

Indian British American Mystic

A Warriors Odyssey to Light

CHRONICLE I



Sher Ranjit Singh Dosanjh

aka "Airman Dos" and "Sunny Side Up"

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Table of Contents

- CHRONICLE I: THE ARRIVAL.....2**
 - Chapter 1: Child of Many Faiths.....2
 - Chapter 2: Dark Shadow Emerges8
 - Chapter 3: Loss of Faith 11
- CHRONICLE II: DEPART THE KNOWN 15**
 - Chapter 4: Confused Teen 15
 - Chapter 5: Military Teen..... 15
 - Chapter 6: Romantic Teen 15
- CHRONICLE III: ENTER THE EGO..... 15**
 - Chapter 7: Academia, Corporations & Startups 15
 - Chapter 8: Self-Image, Self-Worth 15
 - Chapter 9: Great Expectations, Love, Marriage, Family & Career 15
- CHRONICLE IV: FALL FROM GRACE 15**
 - Chapter 10: The Collapse 15
 - Chapter 11: The Rebound..... 15
 - Chapter 12: Collapse Again 15
- CHRONICLE V: THE DEPARTURE 15**
 - Chapter 13: Surrender..... 15
 - Chapter 14: Divine Feminine 15
 - Chapter 15: Healing 15
- CHRONICLE VI: THE ASCENT 15**
 - Chapter 16: The Blue Crow 15
 - Chapter 17: Transformation..... 15
 - Chapter 18: Kairos 15

CHRONICLE I: THE ARRIVAL

Chapter 1: Child of Many Faiths

Magic exists. I saw it during an earlier age.

Though I did not understand what I was looking at. It had wings and was making a noise that was not part of my imagination. My stare of astonishment was all that I could summon. I was 2 years old.

Mother, Father and I lived in a small bedroom, second floor of my Uncle's house in Cranford, Greater London, England. The year was 1969 and the house was just off of Bath Road, which was just a couple of miles to the entrance of Heathrow Airport.

Our bedroom window faced the final landing approach of many a Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet. They would glide majestically against the backdrop of a grey London sky. I mused to myself in 2-year-old gibberish, what a magnificent thing that hopefully, one day, I would get to meet. I didn't know what words were back then, but I do now and I remember that window to the world.

My world was magical. A few days later, Father carried in this little box and set it next to my crib. No bed had I but my crib, at the end of my parents bed, was sufficient for my sleeping purposes. On occasion, I would climb out of my crib and make my way across the vast surfaces at the end of the bed and snuggle in between my parents. Indeed, my world was magical, safe and my imagination was running wild.

The little box only fueled my imagination to a world that I thought was real. It was a Television, black and white and played a show called Star Trek. Creatures of fascination, Space the Final Frontier and out of my bedroom window were the majestic Jumbo Jets. It was magic, it was real and it lifted my spirit into wanting to fly.

On occasion, Mother would take me to her parents' house in Southall. They lived on Hammond Road about four houses from a place called a Gurdwara or Sikh Temple. Their backyard, a trove of hidden treasures, would lead out to Havelock Road and smack dab opposite a graveyard. There I would stand, Temple to my right, graveyard to my front and a British Public House or pub to my left.

Little did I know but that foreshadowed the rest of my life.

The Temple was just a barn. Mother told me she got married there, although I had no idea or concept of those words. They just sounded nice because they were from Mother.

She was nice to me. I remember her hugs.

Her language was strange to me though. The little box spoke different words and she spoke different words. Her words were associated with different sights, sounds and smells. She would sing while cooking with these things called spices. Her face was a young 20 and she appeared like some of the pictures I would see on occasion.



She was from a small village called Chak Mughlani, Punjab India. Journey she did to the United Kingdom in 1964. I can only imagine what she experienced in what was to her a new world.

Now her world included me.

I would look at her and she kept saying these funny words to me as if they meant something.

Sunny, Sunny Singh.

I didn't know what she was blabbing on about but I would just stare at her in astonishment.

