

International Seminar
on
Vision of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji: In the Bharatiya Geo-Cultural Perspective
(05 to 07 October 2026)

CONCEPT NOTE

For decades, a profound irony has dominated Indian historiography. While the heroic indigenous resisters who sacrificed their lives to protect their land and culture were systematically marginalized, the narratives of foreign invaders were accorded prime prominence. Though Kings Dahir, Jaipal, and Anandpal offered heroic resistance across Sindh and Punjab, historical narratives have often focused more heavily on the invasions of Muhammad bin Qasim and Mahmud Ghaznavi. For a long time, our school and higher education textbooks remained dominated by a particular 'Delhi-centric historiography,' under which hundreds of pages were devoted to detailing the administration, architecture, and reigns of foreign invaders, the Delhi Sultanate, and the Mughal era, while the glorious sagas of the nation's true heroes were rendered obscure. An African proverb wisely states, 'Until the lion learns to write, every story will glorify the hunter.' This observation fits our historiographical tradition with precision.

Historians have often viewed Sikh history through a narrow lens, which has led to it being prematurely framed as a localized movement limited to a single philosophy, community, or region. Rather than being confined to a specific territory, the footprint of Sikh history is fundamentally pan-Indian. Clear evidence of this scope is reflected in several foundational elements of Sikh history: the extensive Udasis (travels) of Guru Nanak Dev Ji across all four cardinal directions, the inclusion of teachings from diverse regional saints and languages within the Guru Granth Sahib, the origins of the Panj Pyare (Five Beloved Ones) from distinct corners of the country, and the geographic distribution of the five Takhts across Bharata.

In Bharata, the Sikh Guru tradition served as a robust cultural bulwark against foreign invasions. Following the rise of Turkish political dominance, saintly movements recognized that preserving the nation's core heritage and traditions required a cultural front rather than a purely political one. Under this paradigm, the philosophy of the Sikh Gurus kept the foundational concepts of Bharatiya consciousness alive and enriched, thereby preventing foreign rulers from subjugating the nation's cultural soul. To counter the psychological trauma and oppression resulting from the Turkish

invasions, the Guru's abode offered both spiritual and pragmatic solutions through Gurbani. In this context, 'Sangat' (the congregation of devotees meditating on the Divine and a protective stream of wisdom) and 'Pangat' (the institution of Langar or community kitchen) emerged as an extraordinary synthesis of philosophy and practice. Grounded in the principle of recognizing 'all humanity as one' (Manas ki jat sabhai ekai pahchanbo), this comprehensive framework embodied complete unity and equality. It not only rectified contemporary social flaws to weave Bharatiya society into a unified thread, but also delivered a stern message to the racial arrogance of the ruling Turkish class. Furthermore, the Guru's tradition provided the Gurmukhi script for the preservation of literature, which served not only as the foundation for Sikh scriptural literature, but also as the primary medium for safeguarding works composed in various dialects—such as Braj, Apabhramsha, Khari Boli, and Persian—across the greater Punjab and its adjoining regions.

Numerous public welfare initiatives and the continuous propagation of the Sikh faith played a pivotal role in organizing and unifying the Sikhs. The institutional expansion and mounting socio-religious influence of the Sikh tradition heightened systemic anxiety and hostility among Mughal rulers, culminating in targeted suppression and political marginalization of the Gurus and their adherents. Consequently, the divide between 'Babe ke' (the house of Guru Nanak) and 'Babar ke' (the house of Babur) widened progressively. Ideological and armed assaults by the Turks upon the Sikhs continuously escalated. Amidst this cycle of oppression, the supreme martyrdom of Guru Arjan Sahib, the adoption of arms by Guru Hargobind Sahib, the sublime sacrifice of Guru Teg Bahadur Ji, and ultimately the synthesis of 'Shastra and Shastar' (the scriptures and the sword) established by Guru Gobind Singh Ji became the foundational bedrock of the Sikh ethos. As Sikh resistance intensified, Turk's cruelty reached its zenith. It was within this repressive and challenging milieu that an unparalleled and powerful personality like Guru Gobind Singh Ji provided formidable leadership to the Sikhs.

