

The *Amarnama*:
The Statement of the Immortal

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Composed in Farsi by Nath Mal Dhadi and completed in October 1708, the *Amarnama* captures the moment in Sikh history at which Guru Gobind Singh strictly admonishes the Sikhs against following the Hindu beliefs. A Brahman, the elite of the Hindu society, caused the death of the Guru's four sons, and the implication is that any association with the Brahmans/Hindus is a source of shame and is likely to produce hardship for the Sikhs. Rejecting the funeral rites followed by the Brahmans and of consuming meat with animal slaughtered in Islamic manner,¹ the *Amarnama* instructs the Sikhs to utter only the name of God² and Guru Nanak on auspicious occasions, and recommends reciting the ballad of dhadis for prosperity. These injunctions manifests the crystallization of this third path, one in which Singhs are to be free from the influence of the Brahmans and Muslims in order to develop the Sikh way of life.

The first account narrated in the *Amarnama* takes place at the banks of the river, Godavri, where the Guru has set up a posting only to find the seat of a Hindu ascetic [known to the later tradition as Banda Singh] in the vicinity. The Guru is told that the ascetic has a large following of people who believe that he has subdued the 'demons of the wilderness' (*ghule biaban* and *vohoosh*). While having control over these, he also hoards local assets such as the sheep. On one occasion, the Guru happens to visit the ascetic's seat and orders his sheep to be slaughtered during the sacred time of the solar eclipse. He then distributes the meat as alms (along with his other assets) to the people around.³ Upon discovering that his sheep have been slaughtered, the 'holy man' goes to Nander to gather Hindus and takes his grievance to the King who then comes to the Guru to discern the truth. When the King places a pearl in his hand, the Guru casts the pearl into the Godavari as an offering. Seeing this, the King realizes that the Guru is not after materials gains and he absolves him of the accusation of sacrilege.

In the second account, there is the story of a Brahman who is willing to exploit the beliefs of a humble Sikh. The father of this young Sikh dies in his bedstead. As the son and his wife were away tilling the fields, they were not able to place the father on the ground to release his soul to heaven. Perplexed by this situation, the man goes to the Brahman who directs him to surrender the worth of his belongings, and sends him to the Ganges to perform the ritual bath and offer alms in order to absolve his father for his sins in this world. As the narrative unfolds, the disciple pays homage to the Guru on his way to the Ganges, the Guru discovers the deceit of the Brahman, but does not stop him from going to the Ganges. This account concludes with a reminder to renounce the ways of the Brahmins and to maintain obedience to the God and Guru Nanak alone while also keeping Dhadi and his ballads close to the heart.

Ath Amarnama

Tat Godavari Sri Mukhvak Patshahi 10

Here is the Document of the Immortal [recited]
on the banks of the Godavari in front of the Tenth Master

When the true creator bestowed his grace
All that is in the heavens and the earth came into being. 1

The Guru chose Godavari as a grand encampment
This place was sanctified by the graves of the holy ones. 2

Although the Turks had created an uproar
The True Guru showed his holiness and blessings. 3

There on Godavari lived an obstinate man⁴
He had wooden shoes and a cup of milk
And had shaped his seat in a royal manner. 4

He had also subdued the demons of the wilderness. 5

His heart was void of love, and his mind filled with arrogance.
He detested the ones devoted to truth. 6

He uttered these false words to me:
Do not be boastful about your friendship with the king. 7

A solar eclipse happens once a year.
I explained this to thousands of men. 8

I also explained that,
His manner of worship was similar to Guru Nanak
I had no doubt about this. 9

He went towards Godavri
Leaving his empty seat behind. 10

I asked: who from among you will go and gather all of his sheep? 11

The Singhs obeyed my command,
and with single strokes, slaughtered the sheep. 12

The wild people descended upon the meat like the wind
and hoped to cook the slaughtered sheep. 13

