

VAHEGURU JI KA KHALSA VAHEGURU JI KI FATEH

The Khalsa belong to Vaheguru and Vaheguru is always victorious

TVEY PRASAAD

WITH YOUR GRACE

HARNESSING THE SIKH YOUTH

A humble attempt to disseminate the problem of attracting Sikh youth to the
Gurudwara



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SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI MAHARAJ LIMB: 636
THROUGH THE WORDS OF DHAN SRI GURU NANAK DEV JI MAHARAJ

SORATH, FIRST MEHL:

Those who serve the True Guru, O Beloved, their companions are saved as well. No one blocks their way, O Beloved, and the Lord's Ambrosial Nectar is on their tongue. Without the Fear of God, they are so heavy that they sink and drown, O Beloved; but the Lord, casting His Glance of Grace, carries them across. || 1 ||

I ever praise You, O Beloved, I ever sing Your Praises. Without the boat, one is drowned in the sea of fear, O Beloved; how can I reach the distant shore? || 1 || Pause
||

I praise the Praiseworthy Lord, O Beloved; there is no other one to praise. Those who praise my God are good, O Beloved; they are imbued with the Word of the Shabad, and His Love. If I join them, O Beloved, I can churn the essence and so find joy. || 2 ||

The gateway to honour is Truth, O Beloved; it bears the Insignia of the True Name of the Lord. We come into the world, and we depart, with our destiny written and pre-ordained, O Beloved; realize the Command of the Commander. Without the Guru, this Command is not understood, O Beloved; True is the Power of the True Lord. || 3 ||

By His Command, we are conceived, O Beloved, and by His Command, we grow in the womb. By His Command, we are born, O Beloved, headfirst, and upside-down. The Gurmukh is honoured in the Court of the Lord, O Beloved; he departs after resolving his affairs. || 4 ||

By His Command, one comes into the world, O Beloved, and by His Will, he goes. By His Will, some are bound and gagged and driven away, O Beloved; the self-willed manmukhs suffer their punishment. By His Command, the Word of the Shabad, is realized, O Beloved, and one goes to the Court of the Lord robed in honor. || 5 ||

By His Command, some accounts are accounted for, O Beloved; by His Command, some suffer in egotism and duality. By His Command, one wanders in reincarnation, O Beloved; deceived by sins and demerits, he cries out in his suffering. If he comes to realize the Command of the Lord's Will, O Beloved, then he is blessed with Truth and Honor. || 6 ||

It is so difficult to speak it, O Beloved; how can we speak, and hear, the True Name? I am a sacrifice to those who praise the Lord, O Beloved. I have obtained the Name, and I am satisfied, O Beloved; by His Grace, I am united in His Union. || 7 ||

If my body were to become the paper, O Beloved, and my mind the inkpot; and if my tongue became the pen, O Beloved, I would write, and contemplate, the Glorious Praises of the True Lord. Blessed is that scribe, O Nanak, who writes the True Name, and enshrines it within his heart. || 8 || 3 ||

INTRODUCTION

He who fashioned, adorned and decorated you
In the fire of the womb, He preserved you.
In your infancy, He gave you milk to drink.
In the flower of your youth, He gave you food, pleasure and understanding.
As you grow old, family and friends are there to feed you as you rest.
This worthless person has not appreciated in the least, all the good deeds done for him.
If you bless him with forgiveness, O Nanak, only then will he be saved. ||1||
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj Limb 267 Raag Gauree)

With Vaheguru grace, I was initiated into the Khalsa faith, on 17th November 2000 at the age of 21. Nine months of practise in the rehit (discipline) of a Gursikh had elevated my thirst for Amrit to break point levels. The day I took the ambrosial nectar my new life began and now instead of working to my pre-ordained destiny, I was able to grab hold the reins of my own life and try to make my jeevan (life) worthwhile. I forged thoughts of my 'clean slate' on the principle laid down by Dhan Dhan Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj in Rehraas sahib (Evening prayer):

