

Research Report

DID GURU NANAK TRAVEL UP TO ISTANBUL, TURKEY?*

Where East Ends & West Starts

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ABSTRACT

In previous publications* Prof Devinder Singh Chahal reported a discovery of a monument with an inscription in which the last word of the first line appeared as 'NANAK'. However, it was also reported that it is necessary to confirm if this word 'NANAK' represents Guru Nanak. If it is so then it would confirm his travels up to Istanbul, Turkey, which is often quoted in some *Janam Sakhis* (Biographies of Guru Nanak). The Research Project to verify if the word 'NANAK' stands for Guru Nanak was taken up by the *Institute for Understanding Sikhism*. A team of two researchers, Professor Devinder Singh Chahal and Dr Avtar Singh Dhaliwal took up this task during May 8-22, 2007 in collaboration with Mr Tugrul Biltekin, First Secretary, Embassy of Republic of Turkey, Ottawa. Prof Dr Yurdagül Mehmedoglu and Prof Dr Suleyman Derin were appointed as the Liaison Officers between the *Institute for Understanding Sikhism* and the Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University, Uskudar, Istanbul by the Dean, Prof Dr Raşit KÜÇÜK. Our research revealed that what was apparent as NANAK is in fact KHANIK(N) in which the hook of letter 'Khey' of Arabic Alphabet was damaged by the weathering Agencies. Therefore, it is the inscription about the Emperor Abd-al-Majid Khanak(n) and has nothing to do with Guru Nanak's travel to Istanbul. However, this does not mean that it rules out the possibility of visit by Guru Nanak to Turkey. Besides Prof Chahal delivered a talk on '**Guru Nanak's Concept of God and his Travels in the Middle East**' to the Faculty and the students of Faculty of Divinity of Marmara University, Istanbul and also to that of Selcuk University in Konya, the city of shrine of famous Sufi, Mevlana (Maulana) Jalaluddin Rumi. These were the first lectures on Guru Nanak ever delivered in Turkish universities. We learned a lot about the System of Education of Islamic Studies introduced in Turkish universities by the Government of Republic of Turkey to establish secularism in Turkey. The *Institute for Understanding Sikhism* is highly indebted to the Government of Republic of Turkey; Faculty of Divinity of the Marmara University and that of Selcuk University, Konya; Department of Archeology, Istanbul; and different Research Centers for Islamic Studies for their collaboration and hospitality extend to us.

INTRODUCTION

It is well established fact that Guru Nanak (1469-1539) has travelled extensively throughout the South Asia and Middle East. He has promulgated a unique and universal philosophy of humanism in the Indian subcontinent when renaissance was taking place on European continent (14th to 16th centuries) and scientists were challenging illogical religious concepts and beliefs. He held discussions with religious leaders – Hindus (Brahmans, *Sidhs* and *Jogis*), Muslims (Sufis, Mullahs and

Qazis), *Jains* and Buddhists in India, Middle East, Tibet and Ceylon. During his travels (odysseys, *Udasis*) Guru Nanak challenged the ancient mythology, wrong religious concepts and rituals with which the peoples of South Asia and Middle East were shackled for centuries.

Although there are many gaps in the travels of Guru Nanak, Fauja Singh and Kirpal Singh, Sikh historians, have collated the information from various sources into three major travels as follows [3]:

*Previous work about the discovery of word NANAK in an inscription on a monument in Istanbul, Turkey was published in various journals, Web sites, and newspapers. The first part of this Research Report is based on my Previous article [1].

1. From Talwandi to Sultanpur to Benaras to Dhubri to Assam to Dacca to Ceylon to Ujain to Mathura to Talwandi.
2. From Talwandi to Kailash (Sumer) Parbat to Talwandi.
3. From Talwandi (some says from Kartarpur) to Hinglaj to Mecca to Baghdad to Kabul to (Talwandi) Kartarpur.

Besides the above travels there are many short ones in Punjab and adjoining areas.

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Fauja Singh and Kirpal Singh [3] have mentioned that according to '*Janam Sakhis*' (biographies of Guru Nanak) by Meharban and Bhai Mani Singh, Guru Nanak had travelled to Palestine, Syria, and **Turkey** although there is no definite supporting evidence. Some writers of *Janam Sakhis* have extended his travels even to some countries in Central Asia. Nonetheless, it is evident from the information collected by Fauja Singh and Kirpal Singh that the complete travels of Guru Nanak are still to be discovered.

According to Fauja Singh and Kirpal Singh [3], Guru Nanak boarded a boat which sailed from Sonmiani through Gulf of Eden and Red Sea to Jeddah (Al Aswad), a port near Mecca. They say that after visiting Mecca and Medina Guru Nanak traveled directly to Baghdad in Iraq then to Tehran and Kabul and finally back to (Talwandi) Kartarpur. They argued that Guru Nanak followed direct and shortest route to Baghdad than that of long route through Palestine, Syria, and Turkey as mentioned in some *Janam Sakhis*.

According to them Guru Nanak started his travel from Talwandi to Sultanpur to meet his sister before proceeding to a long travel. From Sultanpur he went to Pakpattan (Ajodhan) to renew his old contacts with Sheikh Ibrahim Farid II. From there he proceeded to Multan to meet Baha-ud-Din, a descendant and successor of famous Sheikh Baha-ud-Din Zakria, founder of *Suhrawardhy Sufi Silslah* in India. From Multan Guru Nanak proceeded to Uch (Deogarh). Here Guru Nanak had a meeting with Sheikh Haji Abdulla Bukhari (d. 1526 CE), a successor of Kalal-ud-Din Bhukhari.

From Uch Guru Nanak went to Sukkur then to Lakhpat (Basta Bander) probably by boat (in river Sind?). There is an old Gurdwara in the memory of Guru Nanak's visit. Mr Sukhvair Bilkhu reports about Gurdwara Sahib Lakhpat at page 30.

From here he proceeded to the seashore where at Kuriani he visited old temples of Koteswar and Narayna Swami. From there he proceeded further to Sonmiani (or simply Miani). Before boarding a boat to Mecca he visited a Hindu temple in Hinglaj. There is a Nanak Dharamsala (inn) in this town.

However, Dr Trilochan Singh [4] has reported that there are some indications that Guru Nanak visited Cairo (Egypt) where during the World War II Sikh soldiers were shown a place on the outskirts of the town where there was a stone memorial (Captain Bhag Singh, Founding Managing Editor of the Sikh Review, was told about the existence of this monument when he was at Cairo during World War II. Unfortunately he could not go there to confirm the information and to see.). Dr Trilochan Singh [4] has also reported from the work of Sydney Nettleton Fisher [2] that in Egypt or in Istanbul (Turkey) Guru Nanak had met the Emperor of Rum (Ottoman), Salim (1511-1520 CE). Dr Trilochan Singh further says that Guru Nanak might have visited Jerusalem.

Because of a lack of any solid evidence, Fauja Singh and Kirpal Singh [3] further strengthened their views that the shortest route from Baghdad to Mecca for Hajj was first marked and prepared for Khalifa Harun Rashid's wife, Zubaida Begum, for Hajj (the pilgrimage) to Mecca. And then during 14th century Ibn Batula adopted the same route for his journey from Baghdad to Mecca.

