requested him to come to

company position, while we were under attack from the Pakistani forces. Before my eyes, the company commander got injured at about 3.30 P.M. in the right arm and he was a evacuated. Col. Bakshi asked me, if I could command the company. On the assurance that I could, he made me the company commander. I was only a 2nd Lt. with 16 months of service. He was so relaxed and sat in a half dug, still uncovered bunker. As the ammunition was exhausted, I walked over to him with confidence and asked for some ammunition. He gave me the ammunition which I distributed among my men. This ammunition did not prove useful as we were on old arm / ammunition .303 and this ammunition was 7.62 caliber that was introduced in the Indian army in 1964-65 but not all battalions were on this new ammunition. A Subedar, Shiva Ji kamble, a platoon commander sitting close to my trench suggested to me to retire. I thought over it and decided to stick to guns and be ready to fight with the enemy with bayonets when the enemy attacked us. Those hundred minutes i.e. 4 P.M. to about 6 P.M were very crucial in my life. I was ready to die. I prayed to Guru Gobind Singh Ji to give me strength to die bravely and without feeling the fear and pain of death. At about 6 P.M, our two tanks came to support us. The officers sitting on the tanks asked me the where abouts of the enemy. I directed him by hand signals. After a few minutes, when the tanks moved over the enemy location firing shells and small arms, the enemy ran away saying "Allah Hoo Akbar." Col. Bakshi came out of his bunker and embraced me and offered me either Mahavir Chakra or Vir Chakra. Instead, I recommended Vir Chakra for Hav. Bhim Sain More, who got Vir Chakra and also ten acres of land in Maharashtra state. I was also later awarded gallantry award, "Mentioned in dispatches." Despite his persuasion that I should stay on in the army I explained to him that for my habits and character I was better cut out for a civil job, which would give me more freedom and family life. I became a college professor and remained as such for three years i.e. 1971 to 1974 and taught political science to degree students at government college Tanda and government college Nabha. This was a government regular job. On the basis of P.C.S Executive exam held in December 1972, I was selected and appointed as an Excise & Taxation Officer From 1974 to 2001 I remained in Excise & Taxation department starting as an Excise & Taxation Officer in 1974 and retired as Additional Excise & Taxation Commissioner, the highest rank that a departmental officer could reach.

Excise & Taxation Department was a very challenging department. I met some really outstanding officers under whom I served. There were others who were my equals and were living a graceful life. There were others, whom I was happy to train them into notable officers. The inclusion of their names and reference shall definitely make this book more graceful and readable.

On my first job as an Excise & Taxation Officer (E) Centre wing, I met S. Manmohan Singh Ghuman then Assistant Excise & Taxation Commissioner, a very honest and hard-working officer. S. Manmohan Singh Ghuman started his career as an Excise Inspector in 1954 and retired as a Joint Excise & Taxation Commissioner in January 1987. He became my very good friend and guided me during service. I am still in touch with him and he is over 94 years of age. Though S. Mohinder Singh Paul had already retired as

Assistant Excise & Taxation Commissioner, our departmental people remembered him as a very honest officer. During the same period, we had an I.A.S officer Mr. Karl Ready who was also a very honest man.

In 1980 Shri R.C. Kapila was the Excise & Taxation Commissioner. It is he who got me promoted from Excise & Taxation Officer to Assistant Excise & Taxation Commissioner and put me in charge of Amritsar district in September 1980. Sh. Kapila was a reputed officer. During the same period (1977-1981) I served under S. Surinder

Singh Giani an honest officer, who was A.E.T.C. at Ludhiana, where I worked as E.T.O (Assessing Authority) and E.T.O (Excise) and he was D.E.T.C. Jalandhar Division, when I was A.E.T.C. at district Amritsar (1980-1981).

In 1990 Shri Suresh Kumar, I.A.S was Joint Excise & Taxation Commissioner. He is very honest and a rare person of idealistic values. The fragrance of his genuineness and honesty is felt though out the state of Punjab. He held very important assignments in the state. Even now after retirement he is helping the Chief Minister, Punjab as Chief Principal Secretary. He was kind enough to release my autobiography (Orak Nibhi Preet) in Punjabi on 6 April 2019 at Punjabi University, Patiala.

Just before my retirement our commissioner was Sardar. D.S. Kalha whose personality impressed me a lot. I met Sardar kalha for the first time in 1987 when he was Deputy Commissioner Gurdaspur and I was Assistant Excise & Taxation Commissioner, Gurdaspur. Despite his coming from a rich background, he was very humble and totally honest. In 2001, when I retired, he was the Excise & Taxation Commissioner and he spoke laudable words on my

retirement.

In addition to these names there are other officers whose respectable reference is very important for me.