This human body has been given to you.
This is your chance to meet the Lord of the Universe.
Nothing else will work.
Join the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy;
Vibrate and meditate on the Jewel of the Naam. ||1||
Make every effort to cross over this terrifying world-ocean.
You are squandering this life uselessly in the love of Maya. ||1||Pause||
I have not practiced meditation, self-discipline, self-restraint or righteous living.
I have not served the Holy; I have not acknowledged the Lord, my King.
Says Nanak, my actions are contemptible!
O Lord, I seek Your Sanctuary; please, preserve my honor! ||2||4||
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Limb 12 Raag Aasa)

My life prior to obtaining the gurus blessing was one that perhaps most of today's Sikh or Asian youth are embroiled in. I was educated in the normal way, obtained my GCSE's, and then went onto college to complete my A-Levels. Following that I experienced three years of the university life at Nottingham Trent. Here I went through the typical university experience of being a student. Those who are there now or have been through it know what it is like and it is futile dwelling on those years because the aim of this project is very different.

Suffice to say that it was difficult maintaining any sort of discipline in a religious sense. The student is attacked, devoured and digested by the five passions Kam (Lust), Krodh (Anger), Lobh (Greed), Moh (Attachment) and Hunkaar (Ego). Those who are a lucky few, escape these five bandits...unfortunately I couldn't.

According to the karma of past actions, one's destiny unfolds, even though everyone wants to be so lucky. ||3||
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Limb 157 Raag Gauree bairagan)

However once I had returned home and realised the extent of the 'mirage' of university life, I felt magnetised and pulled towards a disciplined and more spiritual way of life.

I would without any hesitation whatsoever appeal to the Sikh youth even today, that it is never too late to achieve what you are here for in this life (See above hukam from Maharaj ji). Maharaj answers all your questions.

Bhai Gurdas Ji uncle of the Fifth Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj, and scribe of the first version of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji wrote a series of verses called Bhai Gurdas Ji's Vaara. The verses were written to explain amongst other concepts the role of a gursikh. Guru Arjan Dev ji Maharaj gave the verses a high patronage and stated anyone who reads and understands the varaa will discover the key to Gurbani. Bhai Gurdas ji states:

When one, falling at the Guru's feet, becomes dust himself, i.e. totally deletes ego from his mind, the true Guru also then blesses and obliges him. (Vaar 4 Pauri 18)

Anyone who enters the durbar of Dhan Dhan Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj automatically pleases the Guru. We may not know it; the Guru is so elated that his son or daughter has come to see him that he asks us what we want; however we are too blind to see it and fail to take the opportunity. And we must not waste such chances.

People beg and pray, "Give to us, give to us", and the Great Giver gives His Gifts.
So what offering can we place before Him, by which we might see the Darbaar of His Court?
What words can we speak to evoke His Love?

So how do we ask questions? Personally I used to do little ardas (prayers) to Vaheguru asking not for material things, but simply for Vaheguru to show me the way. Guru ji answered me in the same verse of Japji Sahib:

In the Amrit Vaylaa, the ambrosial hours before dawn, chant the True Name, and contemplate His Glorious Greatness. (Japji Sahib Pauri 4 Limb 2 Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji)

All attempts to remember Vaheguru by chanting his name are worth their while. Slowly the wish to get up in the early morning hours also increases. This time is important because there is little disturbance and the 'channels' to meet Vaheguru and communicate with him are open.

Thus man is completing his primary task in this world, to worship the lord. There are other principles Dhan Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj has laid down for us. These are *Kirt karni* (work hard and honestly) and *vand ke shakna* (share your earnings). Thus the emphasis of Sikhi is not to show you are religious at certain times of the day, or on certain days of the month, but to live Sikhi. To breathe Sikhi then place it in your mind 24/7.

