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Baba Ditta's Turnip, , Sikh Foundation, 1999, 0970036310, 9780970036315, . An adaptation of an old Russian folktale about a man who grows such an enormous turnip that he needs the combined strength of a woman, her grandson, a dog, cat, chickens, a pig, and a butterfly to pull it out of the ground..

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Baba Ditta's Turnip coloring story book by Pushpinder Singh illustrates how the spirit of cooperation overcomes difficulty. Quarreling characters resolve differences to accomplish the task of pulling an enormous turnip from the earth. Each new page, of the folktale told in both Punjabi and English, builds upon the last to offer an engaging opportunity for learning while coloring delightful drawings of a Sikh family and their animal friends.

Baba Ditta's Turnip, A folktale in Punjabi & English by Pushpinder Singh arrived unannounced with another book, The Boy With Long Hair, by the same author. At first, I wondered how significant a folk tale could be to Sikhism. After reading through the book, I came to the conclusion that without saying so, the story effectively illustrates the basic principle of Vand Chakko, sharing and cooperation. More than 98% of all Sikhs are of Punjabi origin, yet there are few books, especially in English for Western Sikhs, that depict the Sikh identity.

I took the coloring story book with me when I visited my daughter. My three year old granddaughter found it and began looking through the pages with interest. She told me the entire story just by looking at the pictures, and turned the book round and round when the characters all tumbled over each other as the turnip came free from the ground. We talked about the characters, how they helped each other, and how Baba looked like "Papa" (her grandfather).

As I read the Punjabi words, I recognized some words from Gurbani, and after a couple of pages, I began to recognize repeated Punjabi phrases. My granddaughter brought over her Spanish and animal picture dictionaries and quietly turned the pages while I read to her in Punjabi. I could tell that she was aware of a language learning opportunity. A little later, I asked her questions about what we had read based on the exercise questions at the end of the story book, and asked her to name some of the animals. I realized she thought I meant for her to give them names, so changed tactics and asked her which animals we'd read about and gave her a few examples not in the story. She told me a goat, chickens and a butterfly, no giraffes or elephants.

With a new baby brother in the family, a busy mom and grandmother, she had to patiently wait and was thrilled when it came time to take out her crayons and color. She picked the turnip, (perhaps because everyone in the story had such trouble trying to pick the turnip) to color and chose a purple crayon for the turnip root and green for the leaves. Coloring itself can be a learning opportunity She told me the color of each crayon as she took it from the box and decided that coloring with a white

crayon over green made the turnip leaves disappear. My granddaughter has quite an imagination and has a collection of nylon wings (including butterfly wings) that she wears for play. Another favorite game is to play "Super Helper" and whisk around the house helping mommy. She seemed to highly appreciate that a butterfly turned out to be the helper that made all the difference in uprooting the stubborn turnip.

Pushpinder Singh's coloring story book Baba Ditta's Turnip illustrates the efforts of a Sikh grandparents and grandson to grow and harvest a turnip with the help of farm animals. Baba Ditta and Baibay Fatto initially at odds about ownership, overcome their differences to work together to gather their bountiful harvest of a single stupendous turnip stuck in the ground. Words and images occur repetitively adding new phrases and images one at a time. With so many repeated images, there are plenty of opportunities for one child to color a favorite character again and again, and even for an entire family of children to color them.

Pushpinder Kaur was born and brought up in a village in Punjab, earned M.Sc in biology and Bachelor in Education degrees from India. She immigrated to the US along with her husband and has lived in San Jose, California. She holds teaching credentials and M.A. in Elementary Education from San Jose State University. She works as a literacy coach in a California public school district.

She has helped start a number of Khalsa Sunday Schools that teach Punjabi, Gurmukhi, Sikh history and Gurbani to young children throughout America including Guru Nanak Khalsa School, San Jose in its 25th year, serving about 700 students. Her comprehensive, step-by-step Punjabi curriculum helps facilitate the smooth operation of many Sunday schools.

Pushpinder has written several storybooks. The Sikh Foundation of Palo Alto published three of the books. Baba Ditta's Turnip is a story that highlights the value of cooperation; The Games We Play is a journey down the memory lane of the games Punjabi children played when she was a young child; and The Boy With Long Hair is the third book that tells in very simple and straightforward words that Sikh boys are like any other child, with feelings, which should not be hurt, with dignity that should be respected and with identity that should be preserved. The book has been incorporated into the list of Supplemental Instructional Materials by the California Department of Education, Sacramento. She believes in, and supports the mission of Kaur Foundation, and was instrumental in carrying out the research for the script of the Cultural Safari DVD produced by the Foundation.

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