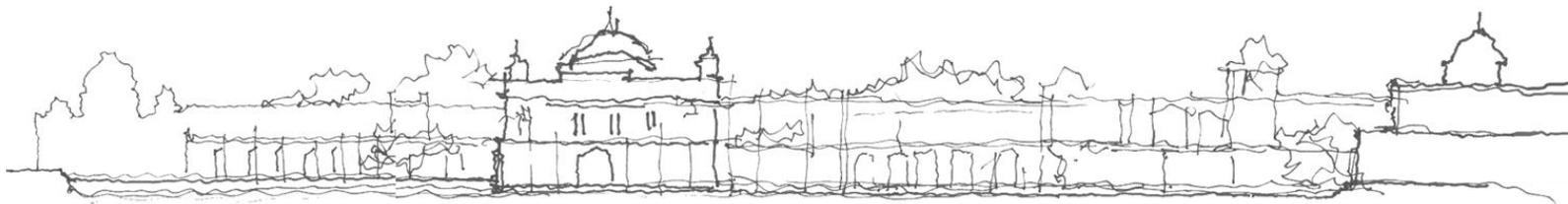


GARDENS OF HARMANDIR SAHIB
AMRITSAR
VOLUME I



Contents

Preamble	I
Impressions	II
Understanding Sikhism	III
Importance of Harmandir Sahib in Sikhism	IV
Gardens in Religious Spaces	V
Significant Monuments	VI
Appendix	VII

The study has been conducted with a few aims in mind - it hopes to understand the various tenets of Sikhism, and the basis on which the religion has been founded. It hopes to compare Sikhism to other religions, and identify how it has distinguished itself - be it the fact that it is a monotheistic religion, or the fact that it is a religion that believes in the idea of a formless God, and has incorporated teachings from other religions into the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. Having established the ideals of the religion, the book then hopes to establish the various themes that may be explored, and how these may be transferred to the design of the garden at *Harmandir Sahib*. The research allows the philosophy of Sikhism to be translated to the garden in various ways - the design itself, the elements used, the movement and flow of the space, and the manner in which the space may be used, amongst others.

Impression One

We had of course heard about the Golden Temple. Of how beautiful its setting was. Of how clean the entire precinct always was. The immense sense of " seva" where thousands of volunteers worked all hours of the day, through out the year, cleaning the place, taking in shoes to store, tending to people. And then of course the famous *langar* where no one is refused food, any time of the day; a little over a hundred thousand people eat every day, with not a paisa taken from them.

This was all true, and amazing to see. It was touching, and it was humbling.

But what really was astounding was that there was not a single place, a single corner, that was closed to people. People could go any and every where. There were no restricted areas; no place where people were stopped from going.

This, in a place where perhaps well over a hundred and fifty thousand people come every day.

And there was no pushing, no jostling. No VIPs. No hustling in the shrine. Every one entered the shrine and sat for as long as they wanted outside it, or near it, and the crowds, gently, with no sense of anxiety offered their prayers. This was in itself impossible to believe. But what really was astounding was that there were no security checks. Not as you entered the shrine, not as you stayed in any of the free places of residence. Not as you ate in the *langar*. And certainly not as you walked along the tank, or even entered the temple. This in today's time is unheard of !

In the day the place is crowded with devotees, in every corner; and in the night the entire space turns into a giant sleeping court. Every corner on the streets, along the various buildings and all around the tank, have thousands and thousands of families - women, children, adults - from all parts of the world, who make the clean marble their bed, so that they can wake up before the crack of dawn and partake in the morning rituals.

You would think that they would shut the place in the evening, and open early in the morning. But just as the food never stops, nor does the time to visit the place.

Any time, every time, night and day, through out the year.

So should not the new gardens be a place , for all the people to go to, any time, all the time? Day and Night ? For families, for elders and most of all for children.

