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# The Kartarpur Sahib Corridor- Reimagining the Relationship with Sikh Heritage & the Religious Diplomacy of Inclusive Pakistan

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Kartarpur, about 118 kilometers (73 miles) from Lahore in Narowal district, lies on the banks of the Ravi River. It is where Guru Nanak, the founder of the 5th largest religion of the world, Sikhism, lived for 18 years before he died there in 1539. Guru Nanak's philosophy (developed & disseminated here) formed the basis of Sikhism, focusing on equality and service to others. The Sikhs all over the world come to Nankana Sahib (Pakistan) to celebrate Guru Nanak Gurpurab<sup>1</sup>. Last year on November 9, 2019, Pakistan has opened the visa-free corridor on 550th birthday of the founder of Sikhism, allowing the Sikh pilgrims to travel between Dera Baba Nanak on Indian side (Gurdaspur) and the Sri Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara (Kartarpur) on Pakistani side. The Kartarpur Corridor carries greater significance in the backdrop of Pakistan India relations. It is widely hoped that the good-will gesture and people to people contact ultimately would positively lead to better diplomatic relations and economic ties between the borders. This article particularly draws attention towards the emblematic significance of the corridor how it reimagines the relationship with Sikh heritage in the offering of the religious diplomacy of inclusive Pakistan. The paper leaves few questions to be answered by future researchers. It concludes that this initiative is a milestone in the elevation of interfaith harmony and a step towards regional peace.

## Introduction

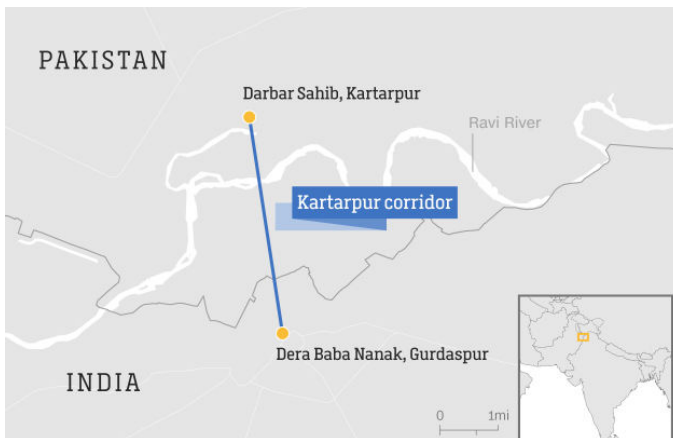
Kartarpur, meaning 'place of God', is located in Tehsil Shakargarh, Narowal District in the Punjab. The Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara, an imposing white structure, stands in the middle of lush green fields 2.5 km off Shakargarh Road in Kartarpur. The first Guru of Sikhism, Guru Nanak, founded Kartarpur in 1504 AD and his Sikh commune comprised people of all religions and castes. He spent the last 18 years of his life there, one of the holiest sites under Sikhism, (Kartarpur Fact-Finding, 2019 April 18). The Kartarpur Gurudwara covers 42 acres (21, 650 Sq.m Building), making it one of the largest in the world.

It was Sharif, the former Pakistani Prime Minister and former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1996, 1998-99 & 1999-2004) who anticipated the Kartarpur corridor in early 1999, as part of their Delhi–Lahore Bus diplomacy. The renovation of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur was started in early 2000 by the assistance of Canadian and American Sikhs (Khalid, 2019). On November 28, 2018, the construction project of the corridor was inaugurated by Imran Khan, Pakistani Prime Minister while likewise the foundation stone for the Indian part of the Corridor was laid by M. Venkaiah Naidu, the Vice President of India. The corridor connects 2 significant Sikh Shrines, Dera Baba Nanak Sahib, Gurdaspur in India and Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan, giving access for Sikh Pilgrims from Indian Punjab to Pakistani Punjab on November 26, 2018 (Sevea, 2018). According to officials, “the corridor can accommodate up to 5,000 pilgrims per day and up to 10,000 can visit the Gurudwara daily”

(<https://minorityrights.org/2019/11/09/opening-the-kartarpur-corridor-is-a-symbol-of-peace-and-respect-between-religions-and-deserves-applause-says-mrg/>). This "corridor of peace" is the latest effort to mend cultural liaison between the two countries. The corridor carries significance for 2 reasons, particularly:

- a. Visa requirement has been waived off, just a valid ID needed
- b. No registration is required 10 days in advance.

