

Summer 2018 Issue (April 2018 – September 2018)



Chairman's Message

By [Surjeet Singh Sidhu](#)

Respected Sadh Sangat Ji,

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

I am thankful to Waheguru and the Sadh Sangat for entrusting me to do seva as chairman for the period 2018-19. As we have been doing in the past, our continuous endeavor would be to run the affairs of the Sikh Foundation of Virginia (“SFV”) in a very secular and professional manner devoid of any partisanship, while keeping in focus the objectives of the SFV that encompass propagation of the teachings of Sikh Gurus and Guru Granth Sahib, and promotion of religious, educational, social and cultural aspects of Sikhism.

As youth is our future, we are taking a very holistic approach to our youth activities this year with the foundational approach of imparting basic tenets of Sikhism, along with useful and practical knowledge for their personal development. Under the guidance of our Youth Coordinator, Paramjit S. Sachdeva, and Punjabi School in-charge, Surinderpal Singh, we are looking at the curriculum for our Punjabi School from a fresh perspective, and are revising the contents based on experience over the years and fresh input from various stakeholders. The school enrollment continues to grow necessitating a need for more facilities, and the Board has made available a refurbished trailer to supplement available classroom space. In addition, for the older kids, the program would now include experienced speakers to interact with them on specific relevant topics. Thanks to the Punjabi School teachers, parents, camp coordinators, and camp counselors, for their continuous dedicated services.

On a broader perspective, SFV Board has been working on a “Vision Project” for the organization to guide the institutional development of SFV over the medium- to long-term time horizon. I touched upon some of the

thoughts in my short address to sangat in April, and plan to make a more formalized presentation to sangat on this in the near future. Also, we plan to announce a town hall meeting in October/November to seek suggestions and advice from sangat in this regard.

In light of the incidents of hate crimes at certain religious places, including the Gurdwaras, around the Washington metropolitan area and elsewhere in the United States, SFV management has taken some preventive measures based on the audit recommendations of the Fairfax County Police to improve security at the SFV Gurdwara Sahib. In addition, we have applied for a grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security under their Non-Profit Security Grant Program. With Waheguru's grace, if we are successful in receiving this grant, several additional concrete measures would be taken in this regard.

The SFV management is making a concerted effort to increase our involvement in the interfaith activities by participating in various interfaith functions. In the same vein, and to increase awareness of Sikhism among the local communities, SFV will host a "Know Your Sikh Neighbors" event at the Gurdwara Sahib during the fall season, wherein other faith groups, school and college students, and neighbors would be invited.

A redesigned SFV website has been launched with several improvements and new features, and we are continuing to upgrade it further for the benefit of sangat. In view of the demonstrated need and for the convenience of sangat, the SFV Board has decided to add another row of benches in the back of the diwan hall. We are in the process of designing upgrade and repaving of the SFV parking lot. This would be a big project costing substantial amount, and we would need sangat's financial support with Tan, Man and Dhan to accomplish this. The plan is to accomplish this task before winter this year.

My thanks to Dr. Rishi Bhatnagar, an orthopedic surgeon, who has been providing free Seva to sangat in our health clinic for the last 7-8 years. Dr. Rishi attends clinic the first Sunday of each month from 11:30am to 1:30pm; please take advantage of his services.

The SFV Gurdwara Sahib has been running very smoothly, but it has been possible only because of the cooperation and active participation of our resident Bhai Sahibans and sangat. If you are not already doing, please contact SFV treasurer to become a regular donator by participating in the direct deposit program. This is the best way to make regular contribution and seek Waheguru's blessings for giving us everything. Also, contact Bhai Sahibans or Langar coordinator to increase sponsorship of the Guru Ka Langar on Thursdays and Sundays.

Overall, the SFV Organization is in Chardi-Kala. Please stay in touch, visit <http://www.sfova.org/>, and give us your valuable suggestions. I thank sangat for its continuing support and encouragement to the Board of Trustees.

With regards,

Surjeet S. Sidhu

Disclaimer: This issue of *SFV Voice* has been prepared by members of the SFV Sangat. The interpretations and views expressed herein are entirely those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SFV, its Board and Management, or the *SFV Voice* editing team.

Secretary's Report

By Kanwaljit Sachdeva

Presently, SFV Gurdwara Sahib has three full time Ragis/Granthis who share various duties. Gurbani Kirtan is recited by Bhai Sat Pal Singh Ji and Bhai Karam Singh Ji during the Sunday and Thursday diwans. They are ably assisted by Bhai Onkar Singh Ji (on Tabla). From time to time, special Kirtan and Katha services are also performed by Ragis and Kathawachaks at SFV premises.

With Waheguru's blessings and support of our sadh sangat, Gurdwara sahib is running well. We have regular Diwan on Sangrand and every Thursday from 7pm-8:30 pm, and from 9am-12:40 pm every Sunday. Shabad Kirtan by Bhai Satpal Singh ji and his jatha is always appreciated. We also have great participation by Gurmat school children, and other sangat members. Gurmat katha by katha vachaks and Vaaran by Dhadhi jathas are really appreciated by sangat.

Since April 2018, 10 Akhand Paath Sahib, 5 weddings, and 12 Kirtan programs have been performed at SFV. In addition, a mini rainsakhai was very successfully organized by the Youth.

We encourage all to come to Gurdwara sahib regularly to listen to Gurbani and seek Waheguru's blessings. We also want to thank all who have been coming forward to take part in recitation of Shabads.