They have ignored the fact that the passage to Palestine, Syria, and Turkey and then to Baghdad might be easier than that of direct route proposed by them. They have also ignored another fact that while in Mecca Guru Nanak was very close to the center of ancient civilization in Cairo (Egypt) and center of Jews, Jerusalem (Israel), and a Sufi center established by Hazrat Mevlana (Moulana) Jalaluddin Rumi in Konya (Turkey), whose philosophy was very prevalent not only in the Middle East but also in India and now in the West. Since Guru Nanak has not left any place connected with Sufism, and religious centers, therefore, there is every possibility that Guru Nanak might have visited the ancient civilization in Cairo (Egypt), Wailing Wall of Herod's Temple in Jerusalem, Sufi center started by Hazrat Mevlana (Moulana) Jalaluddin Rumi in Konya (Turkey) and might have met the Emperor of Rum (Ottoman), Salim, in Cairo or Istanbul (Turkey).

NEW DISCOVERY

I (Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, abbreviated as DSC) was attending an International Conference on Bio-energy in Istanbul, Turkey in 1994 where I also presented my research work on the '*Production of Ethanol as a Source of Energy from Wood*'. On the last day of the conference all the participants went on a cruise in the Straits of Bosphorus (Bosporus), connecting the Black Sea and the

Sea of Marmara (about 32 km) long. The Straits of Bosphorus is an important place where East Ends (Mainland of Turkey on Asian Continent) and the West starts (Istanbul on European Continent).

On my return from the cruise, when I was walking towards the bus waiting for us, I discovered a big monument. This monument is about 12 ft high and about 5 ft wide constructed in mortar. It is situated in a public park at the shore of the Straits of Bosphorus on European Continent, Istanbul, Turkey. It has some inscription in Arabic/Persian Alphabet. When I looked at the inscription on this monument I found ‘Nanak’ inscribed at the end of the first line of its inscription. The bulk of inscription is not legible because of the effect of weathering agencies and there are some small and big cracks which were filled with cement. Moreover, it is in old Turkish language in Arabic alphabet that is difficult to read. However, I was able to read “Nanak” for sure since I know Arabic alphabet and I decided to take a picture of the monument with its inscription for further investigation later. Next morning I came back home to Canada.

On my return I consulted a student of mine from Turkey to decipher the inscription. She showed her inability to decipher because it was not legible. Then I tried a couple of more persons from Turkey without any success. Further research to decipher its inscription remained dormant for 12 years till I visited Lahore, Pakistan to participate in an International Conference on Guru Nanak Heritage for Peace on February 18, 2006 [1].

THE INSCRIPTION

I found the importance of the monument only when Mr. Iqbal Qaiser, the author of a book, ‘Sikh Shrines in Pakistan’, and Mr. Syed Afzal Haider, Senior Advocate of Supreme Court of Pakistan, and the author of a book, ‘Baba Nanak’, helped me to decipher the first line of the inscription, which is in Turkish language. It indicated that it is dedicated to Guru Nanak. The first line deciphered by Mr Iqbal Qaiser is as follows [1]:

In Turkish language

(Transliterated in Gurmukhi Script):

ਜਹਾਂਗੀਰ ਜਮਾਂ ਹਿੰਦ ਲਤ ਅਬਦ ਅਲ ਮਜੀਦ ਨਾਨਕ ।

(*Jehangir jaman hind lat abd al majid Nanak.*)

Meanings in Punjabi:

ਜਮਾਨੇ ਦਾ ਮਾਲਕ, ਹਿੰਦ ਦਾ ਬੰਦਾ, ਰੱਬ ਦਾ ਨਾਨਕ ।

(*jamanay da malik, hind da banda, rab da Nanak*)

Meanings in English:

The Lord of the time, resident of India, Nanak – the man of God.

The rest of the long inscription is not legible and is still to be deciphered.

If the inscription on the newly discovered monument

confirms that it is a memorial to Guru Nanak then it would confirm that Guru Nanak did not proceed from Mecca directly to Baghdad but went to Cairo, Jerusalem, Syria, and Konya and Istanbul in Turkey and then to Baghdad as shown in dotted lines in Fig. 4 in Ref. # 1.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Keeping in view that the last word in the first line of inscription on this discovered monument is NANAK it necessitated to prepare a research project to verify if the word NANAK stands for the name of GURU NANAK and the interpretation of the first line by Mr Iqbal Qaiser as given above is correct, the *Institute for Understanding Sikhism* took up this research project on the following lines:

MAIN OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this project were as follows:

- Is this inscription about Guru Nanak’s visit to Turkey?
- If the inscription is about Guru Nanak then what is the complete message?
- Is it a memorial constructed in commemoration of Guru Nanak? And so on.

The above objectives were studied on the following lines of research:

- Since the monument was discovered about 13 year ago (in 1994), therefore, it was necessary to relocate the site of the monument.
- To discover the original inscription of that monument and with the help of Department of Archeology and the Municipality of Istanbul and deciphering it into English and Punjabi.
- To deliver a talk on ‘*Guru Nanak’s Concept of God and his Travels in Middle East*’ to the Faculties of Divinity at Marmara University, Istanbul, and Selcuk University, Konya, Turkey.
- To search for evidence of meeting of Guru Nanak with Emperor of Rum (Ottoman), Salim, in Istanbul as reported by Dr Trilochan Singh [4] by quoting the reference of work of Sydney Nettleton Fisher [2]. And to discover any information related to the visit of Guru Nanak in Turkey.
- To visit shrines of Hazrat Mevlana (Moulana) (Jalaluddin Rumi to discover the possibilities of discourse of Guru Nanak with the then religious leaders of his shrine of that time.

APPROACH

I contacted Mr. Tugrul Biltekin, First Secretary in the Embassy of Republic of Turkey in Ottawa, Canada (Fig. 1). He arranged my contact with the Dean, Prof Dr Raşit KÜÇÜK and Vice Dean, Prof Dr İlyas ÇELEBİ of the Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University, Bağlarbasi Kampusu, 34662 Uskudar, Istanbul.



Fig. 1. (Left) Mr. Tugrul Biltekin, First Secretary in the Embassy of Republic of Turkey in Ottawa, Canada. (Right) Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, President, IUS.



Fig. 2. (Left) Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, President IUS. (Right) Prof Yurdagul Mehmedoglu, Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University, Uskudar, Liaison Officer.



Fig. 3. (L to R) Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, IUS; Dean, Prof Dr Raşit KÜÇÜK, Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University, Bağlarbasi Kampusu, 34662 Uskudar, Istanbul; Dr Avtar Singh Dhaliwal, IUS; and Prof Suleman Derin, Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University, Liaison Officer.

My (DSC) first contact in the office of the Dean, Prof Dr Kucuk, was with Prof Dr Yurdagul Mehmedoglu, who had just finished her term of Vice Dean (Fig. 2). The next contact was with Prof Dr Ali Kose who forwarded my request to Prof Dr Suleyman Derin. The Dean agreed to appoint Prof Dr

Mehmedoglu and Prof Dr Derin as the Liaison Officers between the Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University and the *Institute for Understanding Sikhism* (IUS) (Fig 3).

Marmara University (*Marmara Üniversitesi*) is a

public university in Turkey. It has succeeded in becoming the second largest university in the whole country. The University's mission is to impart and promote knowledge and values consistent with universal standards, to meet the technological, social and cultural challenges of a global society, to contribute to the creation of an informed society, which learns about and shares this knowledge and values and to emphasize the European dimension in the delivery of educational opportunities. The present Rector (University President) of Marmara University is Prof Dr Necla Pur since July 2006.