The project has been called a breakthrough of peace between India and Pakistan, two South Asian neighbors with a hostile history (<https://www.dw.com/en/why-kartarpur-corridor-is-unlikely-to-defuse-india-pakistan-tensions/a-51166467>)



Source: <https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/india-pakistan-kartarpur-corridor-opens-intl-hnk/index.html>

## Route

Before this Corridor opened, in order to reach Dera Baba NanaK from the Indian capital of New Delhi, one had to fly to Amritsar in the North-Western Indian state of Punjab, 28 kilometers (17 miles) from the Pakistani border. From there, through travelling by car to the city of Dera Baba Nanak, where the corridor begins, lies the place, 1 kilometer away from the border (<https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/india-pakistan-kartarpur-corridor-opens-intl-hnk/index.html>). The distance to Kartarpur was otherwise 112 miles (180 Km) from Nankana Sahib (Khalid, 2019).



## The Birthplace of Sikhism

Sikh means, seekers of truth. Sikh religion does not have any concept of Prophets, and they call their Guru an illuminated soul (Rao, 2019). Sikhism is the 5<sup>th</sup> biggest religion of the world. Its followers celebrate the birth of their Guru in the Punjabi Desi month of Katak on the day of Full moon (PooranMashi). The Sikh religion was founded in Punjab, "the land of five rivers", now separated between India and Pakistan, with most of the world's 27 million Sikhs living in India. The Sikh Community has a high degree of ethnic homogeneity and a strong sense of loyalty to Punjab. It is entirely permissible to claim that Sikh history originates with Guru Nanak, lasting for two centuries through a line of nine successors (McLeod, 1999: 4).

The first Gurdwara in the world was built in 1520s in Kartarpur. (<https://www.brecorder.com/2018/12/05/456784/kartarpur-religious-tourism-potential/>). The changing course of the Ravi River swept up the original village, and the shrine itself had gone through several rebuilds and renovations over the

centuries. "After Nanak died, there was a dispute between the local Hindus and Muslims. Hindus, who claimed Nanak as their Guru, wanted to cremate his body, while Muslims, who saw him as their peer, wanted to bury him. It is believed that Guru Nanak's body was turned into flowers, which were then divided between the two communities" (<https://www.koamnewsnow.com/lifestyle/indiapakistan-peace-corridor-opens-sikh-temple-to-tourists/1140154185>). After his death, on the demand of his followers, both grave and Samadhi<sup>2</sup> were constructed (Khalid, 2019).

### **Life & Teachings of Baba Guru Nanak**

Guru Nanak was born in 1469<sup>3</sup> and grew up in his father's<sup>4</sup> village, named Talvandi<sup>5</sup>. In his young age, he did employment in the services of Daulat Khan Lodin Sultanpur. From here, he began travelling where he finally settled in Kartarpur<sup>6</sup>. There he died, according to the available resources, in 1539 (McLeod, 1999: 5). While Guru Nanak himself has described about the era he lived that, "This age is like a drawn sword, the Kings are butchers; Goodness hath taken wings and flown (Singh, 1990: 99). Guru Nanak started a reformist movement to abolish Shirk<sup>7</sup> in Hinduism. His teachings revolved around belief in one God and one humanity.

The most interesting feature of Guru Nanak's days was Sufism. Guru Nanak (1469-1539) lived in an age of political disintegration (Banerjee, 2000: 1, 810). Guru Nanak's verses have many references to a class of Muslim Faqees called Jangam (MacAuliffe, 1909: 169). Sikhs are the moderate reformist group that has emerged from Hinduism. Its founder, Guru Nanak chose to embrace the good teachings of all religions that have universal applicability. Granth Sahib has 5,894 ballads, 292 couplet of Bhagat Kabir and 134 ballads of Baba Fareed Ganj Shakar. Challenging the dogma across religion, Guru Nanak enticed Muslims and Hindus as his followers. His philosophical drive claimed for an inclusive religiosity that endorsed people from various sects, castes and religions to congregate and worship one God. People of all religions are welcome at Sikh temples because Sikhism teaches inclusiveness and equality without gender discrimination, apart from the sarovars<sup>8</sup> (Regen, [Saifi & Suri, 2019](#)). Nanak believed in the doctrine of transmigration. Holding wine and pork unlawful, he abstained from animal food and enjoined against cruelty to animals. Just as Nanak praised Muhammadans, he also praised the incarnations of gods and goddesses of the Hindus. But he knew them all to be the creation and not the creator (Singh, 1984).



Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, spent the last 18 years of his life in Kartarpur

**Source:** <https://www.dw.com/en/why-kartarpur-corridor-is-unlikely-to-defuse-india-pakistan-tensions/a-51166467>

Guru Nanak believed that in order to avoid sin, live in the world as Nuphar remains dry no matter if it grows in water, like the duck, for that it swims in water yet its feathers remain dry- this was the teachings of Guru Nanak. In search of truth, he travelled for 20-25 years. His 5 travels are very famous and every time he returned to Kartarpur. Those who settled in Kartarpur because of Guru Nanka, laid the foundation of first informal Sikh Community (Baradari). Guru gave them three principles of work, worship and charity. The worship led to the singing of ballads and Langar<sup>9</sup> which was open to every creed. This practice gave birth to volunteer service. In any Gurdwara of the world, if one goes, one will find Kirtan<sup>10</sup> and Langaraltogether, i-e; Worship and Charity. Guru Nanak kept doing farming since to earn and work is an important factor of Sikh religion. Therefore, it is likely sure that nowhere in the world, any Sikh beggar is found. He denied (the doctrines of) Halool (direct descent from or incarnation of God) and Ittihad (direct union of all-pervading God with any particular body) (Singh, 1984, April).

## **Partition Story**

The partition which was thought to be a solution to the communal issues of India did not minimize the hostility. Whereas Kashmir remained a soaring contention through the history. With the partition of the Sub-Continent, a large number of people were cut off from their religious places. So was the case with the Sikhs in Indian Punjab, as most of them were situated in Pakistani Punjab. One of which is the Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara (Sevea, 2018). The antipathy has remained there since decades which resulted in bloody riots at the times of partition and migration of 12-15 million people. The division not only divided pieces of land but the two sacred temples too (<https://www.dw.com/en/why-kartarpur-corridor-is-unlikely-to-defuse-india-pakistan-tensions/a-51166467>).

Many Sikh went to India and overnight, few of the sacred places for Sikhs, like Nankana Sahib were abandoned. After the partition, the abandoned and rotting building of the Kartarpur shrine became a symbol of loss and destruction of the sacred geography of the Sikhs. “In the 1980s, the Darbar Sahib was claimed by smugglers due to its position near to the border” (Regen, [Saifi & Suri, 2019](#)). However in presence of security concerns and prickly relations between both

countries, Sikhs were visiting Pakistan though a challenging task. However, the earlier religious travelling between both countries has been regulated by 1974 Protocol<sup>11</sup>, constituting an Agreement between the Pakistani and Indian governments under visitor category visas.

From Guru Nanak to 10<sup>th</sup> Guru, Gobind Singh, the local Muslims and Sikhs in Punjab did not have any religious conflict or clash until 1947. As a result of which 15 million Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus were forced to migrate in Punjab. To its reaction, most of the bloodshed was done in Punjab. In this charged political milieu, Sikh heritage fell a victim to negligence and occasionally enmity. However the riots during partition did not reach to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa<sup>12</sup>. However in 1965 and 1971 wars, many Sikhs were forced from their villages and left for Nankana Sahib, 500 Km (310 miles) away. This is how small Sikh communities began to emerge in the area (Khalid, 2019).

However it was not only the local community that stirred the revamping of these structures. During 1980s, Sikh started a separatist movement in India. But by 1985, this movement subsided whereas the relations between Sikh heritage and Pakistani state survived. In Musharaff's era, following his theory of enlightened moderation, the religious minorities and their festivals were given due weightage. At that time, many Indian Sikh pilgrims were given visa for Pakistan and simultaneously, the facilities at Gurdwara were improved.



Photo posted to Twitter by Pakistan President Imran Khan shows the highway corridor leading to the holy temple.

### Religious Diplomacy

The Kartarpur Sahib Corridor issue has definitely religious connotations. The uniqueness of Kartarpur Sahib Corridor is that the Sikhs do not need visa for visiting their most sacred religious place. It shows that Pakistan has simplified the access to their religious places and it is not being possessed as the commodity of Pakistan. Since it is being facilitated for a minority therefore it should be appreciated. Neither it is harming anyone nor is it denying the rights of any other ethnic or religious community.