Treasurer's Corner

By Devinder Singh Behniwal

SFV financial accounts are maintained on a Calendar Year basis. Year 2018 was financially good for the Sikh Foundation of Virginia. During the past year, the direct deposit donation has increased. Our goal for direct deposit was by Baisakhi Day 2018. We would like to pay the monthly mortgage from the direct deposit

The treasurer report is posted on the notice board in the Langar Hall.

I am also urging the Sadh Sangat to sign-up for the direct deposit and contribute Dhan to SFV Gurdwara Sahib. Please contact me for any Sewa.

Public Relations Officer's Report

By Sarbjeet S. Kochhar

Annual Picnic- SFV Annual picnic 2018- August 18, 2018

Annual picnic was organized this year at Burke Lake Park in Fairfax Station, on 19th August. This picnic is organized by SFV board members for the community. Board members contribute to make this event happen. It was very exciting and encouraging to see more than 100+ people during the picnic. People starting coming from noon and stayed till 4:00pm. Some met old friends after a long time, and others made new friends. Children had good company or other children. The weather was perfect for outdoor fun. People enjoyed and played. Bingo game was coordinated by SFV's Kanwaljit Ji Sachdeva. Many people played bingo for the first time, and won prizes too.

Food was in plenty and there was a lot of variety such as fruits, rajmah, rice, chips and salsa, burgers, cupcake, cookies, soft drinks, juice, etc. And of course the finale was fresh tea for everyone. And the cotton candy was hit with everyone- kids and elders alike. We were very happy to see children and adults participating in all games and fun. Thank you all for coming and making it a fun day. Great people, food, games, music..... A real fun Saturday.



Youth and Education Committee's Report

By Paramjit Singh Sachdeva & Surinder Pal Singh Sachdeva

The Punjabi and Gurmat School has continued to make good progress during 2018. This is entirely due to the enthusiastic participation of students, strong commitment of teachers and resource persons, and continuing support from parents, volunteers and Board members.

In addition, during the past few months, many SFV Youth have participated in the annual Sikh Day Parade in New York, a Seva project for feeding the homeless in Washington DC, and a 3½ day non-residential Annual Youth Camp at the SFV Gurdwara Sahib on 5-8 July 2018.

The Youth Camp theme was “Mayree Matt Thorri Raam.” A total of 57 youth participated in the Camp, including 14 participants in Level 1 (4-8 years), 25 in Level 2 (9-13 years), 12 in Level 3, and 6 older youth (17-19 years) who also served as volunteers for various activities or were provided leadership development opportunities as counselors-in-training.

The youth, many of whom were not regular students of the SFV School, eagerly participated in Nitnem, Keertan, Theme Shabad discussion, Pictionary, Sikhtoons, Arts & Craft, Debates, and a Sikh History Quiz. These activities were conducted for all three Levels. Participants also engaged in a number of age-relevant sessions on topics affecting Sikh-Americans of school age. These topics included Sikh American History, Sikh Women in Modern History, the Use and Misuse of the Phone and Internet, the Kid Next Door, Bullying issues, Best Foot Forward, My Parents, Story time, and random Video Interviews.

In addition, Camp participants and resource persons discussed Theme-related Gurmat topics, such as Tu Mayra Pita Tu Hai Mayra Mata, Encouraging Seva orientation, Shabad Guru, Guru Granth Sahib (Living Guru), and Man Neevan Matt Uchi. As capstone activities, Camp participants and volunteers took part in an evening Special Keertan Darbar on July 7 and the regular Sunday morning Divan on July 8.

All the Camp activities were well received by participants, parents, and Sangat members. As in previous years, we were fortunate to have competent and committed resource persons and volunteers, including several external speakers and facilitators, our own Granthi Sahibs, and SFV School teachers, volunteers, coordinators, and Board members.

The feedback received was very positive and encouraging. To help improve depth and quality of learning during the SFV Youth Camp and School, it was suggested that more time be devoted to Keertan practice and Sikh history and Gurmat-related topics. As a follow-up, Camp- and School organizers are considering more half- or one-day Camps throughout the School year, and a week-long Annual SFV Youth Camp next year if logistics permit.

We are also seeking additional resource persons from among our Sangat members for coordinating various SFV Youth activities. Additional resources and a well-equipped classroom are especially needed for the older youth interested in half-day Sikh History and Gurmat sessions on a monthly or quarterly basis instead of regular classes every Sunday.

Besides the regular Punjabi and Gurmat classes every Sunday morning (except holidays), special activities this year have included:

This year, SFV commemorated the sixth anniversary of the tragic August 5, 2012 shooting in the Oak Creek, Wisconsin Gurdwara. SFV organized National Seva Day at SFV. SFV youth with support from parents and SFV Sangat packed 200 bags with hygiene products which were donated to a local homeless shelter.



Guru Arjan Dev Ji's Martyrdom day on June 17th at SFV- Great participation by youth singing shabads, poem recitation by children, soulful shabads by Bhai Satpal ji and Bhai Tarlochan ji, and speech by Dr. Sethi. We appreciate everyone for participating and coming to Gurdwara Sahib. Thanks to Mankoo ji for making the video

Food for Body and Soul (June 16th)

SFV held a Sikh American Youth conference at SFV Gurdwara Sahib on June 16th. The following focus areas were covered:

- Food for Body and Soul
- Quality of Today's Food
- Healthy Eating Habits
- Food and Spirituality

Surinder Singh

Information Technology Report

By Harjit S. Chawla

The committee has been involved in re-designing the Sikh Foundation of Virginia (SFV) website that is easy to navigate, while providing updated meaningful information. In addition, increase e-mail users to send timely, and updated notifications while reducing reproduction and mailing cost. The new website will operate on a new platform that is secured and provides confidence on utilizing the Pay Pal system to donate money and pay for various fees related to religious functions. Lastly establish SFV branding logo to identify our Gurdwara being the oldest in Northern Virginia. The committee also, performed the following two special projects.

