

Summer 2016 Issue

(April – July 2016)



Chairman's Message

By Permvir Singh

Respected Sadh Sangat Ji,

With Waheguru's amazing Grace and your support – on 2016 Vaisakhi the current Management Committee took over the Gurdwara Sahib sewa. On this auspicious day the Sangat inaugurated the newly-renovated Langar kitchen and the Akand Path room; it is now appreciated and regularly used by all. On behalf of the Sangat, I must add "We appreciate the efforts of all the sewadars who coordinated this construction effort – Thank you".

At present, the Gurdwara has four resident Bhai Jis who follow the Sikh Rehat Maryada. They are assigned various responsibilities, and are also available for religious services at homes. The SFV organization is in 'Charh-di-Kala'. The SFV Gurdwara Sahib is your place of worship and a place to congregate – so let us all work to maintain its sanctity and form with "Tan, Man, and Dhan." For contributing funds, please contact the Treasurer.

As you may have observed each week, SFV community participation is on the rise – which is a good sign. We had recently organized very successful Kirtan/Katha diwans and summer school camp - may Waheguru bless all the sewadars. Please keep in touch and visit <http://www.sfova.org/>.

Respectfully,

Permvir Singh

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

Secretary's Report

By Amarjit Singh Riat

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

Some of activities for the past three months were:

- Sadh Sangat of Sikh Foundation of VA participated with excitement in Vaisakhi celebrations. During the celebrations, the Nishan Sahib Chola was replaced in presence of Panj Piaray. All the Punjabi school kids were dressed in Bana and Dastars. Everyone recited Shabads while Nishaan Sahib seva was being done.
- Special Katha was performed by Bhai Parmjit Singh Ji Uttrakhand.
- Sri Guru Arjan Dev's Ji's Shaheedi Diwas was celebrated at the Gurdwara Sahib. Special Diwan was held on 15 June in the evening, and on 18 June 2016 (Sunday). Akhand Path Sahib seva was also performed. Principal Kanwal Jit Singh from California performed Katha seva.

Since May 2016, sixteen Sri Akhand Path Sahib Paths and five weddings have been performed at the SFV Gurdwara Sahib. In addition, 10 special Sukhmani Sahib Paths and Kirtans were performed at the premises of the Sadh Sangat by SFV Ragis. Special Sangrand diwans are also held every month at the SFV Gurdwara Sahib. 'First of the month' Kirtan seva is performed by SFV Punjabi school students. All these activities are greatly appreciated by the SFV Sangat.

Treasurer's Corner

By Devinder Singh Behniwal

SFV financial accounts are maintained on a calendar basis. Since May 2016 the monthly records are being kept by the undersigned. Gurdwara accounts for January thru April were kept by Sardar Ajaib Singh, who has since turned them over to the current committee. I appreciate Ajaib's efforts to keep the accounts organized and clear.

The SFV financial position continues to be consistent. Due to the recent renovation/construction project, the reserve account is a bit depleted. I urge the Sadh Sangat to sign-up for the direct deposit and contribute *Dhan* to SFV Gurdwara Sahib.

Please contact me for any Sewa.

Respectfully,

Devinder Singh Behniwal



Public Relations Officer's Report

By Manjit Singh Taneja

Since April 2016, the SFV Sangat has participated in a number of exciting events. More such activities are planned for the coming months. Highlights are given below.

2016 Sikh Day Parade: The Sikh Foundation of VA Sangat participated in the annual Sikh Day Parade in New York on Saturday, 23 April. From SFV, 35 members, including 15 children, joined the tour. The Parade was primarily organized by the Sikh Cultural Society Inc., and the Gurdwara in Richmond Hill, Queens. Participating Gurdwaras and Sangat were accompanied by elaborate floats and eye-catching banners. Five Beloved Singhni, devout Sikh women, dressed in white Bana also marched in the parade. The Singhnis carried swords in their role of Panj Pyare, while also acting as representatives of their Gurdwara.

Indian Ambassador's Vaisakhi Function: On 23 April 2016 Ambassador Arun Singh hosted a Vaisakhi program at his residence. Over 200 people, including prominent Indian American community leaders and Washington DC area professionals attended. The program started with a Gurbani Shabad "Manas ki jat sabhe eke paihcanbo" recited by our own SFV Bhai Sahib Kirpal Singh Ji accompanied by Bhai Onkar Singh Ji and Bhai Karam Singh Ji. In his greetings to the members of the Panjabi community, the Indian Ambassador said that the gathering was both to mark the auspicious occasion of Vaisakhi and to recognize the contributions of the Sikh community in the United States. He said the Indian Embassy was committed to the welfare and progress of the Sikh community in the United States.