It is the only such religious corridor in the whole world where there is no single example that a country, especially with a visa regime and troubled past in history,

and such an immense respect for a specific religious community has been demonstrated with an open heart and good will gesture. But the problem with this corridor on Indian part has been that it again tried to get political mileage out of this initiative. They thought that since majority of the Sikhs live in India, they are not their religious minority. Their sentiments, emotional attachments and religious obligations are the problems of Pakistan which are not, absolutely.

In order to bridge the trust gap, the respect for other party's ideology/ sentiments and religion, Pakistan's decision to open Kartarpur Sahib Corridor is the only gesture is the only gesture to show respect towards an ethnic community and this may lead to opening up of many other religious corridors in future-why not? Like Hindus in Jammu & Kashmir (<https://kashmirobservers.net/2018/09/06/kashmiri-pandits-write-open-letter-to-imran-khan/>) have called on the governments of both countries to construct a similar corridor to permit Hindu Pilgrims for visiting ShradaPeeth<sup>13</sup> which now falls on Pakistani side of Loc. Though it is not included in 1974 Protocol as a shrine for pilgrims purpose (Sevea, 2018).

And it all depends if Modi government / BJP wants to get rid of the troubled past and move forward. They will have to compromise their political vote bank which they have established on the hatred and mistrust towards Pakistan and anti-Pakistan sentiments. Pakistan has tried to fill the gap and to bring the two countries close. Whenever Pakistan has talked about people-to-people contact, unfortunately something happens and blame is on Pakistan, one step forward and six steps back. This is so unfortunate. Providing access to a major religious nation within India to a sacred place to Pakistan is really an amazing development. The credit must be given to Pakistani government for coming up with very serious initiative which has done something really different in the field of diplomacy and taking the situation to the point of resolution between the two countries which are hostile. Though the core issue of Kashmir remains there yet Kartarpur Corridor has given access to a nation living within India and brought it closer to Pakistan. In this case, one must admit that India has lost the diplomatic barrel against Pakistan pretty much, Pakistan has carried the day. This corridor may not ease the tension between two countries but can be conducive in tilting the balance in favor of economy over politics in the region (Kathuria&Mathur, 2019).

### **Critique**

To a real sense, Pakistan desires to uphold its soft image. "The government is serious enough to preserve the heritage sites in the country and the potential of money coming in from the Sikh diaspora. It is considered as a succession of "religious binocular towers" along the Indian side of the border where Sikh pilgrims would climb and view the Darbar Sahib from a distance.





Indian Sikh devotees offer prayers as they look toward the Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib, which is visible from the Indian side of the border

**Source:** <https://www.dw.com/en/why-kartarpur-corridor-is-unlikely-to-defuse-india-pakistan-tensions/a-51166467>

Indian Foreign Ministry has claimed that ISI in Pakistan is training Sikhs in its camps so that they could make terrorist acts in India. India is trying to prove that Pakistan is instigating Sikhs on Khalistan Issue. Every year when Indian Sikhs come to Pakistan, the Indian Government stops them at Wahga border and creates non-issues. Both countries should not involve common man in their political differences and problems. No one's religious sentiments should not be undermined. If Indian Ministry blames that Pakistan is giving training to terrorists, then Pakistani authorities may need to ask how many terrorist acts in India has been done by Sikhs and in how many incidents Pakistan was involved? Itself in India, Sikh youth is protesting because India has made a movie, Gurpreet Singh against Sikhs which undermines their religious sentiments. A country should rethink and revisit that if the minorities are annoyed in a larger system of governance and larger political set up, then it is the right time that one must put one's house in order. If after 72 years of partition, still the minorities are offensive and the rulers are thinking that those minorities will be misused against their country, then it is not only Khalistan Movement, it is a complete Naxalite Movement.

On part of the Indian, if one sees, Congress Party is in power in Punjab, BJP in center and its ally Akali Dal have ensured that they are front and center of any event associated with the corridor. Harisma Kaur Bbadaal, a leading figure from the Akali Dal had been in Pakistan to represent Indian Government when ground breaking ceremony was held. It is interesting fact that the Akali Dal largely depends on the support of Sikh agriculturalists. Sikhs are major power in India in their Armed Forces. The Indian Punjab, the largest grain producer in India, Sikhs are custodians of food products, food supply and chain there. Since last three years, the party has lost support of those Sikhs particularly because of the contentions of not taking actions on desecration of Sikh religious texts. Instead of taking actions on the demands made by Sikhs, on October 14, 2015 the Punjab Police killed two



protestors. However, many other actions were taking by Punjab police against the interest of Sikhs (The Express Tribune, 2015, October 15).