Faculty of Divinity of Marmara University

I consider it would be incomplete report if I don't describe the setup of Faculty of Divinity. The Faculty of Divinity is divided into three Departments housed in four different big buildings of three stories each, one main Administration Building housing the Dean and the Vice Deans plus lecture rooms, classrooms and an auditorium provided with audiovisual aids.

Total Number of Professors, Associate Professor, Assistant Professors. and Assistants in all the Fields: 120

Major Scientific Areas:

1. Department of Basic Islamic Sciences.
 - a. Interpretation (*tefsir*) of Qur'an
 - b. Hadith
 - c. Islamic Law
 - d. Islamic Theology
 - e. Islamic Sects
 - f. Islamic Mysticism
 - g. Arabic Languages and Rhetoric
2. Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies
 - a. History of Philosophy
 - b. Islamic Philosophy
 - c. Philosophy of Religion
 - d. Logic
 - e. History of Religions
 - f. Sociology of Religion
 - g. Psychology of Religion
 - h. Religious Education.
3. Department of Islamic History and Islamic Arts
 - a. Islamic History
 - b. History of Turkish Islamic Arts
 - c. Turkish Islamic Literature
 - d. Turkish Religious Music.

Here again I would like to mention that I have not noticed such a great Faculty of Divinity for Sikh Studies in any university in Punjab or India.

Some of my other observations

There is a cafeteria for the faculty where lunch and tea are served at nominal rates. For example, a reasonable

good lunch was available at the cost of C\$ 3.00. It was the same lunch for everybody.

Almost all the Professors were wearing European dresses and most of the male Professors were wearing ties and were clean-shaved. However, I noticed that the women students were wearing long robes or coats and most of them have their heads covered with hijabs and then with caps or hats. But at the Faculty of Divinity, Selcuk University, Konya the women students were not wearing any cap or hat over the hijab (Fig 7).

Every Professor has a big office with enough shelves for their books, tables, chairs and Internet excess for the computer. Wherever we went to see some Professors first thing offered was tea before we started to discuss anything. Some Professors have facilities to prepare tea in their own office, like Dr Ali Ulvi Mehmedoglu, who would come to his office at 8 AM and would go home at 8 PM. Whenever we went to his office tea was offered within no time.

Lectures

Prof Dr Yurdagul Mehmedoglu had arranged my lecture, *Guru Nanak's Concept of God and his Travel*, after consulting the Vice Dean, Prof Dr İlyas ÇELEBİ.

I, Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, President of Institute for understanding Sikhism, delivered the above lecture to the students and faculty at 3 PM on May 11, 2007 in the Auditorium of the Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University. I was introduced by Prof Mehmedoglu in Turkish language. I delivered my talk in English, which was being simultaneously interpreted into Turkish language by Dr Mehmet Toprak since most of the students and some Faculty members did not understand English (Fig. 6). There was a good question-answer session after the lecture.

Dr İlyas Celebi, Vice Dean, honored me with a Kütahya (China) Platter of Marmara University in a beautiful box (Fig. 4). In response I honored Vice Dean, Dr Celebi, on behalf the IUS with a Crystal Platter (Fig 6). I also honored Dr Mehmedoglu with a Crystal Platter (Fig. 5). I also presented a set of books on Sikhism published by the IUS to the Vice Dean, Dr Celebi, Dr Mehmedoglu and Dr Derin. I promised that all the future publications of the IUS will be sent to the Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University.

I was told by Prof Mehmedoglu that I was the first to talk about Guru Nanak and his philosophy in this university. The lecture was accepted very well. The IUS has developed very good academic relationship with the Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University at Uskudar and the Selcuk University at Konya.



Fig. 4. (Right) Prof Ilyas Celebi, Vice Dean, Faculty of Divinity, Marmarma University presenting Kutahya (China) Platter to Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, President, IUS.



Fig. 5. (Right) Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, President, IUS presenting a Crystal Platter to Prof Yurdagul Mehmedoglu, Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University (Left).



Fig. 6. Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, President, IUS (Center) presenting a Crystal Platter to Prof Ilyas Celebi, Vice Dean, Faculty of Divinity, Marmarma University (Right). Dr Mehmet Toprak (Left), who interpreted my lecture into Turkish language.



Fig. 7. Dr Hulya Kucuk (Center with Black turban and Shawl), Prof Devinder Singh Chahal on her right and Dr Avtar Singh Dhaliwal on her left, Dr Nermin Ozturk 3rd from right, and her graduate students in front row from left - Betul Guclu 2nd, Hilal Sezer 3rd, and Hatice Caker, 4th, and other students.

Visit to the Faculty of Theology in Istanbul University

On May 14 Prof Yurdagul Mehmedoglu took us to the Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University at 5 PM where I explained the work of the IUS and also presented a set of books published by the IUS to Prof Dr Sinasi Gunduz, Prof of History of Religion and to the Prof Dr Cafer Sadik Yaran, Vice Dean.

Both of them were familiar with Sikhism. Dean Prof Yaran told me that he wrote an essay on Sikhism during his graduate school. Prof Gunduz has written a short chapter on Sikhism in his recent book. I had a quick glance in it. It was in Turkish language and as he explained from which I could figure out that it was quite brief and very preliminary and traditional information about Sikhism. I decided that a copy of *UNDERSTANDING SIKHISM – The Research Journal* will be sent regularly to both the libraries of both the Marmara and Istanbul Universities.

Lecture and Discussion at the Faculty of Divinity, Selcuk University, Konya

On May 17 we met Prof Dr Abdullah Ozbek, Culture and Religion, Selcuk Univeritesi, Ilahiyat Facultesi, Konya. I explained about our objectives to search for the possibility of visit of Guru Nanak to the Shrine of Mevlana Jallaluddin Rumi. I delivered a talk, *Guru Nanak's Concept of God and his Travel*, to the students of Dr Hidayet Isik, Associate Prof of History of Religion

and some faculty members.

On May 18 we met Dr Hulya Kucuk, Associate Prof of History of Sufism. We had a good discussion on the Concept of God with her students and about Sufism in Islam with her (Fig. 7). Her special invited article, '*Sufism: Mysticism Developed by Muslims*', is appearing at pages 31-33.

Research Centers for Islamic Studies

I must mention here that I was greatly impressed with the magnificent building and facilities of the Research Center for Islamic Studies. One has to pass through security and one is checked for the membership and then one is allowed to enter into the library. Immediately after entering in the library one finds two computers hooked to Internet to find any information. Then on each floor there are about 8 computers to locate the books and the journal in the library. The books are stacked on three floors and many old manuscripts are stored in other rooms. There are more than 100 tables with Internet connections, where two scholars could work independently with their laptops hooked to the Internet and can have as many books or journals from the library as required for their research work.

We went there in the evening of Sunday, May 13 and it was hard to find a place to sit. That means it is used to its maximum capacity and there was no noise at all. I think this may be the biggest library on the Islamic Studies in

Islamic countries.