The persona of Guru Gobind Singh Ji represents a profound convergence of spiritual leadership, martial strategy, and scholarly erudition. Operating within this multi-faceted framework, his autobiographical work 'Bachitar Natak' functions as a manifesto for the preservation of righteousness (Dharma) and civilizational heritage, in which he explicitly articulates his central life mission:

हम इह काज जगत मो आए॥ धरम हेत गुरदेव पठाए॥

जहां तहां तुम धरम बिथारो॥ दुसट दोखीअनि पकरि पछारो॥42॥

याही काज धरा हम जनम॥ समझ लेहु साधू सभ मनम॥

धरम चलावन संत उबारन॥ दुसट सभन को मूल उपारिन॥43॥

This divine mission proclaimed in 'Bachitar Natak' was not merely a theoretical concept, but the paramount imperative of the epoch. When Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib sacrificed his life to protect the Tilak-Janju (sacred mark and thread), Guru Gobind Singh Ji transformed the widespread public outrage arising from that supreme martyrdom into a disciplined, constructive, and resilient force. The convergence of spiritual vision and contemporary exigencies found its ultimate expression in the Khalsa Panth—institutionalizing a lineage of saint-soldiers who embodied both contemplative depth and martial discipline. For the Khalsa, the eternal teachings of the Gurus, the exemplary life of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, and the heroic ancient literature—revived by the Guru through eminent poets at his courts in Paonta Sahib and Anandpur Sahib—served as an inexhaustible source of inspiration.

Literature imbued with valor and heroic sentiment (Veer Rasa) possessed the potential to transform the spark of rebellion into a blazing flame. Guru Ji was not only acutely aware of this, but he also held absolute faith in the formidable literary tradition of Indian culture. Recognizing its significance, he began inviting poets to the court of Anandpur Sahib for this express purpose even prior to the establishment of the Khalsa Panth. To achieve this objective, Guru Ji himself composed literature rooted in Bharatiya mythology and heroic traditions. Since time immemorial, eternal Bharatiya culture had birthed numerous heroic sagas—in the form of warriors and mythological literature—from which the Bharatiya psyche had drawn inspiration for centuries. To awaken a profound fervor for righteous warfare (Dharam Yuddh) across the Bharatiya realm, Guru Ji systematically foregrounded the heroic motifs embedded within ancient epic literature throughout his compositions.

The facets of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji's persona are not merely confined to the literary compositions of his 'Vidya Darbar' (court of scholars), but are inherently boundless. His philosophy of life represents a unique synthesis of literary theory and practical lifestyle (Praxis). He was not only an eminent man of letters or a linguist, but a conscious 'practical transformer' who

liberated courtly literature from the confines of purely scholastic knowledge to animate it on the plane of reality.

Possessing a profound insight into human psychology, he unlocked the latent potential of socially marginalized groups, oppressed classes, and women—fostering deep self-confidence, advocating for gender equity, and laying the foundation for an egalitarian order. Alongside this social transformation, he was equally a visionary urban strategist, a master of diplomacy, and an adept of principled dialogue. Guru Ji liberated the Sikh discourse from the traditional paths of renunciation, detachment, or passive asceticism, presenting life instead as a pathway to be lived with absolute 'Chardi Kala' (indomitable optimism) and celebration.

The primary objective of this seminar is to conduct an in-depth analysis of Guru Gobind Singh Ji's multifaceted vision—within the framework of his unique personality and monumental literary contributions amidst the Bharatiya geo-cultural landscape—while evaluating its contemporary relevance in modern Bharata.

Sub-Themes

1. Life and Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh
2. The Concept of the Divine (Brahm-Vichar) in Guru Gobind Singh's Vision
3. Neti Neti in the Dasam Granth
4. Guru Gobind Singh's Geographic and Cultural Travels Across Bharat (Bharat-Varsha)
5. The Heroic Archetype (Nayak-Bimb) of Guru Gobind Singh in Articulating National Consciousness
6. The Defense System and Military Strategy of Guru Gobind Singh
7. The Concept of Righteous War (Dharam-Yuddh) in the Compositions of Guru Gobind Singh
8. The Contribution of Guru Ji's Vidya Darbar (Court of Scholars) to Bharatiya Literature
9. The Dasam Granth as a Continuum of the Adi Granth Sahib
10. The Creation of the Khalsa Panth by Guru Gobind Singh
11. The Hukamnamas (Edicts) Issued by Guru Gobind Singh
12. Metrical System of the Dasam Granth

Call for Papers

A limited number of scholars of repute are invited for the IAS Seminar. Those interested in participating should send (preferably by email) an abstract (300 words) of the proposed paper in English/Hindi along with their C.V. (One page) directly to Convenor Dr. Gurpreet Singh Email: gurpreetborawal@gmail.com and **copy to the Academic Resource Officer, Indian institute of Advanced Study, Shimla on his Email seminar@ias.ac.in** Tel: 0177-2831385.

The abstract should clearly state the objectives, methodology, and relevance of the proposed paper including 4–6 keywords. The last date for submission of abstracts is **05th September 2026 by 05:00 PM**. The Institute intends to send Invitation letters to selected participants by the 30th September, 2026. It is the policy of the Institute to publish the papers not proceedings of the seminars it organizes. Hence, all invited participants will be expected to submit complete papers (in English/Hindi), hitherto unpublished and original, with citations in place, along with a reference section, to the Convener and copy to the Academic Resource Officer, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla– 171005 by **10th September 2026**.