- S. Jarnail Singh, Deputy Excise & Taxation Commissioner (Retd_
- 2. Mrs. S.K. Riar, P.C.S (Retd)
- 3. S. Shiv Dular Singh Dhillon, I.A.S (Retd)
- 4. Mrs. Kanchan Chawla, Deputy Excise & Taxation Commissioner (Retd.)
- 5. S. Jai Singh Sidhu, Deputy Excise & Taxation Commissioner.
- 6. Giani Santokh Singh, E.T.O (Retd.)

S. Jarnail Singh joined our department as an Excise & Taxation Officer when I was Assistant Excise & Taxation Commissioner in charge of Patiala district from 1982 to 1987. I utilized his services as an assessing authority Samana, assessing authority Rajpura and Excise & Taxation Officer, (Excise) Patiala district and also gave him training. He has proved to be an asset to the department. His impact was such that businessmen wrote to other businessmen that "you may send goods at your own risk. You should remember that S. Jarnail Singh is an Excise & Taxation Officer here."

Mrs. Surinder Riar, joined our department when I was Assistant Excise & Taxation Commissioner, school in 1981-82. Later on, when I was Assistant Excise & Taxation Commissioner Patiala from 1982 to 1987, we worked together for many years. She was very honest. Her language has been very good and she had hold over her work as an assessing authority. Additionally, I had given her the charge of establishment.

S. Shiv Dular Singh Dhillon's father S. Prithi Singh Dhillon came close to me when I was E.T.O at Ludhiana (1977 to 80). I respected him for his integrity and he too respected me being of the same class. During his job as an Excise & Taxation officer, S. Shiv Dular Singh Dhillon was very honest, serious and responsible. His performance was exemplary even during training. He had the guts to challenge and challan the Excise & Taxation Commissioner, Haryana carrying liquor through Punjab illegally. He detected many big cases. The list of that is very long but the reference of Red Rose distillery Mohali is very important. In this case he detected lakhs of liters of illegal liquor. Despite pressure from the senior officers, he remained steady. The distillery was sealed. The case became so famous that even during current times a campaign is being started against illegal liquor and the name of campaign is operation 'Red Rose'. Modern days Excise officers are being asked to follow the example of S. Shiv Dular Singh Dhillon. Later on, as P.C.S. and I.A.S officer he worked on very important positions as S.D.M, Nabha, A.D.C., Patiala, D.C. at Shri Fathegarh Sahib and Shri Amritsar Sahib. In addition, he headed some other departments. A few months back he has retired and impressed with his performance, the Punjab Government has appointed him as an advisor in Tourism and Culture department.

I know Mrs. Kanchan Chawla who was an E.T.O where as I was Assistant Excise & Taxation Commissioner Amritsar in 1980-1981. I respect her for her honesty and courage. She was sent to inspect a transport company owned by an ill-reputed transporter in 1981.

S. Jai Singh Sidhu was about 15 years senior to me in

age. He came from a noted family of Ram Pura Phul. He started his career as a clerk and rose to be a Deputy Excise & Taxation Commissioner. He was very gentle, honest and humble officer. He was blessed with two daughters and a son all well settled.

Giani Santokh Singh retired as an Excise & Taxation Officer is about 95 years now. He started his career as a clerk and retired as an Excise & Taxation Officer. I saw him bringing food in a small tiffin. He used to come on a cycle always. Since he is devoted to praying, his nature and looks are like a saint. I am proud of being close to him.

Soldier of God

Life is a race. We all human beings are athletes. The athlete first warms-up. He then runs fast. Then at last he sprints. That's how I started my life. I warmed up in army. After three years of teaching in two colleges, 22 years of excise and the 13 years of life as the businessman in the US, I and my wife came back to Patiala in 2010 to live a purely retired life having distributed our property in U.S. between our two sons. These jobs as an Asst. Prof. and later on in Excise & Taxation department from E.T.O. to Additional E.T.C. and also as a businessman in U.S.A. were my second stage.

Now the sprint starts. I did two MAs (2010 and 2013) to understand spirituality. It looks like I passed the God's exam from 2013 to 2016 by going through ailments in the spirit of Chardikala (High Morale). Heart triple bypass in March 2014, cancer in March 2015, Hernia operation in July 2015, cancer reoccurrence in March 2016 were trouble some physically and some what psychologically but by prayers and Lord's grace I had by now learnt that 'ਦੂਖ ਸੂਖ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਦੇਵਨਹਾਰੂ' (these ailments were due to me) because of God's justice, which is perfect. I get what is due to me; good or bad. I have learnt to obey his command,

ਹੁਕਮਿ ਮੰਨਿਐ ਹੋਵੈ ਪਰਵਾਣੂ ਤਾ ਖਸਮੈ ਕਾ ਮਹਲੂ ਪਾਇਸੀ॥

By 2017 I was back to my role of writing and was in Chardikala.