Washington, DC 2016 Sikh (Vaisakhi) Parade:

This Sikh Day Parade was held in DC on 7 May 2016. The goal was to celebrate Vaisakhi and make Sikhs' presence known in USA. Various Washington DC metropolitan area Gurdwaras joined hands in coordinating this

event. Morning Diwan service was held in the lawns near 19th Street and Constitution Avenue. Shabad Kirtan was recited by local gurdwaras' Bhai Sahibs. SFV Bhai Sahib Kirpal Singh Ji and his Jatha recited melodious Gurbani Shabads. The Parade was led by a large banner ('Sikh Day Parade'), Nishan Sahibs, Panj Pyaras, and a beautiful float with Guru Granth Sahib Ji and Granthis performing Kirtan. These were followed by Gurdwaras with a variety of banners with key Sikh teachings about gender equality, justice, and human rights for all.



Youth and Education Committee's Report

By Beant Singh Deu, Surinder Singh, Puneet Kaur, and Jasmeen Dhillon

(1) Gurmat School - Beant Singh Deu & Surinder Singh

A key objective of the Gurmat School is to inculcate pride for Sikh values into our youth. Knowledge of their rich heritage will make them confident about themselves, and they will promote the Sikh belief of universal brotherhood and social equality in western life.

Teaching Punjabi, Sikh religion, history, and Punjabi culture (our Virsa) have been the key ingredients of SFV's Gurmat/Sunday school program. We help our youth become self-confident leaders and good role models for others in the community. They are taught to be humble, selfless and devoted community members who are committed to uplift the communities they live in. In order to achieve this, we focus on teaching our kids Sikh history, beliefs and practices, the art of public speaking, accountability, counseling, and other management skills.

Parents are encouraged to enroll their children in Sunday school for learning Punjabi language, Keertan/speech, tabla and harmonium playing. Sunday school students also actively participate in special Diwans by doing Shabad Keertan, speaking on religious topics, and organizing many community service projects.

Gurmat School Schedule and Program:

CLASSES – Every Sunday, 11:05 AM to 12:30 PM

11:05 AM - 11:15 AM - Assembly (Panj Pauris of Japji Sahib, Deh Shiva, Ardass)

11:15 AM - 11:45 AM – History class (Sikh history, beliefs and practices)

11:45 AM - 12:30 noon – Punjabi classes (different levels, speaking and writing Gurmukhi)

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM – Keertan class.



Other Activities: Children are engaged in many aspects of Sikhism through several youth-oriented activities throughout the year. These activities include the annual Youth Gurmat Camp, Sikh History Jeopardy, Turban/Keski Showdown, Ardass Competition, participation in Hemkunt Speech Symposium, Prabhat Feri, Gurbani Workshops, and Food Drives.

(2) Annual Youth Gurmat Camp 2016 - Surinder Singh

An annual Gurmat Camp for Youth is another facet of the Sunday school through which participants learn teamwork, camaraderie, and character building. Different workshops are held to inculcate religious and social aspects. The main emphasis is to encourage our youth to find their inner strength and practice Sikh beliefs to lead an honorable life.

SFV held its Annual Youth Gurmat Camp from 7-10 July. A total of 62 youth, 4-17 years old, participated in the camp. This year, Camp participation was 50% more than in previous years; many kids from other Gurdwara Sahibs in the area also participated.

It requires a dedicated team to run an effective camp. With the grace of Waheguru and the collective effort of youth committee members along with active participation of Sangat members, this task was completed with ultimate success. All the three days were filled with Keertan Classes, Gurbani Workshop, History Workshops, Public Speaking Training, Debates, Art & Craft Workshops, Sports, and other fun activities. Jasmin Kaur, Gurpreet Singh Brar, Gurdeep Singh, and Mrs. Lovely Lall were the honorable guest speakers who, along with Camp counselors, conducted the workshops.

While the main objective of the camp remains the same every year, which is to provide tools to these kids to become successful Sikh Americans, the theme of the camp changes every year. This year the theme was 'Bani Guru, Guru Hai Bani.' All the workshops were somewhat related to the theme to have a better understanding of how our Guru is in Gurbani, and how reciting and understanding Gurbani leads us to meet with Waheguru. This gigantic task, difficult to complete otherwise, was easily achieved when all the participants overwhelmingly confirmed that they have learned how to relate to Guru Granth Sahib when they are at a Gurdwara, and how to enjoy the Keertan, and have a better understanding of what is being recited.