For some reason I had to hold her hand everywhere I went. I was too big for the pram that had been my mode of transport around the block. Mostly we went to the barn, excuse me, Temple.

There stood the grey beards.

I don't recall seeing them on the little box, but in real life they all seemed to gather at the Temple. I didn't mind them for they somehow mustered a smile when they saw me.

They played instruments of music, sang songs and everyone gathered seemed to know the words, except me. I would just lie on the floor and look up at the ceiling, sometimes out of the small window or just stare at the spectacle before me. I had no words of comprehending the moment but there was a sense of calm.

Mother used more big words and introduced me to a vocabulary that translated into terms like God, Lord, Heaven, Prayer, Faith, Service, Sacrifice, Saints, and Warriors. I'd just look at her like any 2-year-old, bemused, smiling and intrigued by what Mother was trying to convey.

I didn't mind going to the Temple because I would get this sugary cookie type dough and it made me feel good. I think that was my first impression of what the term "heaven" meant. You could go to a place, sing words, receive some sweets, food and big folks would greet you with smiles. Ironically, the exit door led out to the street in front of the graveyard. Quite the contrast of life and death but I just thought of the headstones as people off taking a long nap.

Those were the late 1960's. British Gentlemen wore suits or as best as they could manage. My Father was always working but would often hang out with his Father-in-Law at the pub, the Havelock Arms, half a block down from the Temple. It was the local. It was where the locals gathered and it was where I would sit amid the pipe and cigarette smoke, the chatter but most of all the laughter. I knew what laughter was and as I looked around, everyone seemed to be either smiling, talking or laughing.

England in the late 1960's, it was, for me, a magical time.

The day would come where my parents took me to a place and left me there.

Had I done something wrong? For I was left with strangers.

What was this place called school? I was three and all the kids were my age. They were all shapes, sizes, colors and spoke words different than mine. The little box of black and white pictures had become a reality with kids that were black, brown and white. I didn't pay attention to the other grown-ups or teachers due to the distraction of a thing called a sand pit. It was the first time I mumbled something to another toddler, we both had small shovels and we just started to chuck sand all over the place. For some reason, the adults got perturbed and told us to stop.



I stopped but the other kid kept going and without knowing it, he shoveled the sand into my face. Not knowing any better, I shoveled it back onto his face. For some reason he started to cry and now the teacher was looking at me with a discerning look. In my 3-year-old mind, I had done nothing wrong but was just reciprocating the gesture the other kid had shown. It was only later that I found out that there a million ways that kids can get hurt and I was only at the starting block.

This was the first of many things and so it was, at the same time, both Guru Nanak and Jesus Christ came into my imagination.

Stories at home about Guru Nanak of the Sikh Faith and at school, stories about Jesus Christ of the Christian Faith. My thoughts were filled with kind words, happy words, words of love. I didn't know what the words meant, but I could feel that they were friendly and not meant to hurt.

I did not differentiate between Guru Nanak, Jesus Christ, 747 Jumbo Jets or the Starship Enterprise, they all made me happy. There was no logic involved, no reasoning, no rationale that had to be explained, it was just so.

It was magic.

Before I knew it, there was more magic. It was New Years Eve 1971 and I sat in the waiting room of a hospital as a 4-year-old. Eventually, my Mother appeared carrying a baby, my little brother. The world had changed, new decade, bigger family so we had to move out of our little bedroom with that window to the world. We packed up our few belongings, boarded the train at King's Cross Railroad Station in London and left to a place called Peterborough in East Anglia.

Our one bedroom was even smaller with no window to the world, but eventually Father saved up and moved us into a house on Clarence Road. School here was different and I met some kids who were not Sikh or Christian, but Hindu. They kind of looked like me but they spoke a different language. My vocabulary had expanded but nothing really made any sense. They had many Gods or so it seemed but I couldn't tell the difference. Mother would tell me stories about Lord Hanuman, Shiva, Krishna as well as the ten Sikh Gurus and it was all muddled in my head. At school they were teaching us about the twelve apostles of Christ and it was getting a bit jumbled up. Slowly, to my regret, my imagination of 747 Jumbo Jets and of the Starship Enterprise started to fade. Then everything changed.