1. Replacement of cleaning contractor – we successfully changed our cleaning contractor that performs the identical services while reducing the cost significantly.
2. Replacement of Property Insurance – After being with one insurance company for the past fifteen year we changed to new provider. This company exclusively insurance religious organization in USA. This provide us with the opportunity to increase our coverage, add additional endorsement while reducing the annual cost.

Maintenance Committee Report

The committee was actively involved in providing timely maintenance to the building and outside grounds to ensure that they are safe, and reliable and operates within the confinement of all applicable codes and regulations. During the past year two HVAC systems in the Darbar Hall were replaced and preventative maintenance was performed on the balance units to ensure that they are operating efficiently. Security system was updated along with additional cameras were installed to monitor the activities.

Construction Committee Report

The committee continues to pursue in obtaining Fairfax County permit for replacement of rear egress stairs and installation school trailer. This involved in updating the minor site plan, filling application with Zoning department and finding reasonable, cost efficient trailer. We successfully found the required trailer that meets our requirements but have not been able to obtain the necessary permits. This is an on-going activity.

Sangat's Corner

Poems and Life Experiences

Surinder Singh

ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਜੀਉ, ਮੈਂ ਬਾਂਵਰੀ, ਰਾਤ ਬਿਤਾਵਾਂ ਕੱਲ੍ਹੀ
ਇੱਧਰ ਦੇਖਾਂ ਉੱਧਰ ਦੇਖਾਂ, ਦੇਖਾਂ ਉਪਰੋਂ ਥੱਲੀ
ਬਾਹਰ ਦੇਖਾਂ ਚਾਨਣ ਦਿੱਸੇ, ਅੰਦਰ ਘੁੱਪ ਹਨੇਰਾ
ਨੈਣੀਂ ਨੀਰ ਦਾ ਹੜ ਪਿਆ ਵੱਗੇ, ਚੇਤਾ ਆਵੇ ਤੇਰਾ

ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਜੀਉ, ਕੀ ਦੱਸਾਂ, ਨਾਲ ਮੇਰੇ ਕੀ ਬੀਤੇ
ਧਾਹੀਂ ਮਾਰ ਮੈਂ ਰੋ ਨਾਂ ਸੱਕਾਂ, ਬੁੱਲ ਗਏ ਨੇ ਸੀਤੇ
ਕਦੋਂ ਏ ਮੁਕਣੀ ਰਾਤ ਇਹ ਲੰਬੀ, ਹੋਣਾ ਕਦੋਂ ਸਵੇਰਾ
ਬਿਰਹਾ ਅੰਦਰ ਜੀਣ ਨਾਂ ਦੇਵੇ, ਪਾਉਣਾ ਕਦੋਂ ਜਿ ਫੇਰਾ

ਤੁਸਾਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਪਿਆਰ, ਮੈਂ ਸਾਂਭ ਨਾ ਸੱਕੀ
ਤੁਸਾਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਮਾਣ, ਮੈਂ ਮਾਣ ਨਾ ਸੱਕੀ
ਉਸਤਤ ਨਿੰਦਿਆ ਛੱਡ ਨਾ ਸੱਕੀ
ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਜੀਉ, ਹੰਊ ਵਿੱਚ ਡੁੱਬੀ, ਮੈਂ ਮੈਂ ਕਰਦੀ,
ਤੇਰੀ ਚਰਨੀਂ ਲੱਗ ਨਾ ਸੱਕੀ

ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਪਿਆਰੇ, ਰੱਖ ਲੈ ਮੈਨੂੰ
ਅਉਗਣਿਆਰੀ, ਢੱਕ ਲੈ ਮੈਨੂੰ
ਆਪਣੀ ਕਾਰੇ ਲਾ ਕੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ
ਹਨੇਰੇ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਕੱਢ ਲੈ ਮੈਨੂੰ

ਕਦੋਂ ਏ ਮੁਕਣੀ ਰਾਤ ਇਹ ਲੰਬੀ, ਹੋਣਾ ਕਦੋਂ ਸਵੇਰਾ
ਬਿਰਹਾ ਅੰਦਰ ਜੀਣ ਨਾਂ ਦੇਵੇ, ਪਾਉਣਾ ਕਦੋਂ ਜਿ ਫੇਰਾ
ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਜੀਉ, ਮੈਂ ਭੁੱਲੀ, ਪਈ ਸਜਾਏ, ਰਾਹ ਦੇਖਾਂ ਹੁਣ ਤੇਰਾ
ਬਖਸ਼ ਨਿਮਾਣੀ ਜਿੰਦ ਮੇਰੀ ਨੂੰ, ਛੇਤੀ ਪਾ ਜਾਉ ਫੇਰਾ

ਕੱਲ ਰਾਤੀਂ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ
ਮੇਰੇ ਸੁਪਨੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਇਆ..
ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ..ਕਾਕਾ ਮੇਰੀ ਸੋਚ ਦਾ
ਆਹ ਕੀ ਹਾਲ ਬਣਾਇਆ..?

ਮੈਂ ਕਿਹਾ ..ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਅਸੀਂ
ਆਪਣਾ ਫ਼ਰਜ਼ ਨਿਭਾਈ ਜਾਨੇ ਆਂ..
ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਲਈ ਰੋਜ਼ ਹੀ..
ਫੋਟੋ ਅੱਗੇ ਮੱਥੇ ਘਸਾਈ ਜਾਨੇ ਆਂ..!