Impression Two

As we discussed the work on hand, a senior gentleman, told us, that this place was blessed by *Wahe Guruji* and nothing was impossible. No limitation of time, or money would ever come in the way. And then, more tellingly, he said that the land on which we had to work was the most precious land in the world - no money in the world could ever put a value to it. He was right. It sat adjacent to the Amrit Sarovar in which was the Golden Temple. Touching the edge of the tank. It was after all the most sacred land in the world for the Sikh religion. What value could you put to the land of *St. Peter's Basilica* in *Vatican*, or the *Kabba* in *Mecca*, or the land on which the *Kashi Vishwanath* temple in *Varanasi* sat. It was a priceless piece of land where any thing was possible. After all it was the holy land.

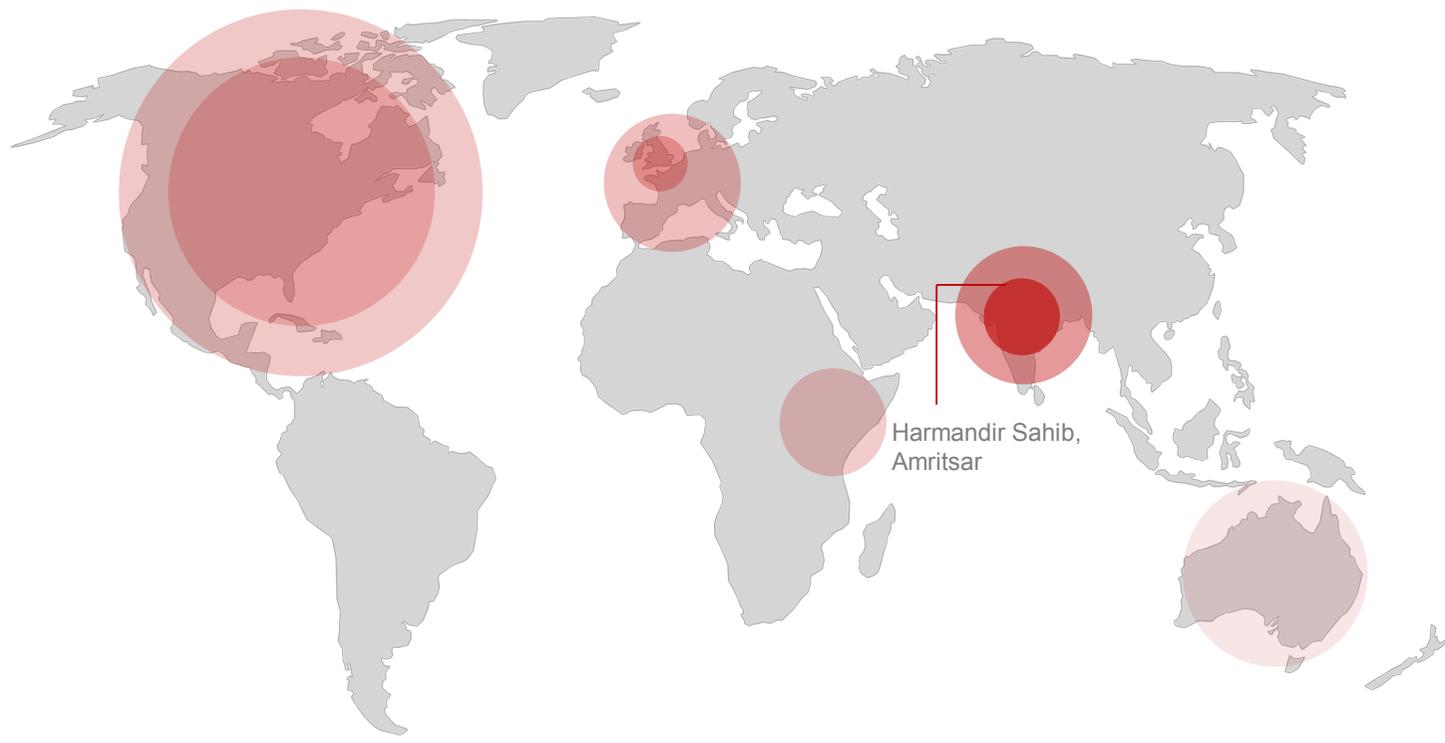
So what is precious on a land which is priceless? That which can be estimated or that which cannot ever be costed. And the only thing that cannot be costed is an experience; a sense; a spirit. That is priceless - and the place had to strive to achieve that. A place of experience, of calm, of the religious spirit, a place that roams in the past, strolls in the present and soars in the future, a place that tells many stories to many people, for all time to come. That would be priceless.