First day of school at Springfield Infants, Mother had dropped me off and there I stood. Surrounded by a dozen boys, they kind of looked like me, but they spoke a different language that I'd never heard of. Urdu.

The biggest of the group approached me, I smiled at him thinking that we could be friends, however, he shoved me and took a swing at me. This was very confusing, for I had not done or said anything, I was just standing there.

Another punch came my way, I pivoted away. Then another which got me flush on my cheek and cut my lip. This was the first fight ever in my life. In that moment, I decided to fight back and clocked him. And then again. He looked shocked, taken aback and though he appeared like a giant to me, I was determined to stand my ground. We both went at it, toe to toe, and none of his friends jumped in but kept the circle formed around me so that I couldn't get away. The school bell rang and for some reason it startled the group and they dispersed.

I'll never forget the look on the other boys face. He looked befuddled that I hadn't dropped. He had a sense of anger and begrudging respect. That was a new vocabulary word for me, Respect. He slowly walked away with one eye fixated on me in case I was going to attack.

I didn't know which way to go but then I heard another boy call out to me. He asked my name, I replied Sunny Singh. He said, "my name is Harinder Singh and here is my older brother Davinder Singh, you're safe with us." Turns out they had three older brothers who I later called the Panj Pyare after the "five faithful" of the Sikh Guru Gobind Singh Ji. They explained to me that those other boys were Muslims. That was a new word and as time would pass, I would learn about Islam.

Later in class, the teacher put some letters in front of me and I did not know what they were. She explained to me that this was my name. I thought I already had a name, Sunny Singh, but this was a whole new experience. Introducing...

Sher Ranjit Singh Dosanjh

Other kids had smaller names, Bob, Tom, Harry, Phil, Ivan etc., I already had a name, Sunny, but now I was told otherwise. This seemed like some sort of joke so I confronted my parents when I got home. My lament fell on deaf ears as they explained how grand my name was. Apparently there is a village in India called "Dosanjh" and "Sher" means Tiger, "Ranjit" means Winner and I knew that "Singh" meant Lion. How was I ever going to remember this spelling, let alone the meaning.

At school, I broke the news to Harinder and Davinder and they had a similar story. I asked about why the Muslims wanted to fight me and they had no idea. Ironically, the group of Muslim boys and their leader that attacked me lived one block away from my house on Clarence Road. As with all boys back in the early 1970's in England, football or soccer was the great equalizer. Those Muslim's in the neighborhood would play football with me and since I turned out to be pretty good, the boy who fought me eventually became my friend.

Our neighborhood had kids from mainland Europe who were Catholics, Muslims from the Middle East, Asia & Africa, Rastas from the West Indies, Sikhs & Hindus from India and the local Irish, Scottish, Welsh & Gypsy Brits who were Christians. Most of us were dropped off before school at a Catholic Church with Nuns and Priests all dressed in black. During school at St. Marks we sang

Christian hymns, studied the Bible according to the Anglican Protestant Episcopal tradition. After school, I went to a Punjabi studies class and we were taught the Punjabi language and Sikh traditions.

Mother was teaching me each day the Punjabi alphabet and soon I could read the Sikh Holy Book, the Guru Granth Sahib. I didn't know what the words meant but Mother would try to explain as best as she could. I was 7 years old and now the formation or the idea of God, Guru, Allah, Prophet, the Divine, Lord all started to form into a narrative of love that I was beginning to mentally understand. The challenge was that these terms all espoused the same feeling of love, of inner knowing, of the notion of being blessed. However, the more history we were taught in school, the more I was disturbed by how humans could commit the wars, the atrocities, the barbarism towards not only each other but to animals and Mother Nature.

Even the Springtime Maypole dancing with ribbons, associated with Pagan or tree worship, were afforded a place at school. These were aligned with historical structures such as Stone Henge and connection with nature. Each May we would celebrate the arrival of Spring by dancing in a weaving pattern and intertwining ribbons around the pole. It was just a fun way of celebrating the arrival of warmer days, playing outside and the end of Winter.