Prayers have a lot to contribute to this. The good deeds done in my past years also elevated my spirit. I was a fortunate person who was born into a good cultured and honest family. I had good parents, grandparents and other ancestors. My elders were God fearing people and prayed a lot. God's hand was always with me. It also gives me lot of peace. Army's gallantry award does not generate egoism anymore. Now I consider it was the mercy of God and I am thankful to God. At this old age, I find Gurbani to be only his blessings. This is his appreciation of my obedience of his 'Hukam' that now I know the purpose of my life.

Right now, after writing five personal/social books, I have to write about the Lord and his loved ones. That is the main purpose of my life now. Now the Lord and the Guru are my relatives. My Rehbar or spiritual guide is Guru Nanak Dev Ji. After Guru Nanak's blessing in America, on January 13,2008 my mind has completely changed and become strong and the inner soul has been blessed with a state of gratefulness and humility. Going from of this world does not seem to me as death, but it is like going back to my home. My fear of illness or suffering is almost gone. I'm preparing a little road for myself. My future is very good and some years of humility, prayers and hard work will make it even better. Throughout this journey I have to walk with my Lord's grace and Guru's teaching. My seriousness, hard work, philanthropy and humility are my tools.

Out of love of my mother land, I had joined army. Facing war as a soldier in September 1965 made me a seasoned soldier. Rest of my life, I remained a soldier steadfast, honest and dedicated. A nearly fatal accident turned me towards God. For the sake of education of my two sons I spent about 13 years in U.S.A. In America I was called Captain Singh. I did businesses like an honest and straight soldier. Shedding shyness I did two M.A.s in divinity at age 68 and 71. 2014 onwards I faced lot of ailments in the spirit of a brave soldier. From 2017 onwards I am writing books and distributing them free of cost. The last phase of my life, I am a bhagat of God, a Sikh of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, and a soldier of God. I remained a soldier throughout.

The Journey of my soul started with Garoor (Pride) to Saroor (Spiritual bliss) was a great journey, highly cumbersome but greatly rewarding.

The two factors that contributed to this two sided love of God and bhagat one the human effort (ਉਦਮ) and His grace (ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ). In Udham (efforts) the army soldering contributed a lot. Army made me steady and kept me in Chardikala. Even now I work with the zeal of a missionary.

I need the blessings of all of you all the time. I am a normal human being. I have no knowledge. I am neither a scholar nor a saint. I am a serious person who suffered everything on his body. I have crossed 80 years of life and I am trying to live a moral life. On the way I have also committed errors which are called sins in spiritual language. There is a famous proverb in English saying 'To err

is human and to forgive is divine'. I am asking forgiveness from God and members of society. Here I am also seeking blessing from the good Godly souls so that I may meet Lord the Almighty

॥ ਦੇਹੁ ਸਜਣ ਅਸੀਸੜੀਆ ਜਿਉ ਹੋਵੈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿਉ ਮੇਲੁ॥ (SGGS 12)

Your blessing will empower me, it is my firm belief.

About the Author

D.O.B : January 13, 1943

Education: M.A. (Pol. Sci., Religious Studies, Sikhs Studies

Career: Joined as an Army Officer in 1963

Decorated in 1965 War

Asstt. Prof. (Pol. Sci.) at Punjab Govt. Colleges at Tanda & Nabha (1971-74)

Joined as ETO in 1974 on the basis of PCS Exam held in Dec. 1972 Retired as Addl. Excise & Taxn. Commissioner in January, 2001

Pursued Business in America 1993-98 & 2002-2010

Hobbies: Golfing, Gardening & Spiritual reading

A Soldier: for ever a Soldier, is a classic Autobiographical account of a life well lived. Capt. Amarjit Singh Kaleka, an officer and a Gentleman, always known to take challenges head on, exhibited rare qualities of rectitude, courage and devotion to duty, with a firm faith in the Almighty, in all the varied fields in which he played various roles with exemplary commitment and passion. A gallant Army Officer, a Civil Servant known for his integrity, a principled Business entrepreneur, a passionate farmer, a responsible son, a devoted husband, a doting father, a scholar of divinity - there is not a single role, that he did not play out with distinction. And all this, while battling serious ailments of heart and even cancer. Not for a moment did he show traces of fear, nor did he ever allow them to make him deviate from his higher purpose.

Shivdular Singh Dhillon IAS (Retd.) Patiala

Sardar Kaleka's writing is 'straight from the heart' rendering of an unblemished unadulterated life of a 24-carat gold person. (A rarity these days).

S.P. Singh IAS (Retd. Chandigarh)













ਇਸੇ ਕਲਮ ਤੋਂ