ਦਾਤਾਂ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਤੋਂ..
ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਅੱਗੇ ਧੂਫਾਂ ਧੁਖਾਈ ਜਾਨੇ ਆਂ..
ਥੋੜੇ ਥੋੜੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਬਾਅਦ..
ਅਖੰਡਪਾਠ ਵੀ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਾਈ ਜਾਨੇ ਆਂ..!!

ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਦੁਆਰੇ 'ਤੇ ਵੀ ਅਸੀਂ
ਕਰੋੜਾਂ ਰੁਪਏ ਲਗਾਈ ਜਾਨੇ ਆਂ..
ਸੁੱਖਣਾ ਸੁੱਖ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੱਗੇ..
ਰੋਸ਼ਮੀ ਰੁਮਾਲੇ ਰੋਜ਼ ਚੜਾਈ ਜਾਨੇ ਆਂ...!!

ਸੁਬਹਾ ਸ਼ਾਮ ਅੱਧਾ ਅੱਧਾ ਘੰਟਾ
ਪਾਠ ਦਾ ਫ਼ਰਜ਼ ਵੀ ਨਿਭਾਈ ਜਾਨੇ ਆਂ..
ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਜ਼ਨਮ ਦਿਨ 'ਤੇ...
ਦੀਵੇ ਬਾਲ.. ਪਟਾਕੇ ਖੂਬ ਚਲਾਈ ਜਾਨੇ ਆਂ...!!

ਪਹਿਰਾਵੇ ਭੇਸ 'ਚ ਕੱਚ ਨਾ ਰਹੇ..
ਪੂਰਾ ਦਿੱਖ 'ਤੇ ਜੇਰ ਲਗਾਈ ਜਾਨੇ ਆਂ..
ਤੁਸੀਂ ਪਤਾ ਨੀ ਕਿਉਂ ਖੁਸ਼ ਨੀ..
ਅਸੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਹਰ ਰਸਮ ਨਿਭਾਈ ਜਾਨੇ ਆਂ...!!

ਬਾਬਾ ਬੋਲਿਆ..
ਮੈਂ ਕਦ ਆਖਿਆ ਸੀ
ਮੇਰੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰੱਟੇ ਲਾਓ
ਮੈਂ ਦੱਸੇ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਏ..
ਭਾੜੇ 'ਤੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਪੜਾਓ...!!

ਮੈਂ ਕਦ ਆਖਿਆ ਸੀ..
ਮੇਰੀ ਫੋਟੋ ਨੂੰ ਧੂਫਾਂ ਲਾਓ..!

ਮੈਂ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਏ..
ਮੇਰੇ ਦਿਨ 'ਤੇ ਪਟਾਕੇ ਚਲਾਓ..!

ਮੇਰੀ ਸਮਝ 'ਚ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਹੈ
ਕਿ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਧੰਨ ਵਹਾਓ ...!!

ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਇਹ ਚਾਹਿਆ ਸੀ..
ਮੇਰੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਨਾਓ..

ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੀਆਂ ਇਹ ਗਲਾਂ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ

ਮੇਰਾ ਚਿਹਰਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਬੱਗਾ ਸੀ..
ਮੇਰਾ ਰੋਮ ਰੋਮ ਕੰਬਣ ਲੱਗਾ ਸੀ..

ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਨੇ
ਮੇਰੀਆਂ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਵਲ ਤੱਕਿਆ 'ਤੇ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ

ਤੁਸੀਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਮੰਨੀ ਜਾਨੇ ਹੋ
ਦਸੋ ਕਿਹੜਾ ਇਕ ਮੇਰਾ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਜੋ
ਮੇਰੀ ਸੋਚ-ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਤੋਂ
ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਭ ਖਿਸਕਾਊ ਦੇ ਕੰਨੀ ਹੋ..!

ਇਕ ਤੁਹਾਥੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵੇਲਾ ਸੀ..
ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕੱਚੇ ਸੀ..
ਸਿਖਿਆ ਮੇਰੀ ਤਾਂ ਅਮਲ 'ਚ ਸੀ..
ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਭ ਪੱਕੇ ਸੀ..!!

ਸੰਗਮਰਮਰ- ਸੋਨੇ ਲਾ ਲਾ ਕੇ..
ਭਾਵੇਂ ਮੰਦਰ ਪਾ ਲਏ ਪੱਕੇ ਨੇ..
ਦਿਖਾਵੇ ਅਡੰਬਰ ਅਮਲੋਂ ਖਾਲੀ..
ਮੇਰੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਤੋਂ ਕੱਚੇ ਨੇ..!!

ਮੈਂ ਬੁਤ ਪੂਜਾ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਕਿਆ ਸੀ..
ਤੁਸੀਂ ਮੇਰੀ ਫੋਟੋ ਪੂਜੀ ਜਾਨੇ..!

ਮੈਂ ਰੋਕਿਆ ਅੰਧਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸਾਂ ਤੋਂ..
ਤੁਸੀਂ ਧਾਰਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਡਰੀ ਜਾਨੇ ਓ..!!

ਮੈਂ ਜਾਤ- ਗੋਤ ਛਡਾਈ ਸੀ..
ਤੁਸੀਂ ਨਾਵਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਜਾਈ ਜਾਨੇ ਓ...!!

