

Sri Hemkunt Foundation
BIG APPLE
ZONE NEW YORK

2023



FLORIDA

CALIFORNIA



GREAT LAKES

TRI-STATE

NAIROBI

NEW YORK

LONDON

DALLAS

GRAND CANYON

GARDEN STATE

SUN BELT





2023



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MISSION



TO ENCOURAGE, PROMOTE AND DISSEMINATE TEACHINGS OF THE SIKH GURUS, AND THEIR MESSAGE OF UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD, PEACE AND TOLERANCE. TO IMPART SPIRITUAL, MORAL AND RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS IN A SCIENTIFIC MANNER. TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND ADULTS IN SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES, LEARNING OF KEERTAN, GURBANI, PHILOSOPHY OF SIKH RELIGION, SIKH HISTORY, FINE ARTS AND CULTURE. TO PROMOTE LEARNING OF PUNJABI LANGUAGE IN GURMUKHI SCRIPT AND STUDY OF SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS INCLUDING GURU GRANTH SAHIB. TO ESTABLISH INSTITUTIONS LIKE SCHOOLS, LIBRARIES, ART GALLERIES AND ALLIED INSTITUTIONS AND TO ORGANIZE CAMPS, CONFERENCES, STUDY TOURS, LECTURES AND SEMINARS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD FOR ACHIEVING THE ABOVE MENTIONED PURPOSES.



Shamsheer Singh

1924 - 2011

Founder, Sri Hemkunt Foundation, Inc

Shamsheer Singh graduated from Punjab university & Established himself as one of the leading exporters of industrial machinery from India to Burma; Thailand to Malaysia; Singapore to Cambodia; and Kenya to Nigeria.

He worked as member, secretary and general secretary in Patna (Bihar) – the sacred birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh on the Prabandhak Committee Takhat Sri Patna Sahib.

He worked as a Founder Trustee and general secretary of Gurdwara Sri Hemkunt Sahib Management Trust. The buildings designed and erected at Sri Hemkunt Sahib, Gobind Dham, Gobind ghat, Joshimath, Srinagar (Garhwal), Rishikesh and Hardwar during this period are really amazing.

In 1980, he established Sri Hemkunt Foundation Inc.

in New York, USA for the sole purpose to convey the Guru's message to the children/ youth Diaspora. He organized Symposium and awarded Rewards to winners. In the last 30 years, the participation has grown from 19 to over 2,000. The program has reached various parts of USA, Canada, Kenya and United Kingdom.

Presently, 69 Gurdwaras in the western hemisphere participate in the program. In the year 2007 (at the age of 82 years), he started a Keertan Darbar program. Under this program, youth (10 – 25 years age) recite Shabads in the same Raags that were written and recited by Guru jees themselves. Every year three different Raags are prescribed, one to each of the three age groups. Primary objective of the program is to revive the use of string instruments – Rabab and Saranda – which were used by Guru jees while reciting the Shabads.





2023



WELCOME



2023
NEW YORK



Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Sri Hemkunt Foundation, Inc.'s International Program Gala.

Since its founding in 1980, the Sri Hemkunt Foundation has worked tirelessly to create an environment where children could learn the spiritual, moral, and religious teachings of Sikhism. The organization continues to do great work preserving their Sikh identity and promoting the learning of its rich culture and history.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work done by the Sri Hemkunt Foundation to put this event together, as well as to honor the amazing group of alumni who have been part of this organization for the past four decades. On behalf of the 1.5 million residents in Suffolk County, I congratulate the Sri Hemkunt Foundation for over forty years of service to our community, and thank them and the host Big Apple Zone for organizing this event.

Enjoy the festivities!

Stephen Bellone
SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE



Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

Welcome to New York!



Guru Fateh Ji As the Host of Big Apple Zone, I am pleased and honored to welcome you all to the 34 th Symposium and 15 th Kirtan darbar at the Hemkunt Foundations' International event.

The past three years have been trying for the entire world, but that did not stop the relentless Sewadars of the Foundation to continue this tradition virtually. Today, by Waheguru ji's grace we are able to be in New York in person once again. This event is a unique opportunity for us to come together from across all continents to meet and interact with a diverse group of participants representing a wide range of perspectives and experiences; focusing on the Sikh history and principles that guide our lives.

The main purpose is to bring together like-minded Sikh youths in a friendly competition but more importantly, this is a unique opportunity for our youth and their families to create everlasting bonds and reflect on our achievements, as well as plan for the future. We have a great event lineup of young speakers and alumni and have planned a motivating and engaging agenda.

We hope that you will take advantage of all that these events have to offer and are inspired to continue supporting our mission and stay committed to preserve our Sikh traditions for generations to come. I take this opportunity to thank all the Sewadars of the Foundation and others for your support and tireless hours you have put in to bring this event alive. I especially like to thank Kavitaash Kaur ji without whose initiative and diligent effort Virtual meets could not have been possible. I know our future is bright because of each of you.

Let's celebrate our successes and resilience and help doing what we do best —Caring for our Youth. Lastly, Good luck to all our competitors today! Thank you again for your presence, and we look forward to productive and enjoyable days ahead. We will do our best to ensure that you have a fruitful and pleasant experience.

Jugraj Kaur
HOST



Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

Welcome to New York!



Long Island Sangat is anxiously waiting with open arms to receive you. It will be our honor to host you. And celebrate 4th decade of Hemkunt foundation. We thank you in advance giving us opportunity to serve you all.

My journey with Hemkunt foundation started back in 1964 when Sardar Shamsher Singh visited at Rangoon Capital of Burma. With his videos to share the Hemkunt Yatra.

He spoke about his Vision to serve the Sikh community. I was impressed at the young age his tall standing personality and always smiling ,style of a Turban Very vivid picture. I met him again at kanpur India 1972 played a key role in my engagement with Lajvinder as a Vichola and my wedding in 1973.

Met him again in 1983 at Richmond Hill Gurdwara U.S.A. where he started his vision Symposiums speeches. My son Amrik took part in speech competition in 1985. Public speaking representing himself and learning sewa at langar thought him to be tolerance and spiritual.

After that I was asked to serve Hemkunt Foundation with the condition to introduce Nit Name program. Since then as a international Nit Name coordinator. Program starts with Nit Name and taking Guru's blessing to perform their speeches & Keertan. Sardar Shamsher Singh left behind his vision and legacy to continue. He was my mentor visited him every other day. He never locks his entrance door ring the bell and walk in. Asked him why is the door always open ? His answer was don't know when Guru ji will walk in and embrace me. His wife had a food ready all the time. He was a father to me and to manny more. You have a complaint put it in my lap And I made holes in my lap they will just passed through. That thought me how to be in high spirits. Chardi Kalaa.

Participants today are extraordinarily smart very hard to judge them. Its a team work and they are all working hard. During Covid we all lost some one in the families, friends. I wish you all in Chardi Kalaa.

Surinder Singh
CO-HOST



**PADAM BHUSHAN
SANT SINGH CHATWAL**
300 East 93rd Street, New York, NY 10128

July 7, 2023

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh!

As a co-founder and past president of Sri Hemkunt Sahib Foundation, New York, I am delighted to be part of the 40th anniversary celebrations of the esteemed Foundation. I am writing to express my heartfelt gratitude for the exceptional service the Foundation has rendered to our community. The selfless efforts of the Board Members have made a profound impact on the lives of countless individuals, and I wanted to take this opportunity to convey my appreciation.

When late S. Samsher Singh Ji, an exceptional visionary and illustrious personality, established the Sri Hemkunt Foundation in New York in November of 1980 the main objective was of conveying Guru's message to our children and youth, and sharing universal brotherhood with the community. Since then, with the guidance of our members, visionaries, intellectuals, and sangats' dedication, this vision has helped create an environment where our youth are guided toward promising futures as upstanding human beings and citizens.

Over the past four decades, the Foundation has played a pivotal role in promoting Sikh heritage and educating the youth in spiritual, moral, and religious teachings of Sikhism. The unwavering commitment to preserving and promoting the rich traditions, values, and history of the Sikh faith has been truly commendable.

Through your diverse range of initiatives, including study tours, distribution of religious books, international symposiums, guest speakers, 'Nitnem' programs, scholarships, and other educational programs, the Foundation has made a profound impact on the Sikh community, fostering greater awareness, inclusivity, and harmony. Your efforts have not only enriched the lives of Sikhs but have also contributed to the cultural tapestry of community.

A special gratitude and recognition goes to S. Karamjit Singh, Vice President, for his long standing selfless service towards the sustained growth of Sri Hemkunt Foundation and its goal of instilling Sikhism's high ideals in the Sikh youth.

May the Foundation continue to thrive, evolve, and illuminate the world with its noble endeavors. May your ongoing work inspire individuals to explore, embrace, and celebrate the beauty of Sikhism, fostering a world where diversity is cherished, and mutual respect is paramount.

Once again, congratulations on the 40th anniversary, and thank you for your invaluable contributions to the Sikh community and beyond.

With deepest gratitude and warm regards,

Sant Singh Chatwal





Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh



Today marks a significant milestone in the remarkable journey of Hemkunt Foundation as we celebrate the 43rd anniversary. It is with immense joy and gratitude that I reach out to you as one of the founding trustees, to reflect upon the incredible progress made together and to express my heartfelt appreciation for your unwavering support throughout the years.

Over four decades ago, a small group of passionate individuals led by Sardar Shamsher Singh ji, embarked on a mission to make a positive difference in the lives of Sikh youth living in Western countries. We were fortunate to have the constant support and encouragement of Sardar Sant Singh Chatwal, my fellow founding trustee. We dreamed of a world where the spiritual teachings of Sikhi could be shared with our youth. Little did we know that our humble beginnings would pave the way for a journey of transformation that would touch the lives of countless Sikh youth in the Western hemisphere.

The spirit of Hemkunt foundation has transformed multiple lives, including our family by connecting us all with Simran, Kirtan, Seva and Sangat and guided the entire family to be immersed in the elixir of Nanak love and glory. Since its inception, Hemkunt Foundation has grown into a beacon of hope, compassion, and resilience. Together, let us continue to stand united in our commitment to cultural preservation and religious harmony. Let us empower future generations with the grace of our Guru Sahib in the spirit of Sikhi. By doing so, we can ensure that our heritage remains a vibrant and integral part of our collective identity.

As an IAS officer and United Nations Ambassador, I have led many initiatives around the world, but this was by far the most meaningful.

I am confident that the future holds even greater possibilities for Hemkunt Foundation, and that the Foundation will continue to make a profound impact on the lives of countless youth.

With deepest gratitude and warmest regards

Swinder Singh
FOUNDING TRUSTEE



Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh



On behalf of Sri Hemkunt Foundation, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all our Zonal and Center conveners, donors, sevadars and children for their invaluable contributions and unwavering support. Without their dedicated seva, this would not have been possible. This Symposium is a testament to the power of compassion, unity and the indomitable spirit of humanity. Your generosity and commitment have laid the foundation for a better world, and we are deeply honored to have you as part of our global family.

To our dedicated Sevadars, we express our sincerest appreciation for your dedication and countless hours of service. Your selflessness and willingness to go above and beyond have been instrumental in the success of this symposium and those of symposiums past. Whether it's lending a helping hand, organizing community events, or assisting in our various projects, your tireless efforts have touched the lives of many and will inspire our youth to come back and give back. We salute your passion and commitment to the cause.

To the children who have actively participated in our programs, you are the heart and soul of our foundation. Your enthusiasm and energy remind us of the importance of nurturing and empowering the next generation and for that we want to extend a very special thank you.

Today, as we gather to share knowledge, insights, and experiences, let us remember that our collective efforts have the power to transform lives and create a more inclusive and compassionate society. This symposium serves as a platform for us to learn from one another, exchange ideas, and inspire positive change. Together, we can work towards building a brighter tomorrow for everyone, irrespective of their backgrounds or circumstances.

Welcome, and thank you again for being the guiding light in the lives of many.

Prithpaul Singh
PRESIDENT



Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

Welcome to New York!

It is my pleasure and honor to welcome participants, parents, judges, coordinators, volunteers and guests from London, U.K.; Kenya and various parts of America who have come here on this special occasion. Together we are celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Foundation.

It all started in 1980 with the foresight and vision of late S. Shamsheer Singh Ji. The seed that he had planted 40 years ago has grown into a giant tree with many branches bearing wonderful fruits. My journey with the Foundation started in 1986 when my younger son, Jaspal Singh, participated in the 2nd age group. While he did not win the first place, he learned very valuable lessons. Besides getting an opportunity to practice public speaking skills, he learned spiritual, moral and religious teachings of Sikhi.

The communications developed at a young age has given him the confidence to address a gathering of thousands with ease. Sikhi concepts learned early on have provided him with confidence to explain to others who do not know anything about Sikhi. Element of competition is good. It helps one strive to do better. However, I urge participants and parents not to overly focus on winning but on the values that one learns by participating in the program. I was impressed with the mission of the Foundation. I started volunteering and have seen the children grow and blossom in every facet of their personality. It has motivated me to stay with the Foundation.

I will request alumni and parents to get involved and take on as many responsibilities to keep the programs of the Foundation going for a long time.

Karamjit Singh

VICE PRESIDENT



Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh
Welcome to New York!



After two years of running virtual symposiums, the Big Apple Zone is thrilled to host this year's guests in person for the 2023 International Symposium and Keertan Darbaar. New York is renowned for its diversity, creativity, and innovation, and we are excited to see the same from our talented and global participants who are the next generation of leaders. Having been involved with the Foundation for a few years, I am constantly amazed at the confidence, talent, and resilience of the children and how they empower and support each other. They never fail to inspire, move, and teach us.

What happens at the symposium stage in terms of competition is important. The spirit of competition drives us to push beyond our comfort zone, embrace challenges, and continuously improve. It better prepares our participants for the real world. But equally important is creating a supportive environment where we value and celebrate each other and our differences. I hope this event will be a catalyst for personal growth for both our younger and older attendees.

The Foundation, now in its fourth decade, has been helping children, youth and adults connect with Sikhi by encouraging participation in Keertan, Gurbani, Philosophy, History, and the Arts. Its programs have reached various parts of the world, across three continents, and over 75 Gurdwaras in the western hemisphere participate in its character-building events.

Throughout the five days in July, you will have the opportunity to immerse yourselves in our global Sikh community and I would encourage you to actively engage with fellow attendees, exchange ideas, and foster meaningful connections. In addition, I hope you will join us in all the splendid events curated by our organizing team, including an NYC boat cruise and a special fourth-decade celebration.

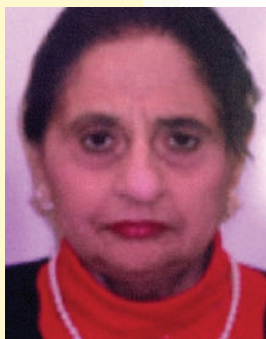
Finally, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all the volunteers, donors, and the organizing team whose tireless commitment and efforts have made this event possible. Once again, welcome to New York. I wish you a memorable symposium experience.

Ravinder Kaur (and Harcharanjit Singh)
GENERAL SECRETARY



Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

Welcome to New York!



On behalf of the Sri Hemkunt Foundation, we, Devinder Kaur and Baljit Singh Rana, welcome all of you to the Foundation's 40th anniversary celebration. We have had the pleasure of serving in various leadership capacities for the Sikh community and the Foundation for many years. Joining the Foundation's noble mission has fulfilled our passion to serve the core of our community – the Sikh youth. Spreading the Guru's message through the teaching of Sikh history and gurmata kirtan is what we have been doing for our community since emigrating to the US with our children in 1970. At that time, there were no gurudwaras or granthis or ragi jathas. Although we were not professionally trained as kirtanis – Baljit trained and was employed as a structural engineer and Devinder was a certified teacher with a BA/MA in Honors Economics, who owned and operated her own clothing stores. But, nevertheless, in devotion to Satguru, we took it upon ourselves to address the needs of our young but growing, new community. Wherever and whenever we were asked, we would travel to people's homes and gatherings to provide shabad kirtan, bringing our own harmonium and tablas, and never accepting a penny. We were always guided by the same sacred mission – to plant and nurture the seeds of the future Sikh community here in America. As word of our seva spread, so too did our travels across the country. Our devotion to our faith and community was, and remains, the inspiration for our service.



With Satguru's grace, our list of accomplishments and achievements for our community is lengthy. Baljit signed the check to buy the building that would become the Sikh Cultural Society in Richmond Hills, Queens. Seeing the need for another gurudwara in Queens, we started the Sikh Center of NY on Parsons Blvd, which continues operating to this day. A few years later, along with Baljit's younger brother, we started another gurudwara in Queens at the Singh Sabha of Bowne Street.

We have been fortunate enough to not only be founders of these gurudwaras, but each of us has also been blessed to serve in numerous and various gurudwara leadership roles, including President, Secretary and members of the Board of the Garden State Sikh Association in Bridgewater, NJ. Devinder was always the guiding force, and held virtually every leadership position at one time or another, for many years in operating and sustaining the GSSA Khalsa School. Similarly, Devinder has been actively engaged in the Foundation's activities teaching and guiding our youth in shabad kirtan, including serving as a Zonal Convenor for over 15 years, and is currently serving as the Foundation's Eastern Region Kirtan Coordinator.

Our service to the community is heartfelt and ongoing and all made possible by the Guru's grace. Again, we welcome you to the Foundation's 40th anniversary celebration and sincerely hope this will be the source of many happy memories.

Devinder Kaur | Baljit Singh
EASTERN REGION KEERTAN CO-ORDINATOR



Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

Welcome to New York!



Join us in applauding the Hemkunt Foundation for their outstanding dedication and impactful work in our community. As we honor the organizations incredible efforts, let's also recognize the vital role the foundation has been a catalyst in empowering and inspiring our youth to make a difference.

The Hemkunt Foundation remains a shining example of compassion and dedication, making a tremendous impact over the course of four decades on the Sikh community around the world. The foundation has been tirelessly working towards uplifting marginalized communities and providing relief in times of crisis. Through their unwavering commitment to the high ideals of the Sikh religion, they have brought about positive change in the lives of countless individuals across various regions. Their philanthropic efforts have touched the hearts of many and have helped create a more inclusive and equitable society. By investing in the youth, we invest in our collective future. Hemkunt Foundation's initiatives have fostered leadership, skill development, and education among young individuals, equipping them to become responsible citizens and change-makers.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Hemkunt Foundation for their incredible achievements and transformative impact. Their enduring commitment to serving those in need has not only provided immediate relief but has also laid the foundation for long-term sustainable development. Through their various initiatives, such as healthcare support, education programs, disaster response, and community development projects, they have demonstrated their unwavering dedication to improving the lives of the underprivileged. Their selfless service and tireless efforts are a true inspiration, and we applaud the Hemkunt Foundation for their remarkable work over the past 40 years. May they continue to make a profound difference in the lives of many more individuals and communities in the years to come.

Let's stand together and support the Hemkunt Foundation's vision for a brighter future. Together, we can nurture the potential of our youth, empowering them to shape a world filled with compassion, equality, and opportunity.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

**Mohinder Singh
Dimpy Tanjea**



FORMAT

The Symposium is conducted worldwide in more than 25 zones. It helps children learn about Sikh history, culture, and philosophy.

There is a local competition for the children at the local Gurdwaras. The top two winners in each group compete at the zonal level with the winners from other Gurdwaras within the zone.

The winners of the zonal competition are invited to compete at the International level in their respective age groups.

The international competition is conducted during the last week of July each year and is hosted by different Gurdwaras around the world.