In the afternoon of May 16 we visited the Degerler Egitimi Mekezi (Center for Values Education), Suleymaniye Cad. No. 11, Istanbul and met Dr Mahmut Zengin, Coordinator. This center has biggest library and about 600 scholars are doing their research work there. A large number of scholarships are given to scholars of different fields of Islamic Studies. He presented us a copy of *Journal of Values Education*. The articles are published in Ottoman language with Abstract in English. He also gave us each a book, *Teaching for Tolerance in Muslim Majority Societies*. Recep Kaymakcan and Oddbjorn Leirvik (eds.), DEM Publication, 2007. This book is based on a workshop held in Istanbul in November 2005 under the title, 'Learning about the other and teaching for tolerance in Muslim majority societies'. It conveys critical analyses and innovative vision for tolerance education in school, focusing particularly on the role that religious and ethical education, social studies and history teaching can play in fostering tolerance and promoting inclusive notions of citizenship.

What a noble idea of tolerance being put into practice by the Center for Values Education. Here I would like to add that:

Article 24 of Constitution of the Republic of Turkey is related with the *Freedom of Religion and Conscience* and religious education and its instructions are determined such as education and instruction in religion ethics shall be conducted under state supervision and control. Instruction in religious culture and moral education shall be compulsory in the curricula of primary and secondary schools. Other religious education and instructions shall be subject to the individual's own desire, and in the case of minors, to the request of their legal representatives.'

The most important point to be noted in this article 24 is the use of word 'conscience' with that of 'Religion' which is not allowed in many religions, so far as I understand. Introduction of word 'conscience' with 'Religion' prepares a person to question what is right and what is wrong.

I presented to Dr Mahmut Zengin the books published by the Institute for Understanding Sikhism and promised to send regularly a copy of *UNDERSTANDING SIKHISM – The Research Journal*, published biannually.

I have not seen such type of facilities and libraries for religious education in any of the universities of the Punjab including the Punjab University in Chandigarh, The Union Territory or in any Sikh Institute in the Punjab.

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Academic Achievements

The academic information about the Religious Education

gained by us has already been discussed as above.

2. Relocation of Monument

- a. Since the 'Discovery of Monument of Guru Nanak in Istanbul' was announced and published in various magazines and newspapers in India and Canada, it has created a great curiosity among the Sikhs all over the world [1]. Now every Sikh wants to see this monument. Therefore, it was necessary to relocate the monument to be sure that it is still there after about 13 years of its discovery. In continuation of my (DSC) further research, I am glad to report that the Monument was relocated in collaboration with Mr. Tim Sibia of London, UK and his friend Mr Alparslan Agat, Agat Dis Tic. Ltd. Sti, Eminonu, Istanbul.
- b. Later it was also relocated by Mr Jatinderpaul Singh of Ramtex Exports, Ludhiana. I am glad that the monument is still in very good conditions after 13 years when it was discovered in 1994.
- c. The monument was relocated at the seashore of European side at Iskelesi Kabataş near a Mosque and next to the Mosque is the Dolmabahçe Palace. This is the place from where ferries depart for Uskudar and other places on the shore of Asian Continent.
- d. To my surprise the relocation has indicated that there is also some inscription on the back of this monument. The full size pictures of the monument with front side and back sides are shown in Fig. 8 & 9).

2. Inscription

a. The inscription on the back side (facing to the city Fig. 9) as reported by Mr Agat of Istanbul through Mr Tim Sibia of UK is as follows:

Sultan of the sea, bounteous of the kingdom, Abdülhamit Han (Sultan) is the one who always spreads the generosity light (radiance) to us and to the sea.

While rowing boats passing from these waters during the stormy times, people were in desperate by remembering the fear.

When bounteous sultan invented this port Kabataş became secure, like piece of jewel harborage in the sea.

when boats gathers here, because of storm and wave time saves them from the damage of the storm

the more your talents repeats, your history enriches

Abdülmecid Sultan have this port made on 1267 (1850).

On the other hand I again contacted Mr Iqbal Qaiser of Pakistan, who was the first to interpret the first line previously, and mailed above two pictures (Fig 8 & 9). He consulted Prof Agha Ali Mudassar of Govt. F.C. College, Lahore, whose family has migrated from Iran and the language of his mother, is Persian. His family



Fig. 8. Full view of the monument facing the Straits of Bosphorus (called front side of monument). The last word of the first line looks like ‘Nanak’ (left side).
Photo: D. S. Chahal, IUS and T. Sibia, London.



Fig. 9. Full view of the other side of the monument facing the city (called back side of monument). Inscription on this side is quite clear and legible.
Photo: D. S. Chahal, IUS and T. Sibia, London.

still speaks Persian. His interpretation of inscription on the side facing city is as follows (Fig. 9):
“When Abdul Majeed Khan became the king of the land of great river of Naval, it was the day of generosity and prosperity for all the seas and the deserts he made the flowers so strong that all the fears and jeopardy disappeared from this desert. By the jewel of his mercy, the river of peace started flowing. Year 1217 Hijri.”
 He said that it is 1428 Hijri now that means it is 211 years old writing. It means round about 1786 CE.

Both the interpretations of the inscription on the side facing city are quite different. Moreover, the 1217 Hijri is equated to 1786 CE whereas this inscription is about the Emperor Abdul Majeed Khan, who ruled the

Ottoman Empire from 1839-1861. Therefore, the date, 1786 CE calculated by Prof Mudassar is quite doubtful. However, the date, 1850 CE, calculated by Mr Agat is quite reasonable. When I examined the pictures of both sides the date looks like 1267 Hijri and when I calculated according to the Date Conversion System: (http://www.islamicfinder.org/Hcal/hdate_pre.php) it comes to be 1850 CE.

b. I (DSC) was more concerned about the interpretation of inscription on the front side (facing the Straits of Bosphorus Fig. 8), which has ‘NANAK’ at the end of the first line. While I was waiting for further research on the inscription from Mr Agat I tried local resources in Montreal.

I tried to explore the resources of Professors from Turkey working in the McGill University and the Concordia University through Mr Manjit Singh, and Prof Harjit Singh Bhabra, respectively. The colleague of Dr Bhabra expressed his inability to decipher the inscription.

I also went to the local Mosque of St Laurent, Quebec and met some Muslim scholars - Dr Rafat Noor and Maulana Afzal Khan. I spent many hours on three different days with Maulana Afzal Khan for deciphering the first line having NANAK in it. He was reading it NANAK but could decipher only a few words. But he was unable to translate even the first line.

However, by that time a report of Dr Mudassar from Lahore through Mr Iqbal Qaiser came in as follows:

“On the front side of the picture (where the word 'NANAK' seems to be written in Fig 8) ... only one line can be read which says:

"Abdul Majeed Khan, the rule of the world is your throne."

(zamaanay ki jahaangeeri tera takht hai Abdul Majeed Khan) ...

The word which looks like "Nanak" is, in fact, the wiped out word "**Khan**".

On the other hand the interpretation of first line sent by Mr Agat, the friend of Mr Tim Sibia, came in as follows:

“The changing time’s ruling king to the world is Abdülmecid Sultan.”

The rest of the inscription is interpreted as follows:

*“His regime enabled the public to be in safety
The wind of his generosity sea, welcomed with pleasure
The world turns to a secure sea with his justice’s wave
That Sultan have it constructed this port
Honoured Kabataş port with an purified security rank
May God always keep him with his throne
He made very secure..... things in the world
With this poem, may his crown decorated
Look, Kabataş became very safe place with this port.”*

Let us compare the interpretations of different scholars of the first line in which the last word is being read as NANAK (Fig. 8):

Mr Iqbal Qaiser:

“The Lord of the time, resident of India, Nanak – the man of God.”

Prof Agha Ali Mudassar:

"Abdul Majeed Khan, the rule of the world is your throne."