Lastly, I would like to thank each and every soul who contributed smallest of the small effort in many different ways to make this camp so special. Also, I would like to thank our four counselors-in-training, Jasmeen Kaur, Puneet Kaur, Sanpreet Singh, and Jeevanjot Singh, who took charge of several activities, while still participating in workshops and learning for themselves. We are proud of you. We cannot wait to see you grow to become full-time counselors in the next year or two.

(3) Stepping into a Leader's Shoes - Puneet Kaur, Counselor-in-training

My experience as a counselor-in-training during camps has helped me with my leadership skills and has helped me learn new things about my religion. This year we had special guests such as Jasmin Kaur, Gurdeep Singh, Lovely Lall, and Gurpreet Singh.

I am 17 years old and have been studying Sikhism since I was a little girl, and I consider myself to have a good amount of knowledge about my religion, but as I always say we learn something new every day. During camp I learned that the Guru Granth Sahib contains 8 different languages and contains writing of 6 Sikh Gurus and 17 Saints & Bhagats (as well as 11 Bhattas and 4 other Sikhs). These are not the usual facts you would hear from someone on the streets, so I was very interested when I found this out, and I would not have learned this fact if I had not attended the session with Jasmin Kaur.

Another session which was very helpful for the campers and the counselors was the public speaking session with Ms. Lovely Lall. She taught us the do's and don'ts of public speaking, such as how to get and keep the attention of your audience. The skills she taught were not only helpful in public speaking but for job interviews. I, along with others, will most likely take away skills like a proper handshake and good posture when we go for job interviews, to show we are confident in ourselves.

Being a counselor-in-training meant we would have tasks as counselors in which leaderships skills are key, such as the task I was given two years in a row—in which I had a session with level 1 participants, which I was able to conduct independently. I am definitely not going to say the task was easy, because it definitely was not anywhere near easy, considering they were all full from a breakfast of donuts. But I can say for a fact that the campers enjoyed the session and found it helpful and fun, because during my session I taught them a song called "We Are Khalsa", and even hours after the session was over the campers would come up to me and sing me the song with a smile on their face and joy in their eyes.

The leadership skills needed for this task were to first get the campers to sit still and quiet down. Though it was difficult at first, once I introduced myself and got connected with them, we all worked together and learned an amazing song given to me by the most wonderful and hardworking person throughout the whole camp, Surinder Singh. He has definitely been a mentor for me, and I am truly blessed and thankful he gave me the opportunity to be a part of the Youth Camp as a counselor-in-training. It was an amazing and fun experience, and most definitely I will come back to future Camps to help.

(4) My Experiences as a Camp Counselor-in-training - Jasmeen Dhillon

Being given the task of pouring cereal for the various starving campers seemed more intimidating than greeting the aunties grouping together in the kitchen. Nevertheless, I stepped up to the plate and conquered the daunting task in front of me.

As a counselor-in-training for SFV's annual Gurmat Camp 2016, I was given the opportunity to facilitate and augment the social and religious knowledge of fellow campers ranging from the ages of 6-17. Having been a lecturer on the art of public speaking in the 2014 Gurmat Camp, a fellow competitor in various Sikh history jeopardy competitions, and a camper in the 2013 Camp, I was able to utilize the techniques and skills that I had gained previously to assist me in this leadership position.

My experiences as a counselor-in-training were of significant value to me and my career in that they allowed me to meet extraordinary and remarkable speakers like Ms. Lovely Lall and Mr. Gurpreet Brar. Ms. Lall's discussions emphasized the effect of being confident when speaking in social situations and how this can be demonstrated through every miniscule action, including a simple handshake, a technique and skill that will assist me in proper etiquette in a global context. On the other hand, Mr. Gurpreet Brar's wise words revealed tips and life themes that have inspired him to flourish as a successful individual, stepping in as a role model for myself as well as others and being an example of how the benefits of hard work and dedication have no limits.

In conclusion, in my expansive training I learned a lot. I learned that it is possible to find a balance between a person's traditional religious beliefs and contemporary social standards. I learned that even with adversities, a lack of resources, and the world being against you, it is possible to succeed and become a role model for the community. I learned that pouring cereal for overjoyed, excited, and hungry campers is definitely not as intimidating as talking to aunts. I learned that with such strong and independent leaders in our Sikh community, nothing can prevent us from becoming widely renowned for our success.