HEMKUNT2.ORG

UK

USA

KENYA



BIG APPLE

2023





2023



PROGRAM

★
2023
NEW YORK

★
HOSTED BY



★ WED JUL 26

ARRIVAL + DINNER

HILTON/SAVOY

★ THU JUL 27

09:00 - 20:00	Guest Welcome Desk	Hilton / Lobby
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch (by sant Sagar Gurdwara Sahib)	Hilton/Savoy
14:00 - 15:00	Meeting - Hemkunt Board	Antun's
15:00 - 16:00	Meeting - Zonal Convenors	Antun's
	Meeting - Parents	Antun's
	Meeting - Participants	Antun's
16:00 - 16:30	Tea	Antun's
16:30 - 17:30	Meeting - Combined	Antun's
18:00	Departure for Antun's	
18:30 - 20:00	Panthic Digital Voice	Antun's
20:00 - 22:00	Dinner (Buffet)	Antun's

06:00 - 07:30	Nitnem	Hilton/Belmont
07:00 - 09:00	Breakfast	Hilton/Savoy
08:30 - 09:30	Meeting - Judges	Hilton
09:30 - 15:00	Ardas Review of Rules Symposium begins	Hilton - Salon C
	Symposium - Group 1	Hotel - Salon A
	Symposium - Group 2	Hotel - Salon B
	Symposium - Group 3	Hotel - Salon C
	Symposium - Group 4	Hotel - Salon D
	Symposium - Group 5	Hotel - Banfi
13:00 - 15:00	Lunch (Vegetarian)	Hilton
17:00 - 18:30	Departure for Boat	from Hilton
18:30 - 22:30	Boat Drive + Dinner	
19:00 - 22:00	Dinner for guests not on Boat Drive	Hilton/Savoy
22:30	Departure for Hotel	

★ FRI JUL 28

★ SAT JUL 29

06:00 - 07:30	Nitnem	Hilton/Belmont
07:00 - 09:00	Breakfast	Hilton
08:30	Departure for Plainview Gurdwara Sahib	from Hilton
08:30 - 09:30	Meeting - Judges	Plainsview Gurdwara Sahib
09:00 - 09:30	Keertan Ardas Keertan Darbar	Plainsview Gurdwara Sahib
09:30 - 11:00	- Keertan Darbar - First Group	Plainsview Gurdwara Sahib
11:00 - 14:00	Langar	Plainsview Gurdwara Sahib
12:00 - 14:00	- Keertan Darbar - Second Group	Plainsview Gurdwara Sahib
14:00 - 16:00	- Keertan Darbar - Third Group	Plainsview Gurdwara Sahib
16:00 - 17:30	Tea Langar	Plainsview Gurdwara Sahib
16:00 - 17:30	- Keertan Darbar - Fourth Group	Plainsview Gurdwara Sahib
17:30 - 18:00	Departure fro Hotel	from Gurdwara Sahib
18:00 - 22:00	HF 4th Decade Celebrations	Hilton / Ballroom

06:00 - 07:30	Nitnem	Hilton / Belmont
07:00 - 09:00	Breakfast	Hilton/Savoy
08:30	Departure for Gurdwara Sahib	from Hilton
09:30 - 10:00	Thank You 2024 Welcome	Hicksville Gurdwara Sahib
10:00 - 11:30	Prizes Closing Ardas	Hicksville Gurdwara Sahib
11:30 - 12:30	Langar / Packed Lunch	Hicksville Gurdwara Sahib

★ SUN JUL 30



2023



SCHEDULE

★
2023
NEW YORK

WED 26 - THU 27 JULY 2023**Guest Welcome Desk****HILTON LONG ISLAND/HUNTINGTON**

598 Broad Hollow Road Melville, NY 11747

+1 631-845-1000

THU, 27TH JULY 2023

06:30 PM - 08:00 PM

Panthic Digital Voice**ANTUN'S BY MINAR**

244 W Old Country, Rd Hicksville, NY 11801

+1 516-681-3300

FRI, 28 JULY 2023

09:00 AM - 03:00 PM

Symposium**HILTON LONG ISLAND/HUNTINGTON**

598 Broad Hollow Road Melville, NY 11747

+1 631-845-1000

Boat Tour

06:30 PM - 10:30 PM

SKYLINE CRUISES

The World's Fair Marina Flushing, Queens NY 11368

+1 718-446-1100

SAT, 29 JULY 2023

09:30 AM - 05:30 PM

Keertan Competiton**GURDWARA GURU GOBIND SINGH SIKH CENTER**

1065 Old Country Road Plainview, NY 11803

+1 516-931-9304

4th Decade celebration

06:00 PM - 10:00 PM

HILTON LONG ISLAND/HUNTINGTON

598 Broad Hollow Road Melville, NY 11747

+1 631-845-1000

SUN, 30 JULY 2023

09:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Prizes | Closing Ardas**Guru Nanak Darbar of LI**

11 S Broadway, Hicksville, NY 11801

+1 516-933-4878



Sri Hemkunt Foundation is grateful to the donors in supporting celebration of 4 Decades of developing youth leadership skills.
(in alphabetical order)

Anoop Singh	\$2,100
Basant Kaur and Jaspal Singh Chawla	\$501
Bhupinder Sabharwal	\$500
Brij Mohan	\$251
Chander Kochhar	\$1,100
Chetinder & Harvinder Dhillon	\$501
Classic Brothers Construction	\$1,100
Daisy and Prithvipal Singh	\$501
Daljeet Singh and Babli Kaur	\$501
Dr. Daljeet Singh and Rupinder Kaur Sidhu	\$1,100
Davinder Kaur and Baljit Singh Rana	\$1,100
Davleen Kaur Sodhi	\$100
Dr Chandni Jeet Gujral	\$2,000
Dr Avtar Singh Tinna	\$500
Dr Kanwal K & Bhupinder S Obhrai, Oklahoma	\$5,000
Dr. Harbhajan Chawla	\$2,100
Dr. Jagdeep and Esnire Obhrai	\$2,001
Dr. Taranjeet Kaur Ahuja	\$250
Dr. Vaneet Singh	\$250
Flushing Singh Sabha	\$5,000
Gurcharan Singh Baring	\$1,100
Gurdev/Ravinder Anand	\$200
Gurdwara, Guru Nanak Darbar	\$2,100
Gurdwara, Plainview	\$5,000
Gurmeet Singh Sehgal	\$100
Gurpal and Manmohan Gadh	\$250
Gurprit and Amarjit Ahuja	\$1,100
Guru Gobind Singh Study Circle	\$1,100
Harcharan Singh Gulati	\$501
Harinder Singh	\$2,100
Harjeet Singh and Rajinder Kaur	\$2,100
Harjot Singh and Aman Kour	\$1,100
Harmander and Joginder Khurana	\$1,000
Harmeet Dhody	\$250
Harmeet Singh	\$1,100
Harry Singh Bolla	\$5,100

Sri Hemkunt Foundation is grateful to the donors in supporting celebration of 4 Decades of developing youth leadership skills.
(in alphabetical order)

Harry Taluja	\$101
Himanshu Tiwari	\$1,100
Inderjit Kaur Gujral	\$1,100
Inderjit Singh Anand	\$31
Ishmeet Dhillon	\$501
Jagmohan and Mona Rajpal	\$1,100
Jasbir Singh Arneja	\$501
Jashanpreet Kaur /Enrollment	\$20
Jasleen Kaur	\$1,000
Jasmime Maletta	\$1,100
Jaspal Singh	\$500
Jessica and Mandeep Kalra	\$251
Joginder Singh	\$500
Joginder Singh and Nina Bagga	\$1,000
Jugraj Kaur	\$1,100
Karamjit Singh and Pushwinder Kaur	\$2,100
Karamjit Singh Dhariwal	\$2,500
Kavitash Arora	\$50
Kawaljeet Kaur Ahuja	\$250
Lakhwinder Singh	\$200
Mahnika Singh Ahuja, Master	\$50
Malkeet Kaur, Esq	\$1,000
Mandeep Kaur	\$3,850
Maninder Singh Sethi	\$500
Geetinder Kaur Gujral, Mini	\$2,100
MNK Enterprises	\$5,000
Mohan Singh Kathuria	\$251
Mohinder Singh and Dimpay Taneja	\$1,100
Mukhtar Singh Kamboj	\$1,100
Mukhti Petroleum Management	\$2,100
Narinder Singh	\$201
Narinder Singh	\$500
Naveen Shah	\$5,000
Neena Narang	\$50
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DONORS

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2023
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2023



ALMUNI

★
2023
NEW YORK



2023



Amrit Singh ★

USA

Amrit Singh, a 20-year-old Sikh boy, recently graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. Throughout his time at UCLA, Amrit actively participated in the Sikh Student Association, engaging in discussions on Sikhi and deepening his knowledge of the faith. He attributes much of his understanding of Sikhi to the "Sakhis" he read while preparing for Sri Hemkunt Foundation Speech competitions. Amrit has honed his public speaking skills through his involvement in various interfaith events, including 9/11 events organized by local cities. He credits his confidence, his rhetoric, and his articulate style of delivery to the experiences gained through participation in events organized by the Sri Hemkunt Foundation.

Prior to Amrit's involvement with Sri Hemkunt Foundation, he was a shy and obsequious kid afraid of being a voice of dissent, afraid of discourse, and most, immensely afraid of being wrong. Sri Hemkunt Foundation unlocked the cage of his mind, and allowed his thoughts to flutter, ascend, and prosper. He served as the Sikh Ambassador of the Orange County Human Relations, where he had the opportunity to speak at forums, schools, and places of worship, promoting awareness of Sikh culture and fostering understanding and tolerance in interfaith topics. His aim was to build communities by promoting respect, conflict resolution, and equality. One of Amrit's significant contributions was pioneering a team of kids in his local Gurudwara Sahib to distribute free food in homeless shelters. Through this initiative, he experienced firsthand how sharing a meal can forge relationships, dissolve anger, and evoke laughter. This endeavor allowed him to foster new relationships across different interfaith communities. Amrit sees this as a way to serve people in need and considers it an honor bestowed upon him by God. He acknowledges the Sri Hemkunt Foundation for providing him with the platform to begin his journey of helping others through sharing, volunteering, and human service. Apart from his involvement in the Sikh community, Amrit has achieved success in various other areas. He has received the National Award for Robotics, has been the recipient of several scholarships, and was selected as an actor by the Hollywood Society of Performance Academy. He also served as a Sikh Model on the Queen Mary Ship in Long Beach and as the lead Sikh float Rider in the 2020 Los Angeles Rose Parade. Amrit has been featured as the lead role in the documentary "The Invisible Identity" by Kaur's Foundation and has been the Poster Boy for the Sikh Arts and Film Festival. Additionally, he was the first Sikh student in his school to be nominated as the Homecoming Prince. Amrit's lifelong association with the Sri Hemkunt Foundation has played a significant role in shaping his life. From his early childhood, he has participated in and excelled in various Hemkunt Speech and Keertan Competitions, even at the international level. He played a crucial role in the establishment of Panthic Digital Voice (PDV), contributing to the development of a program that empowers individuals to tell their own stories effectively through digital media.

★





**I HAVE PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE
IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
PANTHIC DIGITAL VOICE (PDV),
CONTRIBUTING TO THE
DEVELOPMENT OF A PROGRAM
THAT EMPOWERS INDIVIDUALS
TO TELL THEIR OWN STORIES
EFFECTIVELY THROUGH DIGITAL
MEDIA.**

Amrit Singh



Dr. Divya Kaur ★

USA

As a resident doctor inundated with patients and little time to spare, the very mention of Hemkunt was like a blast of cold air in the peak of Summer. In retrospect, Hemkunt wasn't a competition, but instead a platform to inculcate the study and practice of the spiritual, moral, and religious teachings of Sikhism among our diaspora. It fostered my beliefs and provided an immense foundation on adhering to Sikhi. It tremendously improved my ability to speak publicly and command the room. There were many who were inspired by me, for which I am much obliged to my predecessors who served as my inspiration.

Additionally, I learned and practiced many shabads, which facilitated a deep foundation of Gurbani in just a short span of time. Jam-packed schedules in school, then medical school, and once again in residency, meant only incremental learning. However, the shabad verses I did learn helped me during the long, hard, and lonely hours of life's lows and highs (guru mere sang sada hay naley). To this day, the blessings of Kirtan still help me navigate the path of life.

The younger diaspora is living in a whole new world. Elders need to redirect the "frontier-spirit" to one focused on deconstructing - not in the sense of tearing down Hemkunt as an institution, but instead to focus on rethinking and reconfiguring what we have and who we are, to adapt and assure success over the next few decades and centuries.

The idea is to be choosy about the sponsors and organizers who can further Hemkunt's ideology. Perhaps, we can organize a swearing-in-ceremony for renewing vows to the core tenets, including Sangat-da-bhala (community betterment), Abhyaas (practice), Gyan (proficiency/knowledge), Maryada (respectable behavior/code of conduct), and Ummidaan (hopes and expectations). That is Hemkunt. Anything else is just a country club.

Judges for the Hemkunt Symposium should be qualified on multiple dimensions, ensuring that they know their content thoroughly and demonstrate skills of impartiality. Most specifically, they need to stay true to the judging rubric. The ambience at the event should be positively encouraging so that everyone is propelled to get involved. Furthermore, the event coordinators should inculcate a culture of collaboration and feeling of growth as a community, even after the event is completed. When I participated in Hemkunt, I had hoped that the bonds I formed with fellow participants would be life-long. Unfortunately, for some reason, they fizzled out immediately after coming back home.

As Sikhs, we are a strong team because we are comfortable collaborating with others and dreaming bigger. We are co-opting, willing to reach new heights together rather than settling for a race to the bottom. I may not have yet reached the stars, but definitely ambaaran nu chu saki – thanks to Hemkunt

★



**PERHAPS, WE CAN ORGANIZE A
SWEARING-IN-CEREMONY FOR
RENEWING VOWS TO THE CORE
TENETS - COMMUNITY
BETTERMENT, PRACTICE,
WISDOM, MARYADA CODE OF
CONDUCT AND HOPES AND
EXPECTATIONS. THAT IS
HEMKUNT. ANYTHING ELSE IS
JUST A COUNTRY CLUB.**

Dr. Divya Kaur

Gunvir Singh ★

USA

I am writing to express my deepest gratitude for the invaluable support and guidance that the Hemkunt Foundation has provided me, which has profoundly impacted my life and allowed me to develop crucial communication skills.

Since my early days as an immigrant from India in the late 80s, I struggled with effective communication. However, through the Hemkunt Foundation's initiatives, such as reading books and delivering speeches to large audiences, I began to witness a transformation in my ability to express myself confidently and engage with others. I owe a special debt of gratitude to my grandfather, Sardar Shamsher Singh, for establishing this foundation and encouraging me to participate in these activities.

The communication skills I acquired with the foundation's support not only propelled me to climb the corporate ladder but also empowered me to start my own company, which I recently sold. Now, it is my time to give back to the community. Currently, I serve on the Board of Sikh Human Development and hold the position of Executive Director at the Sikh Research Institute.

I cannot stress enough the profound impact that the Hemkunt Foundation has had on my personal growth and development. By equipping me with effective communication skills, they have opened doors of opportunity that would have otherwise remained closed. Whether in professional settings, social interactions, or personal relationships, the ability to communicate effectively plays a pivotal role in achieving success and building meaningful connections.

I am truly grateful for the guidance and resources provided by the Hemkunt Foundation. They have allowed me to develop the confidence to express myself clearly and persuasively. The foundation's unwavering dedication to nurturing talent and empowering individuals like myself has undoubtedly made a significant difference in my life.

In conclusion, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Hemkunt Foundation for their continuous support in helping me acquire invaluable communication skills. Your commitment to enabling individuals to reach their full potential is truly inspiring. I eagerly look forward to utilizing these skills not only for my personal growth but also for positively impacting those around me.

Once again, thank you for your unwavering dedication and support.

★





**AS THE GRANDSON OF THE
FOUNDING FATHER OF THE SRI
HEMKUNT FOUNDATION, HIS
ENCOURAGEMENT TO PARTICIPATE
IN THE SYMPOSIUM HAS NOW
LED ME DOWN THE YEARS INTO
SERVING ON THE BOARD OF SIKH
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND AS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT THE SIKH
RESEARCH INSTITUTE.**

Gunvir Singh

Harpreet Kaur ★

USA

During her formative years, Harpreet acknowledges the pivotal role played by Hemkunt Foundation in helping her recognize and embrace her strengths and talents. Her active participation and numerous victories in the Hemkunt speech competition earned her first place twice at the international level. This valuable experience has been instrumental in empowering her both personally and professionally.

Harpreet's debut feature documentary, 'The Widow Colony,' made history as the first Sikh film to be showcased at the Canadian and UK Parliament, followed by a special screening at the United States Congress. Her groundbreaking documentary, 'A Little Revolution,' intimately delves into the lives of children of farmers in Punjab, India, who have tragically lost their parents to suicide. Through her compelling storytelling, Harpreet aspires to not only educate and entertain but also to enlighten viewers about pressing societal issues.

With a unique ability to weave poignant narratives, Harpreet Kaur continues to captivate audiences, leaving a profound and lasting impact through her films. Her dedication to advocacy and powerful storytelling continues to drive positive change and inspire countless individuals to take an active role in shaping a better future.

★





**DURING MY FORMATIVE YEARS
I ACKNOWLEDGE THE PIVOTAL
ROLE PLAYED BY HEMKUNT
FOUNDATION IN HELPING ME
RECOGNIZE AND EMBRACE MY
STRENGTHS AND TALENTS IN
FILMMAKING.**

Harpreet Kaur

ALUMNI

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Jasmine Kaur



USA

Jasmine Kaur is a law student at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law based in Los Angeles, CA. She graduated high school with three associate's degrees and graduated from UCLA with high honors and distinction from the Chancellor with her Bachelor's degree in Sociology. She then pursued her Master of Public Policy from USC Sol Price School of Public Policy with a Certification in Nonprofit Management and Policy. Not only has Jasmine held prestigious internships, like working at the Central District Federal Courthouse in the Habeas Corpus Unit, but she's worked with several Sikh nonprofits. Currently, she spends most of her free time working with Anhad Magazine, a student-run, and Sikh-print magazine focused on empowering the diaspora to unify with their Creator.

As a first-generation Sikh woman of color entering a field with very few Sikhs, Jasmine attributes her confidence and passion for public speaking, which has helped her stand out, to the Hemkunt Inc. Foundation. As a participant since the age of six, reaching international finals almost every year, and finally winning the gold medal in 2019, Jasmine firmly believes that the Hemkunt Inc. Foundation has empowered her by providing the necessary skills to become an effective advocate for her future clients, to be able to speak about injustice and collective support for those around her (following her Sikh values), and most importantly, gaining a more profound sense of Sikhi and sangat with the community that Hemkunt provides. She kindles this fire, burning brighter because of Hemkunt, Hemkunt, through her work with Anhad Magazine.





**THROUGH FOLLOWING MY SIKHI
VALUES, I ATTRIBUTE MY
CONFIDENCE AND PASSION FOR
PUBLIC SPEAKING, WHICH HAS
HELPED ME STAND OUT IN MY
PROFESSION, TO THE HEMKUNT
INC. FOUNDATION.**

Jasmine Kaur

Jessica Kaur ★

USA

The Hemkunt Foundation Symposium is a prestigious event that captivates children's minds worldwide, immersing them in the rich tapestry of Sikh history, culture, and philosophy. With over 25 zones participating, this symposium serves as a platform for young learners to deepen their understanding of Sikhism and showcase their knowledge and talents.

I had the privilege of participating in this remarkable event for five consecutive years, and it proved to be an enlightening and unforgettable experience. From the very first year, I was captivated by the Hemkunt Foundation Symposium's spirit of exploration and learning. The local competition at my Gurdwara provided the initial stepping stone, where I had the opportunity to demonstrate my passion for Sikh history, culture, and philosophy. The competition became an annual highlight for me, a chance to challenge myself and continuously expand my knowledge. As the years progressed, I witnessed my growth and development as a participant. The zonal competition became more intense each year, with participants from various Gurdwaras within the zone vying for the top honors. It was a challenging journey, but my determination and dedication pushed me to perform my best. Through hard work and perseverance, I secured the first-place title, earning the privilege to compete at the international level in 2013. Competing at the International Hemkunt Foundation Symposium was an extraordinary experience that brought together talented young Sikh participants from around the world. It was an honor to represent my zone and stand alongside fellow participants who shared the same passion for Sikhism. The international competition served as the ultimate test of knowledge, skill, and eloquence. From 2013-2017 remarkable years, I competed at the international level. I had the opportunity to engage with participants from diverse backgrounds and learn from their unique perspectives. The Symposium created a vibrant atmosphere of cultural exchange, fostering a deep appreciation for the global Sikh community. It was humbling to witness the depth of talent and dedication among my fellow participants, and it motivated me to continually push the boundaries of my own abilities. Placing twice at the international level in 2015 and 2017 was an achievement that filled me with immense pride and gratitude. It was a testament to the countless hours of study, preparation, and practice I had invested. The recognition bestowed upon me validated my commitment to Sikh history, culture, and philosophy. Beyond the trophies and accolades, the Hemkunt Foundation Symposium left an indelible mark on my personal growth and identity. The symposium nurtured a sense of pride in my Sikh heritage. The experience instilled in me a deep-rooted understanding of the values and principles that Sikhism embodies—equality, compassion, and selfless service to humanity. Participating in the Hemkunt Foundation Symposium for five years has profoundly shaped me. It has instilled in me a lifelong love for learning, an unwavering commitment to my faith, and a sense of responsibility to share the wisdom and teachings of Sikhism with others. The symposium has become an integral part of my journey, and the memories and friendships forged during those years will forever hold a special place in my heart. The Hemkunt Foundation Symposium continues to inspire generations of young Sikhs worldwide, fostering a deep appreciation for their heritage and encouraging them to contribute positively to society. It serves as a testament to the power of education, unity, and cultural exchange. By nurturing young minds and instilling a sense of pride in their identity, this symposium paves the way for a brighter and more.