Mr Alparslan Agat:

“The changing time’s ruling king to the world is Abdülmecid Sultan.”

I may add here also that Mr Abnash Singh, Engineer from McGill University, Montreal read NANAK as KHANAK. He is also the member of the IUS. While some other members of the IUS, Mr Gurcharan Singh Bhatia and Mr Bagga Singh Jhajj were reading it as NANAK. However, we also tried to look into various dictionaries but we could not find the word KHANAK in any dictionary. On the other hand Dr Parminder Singh Chahal, another member of IUS, Biochemical Engineer from National Research Council of Canada is of the view that NANAK could be the last name of Abdul Majeed since NANAK has been found to be the last name of some persons in the scientific literature. His colleague from Turkey says if it is KHANAK that means a KHAN of lower class.

The above comparison of the first line of the inscription containing word NANAK indicates that the interpretation of each scholar is different than that of the others. Some are reading last word as NANAK, other read it as KHAN or KHANAK, and still others read it as SULTAN. Since I was more concerned to find out if NANAK is the same as of Guru NANAK, therefore, I wanted to conduct serious research to settle this mystery once for all.

Date of the Monument

When we examined the inscription on the both sides of the monument (Fig. 8 & 9) it appears that inscription was engraved either as 1217 or 1267 Hijri, which is equivalent to 1802 or 1850 CE according to the Date Conversion System: (http://www.islamicfinder.org/Hcal/hdate_pre.php).

The later date 1267 Hijri (1850 CE) appears to be correct since the Emperor of Ottoman Empire (1839-61 CE) was Abd-al-Majid Khan (1823-61 CE).

Now the question to be settled is:

Is NANAK, the last word in first line, for Guru Nanak?

Although the word ‘Nanak’ was not found in common Arabic and Persian Dictionaries, however, it cannot be ignored that ‘Nanak’ is the family or last name of some persons. On the other hand I have also noticed that ‘*Hazrat Rab Majid Baba Nanak Faqir*’ is found in an inscription on a stone in Baghdad dated 917 Hijri which is equivalent to 1511 CE. (Please read article at pages 34-36 & 26). since word ‘MAJID’ is used before ‘NANAK in inscription found in Baghdad and NANAK in this case is ‘Guru Nanak’, therefore, it forces us to look into these inscriptions seriously to find out who is

the ‘**Abd-al-Majid Nanak**’ in the first line of that inscription discovered in Istanbul?

LATEST FINDINGS

Dr Avtar Singh Dhaliwal, MD, a member of the IUS offered himself to join this research project. We started our journey from our homes on May 8 and met each other at the Ataturk International Airport at Istanbul in the morning of May 9, 2007.

On May 10 we visited the monument along with Prof Dr Yurdagul Mehmedoglu expert in Arabic and Persian Alphabet. Prof Mehmedoglu noted down the inscription and she was also reading the last word as NANAK (Fig. 10). Meanwhile, I took a chair and focused my digital camera only on the word, which appeared as NANAK. When the picture was enlarged I found that it is KHANAK from which the hook of ‘*Khey*’ (Arabic alphabet) was damaged. I spent a lot of time with Dr Ali Ulvi Mehmedoglu, husband of Dr Yurdagul Mehmedoglu, also expert in Arabic and Persian and Ottoman languages to find out the meanings of KHANAK. We could not find this word in any dictionary.

Meanwhile Dr Suleyman Derin introduced me to Prof and Dr Cahid Baltaci, Faculty of Theology, Department of Islamic History. He is expert in reading the inscription on the old monuments. First he read this inscription whatever was legible. Since there was a lot of damage to inscription we decided to go to the Library of the Faculty of Divinity to find out the original inscription of the monument. On his demand the Librarian brought the books, *Istanbul Cesmeleri*, Vol. I & II. 1943. (Istanbul Cheti) by Ibrahim Hilmi Tanisik. Published by Maarif Matbaasi, Istanbul. In these books the pictures of monuments were printed on the right side page and the original description on the left side of the page. Unfortunately no picture or inscription of this monument was found in these books.

Then we decided to go to the Research Center for Islamic Studies, a few blocks away from the Marmara University. There we found a book, *Gemiler Suvariler Iskelelerim*. 1998. by Eser Tutel, Yayinlari, Iletisim on ships and ports, which contained the picture of this monument at page 78 but no original description.

Dr Ali Ulvi Mehmedoglu said that the word KHAN is written as HAN in Ottoman language. However, during 1800 the Arabic and Persian were still very common languages in Turkey. Now the Ottoman language is quite different than that of the Arabic and Persian, moreover, such words are pronounced and spelled differently. Therefore, it was quite a difficult task to resolve this issue. We also consulted Dr Ziya Kazici, Specialist in Languages. He showed great interest in reading the inscription of the monument. He was leaving for Syria



Fig. 10. (Left to Right) Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, Prof Yurdagul Mehmedoglu and Dr Avtar Singh Dhaliwal. After close examination of inscription.

next day and on his return he will visit the monument and will look into the inscription himself for his own studies. Both husband and wife (Drs Mehmedoglu) tried very hard working at their offices and home and finally they came to the conclusion that the word is definitely ‘**KHANIK(N)**’ and now it is pronounced as ‘**KHANIN**’ in Ottoman, which means a ‘**Of the Khan**’.

When I showed our finding on the inscription on the monument at Kabatas, Istanbul to the group at Dr Hulya

Kucuk's office (Selcuk University), Dr Kucuk said that the word NANAK, after the words Abd al-Macid, is in fact KHANIK[N], here K reads as N, since it is possession letter, and this word means Khān's in which first letter *Khey's* hook was damaged by the weathering, agencies. Therefore, that part of inscription should be read as "Abd-al-Majid Khan's".

The other word, which was read as HIND by Mr Iqbal Qaiser also was not HIND but its close up examination indicated that it is 'MA'DALET' meaning 'Dispenser of justice'. It is drawn from 'ADALAT' 'Dispenser of Law or maker of law or maintaining law'.

The word 'JEHANGIR' is undamaged and can be easily read, which means 'Known in universe, conqueror of universe, and victor of universe'.

Although 'MAJID' in ABD-UL- MAJID' is also damaged but it is easily understood that it is MAJID.

Now the first line has been deciphered as follows:

Jehangir jaman ma'dalet Abd-Al-majid KHANIN.

It means:

"Abd-al-Majid Khan is conqueror of the world and dispenser of justice."

This interpretation appears to be more correct, however, it is quite different than that of others reported above. It clearly indicated how difficult is to decipher old inscription, which is damaged by weathering agencies. On the other hand it also indicates that how difficult is it to interpret the inscription written in old Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman languages. Therefore, it is obvious how easy it was for Prof Devinder Singh Chahal and Mr Iqbal Qaiser to read NANAK and HIND in the first line of that inscription.

Department of Archeology – Topkapi Palace Museum

May 14: In the afternoon we went to Topkapi Palace Museum. We met Ms Gulendam Nakipoglu, Curator of Library and Vice Director of History of Art, Topkapi Sarai Museum, Sultanahmet, Istanbul. Mr Ozgur Ayturk of Topkapi Palace Museum was our contact person appointed by Mr Tugrul Biltekin, First Secretary of the Embassy of Republic of Turkey. They looked into the pictures of inscriptions of the monument. They told that it had already come to them through Mr Biltekin, about three four months ago. Since then they were trying to find the original inscription but they could not find. They had tried the local municipality of Kabatas and bigger municipality of that locality they could not find the original inscription.