Hearing of You, I live.
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Limb 104 Raag Maajh)

It is with these principles that our entrance into this world is worthwhile, our lifestyle is improved by our guidance from Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj; and consequently our exit from this life becomes understandable. .

It is these personal experiences of the Guru's piyar (love) and his forgiving nature that I feel that we should all benefit from it. If a lowly sinful person like myself is capable of walking the path with the Gurus guidance then I believe that the message of Maharaj is important for us all. Thus is my rationale behind this study. I long to see some improvement in the way we as a Sikh community can start laying foundations for a future.

Please forgive my past actions, God, and place me on Your path for the future. ||2||
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Limb 624 Raag Sorath)

I was searching for some inspiration and guidance for the day ahead from some Sikh websites. Checking to see what Maharaj required me to do for the day had become part of my daily routine. With the blessings of Maharaj, I received a message from Dhan Dhan Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj to use my writing skills for the service of the Sikh community.

At first reading, the order on page 1 may just seem like any other message. Sometimes it's a tuk (line) of bani that answers your questions, and at other times it is even one Shabad (word) that sheds light on your mental dilemma.

However there is no limit to Maharaj ji's all seeing all doing eye. For a couple of days prior to the hukam my mind had been toying with the thought of writing something to inspire the Sikh youth towards Sikhi, but I was looking for some indoctrination, from some avenue to provide me an angle to start putting my opinions down. I am in continuous awe of Maharaj ji's guidance. Thus Maharaj had granted me permission to write something of some use.

By the Hukam of His Command, all are created. By His Command, actions are performed.
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Limb 55 Raag Siree Raag)

As a regular visitor to the local Gurudwara sahib, I felt at times sadness that the youth of today were missing out on the treasure chest of guidance provided to us by Dhan Dhan Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj. Developing my thoughts further on the matter I thought about what more could be done to attract the youth to the Gurudwara. As a result I thought of techniques we could bring to attract the youth to the love of Maharaj ji.

A lot of the recommendations in this report are the ideas used by the Sikh Sangat in other Gurudwaras around the country. As the Hukam ordained by Maharaj ji suggests I am just putting these ideas on paper. I do not wish for any heightened status in the Sangat, nor do I want any praise for what is being written. These ideas are by the Saadh Sangat for the Saadh Sangat, and the Sangat is the Guru's image thus the cognitive processes gone into preparing this report, only the guru deserves praise for. I hope as a servant of the master, my efforts match up to the expectancy of my Lord.

Daas
Kuljit Singh
15 January 2002

With Pen in Hand, the Unfathomable Lord writes the mortal's destiny upon his forehead
The Incomparably Beautiful Lord is involved with all.
I cannot utter Your Praises with my mouth.
Nanak is fascinated, gazing upon the Blessed Vision of Your Darshan. I am a sacrifice to You.
||1||
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Limb 1361 Raag Phunay)

THE PROBLEMS AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

TVEY PRASAAD

WITH YOUR GRACE

O Destroyer of the pains and the suffering of the poor, O Master of each and every heart, O
Masterless One:
I have come seeking Your Sanctuary. O God, please be with Nanak! ||1||
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj Slok limb 263 Raag Gauree)

You have read in the introduction that I have been educated and brought up in the British education system. Education is the main thing drilled into the flourishing mindset of most young Sikh individuals. If we are lucky as children we have spiritual education also dictated to us. At that age we might not realise it, but we should count ourselves very lucky to have such knowledge. We never know when we will fall back onto it.

Contemplate and reflect upon knowledge, and you will become a benefactor to others.
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Limb 356 Raag Aasa)

The main problem in my opinion is that there is a massive gulf in the spiritual education of a young Sikh child. The core of our problem today in attracting young people comes from the fact that we as a Sikh community are slack in educating our children enough to make sure they have a defined and well-structured foundation for Sikhi when they get older. And there seems to be pockets of time that we educate them and when we do not. The need is for continuous education throughout the formation years of a child.