Now since the Corridor has been opened then definitely it has a strong link to the past relations between India and Pakistan and the current political scenario. If India criticizes it, it is understandable because the Sikh minority is very much important from many aspects, and their tilt towards Pakistan, though it is for religious or social reasons; it is not acceptable for them. India is well aware that it would have a direct impact on bringing Sikhs and Muslims close and it will a direct positive impact on Indian Muslims as well. . This will in the long run make hurdles for Indian extremist minds and Hindutva.

Likewise many groups in Pakistan have condemned the government's decision to open the Kartarpur corridor, claiming that it is like turning a blind eye to India's abrogation of Kashmir's special status on August 5, 2019. While others assert that the visa-free border crossing would be a compromise on national sovereignty. It is indeed surprising that Khan not only permitted the construction of the corridor, however also worked on it dynamically, bearing in mind the fact that his political rival and former Pakistani PM Nawaz Sharif was one of the architects of the passage.

Against the framework of recent Kashmir events, the November 9 Kartarpur corridor inaugural is even more astounding. According to the officials, "The Kartarpur discussion has endured at least two bilateral crises, in February 2019, and Pakistan sustained to have this conversation [on Kartarpur] regardless of the events. In August, we had Article 370 [the abrogation of Kashmir's special status] and Pakistan escalated the rhetoric on everything else but the Kartarpur corridor project. That is a demonstration to the fact that powers larger than the democratic or civilian leadership of Pakistan have been pushing it" (<https://www.dw.com/en/why-kartarpur-corridor-is-unlikely-to-defuse-india-pakistan-tensions/a-51166467>).

It must be appreciated by the global powers that Pakistan has gone an extra mile, which is laudable. Nonetheless the Kartarpur corridor is an isolated move. It will have little or no impact on other bilateral disputes. However it is widely believed that at the end of the day, such initiatives are always worthwhile (<https://www.dw.com/en/why-kartarpur-corridor-is-unlikely-to-defuse-india-pakistan-tensions/a-51166467>).

### **Hop of conviction**

Mamoon (2018) writes that "In Pakistan, Sikhs are a visible minority who may assert that precedence of law and issues of governance not only spin around all citizens with diverse ethnicities and religions and may they be a minority nevertheless even a solace of inclusive dialogue amongst the populations that exist outside the national borders may benefit from partaking in religion other than Islam as a starting point towards a peaceful regional or global community. The localization of global citizenship is established by encouraging anthropological inclinations among different religious groups that pursue cultural references from grass roots as is true in case of global Sikh community that precisely expected

simplification from Islamic Pakistan to empower them reaching out to their roots much of which is located within the Pakistani borders”.

The opening of Kartarpur Sahib Corridor echoes the shifting outlooks and approaches of Pakistan and enduring heritage of Guru Nanak and his ideas. It would help addressing the wounds of partition, tiling the way for reconciliation between different religious communities and this is what Guru Nanak tried throughout his life to formulate an inclusive society (Khalid, 2019). The Gurdwara Drabar Sahib Kartarpur is one of the holiest places in Sikhism. South Asian neighbors India and Pakistan have spikey relations and have fought three wars, two of them over the disputed Kashmir region. India blames Pakistan for supporting terrorism against India. Given their capricious relations, many view the opening of this corridor as a major landmark. The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has articulated his optimism that it could turn as a bridge between the people of India and Pakistan. Talking about the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Modi expected that the corridor might result in a better future between the two nations.

"Had anyone ever thought that the Berlin Wall would fall? May be with the sanctifications of Guru Nanak Dev, this Kartarpur corridor will not just remain a corridor, however act as a bridge between the peoples of the two countries," Modi said. Like France and Germany whose leaders decided to break their shackles and they did (<https://www.dw.com/en/kartarpur-corridor-can-india-and-pakistan-bring-down-their-berlin-wall/a-46491889>).

It has been under much debate and many have tried to politicize the issue. No doubt, politics is major part of this and will always remain there because after partition many religious places have been divided and remained at those places where the followers of those particular religions were not in majority. It is widely believed that there are almost 70 historical Gurdwaras in Pakistan which venerate several traits of Guru Nanak's life and out of which 13 or 14 have been revamped and opened for Sikh pilgrims. The rest of few either desecrated or merged into Sufi Shrines, preserved by local Muslims and inherited through oral traditions, people started living there or at all wiped out (Khalid, 2019).