Sangat's Corner

ਐਸਾ ਸਿਮਰਨੁ ਨਿਤ

By Bhai Kirpal Singh

ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਤਿੰਨ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। “ਬਾਲ ਜੁਆਨੀ ਅਰੁ ਬਿਰਧਿ ਫੁਨਿ ਤੀਨਿ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਜਾਨਿ ॥” ਪਹਿਲੀ ਉਮਰ ਬਚਪਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਤੀਤ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੁਆਨੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਤੰਦਰੁਸਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਅਤੇ ਧਨ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਸਰਮਾਏਦਾਰ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। “ਤੀਜੇ ਪਹਰੈ ਰੈਣਿ ਕੈ ਵਣਜਾਰਿਆ ਮਿਤ੍ਰਾ ਧਨ ਜੋਬਨ ਸਿਉ ਚਿਤੁ ॥” ਇਸਦਾ ਲਗਾਉ ਧਨ ਪਦਾਰਥਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਵਲੋਂ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਦਾਤਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜ ਕੇ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਵਿਸਰ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। “ਦਾਤਿ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਵਿਸਰਿਆ ਦਾਤਾਰਾ ॥” ਜੀਵ ਪਦਾਰਥਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਸਾਰੇ ਸੁੱਖ ਮੰਨ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਸੁੱਖ ਸਦਾ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਨ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੁੱਖ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਹਨ। “ਸੁਖੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਬਹੁਤੈ ਧਨਿ ਖਾਟੇ ॥ ਸੁਖੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਪੇਖੇ ਨਿਰਤਿ ਨਾਟੇ ॥ ਸੁਖੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਬਹੁ ਦੇਸ ਕਮਾਏ ॥ ਸਰਬ ਸੁਖਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਏ ॥੧॥” ਮਾਇਆ ਦੀ ਸੇਭਾ ਬਹੁਤੀ ਦੇਰ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। “ਇਹ ਮਾਇਆ ਕੀ ਸੇਭਾ ਚਾਰਿ ਦਿਹਾੜੇ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਬਿਲਮੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥” ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਹੀ ਲੋਕ ਪਰਲੋਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਦਾ ਸੁੱਖ ਦੱਦਾ ਹੈ। “ਹਲਿਤ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਲਿਤ ਸੁਖੁ ਨਿਤ ਸੁਖੁ ਸਿਮਰਨੇ ਨਾਮ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਕਾ ਸਦਾ ਲੀਜੈ ॥”

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਚਰਦਿਆਂ ਕੰਮ ਕਾਰ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਚਿੱਤ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਾਉਣਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਰਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਛੱਡਣੀ, ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦਾ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਹੈ, ਕਿਰਤ ਕਰੋ, ਨਾਮ ਜਪੋ, ਤੇ ਵੰਡ ਛਕੋ। “ਹਾਥ ਪਾਉ ਕਰਿ ਕਾਮੁ ਸਭੁ ਚੀਤੁ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਨਾਲਿ ॥”

ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਂ ਨੇ ਜੀਵ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਤੂੰ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਕਰ ਲੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਤੈਨੂੰ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਛਤਾਉਣਾ ਨਾ ਪਵੇ। ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਵਲੋਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਤੇਰਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਉਜਲਾ ਰਹੇ। ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਹਰ ਦੁੱਖ ਸੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਥ ਦੱਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ ਲੋਕ ਕੇਵਲ ਸੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਸਾਥੀ ਹਨ। ਦੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਤੇਰਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਸਾਥ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇਣਾ। “ਸੁਖ ਮੈ ਬਹੁ ਸੰਗੀ ਭਏ ਦੁਖ ਮੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਭਜੁ ਮਨਾ ਅੰਤਿ ਸਹਾਈ ਹੋਇ ॥”

ਅਖੀਰ ਜਦੋਂ ਬੁਢਾਪਾ ਆ ਗਿਆ, ਹੁਣ ਸਰੀਰ ਵੀ ਸਾਥ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇ ਰਿਹਾ, ਅਤੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ ਲੋਕ ਤੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਵੀ ਸਾਥ ਛੱਡਣ ਲੱਗੇ। “ਤਬ ਨਰੁ ਸੁਤਾ ਜਾਗਿਆ ਸਿਰਿ ਡੰਡ ਲਗਾ ਬਹੁ ਭਾਰੁ ॥”