Last date of submission of Abstracts/Bio note = 05th September 2026 by 05:00 PM

Last date of Submission of Full Paper = 30th September 2026

Guidelines for submission

Font- Times New Roman/Unicode hindi

Font Size- 12

Paragraph spacing- 1.5

Bibliographical References

- Bibliographical references should be in a consistent style. For detailed instructions we refer to either of the following 3 books: *The Chicago Manual of Style*, *Hart's Rules*, or *Butcher's Copy-editing*. Please cross-check references to see that each reference makes sense and matches the relevant bit in the main text.

Books

- **Single Author**
Chaudhuri, Amit, *Afternoon Raag*, London: Heinemann, 1993. p72.
Surname, First name, *Title of Book*, Place of Publication: Publisher, (date) and page.
- **Multiple Authors**
Basu, Tapan, Pradip Datta, Sumit Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar, and Sambuddha Sen, *Khaki Shorts Saffron Flags (Tracts for the Times/1)*, Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1993 and page.
Surname of first Author, First name of first Author and First name of second Author, Surname of second Author etc., *Title of Book*, Place of Publication: Publisher, (date) and page.

Edited Volume

- Single author
George, K.M. (ed.), *Modern Indian Literature: An Anthology, Plays and Prose*, Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1994 and page.
- Multiple authors
Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (eds), *The Empire Writes Back* [1989], London and New York: Routledge, 1995 and page.

Translated Volume

- Kemal, Yasher (trans. from Turkish by Thilda Kemal), *The Wind from the Plain* [1960], London: Harvill Press, 1989 and page.

Paper in Edited Volume

- Single Author and Single Editor
Masselos, J.C., 'The Khojas of Bombay: The Defining of Formal Membership Criteria During the Nineteenth Century', in *Caste and Social Stratification among the Muslims*, Imtiaz Ahmad (ed.), Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1973.

Surname, First name of Author, 'Title of Paper', in *Title of Book*, First name of Editor Surname of Editor (ed.), Place of Publication: Publisher, (date) and page.
- Single Authors and Multiple Editors
Salomon, C., 'The cosmogonic riddles of Lalan Faqir', in *Gender, Genre and Power in South Asian Expressive Traditions*, A. Appadurai, F. Korom, and M. Mills (eds), Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991 and page.

Surname of Author, First name of Author, 'Title of Paper', in *Title of Book*, First name of first Editor Surname of first Editor and First name of second Editor Surname of second Editor (eds), Place of Publication: Publisher, (date) and page.

Paper in Journal

- Single Author
Bouiller, V., 'The Nepalese State and Gorakhnathi Yogis: The Case of the Former Kingdoms of Dang Valley, 18th-19th Centuries', *Contribution to Nepalese Studies*, 20 (1), 1993, pp. 29-52.

Surname, first name, 'Title of Paper', *Name of Journal*, Volume number (Issue number), (date), pp. 000-0.
- Multiple Authors
Murty, M. N. and R. Ray, 'A Computational Procedure for Calculating Optimal Commodity Taxes with Illustrative Evidence from Indian Budget Data', *Scandinavian Journal of Economics*, 91(4), 1989, pp.655-70.

Surname of first Author, First name of first Author and First name of second Author
Surname of second Author, 'Title of Paper', *Name of Journal*, Volume number (Issue number), (date), pp. 000-0.

Paper in Edited Journal

- Single author
Gaborieau, Marc, 'Life-Cycle Ceremonies among Converted Muslims in Nepal and Northern India', in Islam in Asia, Yohanan Friedmann (ed.), vol. I, *South Asia*, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1984 and page.

Unpublished Papers/Mimeographs/Discussion Papers/Working Papers

Chander, P. and L. Wide, 'Corruption and Tax Compliance', mimeo, New Delhi: Indian Statistical Institute, 1989.

Surname of first Author, First name of first Author and First name of second Author Surname of second Author (1991), 'Title of Paper', mimeo, Place: Organization, (date).

Newspaper: Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Name of Newspaper* (City and Province/State of Publication, if not Included in Name), Date of Publication. <https://doi.org/DOI> Number or Name of Database.

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 - Example: 1. Jack Caulfield, "A Step-by-Step Guide to the Writing Process," *Scribbr*, April 24, 2020, <https://www.scribbr.com/academic-writing/writing-process/>

If there is no author or date:

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 - Example: "About the UvA." University of Amsterdam, accessed July 24, 2018. <https://www.uva.nl/en/about-the-uva>
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 - Example: 1. "Catholic News Agency," accessed March 25, 2025, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/>

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