★





**THE SYMPOSIUM CREATED A
VIBRANT ATMOSPHERE OF
CULTURAL EXCHANGE, FOSTERING
A DEEP APPRECIATION FOR THE
GLOBAL SIKH COMMUNITY.**

Jessicca Kaur

ALUMNI

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Sania Kaur ★

KENYA



Prabhdit Singh ★

KENYA



Jaskiran Kaur ★

KENYA



Daljeet Kaur ★

KENYA



Harneet Kaur ★

KENYA





AFTER MISSING IN ACTION AT THE HEMKUNT SYMPOSIUM FOR 25 YEARS, KENYA FIELDDED A COMPLETELY NEW GENERATION OF SIKH YOUTH FROM AFRICA AND MADE A HISTORIC RETURN TO THE WORLD STAGE IN NEW JERSEY IN 2019. THOUGH ONLY THREE MANAGED TO TRAVEL WHO I ACCOMPANIED AS CONVENOR, THEY WERE LEFT IN AWE OF THE AMAZING ATMOSPHERE AND ENERGY OF THE HUNDREDS OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS FROM THE USA AND THE UK. THIS SEEDED THEIR CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC SPEAKING AND ON SIKH MATTERS, AN EXPERIENCE THEY RETURNED HOME TO PUT INTO PRACTICE AS THEY GROW UP INTO POWERFUL SPEAKERS.

Khalsa Lakhvir-Singh

ALUMNI

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Lilly Singh

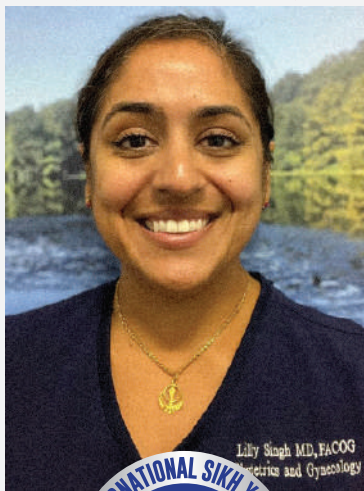


USA

I grew up going to Guru Nanak Khalsa School San Jose, and participating in the Hemkunt Speech Competition, right about from the time I learned how to read. I didn't always win or even place, and sometimes I did. Either way, the competition and its atmosphere gave me many gifts: friendships, knowledge, confidence, and the ability to talk to people I don't know.

The competitions dominated my summers from grade school through high school from 1991-1999). I attended UC Davis for college, where I studied bhangra - I mean neurobiology. Eventually I decided I wanted to become a physician and applied to medical school, then residency, and then my jobs thereafter. At each stage, whether engaging with new colleagues, presenting research, interviewing for the next step, or understanding my patients, two things were important. Knowing myself, and knowing how to connect with people. The speech competitions helped me with both.

Now, as a board-certified obstetrician gynecologist, I aim to help each of my patients achieve their best health. Sometimes that means meeting them where they are and strategizing how to overcome their individual obstacles. Sometimes it means advocating for patients of color in a system that regularly marginalizes them. Always, it means looking people in the eye, establishing direct connections, and staying in chardi kala.





**THE HEMKUNT SYMPOSIUM AND
ITS ATMOSPHERE GAVE ME
MANY GIFTS: FRIENDSHIPS,
KNOWLEDGE, CONFIDENCE, AND
THE ABILITY TO TALK TO PEOPLE
I DON'T KNOW.**

Lilly Singh

Mehtaab Singh ★

USA

The symposium speech competition has played a crucial role in my development allowing me to develop a sense of comfort presenting to an audience and providing me with the tools necessary to do so effectively. My earliest memories of the speech competition were from the first times I competed as a relatively young child. At these initial stages while the speech was mostly written by my mother, a large portion of the preparation for the competition was spent first understanding the precise message we sought to communicate for each question and then honing a presentation which would accentuate that meaning for each answer, focusing on the use of vocal cues or nonverbal gestures.

Through this process, while of course learning a tremendous deal about the history and values which are a crucial part about being Sikh, there were a number of lessons regarding presentation which have been invaluable. Among these lessons, I learned that mastery of the precise topic one was discussing is an invaluable part of presentation, that a large portion of effective communication is non-verbal, and that being able to communicate one passion for the topic at hand is crucial in any presentation. As an aspiring academic mathematician, while my primary role is as a researcher, a substantial portion of my time is devoted to both listening and presenting works at academic venues. While these talks often take a substantially different format than the symposium speeches, being an hour long and involving a substantial interactive portion through question and answers, the principles of effective communication with an audience still apply.

In particular, while recent developments within the field are formally communicated through papers, in practice such talks and presentations serve as crucial venue for spreading ideas. Therefore, effectively communicating one's ideas allow them to be used in future developments and being an adept communicator is a highly valued skill within the field. The speech competition's early practice with thinking about how one should present material, what points of a topic should be emphasized and how, and being able to judge how engaged the audience is have been invaluable. Furthermore, general comfort in front of an audience has also been useful other times in this professional sphere; recently I was asked to introduce a plenary speaker at a conference in front of a few hundred attendees. Given the number of times I had presented as a child through the speech competition preparing for this situation on short notice was within my comfort zone. This general comfort with an audience has been among the most valuable gifts that the speech competition has given me.

★





**WHILE AS A RESEARCHER OFTEN
TAKE A SUBSTANTIALLY
DIFFERENT FORMAT THAN THE
SYMPOSIUM SPEECHES – BEING
AN HOUR LONG AND INVOLVING A
SUBSTANTIAL INTERACTIVE
PORTION THROUGH QUESTION
AND ANSWERS – THE PRINCIPLES
OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
WITH AN AUDIENCE STILL APPLY
IN MY PROFESSIONAL LIFE.**

Mehtaab Singh

ALUMNI

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Pargat Singh ★

USA

I competed in the Hemkunt competition for 10 years (2000-2009) alongside my older sister. With training and support from my family, I managed to reach the International level 3 times, placing in the top 3 each time. I still remember the International level trips very fondly in large part due to the friends I made there. Even growing up with a large local Sikh community it was fantastic to meet other Sikh kids with shared interests.

The competition was also a great excuse for a family trip to an area we might not otherwise have visited. I also volunteered when the International competition was being hosted by my local zone. I used the public speaking skills I learned in the Hemkunt symposium to excel on the Debate team in high school, winning multiple tournaments and earning invites to state and national championship events. In addition to finding a love of competition and public speaking, I fell in love with and married Ramanpreet Dheri, a fellow Hemkunt competitor, who I had gotten to know on our shared Hemkunt trips when we were kids. I attended UC San Diego and after completing a degree in Computer Engineering I am pursuing a career as a software developer in the Bay Area.

★





**I USED THE PUBLIC SPEAKING
SKILLS I LEARNED IN THE
HEMKUNT SYMPOSIUM TO EXCEL
ON THE DEBATE TEAM IN HIGH
SCHOOL, WINNING MULTIPLE
TOURNAMENTS AND EARNING
INVITES TO STATE AND NATIONAL
CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS.**

Pargat Singh

Punit Kaur ★

USA

I consider myself very fortunate to have grown up a member of the Hemkunt family, which was responsible for shaping my childhood and ultimate identity; I was able to connect with my Sikh roots, see role models, engage with a global Sikh sangat, and grow in confidence as a young woman, a learner, an orator, and a musician in Gurmat Sangeet. The skills I honed throughout the years, in constructing knowledgeable and tailored speeches and in fine-tuning my skills in the resounding reverberations of raag, are precious skills that I carry till today. These skills are in fact, not just skills but pieces of our ancestral identity that I treasure, and intend to pass on to younger generations.

As an English educator, I firmly believe that the depth of knowledge and exposure that one receives as a Hemkunt participant, provides the kind of richness that carries over from childhood into the people we are today. I would like to thank the Hemkunt Foundation for providing the youth with a firm foundation that is rooted in Sikhi, and for also providing the youth with a global Sikh sangat from which to learn and grow. These years go by quickly, so cherish the lessons and memories that you will receive.

★





**I CONSIDER MYSELF VERY
FORTUNATE TO HAVE GROWN
UP A MEMBER OF THE
HEMKUNT FAMILY, WHICH
WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR
SHAPING MY CHILDHOOD AND
ULTIMATE IDENTITY.**

Punit Kaur

Ramanpreet Kaur ★

USA

I began competing in the Hemkunt speech competition when I was 7 years old and continued participating for 10 years (2001-2010). I also took part in the Hemkunt Kirtan competition for many years including the inaugural event in Florida. My Kirtan Jatha and I also competed and won 1st place at the International level 3 consecutive years in a row.

I then went on to study at UCLA and Harvard Law School, and now work as an attorney. I am married to fellow Hemkunt alumni, Pargat Singh, whom I often competed against. I would credit the Hemkunt competitions with helping me to overcome my immense stage fright. During my first Hemkunt speech, I could barely get my words out due to my shaking, and in fact stopped my speech halfway through because I was overcome with nerves. Thanks to the opportunity provided by the Hemkunt competitions and years of hard work and practice, I am now fully comfortable with public speaking and able to present in front of large groups with ease.

★





**I HAVE COMPETED AT THE
HEMKUNT SYMPOSIUM FOR MANY
YEARS, AND HAVE EVEN WON
GOLD AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL
FOR CONSECUTIVE YEARS.**

Ramanpreet Kaur

Sehaj Kaur ★

USA

Sahej Kaur, a 23-year-old Sikh girl, is currently pursuing her Doctor of Pharmacy degree (Pharm.D.) in the graduate program at the University of California, Irvine (UCI). She holds prestigious leadership positions as the President of the Academy of Student Pharmacists (ASP) Chapter at UCI - the President of the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) and the President of the California Pharmacists Association (CPhA). Previously, she served as the President-Elect of these organizations from 2021 to 2022. Additionally, Sahej served as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) student representative on the DEI committee at her pharmacy school from 2021 to 2022. In 2020, she completed her Bachelor of Science in Biology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where she was also involved in Bruin Bhangra. Sahej attributes her achievements to the confidence she gained through her participation in events organized by the Sri Hemkunt Foundation.

Sahej Kaur has been actively involved with the Sri Hemkunt Foundation since her early childhood. She has not only participated in but also excelled in various Hemkunt Speech and Keertan Competitions, even at the international level. Moreover, Sahej played a pivotal role in the establishment of Panthic Digital Voice (PDV), contributing to the development of a program that empowers individuals to effectively showcase and tell their own stories.

Her association with the Sri Hemkunt Foundation has had a profound impact on Sahej, influencing multiple aspects of her life. Through speech competitions, she honed her public speaking skills and learned to deliver impactful messages. Keertan competitions deepened her understanding of Sikh practices and helped her connect with Sikhi by learning to play the Dilluba and sing in Raag. Participating in PDV provided her with valuable insights into the art of storytelling through media, which plays a significant role in shaping societal knowledge.

Sahej values her connection with the Sri Hemkunt Foundation, as it has afforded her the opportunity to acquire crucial skills and develop them from a young age. She has actively engaged in interfaith events and organizations to represent the Sikh faith and raise awareness about Sikhi. Moreover, she held the position of Academic Director at the Sikh Student Association (SSA) at UCLA. Sahej also played a key role in establishing and fostering the growth of the Inter-Gurdwara League (IGL) in Southern California, a sports competition involving volleyball, basketball, and cricket among different Gurdwaras.

In her leisure time, Sahej finds joy in Bhangra and indulges in music.

★





**BESIDES BEING ACTIVE AT THE
HEMKUNT SYMPOSIUM SINCE
EARLY CHILDHOOD AS A
PARTICIPANT IN THE SPEECH AND
KEERTAN COMPETITIONS, I HAVE
ALSO PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE IN
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PANTHIC
DIGITAL VOICE.**

Sehaj Kaur

ALUMNI

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Sukhveer Singh ★

USA

I started participating in the Hemkunt Speech Symposiums in 2007 at Guru Nanak Khalsa School, San Jose. The excellent teachers at Khalsa School helped me with my speeches as well as my speaking skills. Each year I looked forward to learning and participating. With their guidance and support, I was able to attain podium positions at the international level in 2015, 2016, and 2017.

After participating in the Hemkunt Speech Symposiums, I have continued to use the skills I gained while learning how to do public speaking. Learning how to speak to an audience, how to deliver a message concisely and with passion, and engaging an audience are some of the key things I learned while competing. Now, I've used these skills in job interviews, in project presentations, and many other scenarios.

I have just completed my Masters in Computer Science and Mathematics at University of California at Santa Cruz and will be starting off my career at the Plano, Texas campus of a major financial institution.

My experience from the symposiums gives me confidence in my ability to deliver a meaningful message. I am very thankful for everyone who is part of the Hemkunt Foundation and hope other will find the same success.

★





**FROM THE TIME I STARTED
PARTICIPATING IN THE HEMKUNT
SYMPOSIUM IN 2007, I WORKED
MY SELF UP TO ATTAINING
PODIUM FINISHES AT THE
INTERNATIONAL LEVEL FOR THREE
CONSECUTIVE YEARS FROM 2015
TO 2017.**

Sukhveer Singh

Sukhveer Kaur ★

USA

I started participating in Hemkunt Speech Symposium in 2010 at Guru Nanak Khalsa School, San Jose. This started off simply to follow in the footsteps of my older brother who had already been participating in the symposiums for several years. However, after a while, it became clear to me that I really enjoyed the whole experience – the learning, the public speaking, and being part of a community that strove to learn more about Sikhi. I will always be forever grateful to the teachers at Khalsa School for their help with my speeches as well as my speaking skills. With their guidance and support, I was able to attain podium positions at the international level in 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2021.

I learn so much about Sikh culture and history every single year through my participation in Hemkunt. From the stories of our Gurus to the messages in the Bhagat Bani and much more, participating helps me understand vital messages of Sikhi that I may not already know.

My participation also led me to join my middle school speech team, high school debate team, and college mock trial team—all of which have public speaking as a key component. Through my experiences in Hemkunt, I learned how to effectively research and write a speech, practice enunciation until my words could be clearly heard (especially when I had braces), and most importantly, how to build self-confidence while speaking in front of an audience. These skills have helped me excel in my academic life and pushed me to step outside my comfort zone.

I am currently a sophomore at Scripps College studying Politics with a minor in Biology. Once I graduate college, I plan to go to law school.

★





**I REALLY ENJOYED THE WHOLE
EXPERIENCE AT THE HEMKUNT
SYMPOSIUM – THE LEARNING,
THE PUBLIC SPEAKING, AND
BEING PART OF A COMMUNITY
THAT STROVE TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT SIKHI.**

Sukhveer Kaur

ALUMNI

2023 | Hemkunt International Sikh Youth Symposium • Keertan Darbar • Panthic Digital Voice | NEW YORK

Soon after moving to California from Singapore, I started participating in the Hemkunt speech competitions at the age of 10. This helped me learn about Sikh history & traditions, and I was able to build important life skills in public speaking, giving me confidence that I am still thankful for today. Through my treasured experiences with the Hemkunt Foundation, I found a strong community and a sense of belonging. I was fortunate to have great support from my family and the San Jose Khalsa School sangat, and I successfully won medals at multiple international tournaments.

Sukritee Singh ★

USA

I later attended UC Berkeley and then St. George's University-School of Medicine, after which I completed my Internal Medical residency training at NY Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital. I currently practice as a hospitalist in Sacramento, CA.

★





**THROUGH MY TREASURED
EXPERIENCES WITH THE
HEMKUNT FOUNDATION, I FOUND
A STRONG COMMUNITY AND A
SENSE OF BELONGING.**

Sukritee Singh

Tejinder Singh ★

USA

I was born in 1981 and grew up in San Jose, California. I participated in the Hemkunt Foundation's International Symposium throughout my young life (from 1991-1998). This participation was an important contributor to my passion for speech and debate. I was a member of my high school debate team, where my performance earned me a scholarship to debate at U.C. Berkeley. There, my debate partner and I were ranked the top two-person debate team in the country, and I was ranked the top individual debater my senior year. I went on to Harvard Law School, where I participated in the school's moot court program (another speech competition!) competing in the final round and was named the top individual speaker—before launching my professional career. I credit my speech and debate career with helping me craft arguments that will be persuasive, even (indeed, especially) to people who aren't naturally inclined to agree with my point of view.

As a lawyer, I focus on helping “the little guy” pursue justice. Among others, I represent whistleblowers who learn of fraud or misconduct and speak out against it, victims of terrorist attacks, civil rights plaintiffs, and indigent criminal defendants and immigrants. On the other hand, I almost never represent large corporations. Instead, I try to level the playing field between large companies and the people they invariably harm in their pursuit of profit.

When I am not lawyering, I love spending time with my wife, Anna, and our three sons, Leo, Felix, and August. I have also become obsessed with playing golf (though I am really not very good--yet). I also like reading, watching playoff basketball, and playing basically any board or card game I can get my hands on.

★





**MY PARTICIPATION AT THE
HEMKUNT SYMPOSIUM WAS AN
IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTOR TO MY
PASSION FOR SPEECH AND
DEBATE. I WAS A MEMBER OF MY
HIGH SCHOOL DEBATE TEAM,
WHERE MY PERFORMANCE
EARNED ME A SCHOLARSHIP TO
DEBATE AT U.C. BERKELEY.**

Tejinder Singh



2023



BIG APPLE-NEWYORK
 CALIFORNIA, CAPITOL
 CALIFORNIA, GADRI BABBE
 CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES
 CALIFORNIA, NORTHERN
 CALIFORNIA, ORANGE COUNTY
 CALIFORNIA, SILICON VALLEY WEST
 CALIFORNIA, SILICON VALLEY EAST
 CALIFORNIA, SILICON VALLEY CENTRAL
 CAPITOL, US
 GREAT LAKES
 FLORIDA

ZONES

 2023
 NEW YORK

GARDEN STATE, NEW JERSEY
 ARIZONA, GRAND CANYON
 SUN BELT
 DALLAS, TEXAS
 TRI STATE
 LONDON
 LONDON, GREATER
 LONDON, GURUNANAK
 LONDON, KHALSA
 LONDON, MATA KHIVI
 LONDON, SOUTH
 LONDON, WEST
 NAIROBI - KENYA



2023





2023



JUDGES

★
2023
NEW YORK



SYMPOSIUM

GROUP 1

Jasleen Kaur
 Jasmine Kaur
 Kiran Kaur
 Khalsa Lakhvir-Singh

GROUP 2

Harjeet Singh
 Kamlesh Kaur
 Maninder Kaur
 Noor Kaur

GROUP 3

Harkishan Singh
 Narinder Pal Singh
 Nina Kaur
 Pushpinder Kaur

GROUP 4

Jaswant Singh
 Madanjit Singh
 Sahib Singh

GROUP 5

Gurinder Pal Singh
 Gurpreet Singh
 Harcharan Singh
 Harinder Singh

JUDGES

SYMPOSIUM

GROUP 1

2023 | Hemkunt International Sikh Youth Symposium • Keertan Darbar • Panthic Digital Voice | NEW YORK



2023



Jasleen Kaur ★

USA

Senior Scrum Master/ Manager in a healthcare domain company.
Over 13+ years in IT. Bachelors in Computer Engineering.

Married to a gursikh IT professional and blessed being a Mom of a 14 year old daughter(group 4 participant) and 10 year old boy.

Love spending Fri eve & Sundays at Gurudwara with our community sangat.

STEM advantage mentor - For support, guidance and coaching to STEM advantage scholars.

Enjoy Therapeutic cooking

★



**MARRIED TO A GURSIKH IT
PROFESSIONAL, **JASLEEN KAUR**
IS BLESSED BEING A MOM OF A
14 YEAR OLD (PARTICIPANT IN
THE HEMKUNT SYMPOSIUM) AND
A 10 YEAR OLD BOY.**

JUDGES

SYMPOSIUM

GROUP 1

2023 | Hemkunt International Sikh Youth Symposium • Keertan Darbar • Panthic Digital Voice | NEW YORK



2023



Jasmine Kaur



USA

Jasmine Kaur is a law student at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law based in Los Angeles, CA. She graduated high school with three associate's degrees and graduated from UCLA with high honors and distinction from the Chancellor with her Bachelor's degree in Sociology. She then pursued her Master of Public Policy from USC Sol Price School of Public Policy with a Certification in Nonprofit Management and Policy. Not only has Jasmine held prestigious internships, like working at the Central District Federal Courthouse in the Habeas Corpus Unit, but she's worked with several Sikh nonprofits. Currently, she spends most of her free time working with Anhad Magazine, a student-run, and Sikh-print magazine focused on empowering the diaspora to unify with their Creator.

As a first-generation Sikh woman of color entering a field with very few Sikhs, Jasmine attributes her confidence and passion for public speaking, which has helped her stand out, to the Hemkunt Inc. Foundation. As a participant since the age of six, reaching international finals almost every year, and finally winning the gold medal in 2019, Jasmine firmly believes that the Hemkunt Inc. Foundation has empowered her by providing the necessary skills to become an effective advocate for her future clients, to be able to speak about injustice and collective support for those around her (following her Sikh values), and most importantly, gaining a more profound sense of Sikhi and sangat with the community that Hemkunt provides. She kindles this fire, burning brighter because of Hemkunt, Hemkunt, through her work with Anhad Magazine.