In most Gurudwaras, the foundations of a good Sikh education are in place. Punjabi schools have been set up to provide GCSE and A level Punjabi courses to students. Punjabi is simply referring to our ethnicity. Gurmukhi is the correct term to be used. Learning our mother tongue is essential, because without knowledge of it our ability to read Bani will be non-existent. Thus simply limiting our children to learning GCSE or Alevel Punjabi is not enough.

RECOMMENDATION 1: TEACHING OF GURBANI

“Oh brother the Gurmukhi language should be taught to a Sikh by another Sikh.”

Bhai Dhesa Singh Ji makes the above statement in his rehitnama (one of a series of considerations about the gursikh discipline after taking Amrit). We can see that justification exists that the Sikh child should be taught Santhiya (expression of bani), by a person learned in the art of reading it in the proper manner.

Furthermore it is also important to understand that the Gurus construed the Gurmukhi alphabet¹ thus we become automatically obliged to learn the language of the Gurus.

Some Gurudwara sahibs in the UK do have Gurbani Santhiya classes. Yet still the problem exists of attracting youngsters to the classes. Parents also have a crucial role here. They must encourage their children to not just go to Punjabi classes but also to Gurbani Santhiya classes. The whole image of learning in a Gurudwara must be changed. People involved in educating these children should have a positive attitude and be optimistic in their objectives. Simple techniques like announcing the classes should take place in every divan and visual encouragement like posters should be utilised.

Parents are a unique breed. I pay obeisance to them for coming to this country, working and earning by the sweat of their brow whilst also trying to balance out our cultural and if we've been lucky, our religious education too. Our parents are a testament to the principle laid down by Dhan Dhan Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj: Kirt Karo.

However increasingly, where I congratulate parents on their role as teachers to their children, I also grow agitated by some parents who block their children from treading the Sikhi path. Being Sikh is a way of life. I have heard of many instances where a Sikh youth has approached me and explained that they are trying to keep their hair or trying to get into Sikhi, however their parents are totally against it.

Preventing someone to become a Gursikh you can imagine is a massive blasphemy. And I find that society does not want to intervene in these situations. Some Gurmukh members of the Sangat should get together and form a domestic problem committee that helps resolve these kinds of family disputes.

¹ Pg 418 See Mahan Kosh (Encyclopaedia of Words related to Maharaj Ji/Sikhi) by Kan Singh Nabha.

Gurbani makes reference to Bhagat Prehlad whose father Harnaksh prevented him from meditating on the creator Vaheguru. In the end Harnaksh met an awful fate. We should realise that the power of bani is great and its repercussions on people even greater. Maharaj ji says:

By Guru's Grace contemplate spiritual knowledge; read it study it, and you shall be honoured
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Limb 1329 Raag Prabhatee)

Bhai Sahib Bhai Santokh Singh Ji the famous Sikh Poet and Writer states in Sri Guru Nanak Parkash (First half, 6, Vol.2 p 172):

Those parents who say 'I have a lot of gun/gian (virtues/traits) and then do not educate their children are great enemies of their children. Those parents don't gain any splendour, their children don't gain any sense; this is the way of the world

Thus it is my appeal to those parents, who are not practising Sikhs, to maintain the Guru's image and give up pursuits of intoxicants and worldly pleasures. Let Bani be your breakfast, lunch, supper and sleep and let altruistic deeds be your work. Working hard is important but sowing the seeds of Sikhi in your own personal farm of Sikhi will allow your children to harvest the goods in the future. This is also an important part in your role as a Sikh parent.

Night is the summer season, and day is the winter season; sexual desire and anger are the two fields planted. Greed prepares the soil, and the seed of falsehood is planted; attachment and love are the farmer and hired hand. Contemplation is the plough, and corruption is the harvest; this is what one earns and eats, according to the Hukam of the Lord's Command. O Nanak, when one is called to give his account, he will be barren and infertile. ||1||
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj Limb 955 Raag Raamkalee Slok Mehela1)

The other problem of course, is of peer pressure or societal pressures. A lot of our Sikh youth some oblivious to our parents' wishes are heading towards alcohol, drugs and pleasures of the material world, which induce the five passions to run amok in their minds.