ਮਹਾਂਰਾਜ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਅਸਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਜੀਵ ਨੂੰ ਹੁਣ ਸਮਝ ਆਈ ਕਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਹੁਣ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਆਸਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ। ਫਿਰ ਅਖੀਰ ਇਹ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਦਾ ਦਰਵਾਜ਼ਾ ਖੜਕਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਫਿਰ ਇਹ ਜੀਵ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਅੱਗੇ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਮੁਆਫ ਕਰ ਦੇ, ਮੈਂ ਸੁੱਖਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਵਿਸਾਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਹੁਣ ਦੁੱਖ ਦੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਲੋੜ ਪਈ ਹੈ। ਤਾਂ ਹੀ ਕਬੀਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। “ਕਬੀਰ ਕਾਮ ਪਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਮਰੀਐ ਐਸਾ ਸਿਮਰਹੁ ਨਿਤ ॥ ਅਮਰਾ ਪੁਰ ਬਾਸਾ ਕਰਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਗਇਆ ਬਹੇਰੈ ਬਿਤ ॥੧੬੩॥”

ਭੁੱਲ ਚੁੱਕ ਦੀ ਖਿਮਾਂ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਦਾਸ – ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਰਾਗੀ, Sikh Foundation of Virginia, USA

Poems

By Barinder Kaur Deu and Harjit Singh

ਧਰਮ

ਕੀ ਹੈ ਇਹ ਧਰਮ? ਕੀ ਹੈ ਇਹ ਧਰਮ?
ਬਣਿਆ ਹੈ ਜੇ ਮਿਟਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਮਨ ਦੇ ਭਰਮ ॥

ਕੀ ਧਰਮ ਹੈ ਪਾਉਣਾ ਜਨੇਊ?
ਫਿਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਨੇ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਾਂ ਪਾਇਆ ਜਨੇਊ?
ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਨੇ ਕਿਉਂ ਬਚਾਇਆ ਜਨੇਊ?
ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਧਰਮ ਹੈ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਮਨ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਦੀ ॥
ਤੇ ਮਨ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਨਾਲ ਪਾਉਣ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਦੀ ॥

ਕੀ ਹੈ ਇਹ ਮਨ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਹੈ ਇਹ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ?
ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ॥
ਮਨ ਮੰਦਰ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਨ ਜੋਤ ਹੈ?
ਕੀ ਇਹ ਖਿਆਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਦੌੜ ਹੈ?
ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਮਨ ਹੈ ਧਰਤੀ ਖਿਆਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਟਿੱਬਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਟੋਇਆ ਦੀ ॥
ਜਰੂਰਤ ਹੈ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਕਸਾਰ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦੀ ॥
ਸਥਿਰ ਜਦ ਮਨ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਣਗੇ ॥
ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਫਿਰ ਸਾਕਾਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਣਗੇ ॥

ਕੀ ਹੈ ਇਹ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਤੇ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਇਹ ਕਰਦਾ?
ਧਰਮ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਾ?
ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਨੀਂਹ ਹੈ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਮਹੱਲ ਦੀ ॥
ਦ੍ਰਿੜਤਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਦੀ ਹੈ ਗਿਆਨ ਤੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਦੀ ॥
ਆਓ ਹਲ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਮਨ ਦੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਸਵਾਰੀਏ ॥
ਨਾਮ ਦੇ ਸੁਹਾਗੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੋਧੀਏ ਸਿੰਗਾਰੀਏ ॥

ਗੁਰੂ ਕੇਲੋ ਗਿਆਨ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਦਾਤੇ ਨੂੰ ਧਿਆਈਏ ॥
ਹੁਕਮ ਉਸਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿਣ ਦੀ ਵਿਉਂਤ ਵਿਚਾਰੀਏ ॥
ਇਕ ਦਾਤੇ ਉਤੇ ਜਦ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ ॥
ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਰਾਹ ਦਾ ਤਦ ਆਗਾਜ਼ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ ॥
ਧਰਮ ਖੇਲ ਹੈ ਮਨ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਂਜਣ ਦੀ ॥
ਨਾਮ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਨਾਲ ਸੋਧਣ ਤੇ ਸਾਂਭਣ ਦੀ ॥
ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਦੀ ਜਾਨ ਹੈ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ॥
ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਨਾਂ ਖੋਏ ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ਾਨ ਇਹ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ॥