Impression Three

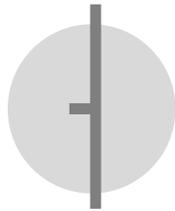
In the night, we went to Babaji's *dera* for dinner. It was a rare honor. He sat on the floor in front of us and fed us. The food was delicious and we ate more than any of us was used to. Before we left someone asked him to say something. Softly, reluctantly he first said he had nothing to say, and then when prodded, slowly started. And in the next 40 minutes, gently dissected the meaning of life and explained it as simply and as clearly as a patient mother explaining the need to wash hands before eating to a naughty child. He quoted from all sacred books at will, translated when he knew we could not understand, and at no time did he preach. It just seemed like he was posing questions, and leaving us to make the choices. In those 40 minutes, the meaning of life, its purpose was abundantly clear; we of course will spend our lives dodging its real import.

And he said something that stayed - here was a religion that respected all religions, talked about all of them, quoted from all of them, and did not force an opinion on any one- just said that while there are many religions, each one is a way to reach the one - the one God. So it did not matter which religion you followed, so long as you sought the one God. And he was there before the world was born, and will be there long after it is gone. It was a soothing voice in a world that speaks loudly to draw you to their Gods.

So how generous, and yet how profound must this place be, so that it can be gentle, and yet have many layers that can be unpeeled and understood over time?



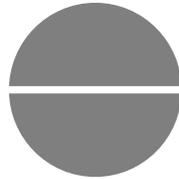
- Population density of Sikhs, worldwide
- Greater than 500001
 - Between than 100001 and 500000
 - Between than 10001 and 100000