At university I saw the offspring of many Sikhs trying to assimilate into the western culture without regard for their own. I am not talking about Punjabi culture I am talking about Sikh culture. It was hardly surprising because even I was finding it hard to control my mind. The Guru's answer to this is to stay in the company of god worshippers (Sangat) and keep up recital of the guru's bani. Without these gifts from Maharaj ji souls are lost. With Maharaj's blessings the university scene will also improve, once we have laid education foundations down for our future generations.

Says Kabeer, listen, O Saints: in the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy, you shall be saved. ||3||1||

The British Organisation of Sikh Students is helping to become more and more organised, and Sikhi weeks are very prominent in the university calendar. However there is a continuing contest for the attentions of student minds between the organisers of Sikh events and the Bhangra gig organisers. Unfortunately it is usually the nightclubs that win over the young minds. The positive is that at least there is some attachment to the Punjabi culture and language.

Most of these youth are left usually confused when it comes to religion or culture. Confused about what being Sikh or Punjabi is. Worried about fitting into the norm. The common excuse given is lack of education. Most of the youth are good-natured people eager to learn. Yet their main criticism of Sikhi at the moment is narrowed down to several issues:

- i) When they do attend the Gurudwara, the majority of the youth do not understand what is being said by the gianis, ragis, or what Maharaj is trying to tell them.
- ii) They cannot stand the politics of the Gurudwara and the constant ramblings in the place of the Guru, which undermine worship.
- iii) When they do understand someone, they cannot understand why they are being talked down to.

It becomes difficult to explain to students at this stage the concept of Miri and Piri (Spiritual and political power). The reason is because their spiritual growth has been stunted thus their move forward to the aspects of dharm (standing for religious rights) does not even come into existence. Where it does exist there usually is very little spiritual back up. Thus Sikhi becomes maligned by the malpractice of the faith.

I surrender my mind and body, and place everything before Him; following the Guru's Teachings, spiritual wisdom is implanted within me. ||1||Pause||
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj Limb 1325 Raag Kalyaan)

It is my opinion that one must have a religious stock of bani in them before transcending to righteousness. How can one build a wall before the foundations are laid down? Thus education of the youth is the key to establishing Sikh leaders of the future, after all that is our primary aim. The solution is to provide Santhiya to the youth after they have learnt Gurmukhi, then to explain or have the youth research the meanings of the Gurus word. Every Gurudwara should invest in a teacher of Gurbani.

I can understand where most of the youth feel upset when someone tells them something and they feel as if they are being castigated. How will a person know about the sky being blue if he has never seen the sky? I have tried to explain to many youth that we should not perceive someone being angry with us as talking down to us. However there is a way of explaining situations. Usually someone talking with love and patience can explain things better than a person who just points out the mistake in an angry tone.

He who shows love, only he will realise god
(Tvey Prasad Suvaiye Dasam Granth Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Limb 15)

RECOMMENDATION 2: TO TRANSLATE GURBANI

Accepting Guru as God they by cultivating the words of the Guru, translate them into life
The Gurmukhs serve and attain the fruits of happiness. (Bhai Gurdas ji vaar 20 pauri 40)

The main problem for the youth and generally in Sikhi is the lack of understanding of Gurbani. People like myself need to read copious amounts of translations, ask many a learned people and then finally understand what we are being told by Guru Ji. There is generally a massive lack of Sikh preachers who know perfect English. Thus the youth miss out on understanding the Guru's word.

How can we change this?