- ਬਰਿੰਦਰ ਕੋਰ

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ

ਇਕ ਹੱਥ ਕਲਮ ਫੜੀ ਸੱਚ ਦੀ
ਦੂਜਾ ਤੱਕੜੀ ਪਿਆ ਤੇਲੇ ਰੱਕ ਦੀ
ਕਲਮ ਅਨਿਆਂ, ਅਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਵੰਗਾਰਦੀ
“ਰਾਜੇ ਸ਼ੀਹ, ਮੁਕੱਦਮ ਕੁੱਤੇ” ਹੈ ਚਿਤਾਰਦੀ

“ਕਲਿ ਕਾਤੀ” ਰਾਜੇ ਨੇ ਕਸਾਈ ਹੋ ਸਏ
ਭੁੱਲ ਕੇ ਧਰਮ, ਅਧਰਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਖੇ ਗਏ
ਵਾੜ ਦਿਨੇ ਰਾਤ, ਭੱਜ ਖੇਤ ਖਾਰਦੀ
ਕੂੜ ਕੁਸੱਤੋਂ ਦੀ ਤੂਤੀ ਹਰ ਥਾਂ ਬੋਲਦੀ
ਸੱਚ ਕੇ ਚੰਦਰਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਿਸ਼ਮ ਡੋਲਦੀ

ਰਸਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਜੰਜੀਰ ‘ਚ ਧਰਮ ਗੁਸਿਆ
ਭੇਖ ਤੇ ਅੰਡਬਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਫੈਲੀ ਮੱਸਿਆ
ਜਿਨੇ ਇੱਥੇ ਬੰਦੇ, ਉਨੇ ਬਣੇ ਰੱਬ ਨੇ
ਲੁੱਟ ਦੇ ਪਿਆਸੇ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਬਣੇ ਸੱਭ ਨੇ

ਜਗਤ ਜਲੰਦਾ ਮੁੜ ਵਾਜਾਂ ਮਾਰਦਾ
ਭੁੱਬ ਰਿਹਾ ਬੇੜਾ, ਬਾਬਾ ਆ ਕੇ ਪਾਰ ਲਾ
ਕੋਹੜੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਆ ਕੇ ਫੇਰ ਦਇਆ ਦੱਸ ਜਾ
ਸੱਜਣਤਾਈ ਦਾ ਸੱਜਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਲ ਸਮਝਾ

“ਏਕ ਨੂਰ ਤੇ ਸੱਭ ਜੱਗ ਉਪਜਿਆ” ਸਾਰੇ ਜਾਣ ਲੈਣ
ਖਾਲਕ ਨੂੰ ਖਲਕ ‘ਚ ਮੁੜ ਪਹਿਚਾਣ ਲੈਣ
ਮੇਟ ਵੰਡਾ ਵਿਤਕਰੇ, ਤੇ ਮੇਰ-ਤੇਰ ਨੂੰ
ਬਿਠਾਈਏ ਦਿੱਲ ਦੇ ਤਖਤ, ਮਨੁੱਖਤਾ ਦੀ ਉਸੇਰ ਨੂੰ ।

- ਹਰਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ

ਸਿੱਖੀ

ਉਹ ਕਿਹੜਾ ਬੂਟਾ ਏ, ਜੇ ਜਬਰ ‘ਚ ਵੱਧਦਾ ਏ
ਜ਼ਾਲਮ ਨੂੰ ਲੋੜ ਪਵੇ, ਤਾਂ ਛਾਂ ਵੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਏ
ਜੇ ਬੈਠਦਾ ਦੇਗਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ, ਜੇ ਲੋਹ ਤੇ ਸੜਦਾ ਏ
ਜੇ ਕੰਧਾ ‘ਚ ਚਿਣ ਕੇ ਵੀ, ਮਜ਼ਲੂਮਾਂ ਲਈ ਮਰਦਾ ਏ
ਪਰ ਸੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਏ ।

ਜੇ ਖਲ ਲੁਹਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ, ਤੇ ਟੋਟੇ ਲਾਲਾਂ ਦੇ
ਝੋਲੀ ‘ਚ ਪਵਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ
ਜੇ ਅਰਿਆਂ ਥੱਲੇ ਵੀ ਹੈ ਸੁਕਰ ਮਨਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ
ਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਭਾਣੇ ਨੂੰ, ਮਿੱਠਾ ਕਰ ਗਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ
ਚਿੜੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ, ਜੇ ਬਾਜ਼ ਤੁੜਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਦੇ ਤੁਪਕਾ ਨਾਲ, ਲੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭਿੜਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ

ਦੇਸ਼, ਕੌਮ ਦੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਲਈ, ਜੇ ਸਰਬੰਸ ਲੁਟਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ
ਤਾਜ-ਤਖਤ ਗਵਾ ਕੇ ਵੀ, ਸਬੱਰ ਚੰਗਾ ਹੈ ਗਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ
ਭਾਜੀ ਚੜੀ ਸਦੀਆਂ ਦੀ, ਪਰਤਾ ਜਰਵਾਇਆ ਨੂੰ,
ਗੰਗਾ ਉਲਟ ਵਗਾ ਕੇ ਤੇ, ਹੈ ਠੱਲਾਂ ਪਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ
ਨਦੀਆਂ ਅਟਕਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ

ਜੇ ਜਾਤ ਘੁਮੰਡਾ ਨੂੰ, ਪੰਗਤਾਂ ‘ਚ ਸਜਾ ਕੇ ਤੇ ਕਾਫੂਰ ਬਣਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ
ਜੇ ਭਾਗੇ ਦੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਦੀ, ਖੰਡ-ਖੀਰ ਤੇ ਚੂਰੀ ਦੀ ਅਸਲੀਅਤ ਨੂੰ ਕਰ ਨੰਗਿਆ ਗਲ -
ਲਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਲਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ
ਤੇ ਸਬਰ ਸਬੂਰੀ ਨਾਲ, ਰਲ ਵੰਡ ਕੇ ਖਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ।

- ਹਰਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ

The Special Place of Women in Sikhism*

By Paramjit Singh Sachdeva

Women are expected to have a special place in Sikhism. Guru Nanak's mother, sister, and wife were among the first Sikhs ('Nanak-panthis'). Since then, for over 500 years, women have served as valued members of the Sadh Sangat, have diligently prepared and served Langar, have nurtured countless Sikh children, and in these and so many other ways have participated actively in the life of the Sikh community.

As Guru Nanak says in the Guru Granth Sahib (p. 473): “ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ ॥” [So why call her bad? From her, kings are born]. Guru Amar Das spoke against the horrible Hindu tradition of 'Sati', asked Sikhs to get rid

of Purdah (seclusion of women), and appointed women as leaders for spreading Sikhism. A Sikh woman helped Guru Gobind Singh prepare Amrit for initiating the Khalsa.

Guru Nanak's message of gender equality directly challenged prevailing Hindu and Muslim beliefs that denigrated women. The Gurus' teachings, and the lives they led, sought to change this forever. However, Sikhs have often failed to live up to Sikhism's proclaimed values. We have failed to do what our scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, teaches us. Glaring instances of such gender inequality are well known. Women are still not allowed to perform Kirtan seva inside Harmandir Sahib; and women are not allowed to serve as Panj Pyaras during the Amrit Sanchar ceremony. Instead of practicing what we preach, we seem to be easily misled by rationalizations that lead us away from teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Our individual and collective efforts toward gender equality of women in Sikhism must now be strengthened. We must strive to fully empower Sikh women in all aspects of our daily lives. Both Sikh men and Sikh women have to do this in earnest. Good intentions are not enough – they must be followed by practical, meaningful action. We all have to do our part, in our own way, and there can be no justification for further procrastination. In all our institutions, including Gurdwaras, women must have equal rights, responsibilities, and authority—so that we could all live up to the high principles and Sikh values we so proudly proclaim. Women must also step up to the leadership opportunities that this would provide. This would enable all of us to benefit from their tremendous untapped energy and enthusiasm, and their potentially-huge contribution to the continued well-being of the entire global Sikh community.

* Based on "Responding to Challenges Confronting the Sikh Panth" by the same author, forthcoming in *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, India, Summer 2016.

Health Corner

Zika Virus: What You Need To Know

By Dr. Tarleen Kaur Singh

In the past few months, there has been a lot of coverage in the news about the Zika Virus and its links to birth defects and other health issues – especially among those living in or traveling to South and Central America. This article will cover basic information about the virus and its health effects, as well as what you can do to prevent Zika and other mosquito-borne illnesses from spreading.

The Zika (pronounced "ZEE-ka") Virus is mainly spread by the bite of infected mosquitoes, but can also be spread from mothers to babies during pregnancy or at birth, and through blood transfusions or sexual contact with an infected person. Zika Virus has been linked to two rare conditions: microcephaly (a birth defect where an infant's head is smaller than normal) and Guillain-Barre Syndrome (a condition in which the immune system attacks nerve cells, causing weakness and sometimes paralysis).