To me, all these Religions, Faiths, Spiritual practices were pointing to the same source energy of the cosmos. It was a truth that was not arrived at by some mathematical formula or logical operand, but by an inner knowing of Truth. Not a personal truth, twisted to fit a narrative or story that makes one feel good, but of Truth, like a smile originating from love.

So it came to pass, the first miracle.

By now, at age 8, it was evident that I was one of the best football players in the neighborhood and definitely at St. Marks. I was made captain, center forward or striker as it's known and became the top goal scorer, winning medals and the such. On a particular game day, I had forgotten my football top (soccer uniform) at home. In my panic mode, I figured out how to get out of class, run home, get my top and "leg it" (run) back to school before anyone would notice.

No one was home and I searched the house top to bottom but couldn't find the uniform top. Our house was small, known as a tenement home, built for the industrial revolution age and was considered an urban slum home for low-income families. To me it was a castle and I didn't know any better.

I searched and searched but couldn't find the uniform top. In our downstairs front room, which is the first room you immediately enter upon opening the front door, were pictures of the Sikh Gurus. I knelt down in front of them, clasped my hands, closed my eyes and prayed a prayer in English to the Gurus and to Jesus Christ. If I had known how to pray respectfully to Allah or the Hindu Divinities, I would have done so, but I was lacking that knowledge.

I ran around the house again looking and searching but to no avail. I was on the cusp of giving up when I entered the front room again and there right in front of the pictures was my jersey top.

Do you know how big I smiled. Do you know how I said thank you. Can you imagine the love in my heart at that moment. The jersey, uniform top is a big shirt. It was laid out in front of the pictures,

where minutes before I knelt praying. This was no figment of my imagination but just like an inner knowing that I was not alone living this life as a little human boy.

Locked the door did I, legged it back to school and gratitude was in my heart for the smile that the Lord God Almighty had graced upon me.

Those were great times for me and our family!

Our school, St. Marks Primary All Boys School on Gladstone Street, was a part of the Church of England Religious Christian Education System. Each Christmas Holiday season, we conducted school plays with Christmas themes, had nativity-based plays and to my surprise, they made me the soloist on the school choir. I'd sing the opening parts to "Once in Royal David's City" and "Silent Night" before the rest of the choir would join in at St. Mark's Church on Lincoln Road. We'd go on school choir competitions and we even sang the Latin hymn "Gaudete, Christus est natus" i.e., "Rejoice, Christ is born."

Even our neighborhood, as diverse as it was, had Santa Claus come down the street on a Fire Engine during the Christmas Holidays. Carolers would go door-to-door singing Christmas songs spreading the message of "peace on earth and good will toward men" while the snow lay on the ground ankle deep.

It was a similar scene during the festival of Diwali. We'd gather at the Sikh Temple in Peterborough that my Father helped build on Gladstone Street and let off fireworks. My Mothers Hindu friends would invite us to the Holi festivals and we would dance around with wooden sticks.

All in all, life during those years as a young boy was brilliant. Father threw on a Liverpool Football Club top on me along with a Peterborough United jersey. The trifecta was complete when he got me the England National Football top.

Faith, Family and Sport. I was an "A" student, captain of the soccer team and was aligned with God.

What could go wrong?

Chapter 2: Dark Shadow Emerges

Television started to play an expanding role in my life, especially around the concept of Space. I'd watch shows like Thunderbirds Are Go, Space 1999, Battlestar Galactica and Buck Rogers. This all fed into my previous fascination with Star Trek and my early memories of watching the Apollo missions. This was also the time when movie theaters became popular with our family. We'd travel to Southall, London from Peterborough to watch Indian movies, like Sholay and Dharam Veer. In Peterborough, the Odeon Theatre was where movies like Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla, Jaws and Star Wars captured my imagination.