With both hands I generously gave the meat as alms only to these people. 14

I also gave: One elephant, five of our tall-strong bodied, bulky and young men. 15

But I did not give anyone the cows
I absolutely did not let the wild ones get their hands on the cows. 16

After giving alms to the wild people
We had a royal celebration. 17

On that day it was the earlier part of the afternoon
and Dhadis recited some ballads. 18

In the evening *rahiras* was recited

and after prayer, food was distributed. 19

Upon taking the blessed food of *rahiras*

I directed the Singhs to 20

'Perform ablution with zest and happiness

While taking the name of Guru Nanak so that you might be strengthened.' 21

Upon hearing this command,

They did not give the cows to the wild ones. 22

The command of God was in their hearts

Because there is no God other than Him. 23

Do not ever think of following the Hindus,

Follow the one I worship, rely only on Him. 24

I bow only to the One

From Him I have gained all of my strength and grandeur. 25

When that man came out from Godavari

He saw all of the bloody sheep. 26

He sent five of his brave ones towards me

Each one was ready to kill me. 27

They made many attempts to kill me

But I was under the protection of God. 28

So they stopped their fighting

As my Singhs were much stronger than them. 29

Injured in their attempts against the Satguru

Bloodied, they returned to their leader. 30

They related to him the great difficulty with which they saved themselves from
the strength of the Satguru. 31

Other braves ones were ready to give their lives for the Guru
and came secretly on horseback. 32

We do not run from the group of four *jogis*
Nor do we fear the fifty-two arrows of the warriors. 33

We begged the guru to accept us in his Panth
It was the only way to save our lives. 34

Upon hearing this, the man frantically ran to Nander
Where he gathered the Hindus, and told them: 35

'The guru killed my sheep!
He killed them during the solar eclipse.' 36

Upon hearing this,
The Hindus rallied together and took this grievance to the king. 37

Many chiefs and wealthy men were present at the king's court. 38

Where he cried before the king that the
Guru had destroyed the Hindus. 39

The grieved stood together in their plea for justice. 40

They expressed their grievance to the King
And the King began to contemplate the matter. 41

His majesty had a chief named Nand Lal who was always at his side. 42

In their distress,
the Hindus followed his majesty to Godavri. 43

In the midst of grand celebrations, they arrived at Godavri
Where the guru was immersed in worship. 44

The King presented jewelry of different kinds
And he placed one pearl on the palm of the Satguru's hand. 45

The guru threw the pearl into the river,
The king was very surprised by this. 46

The Satguru then said to the king:
'The river requested the pearl as an offering.' 47

The King had heard about how great the Satguru was,
So he joined his hands with great humility. 48

Seeing truth in the eyes of the king,
The Satguru gave the king his seat. 49

The king conveyed to me
the nature of complaints made by the Hindus. 50

I sought justice from the king, I asked him to remove from me the accusation of
committing sacrilege during the eclipse. 51

The grieving Hindus then exclaimed before the king
that our evil nature caused the eclipse to take place. 52

I then revealed to the king the secret behind my actions:
I gave the food of the birds, to the birds. 53

I offered the slaughtered sheep to the misguided ones,
As their manner of food and drink was unholy. 54

Upon hearing the cause behind these actions,
The Hindus shamefully returned to their homes. 55

The man who first rallied against me,
Fell to my feet and asked for forgiveness. 56

I commanded him along with five of
my free-minded Singhs to go to Punjab. 57

In this world full of anguish and pain,

I followed the command of God with my mind and body. 58

Because I speak like a truthful man,
The ones in pain come to me for healing. 59

These people are unaware, and have no one to guide and teach them,
So they remain ignorant and without a guardian. 60

I hope to reach that everlasting place,
Where I will be in peace with my creator. 61

May all the Singhs sustain the Dhadis
And listen to their ballads. 62

Dhadi is like a Singh to me.
This *Safarama* will be very important for the Dhadis. 63

