

'Gurudwara'

By Sharat Kumar

I joined the Indian Economic Service (IES) in September 1980. On completion of the Foundation Course at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), Mussoorie, all the IES probationers proceeded for the next sojourn of specialised training at the Institute of Economic Growth (IEG) in Delhi.

While there were as many as four hundred probationers during our training at the LBSNAA, the number of trainees at the IEG was only twenty. It was a more intensive training at the IEG, for a period extending to nearly a year. Sundays being off days, however, there was not much to do.

On one of these Sundays, my good friend Avtar Singh asked me at the morning breakfast if I would be willing to accompany him to the '**Bangla Sahib Gurudwara**' in the evening. I told him, 'Yes, I will be very happy to come with you'.

There was thus a lot of time before we started for 'the Gurudwara'. After a good lunch, I went for the usual siesta. In the dream, *I found myself at a place where there were a lot of beggars*. To one of these beggars, I saw myself giving Rs.50, which was received very gratefully.

I woke up subsequently and forgot all about the dream and got ready to go with Avtar as planned. We eventually reached the Gurudwara somewhere around 7-7.30 P.M. *What struck me at the Gurudwara was a large crowd of beggars*. I was reminded of my dream, and inspired by the dream I went forward to give alms to one family of beggars.



Bangla Sahib Gurudwara

I was, however, not sure how much to give. One guide for deciding the amount was the normal practise of doling out a few pennies from the wallet and move on; *the other guide was my vision in the dream and give Rs.50*. I ended up finally giving Rs. 20, ***and regretted!***

It happened so that the moment I gave Rs. 20, the whole family which included an old man, a young lady, her husband and children gathered together and immediately left the place. It dawned on me that they had a purpose to ask for the money and were not a greedy lot. The moment they got the bare minimum, they did not wish to beg further.

Since then, I am convinced if we could put in place a reasonably sound 'social security system' in India, the scourge of beggary will also come to an end.