Recently with the amazing work carried out by some budding individuals who have been blessed greatly by Maharaj; Sikhi-to-theMax.Com an Internet search engine has appeared. It comprehensively provides translation and transliteration of the whole of the Guru' word. I had the pleasure of going to BOSS camp in the summer of 2001, and there was use of this technology in providing a solution to the problem stated above with great success.

It is possible to project the translation of Guru Maharaj ji in English. The computer software containing the translations; is projected onto a screen via a projector and a laptop computer. The result is instant translations as the bani is read or sung. This automatically allows the youth to understand what the bani is being said.

Thus there will be a bridge built in communication between the Sikh youth and Guru Ji. The bridge will almost certainly allow someone to cross over the river. Even if one soul is saved, it will be worth the investment. After all one is equal to 125,000 in the eyes of Kalgidhar paatshah Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj. At the camp, the feedback about the projection screen amongst the youth was very positive. Most of them found it extremely useful in hearing the gurus word and understanding bani. I have included in appendix 1 of this report an estimate of the projection costs. It is imperative each and every Gurudwara committee makes this investment for the youth.

Seeing the definition of Gurbani on screen will entice the youth to come and learn more about what Gurbani has to say. Gurbani has enough power to make a pauper into a king thus we must believe in its ability to magnetise people.

Modesty and righteousness both, O Nanak, are qualities of those who are blessed with true wealth. Do not refer to that wealth as your friend, which leads you to get your head beaten. Those who possess only this worldly wealth are known as paupers. But those, within whose hearts You dwell, O Lord - those people are oceans of virtue. ||1||
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj Limb 1287 Slok Mehela 1 Raag Malaar)

RECCOMENDATION 3: YOUTH DIVANS

I am not afraid of losing my youth, as long as I do not lose the Love of my Husband Lord Fareed, so many youths, without His Love, have dried up and withered away. ||34||
(Guru Granth Sahib Ji limb 1379)

A weekly youth divan must take up one night of the Gurudwara week. Either have the youth do kirtan for the evening divan, or allow the youth to commence an hour's simran. The programme should be advertised on the radios, and around the Gurudwaras in the city. It should be open to everyone regardless of age, but should be conducted by the youth. The Granthi must read out Rehraas sahib (Evening prayer), and the projection screen should be displaying the translations. Then simran or kirtan should commence. Kirtan is usually taught at the Gurudwara or in the community and there will be with Maharaj ji's blessings no shortage of kirtanees.

Hukamnama and Seva

After the Granthi takes the Hukamnama from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj, a volunteer should be called forward from the youth, to come and read out a translation of the hukam from a copy of Maharaj ji to the Sangat. This will promote access to the front for young people, and also help them shed their anxieties in taking front line roles later in life. The key object is that the individual will also build up a well of understanding of the Guru's word in his/her mind, whilst also serve a purpose to the rest of the Sangat who may not understand Gurbani.

The youth should also be allowed to do other seva including distributing Karah Parshaad. Of course, there will be mistakes made by youth, but if taught with love (piyar) and corrected with love, then individuals will learn from their experiences.

The Gurmukhs, who focus on serving the Guru, are saved; by great good fortune, they perform service.
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj Limb 800 Raag Bilaaval)

There is a time and place to be strict, but these instances of harshness should be restricted to times of real need. There is always a risk of pushing someone away from Sikhi when we intimidate him or her.

Langar

The Langar on the day of the Youth Divan should be alluring to the taste buds of a young Sikh person! It may be an idea to incorporate the usual chips and beans, pizza, and pasta. With Vaheguru 's blessings, the youth will eventually take on the role of preparing the langar themselves according to the discipline of preparing food in the Guru's Kitchen. Again the need exists for understanding, communication and patience for the right results to be obtained.

Fetching water for the holy congregation is equal to the kingdom of lacs of Indrapuris.
Grinding of corn (for the holy congregation) is more than the pleasure of myriads of heavens.
Arranging for and putting in woods into the hearth of langar (free kitchen) for the congregation is equal to the riddhis, siddhis and the nine treasures (powers obtained from simran).