I instructed the Dhadis to read this *Safarama* to the Singhs. 64

When the Singhs give alms to Dhadis
They will attain spiritual elevation
And will be blessed with all the things of this world. 65

In Nandair, death came suddenly upon one of my Singhs
While he was still in his bedstead. 66

Others quickly reported to me that
He was alone at the time of his death. 67

They asked that since he died in his bedstead
How will his soul be absolved in the presence of the Lord? 68

'Should we place him in the river, or light the funeral pyre?
We will do as the Guru commands.' 69

I told them not to be distressed,
For that humble person has reached heaven. 70

During his final moments he was immersed in the remembrance of God.
I assure you that he has a place in heaven. 71

Recite *ardas* and place him in the Ganges [Godavari],
Do not overly contemplate or worry about this matter. 72

There is no need to obey the Brahman,
Nor is there a need to ask the elders,
Tell Dhadis to sing the ballad of Nath Mal. 73

Recite the name of God
And send him into the river Ganges [Godavari]. 74

I heard of doing this before as well,
The fifth Guru Arjan has told us to do this. 75

In Kiratarpur there was a well with sweet water,
One of my humble disciples from the village Bakala lived there. 76

He was a poor and humble man,
Who had a wife and a strong horse. 77

His father was an old man,
They had a small amount of land and an ox. 78

When he had gone away to plant the seeds for the fall crops,
His wife had accompanied him to provide food and water. 79

She left his father in the hands of God, and he died in his bed. 80

When the husband and wife arrived home
They discovered what had taken place. 81

He was a holy man, who had taken the name of the Guru,

So he reached heaven while in his bedstead. 82

The man asked the Brahman, who answered: 83

'Your father left this world with many sins against his soul,
With my guidance you can absolve him.' 84

With deep sorrow the disciple joined his hands seeking mercy:
'I will do as you command so that my father might be absolved.' 85

'I would like to maintain the respect I have in this world;
I trust that my father will be purged of his sins.' 86

The Brahman told him to bring gold coins
And give alms generously. 87

'You should immediately light the funeral pyre,
And give alms at the Ganges.' 88

'Quickly go to the Ganges,
And then you will be able to drink the water from this well.' 89

He conferred with his wife and offered his father to the fire. 90

The disciple sold his ox and set out
Towards the Ganges with his wife. 91

He gave the worth of all these things to the Brahman,
Save three gold coins that he gave to his wife. 92

Moneyless, he left the town of Bakala. 93

With his wife he crossed the River Beas
And frantically ran towards Kiratarpur. 94

It occurred to him that they should first pay homage to the Satguru. 95

His wife agreed upon this holy act,

And they decided to go to the Ganges after seeing the Guru. 96

In the presence of the Guru he presented an offering,
And joined his hands together to greet him. 97

He praised the Guru,
So the Guru blessed him and his family. 98

The Guru asked this sorrowful disciple:
'Where are you good people going?' 99

[He responded]:
'Because my father died in his bedstead,
The Brahman has told me to go and purify myself in the Ganges.' 100

'I worked the land with my ox,
I was not worried about earning my living.' 101

'I gave away all of my earnings and left empty handed,
Now we are on the path to the Ganges.' 102

Upon hearing this, the guru became agitated with the Brahman,
And stated: 103

'Give nothing to bad people,
The Satguru is the sole liberator,
His disciples are under his protection.' 104

The Guru took his hand and said:
'Look, here is your father in heaven.' 105

'The Guru has placed your father in heaven.
It is the same bedstead, and the same fortunate man.' 106

Happily, the father looked at his son and asked,
'How did you arrive at this place?' 107

He said 'O good one, Remember name of the Guru

And guard it in your heart.' 108

The grace of the Guru brought mercy upon us,
He made us forget all of our suffering. 109

Upon hearing this they went to Kiratarpur
And presented the matter to his holiness. 110