Though nothing can be predicted about Indo-Pak relations which direction would they move? However, physically, it looks as if the opening of Corridor is a step forward towards better relations in the days to come. The signals were captivating and the question in the air is whether this first nod could be the initiation of a long-awaited facilitation of tensions – rapprochement might be too tough a word -- between India and Pakistan. Unquestionably, Imran Khan has been amassing all the PR brownie points in recent months by talking about his longing for peace and how India was evading all his proposals. His moves were making India and Modi look conspicuously impolite. Also, ever since the Pulwama-Balakot deadlock it is exceedingly visible that world pressure has gained momentum over India to talk to Pakistan – and the US President Donald Trump has, of course, offered to arbitrate. Knowingly, on the Indian side, the corridor's foundation stone was laid on November 26 last year, the anniversary of the 26/11 attack. Could that have been a

diplomatic lapse or was it an indirect signal that India was ready to put the attack behind it? Also, Manmohan Singh and Indian Punjab's Chief Minister Amarinder Singh were amongst the first batch of 560 pilgrims who travelled the 4 km from Dera Baba Saheb in Gurdaspur to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur. Manmohan is unlikely to have been there if he had not received a green signal from the government (The Hindu Business Line, 2019, November 12).

On a positive note, this religious diplomacy will prompt tourism in the country as it will attract Sikh community across the globe, residing in UK, Canada and the US, but majority of them from India. This promotion of local religious tourism will permit the ancillary services to flourish. Nevertheless, only visa free facilitation is not good enough. A lot more is needed in the areas of infrastructure, for example, lodging and boarding facilities, access roads, road-side facilities, parking, pedestrian areas, in order to sustain the religious tourism. It can bring in 300,000 persons per year, yielding economic benefits of around \$ 300 million annually

(<https://www.brecorder.com/2018/12/05/456784/kartarpur-religious-tourism-potential/>).

## **Conclusion**

The fundamental teachings of Baba Nanak Dev, like universal brotherhood, equality and sharing have significance for the modern world, predominantly South Asia. These teachings are a remedy to the fast disseminating trend of fanaticism for different color, race, religion or sect. The South Asian region acutely requires interfaith harmony. Whereas opening the corridor is a step in the right track, much more needs to be done to generate a tolerant and inclusive society at both sides of the border.

Regardless of criticisms by several countries, the BJP government continues to infringe fundamental human rights in the Indian Occupied Kashmir whereas it continues to target religious minorities, dissenting politicians, intellectuals and media houses all over the country. Pakistan has revealed its commitment to regional peace by opening the corridor. India needs to respond by lifting multifarious curbs on basic human rights in Kashmir and agree to hold talks with Pakistan to resolve all outstanding issues. It is being echoed as a new era of peace, relationship of mutual cooperation, and historic day (Jafry, 2019). It is a positive step even after the abrogation of Article 370. Pakistan has, however, kept the Kartarpur project alive, making it the *raison d'être* for New Delhi and Islamabad to retain the diplomatic channels open. This is a unique step towards generalizing the respect for other religions within Islamic identity of Pakistan.

The opening of Kartarpur Corridor involves the political will of Pakistani government to corroborate its rhetoric about developing better ties with India and

new civilized relationship with India. The decision of opening up visa free corridor is the right step and in the right direction. In the past same efforts have been made through Samjhuta Express<sup>14</sup> and Sada-e-Sarhad<sup>15</sup>, though both services have been suspended by Pakistan. The Kartarpur Corridor could be a confidence-building measure in the politically-strained and historically-charged relationship between India and Pakistan. The Kartarpur Corridor holds the potential to foster religious tourism, promote people-to-people contact to reduce the trust deficit on both sides, and in turn perhaps aid dispute resolution by keeping avenues of dialogue open. National security concerns dominate discussion among policy elites on both sides and Kartarpur is not the magical solution to resolve deeply contentious issues between the two countries, such as on Kashmir—in fact, the Indian side has asserted that operationalizing Kartarpur does not mean “bilateral dialogue will start.” Nevertheless, it illustrates that the two sides are sometimes able to set their differences aside to serve the broader interests of their people, and it is thus a laudable achievement for the two South Asian neighbors (Saha, 2019). Though diplomatic, moral endeavor is not enough. When the compulsion of cooperation is greater than the impulse for competitions, things will get better.