**A FORMER PARTICIPANT AND
INTERNATIONAL LEVEL HEMKUNT
SYMPOSIUM WINNER, **JASMINE
KAUR** ALSO SERVED AS A JUDGE
IN MANY EDITIONS OF THE LOS
ANGELES ZONE.**

JUDGES

SYMPOSIUM

GROUP 1

2023 | Hemkunt International Sikh Youth Symposium • Keertan Darbar • Panthic Digital Voice | NEW YORK



2023



Kiran Kaur



USA

Kiran started her journey with Hemkunt when she was 7 years old. She was a passionate participant for 15 years and competed at the international level numerous times. Kiran then returned to Hemkunt as a judge at the local and zonal level for several years as well.

As a former participant, she understands how Hemkunt speech competitions can be a transformative and invaluable opportunity. Her experience throughout the years of researching, preparing, and delivering speeches provided her an unique and meaningful moment to deepen her relationship with Gurbani through understanding and applying the teaching of the Gurus. She is excited and thankful to continue her journey with the Hemkunt Speech Symposium as it empowers and enables the next generation of influential Sikh public speakers.





**A JOURNEY WITH HEMKUNT
SYMPOSIUM THAT STARTED
WHEN **KIRAN KAUR** WAS JUST 7
YEARS OLD, GOING ON TO
PARTICIPATE FOR 15 YEARS, SHE
SERVED AS ZONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL JUDGE FOR
SEVERAL EDITIONS.**

JUDGES

SYMPOSIUM

GROUP 1

2023 | Hemkunt International Sikh Youth Symposium • Keertan Darbar • Panthic Digital Voice | NEW YORK



2023



Khalsa Lakhvir-Singh ★

KENYA

Designer

With over twenty five years of collective experience in the advertising, design, branding, media and creative industries, I most recently served as the Visual Editor-in-Chief at Radio Africa Group, a leading media house based in Nairobi, Kenya. I also take great interest in developing other skills that come naturally to me - photography, writing, historical research and motivational speaking. All these skills add up to realise my ultimate potential in creative expression for both self and for the professionals that I always seek to affiliate with.

Sikh Preacher

I am a passionate Sikh motivational speaker, lecturer and writer who has been serving the local Sikh Gurdwaras and wider Sikh community in Kenya for over 20 years in various religious activities.

My visionary outlook is to help Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike across the world in understanding Sikhi through the message of Gurbani and how to apply it in their everyday lives. This is being done through my social media platforms and speaking at Gurdwaras, institutions and forums that avail the opportunity to reach out directly to the masses.

My strengths of proficiency in Punjabi, Hindi, Swahili and English help me to stand out in today's need to reach out to peoples of all demographics who can understand Sikhi and its history in the language of their preference to better their knowledge of the Sikh faith.

Historian

I am also an independent historian who researches and publishes the history of Sikhs in Kenya - and Africa in general - in an effort to help the masses understand who the Sikhs are in relation to historical context. My various social media pages command a following in their thousands as I regularly and consistently publish informative Sikh and historical content, drawing conversations from a cosmopolitan audience who take keen interest to learn from my posts.

Additionally, I am also a budding publisher with my own inspirational books, magazines and other educational material getting ready for print.

www.KLS.ke





**AS A SECOND TIME PARTICIPANT
IN THE HEMKUNT SYMPOSIUM,
KHALSA LAKHVIR-SINGH
BROUGHT KENYA BACK INTO THE
HEMKUNT SYMPOSIUM IN 2019
AFTER HIS COUNTRY DID NOT
PARTICIPATE FOR 25 YEARS.
BESIDES BEING A JUDGE, HE'S
MENTOR TO HIS 2023 TEAM AND
ALSO DESIGNED THIS YEAR'S
SOUVENIR BROCHURE.**

JUDGES

SYMPOSIUM

GROUP 2

2023 | Hemkunt International Sikh Youth Symposium • Keertan Darbar • Panthic Digital Voice | NEW YORK



2023



Harjeet Singh completed his Bachelor of Engineering in 1970 (Mechanical), from Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra.

He has over 45 years of experience in mechanical and construction. In India, Harjeet Singh owned Grey Iron Foundry and a machine shop. Which were ancillary to Heavy engineering corporation. In 1985, Harjeet Singh and his family moved to New York, where he started doing construction for the government and worked for the School Construction Authority, Metropolitan Transport Authority and Dormitory Authority for the State of New York. He has been Zonal convener for Big Apple Zone.

Harjeet Singh



USA

Harjeet Singh is involved with the Hemkunt Foundation since 1987. He is one of the trustees of Hemkunt Foundation. He was involved in various activities in the New York Gurdwaras, taking care of the construction at the Gurdwaras. The whole family is involved in Hemkunt Foundation (Speech Competitions), since then. Children and grandchildren have been participating in the speech competitions and have won recognitions in Central, Zonal, and International levels. Harjeet Singh has been judging and conducting the speech competitions at Central and Zonal levels. He has now moved to Virginia, Capital Zone. He is humbled to be part of this inspiring organization.





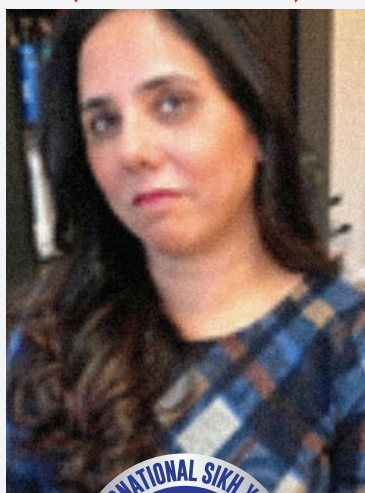
A ZONAL CONVENOR FOR THE BIG APPLE ZONE, **HARJEET SINGH HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH THE HEMKUNT FOUNDATION SINCE 1987, AND HAS BEEN JUDGING AND CONDUCTING SPEECH COMPETITIONS AT CENTRAL AND ZONAL LEVELS.**

JUDGES

SYMPOSIUM

GROUP 2

2023 | Hemkunt International Sikh Youth Symposium • Keertan Darbar • Panthic Digital Voice | NEW YORK



Kamlesh Kaur ★

USA

Kamlesh Kaur, a registered dietitian, immigrated to the United States in 1996. Initially employed as a clinical dietitian at Woodhull Medical Hospital for a duration of four years, she subsequently transitioned her career path to the Department of Education. Kamlesh has since dedicated over two decades of service to the New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE), assuming various roles including classroom teacher, attendance coordinator, and presently functioning as a High School Counselor.

With an educational background encompassing three master's degrees, Kamlesh holds a degree in education from Touro College, a counseling degree from NYIT, and a school building leadership degree from the College of Saint Rose. Her extensive expertise lies in a range of areas, including engaging with parents, students, and teachers; program development; counseling services; administrative tasks; professional development and support; delivery of guidance lessons; provision of college and career advice to both parents and students; as well as participating in numerous meetings with outside agencies, colleges, and universities.

Kamlesh's commitment to education and active involvement in the Sikh community is evident through her longstanding engagement with The Hemkunt Foundation since 2012. Within this organization, she generously volunteers her time as a judge at local, zonal, and even international levels, having served as a judge in Phoenix, Arizona.

★



**A LONG-STANDING ENGAGEMENT
WITH THE HEMKUNT
FOUNDATION SINCE 2012,
KAMLESH KAUR CONTINUES TO
COMMIT HERSELF AS A LOCAL,
ZONAL AND INTERNATIONAL
LEVEL JUDGE.**

JUDGES

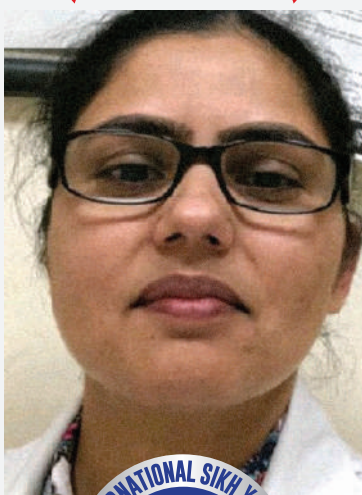
SYMPOSIUM

GROUP 2

2023 | Hemkunt International Sikh Youth Symposium • Keertan Darbar • Panthic Digital Voice | NEW YORK



2023



Maninder Kaur ★

USA

I Maninder Kaur was born in Sikh family of a village Mattewal of district Amritsar in Punjab. Since I got my senses, I see my parents, grandparents, neighbors, and everyone I interacts with were simple, Gurmukh, hardworking, and down to earth. I used to love to go to Gurdwara with my grandmother and learn gurbani from her.

When I went to school, my teachers were with same values and our headmaster started a routine where we do morning prayer and Japuji Sahib for one week and Geeta path for another week alternately. We used to participate in gurbani kanthh competitions, gurpurab celebrations, and langer sewa. These are my roots before 1984 happened. I have seen Sikhs' struggle, suffering, and regrowth. I love to read and used to read historical books from school library and gurdwara library. Becoming a professional woman was a challenge but with gurbani and Waheguru's grace, I won over all obstacles and received my Nursing Diploma from Medical College Patiala. I have served in DMCH Ludhiana and GMCH Chandigarh before I passed CGFNS, IELTS, NCLEX-RN and moved to USA. All this happened because I stay connected with my roots and Waheguru's grace. I continued my education as RN-BSN, MSN in Healthcare Leadership, and Doctorate in Nursing Practice. I am a Certified Case Manager and work as case manager in NCH&H/Queens. My goal is to continue to learn about Sikhi and Gurbani.

★



**USED TO PARTICIPATE IN
GURBANI KANTHH
COMPETITIONS, GURPURAB
CELEBRATIONS, AND LANGAR
SEWA, THESE WERE THE ROOTS
OF **MANINDER KAUR** BEFORE
1984 HAPPENED - AND HAS
SEEN SIKHS' STRUGGLE,
SUFFERING, AND REGROW.**

JUDGES



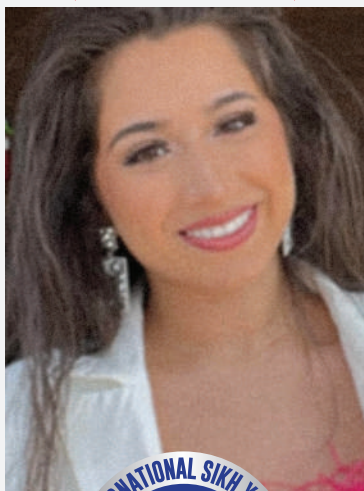
SYMPOSIUM

GROUP 2

2023 | Hemkunt International Sikh Youth Symposium • Keertan Darbar • Panthic Digital Voice | NEW YORK



2023



Noor Kaur ★

USA

Noor Kaur has been a part of Hemkunt for over 10 years. She started out as a participant of speech and Kirtan where she won several awards. She went to internationals every year and was placed first in speech at the 2015 symposium. She has a great love and appreciation for the Hemkunt Foundation and is eager to carry on this journey through judging. Noor has been a part of several public speaking competitions and judging in her academic and professional life. She continues to invest in the successes of participants.

In her professional life, Noor holds a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics and Computer Science from the University of California, Riverside, and a Master's degree in Finance from Vanderbilt University. Currently, she is working in the Finance sector at Vanguard as Chief of Staff and loves it. She also holds a passion for teaching and helps students out with their academics.

One of Noor's favorite hobbies is Bhangra. She loves to choreograph, make videos, and teach young students. Bhangra was a big part of her life and she still holds herself close to it. She also loves to travel and explore the world.





**STARTING AS A
WINNING PARTICIPANT
IN MANY SPEECH AND
KEERTAN COMPETITIONS
AT THE HEMKUNT
SYMPOSIUM, NOOR
KAUR FEELS NOW FEELS
EQUALLY HONOURED AS
A JUDGE.**

Software professional born and grew up in India, living in America for the past 40 years. Studied in India, Canada and USA. A Devout and humble Sikh. Served as a coordinator and convener for various Sikh youth activities in the past.

Harkishan Singh ★

USA

Associated with various Sikh organizations and advocacy groups in various capacities. Representing Sikh community and a member of interfaith committee of Bergen county NJ for last 20 years. Affiliated with Sri Hemkunt Foundation for more than 25 years.

★

JUDGES

SYMPOSIUM

GROUP 3

2023 | Hemkunt International Sikh Youth Symposium • Keertan Darbar • Panthic Digital Voice | NEW YORK



2023





**ASSOCIATED WITH VARIOUS
SIKH ORGANIZATIONS AND
ADVOCACY GROUPS,
HARKISHAN SINGH HAS BEEN
REPRESENTING THE SIKH
COMMUNITY AND A MEMBER
OF THE INTERFAITH
COMMITTEE OF BERGEN
COUNTY NJ FOR LAST 20
YEARS AND HAS AFFILIATED
WITH HEMKUNT FOUNDATION
FOR MORE THAN 25 YEARS.**

JUDGES



SYMPOSIUM

GROUP 3

2023 | Hemkunt International Sikh Youth Symposium • Keertan Darbar • Parthiv Digital Voice | NEW YORK



2023



Narinder Pal Singh ★

USA

NarinderPal feels fortunate and is thankful to the Guru for the opportunities for services in different community programs involving the children of the San Francisco Bay area.

He has been associated with Guru Nanak Khalsa School, San Jose in managing their Gurmat and Keertan programs since 1992. He has been involved in the Sri Hemkunt Foundation Speech symposium at San Jose center, where he served as an organizer, judge and a resource for speech preparation. He has also been a guide for his own three children who are greatly benefited by participating in this program. Later, with the introduction of Sri Hemkunt Keertan Darbar, he has been responsible for coordinating the efforts requiring participation of children in the program from San Jose Center.

Since 2009, NarinderPal has been blessed with the sewa of providing the Sangat with blissful Keertan programs, in the role of a member of the San Jose Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. NarinderPal is an Amritdhari Sikh.





INVOLVED IN THE HEMKUNT SYMPOSIUM AT SAN JOSE CENTER, WHERE HE SERVED AS AN ORGANIZER, JUDGE AND A RESOURCE FOR SPEECH PREPARATION. **NARINDER PAL SINGH HAS ALSO BEEN A GUIDE FOR HIS OWN THREE CHILDREN WHO ARE GREATLY BENEFITING BY PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROGRAM.**

JUDGES

SYMPOSIUM

GROUP 3

2023 | Hemkunt International Sikh Youth Symposium • Keertan Darbar • Panthic Digital Voice | NEW YORK



Nina Kaur ★

USA

Nina Bagga was born in Madhya Pradesh, India. After she graduated with a Bachelors of Science she then completed her masters in Economics. She moved to the United States after her marriage to Jogendra Singh Bagga, P.E. She has two sons and a daughter, and loved participating in their school-related events. Whether it be PTA meetings or attending local soccer games, you can always count on her being there with a smile on her face.

Her involvement with the Sikh community started many years ago in Sacramento, California. She began by teaching Gurmukhi on Sunday mornings at the local Gurudwara. From there, she further dedicated her time to community programs, including the annual Vaisakhi celebrations. Her devotion allowed the programs to flourish and become a success.

Soon enough she began to work with the Sri Hemkunt Foundation. She devoted over four years, proving to be a hardworking individual. After living in California for over 20 years, she and her family moved to Long Island, New York. Although she relocated, she did not stop giving back to her Sikh community. She continues to work with the foundation to this day. She not only encourages the community to participate in the annual symposium, but had her own children participate as well. As her grandchildren get older, they know that their grandmother will be sure to teach them the foundations of Sikhism.

Her focus and dedication is evident in the success of her children, who have all become respectable doctors. Her eldest son has successfully completed his medical degree and fellowship, married with two children. Her daughter has finalized her education as a dentist, also married with two children. Her youngest son followed in his sister's footsteps to become a dentist, and further specialized in surgery. He is married and recently welcomed a daughter."

★



**DEVOTING OVER 4
YEARS TO THE HUMKUT
FOUNDATION, NINA
KAUR ENCOURGED BOTH
COMMUNITY AND HER
OWN CHILDREN TO
PARTICIPATE IN THE
SYMPOSIUMS.**

JUDGES

SYMPOSIUM

GROUP 3

2023 | Hemkunt International Sikh Youth Symposium • Keertan Darbar • Panthic Digital Voice | NEW YORK



2023



Pushpinder Kaur, born and brought up in a village in Punjab, is a credentialed teacher, author and administrator in Khalsa School San Jose.

She has been involved in teaching Punjabi and Sikh culture to the Sikh children in San Jose since 1988. She is one of the founding members of Khalsa School, San Jose. She has helped start a number of Khalsa Sunday Schools throughout U.S.A.

Pushpinder Kaur



USA

She was a pioneer in designing curricular materials to teach Punjabi as a Second Language and Gurmukhi script in the 90's. She holds a Masters Degree in Teaching of English as a Second Language. She has prepared a very comprehensive, step-by-step curriculum that helps facilitate smooth running of the Sunday schools and teaching children Punjabi as a Second Language. She has authored more than 20 books. Her books are based on proven strategies to teach a second language. Her materials have been used to teach Punjabi as a Second Language in Canadian public schools as well as a beginner's level course offered at the university level in the U.S.A.

Pushpinder has been involved with Sri Hemkunt Foundation Symposiums for several years as her own children participated in the competitions. She believes that SHF symposiums were a tremendous force in educating her family about the many aspects of Sikh life.

Among her passions is supporting diversity in the US Public schools and she has championed this cause through books like The Boy with Long Hair and public presentations. The Boy With Long Hair has been used as Book of the Month in several schools, endorsed by the Californai Teacher's Association and included in the History and Social Science Framework by the California Deparment of Education. Pushpinder, for several years, has been involved in diversity training for public school teachers in Punjabi Sikh culture, their religion, traditions and customs. She is also on board of directors of Kaur Foundation.





**INVOLVED WITH SRI
HEMKUNT FOUNDATION
SYMPOSIUMS FOR SEVERAL
YEARS AS HER OWN
CHILDREN PARTICIPATED IN
THE COMPETITIONS,
PUSHPINDER KAUR BELIEVES
THAT THE SYMPOSIUMS
WERE A TREMENDOUS
FORCE IN EDUCATING HER
FAMILY ABOUT THE MANY
ASPECTS OF SIKH LIFE.**

JUDGES

SYMPOSIUM

GROUP 4

2023 | Hemkunt International Sikh Youth Symposium • Keertan Darbar • Panthic Digital Voice | NEW YORK



2023



Jaswant Singh ★

USA

Dr. Jaswant Singh Sachdev, M.D., F.A.A.N., a board certified Fellow of the American Academy of Neurology, has been practicing Neurology in Phoenix, Arizona, U.S.A since 1976.

Before migrating to United States in 1972, Dr. Sachdev completed his post-graduate studies in medicine (M.D.) He had a bright academic career and was the recipient of several Gold Medals including an award for the “Best Graduate” of the MBBS class of 1967. Thereafter, he taught at the Government Medical College, Patiala, Pb., India. Since his arrival in Phoenix in 1976, he has been involved in various local Indian community services. He has been one of the Sevadars for the construction of two Gurdwara Sahib in Phoenix area. Every month once a month since 2000, he has been heading a Seva (service) group with the help of his wife and several other Sikh volunteers to prepare and serve free hot fresh full meals to about 150 - to 250 homeless citizens. Thus far about 30,000 meals have been served.

He has been regularly offering power point presentations to non-Sikh groups about Sikh faith and Sikh people in Gurdwara Sahib itself as well as at various colleges, community centers, adult homes, groups and churches when invited.

Dr. Sachdev is also an Advisory-committee board member for Arizona Inter Faith Movement (AIFM) representing Sikh Community. For his various community service efforts and activities, “Arizona Asian American Association” recognized Dr. Sachdev with its “Outstanding Citizen’s Award” in 2004.

Besides being a physician of repute, Dr. Sachdev is an author with an interest in the issues pertaining to the Indian Subcontinent diaspora as well as Sikh faith. Several of his essays are regularly published in many ethnic weeklies in U.S. and Canada. In addition he has already published four books. His first book titled “Square Pegs, Round Holes” dealing with diaspora issues was very well received by Indian community. His second book dealing with similar matters, “One Coin, Two Sides” appeared on shelves in 2011. It was followed by a 3rd book in the same year, “Sikhism: Points to Ponder; Perspectives of a Sikh Living Abroad” that primarily deals with the diaspora Sikh issues. His fourth book “Western Mirror, Eastern Reflections” has recently been launched.

He is serving as a Zonal convener for the Grand Canyon Zone of International Hemkunt Foundation that helps Sikh children learn the art of public speaking and Kirtan. In addition he has been blessed to serve as a Judge for International Speech Competition for several years.