ਲਾਲੇ ਲਈ ਮੈਂ ਲੜਿਆ ਸੀ..
ਤੁਸੀਂ ਭਾਗੇ ਨੂੰ ਜੱਫੀਆਂ ਪਾਈ ਜਾਨੇ ਓ...!!
ਰਾਜੇ ਸ਼ੀਹ ਮੁਕੱਦਮ ਕੁੱਤੇ..
ਤੁਸੀਂ ਤਖਤਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਬਿਠਾਈ ਜਾਨੇ ਓ...!!

ਮੈਂ ਸੱਜਣ ਠੱਗ ਭਜਾਏ ਸੀ..
ਤੁਸੀਂ ਹਾਰ ਤੇ ਵੇਟਾਂ ਪਾਈ ਜਾਨੇ ਓ....!!

ਛੇਡਹਿ ਅੰਨ ਕਰਹਿ ਪਾਖੰਡ ਸਮਝਾਇਆ ਸੀ
ਤੁਸੀਂ ਖੁਦ ਹੀ ਵਰਤ ਰਖਾਈ ਜਾਨੇ ਓ.....!!

ਪਹਿਰਾਵਾ ਭੇਸ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨਹੀਂ..
ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਿਹਨੂੰ ਬੁੱਧੁ ਬਨਾਈ ਜਾਨੇ ਓ....?

ਸਿਖਿਆ ਮੇਰੀ ਕੋਈ ਮੰਨੀ ਨਾ..
ਪਰ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਹਾਈ ਜਾਨੇ ਓ....??

ਮੇਰੇ ਲਈ ਤਾਂ ਦੋਸਤੋ..
ਇਹ ਝੰਜੋੜਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਖੁਆਬ ਸੀ..
ਸੁਪਨਾ ਸੀ ਜਾਂ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ..
ਮੇਰੀ ਜ਼ਮੀਰ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਅਵਾਜ਼ ਸੀ...!!

ਲਿਖਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਰ ਸ਼ੇਅਰ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਕਰ ਦਿਉ

The Religious Educational Function of Gurdwara – Paramjit Singh Sachdeva*

*[*Excerpted from the author's article in the "Abstracts of Sikh Studies", July-Sept 2017, Chandigarh, India]*

A *Gurdwara* is expected to serve religious, educational, and charitable purposes.The religious function is of course primary. It is naturally the focus of attention, both for the *sangat* and for gurdwara management. The 'charitable' dimension usually comes next, for it provides opportunities for *seva*, and potentially benefits many. The educational function is crucial as well, but is often neglected, with unfortunate consequences.Unless a gurdwara's management committee and *sangat* become thoroughly conversant with Sikhism's basic beliefs, tenets, values and principles, neither the religious nor the charitable functions of a gurdwara can be properly performed.

Gurdwaras during and since the Guru period

.... During the Guru period, as long as the Gurus could personally ensure that *dharamsals*, gurdwaras and other missionary centers properly performed their assigned functions, the Sikh community was well served. This enabled the new religion to take root and develop, and helped create a community of faithful Sikhs willing to give their all to their Guru, Granth, and Panth. Commitment to Sikh beliefs and values had so filled them with faith, fidelity, devotion and courage that they were able to overcome all manner of obstacles without losing heart. Their deep understanding of Sikh teachings had shaped their entire way of life and had enabled them to succeed, despite insufficient material resources, unprincipled behavior of local leaders, and vicious attacks by enemy forces. The importance of honesty, integrity, selfless service, and trustworthiness in daily life, including for those responsible for leading the *sangat*, was considered paramount. Sikh leaders were expected to serve as exemplary role models, leading by example. They were expected to know and follow the Gurus' teachings, and to help others learn and follow them as well.

[Since then,] ... While the expectations that a gurdwara must meet have not changed, our capacity to meet these obligations has dramatically declined. In the process, learning and internalizing the essentials of Sikhism and practicing what the Gurus taught us seem to have been given short shrift. We seem to have become more concerned about what merely feels good, not what's in the heart; what's on the head, not in it; and what's easily in sight, not what's inside, where God resides. We forget that it is the gurdwara's educational function to transport us from the world of the self to the Word of the Divine; and to help us go beyond the trivia of the here and now to the essence of the One beyond.

[Learning from this experience,] To the extent that neglect of the educational purpose of gurdwaras has driven us into this seemingly bottomless pit of ignorance and unSikh-like practices, strengthening this essential function of a gurdwara would enable us to get out of it. We could then again sit comfortably and in peace in our gurdwaras at the feet of our Guru Granth Sahib. This task is now vital and urgent. It is only through a major change of heart and mind – accomplished through painstaking but systematic Gurbani education programs at our gurdwaras and elsewhere – that we might be able to get away from the superficial Sikhism in which we now seem enmeshed. This would enable us to concentrate our efforts on the inner values, principles and Sikh teachings that would truly make us the kind of Sikhs our Gurus intended.

For this to happen, however, all three groups – *sangat*, *parcharaks*, and management committees – collectively responsible for ensuring that a gurdwara effectively discharges its educational purpose must step up and play their rightful parts in a mutually-reinforcing, transparent, and publicly-accountable manner.

Sangat's responsibilities

The *Sangat* itself has to become much more knowledgeable and enlightened, in order to serve as the ultimate 'guarantors' of *Sikhi*, as vital members of a Sikh Panth genuinely following Guru Granth Sahib. This would help ensure that we would not be so easily misled by unscrupulous or motivated *granthis*, *parcharaks*, and gurdwara management committees. This religious education needs to cover *sangat* members of all ages, not just the youth. The older *sangat* members are the ones who vote for and become members of gurdwara committees; so they too need to be well versed in Sikhism's teachings, values and *maryada*. This would ensure that their views and decisions on issues confronting a particular gurdwara, or sometimes even the larger global Sikh Panth, are based on a deep and correct understanding of authentic *Gurbani* solely from the Guru Granth Sahib.