It is not enough to talk about peace rather one must believe in it. And it is not enough to believe in it, one must work on it. An inclusive society is key to sustainable peace. Any step to create conducive environment for regional peace and to bridge the trust gap between Pakistan and India should be appreciated and acknowledged. In order to achieve peace, we need to invest in peace. The peace initiative has always been appreciated by Pakistan, regarding Kartarpur Corridor. It needs to be understood that whenever there is an animosity and mistrust, the gap becomes quite widen. Therefore it is the duty and obligation of the government to fill that gap through different measures/ initiatives and different gestures. All these things can culminate into a positive outcome.

Apart from other discussions, the questions need to be researched. How the things have been incurred between Punjabi Muslims and Sikhs so fast while it could not happen in case of Hindus and Muslims? Is it a natural minority to minority brotherhood or there are some other deep historic or social reasons.

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**Annexure-A**

**PROTOCOL CONSTITUTING AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA [1974] INTSer 37**

**PROTOCOL CONSTITUTING AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN ON VISIT TO RELIGIOUS SHRINES**

**Islamabad, 14 September 1974**

The Government of INDIA

AND

The Government of PAKISTAN,

TAKING note of the sentiments and devotion of the various communities in the two countries for the historic and sacred shrines in the other

HAVE agreed on the following principles for facilitating visits to such shrines :

- (i) Such visits from one country to the other shall be allowed without discrimination as to religion or sect. The list of shrines to be visited will be finalised shortly through correspondence. The agreed list may be enlarged from time to time by mutual agreement.
- (ii) Upto 20 parties may be allowed to visit from one country to the other every year. This number may be revised from time to time.
- (iii) Every effort should continue to be made to ensure that places of religious worship mentioned in the agreed list are properly maintained and their sanctity preserved.
- (iv) Such visitors will be given Visitor Category visas.

Sd /-  
KEWAL SINGH  
Foreign Secretary  
Ministry of External Affairs  
Government of India

Sd /-  
AGHA SHAHI  
Foreign Secretary  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Government of Pakistan

Islamabad, September 14, 1974



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<sup>1</sup>The anniversary of His birth

<sup>2</sup>Memorial- A small marking constructed over the buried ashes of a deceased after cremation of Guru Nanak

<sup>3</sup> In the month of Vaisakh, S. 1526. For details see Mcleod, W.h.(1999). *Sikhs & Sikhism*. New York: Oxford University Press. P. 36. Though the date of birth had a protracted controversy, yet Miharban and Puratan traditions has been supported by the Gyan-ratanavali over the year A.D. 1469

<sup>4</sup> Named Kalu, Khatri of the Bedi Sub-caste,

<sup>5</sup>RaiBhoi di Talvandi, Talvandi is now called Nankana Sahib, Tehsil Shekhupura, District Lahore

<sup>6</sup> Place situated on the right bank of River Ravi and opposite the town of Dehra Baba Nanak

<sup>7</sup> In Islam, it is the sin of practicing idolatry or polytheism

<sup>8</sup>In [Sikhism](#), it refers to the sacred waters of a pool, or moat like tank, built around or close to Gurdwara

<sup>9</sup>The community meal where everyone takes turns cooking, eating and serving food as well as cleaning. The wheat that will be used in the langar will be from the same fields where Guru Nanak Devji also cultivated crops

<sup>10</sup>Sikh music or Shabadkirtan is Kirtan-style singing of hymns or Shabad from the Guru Granth Sahib, the central text of Sikhism. It began in the late 16th century as the musical expression of mystical poetry, accompanied by a musical instrument *Rabab*, by BhaiMardana an early follower of Guru Nanak

<sup>11</sup> Annexure A attached at the end

<sup>12</sup>Earlier called NWFP, the most Westerly Province of Pakistan, bordering Afghanistan

<sup>13</sup>It is a Hindu temple and ancient center of learning dedicated to the Hindu Goddess of learning, Sharada. It was one of the foremost temple universities of the Indian Sub-Continent

<sup>14</sup>It is a bi-weekly train—Thursday and Monday—that runs between Delhi and Attari in India and Lahore in [Pakistan](#)

<sup>15</sup> It is a passenger bus service connecting the Indian capital of Delhi with the city of [Lahore, Pakistan](#) via the border transit post at Wagah.