★



**SERVING AS A ZONAL
CONVENER FOR THE GRAND
CANYON ZONE OF
HEMKUNT SYMPOSIUM,
THE HIGHLY DECORATED
JASWANT SINGH ALSO
CONTINUES TO SERVE AS A
JUDGE FOR THE
INTERNATIONAL SPEECH
COMPETITION SINCE
SEVERAL YEARS.**

JUDGES

SYMPOSIUM

GROUP 4

2023 | Hemkunt International Sikh Youth Symposium • Keertan Darbar • Panthic Digital Voice | NEW YORK



2023



Education: M.Sc. Electrical Engineering-Polytechnic Institute of New York (Brooklyn)

Registered Professional Engineer: Electrical and Control Systems
Teaching Experience

Lecturer & Senior Lecturer In Roorkee University & in Delhi College
Of Engineering Instructor in Community College & San Francisco
State in Electrical & Control Systems Engineering

Madanjit Singh ★

USA

Worked In Top Engineering Company for 37 years on various
positions, Senior Engineer, Engineering Specialist, Engineering
Supervisor, Lead Engineer and Principal Engineer

Vice President-Dist 3, International Society Of Automation and
President of Savannah River Section. Senior Life Member- ISA and
Life Member – IEEE.

Has been Director/coordinator Guru Angad Dev Khalsa School, El
Sobrante CA

Secretary- Sikh Center El Sobrante, CA, Treasurer Sikh Center
(Queens) New York.

Active role in construction of Sikh Center, El Sobrante Gurdawara
building.

Has been involved with Hemkunt Foundation since 1994. Introduced
Youth program in California (El Sobrante, Hayward, Fremont,
Fresno, and Sacramento), Texas (Houston, Dallas and Austin) and
Arizona (Phoenix). Has been Zonal Convener for above centers.
Successfully conducted International Youth Symposiums in
El-Sobrante/ San Jose, California and in Orlando, Florida with
SadhSangat. Has been Trustee of Hemkunt Foundation. Supported
first Kirtan Program in the International Youth Symposium at
Orlando, Florida.

★



**INVOLVED WITH THE
HEMKUNT FOUNDATION
SINCE 1994, MADANJIT
SINGH INTRODUCED THE
YOUTH PROGRAM IN
SEVERAL ZONES IN
CALIFORNIA, TEXAS AND
ARIZONA AND SERVED AS
THEIR CONVENOR. HE IS
ALSO A TRUSTEE OF THE
FOUNDATION.**

Sahib Singh developed his passion for Sikh philosophy at home from reading and conversations with his Dadhi Ji from an early age -- that continues to this day in the same form with his Bhua Jis.

Sahib Singh ★

USA

He's been an active member and leader at Sikh Youth camps and conferences since he was eight. He has been a past judge for Hemkunt speech competition. The ethics of Gurbani shapes Sahib's practice as a strategic designer at the Center for Complexity at Rhode Island School of Design working to improve well-being within complex systems. He's currently co-leading a health equity pilot with medical professionals at the University of California San Francisco's School of Medicine to improve health outcomes for patients with limited English proficiency and to foster a transdisciplinary model of collaboration for strategic improvement. Trained as a sociologist and a designer with some science on the side, Sahib's energized about inventing structures within systems that amplify people's abundant virtues. He holds a black belt in karate which includes training in aikido, wing chun and jujitsu.

★

JUDGES



SYMPOSIUM

GROUP 4



2023





**AN ACTIVE MEMBER AND
LEADER AT SIKH YOUTH
CAMPS AND CONFERENCES
SINCE HE WAS EIGHT, SAHIB
SINGH HAS BEEN A PAST
JUDGE FOR THE HEMKUNT
SPEECH COMPETITION.**

JUDGES

SYMPOSIUM

GROUP 5

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2023



Gurinder Pal Singh ★

USA

Dr. Gurinder Pal Singh has been associated with Sri Hemkunt Foundation Sikh Youth Symposium since 1992, first as a center convener, then as a zonal convener and is presently the Keertan Darbar coordinator for the Northwestern Region of USA. His other present sewa activities include serving as the director of Guru Nanak Khalsa School, San Jose and Vice president of Sikh Gurdwara San Jose.

He is a founding member of Chardikalaa Foundation and was also on the board of trustees and advisors for the Sikh Foundation.

Professionally, he has a Ph.D degree in Physics and retired in 2013, after working at famous institutions like, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai; Max Planck Institute for Solid State Physics, Stuttgart ; IBM Almaden Research Center San Jose and HGST research, San Jose. Presently he is a visiting professor at Panjab University, Chandigarh India. He holds 14 patents and over 40 publications in fields of science and technology.

He is very thankful to Waheguru and the community for the opportunities for sewa and successes. He believes in “Gurprasad: Our sincere efforts are necessary, but success comes only from Waheguru’s Grace”.

★



**ASSOCIATED WITH THE
HEMKUNT SYMPOSIUM
SINCE 1992, FIRST AS A
CENTER CONVENER, THEN
AS A ZONAL CONVENER, DR
GURINDER PAL SINGH IS
PRESENTLY THE KEERTAN
DARBAR COORDINATOR FOR
THE NORTHWESTERN
REGION OF USA.**

JUDGES

SYMPOSIUM

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2023



Gurpreet Singh ★

USA

Gurpreet has over 25+ years in IT, Finance and Federal sectors with more than 22 years of consulting and management experience. Strong experience implementing and managing all aspects of a Cybersecurity and IT Modernization programs including isecurity engineering, operations and management (across infrastructures, systems, applications and networks), data analysis and metrics reporting, Virtual Health Integration and program management support, FedRAMP, FISMA, RMF, Big Data, DOD/VA Interoperability, and Security Standards and Regulatory Guidance. Gurpreet holds federal security clearance and oversaw Enterprise strategy efforts to include Information Security, Continuity of Operations/Disaster Recovery, Data Center and Storage Consolidation, Secure Mobile Platform, License Management and AWS GovCloud Migrations. ASSURSEC client experience extends across DOD/Defense Health, NASA, DHS, OPM, DOL, MSHA, and DOS. ASSURSEC hosts Corporate Leadership Internship Program to provide mentorship opportunities to high school and college students in the field of Technology and Cybersecurity.

Sardar Gurpreet Singh is a recipient of the prestigious Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award and multiple awards in Art & Painting from around the globe. Gurpreet is a graduate of London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and undergraduate of the University of Paisley Scotland UK. Gurpreet enjoys traveling, hiking, poetry, dancing, reading, thought-leadership exchange as well as mentoring students and professionals from all backgrounds and skills. Gurpreet is a life member of FBI Citizens Academy Alumni, Multiple counties Sheriff Citizens academy Alumni, Loudoun Interfaith Bridges Alumni, and current member of Loudoun County Multicultural Advisory Committee.

★



**GURPREET SINGH ENJOYS
TRAVELING, HIKING,
POETRY, DANCING,
READING,
THOUGHT-LEADERSHIP
EXCHANGE AS WELL AS
MENTORING STUDENTS
AND PROFESSIONALS
FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS
AND SKILLS.**

JUDGES

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Masters Degrees in:

- a. Political Science and Public Administration, Delhi University, New Delhi
- b. Master in Computer Science, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York

Harcharan Singh

USA

Experience:

- a. Professor of Political Science and Public Administration at SGTB Khalsa College, Delhi University, teaching Under graduates and post graduates for 12 years
- b. IT Professional with IBM for 26 years, responsible for the development of Main Frame Application Development Modules, involved in the Design and integration of Business Processes, Application Architect including specialization in the Client Server Architecture and Project Management for business process and Application Outsourcing.
- c. Adjunct Professor of Computer Science at North Carolina Central University in the Department of Mathematics for two years, from 1989-1991 sponsored by IBM

Community Involvement:

Elected representative of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee duly constituted under the DSGMC, served as Joint Secretary, Member the Board of Directors of various Committees of the DSGMC, Manager of Khalsa Girls Higher Secondary School.

While in US, stayed involved with Social, Sikh Community and interfaith related activities in the states of New York, North Carolina and in Texas.

Hemkunt Involvement:

Have been associated with Hemkunt Organization, ever since the organization was conceived while in New York and created a Local Center at Raleigh/Durham, North Carolina. Currently very humble Zonal Convener for the Hemkunt Organization of the Sunbelt Zone, Texas.

ਜੇ ਹਮਰੀ ਬਿਧਿ ਹੋਤੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਾ ਸਾ ਬਿਧਿ ਤੁਮ ਹਰਿ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਆਪੇ ॥
 ਹਮ ਰੁਲਤੇ ਫਿਰਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਬਾਤ ਨ ਪੂਛਤਾ ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸੰਗਿ ਕੀਰੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਪੇ ॥
 ਧੰਨੁ ਧੰਨੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਨ ਕੇਰਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਚੁਕੇ ਸਭਿ ਸੋਗ ਸੰਤਾਪੇ ॥





**ASSOCIATED WITH THE
HEMKUNT FOUNDATION EVER
SINCE ITS INCEPTION,
HARCHARAN SINGH CREATED
A LOCAL NEW YORK CENTER
AT RALEIGH/DURHAM, NORTH
CAROLINA. HE ALSO SERVES
AS THE ZONAL CONVENER FOR
THE HEMKUNT SYMPOSIUM
IN THE SUNBELT ZONE,
TEXAS.**

JUDGES

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2023



Harinder Singh ★

USA

Harinder Singh was born and brought up in India. He is a graduate of the prestigious National Defence Academy and was commissioned as an officer in the Army. He was a consistently top performer, standing first in the overall order of merit, country-wide, in the NDA examination. He went on to get his Bachelor's and Master's degree in Electronics & Telecommunications, summa-cum-laude and has authored several technology related papers for leading journals.

He has spent his entire working career in telecommunications and was a pioneer in the field of satellite communications in India, having been deputed to Indian Space Research Organization for early experimental work in 1970s with UN and NASA sponsored projects. He lived in Sultanate of Oman for 10 years before migrating to USA in 1998. His family consists of Savinder Kaur and two sons, Rajveer and Preet. As a new entrant, Harinder is excited to be part of Hemkunt Foundation and is looking forward to be working with seasoned and experienced leaders, and to be learning and furthering the cause of Sikhs and Sikhism, within and outside USA.

★



**EXCITED TO BE PART OF THE
HEMKUNT SYMPOSIUM,
HARINDER SINGH IS LOOKING
FORWARD TO BE WORKING
WITH SEASONED AND
EXPERIENCED LEADERS, AND
TO LEARN AND FURTHERING
THE CAUSE OF SIKHS AND
SIKHI, WITHIN AND OUTSIDE
USA.**



2023



JUDGES

★
2023
NEW YORK



KEERTAN

Amarjit Kaur
 Bachittar Singh
 Hardeep Kaur
 Harinder Singh
 Manmeet Singh
 Manpreet Kaur
 Soni Kaur

Amarjit Kaur

Bachittar Singh

Harinder Singh

Manmeet Singh

Manpreet Kaur

Soni Kaur

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EST. 1980 • NEW YORK

KEERTAN DARBAR • PANTHIC DIGITAL VOICE

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Bachittar Singh



USA

He is disciple of renowned sangeet acharya Professor Tara singh ji and Belongs to lineage of renowned kirtan gharana. Son of famous Siromani Ragi Bhai uttam sing'Patang' Brother Dr.Jagir Singh 'Amrit Kirtan'chandigarh and Dr.Gurnam Singh(Punjabi University Patiala) the renowned Gurmat Sangeet Scholars.

He made significant Professional and Academic contribution as Member Post Graduate Boards of Studies Punjab University Chandigarh , Dean Extracurricular Activities and Director Musical and literary items for youth festivals of Punjab university, Chandigarh . He performed as Approved Artist of A.I.R. Jalandhar in Light Vocal Category for for App.15 years and has given Performance of Shabad Kirtan in various Educational and Religious institutions in India and USA .

He is Approved Member Panel of Judges for Music Items by Departments of Youth welfare Panjab University, Chandigarh, Punjabi University, Patiala. Punjab Agriculture University, Ludhiana , Department of Gurmat Sangeet, Punjabi University, Patiala. Punjab School Education Board, Mohali. and Various other Educational, Musical, Literary and Religious organizations in India and USA .





**PERFORMED AS APPROVED
ARTIST OF A.I.R.
JALLANDHAR IN LIGHT
VOCAL CATEGORY FOR FOR
ABOUT 15 YEARS, DR
BACHITTAR SINGH HAS
GIVEN PERFORMANCE OF
SHABAD KIRTAN IN VARIOUS
EDUCATIONAL AND
RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN
INDIA AND USA .**

JUDGES

KEERTAN

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Amarjit Kaur ★

USA

Amarjit Kaur grew up in New Delhi, India. She developed a passion for Indian classical music, folk music and Gurbani Kirtan at the tender young age of four. She heralds from a family of artists, musicians and scholars. Her brother Ranjit Singh is a noted professor and prolific author. Her brother OngKar Singh was an accomplished tabla player who studied with the master, Ustaad Tari Khan.

Musical Training Amarjit Kaur earned her Masters in Indian Classical Music Sangeet Parveen from Allahbaad University. She completed her Alankar Masters of Classical Music from Chandigarh University, and her Sangeet Visharad from Bhatkhandey in Delhi. Amarjit Kaur has also studied with classical masters of likes of S. Rattan Singh Tansen Ji, Ustaad Nasir Ahmad Khan Sahib Ji, Bhai Santa Singh Ji, and Bhai Santa Singh Kanwal Ji.

Winning Competitions Amarjit Kaur's father was the Chief Architect for the Indian Defense Ministry, which held regular Classical Music Competitions. She won First Prize on several occasions. At age sixteen, Amarjit Kaur participated in and won the Gold Medal from Bangla Sahib Kirtan Competitions. As she progressed in her music, she taught Gurbani Kirtan there as well.

Coming to America In 1974, Amarjit Kaur was invited to the United States by renowned spiritual teacher, Siri Singh Sahib, Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa, Yogi Ji, whose mission was to spread the Guru's Word. He sought her out because he'd heard her play as a young woman and was entranced by her devotional kirtan and joyful attitude. He knew she had what it took to relate to and uplift Sikhs in the West with the love of the Songs of Nanak. She traveled with the Siri Singh Sahib and staff all over the US, Canada, and UK, teaching and performing at Ashrams and Gurdwaras far and wide, training thousands of young Westerners in the Guru's Science and Art of Gurubani Kirtan in Nirdharit Ragaas.

Lifetime Achievement Award Amarjit Kaur is the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Gurumat Sangeet Academy of Boston, for her dedication serving the Sadh Sangat with the Guru's sacred message.

A Friend to All in the Guru's Bani Besides excelling in Gurbani Kirtan, Amarjit Kaur attained her Masters in Economics, and was an employee at the World Bank in Washington DC for many years, while raising her family with her late and wonderful husband, Jagjit Singh Rathore. Today, Amarjit Kaur lives in Northern, Virginia and serves many Gurdwaras and households with Kirtan. You can often hear her play at Raj Khalsa Gurdwara in Sterling, where she continues to play and teach a new generation of young raagis in Nirdharit Raga.

Masters Indian Classical Music Sangeet Parveen from Allahbaad University
Alankar Masters Classical Music from Chandigarh University
Sangeet Visharad from Bhatkhandey in Delhi
Gold Medal from Bangla Sahib Kirtan Competitions
Multi-First Prize Winner Participating In Defence Ministry Classical Competitions
Studied with:

S. Rattan Singh Tansen Ji
Ustaad Nasir Ahmad Khan Sahib Ji
Bhai Santa Singh Ji
Bhai Santa Singh Kanwal Ji

Invited to the US to Teach Gurubani Kirtan in Nirdharit Ragaas
Thousands of Kirtan Performances in the US, Canada and UK
Trained Many American Sikhs to Perform Kirtan in Nirdharit Ragaas
Served as a Kirtan Judge In VA, MD, Canada and NJ Competitions
Recipient of Lifetime Achievement Award from Gurumat Sangeet Academy Boston
Masters in Economics and Employee at the World Bank in Washington DC

★



AMARJIT KAUR
PARTICIPATED IN AND WON
THE GOLD MEDAL FROM
BANGLA SAHIB KIRTAN
COMPETITIONS. AS SHE
PROGRESSED IN HER MUSIC,
SHE TAUGHT GURBANI
KIRTAN THERE AS WELL.

JUDGES

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Giani Harinder Singh ji was born and raised in Fareed Ct. Punjab-India. Came to visit US few times as a keertani Jattha. He has settled in the USA since 2004 serving Sikh Community as a 'GRANTHI' and teaching Classical-based Gurmat Sangeet at Gurdwara of Carteret NJ for past many years.

Gyani Harinder Singh ★

USA

He obtained a Masters in Gurmat Sangeet from University of Patiala -Punjab. He learned classical rag and Instrumental Vidya from Brijindra College of Freed Cote, Punjab. He also had 12 years of training in Tabla from famous Prof: Rama Kant and Krishna Kant at their Music School. He did teach Gurmat Sangeet to youth at Baba Farid Public School for many years. Giani Harinder Singh ji has earned the honor and experience serving as a JUDGE at Gurmat Sangeet Keertan Competitions at PUNJAB SCHOOL OF SIKHIYA-BOARD for a number of years before migrating to the US. He has many Shabad- recordings and earned degree of 'Giani' in Language of Punjabi. Giani Harinder Singh ji always keeps in touch and very helpful to assist any way possible in teaching of Sikh Values to our Youth.

★





**GIANI HARINDER SINGH HAS
EARNED THE HONOR AND
EXPERIENCE SERVING AS A
JUDGE AT GURMAT SANGEET
KEERTAN COMPETITIONS AT
THE PUNJAB SCHOOL OF
SIKHIYA BOARD FOR A
NUMBER OF YEARS.**

JUDGES

KEERTAN

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Manmeet Singh ★

USA

Manmeet Singh

240.751.7615 | 8079 High Castle Rd, Ellicott City, MD | jakalsahai@hotmail.com



Gurmat Sangeet

Manmeet Singh and his entourage, *Jatha*, has been in a Gurmat Sangeet scene from their early days in Dubai in 1981. They won several Keertan Competitions and have participated in Gurmat Sangit Darbars in the US, UK, India & Dubai. Manmeet is well versed with Hindustani classical music, Gurmat Sangeet, Sufiana & Folk music.

Manmeet's kirtan style is influenced by the likes of B. Avtar Singh, B. Balbir Singh, B. Dilbag Gulbag Singh. He's got extensive knowledge of Gurbani Raags and Hindustani Raags. Manmeet has been teaching Tantee Saz in Camps since 1995 in Maryland and Michigan. He's been judging various Kirtan competitions in Pittsburgh, Washington DC, Texas, Kansas etc. for the last two decades.

Manmeet's fascination with Sikh instruments & Gurbani Raags led him to produce a short film, *Saz of Gurmat Sangit* along with other award winning films like *The Widow Colony* & *A Little Revolution*.

Manmeet is currently working as a Senior Director in IBM.

Instrumentalist

Manmeet Singh's is a multi-talented musician who plays:

- › Sarangi - (Teacher U. Surjit Singh)
- › Rabab - self taught
- › Sarod - (Student of Richard Henderson, Pt. Soumya Chakraverty)
- › Harmonium - B. Baldev Singh
- › Pakhawaj - Parminder Singh
- › Tabla, Dhol, Dholki - self taught

★



**MANMEET SINGH IS A
MULTI-TALENTED MUSICIAN
WHO PLAYS THE SARANGI,
RABAB, SAROD,
HARMONIUM, PAKHAWAJ,
TABLS, DHOL AND DHOLKI.**

JUDGES

KEERTAN

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Manpreet Kaur Singh, MD, MS

- Associate Professor and Akiko Yamazaki and Jerry Yang Faculty
- Scholar in Pediatric Translational Medicine
- Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
- Director, Pediatric Mood Disorders Program
- Director, Pediatric Emotion and Resilience Lab
- Stanford University School of Medicine.

Manpreet Kaur



USA

Dr. Manpreet Kaur is Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University and leads the internationally renowned Pediatric Mood Disorders Program to advance understanding and early treatment of youth with or at high risk for developing a lifelong mood disorder. The program promotes healthy brain development and has the bold vision to prevent chronic and progressive mood disorders through globally recognized research, education, and innovation.

Manpreet Kaur has been awarded multiple multi-million-dollar research grants from the National Institutes of Health and has been endowed with a Faculty Scholar Award in Pediatric Translational Medicine. She has been quoted in Time Magazine and has given lectures at the United Nations and around the world to reduce mental health stigma. She has received multiple awards for her scientific expertise, humanistic service to her patients, and outstanding leadership. In her spare time, Manpreet enjoys hiking with family and listening to Gurmat Sangeet. She was classically trained by many ragis over the years, including Bhai Avtar Singh, Bhai Ajit Singh Alankari, and Bibi Amrit Kaur. She competed and won first prize in kirtan competitions at Pittsburgh Gurdwara, among others. She knows all 31 ragas and 62 varieties of ragas denoted in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. She teaches gurmat sangeet, and has judged the Hemkunt Foundation.