The recent incident in a Virginia (USA) gurdwara relating to the *Amrit sanchar* ceremony, as well as the responses of other gurdwaras worldwide to this and related events, would probably have been very different if the *sangats* and management committees of these gurdwaras had been more knowledgeable of the contents and teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib as well as universally accepted Sikh Code of Conduct (1945). A similar conclusion could probably apply to the much more important Panthic issue of the authenticity of the book now titled the *Dasam Granth* (and previously known as *Bachittar Natak*) and whether any of its contents were actually authored by Guru Gobind Singh himself and should thus be considered *Gurbani*.

Granthis' and preachers' responsibilities

As pointed out by many scholars for several decades now, and nicely summarized by Col. Avtar Singh in "Gurdwaras and Sikh Preachers (Granthis)" in 2014, there is a huge unmet need for suitably training *granthis* and *parcharaks*. While some very valuable and noteworthy efforts have indeed been made in this direction in recent years, much more needs to be done. We need to set standards and ensure high quality programs for training our *parcharaks*. And, in the age of the internet, this training should now be made available globally, through reputable continuing education programs, websites, videos, and on-line courses. Since we can now easily access Guru Granth Sahib directly, at any time, through a computer or smart-phone, it should also be possible to have the Guru always in our hearts and minds, and not only in our homes and pockets. Continuous self-learning by preachers, facilitated and even demanded by *sangat* members and gurdwara management committees, could help close the gap between the kind of *granthis* and *parcharaks* we need and what we now have.

Gurdwara management committee's responsibilities

A gurdwara's management committee must satisfactorily ensure that a gurdwara undertakes its religious educational functions effectively. For this we need wise, committed and principled leadership, with the right values, vision, competence, and resources. These leaders must also be publicly accountable, and they need to continually earn the trust and confidence of the gurdwara *sangat* they ostensibly serve. The capacity to lead gurdwaras as respected trustees and managers is often in short supply, but can be developed, as is being done in other non-profit religious organizations worldwide. A healthy dose of professionalism and selfless service to a cause larger than self-interest, and a concerted effort to overcome the many ills now plaguing our gurdwaras would go a long way, even in the short term. This would bring gurdwaras into the 21st century, would modernize their outlook and approach, and would make them suitable for meeting the pressing needs of the *sangat* for in-depth authoritative teaching of *Gurbani*.

A key aspect of this improvement would involve not just providing better facilities for the educational programs run by gurdwaras, but also greater attention to the ‘softer’ side of gurdwara management, particularly the provision of suitable incentives to staff and *sangat* members to motivate them to set and achieve higher goals and standards for in-depth learning of *Gurmat* at a gurdwara. One easily measured indicator of the seriousness of these efforts would be the annual budget allotted to a gurdwara’s educational activities. Budgets demonstrate an organization’s priorities, so both absolute and relative amounts of expenditures on various educational activities undertaken, as well as budget allocations over time, should be given due attention by gurdwara management committees, and should be made known to the *sangat* to ensure public accountability. All this would help ensure that Sikhism’s bedrock principles of transparency, honesty, accountability, and selfless service are used by management committees to run the gurdwaras themselves, thus ensuring that the *sangat* and Panth always remain supreme, as the Gurus intended.

Concluding Remarks

.... Substantial strengthening of the educational function of gurdwaras is now urgently needed, so that we may dig ourselves out of the unfortunate mess we seem to have gotten ourselves into. We must collectively give this vital task high priority, and must take concerted and systematic action at all levels. We also need to hold our leaders and ourselves accountable for delivery of results that better meet our Gurus’ expectations of what a gurdwara should be, and what its management committee, *sangat*, and *parcharaks* should do.

This would help restore our gurdwaras to their rightful place in a Sikh’s daily life. Gurdwaras would then become the centers of learning, service, and missionary work that they once were during the Guru period. Our gurdwaras would again serve the *sangat* and the Sikh Panth as true ‘*dharamsals*’, as envisaged by the founder of Sikhism five centuries ago.

SFV Senior Corner

Sadh Sangat Ji, do you know?

SFV Gurdwara Sahib’s Seniors Program Continues to flourish!

This Program continues to serve the social and wellness-related needs of the SFV Sangat members who are ‘seniors’ (55 and older). Most participants are retirees (or those free at that time) seeking to enrich their own and others’ lives through meaningful social interaction.

The Program remains committed to providing a safe and comfortable environment for informal interaction among seniors. It seeks to encourage a healthy life style and enhance physical and mental well-being. Participants design and conduct activities on a voluntary basis, and themselves determine program content and mode of implementation. Every participant engages in a particular Program activity on a voluntary, self-selection basis.

There is no charge for participating in regularly-scheduled Program activities at the SFV premises, but there is a nominal charge for special events or field trips. SFV does not provide transportation to or from the Gurdwara premises or have qualified/certified staff to assist the seniors. Hence, participants must be able to commute to and from the Gurdwara Sahib on their own, and manage their personal care independently without assistance. All participants must register with the coordinator of the SFV Seniors Program and sign a consent form absolving SFV of any liability for engaging in any Program activity.