At school, one of my teachers, Mrs. Blackwell, introduced us to a book called "The Hobbit." She would read, we would color. The world of elves, dwarves, hobbits, dragons, goblins was right in line with the surroundings of the English countryside. It didn't take much to spark the imagination about going on adventures and facing trolls and goblins. Heck, our backyard had WWII bomb shelters and we would often play typical games, cops vs. robbers, cowboys vs. Indians and knights vs. dragons. The imagination was running wild, fantasy realms were dreamed up and the religious texts took a back seat.

As a nine-year-old, I became fascinated with all things football. As a typical kid back then, I would be collecting football player cards, trading cards, playing marbles in the school yard, smashing conkers, a typical British playground activity, and just doing boy stuff. It was a great time and during the summer of 1978, FIFA held the World Cup of Football in Argentina.

Father had been saving up and purchased a 19-inch color television. It was the most amazing thing I had ever seen. Color TV on a massive 19-inch display! I recall watching this young kid named Diego Armando Maradona on the sidelines and players like Mario Kempes, Osvaldo Ardiles and Ricardo Villa actually playing and winning the World Cup. The other vivid memory was Scotland losing to Peru and having players like Kenny Dalglish, Graeme Souness, Archie Gemmill, Andy Gray and Gordon McQueen. For some reason the song of "We Are Ally's Tartan Army" is still stuck in my head from the farewell serenade at Hampden Park.

Father and I watched Match of the Day on Saturdays and we supported Liverpool Football Club. Their club anthem, "You'll Never Walk Alone" became known throughout Europe after the team won the European Cup a few times. It was also the time that Father started to take me to Peterborough United matches at the London Road Stadium. Little did I know that I would be selected to join the Peterborough Youth Academy and practice with the coaches and other city-wide players at the actual stadium facilities. We would travel to Cambridge, Norwich and other towns in East Anglia to play against their city youth teams. This is also the time that I started to drift further and further away from the faith-based teachings and religious practices. Football had become my religion.

Television also introduced the world of music and videos to me. A show called Top of the Pops introduced musical acts from all genres. Our diverse neighborhood had a mixture of traditional Bhangra Punjabi music, reggae, SKA, Pop and Teddy Boy Rock. It was around this time that the country of the United States of America captured my imagination. Shows like Starsky and Hutch, Dallas, Hawaii 50, Streets of San Francisco, Dukes of Hazzard and music from Elvis, Kenny Rogers,

Bob Marley, and 50's rock started to make an impression on me. Father mentioned that we had applied to leave England and emigrate to the United States which would further fuel the fantasy about "The American Dream."

A new identity was emerging and I felt myself no longer inquiring about the world, for some reason I thought I knew the world. At school, my final and fourth year at primary school, I was made Captain of Scott, which essentially meant leading one-fourth of the school in academia and sports. We were extremely successful, winning almost all the sports trophies and multiple academic cups. I went on stage to collect the trophies from the school principal, Mr. Knight, multiple times in front of the entire student body. Life was great, sports, movies, music, TV shows, family and friends...then it all started to unravel.

Hate was not a thing I understood but I was about to get a rude awakening from those who did hate. A couple of blocks from our neighborhood were a group of Catholic kids who didn't like the Protestants or the brown and Jamaican kids. I didn't know why but racial slurs and hate was unfurled upon us at the local park which we called "The Rec." The day would come where me and a friend, Barry, got trapped by the older Catholic kids and we were held in one of the WWII bombed out bunkers.

The question they asked each of us was "Do you Love Jesus?" Barry was a Protestant and said yes to the cross that was dangled in front of him. Then the question came to me.

The brown, red and black bricks of the WWII bunker which were meant to keep people safe from the German bombers became my trap. Bricks lay all around me, dust, mud, broken wood panels and light rain smattering on top. Six of them blocked my escape path, they were way too big, High School kids, teenagers.

"Do you Love Jesus Christ?" this time the question was asked with force and a switch blade was waved around.

In what seemed like an eternity, I just looked at him. I looked him in the eye. I was not afraid. I thought the question was a stupid one and that these kids were idiots. They reminded me of my first day of school at Springfield Infants, then it was Muslims now it was Catholics.

