

GURPREET SINGH



From the pages: *Katar* or pointed punch-dagger of Guru Hargobind; (Bottom) A rare painting shows two Sikhs, Bhai Mehtab Singh and Bhai Sukha Singh, arriving at the Golden Temple to avenge its desecration by Mughal *satrap* Massa Ranghar, in August 1740



Authors, Roopinder Singh (in the background) and Bhayee Sikandar Singh with a copy of the book

HISTORY COMES ALIVE

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This is a story of many evolutions, just like life itself. Far from a pre-planned task, the writing and compilation of the book, *Sikh Heritage — Ethos & Relics*, was a consequence of numerous unexpected events paving the way for Bhayee Sikandar Singh and Roopinder Singh to look at history and arrive at its ethos. Published by Rupa, the book was launched in the city on Sunday.

As you skim through the 204-page volume that is filled with illustrations, vivid pictures and their historical context, the more than 500-year-old Sikh history suddenly comes alive. Be it through one of the *juttis* of Guru Amar Das, which has been encased in silver and preserved by a family from Pakistan's Shekhupura, a brass foot-scraper used by Guru Hargobind or a rare

painting showing Guru Tegh Bahadur receiving the news of the birth of his son, it is hard to believe that history came gasping for breath from under layers of time.

The 'kernel of idea', in the words of Roopinder, germinated in the Smithsonian gallery, US, where some relics preserved by Bhayee Sikandar's family were being exhibited in 2008. The director of the gallery then wondered if it would be possible to collect more such relics of the Sikh religion and compile them in a book. Bhayee Sikandar considered doing it himself, no matter how monumental the task. An MBA from Canada, Bhayee Sikandar is the descendant of Bhai Rup Chand, who was blessed by Guru Hargobind. Being a scion of the Bagrian family, he knows only too well the significance of being the custodian of a rich part of history and the relevance of passing it down generations. He laughs when he recalls, "I needed a pragmatic, modern-thinking and younger man

to help me with the book, and that is when I thought of Roopinder."

So, the two set off on a journey that was to require deep digging, long travel, endless hours of work and Godly patience. "We started with a micro-look at the relics that were associated with the Gurus and the families connected to them," says Roopinder, a senior journalist. The authors concede that the book was evolved while it was being worked upon. Needless to say, the final product is very different from the idea that it had developed from.

Their sources, say the authors, were of prime importance, almost sacrosanct to their efforts. Apart from the Houses of Nabha and Patiala, there were the 'custodians' of the relics who contributed majorly to the book. "We chose to call these families who preserved the precious relics 'custodians', for they hold these artefacts in reverential regard and don't make money out of them," explains Roopinder.

The book is divided into two parts. 'Ethos', the first, includes the period beginning from Guru Nanak Dev to the Partition. Entailing the history, culture and evolution of the Sikh religion spanning this massively long period, this part puts the journey of the Sikhs on the global map, with events taking place in the state being connected to imperative world happenings.

The second part of the book comprises 'Heritage', to which make contributions the custodians at Bhai Rupa, Bagrian, the Phulkian States, Patiala, Nabha, Bilga, Darauli and Sursinghwala. "It is a collaborative endeavour on which a wider diaspora was involved," says Roopinder, adding, "We were targeting two types of audience — Indians and westerners. While the former would be better able to grasp what was happening, the latter needed more rationale and logic. We have taken out the hyper-bolic."

A large part of the book contains

previously unseen pictures. Some miniatures, that are included amongst the contributions made by the custodians at Nabha, make their maiden journey in print. Roopinder remarks, "We have attempted to make the book accessible — in terms of language used, visual metaphor and captions — all of which provide information in an encapsulated form."

Roopinder feels that as a lot, we lack sensitivity towards documents and heritage. "Our museums are ill-equipped and uninteresting," he remarks. Past events have proved that the state is incapable of preserving precious artefacts, which is perhaps why they remained safe in the hands of descendants. In such a case, there is a strong need to protect them for future progeny. Bhayee Sikandar puts it in other words: "If the roots are cut, there can't be a blossom. You are born of the seen and turn to seed again...that's the ethos." The book compels you to nurture the roots.