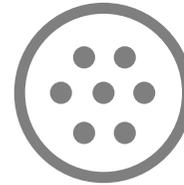
Guru Nanak
(1469-1539)
Humility



Guru Angad
(1504-1552)
Obedience



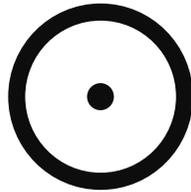
Guru Amar Das
(1479-1574)
Equality



Guru Ram Das
(1534-1581)
Service



Guru Arjan
(1563-1606)
Self-sacrifice



Guru Gobind Singh
(1666-1708)
Royal courage



Guru Tegh Bahadur
(1621-1675)
Tranquility



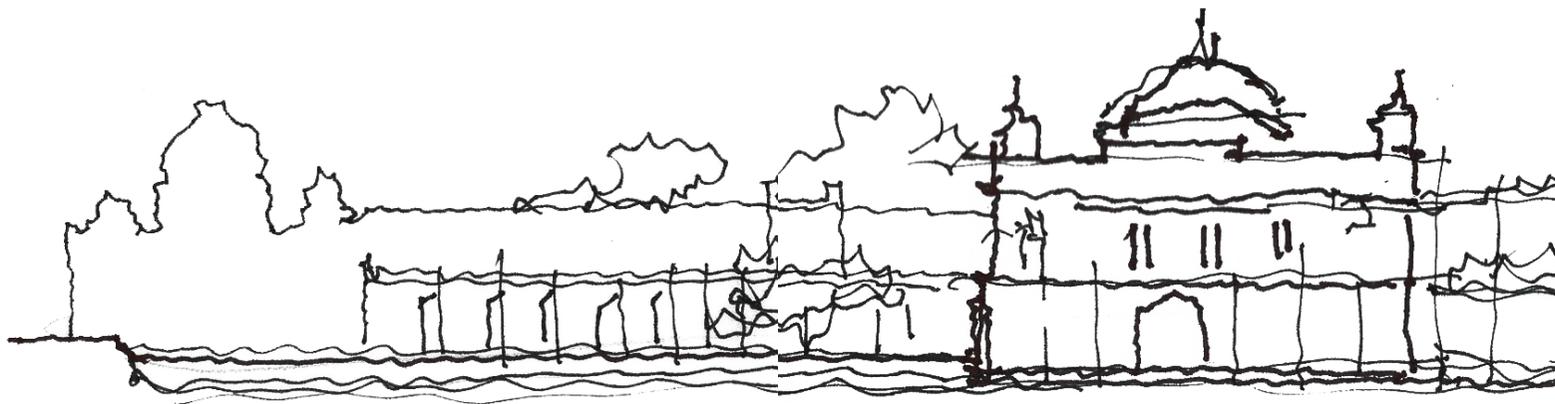
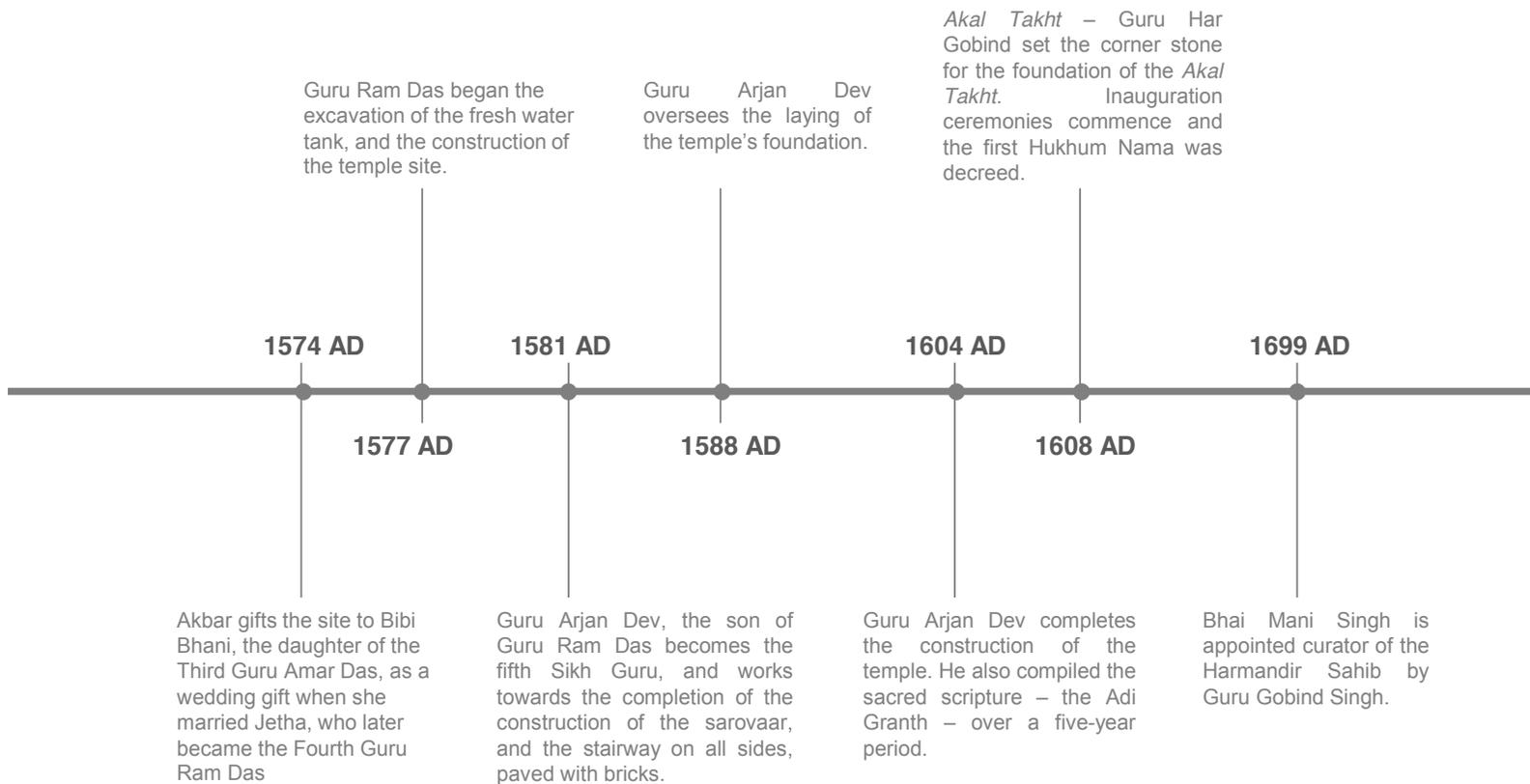
Guru Har Krishan
(1656-1664)
Purity