In that moment, Christ appeared in my heart, it was not a thought. It was not a reasoning or some rationale logic based upon the metric system. It was a warm feeling which I can only describe as love.

I answered "Yes"

Then the bricks were hurled towards us.

Yes, there were screams.

Yes, there was pain.

Yes.



They dragged us into two separate wells that looked like shafts that ran down to caves deep underground. A concrete slab was placed over the hole at the top and everything turned dark. Time had stopped for me. It was cold, damp, dusty and I was holding on to the metal ladder rods, built into the side of the hole, that led down into what I thought was hell.

In the darkness, I thought what did I do?

I said "Yes"

In the darkness, I thought that I was about to die.

I was not afraid.

In the darkness, a dark shadow emerged.

I did not recognize it.

And so the concrete slab was removed.

I do not know who emerged.

Chapter 3: Loss of Faith

So began my Odyssey.

The boy who emerged was not the same boy who entered into darkness. The older kids dragged me out and continued to pummel me. Barry was no longer in sight so I was once again surrounded and had no way to escape. I fought back, did my best to defend myself against the blows, punches and kicks. At this point I was numb to the pain and survival instincts kicked in.

There was a part of me that was grateful that I had been let out of hell and the hole that I was buried in. Another part of me was angry and a rage welled up which fought and fought and fought.

Day turned into Night. Light into Dark. Love into Hate.

My rite of passage was over.

They had no more use for me. Their job was done.

They were apparitions. As quickly as they had appeared out of nowhere is how quickly they dispersed and disappeared. I walked home trying to replay what had just happened. Adrenaline was too high for me to feel any physical pain. My mental faculties did not have sufficient processing power to compute the reality or gravitas of the situation.

Upon entering the family abode, Mother just looked at me and asked what had happened to me? I just shrugged it off saying we were playing rugby on a concrete playground and just had a few bumps and bruises. Yes, they were the physical markers but something was different, something had shifted within me and I couldn't quite place it. I did not have the words, the vocabulary was non-present and I couldn't close my eyes due to going back to that moment in darkness, my first experience of hell.

Life changed after that day.

The Mischief archetype emerged, as did the Thief, as did the Cheat, as did the Liar. At school, the Muslim kids could be excused from the Christian prayers and religious studies. I requested to be removed also and my wish was granted. While the Christians and Catholics worshipped, sang hymns and studied the Bible, the rest of us went to another classroom and played cards.

I dropped out of the choir group and also stopped going to the Punjabi Sikh after school classes. The Punjabi kids in the after-school class were still learning the alphabet and here I could read the Guru Granth Sahib. I learned that being too smart or just being ahead of fellow peer students got you isolated from the tribe, basically becoming an outsider.

The school environment changed also. Groups of white National Front skinheads had descended upon our area and their kids started to go "Paki Bashing" a derogatory term used for beating up any brown skin kids. I stood in the school playground, about thirty white National Front kids were charging towards me, hate was in their eyes. There was nothing I could do, the playground had a metal fence all around and there was no escape. I accepted my fate, stood my ground and waited for the onslaught to begin.

By some miracle, one of the bigger Jamaican kids who was running with the skinheads told them “not this one.” I knew him from the school soccer team and his eyes locked onto mine and he shouted, “not this one.” In that moment, time stood still and the wave of skinheads, wearing green bomber jackets, doc martens and spewing hate split like the red sea around me. Everything was in slow motion. I could see and feel their glee, their anticipation of blood and infliction of pain. This is an emotion that I did not know existed.

I turned around to see what was happening and all I saw was Hindu, Sikh and Muslim kids getting beat to a pulp. The sad part is that just a year ago, some of those Christian and Catholic boys were our friends. The same pattern was taking place all across England. In Southall, London, the race riots caused the death of a school teacher, Clement Blair Peach, who was demonstrating against the National Front meeting on St. George’s Day, 1979.

If this was the work of God.

If this was the Divine will at work.

If this was what the Guru’s talk of regarding “One”

Then, it was lost on me.