The museum experts told us that it was the policy of the Ottoman Empire that monument can only be built of the

Emperors. Building of a monument of any person other than the Emperor was impossible. At the top of every monument the name of Emperor is written calligraphically and then the main text about that Emperor. The calligraphic writing of name of each Emperor is the same as if it is an official stamp of the Emperor.

Finally, we, all the researchers of the IUS, that of the Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University, and that of the Department of Archeology in the Topkapi Palace Museum, have reached a definite conclusion that what appeared as NANAK is not NANAK but KHANIK[N], which is pronounced as KHANIN in Ottoman language and which means 'OF KHAN'. Moreover, what we pronounce as KHAN is spelled as HAN in Ottoman language.

A Wishful Thinking

I further discussed with Dr Ali Ulvi Mehmedoglu that if we read NANAK in place of KHANAK and interpret *Abd, Al, Majid* as the adjectives for NANAK in the first line (*Jehangir jaman ma'dalat Abd-Al-majid NANAK*) then its interpretation would be as follows:

"Nanak, the servant of God, is Conqueror of the world and dispenser of justice."

Further study on the history of monument indicates that it was built in the name of Ottoman Emperor Sultan Abd-al-Majid in 1267 Hijri (1850 CE). A port was established in that area (Kabataş) in order to save the boats of Sultan from heavy winds and this stone monument was put there at that time. On back side of the monument the benefits of the port are written and on front side facing the Straits of Bosphorus it appears to be a sort of prayer according to Mr Agat. If it is so then I thought: *Is this prayer connected to Guru Nanak?*

The place of the monument was changed from its original place when there was road construction and in 1987-1988 it was restored by government, now it is located in the same area in Kabataş. Since the year (1850 CE) on the monument indicates that it was constructed 311 years after Guru Nanak (1469-1539 CE), it creates another curiosity that how come somebody will raise a monument in Istanbul with inscription containing the name of Guru Nanak after that long time?

Did Guru Nanak meet with Emperor of Ottoman, Salim Khan?

On May 13 when we were trying some deciphering and interpretation with Dr Ali Ulvi Mehmedoglu and his wife, Dr Yurdagul Mehmedoglu at their house Dr Suleyman Derin came in the afternoon also. I showed him the following reference if we could find it in any

library:

Sydney Nettleton Fisher: *The Middle East: A History*. p 206-39. J. M. S. (LI) 281.

This reference was quoted by Trilochan Singh [5] saying that the work of Sydney Nettleton Fisher (the above reference) indicates that Guru Nanak had met the Emperor of Rum, Salim (1511-1520 CE) at Cairo or Istanbul. Dr Ali Ulvi Mehmedoglu found that the above reference is not correct. He searched for this journal on Internet and came to the conclusion that this reference could be as follows:

Fisher, Sydney Nettleton. 1981. *The Middle East: A History*. International Journal of Middle East Studies (J. M. S.). Vol. 21: 206-236.

Dr Derin took me to the Research Center for Islamic Studies to find out this reference since it is the biggest library for Islamic studies in Turkey. We could not find this reference but we found a book:

Fisher, Sydney Nettleton: (1979 3rd ed.). *The Middle East: A History*. Alfred A. Knoff. Inc.

The portion dealing with Emperor Salim Khan did not contain anything about Guru Nanak in this book.

Unfortunately none of the library in Istanbul had this journal of 1981. On my return to Canada I requested Dr Parminder Singh Chahal to procure this article through the Libraries of Canada. He could not find this article in any library of Canada. After a long search of three weeks he could not locate this reference and said that this could be incomplete reference. Therefore, nothing definite could be said if Guru Nanak met Emperor of Ottoman, Salim Khan, in Istanbul until we examine the above reference.

Well one can imagine how much time could be wasted to find out the incomplete references. I have noticed that it is a common practice of some Sikh scholars to write incomplete references for their articles.

Visit to Cerrahi Dergahi

At 9 PM on May 14 we went to see the Whirling Dervish at Cerrahi Dergahi in Karagumruk Fatih. There were about 200 Muslims who held their *Namaz* first. Then they sang some holy verses. They repeated *Allah Huu, Allah Hayy*, which is the *Zikr*, together loudly with different and fast movements of their body indicating that they have gone to mystic state. *Şeyh* was directing the *Zikr*.

Then the musicians continued to sing and dervishes started their performance. The whole function finished at 12:30. Food was neither served to anybody before the *Namaz* nor after the end of whole function. However, we were served with tea since we were special guests of Dr Yurdagul Mehmedoglu. Every man was wearing a white cap and

women were covering their heads with scarfs or Hijabs. Women sat separately on the upper floor but they were being communicated through intercommunication with cameras and TV sets and they were joining the *Zikr*.

On the contrary in Sikh Gurdwaras in every country the *Sangat* (congregation) is fed before the start and also fed at the end of the service/function.

Whirling Dervish (You Tube: <http://img.youtube.com/vi/GJlOfU-OjC0/2.jpg>)

Sema (the universal movement) is the inspiration of Mevlana (Maulana) Celaleddin (Jalaluddin) Rumi (1207-1273) as well as a part of Turkish custom, history, beliefs and culture. It symbolizes in seven parts the different meanings of a mystic to perfection (Ascension-Mirac).

The *Sema* ceremony represents a mystical journey of man's spiritual ascent through mind and love to the Perfect or fulfillment (*Kemal*). Turning towards the truth, he grows through love, deserts his ego, finds the truth, and arrives to the "Perfect". Then he returns from this spiritual journey as a man who reached maturity and greater perfection, so as to love and to be of service to the whole creation, to all creatures without discriminating in regard to belief, class, or race... The dervish with his long head-dress (his ego's tombstone), his white skirt (his ego's shroud) is spiritually born to the truth, by removing his black cloak, which symbolizes the universe, he journeys and advances to spiritual maturity through the stages of the *Sema*. At the onset and each stage of the *Sema*, holding his arms crosswise he represents number one, and testifies to God's unity. While whirling his arms are open, his right hand directed to the sky ready to receive God's beneficence, gazing his left hand turned toward the earth, he turns from right to left, pivoting around the earth, he turns from right to left, pivoting around heart. This is the way of conveying God's spiritual gift to the people upon whom God looks with Divine watchfulness. Revolving around the heart, from right to left, he embraces all of humankind, all the creation with affection and love. The *Sema* is consisted of several parts with different meanings... (Text by: The Grandson of Hz. Mevlana Dr Celaleddin Bakir Celebi, Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, Konya, Turkey)

VISIT TO KONYA

The City of Mevlana (Maulana) Jalaluddin Rumi

On May 17 we reached Konya by bus after traveling whole night of May16 & 17 a distance of 9 hours about 700 Km. We were received by Mr. Rüşdi Altundeger, cousin of Dr Yurdagul Mehmedoglu. He is a school



Fig. 11. Mevalana (Maulana) Jalaleuddin Rumi (1207-1273 CE). From the Museum of Hazrat Maulan Musum, Konya, Turkey.

teacher and he remained with us throughout our stay in Konya. He took us to Prof Dr Abdullah Ozbek, Selcuk Universitesi, Ilahiyat Fakultesi, Konya. Prof Ozbeck was our main contact person in this university. He invited Prof Dr M Sait Simsek, Essential Islamic Sciences, and Dr Hidayet Isik, Associate Professor, Department of History of Religion. But Dr Hulya Kucuk, Associate Prof of History of Sufism, could not join us since she was sick; however, she promised to meet us next day.