The blessings of the Guru were bestowed upon you in a way that rarely occurs
For those who are immersed in worldly affairs. 111

The Guru said: 'oh dear disciple,
Bring for me the water of the Ganges.' 112

'Fill our cup with water,
And fill this bowl^s with water as well.' 113

As he entered the Ganges for his ablution,
He lost the cup the Guru had given him. 114

Helpless in his search for the cup,
The disciple went to the bazaar to purchase another. 115

And when he had filled it with holy water from the Ganges
He traveled happily to Kiratarpur. 116

With his miraculous powers
The Guru was able to discern what had happened with the cup. 117

Speak like a true and holy disciple,
And tell me what happened in your journey. 118

He told the Guru that the cup fell into the Ganges,
And the Guru stated: 'I will get that cup back from the Ganges.' 119

The Guru then sent him to Shakrganj
And told him to retrieve the cup from the Ganges. 120

He saw that the river was flowing
And countless cups were floating in the water. 121

Fearfully he cried to the Guru:
'Oh true one, where is the cup?' 122

The Guru said,
'Despite all the numerous cups there, you will touch only mine.' 123

A voice spoke from the Ganges saying: 'take the cup!'
Filled with joy, he went towards the Guru. 124

Where the guru said: 'The Ganges does not only flow in Haridivar,
I can see it all here from the well in Shakrganj.' 125

The Guru asked his disciple, tell me:
'Is virtue obtained by going to the Ganges,
Or can it be found in this well?' 126

Then I commanded my disciples to be strong
And to taste the nectar from the double-edged sword. 127

Do not follow the Brahman or listen to his advice.
Do not stain yourself by associating with him. 128

There is another way to praise the Creator,
When you gather to pray, recite the Ballad of Dhadi. 129

After the offspring of Mardana sings the praise,
You should gather for the Ballad of Dhadi. 130

You should also feed the poor,
Do not let anyone remain hungry or thirsty. 131

Do not listen to the Brahman,
And do not slaughter your animals in the way of the Muslims. 132

Anyone who obeys this will flourish in this path. 133

When prophets and avatars were sent to us,
Guru Nanak was appointed their chief. 134

On any occasion of happiness,
The Ballad of Dhadi should be played in the afternoon. 135

The great soul has given us this high status
So our Singhs will remain content in all situations. 136

May Dhadi always be with our Singhs,
Do not eat without him. 137

Guru Nanak said that Mardana will always be with us. 138

And that Nath Mal Dhadi is also forever by our side. 139

To associate with the worship of the Brahman is a great shame.
The Brahmans killed four of our sons. 140

Do not carry out the funeral rites prescribed by the Brahmans,
They bring pain and hardship for our Singhs. 141

The Singh should take *khande di pahul*,
When the child is born he should also be initiated. 142

Search for the spiritual nectar in your youth
So that you are not exhausted by your enemy. 143

At the moment of death this nectar brings comfort,
It offers an open glimpse of the divine. 144

Due to the growth of our community
I have blessed Dhadis with the *Amarnama*. 145

Dhadis brings prestige and grace to the assembly
And reciting the *Amarnama* graces a Dhadi. 146

*Ehti si Amarnama MukhVak Patshahi Dasam hukam sat Sampuran
Sal – 1765 [1708 CE] Mah Katak, Jama Darj kita Gur Sobha main.*

(This *Amarnama* recited in the presence of the Tenth Master. Completed in the year 1708 CE, October 1st and recorded in a manuscript containing the text of *Gur Sobha*).

¹ *Do not listen to the Brahman, and do not slaughter your animals in the way of the Muslims. Line 132.*

² Farsi words used for God are *Parvardigar* (23), *khuda* (28), *rab* (44).

³ *I also gave: One elephant, five of our tall- strong bodied, bulky and young men. 15.*

⁴ First part of line 5 in original document.

⁵ Kumandal / murrabaz.