Currently, seniors meet every Wednesday from 9 AM to 1 PM at the SFV Gurdwara Sahib. Program activities include, on a voluntary basis, yoga/flexibility exercises under the guidance of experienced members, participating in Naam simran and Gurbani vichaar, and discussing general health issues or sharing life experiences. Some seniors use this time for learning or teaching new skills, such as conversational English. While sharing a meal (langar), participants converse about current affairs and issues relevant for seniors (e.g., aspects related to immigration, Medicare, Social security, etc.). Activities can be modified or added in response to participants' changing interests or preferences.

The current schedule of Program activities, every Wednesday, is:

09:00 AM - 10:15 AM	Langar Preparation
10:15 AM - 10:30 AM	Naam Simran
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Light Yoga/Breathing Exercises/Pressure Points
11:30 AM - 12:00 (Noon)	Gurbani Vichaar
12:00 PM - 12:15 PM	General Discussion
12:15 PM - 01:00 PM	Langar and Cleaning

All SFV seniors are welcome! For further information, please contact the Coordinator for the Seniors Program (see the SFV Board's office-bearers list), or the Program Facilitators Dr. Barinder Kaur Deu (email: barinderdeu@gmail.com, phone 703-978-2420) or Mr. Randhir Singh Chhatwal (email: randhir.chhatwal@gmail.com, phone: 978-884-8333).



SFV Participates in Fairfax County Chaplain program

Sadh Sangat Ji SFV management is very happy to inform that by the grace of Waheguru, I have successfully graduated from the Fairfax County Chaplain program last week. Fairfax County had started the Community Chaplains Corp to provide spiritual care to the residents involved in traumatic incidents. Ordained member of different interfaith communities are selected to be the part of the corps. This program was started about five years back and currently there are over 45 + Chaplains who have been trained and are serving the county at the time of need.

For your information Chaplains provide:

- A personal presence,
- Provide sense of spiritual safety and security as well a sense of healing and hope.
- Provide a helping hand on the scene with basic needs such as food and water,
- Assist people in connecting with next step resources, perform duties as assigned by the incident commander or his/her designee.
- Conduct private religion specific ceremonies if required by a resident.

SFV Participates in World Alliance of Religions (June 2, 2018)

World Alliance of Religions' Peace (WARP) is a Seoul; South Korea based organization with a goal to promote peace initiatives and the right of free religious practices across the Globe. They have over 218 offices in 113 countries across the world and hold regular inter faith meetings. On June 2nd, the Korean delegation led by Chairman Man Hee Lee Visited Washington DC and had a meeting with the representatives of faith based Organizations at the Museum of Bible. There were nearly 200 attendees representing different faiths. S Manjit Singh Taneja and Randhir Singh Chhatwal represented the SFOVA.

Speaking on the occasion, Randhir Singh shared from Gurbani the need to control the adversaries such as Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment and Ego and have internal peace. He said we can have external peace only when we have internal peace. Freedom to practice a religion is a right of every human being and needs to be protected. Forced religious conversions must be banned in the modern world. He appreciated the efforts of WARP and assured that SFOVA will stand with them in promoting the peace.

On this occasion SFOVA (Randhir ji) was presented a Certificate of Recognition for Messenger of Peace. SFOVA also presented a shield with Khanda in the Center to Mr Lee for his effort in prompting the World peace. This was very much appreciated by the Korean delegation and all the attendees with big applause.



Randhir Singh Ji Chhatwal made gave a powerful speech on Sikhism. Here as the speech:

Brothers and sisters

At the outset I am thankful to World Alliance of Religions' Peace office in Washington D.C., my organization Sikh Foundation of Virginia SFOVA, whom I am representing for giving me the opportunity to be here today. Special thanks to the Management of Museum of Bible, who threw open their doors, providing us the opportunity to see the rare artifacts and the historical impact of the Bible.

Please allow me to extend my warm greetings to you as per Sikh tradition

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa Waheguru ji Ki Fateh

The greeting means the purity belongs to the one Supreme creator. The victories belong to our infinite creator.

The question comes to mind victory against whom? Yes victory against five most dangerous and powerful enemies known as Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachment and Ego. Once we have conquered these adversaries, **we get Peace, Harmony, Spirituality, Love and Prosperity.**

It is important at this stage to realize, who we are, and what our ultimate end is. We are nothing but dust, created by our parents, who were dust themselves and at the end we all get into the dust. If that is the ultimate end why we hate each other and even kill, why we cannot reach there in peace? Rather than resting in peace after getting back into the dust?

New concepts like the borderless digital word, remind us that we are deeply interconnected and interdependent. We all emanate from and return to the same divine home. As humans during our life time we always keep looking for peace and most of the time are seeking it through our religious teachings. When we start examining the word religion it directs towards set of beliefs and practices. In some religions, these beliefs are documented in the form of scriptures, which have become standard of conduct for its followers. Most of us start following the religion in which we were born. Unfortunately, at times as an advocate of a one religion, we start enforcing our beliefs on others. Organizations such as the Christian Council of Korea deceive people into kidnapping their loved ones in an attempt to coercively convert them to the Presbyterian doctrine. These actions are a violation of basic human rights and must be stopped! Thus instead of bringing peace with in our inside, we start disturbing peace of others who were in peace within themselves as individuals and groups.

It is my firm belief that only when we have peace inside we will have peace outside.

In the words of Bhai Mohinder Singh ji of Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha UK, an international authority in inter-religious understanding and cooperation for peace, we see all humans are part of one Global family. Our prayers can be different but our tears are the same. As God's children, our diversity is to be respected and our feelings of kinship should help us flourish.

