

Taking Amrit

Harjinder Singh Tue Dec 25

I am one of the lucky persons who have taken *amrit* and I would like to share some thoughts on taking *amrit* with the *Cyber Sangat*. Many people seem to shy away from taking *amrit* because they think that you have to be perfect before being initiated into the Khalsa. On the other end of the scale are those who think that just by taking *amrit* you become perfect.

Sikhism is a way, a route that has no end in this life. If everybody thinks that you are perfect, or at least very good, you should know that compared with Waheguru you are very imperfect. We should try and become real *brahmgiannis*, those that fully know God, realising that the only real knower of God is God. You could say that we have been set a hopeless task but that we should not be discouraged and keep trying in good spirit. That, and following the Reht Maryada, is what an *amritdhari* needs to do. You will go slowly, you will take two steps forwards and one step backwards but, as long as you really want to with all your heart and mind, Waheguru will help you on your way.

When I arrived at the Gurdwara to take *amrit*, I was told to take *ishnán* and put on a fresh *kachherá*. To my surprise, it was not a public ceremony in front of the *sangat* (as in 1699). The *diwan* hall was only open to the *amritdharis*-to-be and the *sevadaars* on duty. I remember how, while stirring the *amrit* with a sword, the *panj piaré* recited the *panj banian* in about twenty minutes.

We were made to sit on the floor in front of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, one group queuing up from the left and the other from the right with the steel bowl in the middle. *Amrit* was sprinkled on my head (we had to tie our *págs* so that they could be opened from the top), in my eyes, on my hands and to be drunk. After each sprinkling we had to say 'Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh'. At the end of the ceremony we had to bow in front of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and then turn round and say *fateh* to the *sangat*.

As I was not from a Sikh family, I received my name from the *panj piaré*. The Hukam of that day started with 'har' and, on my request, the *panj piaré* chose the name Harjinder for me, which is a name I am very happy with.

We were then instructed by the *panj piaré* on what to do and what not to do. Most of the instructions concerned things that are not in the Reht Maryada. And the idea of sharing God's love with all our brothers and sisters, regardless of colour, creed or caste, was greatly under-mentioned. But that really did not matter for me. I knew I had done the right thing, I did feel very happy. I had signed a contract with Guru, and in spite of my many imperfections, would become both a more useful, and a more happy person.

Nobody should be pressurised by friends or family to take *amrit*. But, if you feel the call, do not be afraid and go for it. You will grow spiritually. You will become stronger. And that strength comes from Waheguru.

Born Cornelis Heule in 1947 in the Netherlands, Harjinder Singh arrived in Delhi January 9, 1996, in Amritsar about a week later and took amrit on July 14, 1996. During a four-year stay in Punjab, Harjinder first did seva in Harmandir Sahib and then spent one and a half years at the Institute of Sikh Studies in Chandigarh.

Since February 2000 Harjinder is in London where he worked with the Sikh Human Rights Group and

continues to volunteer for it's affiliate, Gurseva. Active in the United Kingdom's Liberal Democrat party, Harjinder was involved in the party's recent general election campaign.