

## AN UPDATE ON THE DISCOVERY OF THE MONUMENT OF GURU NANAK

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. Now every Sikh want to see this monument. In continuation of our further research, we are proud to inform that the Monument has been relocated in collaboration with Mr. T. Sibia of London, UK and Mr Jatinderpaul Singh of Ramtex Exports, Ludhiana. We are glad that the monument is still in very good conditions after 12 years when it was discovered in 1994. 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 as follows. Calligraphic writing at the top with gold is **BISM ALLAH** (Starting in the Name of Allah).



Fig. 1. Full view of the monument facing the Straits of Bosphorus (called front side of monument). Compare it with the first one, which showed only the inscription, much damaged and not easily legible. *Photo: D. S. Chahal, IUS and T. Sibia, London.*



Fig. 2. 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.*

## CONTINUATION OF RESEARCH

Our research for deciphering the inscription and to find out the background history of this monument is going on. Here is an update on the discovery of monument of Guru Nanak:

## UPDATING

Our initial research after consulting a number scholars indicates that there is need of hard and serious efforts to work with scholars not only experts in Arabic and Persian but also in Turkish, and who are familiar with the status of these languages of that time. Whatsoever, we have discovered through the help of scholars from Montreal and from Istanbul in coordination with Mr. T. Sibia is as follows:

### First Deciphering Attempt

I found the importance of the monument only when Mr. Iqbal Kaiser, 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 Arabic/Persian/Turkish language (Fig. 1. Front view). It clearly indicates that it is dedicated to Guru Nanak. The first line deciphered by them is as follows:

### In Arabic/Persian/Turkish languages

(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. However, the date, 1267 Hijri (1850 CE), in the crown and at the bottom line of the monument is quite legible (Fig.1).

When we examined the inscription on the other side of the monument (Fig. 2. Back side) it appears that inscription was engraved either in 1217 or 1267 Hijri, which is equivalent to 1802 or 1850 CE. The later date (1850 CE) appears to be correct since the Emperor of Ottoman Empire (1839-61 CE) was Abd-al-Majid (1823-61 CE). It is also assumed that the name of the inscriber is also Abd-al-Majid, which appears above that date. Abd-al-Majid is very common name among Muslims. And ‘Abd-al-Majid’ is also written before ‘Nanak’ at the end of the first line on the front side of the monument. Then ‘Abd-al-Majid’ is also appearing at the end of the first

line on the back side of the monument.

Now the question is:

### Who is ‘Abd-al-Majid 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 we 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. This further forces us to look into these inscriptions seriously and also along with other related writings to find the truth that:

Who is this ‘Nanak’ in the inscription on monument discovered in Istanbul?

Further study on its history indicates that this monument was built in the name of Ottoman Empire 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 there is prayer for the Sultan. If it is so then: *Is this prayer connected to Guru Nanak?*

The place of the monument was changed from its original place when there was road construction and on 1987-1988 it was restored by government, now it is located in the same area which is called Kabataş (near dolmabahçe palace)

At present it looks like that until the whole inscription on both sides of the monument is deciphered it is difficult to draw any inference to relate it to Guru Nanak.

Since the date (1850) on the monument indicates that it was constructed more than 300 years after Guru Nanak (1469-1539 CE), it creates another curiosity that how come somebody will raise a monument with inscription containing the name of Guru Nanak after that long time?

It also needs a serious research to look into the history of Sufism in Middle East and their interaction with the Sufism in India since in the Muslim world Nanak is known a Sufi named as ‘*Baba Nanak*’, *Baba Nanak Fakir*, and even as ‘*Hazrat Rab Majid Baba Nanak Faqir*’ on the stone at Baghdad.

Besides a new line of research, “*To study the interaction of the philosophy of Guru Nanak from an angle of his Sufism with that of Middle East Sufism*” has also become an important research project for the IUS.

*Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, PhD*