This is the conviction, which drives the charter for Declaration of Peace and cessation of war. HWPL recognized that the peace and harmony between the religions can only happen through dialogues and meetings. The WARP office provided us a platform to interact and appreciate the principle, theory and beliefs of other religions. Personally, I had been benefited by listening and interacting with the seven different faith representatives during the monthly meetings. There were several common teachings between mine and other religions, providing me the opportunity to build on them. I got motivated to invite and welcome my friends from WARP office to our Gurudwara and show them what we are and how we are practicing our beliefs of equality and sharing. I trust that gaining an understanding of scriptures of other religions is important but how these are being actually practiced and followed is equally important in creating a world of peace .

The article 8 of the DPCW, related to freedom of religion is very close to Sikh teachings and history. Our 9th guru Teg Bhadur ji and his closest followers opted to give supreme sacrifice to protect this fundamental right for all humans and children of God.

My organization, Sikh Foundation of Virginia joins me in supporting article 9 where the responsibilities of the State are very nicely spelled out. This will promote the religious freedom, while taking care of differences attributable to the religion or ethnicity, which pose a threat to peace and communal harmony. As an organization we support it and will join HWPL in sending letters of support to the United Nations, expressing the urgency of passing this law. The passage of DPCW will help in stopping the organizations such as the CCK and world peace can be progressed.

We greatly admire the role of HWPL peace academies. We believe our younger generation and youth need to be involved and educated on how to establish and maintain peace in the Global community. In this respect, we would like the Sikh Foundation of Virginia to be an associate of the HWPL Peace Academy. I am glad to report initial work in this direction has already begun and Peace Academy representatives will be helping us in the youth camp workshop later this summer. We are committed to support the peace academy.

The Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War beautifully lists the goals of our collective efforts, to seek restorative justice and sustainable peace. It also recognizes that faith daharmik and spiritual traditions that have long guided us to practice love, mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation have to be protected. The DPCW seeks to offer humane solution to a global problem of destructive extremism and counter extremism, We congratulate Chairman Lee for his global efforts of achieving peace and will solidly support him not only getting these adopted by the United nations but its implementation and practice at the grass root level

I conclude this by saying “Sarbat Ka Bhalla”, meaning “may everyone in the world prosper and be in peace” which is the ending of our daily sikh prayer.

Thanks

SFV united with local houses of faith to show solidarity for Bethlehem Lutheran Church

The church was vandalized with property damage and hate speech. SFV feels These egregious acts are not just an affront to the church, but to our entire community. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia organized a program to show solidarity and stand together against such heinous acts.

During our last SFV Voice, we shared with our Sangat many of the Fairfax County resources available to our Seniors and all Sangat members. Do you also know there are many free health related services available to Fairfax County Seniors?

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/>

Under this program you can possibly get support for the following programs:

County Services

Adult Day Health Care	Insight Memory Care Center	Adult Protective Services	Transportation (More on transportation below)
Mature Driving Issues	Care Management	ElderLink Care Management	ElderLink Care Management
Caregiver Support and Respite Programs	Disability Services	In-Home Care	Meals on Wheels
Medicare and Insurance Counseling- VICAP	Medicaid	Mental Health Services	Nursing Homes and Assisted Living
Public Benefits (Food Stamps-SNAP, etc.)	Senior Employment	Senior Housing	Services for Alcohol and Drug Use Disorders
Speech and Hearing Services	Tax Relief	Voting	And much more...

<http://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/public-works/transportation-division/cue-bus/transportation-for-seniors-and-persons-with-disabilities>

Transportation for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

CUE Bus: 703-385-7859 (TTY 711)

Senior citizens and persons with disabilities may obtain a CUE Bus identification card to receive the reduced bus fare of 85¢. Please complete and return a CUE Bus Senior ID Application or CUE Bus Disability ID Application form to the Transportation office located at **10455 Armstrong St, Room 200A**. These identification cards are not limited to City of Fairfax residents and are free of charge.

City Wheels: 703-385-7859 (TTY 711)

Fastran: 703-222-9764 (TTY: 703-324-7079)

MetroAccess: 301-562-5360 (TTY: 301-588-7535)

Seniors On-the-Go: 703-877-5800 (TTY: 711), Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Taxi Access: 703-877-5800 (TTY 711)

For any additional information contact
Manjit S. Taneja (ManjitTaneja@yahoo.com)

Editor's Corner

Request to Sangat for Contributions to *SFV Voice*

Respected Sadh Sangat Ji: Please make your voice heard through *SFV Voice*! Through six-monthly updates from SFV officers and coordinators, and voluntary contributions from the Sangat, the Newsletter will cover:

- The Punjabi/Gurmat school, annual youth camp, and various service projects
- Katha, kirtan and gurbani vichar programs
- Activities that amplify women's voices
- Programs for seniors and elders
- Cultural events, annual picnic, and interfaith activities
- Broader concerns of the global Sikh community, and
- Suggestions from the Sangat, and SFV management's response.

Please share your views on any relevant topic that interests you! We particularly invite contributions from women, youth, and seniors. Your write-ups can be short (just a few paras), or longer (a couple of pages). In English, or in Punjabi. Just send us a final draft, and we'll work with you to get it published!

Contact Manjit S. Taneja (ManjitTaneja@yahoo.com 703-585-1078) or any of the editorial team members for more information or clarification. We look forward to hearing from you. Thanks!

Editorial Team: Manjit S. Taneja (Editor) pammisachdeva@gmail.com (703-927-0752); Beant Singh Deu, beantsdeu@gmail.com; Navdeep Singh, deepsingh84@gmail.com; and Puneet Kaur, nitakaur89@gmail.com.

Published by:

Sikh Foundation of Virginia (SFV)
7250 Ox Road, Fairfax Station, VA 22039
Phone: 703 323 8849