"WE STARTED WITH A MICRO-LOOK AT THE RELICS THAT WERE ASSOCIATED WITH THE GURUS AND THE FAMILIES CONNECTED TO THEM"

United colours of promotion



The star cast of upcoming Punjabi film, *Tu Mera 22, Main Tera 22*, which includes Amrinder Gill (far L) and Mandy Takhar (second from right) amongst others, was at Piccadilly Square, Sector 34, Chandigarh, on Sunday. However, the second male lead, Yo Yo Honey Singh, was conspicuous by his absence.

HTC

hot tip

PAMPER YOUR SKIN THE NATURAL WAY!

- 1 Moisturise your skin:** Coconut-based moisturisers work wonders for the skin in winters as they protect the skin's barriers and lock in moisture.
- 2 Use coconut oil:** Take bath with lukewarm water and include a few drops of coconut oil to the bathing water. This keeps the skin soft throughout the day.
- 3 Use gloves:** Take good care of your hands and feet from getting damaged in the winter chill by moisturising them at least twice a day. Also, use gloves while doing daily household chores.
- 4 Use mild soaps:** Avoid using harsh soaps, shampoos and shower gels on your skin since they make it dry. Instead, use a mild soap or face wash.
- 5 Have nutritious food:** It is important to have nutritious and healthy food and keep yourself well hydrated by having lots of water. Fruits such as melons, watermelons, oranges and their juices help maintain the moisture



balance of the skin.

6 Home-made masks: You can mix yoghurt with ground almonds and coconut milk and apply the mixture on your face. Wash it off after 20 minutes with lukewarm water. You can also blend an avocado with a few drops of coconut oil and apply the mixture all over your body. Wash it off after 20 minutes and then take a bath.

7 For the lips: A good natural oil-based lip balm or a few drops of coconut oil will be an effective cover for your lips against the cold weather. Butter is also effective in curing chapped lips and also renders extra softness to your skin.

INPUTS BY GERMAN-INDIAN
 MODEL AND BOLLYWOOD
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Botox may cure foot pain

Can botox be the cure for a common foot ailment in the future? If one goes by the revelations of a new Mexican study, then the answer is, yes. The study finds that botox injections help treat the common foot ailment plantar fasciitis better than commonly used steroid treatments.

Common among both runners and overweight people, plantar fasciitis

results when connective tissues on the sole of the foot, the plantar fascia, become inflamed.

According to the scientists, steroid treatments can sometimes cause complications. In two to six percent of patients, steroid treatments can lead the plantar fascia to rupture.

Researchers devised a trial to compare steroid treatment with the

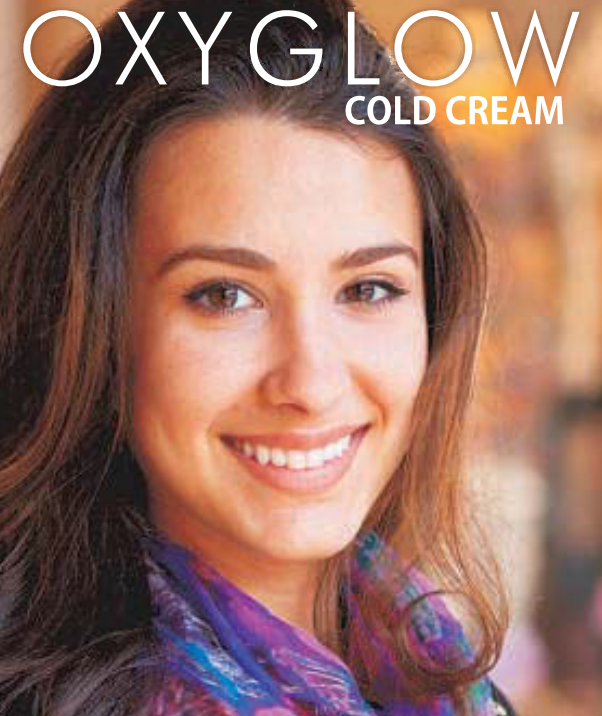
botulinum toxin alternative, also known as botox, which works by blocking the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, weakening the muscles for several months.

The scientists recruited 36 patients and divided them into randomised, double-blind groups, with one group being treated with steroids and the other group being treated with botox. Both groups

completed stretching exercises, another common treatment protocol.

While both groups appeared to be recovering, the botox group reported less foot pain and evaluations found better foot function and alignment. The findings, announced recently, appeared online in the journal *Foot & Ankle International*, published by Sage.

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