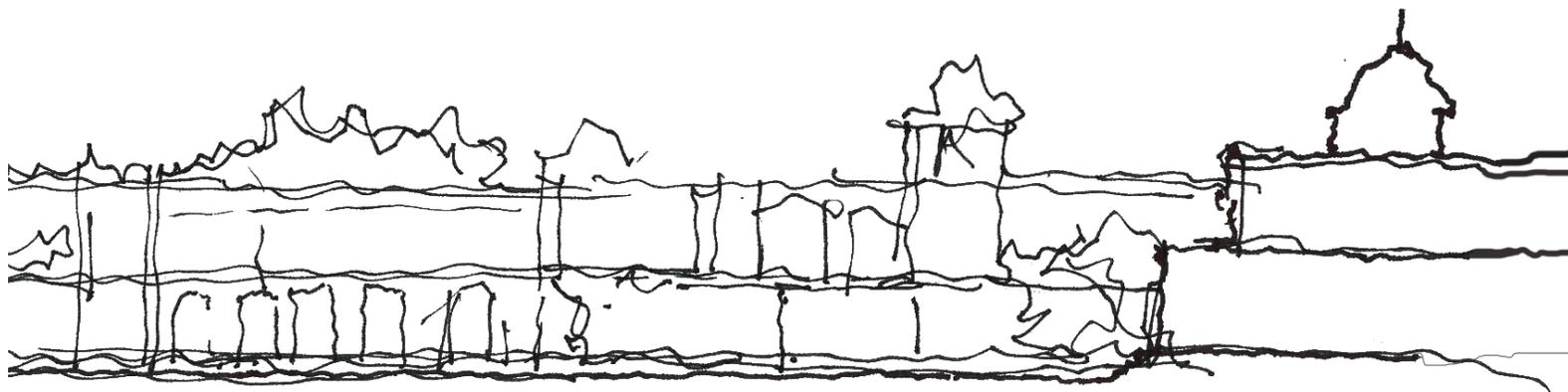
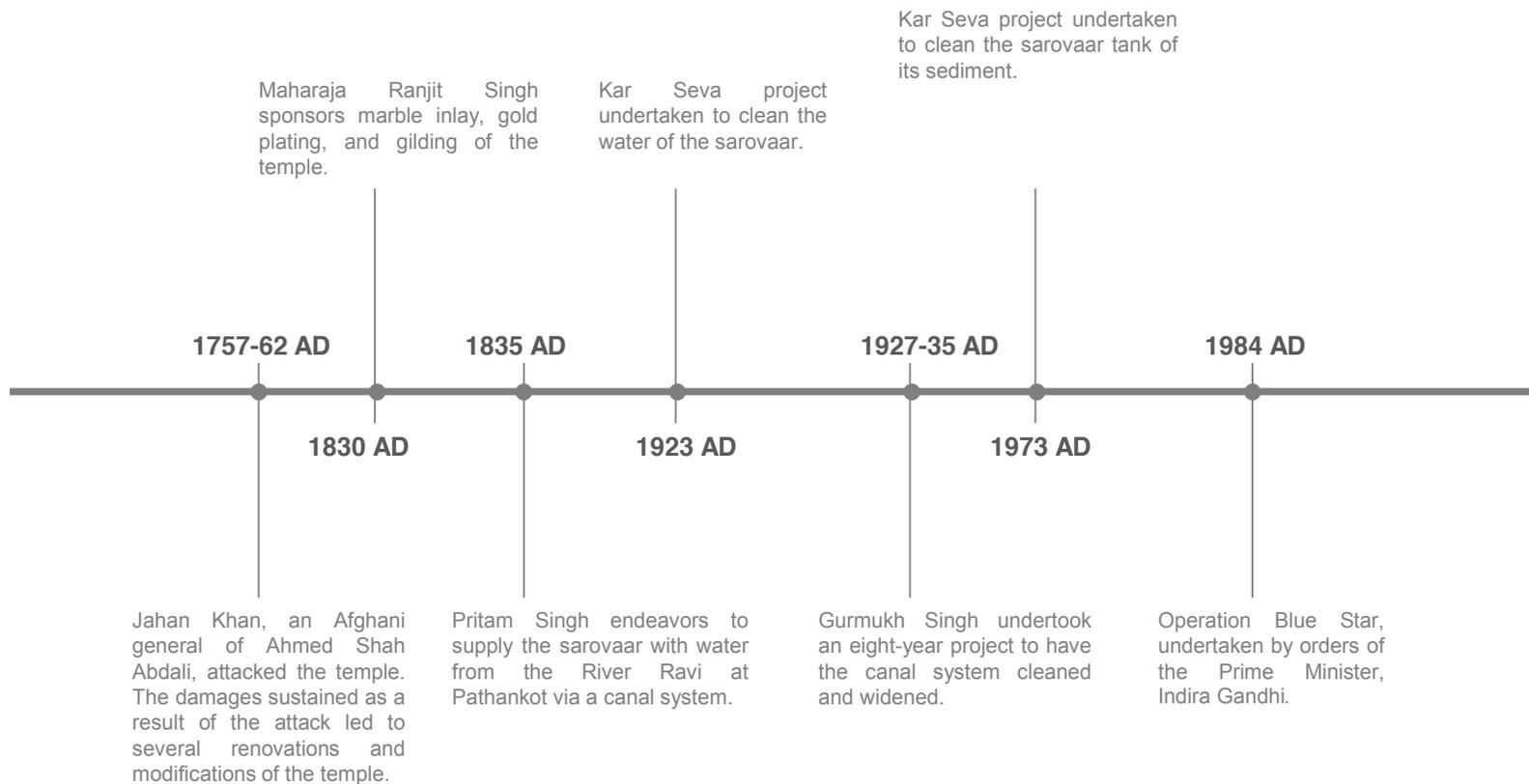