**COMPETED AND WON FIRST
PRIZE IN KIRTAN
COMPETITIONS **MANPREET
KAUR SINGH** KNOWS ALL 31
RAGAS AND 62 VARIETIES
OF RAGAS DENOTED IN THE
SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB.
SHE TEACHES GURMAT
SANGEET, AND HAS JUDGED
AT THE HEMKUNT
SYMPOSIUMS.**

JUDGES

KEERTAN

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Soni Singh ★

USA

Gurmat Sangeet has always been and will remain part of Soni's life. A proud alumna of the Hemkunt Speech Competition, before she could yet speak, Soni used to hum along with Asa Di Vaar. Her Nani ji is the daughter of renowned poet, musician, and instrument-maker, Giani Gian Singh Almast ji and has taught her many of their bandishaan. Soni sings Kirtan and plays a myriad of Saaz - including strings, such as Dilruba, and she has previously both participated in and judged Kirtan competitions.

Last year, she co-organized Gaavani: the first all-day all women-led Gurmat Sangeet Raag Darbar hosted at Fremont Gurdwara Sahib, Bay Area. This year, she had the pleasure of visiting Principal Sukhwant Singh ji at his school: Baba Sucha Singh ji Gurmat Sangeet Academy, Amritsar. She was inspired by his efforts to cultivate the art of Gurmat Sangeet; hoping to instill this value in her kids, Sangeet Singh and Malaar Singh, she looks forward to their participation in future Hemkunt Speech and Kirtan competitions.

She is thankful to give back to an organization that has provided much opportunity to her throughout the decades and wishes the participants the best of luck in evoking Guru ji's Universal message - "Bhalo Bhalo Re Kirtaniya".

★





**HOPING TO INSTILL THE
VALUES OF GURMAT
SANGEET IN HER KIDS,
SANGEET SINGH AND
MALAAR SINGH, SONI
SINGH LOOKS FORWARD TO
THEIR PARTICIPATION IN
FUTURE HEMKUNT SPEECH
AND KIRTAN
COMPETITIONS.**



2023



PARTICIPANTS

★
2023
NEW YORK

SYMPOSIUM

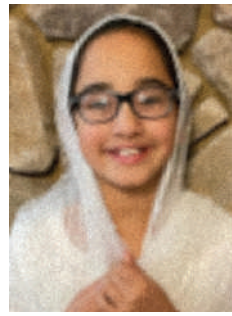
★ Big Apple ★ New York

PARTICIPANTS ★ SYMPOSIUM

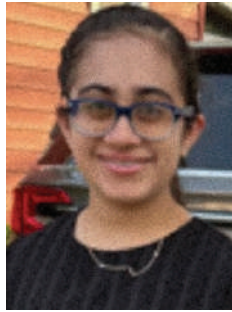
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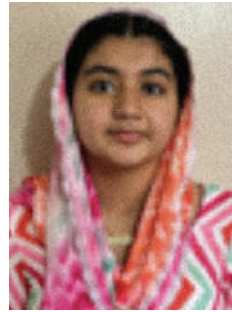
★ **Group 1**
Gurisha Kaur



★ **Group 2**
Gunisha Kaur



★ **Group 3**
Ishpreet Kaur



★ **Group 4**
Avneet Kaur



★ **Group 5**
Snoberjeet Kaur



Convenor
Jugraj Kaur



Co-Convenor
Malkeet Kaur



Co-Convenor
Harmmeet Singh

★ California, Capitol ★

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★ **Group 1**
Liv Kaur



★ **Group 2**
Sukhveer Singh



★ **Group 3**
Naveeha Kaur



★
Convenor
Paramjit Singh

★ California ★ Gadri Babbe

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★ **Group 1**
Shubhjeet Kaur



★ **Group 2**
Bhavneet Kaur



★ **Group 3**
Jasamrit Kaur



★ **Group 3**
Arpit Kaur



★ **Group 4**
Simranjot Kaur



★ **Group 5**
Gurinder Singh



Convenor
Gurdeep Singh

★ California ★ Los Angeles

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★ **Group 1**
Japjot Singh



★ **Group 2**
Shan Singh



★ **Group 3**
Reet Kaur



★ **Group 4**
Gurnam Kaur



★ **Group 5**
Inderjeet Kaur



Convenor
Channpal Singh



Co-Convenor
Kanchan Kaur

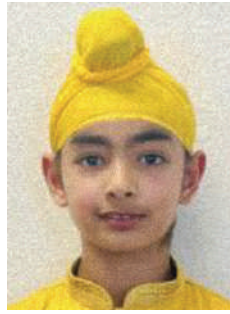
★ California ★ Northern

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★ **Group 1**
Abhinash Singh



★ **Group 2**
Prabhnoor Singh



★ **Group 3**
Munveer Singh



★ **Group 5**
Manat Kaur



Convenor
Harpreet Kaur



★ California ★ Orange County

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★ **Group 1**
Gurseerat **Singh**



★ **Group 2**
Japji **Kaur**



★ **Group 3**
Tarikka **Kaur**



★ **Group 3**
Sehaj **Kaur**



★
Convenor
Jasleen **Kaur**



★
Mentor
Dr Ginny **Kaur**

★ California ★ West Silicon Valley

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★ **Group 1**
Khivi Kaur



★ **Group 2**
Navnidh Kaur



★ **Group 3**
Prabhnoor Kaur



★ **Group 4**
Hashaan Singh



★ **Group 5**
Gurpriya Kaur



Convenor
Gurmukh Singh

★ California ★ East Silicon Valley

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★ **Group 1**
Angad Singh



★ **Group 2**
Simrat Kaur



★ **Group 3**
Harnoor Kaur



★ **Group 4**
Ashmeet Singh



Convenor
Gurminder Singh

★ California ★ Central Silicon Valley

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★ **Group 1**
Fateh Singh



★ **Group 2**
Sewak Singh



★ **Group 3**
Jazleen Kaur



★ **Group 4**
Sehaj Singh



★ **Group 5**
Geeta Kaur



Convenor
Akbal Singh

★ Florida

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★
Convenor
Inderpal Singh



★ **Group 1**
Ardeep Singh



★ **Group 2**
Suhavi Kaur



★ **Group 3**
Angad Singh



★ **Group 4**
Ruhi Kaur



★ **Group 5**
Jasmine Kaur

★ Garden State ★ New Jersey

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Convenors
Randeep Kaur
Jasdeep Singh



★ **Group 1**
Arnav Singh



★ **Group 3**
Jodhfateh Kaur



★ **Group 5**
Sehaj Kaur



★ **Group 2**
Harkiran Kaur



★ **Group 4**
Sahib Singh

★ Grand Canyon ★ Arizona

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★ **Group 1**
Adab Singh



★ **Group 1**
Mehar Kaur



★ **Group 2**
Guneet Kaur



★ **Group 3**
Sahej Kaur



★ **Group 4**
Ronak Singh



★ **Group 5**
Avneet Kaur



★ **Group 5**
Jaspreet Singh



Convenor
Dr Jaswant Singh

★ Sun Belt

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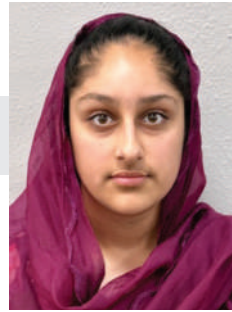
★ **Group 1**
Gurjas Singh



★ **Group 2**
Sonal Kaur



★ **Group 3**
Sahiba Kaur



★ **Group 3**
Parneet Kaur



★ **Group 4**
Harjas Singh



★ **Group 5**
Anmol Kaur

★
Convenors
Dawinder Singh
Jagtar Singh

★ Dallas ★ Texas

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Convenor
Bindu Kaur



★ **Group 1**
Jacqueleen Kaur



★ **Group 3**
Harshdeep Singh



★ **Group 2**
Jasmine Kaur



★ **Group 4**
Vedika Kaur

★ Tri State

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★ **Group 1**
Harfateh **Singh**

★ **Group 2**
Gurleen **Kaur**

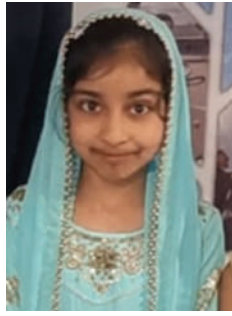
★ **Group 3**
Avneet **Kaur**

★ **Group 4**
Sahibjot **Singh**

★ London

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★ **Group 1**
Avani Kaur



★ **Group 2**
Isha Kaur



★ **Group 3**
Ishbir Singh



★ **Group 4**
Ayshmit Singh



Convenor
Sukhbir Kaur



Convenor
Parminder Kaur



Convenor
Barinder Kaur



★ Capital ★ US

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★
Convenors
 Setinder Kaur
 Herjit Kaur

- ★ **Group 1**
 Keerat Kaur

- ★ **Group 2**
 Harnoor Kaur
 Nehmat Kaur

- ★ **Group 3**
 Pahuljot Kaur

- ★ **Group 4**
 Mehar Kaur
 Kirpa Kaur

★ PARTICIPANTS ★ SYMPOSIUM

★ London ★ Guru Nanak Darbar

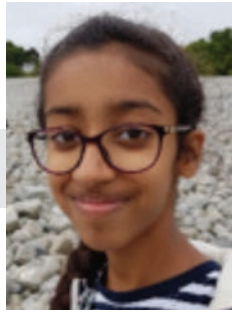
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★
Convenor
Gurmeet Singh



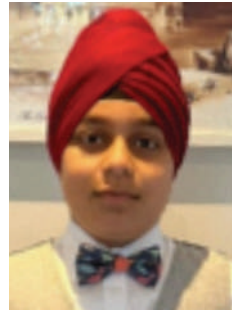
★ **Group 1**
Armaan Singh



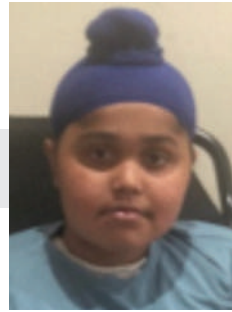
★ **Group 3**
Sirit Kaur



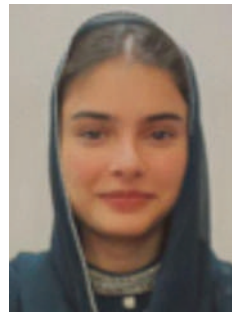
★ **Group 4**
Ishleen Kaur



★ **Group 2**
Karmann Singh



★ **Group 3**
Harkirat Singh



★ **Group 5**
Varundeeep Kaur

★ London ★ Khalsa Zone

PARTICIPANTS ★ SYMPOSIUM

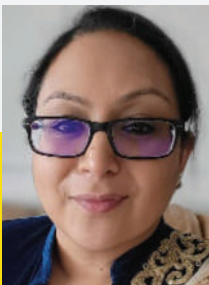
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★ **Group 1**
Harkirat Kaur



★ **Group 2**
Khushi Kaur



Co-ordinator
Guramrit Kaur



★ London ★ Mata Khivi Zone

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★ **Group 1**
Shubhdeep Singh



★ **Group 2**
Kaiyan Singh



★ **Group 3**
Arjan Singh



★ **Group 3**
Ruhani Kaur



Co-ordinator
Sharonjit Kaur

★ London ★ South

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★ **Group 2**
Jaskeerat **Kaur**



★ **Group 3**
Jujhbir **Singh**



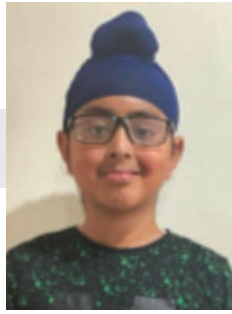
★ **Group 3**
Guradaes Pal **Singh**



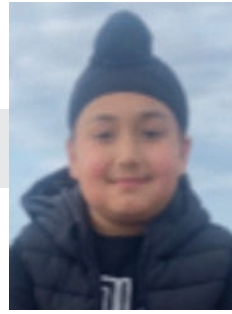
★ London ★ West

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★ **Group 1**
Japnjot Singh



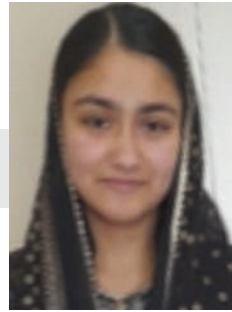
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Japnjot Singh



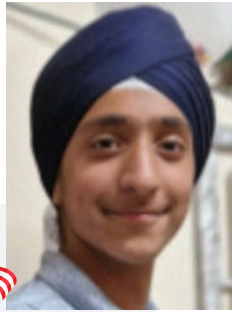
★ **Group 2**
Rajvir Surya Mehta



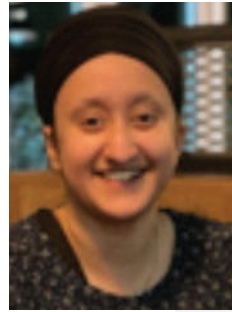
★ **Group 3**
Charanpreet Kaur



★ **Group 3**
Jot Kaur



★ **Group 4**
Amanjot Kaur



★ **Group 5**
Harneet Kiran Kaur



★ **Convenor**
Sukhraj Kiran Kaur



★ **Convenor**
Kamaljit Kaur

★ Kenya ★ Nairobi

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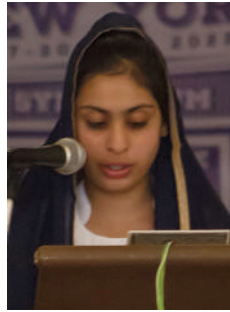
★ **Group 1**
Gurasees Kaur



★ **Group 2**
Dilawar Singh



★ **Group 3**
Navdeep Kaur



★ **Group 4**
Jasmeet Kaur



★ **Group 5**
Khalsa Sahib-Singh



Convenor
Khalsa Navjit-Kaur



Co-Convenor
Sarabjit Kaur



Mentor
Khalsa Lakhvir-Singh



Mentor
Dharam Singh



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Miri Piri ★



Group 1

Prabshurn Singh, Nameh Singh Keerat Kaur,
Anaad Kaur, Gurjas Singh

Trainer: **Khazan Singh**

Nirmolak Gurbani ★



Group 2

Preet Kaur, Hardeep Singh, Saheb Singh,
Anshveer Singh, Anureet Kaur

Trainer: **Balkar Singh**

Gurmat Kirtan School Grade 5a

**Group 3**

Sehaj Kaur, Harkeeth Singh, Insaf Singh
Ishmeet Singh, Nehmat Kaur

Trainer: **Harlove Singh**

Raj Karega Khalsa ★

**Group 4**

Gurjot Singh, Ajuni Kaur, Mahnek Singh
Pawandeep Kaur, Ranveer Singh

Trainer: **Dr. Amrita Kaur**

★ Southern Region ★ Texas

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Bairarhi Jatha



★ **Group 4**
Unnat Singh, Dashmesh Singh,
Anmol Singh, Sehajpreet Singh

Halle Yaara Halle Yaara



★ **Group 1**
Gurdeep Singh, Abir Singh, Anhad Singh,
Sahib Singh, Saaj Singh

Co-ordinator: **Tarvinder Singh**



Satgur Aayeo Saran Tuhaari ★



Group 2

Prabheleen Kaur, Harnoor Kaur, Gurbani Kaur,
Sehaj Kaur, Gurdaas Singh

Co-ordinator **Raj Kaur**

Maango Daan Thakur Naam ★



Group 2

Japnam Kaur, Manroop Kaur,
Prabhdeep Singh, Akaal Singh

Co-ordinator: **Sukhvir Singh**

Loridraa Saajan Mera

**Group 3**

Sukhpreet Kaur, Sandeep Kaur,
Harsimran Kaur, Mehar Kaur

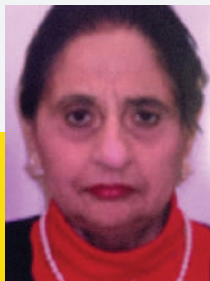
Co-ordinator: **Harjeet Kaur**

★ Eastern Zone

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Co-ordinator
Devinder Kaur

Kirpa Nidh Basoh Mere Hirdey ★



Group 2

Harnidh Kaur, Arjanveer Singh, Gurtej Singh,
Ekjot Singh, Gurvir Singh

Co-ordinator: **Gurvinder Singh**

Sun Yaar Hamaarey Sajjan ★



Group 3

Puneet Kaur, Gurleen Kaur,
Tanvi Kaur, Himmat Singh

Co-ordinator: **Kaur**

Koi Jaane Kavan Eeha Jag Meet ★



Group 3

Rashdeep Singh, Habir Singh,
Ishar Singh, Anoop Singh,
Mayher Singh

Co-ordinator: **Manavjeet Singh**

Har Joo Raakh Leho Patt Meri ★



Group 3

Avneet Kaur, Japmeet Kaur, Kudrat Kaur,
Mannat Singh, Harjot Singh

Co-ordinator **Kaur**

★ Western South

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Co-ordinator
Surinder Kaur

Kaur & Singh Academy ★



Group 2

Mokhanter Singh, Simran Kaur, Gurman Kaur,
Diane Sehaj Kaur, Anantdeep Singh--Tabla

Trainer: **Makheer Singh / Mahnek Singh**

◀ Co-ordinator: **Jatinder Kaur**

Kaur & Singh Academy ★



Group 2

Japnoor Singh, Dilnoorpreet Singh,
Balraj Kaur, Jasnam Singh--Dilruba

Trainer: **Makheer Singh / Manjeev Singh**

★ Western North

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**Group 1**

Dilnoor Kaur, Japleen Kaur, Suhavi Kaur
Raisa Kaur, Tanveer Kaur

**Group 2**

Ishmeet Kaur, Harnoor Kaur, Ramneek Kaur
Jastej Singh, Tarnveer Singh

**Group 3**

Japji Kaur, Maneet Kaur, Ishmeet Kaur
Sneha Kaur, Sahbaj Singh (Tabla)

BIG APPLE

2023





2023



ARTICLES

★
2023
NEW YORK



THE LONG JOURNEY OF SRI HEMKUNT FOUNDATION

KARAMJIT SINGH



SIGNIFICANCE OF TURBAN IN A SIKH'S LIFE

JASMEET KAUR KOCHER



'BOLE SO NIHAAL SAT SRI AKAAL!'

JASMEET KAUR KOCHER



NANAK'S FOOTSTEPS IN EAST AFRICA

KHALSA LAKHVIR-SINGH



'WAHEGURU JI KA KHALSA WAHEGURU JI KI FATEH'

JASMEET KAUR KOCHER



DARSHAN OF GURU GOBIND SINGH TO AN AFRICAN

KHALSA LAKHVIR-SINGH



SIKHI AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

JOGISHWAR SINGH, PHD



THE UNDYING SPIRIT OF CHARDI KALA

SURINDER SINGH



KEEPING SIKHISM ALIVE

MANMEET KAUR



DARSHAN-E-GURU GOBIND SINGH

KHALSA LAKHVIR-SINGH



SIKH VALUES FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

JASMEET KAUR KOCHER



KARAMJIT SINGH

VICE-PRESIDENT, SRI HEMKUNT FOUNDATION, NEW YORK

Sri Hemkunt Foundation was founded in 1980 in New York. It was established by 11 dedicated visionaries who observed that the Sikh youth living in the Western countries lacked knowledge regarding the high ideals of their religion and were therefore losing their Sikh identity.

THE LONG JOURNEY OF SRI HEMKUNT FOUNDATION

In an effort to improve the situation, the Foundation created an environment where children could learn the spiritual, moral, and religious teachings of Sikhism. Since then, the promotion of learning Punjabi, Kirtan, Gurbani, Philosophy, History and Sikh culture has been the cornerstone of the Foundation.

Objectives & Purpose

S. Shamsher Singh (1924- 2011) established the not-for-profit organization in 1980 in New York for the purpose of connecting the children growing up in the western hemisphere with Sikhi. The objective of the organization was to help children be proud of being a Sikh and also help them explain it to others who knew nothing about Sikhi. The program also included developing children's public speaking skills. These skills are vital

for children to excel in any profession they choose in life.

Children are divided into five age groups, viz, 6-8, 9-11, 12-14, 15-17, and 18-25. Age-appropriate books/ topics are assigned to each group. Participants present answers to the specific questions in a specified time from the podium. A set of three judges evaluate the speech for both the contents and presentation. Every participant is recognized with an appreciation award to encourage them. Winners are awarded additional prizes.

In 2007, we added another segment to our annual program where children are encouraged to recite Shabads in the same Raag as recorded in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Children also use string instruments (Rabab, Saranda, Taus etc.) used by Guru jees or that were used during their period.

In 2015 a third annual program was added. It is called Panthic Digital Voice. Children are trained to tell their story via digital medium. They are given a specific topic every year e.g., Vand Chhako, Kirat Karo, My Sikh Role Model, Sikh Identity, Chardi Kala etc. Children can use experiences from school, playground, home, shopping etc. and tell a story. Children are thus exposed to journalism helping them to aim for anchor positions of major networks. Only a Sikh can tell the story about Sikhs with the right perspective.

Foundation Mission, Process & Resource Development

The foundation's program is a three tier activity. The first tier is the Gurdwara level. 30 participants are required to recognize a Gurdwara as a unit, called a "Center". The person coordinating the program is called a "Center Convener". There are 75 gurdwaras spread over the USA, UK and Kenya participating in the Foundation's program. A group of 3 or more Gurdwaras constitute the second tier called a "Zone". The person coordinating a Zone's activity is called a "Zonal Convener". The first and second position holders in each age-group participate in the Zonal Symposium.