Most people infected with Zika do not develop symptoms. For those who do, the illness is generally mild with symptoms lasting from a few days to a week. Symptoms include: fever, joint pain, rash, and red eyes, and will develop within 2-7 days of being infected. For pregnant women, Zika infection may lead to birth defects, including microcephaly. The risk of a baby developing microcephaly is higher if the mother is infected in the first trimester of pregnancy, but is still possible if the mother is infected later in her pregnancy.

Currently, there is no specific medicine to treat Zika, but you can manage its symptoms. If ill, you should get plenty of rest, drink water to prevent dehydration, and take Tylenol to reduce fever and pain. You should NOT take aspirin or any other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (like ibuprofen). You should also stay indoors when you feel sick to prevent mosquitoes from biting you while you are ill. If a mosquito bites you when you are ill, it may become infected with Zika and pass the virus on to the next person it bites.

If you are concerned that you may have contracted Zika after traveling, through sexual contact with an infected person or from a mosquito bite, call your doctor. Your doctor will determine whether you need to get tested and will guide you through the process. For pregnant women, this may include getting blood and urine tests and ultrasounds to monitor the health of your baby.

What You Can Do To Prevent Zika: The best thing each and everyone one of us can do to prevent the spread of Zika is to take measures to prevent mosquitos from breeding and biting. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following actions for everyone:

1. Wear insect repellent. Look for any of these active ingredients: picardin, DEET, IR3535. Insect repellents are safe to use according to the instructions on the bottle. Some products are not safe to use on children under 3 years old, so make sure to read the instructions.
2. Wear Protective Clothes: wear long sleeve shirts and long pants. For extra protection, treat clothes with permethrin.
3. Use screens on windows and doors. Use air conditioning when available.

For more information on Zika Virus, what the areas of active transmission of Zika are, and what you can do, visit the CDC's website on Zika at: www.cdc.gov/zika

Editor's Corner

By Paramjit Singh Sachdeva

Thanks for the wonderful opportunity to serve as an elected Board member this year. It's also a great privilege to serve as editor of the revived SFV Voice newsletter.

Established in 1987, SFV is now in its 30th year of dedicated service to the local Sikh community. It has reached a stage when taking stock and setting goals for the coming years could help improve how we function as a Gurdwara and as a Sangat.

Overall, our mission seems fine, the kitchen is 'state-of-the-art', and the new Katha room enables us to more satisfactorily undertake two essential functions – Langar seva and Gurbani path. We also have good Granthis, experienced Board leadership, a reasonable physical facility, improved educational activities for kids and youth, and many dedicated volunteers. However, several areas seem to need greater attention.

For example, our Punjabi school facilities could be upgraded; and the Gurmat study program for both youth and adults strengthened. This would facilitate more in-depth understanding of Gurbani and of Sikhism's basic beliefs, values, and practices. We could do more for seniors and women, as well as engage more effectively with local Gurdwaras and interfaith groups. We could strengthen our financial base and make programs more participative—

and thus more effective and sustainable. And we could make better use of the latent talent of Sangat members, both men and women.

All of these efforts could be guided by a Management-crafted, Sangat-endorsed, and Board-approved 2020 (or even longer) vision for SFV that takes into account anticipated needs and future expectations of what any well-functioning and responsive Gurdwara Sahib in America should provide to its diverse community. Undertaking this strengthening of SFV programs and making them more effective will not be easy—it never is. But our collective efforts could be facilitated by improved collaboration among those serving as 'sevadars' and increased involvement of the entire SFV Sangat.

It is this phased but concerted 'renewal effort' that we must now engage in; and for which we need your contributions and suggestions. Please contact any of the SFV Board members for this. We look forward to your active participation in all SFV activities. Please share generously, and care wholeheartedly for SFV!

Your suggestions for improving this Newsletter are very welcome too. Thanks to all in advance, and Gurfateh!

Request to Sangat for Contributions to *SFV Voice*

Respected Sadh Sangat Ji:

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

- the Punjabi/Gurmat school, annual youth camp, and various service projects
- katha, kirtan and gurbani vichar programs
- activities that amplify women's voices
- programs for seniors and elders
- cultural events, annual picnic, and interfaith activities
- broader concerns of the global Sikh community, and
- suggestions from the Sangat, and SFV management's response.

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

Contact the editorial team for more information or clarification. We look forward to hearing from you. Thanks!

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