Time passed, the age of innocence, was gone. It was time to select a High School and I chose Jack Hunts about a couple of miles walk outside our neighborhood to a better school district. Since I chose that particular school, a few of the Indian and Pakistani friends said they would join me. It was a decision that I wish I could have taken back and should have gone to the local St. Paul’s School for Boys.

Not all Christian and Catholic kids were bad. There were some that were decent and the rest were split into different groups. There were the heavy-metal rockers, SKA, Punk, Teddy Boys, New Wave, Ragga Muffin heads, and a bunch of others. Jack Hunts was a mixed school meaning boys and girls and had kids from eleven to sixteen years of age with Prefects aged seventeen to nineteen.

We were the entry level, youngest group so were an easy target. Anyone walking to or from High School would get picked off by the skinheads or other crazy groups. Our group didn’t study. We just played cards, ditched class, stole a bunch of shit and made sure we walked in groups.

I got selected onto the school soccer team for my first year, center forward / striker position, but the skinheads and other groups on the team wouldn’t pass me the ball. Typical racial slurs and comments “get the fuck out of our neighborhood,” or “go back to your country” were a daily thing. In the locker rooms, the rest of the team would distance themselves so as to not catch some sort of invisible virus. Despite it all, I was determined to win and we did. We won all the competitions that we were in and I led the goal scoring charge.

There were random acts of kindness. A few times, the boys on the team stood up for me against their older brothers and friends. We were teenagers and the shower area was quite dangerous. I was grateful that a few of my teammates didn’t allow anything to happen to me. A similar situation arose in 1981 when the England National Football team was going to play Hungary in a World Cup Qualifier at Wembley Stadium. Around 30,000 tickets were allocated to school kids when the

Football Association (FA) thought that England were already eliminated. Discounted tickets were allocated and Father purchased a ticket for me.

As events unfolded, it turned out that if England won the match, they would qualify for the World Cup in Spain 1982. All of a sudden, there was a demand for tickets and the FA tried to repurchase the discounted student tickets in order to get a more lucrative price. The ploy failed and I was dropped off at Jack Hunts school to board the coach (bus) to London's Wembley Stadium. The other teens started jeering at me stating I was the only Hungary supporter and how dare I carry the flag of St. George.

It rained all the way to London. It rained during the match. It rained after the match. St. George's flag and the Union Jack were everywhere on the streets leading up to the venue. But something in me felt hollow. I was thirteen now and no longer felt part of the country I was born in.

Where once faith was front and center, now stood science and math.

Where once love was felt, now stood indifference.

Where once stood a United Kingdom, now stood a divided land with a Queen.

We returned back to Peterborough. I told Father the game was great and Paul Mariner scored the winning goal. He smiled and was living the moment through the eyes of his son.

The next day, Father came through the door with a smile.

"It took five years but we've got it!"

"Got What?"

"Our visa to the United States of America got approved, we're leaving next year!"

"Oh" I said.

Mentally, emotionally and spiritually, I'd already left.

Something stirred though. I recalled the moment when NASA's Space Shuttle with John Young and Robert Crippen had its first launch on April 12th, 1981. I would stare out and look into the night sky and wonder what it would be like in Space.

Now, during the day, our preparations had begun to pack up and leave. I would look up at the sun, gaze at the puffy white clouds with the background of a majestic blue sky and practice singing "The Star-Spangled Banner." If we were not welcome in the United Kingdom, perhaps, we could start over and be welcomed to the United States. It was after all the land of immigrants.

One last time, I ventured to the Sikh Gurdwara.

One last time, I made my way to St. Marks Church.

One last time, I walked the grounds in and around Peterborough Cathedral.

And one last time, we sat together as a family in the front room of small miracles. Mother, Father, and two Sons. We had a Russian photographer come by and take a snapshot. He had the biggest smile, genuinely happy, and so were we.

I had lost my faith but had discovered hope.

Goodbye Peterborough, you brought me tears, pain, laughter and love.

Strange is the part of me that will miss you, but miss you I will.

We boarded the train at the Peterborough Railroad Station with two suitcases, two duffle bags and headed back to Kings Cross Railroad Station, London.

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