First position winners at the Zonal Symposium participate in the third and the final tier

symposium. We call it an "International Symposium". Participants from various States of the USA (New York, New Jersey, Florida, Michigan, California, Texas etc.), UK (London) and Kenya gather together at the specified venue (rotated every year) for the grand finale of the Symposium.

All activities at Center, Zonal and International level are performed by dedicated selfless Sewadars. It includes conveners, judges, time keepers and many more to conduct the program. The Foundation has not made an appeal for funds or held a fundraising event in the last four decades. The Foundation's administrative and overhead expenses during all these years have been zero. All work is performed by dedicated volunteers as Sewa. The 13 Board Members contribute annually to fund the prizes awarded to winners and participants at the international event.

Books published by Foundation

In 1980 we started with Bhai Vir Singh's books. The books were primarily in Punjabi. For some books English translation were available. The children growing up in the western hemisphere could not connect with the social context in Bhai Vir Singh's books. We switched to books written and published in India by other authors. Parents commented that these books present Guru jees' life with miraculous powers instead of

presenting the teachings based on logic and reasoning. The sewadars of the Foundation undertook the project of writing books for Groups 1, 2, and 3 based on parents/participants comments over the years. These children are very young. They are generally helped by parents and grandparents to prepare the speech. Books written by the Foundation portray the Gurus' teachings in a rational and logical manner. Permission from the Foundation is not required to use the books in Sunday Schools or by anyone else.

Success story that can be considered as truly inspiring?

Over the last 43 years, participants have excelled in various professions. We are proud to say that they have retained their Sikhi Swaroop. Gurbir Singh Grewal (Director of the SEC's Division of Enforcement, formerly Attorney General, New Jersey), Kamal Singh Kalsi (Lt. Colonel in the US Army), Ravinder Singh Bhalla (Mayor, New Jersey) are just a few examples. Some have moved on to serve in other Sikh organizations e.g., Sikh Coalition.

Memorable incidents from the competitions

In 2005 the international program was held at New York. We had invited Navdeep Singh Bains, who served as Minister of Innovation, Science, and Industry in Canada. He was very young, in his

30s, a Member of Parliament, Canada and a visibly recognizable Sikh. During his keynote speech he narrated his personal experience with the Foundation. The book was on the Life of Guru Nanak. He prepared his speech in Punjabi for an extra prize. He remembered the entire speech by heart and was confident of his preparation. When he came to the podium and started to address the audience, he blanked out upon seeing so many people in front of him. He simply said, "Guru Nanak ji was a good person" and left the podium. Since then, he has developed public speaking skills and can address the parliament with full confidence.

How do you think that the Foundation is succeeding in its mission?

Examples provided under earlier questions are proof that the Foundation is succeeding in its mission. Moreover, children of the parents who participated decades ago are participating now. Parents are convinced of the benefits of the Foundation's program.

Any new ideas and projects that the Foundation is looking at for the future?

We have written books for age groups 1, 2 and 3. One book for group 5 was co-authored by S. Bhupinder Singh, Houston, USA, and S. Paramjit Singh, Virginia, USA, and me. These are available in English and Punjabi on our website for free. We

are working on getting the illustrations prepared from young artists so that the children can better connect with them. We plan to have printed books available through Amazon at a very reasonable cost. We are also planning to have books available on Kindle.

The maximum Sikh population is in India. So what about an India Zone or may be multiple zones there?

We would love to extend the program to children in India. Immigration issues hold us back. Every year the international event is hosted in a different zone (city). Every time it is held in USA/UK, children in India would require a tourist

visa. Parents and grandparents of young children generally accompany them to the international event. Visa requirements would complicate the entire program.

However, we encourage dedicated volunteers to start this program in their country. We are ready to guide and help them in every manner possible. If needed, we are willing to visit them and provide guidance in person.

(S. Karamjit Singh, New York, USA) can be contacted for further information at email address: karamjit@hemkunt2.org.



‘BOLE SO NIHAAL SAT SRI AKAAL!’

JASMEET KAUR KOCHER

The salutation "Bole So Nihal Sat Sri Akal" is a commonly used by Sikhs, often loudly and enthusiastically in congregational settings or during religious ceremonies.

First part of the Jaikara is "Bole So Nihal" means "whoever utters shall be fulfilled". The second part "Sat Sri Akal" means "Eternal is The Great Timeless Lord". Sat Sri Akal shouted in unison, responding to the call — Bole So Nihal is a call to action, or expression of ecstatic joy or an invocation for Divine aid.

Sat Sri Akal

In literal words Sat (Sanskrit satya) means 'true', 'real' or 'eternal'; Siri is an honorific denoting 'grace' or 'majesty'; Akal means "Timeless" 'Eternal' or 'Transcending Time'. Sat Sri Akal has been used since the creation of the Khalsa. In the normal situation when two Sikhs meet, with folded hands on either side in mutual courtesy and respect they exchange greetings of Sat Sri Akal pointing out the glory of God to each other.

The combination of "Bole So Nihal" and "Sat Sri Akal" is a way for Sikhs to energize and unite themselves in the name of their faith. It is a way of showing reverence and acknowledging the shared spiritual nature of humanity. It serves as a reminder of their shared values, commitment to Sikh principles, and the victorious spirit that permeates their community. It is often used to celebrate and uplift the spirits of fellow Sikhs, reinforcing their collective identity and devotion to their beliefs.



'WAHEGURU JI KA KHALSA WAHEGURU JI KI FATEH'

JASMEET KAUR KOCHER



"WaheGuru Ji Ka Khalsa, WaheGuru Ji Ki Fateh" is a Sikh phrase that holds great significance and is commonly used by Sikhs in various contexts.

"WaheGuru" is a term used by Sikhs to refer to God. It is a combination of two words: "Wahe" meaning wonderful or awe-inspiring, and "Guru" meaning teacher or enlightener. So, WaheGuru can be understood as the wondrous and enlightening presence of the divine.

"Ji" is an honorific suffix used in the Sikh tradition to show respect towards God. It is added after the name or title to express reverence and humility.

"Ka Khalsa" translates to "belonging to the Khalsa." The Khalsa is a community of initiated Sikhs who have undergone a special ceremony called "Amrit Sanchar." They commit themselves to living according to the Sikh code of conduct and upholding the principles of Sikhism. Referring to oneself as "Ka Khalsa" expresses a sense of belonging and identification with the Khalsa community. They are dedicated to living according to the principles of Sikhism, such as honesty, equality, and selfless service.

Ki Fateh: "Ki Fateh" means "victory belongs to." It signifies the triumph of the divine and the ultimate victory of righteousness. By saying "WaheGuru Ji Ki Fateh," Sikhs acknowledge that all victories and successes come from the divine and attribute any triumphs to God's grace.

So, when Sikhs say "WaheGuru Ji Ka Khalsa, WaheGuru Ji Ki Fateh," they are expressing their devotion to the wondrous and enlightening presence of God (WaheGuru) and recognizing the Khalsa community. They also affirm that victory belongs to God and acknowledge the divine's role in their achievements. It is a way of affirming their dedication to living according to Sikh principles and seeking God's blessings in all aspects of life.





SIKHI AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

JOGISHWAR SINGH, PHD (Switzerland)



Sikhism, a monotheistic religion that originated in the Punjab region of India in the 15th century, has a strong tradition of environmental protection and preservation. This is rooted in the belief that the natural world is a manifestation of the Divine and that all living things have equal value so they should be treated with respect and compassion.

The Sikh holy scripture, the Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji (SGGS), contains numerous references to the importance of preserving the environment and living in harmony with Nature. For example, it states that “The earth is a sacred place and all living things are part of the Divine”. Also, “The creation of the world is a wonder; the protection of all is the duty of the Lord”. These teachings remind Sikhs that the natural world is not just a resource for human use but a sacred creation that should be protected and respected. Sikhs are also encouraged to engage in practices that promote environmental stewardship, such as planting trees, protecting wildlife and conserving water. Many Sikh organisations and Gurdwaras around the world have implemented environmental initiatives, such as solar panel installation, rainwater harvesting and recycling programs. These actions demonstrate the practical application of Sikh teachings on the environment and the importance placed on preserving the earth for future generations. Furthermore, Sikhi promotes the principle of “Sarbat da Bhala” which means well-being of all. It emphasises on the idea that the well-being of the human race and the well-being of the environment are interconnected. This principle encourages Sikhs to

consider the impact of their actions on not just themselves but on all living beings and the environment as a whole. It also highlights the interconnectedness of all living things and the importance of working towards the betterment of all. Sikh teachings on the environment also extend to the concept of “Sewa” or selfless service. This includes serving and protecting the environment, as well as other living beings, as a form of devotion to the Divine. Many Sikhs participate in volunteer work to clean up local parks and rivers, plant trees and take other actions to protect and preserve the environment. One of the most important examples of Sikhs’ dedication to environmental protection used to be their commitment to the protection of forests, which had been a traditional practice of the community for centuries. Sikh history is replete with events in Lakhi jungle or Machhiwara jungle. Punjab used to have such large forests which provided shelter to Sikh groups fleeing genocide at the hands of Mughal rulers in Delhi and their factotums in Punjab. So many idioms used in Sikh daily life originate from those times of life spent in the forests of Punjab. Today when the forest cover in Punjab has fallen to below 5%, it is time to renew our tradition of playing an active role in such protection, both in India and overseas. In India, Sikhs should become instrumental in trying to preserve the natural forests of the Punjab region which has been considered as one of the most bio-diverse areas in the country. A very commendable recent effort in this context has been the action by mainly Sikh and other civil society groups which saved the Mattewara forest area from destruction which had been planned in order for an industrial complex to be set up there. Sustained action by Sikh social activists, supported by some others, succeeded in forcing the Punjab government to abandon the industrial project envisaged for Mattewara.

More such efforts need to be initiated. The order by the Punjab government to stop the Marlbro’s Ethanol Plant near Zira has also thrown light on efforts by Sikh civil society to curb activities which pose a health hazard to lives of people by polluting their drinking water supplies and fields. The Green Revolution in Punjab has in time become not a boon but a bane through unbridled use of chemical fertilizers, coupled with excessive use of groundwater which has caused severe shortages of supply. Pessimistic predictions say that Punjab will run out of groundwater by 2050 if not earlier, if its use is not better regulated to protect the environment. So far, governments in Punjab have mostly paid lip service to environmental protection. They now need to take strict action to slow down environmental degradation which has turned vast areas of Punjab into hotbeds of people suffering from cancer, depleted groundwater sources and chemical fertilizer poisoning of fields leading to diminishing returns in agriculture. Central governments in Delhi have always discriminated against Punjab by not setting up any mass employment industries there. The usual excuse being that Punjab is a border state. So is Gujarat for that matter but so much heavy industry has been set up there. I have observed that the young generation is distancing itself in large numbers from religious belief in several

countries and religions. Youngsters are raising questions about religion and politics. Greta Thunberg and other young people in Western Europe have made environmental protection a major issue even outside this area. For example, the Green Party had its best ever electoral score in Switzerland in the federal parliament elections in October 2019 with a lot of its elected members being 35 years old or under. Young people are now putting pressure on ruling dispensations that urgent steps should be taken for environmental protection to counter climate change / global warming, keeping in view their future. Politics as usual is no more an option in several countries. Climate change and global warming have become topics of daily discourse even if some people like Donald Trump continue to label these as fiction. Denying these facts is like a stork burying its head in the sand. Temperatures are rising every summer in the Arctic, the ice cap is melting at a fast rate. Poor countries like Honduras and the Philippines have faced multiple hurricanes in the past months. Even the US, where the former President tried not just to overturn the results of a general election but also refuses to accept the scientific evidence of accelerating climate change, has seen very high financial and human life losses in California due to massive wildfires and unprecedented flooding. I see around my own house in Switzerland that less and less snow seems to be falling every winter. India is being hit with stronger floods, heavy rains and draughts. No purpose is served by denying this. Joshimath town in Uttarakhand has started rapidly sinking because of indiscriminate road building and other construction activity. In this context, we need to spread the environmental protection message of Sikhism, so well contained in the message of its founder, Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji. He says in the concluding lines of the Sikh morning prayer, the Japji Sahib: "Air, water and earth; Of these we are made; Air like the Guru's word gives the breath of life, To the babe born to the great Mother Earth, Sired by the Waters, The day and night our nurses be, That watch us in our infancy, In their laps we play, The world is our playground, The Sikh Bulletin.

Our acts right and wrong at Thy court shall come to judgement, Some be seated near Thy seat, some ever kept distant, The toils have ended of those that have worshipped Thee, O Nanak, their faces are lit with joyful radiance – many others they set free" (Page 50 of "Japji – The Immortal Prayer-Chant, Translated by Khushwant Singh, Abhinav Publications) Most of us Sikhs recite these lines like parrots every morning but how many of us try to act on these words? Not only here, Guru Nanak Dev ji talks about Mother Nature also in Asa ki Vaar. He uses the word "Kudrat" (Nature in its broadest sense) in many stanzas. "Kudrat" here is synonymous with the Divine Life Force, Almighty Waheguru. Here is an example from Asa ki Vaar where the word Kudrat has been translated as "His" meaning the Almighty: "By His Power we see, By His Power we hear, By His Power the Nether Worlds exist, and the Akashic Ethers, By His Power the entire creation exists, By His Power the Vedas and the Puranas exist, and the holy scriptures of the Jewish, Christian and Islamic religions, By His Power all deliberations exist, By His Power we eat, drink and dress, By His Power all love exists, By His Power come the species of

all kinds and colors, By His Power the living beings of the world exist, By His Power wind, water and fire exist, By His Power earth and dust exist, Everything is in Your Power, Lord; You are the all-powerful Creator, Your Name is holiest of the Holy, O Nanak, through the Command of His Will, He beholds and pervades the creation; He is absolutely unrivalled” (Source: manpreet159.wordpress.com) In recent years, many Sikhs have also been working to raise awareness about climate change and its impact on the environment. They have been active in organising and participating in rallies, marches and other events to call for action on climate change and advocate for sustainable living. Sikh institutions like the SGPC have been a miserable failure in highlighting the nexus between the Sikh religion and environmental protection. Mired in petty politics, they have betrayed the community’s trust. Sikh civil society, both within and outside India, needs to overcome SGPC failure to lead. A large number of Sikhs have settled outside India. They now constitute a global presence. They need to actively inform their local communities about the environment friendly essential teachings of their religion. Proper knowledge of this aspect can help to reduce occasional hostility against Sikhs, arising out of ignorance about its basic principles and the physical appearance of the Khalsa. Sikhs living outside India very often indulge in philanthropy in Punjab by setting up schools, hospitals etc. They need to focus much more on the compatibility of environmental protection and the Sikh religion in channelling their funds for such works. In conclusion, Sikhism is fully compatible with environmental protection, as its teachings emphasise the importance of living in harmony with Nature and preserving the environment for future generations. Sikhs are encouraged to take action to protect the planet and its resources. Many Sikh organisations and Gurdwaras are actively engaged in environmental initiatives. Whether it is through planting trees, conserving water, or raising awareness about climate change, Sikhs are working to make a positive impact on the environment and ensure a sustainable future for all.



KEEPING SIKHISM ALIVE



MANMEET KAUR

"He alone is a man who keeps his word not that he has one thing in the heart and another on the tongue." -Guru Gobind Singh Ji

In today's demanding and fast moving world where everyone is in a hurry to reach great heights quickly, we have forgotten the value of our culture and the role of scriptures in our lives.

There are many religions and cultures which have eventually lost themselves in the process of embracing modernism. It all begins when parents feel they don't need to pass it down to their children. As individuals adapt to new environments, they forget to embrace and imbibe the values that a particular religion or culture offers.

This is where the loss of a heritage begins. Soon enough throughout generations, many heritages are lost such as Sikhism. Parents bring sudden changes in a child's life by bringing them to a different country. In the process of getting better education

and job opportunities, children as well as the parents lose part of their heritage by not speaking Punjabi. Gradually, there is big shift in the cultures one is rooted to and the one adapts to. Children are taught a broad set of values and norms which they now consider their heritage.

These days children have no idea about our history or language, they struggle to speak in their own mother tongue, struggle to read Gurmukhi. The new generation faces challenges in answering anything being questioned about their culture. Children get influenced by other cultures due to lack of knowledge about own culture which does not get better with the rampant immigrations of our fellow community members to places that are not even aware of SIKHISM. The absence of the youth of our religion from the Gurdwaras is the biggest factor in making the young minds of our community extremely distant and negligent of our culture. At the end of the day the responsibility of spreading awareness among the youth of our community comes down to our well learned and experienced elders to guide us and show us the way to keeping our Sikhism alive.

Educating the coming generations and bringing awareness of our religion has become a priority. In conclusion, the most rich and valuable education a parent can give their child is that of heritage and values, which we must preserve, if not for ourselves but for the generations to come.



SIKH VALUES FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

JASMEET KAUR KOCHER

Sikhism is a religion that emphasizes the practice of certain values in everyday life. Here are some key Sikh values and how they can be applied:

- **Naam Japna** (Meditating on God's Name): Sikhs believe in remembering and meditating on the name of God throughout the day. This practice helps cultivate a sense of mindfulness and spiritual connection in everyday life.

- **Kirat Karna** (Earning an Honest Living): Sikhs are encouraged to engage in honest and ethical work, earning their livelihood through hard work and integrity. They are expected to contribute positively to society and avoid exploitation or dishonesty.

- **Vand Chakna** (Sharing with Others): Sikhs are taught to be selfless and share their blessings with others. They are encouraged to engage in acts of charity, donate to those in need, and serve the community through selfless service (seva).

- **Equality and Social Justice:** Sikhism promotes the values of equality and social justice. Sikhs are expected to treat all individuals with respect, regardless of their caste, creed, gender, or social status. They are encouraged to challenge discrimination and work towards creating a more just and equal society.

- **Seva (Selfless Service):** Seva is an integral part of Sikhism. Sikhs are encouraged to engage in

selfless service, both within the Sikh community and in society at large. This can involve volunteering at gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship), participating in community outreach programs, or helping those in need.

- **Humility (Nimrata):** Sikhs are encouraged to cultivate humility and avoid arrogance or pride. They strive to lead a modest lifestyle and treat others with humility and respect.

- **Compassion and Forgiveness:** Sikhs believe in practicing compassion and forgiveness towards others. They are encouraged to show kindness, empathy, and forgiveness, even in challenging situations.

These values are not limited to specific rituals or practices but are meant to be applied in daily life, at work or socially, shaping the behavior and interactions of Sikhs with each other and the world. By embodying these values, Sikhs seek to lead a complete and fulfilling life while being deeply grounded to their faith.



SIGNIFICANCE OF TURBAN IN A SIKH'S LIFE

JASMEET KAUR KOCHER

The turban holds immense significance in a Sikh's life, representing their faith, identity, and commitment to upholding the principles of Sikhi. It is not merely a piece of cloth, but a crown that adorns the head of a Sikh, symbolizing their connection to the divine and their dedication to living a life of righteousness.

In the words of Guru Granth Sahib, the holy (Living Guru) scripture of Sikhi, the turban is described as a mark of honor and grace. Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of Sikhi, writes, **"Praise the Lord with every breath, and wear the turban as your decoration"** (Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 1084). This quote highlights the turban's significance as a visible representation of one's devotion to the divine and a reminder to live a life in accordance with Sikh principles.

The turban also serves as a symbol of sovereignty and equality. Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth Sikh Guru, writes in Guru Granth Sahib, **"Recognize all human race as one"** (Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 611). This teaching emphasizes the importance of equality and the rejection of discrimination based on social or cultural differences. By wearing the turban, Sikhs demonstrate their commitment to treating all individuals with respect and dignity, regardless of their background or status.

Furthermore, the turban is a sign of discipline and self-control. Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the fifth Sikh Guru, writes, **"With every breath, remain**



detached, and wear the Lord's turban" (Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 36). This quote highlights the turban's role in reminding Sikhs to maintain discipline and control over their thoughts, words, and actions. It encourages them to live a life of integrity and to constantly strive for spiritual growth.

The turban is also a means of protection and courage. Guru Gobind Singh Ji writes, *"Wear the turban of true contentment, and you shall find the Lord God. He shall bless you with honor, and no one shall have power over you"* (Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 1084). This verse highlights the turban's association with strength and fearlessness. It reminds Sikhs that by staying true to their faith and principles, they can find inner strength and overcome any challenges they may face.

Moreover, the turban fosters a sense of community and unity among Sikhs. It acts as a unifying symbol, transcending social and cultural differences. Guru Amar Das Ji, the third Sikh Guru, writes, *"Wear the turban of the Lord, and all your affairs shall be resolved"* (Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 36). This quote emphasizes the turban's role in bringing Sikhs together and creating a sense of belonging. It encourages Sikhs to support and uplift one another, fostering a spirit of unity and solidarity within the Sikh community.