Guru Har Rai
(1630-1661)
Mercy



Guru Hargobind
(1595-1644)
Justice





Vatican Gardens

A place for quiet meditation for the Popes, the Vatican Gardens are spread over an area of 58 acres – occupying half of the Vatican Territory. They are formally known as the Gardens of Vatican City. The space includes gardens, vibrant flowerbeds and topiaries, green lawns, and a 7.4-acre forest. It also includes ancient fountains and sculptures. The Gardens, themselves, represent a harmony in nature. It hopes to remind mankind of their original status in the larger scheme of things. The gardens are divided into distinct landscape styles – English, French, and Italian. The highest point of the Garden is 200 feet above the sea level.



Vatican Gardens: The gardens of Vatican City cover most of the area of the Vatican city, adjacent to St. Peter's Basilica. They are considered to be a quiet place for meditation by the Popes since 1279.
Total area: 5,48,390 sq. mt.





The memorial to the Holocaust is a memorial plaza at the Weizmann Institute of science. The centerpiece is bronze and stone sculpture representing a *torah* scroll that has been split in half. The walls surrounding the plaza have inscriptions of names and quotes.

Year of completion: 1972
Designed by: Dani Karavan

Memorial to the Holocaust
Rehovot, Israel



The Memorial depicts the foundation of the synagogue marking the exact location of the old Regensburg synagogue in order to commemorate the decree passed by Regensburg's city council on the 12th January 1519 to expel all the Jews from the city within 2 weeks

Area: 160 sq.mt
Year of completion: 2005
Designed by: Dani Karavan

Mizrach
Neupfarrplatz, Regensburg, Germany



M/s Prabhakar B. Bhagwat
Landscape Architecture ■ Architecture
Environmental Planning ■ Master Planning
www.landscapeindia.net

May 2018