We explained to them about our objectives to search for the possibility of visit of Guru Nanak to the Shrine of Mevlana (Maulana) Jalaluddin Rumi. Since Guru Nanak had visited almost all the Sufi centers of India and Pakistan before entering into Middle East for onward journey to Mecca and Medina, therefore, there is every possibility that Guru Nanak must have come to Konya to visit the shrine of Mevlana (Maulana) Jalaluddin Rumi.

During preliminary discussion in the office of Dr Ozbek, Dr Isik suggested that he has a class and we can all move to that class and requested me (DSC) to deliver a talk on, *Concept of God and Travels of Guru Nanak in Middle East*?. Then we all moved to the class of Dr Isik. I delivered the above talk with power point slides. We had good discussion thereafter. Then Prof Dr Ozbek took us

to university cafeteria for lunch. A few more professors joined us there at lunch.

Next day we came back to Dr Ozbek's office where Dr Hulya Kucuk, Associate Prof of History of Sufism came in. Then we moved to the office of Dr Kucuk where her students also joined in discussion on Sufism and to find out possibilities if Guru Nanak visited shrine of Hazrat Mevlana Jalaleddin Rumi.

Dr Hulya Kucuk has done a lot of work on Sufi Bekhtashi and Mevlevi. She has also published a book in English, *The Role of the Bektashis in Turkey's National Struggle*. Hulya Kucuk, Leiden& Boston: Brill, 2002.

When I showed a painting of Guru Nanak to Dr Kucuk she immediately pointed out that Guru Nanak looks like Sufi Bekhtashi. This painting of Guru Nanak can be seen in the book of Kushwant Singh and Ragu Rai [4]. In this painting Guru Nanak has been shown wearing a turban on *Kula* (cap) and leaving one end of turban falling out. His style of turban is very similar to that of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (Fig. 11). She immediately asked her

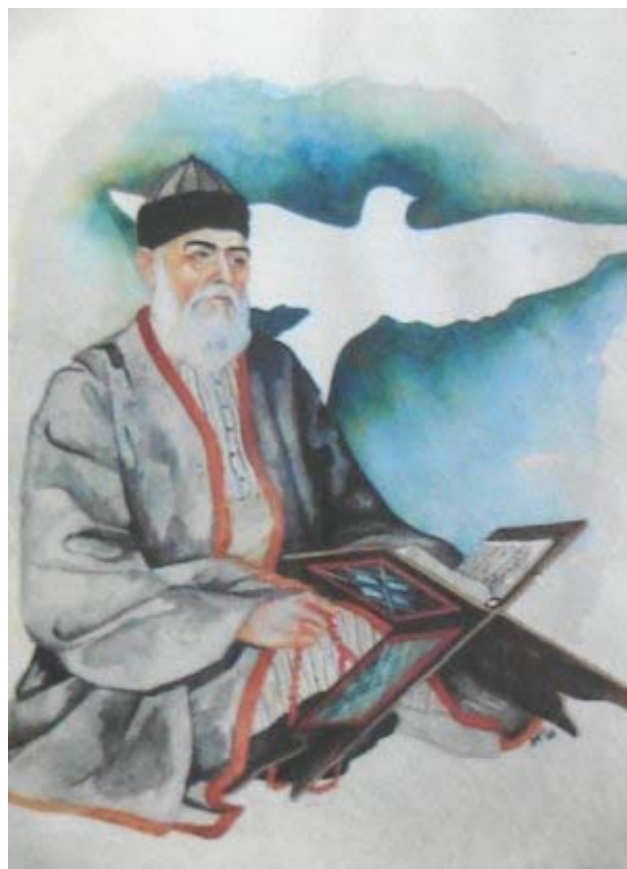


Fig. 12. **Haci Bektasi**: From the title cover of the book: *Haci Bektasi Veli Ve Makalat* written by Dr Abdurrahman Guzel, published by Burak Matbaasi, Ankara,

students to bring some books on Bektashi from the library. We found a picture of Haji Bektasi (Fig. 12) on the front cover of a book, *Haci Bektasi Veli Ve Makalat* written by Dr Abdurrahman Guzel, published by Burak Matbaasi, Ankara, which was very similar to that of Guru Nanak, which I found in the book of Kushwant Singh and Ragu Rai [4]. Moreover, the back ground of the picture of Guru Nanak appears to be Straits of Bosphorus. I enquired from some students and Professors at the Marmara University if the background resembles with that of Straits of Bosphorus. They all agreed. There is an important river in Turkey. Its picture also indicates similarity to that of the background of painting of Guru Nanak. It appears that the artist who painted the picture of Guru Nanak may be from Turkey.

If one compares the dress and face of Guru Nanak with that of Haji Bektasi one will find good resemblance with each other. Bhai Gurdas in *Pauri* 32-38 of *Vaar* 1 has also written that when Guru Nanak started his travel towards Middle East he changed his dress to that of a Muslim like a haji and took his Muslim disciple, Mardana, for this important travel to Mecca and Baghdad.

The dates of birth and death are not known and it is considered that Sufi Bektashi came from Central Asia according to Dr Kucuk. Guru Nanak has also been in Middle East at least for about 11 years, i.e. from 511 CE the date on monument in Baghdad to 1521 CE the time of

attack by Babar on Saidpur (now Eminabad) described by Guru Nanak in his *Babarvani* uttered when Guru Nanak was in Eminabad on his return from Middle East back to Talwandi (Kartarpur) (Please read article on pages 34-36 & 26).

Guru Nanak has also been in Azerbaijan (Central Asia) during his Middle East travel since an inscription of the first verse of Guru Nanak has been discovered in a temple in Baku, Azerbaijan (Please read article on pages 37-40 & 26). Could it be possible that Guru Nanak is considered as Sufi or Haji of 13th or 14th century instead of 16th century, who stayed in Middle East for at least 11 years (1511-1521 CE). We intend to do further research on this topic in collaboration with Dr Kucuk.

There is another book on *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes* by John Kingsley Birge. London and Hartford, 1937 translated into the Turkish as *Bektasilik Tarihi*, by Reha Camuroglu, Istanbul: ANT Yayinlari, 1991 – it contained a pencil sketch, which looked like that of a Sikh.

Later Dr Kucuk showed us a book, Ibrahim

Hakkı Konyali. 1997. *Konya Tarihi*, Ankoc Burcak Matbaasi. This is the main source book on Konya but nothing was found about Guru Nanak in this book.

Dr Kucuk introduced us to Dr Nemim Ozturk (nozturk@selcuk.edu.tr), who teaches history of religions but Hinduism is her favorite subject. Although she was aware of Sikhism, asked us further to get first hand information on Sikhism. She told us that she has not read anything about Guru Nanak visiting Konya. Dr Kucuk and Ozturk, called together to several experts on the History of Konya (like Mehmet Al Uz and Dr Hasan Ozonder), to obtain some information about Nanak visiting Konya, but they could not tell anything about Guru Nanak.

Dr Kucuk deputed her graduate student, Miss Betul Guclu, as our guide and interpreter for our visit to the museum of Hazrat Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi (Fig. 13) and the Library of various Manuscripts on Islam and Sufism.