In conclusion, the turban holds deep significance in a Sikh's life. It is a visible representation of their faith, identity, and commitment to Sikh principles. With quotes from Guru Granth Sahib, we can understand that **the Sikh turban symbolizes honor, grace, equality, discipline, courage, and community**. It serves as a constant reminder to Sikhs to live a life of righteousness, humility, and service to others. The turban is not merely a piece of cloth but a sacred crown that carries the spiritual and cultural heritage of Sikhi.





NANAK'S FOOTSTEPS IN EAST AFRICA

KHALSA LAKHVIR-SINGH (Kenya)

A recent discovery suggests that Guru Nanak may have travelled as far as East Africa, besides other parts of the already documented parts of the world. A small settlement, a hundred miles from Kampala, Uganda, is named 'Bamu Nanika' (Bamu may be a short form of Baba Mungu – *Mungu* means God in the East African language of Swahili) which the locals there revere for its spiritual powers. They say that a holy man, not one of their own, sat on a certain spot there and meditated. The spot is covered in a bark-like material and not shown to anyone. Prayers are done in their traditional way. It is also said that all of Uganda's Kabakas (traditional kings) visited the 'shrine' to receive blessings upon their advent of rule.





It is theorised that Guru Nanak may be traversed into Africa down from Arabia, sailed by boat through the River Nile in Egypt and walked through the wilds of Africa and settled in Uganda for a while before making his way back to India from the centuries' old Kenyan coastal town of Mombasa.

It is even believed that in a sakhi, Bhai Mardana asked Guru Nanak why the locals had curly hair. That faintly suggests Guru Nanak's visit to Africa.

The area is arid with no fresh water for miles. But only a few hundred meters away is a small spring of fresh water which the locals do not allow anyone to drink or wash hands with. The water is somehow used, like 'giving amrit' to devotees who are all Africans.

When asked about who they revere the place for, the locals say that, 'He is not one of ours, but there is some great spiritual power here'.

The locals there know not who the Sikhs are, we are strangers to them, but with further research, there is a high possibility of adding Africa's name to the places Guru Nanak travelled to.





DARSHAN OF GURU GOBIND SINGH TO AN AFRICAN

KHALSA LAKHVIR-SINGH (Kenya)



Gurdwara Makindu Sahib (rooted since 1898) is considered by Kenya's Sikhs the Harmandar Sahib of Africa because of the sense of serenity it provides to travellers, visitors and devotees from around the world - and for that kind of blessed feeling not felt as strongly in other places certainly has a psiritual reason behind it.

When the Uganda Railway was completed in 1902 at Port Florence (which is now Kisumu, Kenya), Makindu played a prominent role as a service point on the railway's advance from Mombasa. Dozens of artisans and train drivers were Sikhs and the station at Makindu became a place of religious fervour. Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims would gather together in the evenings and sing the praises of God. They did so under a tree, the spot where the current Gurdwara now stands. It is also believed that the Gurdwara was funded by Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike.

The early Gurdwara was a tin-roof little hut , but when the Railway moved on from Makindu, the service point went into disuse and became unimportant. The Sikhs naturally moved along too, leaving their behind their tiny Gurdwara under the watchful eye of an African servant who would clean the Gurdwara. Sikh devotees who passed along the Gurdwara would leave offerings of money by dropping it through the locked Gurdwara's window.

As the years rolled on and the Railway complete, the Sikhs settled in Kenya. Slowly, they began to contemplate the idea of reviving the small Gurdwara in Makindu. Akhand Paths began to be organised on regular weekends, with families travelling 200 miles or so, in rough murram red-soil earth. There, they would gather and pray, prepare langar and socialise. Over the years, the Gurdwara began to be developed.

It is in 1926 that a solid foundation was laid. The Gurdwara then became a fully-functional one - with a langar hall, prayer hall and tiny rooms of accommodation for the gyanis and sevadaars of the Gurdwara. It also began to provide free meals and rest for weary travellers who would stop by at the Gurdwara for a night or two on their journeys to and from Nairobi and Mombasa.

A copy of the Guru Granth Sahib that survived a mysterious fire which burnt down the whole Gurdwara (probably before 1926) is still there today. I was fortunate to obtain the darshan of the Guru Granth Sahib at a Sikh's residence in Mombasa. On it's first page, the then-Granthi of the Gurdwara recorded, in his own handwriting, exactly what had happened that day, and how miraculously, the Guru Granth Sahib was untouched by the tragedy to the Gurdwara.

An African sevadaar (known only as Gwalo) of the Gurdwara once claimed that he saw, in the night awoken from his sleep, a figure on a white horse. The horseman approached him and spoke to him, telling him not to speak to anyone about the incident of his visit. The startled and shaken man could not believe his eyes and was so scared that he he told the first person he saw the following morning. Asked who the man on the horse was, the African man pointed to a painting of Guru Gobind Singh which was displayed in the Gurdwara and said, 'That was him! Exactly like the was is there and so was the white horse!' The incident spread through the Sikh community like wild fire and soon people began to come more often to the Gurdwara, regardless of the miles that separated them from it. The incident also prompted the Sant Baba Puran Singh Kerichowale (founder, Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha) to lead Gursikhs to gather at the Gurdwara regularly, and serve it by prayer, langar and cleaning. The Gurdwara had been almost forgotten and neglected when Guru Gobind Singh's incident occurred.

That was not the only incident of the darshan of Guru Gobind Singh at Makindu Sahib. People claim to have heard, in the silent of night, to have heard the approach of horses, just outside the Gurdwara. The sounds were akin to an army, stopping for the night. They claimed that they heard sounds of a kitchen being put in place, like langar was being prepared.

Evidently, the incident was believed to be another darshan of the Guru, stopping by the shrine.

In yet another event, an amazing first-time encounter happened with a member of the Istri Sabha during the early years of the Gurdwara. A lady who was reading the Guru Granth Sahib in the night, lit by only a kerosene lamp (there was no electricity there then), witnessed in the shadow falling on the Guru Granth Sahib. The figure, she recalled, was of someone doing the 'chaur' over the Sikh Scriptures. The figure was, by description, none other than Guru Gobind Singh.

A European visitor narrated how she had stopped at the Gurdwara Sahib for the night on her journey from Mombasa back to Nairobi, and said she had never felt so peaceful in her life before. She even felt the presence of someone seated in the passenger seat as she prepared to drive on the following morning. 'I'm not sure who that was, but I am certain there was someone there,' she explained. 'I didn't get scared, though, I took it as a good omen, like someone was keeping a protective watch over me as i embarked on my journey.'

Like this lady, there are thousands of people who stop by the Gurdwara on their journeys along the busy Mombasa Highway. The Gurdwara attracts people of all races and colour - Hindus, Muslims and Christians. They all drive in like it was home. They always find a meal waiting for them and accommodation to take rest in. They feel no discrimination, or even the slightest hesitation that they are walking through a Gurdwara. It's a power there, I believe, that brings them here - a power that sees no differences. All feel the same bliss, as though they are visiting a Sikh Temple, but walking through God's very own garden.

Through countless other testimonies, is is believed that whatever one asks for at this Gurdwara, it is granted. Wishes have come true, prayers have been answered, if you come with pure intentions, cloaked in humility. Akhand Paths are regularly done there, and requests come from as far away from Europe and Australia where ex-Kenya Sikhs are now settled, and yet remember the beloved Gurdwara they had to leave behind. Had it been in their grasp, they surely would have taken it with them!





THE UNDYING SPIRIT OF CHARDI KALA

SURINDER SINGH

Chardi Kala originates from Sikhism which means to attain and maintain a psychological state of eternal optimism and joy. It means to always have a positive outlook on life, irrespective of life situations. Hence, the state where the mind is buoyant even when the going gets tough, because it's easy to stay positive when everything is running smoothly.

So, How can you attain Chardi Kalaa? Or positive outlook on life. Who is there to guide you..? Where can you get it? Why is it Important.

Our Eternal Living Sri Guru Granth Sahib is our guide where all the answers are available.

ਵਿਣੁ ਤੁਧੁ ਹੋਰੁ ਜਿ ਮੰਗਣਾ ਸਿਰਿ ਦੁਖਾ ਕੈ ਦੁਖ ॥
ਦੇਹਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੀਆ ਉਤਰੈ ਮਨ ਕੀ ਭੁਖ ॥

*To ask for any other than You, Lord, is the most miserable of miseries.
Please bless me with Your Name, and make me content; may the hunger of
my mind be satisfied.*

Most important part is Acceptance. Acceptance is as is and unconditional. Acceptance has its own principles you cannot change their behavior or habits. Or preordained, If you try to change there will be negative energy which travels around you in ten folds. But if you accept as is then there is a positive energy travels in twenty folds.

ਬੀਸ ਬਿਸਵੇ ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨੈ ॥

One who obeys the Guru's Teachings one hundred per cent

When you accept Guru's teachings through Naam Simran total loyalty and Honesty to Guru ji will lead you to eternal bliss Of CHARDI KALAA.

ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮਿ ਮਨੁ ਲਾਗਾ ॥ ਜਮੁ ਲਜਾਇ ਕਰਿ ਭਾਗਾ ॥

The Messenger of Death has run away in shame.

Acceptance of Naam makes you fearless with out hate, state of positive outlook and CHARDI KALAA.

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀਕਲਾ ॥ ਤੇਰੇ ਭਾਣੇ ਸਰਬੱਤ ਦਤ ਬਲਾ॥

Naam is Chardi Kalaa and Acceptance of his Hukam is CHARDI KALAA.

Acceptance is not a compromise, not a trade, unconditional acceptance of Guru's Teachings.





DARSHAN-E-GURU GOBIND SINGH

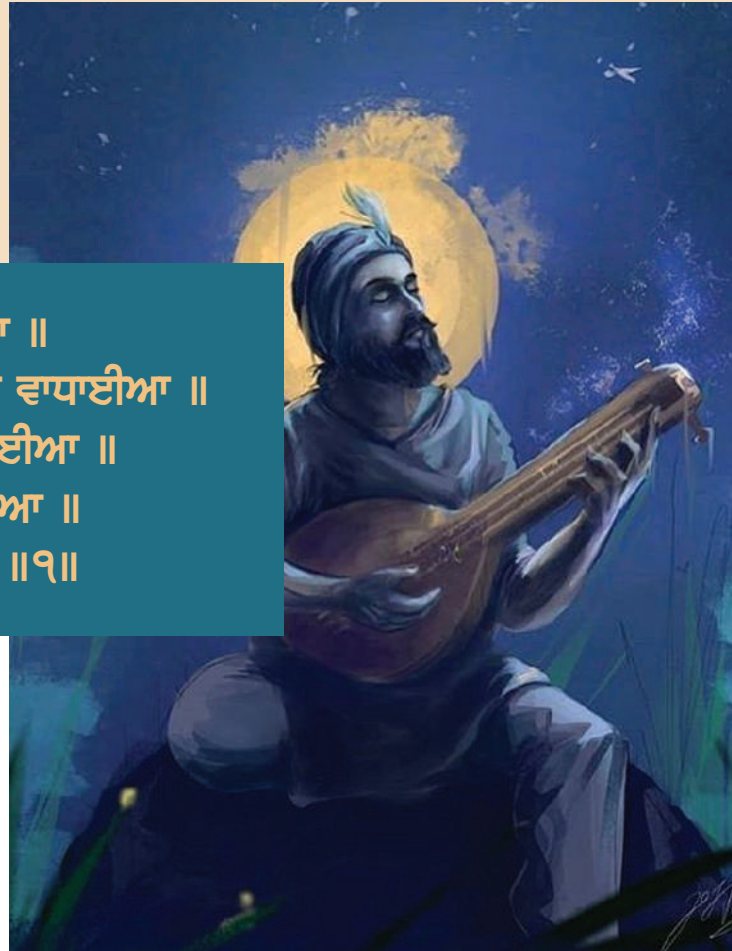
KHALSA LAKHVIR-SINGH (Kenya)

ਅਨੰਦੁ ਭਇਆ ਮੇਰੀ ਮਾਏ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਮੈ ਪਾਇਆ ॥
ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਤ ਪਾਇਆ ਸਹਜ ਸੇਤੀ ਮਨਿ ਵਜੀਆ ਵਾਧਾਈਆ ॥
ਰਾਗ ਰਤਨ ਪਰਵਾਰ ਪਰੀਆ ਸਬਦ ਗਾਵਣ ਆਈਆ ॥
ਸਬਦੋ ਤ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਹਰੀ ਕੇਰਾ ਮਨਿ ਜਿਨੀ ਵਸਾਇਆ ॥
ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਹੋਆ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਮੈ ਪਾਇਆ ॥੧॥

Apni akhaan bandh karke, akhiaa meech
ke, apne mann rahin, apni surt nu uss
pavitar dharti teh haazar karo, jis pavitar
dharti teh mera Satguru 1699 tohn saadi
udeek vich kharra hai.

Jis ne Satguru nu palaya, usdi Sikhi nu
kamalaya, fer os Sikh teh Guru vich koi
faasla nai rehnda. Dono ik ho jande ne.
Mill jande ne, jivein joti jot naal, pani sang
pani naal, suraj kiran naal.

ਸੂਰਜ ਕਿਰਣਿ ਮਿਲੇ ਜਲ ਕਾ ਜਲੁ ਹੂਆ ਰਾਮ ॥
ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਲੀ ਸੰਪੂਰਨੁ ਥੀਆ ਰਾਮ ॥



One of the most misunderstood and misrepresented of all the 10 Gurus of the Sikhs, yet he established the most enduring and unequalled legacies in the annals of world history when he declared the Will of Nanak as the ultimate Hukam for his Sikhs - to entrust their body, mind and soul only to Shabad Guru - Guru Granth Sahib.

Besides that, he led the Sikhs as Guru from the age of just nine to his last days - a total of 33 untiring years that he employed in guiding and protecting humanity - the very mission of every other Nanak before him. Yet, he is remembered, celebrated and venerated by millions for what he accomplished, not for himself, but for the downtrodden, meek and oppressed - bringing revolutionary change of mindset to a populace that would stand the test of time - all in a relatively short lifespan of just 42 years.

The man who towers above all but is found at the feet of the humble, and who turned the unassuming into born immortals was none other than Guru Gobind Singh, the man who in 1699 played a miracle on the minds of his countrymen in a way that they can still stand before the mirror and before men of the world and they would see none other than the Guru himself in their reflection.

Nanak lived 239 years on this mortal realm - from his first bodily manifestation to his tenth, from a humble and trekking saintly figure to the immovable solidly figure in the form of Shah-e-Shenshah Guru Gobind Singh. Each form revealed what we would finally be in the mold of his ultimate creation, the Khalsa, the intended vision of Nanak himself.

In every bodily form of Nanak, his Khalsa can experience him in flesh and blood so long as the Khalsa live by the countless breaths of Nanak's wisdom.

As the Khalsa, we have the greatest and closest relation one can ever have with the Guru, for we become his very own.

ਮਾਲਸਾ ਮੇਰੋ ਸਜਨ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਰਾ

When Guru Gobind Singh called upon his Sikhs to assemble at Anandpur Sahib in the early hours of Vaisakh in 1699, little did anyone realise what wondrous play was about to unfold before their very eyes. The Nanak who they knew of and who stated in Shabad Guru.

ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ ॥
ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ ॥
ਇਤੁ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰੀਜੈ ॥
ਸਿਰੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਾਣਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ॥

Besides putting the head of the Sikh to the test, Nanak, in his tenth physical appearance, was about to give the greatest gift to one who heeded his call - his very self.

When one Sikh after another arose amongst the crowds of thousands—many of who sat aghast and others taking to their heels—to stand and be counted when the Guru's voice thundered for a head to meet the steel of his brandished, steel-sharp sword, the heavens fell silent as the land of the holy saints was to be awashed with their blood and paradoxically bring back the lifeless to life.

The Guru and the Sikh, one after the other, unflinchingly stood before each other, one with his head raised and the other with his head bowed - and with a single lightning blow, the head of the Sikh fell at the hallowed feet of the Guru.

But when the Guru's divine sword had filled its thirst with five heads, they were brought back to life - all in full view of thousands. What was once a scene of confusion and fear turned into awe and wonder.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਾਰਿ ਜੀਵਾਲੇ ॥

There was no ambiguity left in anyone's mind that the Guru played no tricks with them, hid nothing from them and what he asked for, he took - but in return, he gave back more than what they gave - in exchange of dread, fearlessness; in exchange of doubt, faith; in exchange of loss, gain.



Newly infused with life and taken away to prepare them in their new spiritual and physical forms, the Guru presented to the crowds waiting with baited breath what next the Guru would inspire them with, one could hardly tell the Guru from the five. Not only were they decked out like the Guru, but so was the glow on their faces, radiant like the Guru himself.

Here, the Guru presented multiple duplications of his own self, unmistakably complete and a reflection in themselves what the Guru was. Such was the power that day, that it continues to live amongst us even to this day.

Nanak da chamatkar.

By preparing the Khalsa, who would be dead to the world but alive to the Word, complete in both outward and inner identity of Shabad Guru's wisdom, Nanak's mission was climaxed when, through Shabad Guru, let no one remain lowly but instead raised each to his level by transforming a mere Sikh to Gursikh; Bani to Guru; a human to a devte; a mortal to akaal; a khalis to Khalsa; and Vaisakh to Vaisakhi.

The condition to see the Guru in ourselves and before our selves still remains - to unconditionally give to the Guru what we consider as precious to ourselves and in return receive what the Guru deems invaluable for us.

ਬਿਨਵੰਤਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਭਈ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਮਿਲੇ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ॥

Prays Nanak, I have become immaculate and pure; I have met the Imperishable Lord God.





2023





HEMKUNT FOUNDATION

40+ YEARS - NEW YORK CITY



MR & MRS. PARAMJIT SINGH BEDI

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Chairman: Afghanistan Committee of GSC

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh !

First of all I would like to congratulate the whole team of Hemkunt foundation on the 40th year celebration and for their selfless & excellent services to give Sikhi education to our youth. More than 40 years ago S. Shamsher Singh Ji thought of giving Sikhi education to youth who are living abroad in USA and other foreign countries. He started Hemkunt Foundation to educate Sikh Youth.

By the grace of Waheguru Ji, this year symposium is making a history where Sikh youth are coming from London, Kenya and more than seven states of USA

Bedi family would like to congratulate Hemkunt Symposium participants for making it to the final level of symposium. You all should be very proud of yourself for attending this event and spreading message of Sikhi. I also want to thank all the parents who bring their children for this symposium. I also like to thank whole team of this year for their hard work for the success of this event under the super vision of Bhainji Jugraj Kaur ji for last 6 months.

Paramjit Singh Bedi





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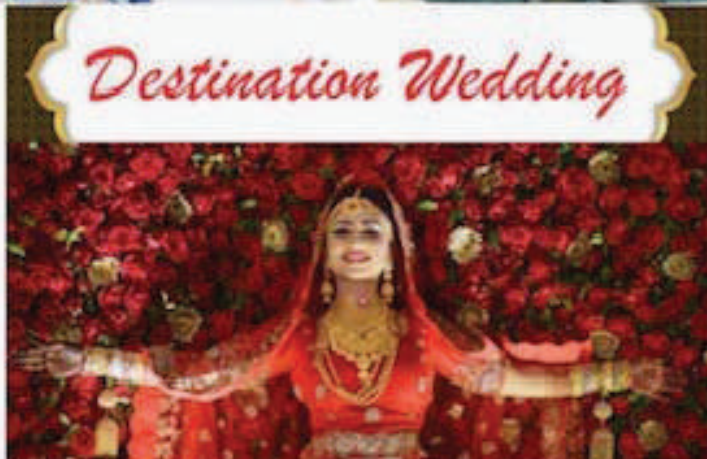
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SONNY SINGH



Sonny Singh is a Brooklyn-based musician, educator, and activist. Simultaneously spiritual and rebellious, Sonny's music is a reminder that hope, love, and devotion are crucial to our struggles and our collective survival. Sonny's debut solo album is entitled *Chardi Kala*, the Sikh concept of revolutionary eternal optimism. *Gothamist* calls it "utterly irresistible."

JazzTimes calls Sonny's music, "vibrant, ebullient, and energized...a prayer for our ailing world." *Live Mint* says, "Singh has done that rarest of rare things as a musician—he has actually charted new ground, pushing the idea of South Asian fusion music down a new, previously unexplored side path."

As a singer and trumpet player, Sonny has been central to the sound and raw energy of Red Baraat since the band's inception in 2008, touring globally and recording 5 studio albums. He released his debut solo album, *Chardi Kala*, in May 2022. *Chardi Kala* is a return to Sonny's Punjabi & Sikh roots, but with the lens he's developed over the course of his life as a touring musician, educator, and activist. His new music has been featured on GRAMMY.com, NPR Music, Rolling Stone India, HuffPost, Songlines Magazine, and WNYC's New Sounds. Sonny's band has performed at the Brooklyn Museum, MASSMoCA, O+ Festival, Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), and The White House for President Joe Biden's 2023 celebration of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage.





2023



OUR JOURNEY SO FAR



CANADA

1993



USA

1989

2009

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