



December 2011
Dharat Suhavi: Volume 1 Issue 3

Oxford University Invites EcoSikh to Map Religious Forests

Oxford University scientists at the [Biodiversity Institute](#) and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation have invited EcoSikh to their global initiative to map the world's [religious forests](#). With religions owning 8 percent of the world's land, and 15 percent of this land having sacred connotations, [scientists](#) are hoping to advance conservation measures through partnerships with world religions.

There are a number of historic forests in the greater Panjab, including Machhiwara, Lakhi Jungle, Kiratpur Sahib, and Anandpur Sahib, which have served as places of refuge and renewal for Sikhs. Though very little of the original forests remain, Oxford scientists are interested in creating a map of afforestation efforts by Sikhs in Panjab, while EcoSikh is exploring the potential for regenerating portions of historic forests.

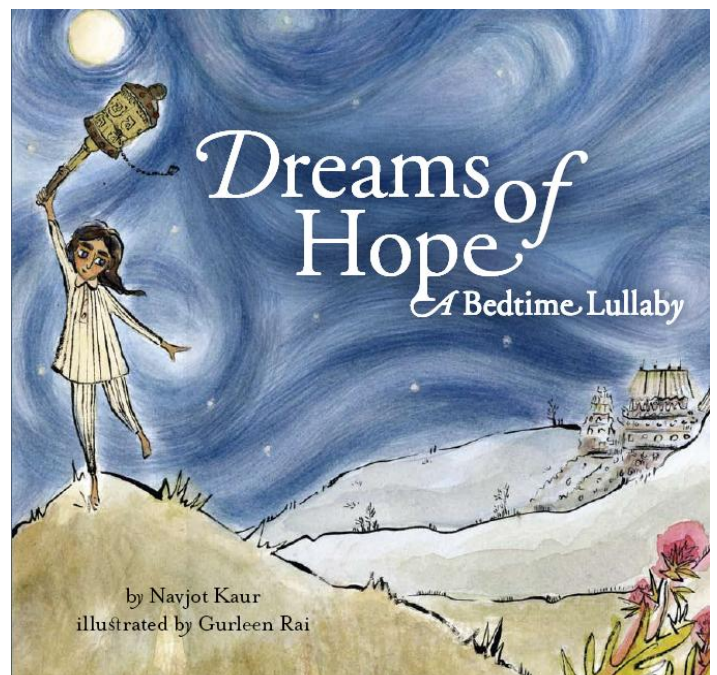


Dreams of Hope by Saffron Press

This year Sikh-inspired publishing company, [Saffron Press](#) published *Dreams of Hope*, a bedtime lullaby story on a father's poetic ode to his daughter, where he encourages his daughter to dream big and have compassion for the natural world:

*'Deep oceans sing healing lohreeyan,
Little One.
Mother Earth is whispering messages of
peace, Little One.'*

Launched in late 2009, Saffron Press is a small independent publisher that challenges notions of bias and stereotype by publishing stories that encourage global understanding and engagement. Saffron Press is committed to the environment, printing on 100 percent recycled paper and having planted 625 trees for the first edition of the book *A Lion's Mane*. The company continues to look for greener avenues to share stories, including tree-free alternatives to publishing.



See the [video](#) trailer of *Dreams of Hope*.

Saffron Press is offering free shipping and gift wrap for purchases made [online](#) until December 31st. Each purchase will help support the dreams of little ones in need.

Baba Sewa Singh Receives Justice Kuldeep Singh Environmental Protection Award

[Baba Sewa Singh](#) who is highly regarded for his education and environmental work through Nishan-e-Sikhi in Khadoor Sahib, Amritsar has been honored with the Justice Kuldeep Singh Environmental Protection Award. In 1999, Baba Sewa Singh partnered with local volunteers for afforestation work in Gwalior, Jaipur, Kartarpur, and Dera Baba Nanak in Panjab. Since 2008, Baba Sewa Singh and local *sewadars* have planted 500 trees in 100 villages each year, totaling 50,000 trees annually.

The award is well deserved. Though forests are important to maintaining Panjab's ecosystem, at present only 6 percent of the state is under [forest cover](#), even lower than the desert state of Rajasthan at 9.5 percent.

Save the Date: March 14th Sikh Environment Day 2012

Sikhs across the world will celebrate *Sikh Vatavaran Diwas*, or [Sikh Environment Day](#) the week March 14, 2012. Last year, three Takhts and Gurdwaras and schools across six continents gathered for divans focused on *kudrat* in Gurbani, tree plantings, clean ups, and children's art displays on the environment. This year, we aim for 500 Gurdwaras and schools to participate across South Asia and the Diaspora.

Stay tuned for more info on how to register your Gurdwara, Khalsa School, or other affiliation.

Did You Know?

Nature is a prominent theme in the work of Sikh writer and Panjabi literary figure Bhai Vir Singh. His extensive body of work includes scenes from nature from dewdrops to honeybees to the *mehndi* plant. As we celebrate his birth anniversary this December, we share the following poem from his collection *Lehran de haar* (Garlands of Waves) called *Gulab da Phul Thodan Vale Nu* (To Those who Pluck the Rose) or *Urge of the Rose*:

ਗੁਲਾਬ ਦਾ ਫੁਲ ਤੋੜਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ:
ਡਾਲੀ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਤੋੜ ਨ ਸਾਨੂੰ
ਅਸਾਂ ਹੱਟਮਹਿਕ ਦੀ ਲਾਈ !
ਲੱਖ ਗਾਹਕ ਜੇ ਸੁੰਘੇ ਆਕੇ
ਖਾਲੀ ਇਕ ਨਾ ਜਾਈ
ਤੂੰ ਜਾਈ ਇੱਕ ਤੋੜ ਕੇ ਲੈ ਗਿਓਂ,
ਇੱਕ ਜੋਗਾ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਸਾ
ਉਹ ਭੀ ਪਲਕ ਝਲਕ ਦਾ ਮੇ
ਰੂਪ ਮਹਿਕ ਨਸ ਜਾਈ !

*Do not pluck us off our stem
We have opened a house of
fragrance
Even if millions have smelled my
fragrance
No one goes unfulfilled
If you pluck one from its source
Then you will only be left with
one
And that too dies with in a blink
of an eye
Its beauty and fragrance will*