After visiting the Museum we went to meet Mr Bekir Sahin, Director, Konya Bolge Yazma Eserler Kutuphanesi Müdürü (Konya Manuscript Library. This Library was housing about 85,000 old manuscripts and books. (Please read about this library at Web site: www.konya.gov.tr/byek/ENGLISH/english.htm).



Fig. 13. (From L to R) Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, IUS; Miss Betul Guclu, our guide and interpreter; Dr Avtar Singh Dhaliwal, IUS; and Mr Rusdi Altundeger.

The Library staff helped us a lot to find out if there is any book or document on Guru Nanak. Nothing was found there. On the other hand they found three books related to the time when Guru Nanak was in Middle East (1500 to 1600) nothing was found except in one of the books something about Brahmanism was found without any reference to Guru Nanak. Almost all the documents have been photocopied on CD thus on searching with Nanak nothing could be traced out (Fig. 14).

A brief description about Mevlana (Maulana) Jalaluddin Rumi and the museum is given in a separate article at pages 24-25.

On May 19 (Saturday) we traveled back to Istanbul from Konya via Ankara and reached Istanbul in the evening at 6:30 PM. We had dinner at the home of Dr Yurdagul Mehmedoglu's family: her husband Dr Ali Ulvi Mehmedoglu, her sister Ms Nebiye Konuk, and her parents.

On May 20 (Sunday) we went out to see Bomonti (Tea Garden) at Kadikoy a beautiful place on the shore of Straits of Bosphorus. It is a beautiful scene along the shore with grass and paved sidewalk (Fig. 15). After strolling along the shore we went on the hill for tea from where one can enjoy the scene of Marmara Sea and its shore.

In the evening the parents of Dr Yurdagul Mehmedoglu came in and her sister Nebiye also joined us. Before that Dr Yurdagul Mehmedoglu gave us lots of presents packed beautifully. At about 9 PM we had a family dinner and enjoyed up to 12 Midnight drinking tea again and again.

On May 21: I wanted to go to the University of Marmora, Faculty of Divinity for some more information from the library and to thank the Dean and Vice Dean and Dr Suleyman Derin for their cooperation in coordinating our research program. Dr Dhaliwal also joined me. We met the Dean in his office and thanked him for such a great cooperation, and hospitality offered to us.

In the evening the Mehmedoglus gave us a farewell dinner and we talked up to 3:00 AM of May 22 then we left for the Istanbul airport to fly back home. We brought back home the sweet memories of hospitalities especially of the Mehmedoglus and all the other Professors of various universities; and the Governmental Officials of Istanbul for their help and for the courtesy extend to us.

Did Guru Nanak visit Turkey?

Although we could not find any evidence of visit of Guru Nanak up to Konya or Istanbul in Turkey, still it cannot be ruled out that Guru Nanak could ignore to visit the Center of Mevlana (Maulana) Jalaluddin Rumi. Although the



Fig. 14. (L to R) Mr Rusdi Altundeger, Dr Avtar Singh Dhaliwal, Mr Bekir Sahin, Director, Konya Manuscript Library; Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, and Miss Betul Guclu.

Sikh history is not consistent about the period of Guru Nanak's stay in Middle East even then I could collect from history and the Babarbarani of Guru Nanak in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib at pages 360, 417-418, and 722-723 that Guru Nanak was an eyewitness when Babar sacked Saidpur (now Eminabad in District Gujrat, Pakistan) in 1521 CE. At that time Guru Nanak was returning from Middle East travel to back home at Talwandi (Kartarpur). On the other hand the inscription on a wall in a shrine about Guru Nanak in Baghdad, Iraq indicates that Guru Nanak was in Baghdad around 1511 CE. These two dates are quite reliable thus it could be easily deduced that Guru Nanak was in Middle East at least for 11 years (Please read article on pages 34-36 & 26). Therefore, there is every possibility that he would have visited the shrine of Mevlana (Maulana) Jalaluddin Rumi in Konya since he has not left any Sufi center which has not been visited by him. And he might have also met the Ottoman Emperor, Salim Khan, in Istanbul in Turkey during his long stay of 11 years in Middle East.

It is also strange that very little is known in the Sikh history and Sikh literature about the contributions of Guru Nanak during this long stay of about 11 years in Middle East, the Muslim Countries, except some writings of Rukn Din and some supposed to be the writings of Guru Nanak reported by Trilochan Singh in his book [4].

CONCLUSIONS

- The word NANAK in the first line of the inscription on a monument situated at the shore of Bosphorus, which was first deciphered by Mr Iqbal Qaiser turned out to be KHANIK[N] (pronounced as KHANIN), which means 'Of Khan'



Fig. 15. (L to R) Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, Prof Yurdagul Mehmedoglu, and Dr Avtar Singh Dhaliwal at the shore with panoramic view of Istanbul and Marmara Sea.

- Research in all the municipalities of Istanbul and the Department of Archeology of Turkey failed to reveal the original inscription of this monument for complete deciphering of the inscription.
- Similar research in the Library of the Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University, and the Research Center of Islamic Studies in Uskudar, Istanbul failed to reveal any information about this monument.
- Our visit to the Faculty of Divinity, Selcuk University, the Center of Hazarat Mevlana Rumi and the Konya Bolge (District) Manuscript Library failed to reveal any information about the visit of Guru Nanak in Konya, the city of the great Sufi.
- However, it was a great achievement that I was able to deliver a lecture, *Guru Nanak's Concept of God and his Travels in Middle East*, at both the Universities at Istanbul and Konya.
- Beside we have been able to develop strong academic relationships between the Institute for Understanding Sikhism and the Faculties of Divinity at the Marmara University, Istanbul University, and Selcuk University.
- The Publications of the Institute for Understanding Sikhism were presented to some professors at all the three universities and promised to them to mail our biannual periodical, *Understanding Sikhism – The Research Journal* in the future.
- Sikhism has been introduced in Turkish universities as one of the important religions other than Islam. Sikhism has close affinity to Islam.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I, on behalf of the *Institute for Understanding Sikhisms*, am very grateful to Mr. Tugrul Biltekin, First Secretary in the Embassy of Republic of Turkey in Ottawa, Canada, for coordination in this research project and for arranging my contact with the Dean, Prof Dr Raşit KÜÇÜK and Vice Dean, Prof Dr İlyas ÇELEBİ of the Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University, Bağlarbasi Kampusu,

34662 Uskudar, Istanbul. I am also thankful to Mr Biltekin for arranging the contact with the Department of Archeology, Istanbul.

I am very grateful to the Dean, Prof Dr Kucuk, for appointing Prof Dr Yurdagul Mehmedoglu and Prof Dr Suleyman Derin as the Liaison Officers between the Faculty of Divinity, Marmara University and the *Institute for Understanding Sikhism*. I am highly indebted to Prof Dr Yurdagul Mehmedoglu who did not leave any stone unturned to help us to get in touch with all the experts on various subjects at various universities and institutions.

SPONSORS

I am grateful to Dr Avtar Singh Dhaliwal, a very dedicated member of the IUS, from Johnson City, Tennessee for joining the research team at his own expenses.

In short I would say not enough funds could be raised to meet the expenses of this Research Project. Therefore, minimum was spent on this project which was met from the funds of the Institute for Understanding Sikhism contributed by our regular sponsors of the institute. Finally, I am highly indebted to all the sponsors (Please see page 1 for major sponsors) for enabling me to complete this Research Project.

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