The holy persons are the caretakers of the poor and in their company the humility resides in the heart (of people).

Singing of hymns of the Guru is the personification of the unstruck melody.
(Bhai Gurdas Ji Vaar 14 Pauri 17)

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Akhand Jaap

All Gurudwaras undertake continuous reading of Dhan Sri Guru Granth sahib Ji Maharaj (Akhand Path). It is a common problem that there is a lack of youth who participate in reading Maharaj ji. Many youth feel that they are not ready for the task of reading Maharaj, as they want to perfect their rehit or Sikhi discipline.

However, I believe in order to train the youth as readers of Guru Granth Sahib ji Maharaj (Paathi), we need to organise little events for children. Most children can repeat Vaheguru and the first Pauri of Japji Sahib. It may be a good idea to arrange an Akhand Jaap (continuous repetition) where only children or the youth participate. Following this it will be good to reward these children with prizes and Sirapaos (Honorary cloth) from Maharaj Ji. Thus you have increased the confidence of these children to come forward to repeat Vaheguru and also commended them for their performance.

These types of events are essential for the continuing development of Sikhi in the youth.

Sikhi Camps

Around the country youth camps for children on holidays are being organised with a renewed vigour. We can learn by meeting with people who organise these events and implement plans for a number of Sikhi camps throughout the year. This will allow the community to see the improvement of Sikhi in the younger generation.

Teenage youths should be encouraged to go to Sikhi camp in the summer held by the British Organisation of Sikh Students. It is a valuable week away where activities are organised in conjunction with the British Army along with regular morning and evening durbars. It also allows friendships and networks to be made amongst the Sikh youth all over the country.

O friend, association with the Holy is the perfect cleansing bath.
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Limb 687 Raag Dhanaasree)

Youth Kirtan Durbars

Every Gurudwara should encourage a *monthly* youth kirtan durbar in addition to the once-a-week durbar for naujawan. If there is a lack of kirtanees in the Gurudwara, of a young age, networks must be made with young kirtanees from all over the country. With maharaj's blessings, where a gursikh completes an ardas for a programme to go ahead successfully, Maharaj always answers those prayers.

Some gursikh students from Demontfort University and Leicester University arranged a reinsbhai (day-night) kirtan durbar. There was in our minds doubt as to whether we had enough kirtanees to complete the programme. After doing ardas to Vaheguru and asking for his assistance the programme was a massive success. People on the path of Sikhi and love for the teachings of Dhan Dhan Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj, stayed until the ambrosial hours of the morning to celebrate the avtar divas (coming into this world) of Dhan Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji Maharaj.

A guru's Sikh must always live with everlasting optimism (chardi kalla) even in the face of negativity. The guru is always pleased with such offerings of optimists.

I offer my heart-felt prayer to the Guru, and it is answered. ||Pause||
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj Limb 396 Raag Aasaa)

Weekly Discussion Groups

These groups should be ran and co-ordinated in the Gurudwara Sahib. There can be two types, but both concerning Sikhi. The first concentrating on interpreting Bani and its ideals into English and plain thought; the second, focusing on social issues which affect the true governance of the individuals Sikhi in this country. This will allow a sense of togetherness and oneness; will encourage unity and provide for more people slowly coming into Sikhi. Several Gurudwaras in the country provide for these groups and they have been found to be extremely useful in binding the Sikh youth who attend.

Remain united with the Society of the Saints; chant the Name of the Lord, and find peace.

||1||Pause||

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj Limb 31 Siree Raag)

Gatka Classes

No stone should be left unturned in the quest for gatka teachers who are willing to come and teach gatka to children. Although martial arts exist in certain Gurudwaras in the country, it is important to propagate and proliferate our own martial art. Combined with bani there is no real substitute for this martial art. This will pull in people to Sikhi and also encourage thought processes in the youth's mind about just how rich our way of life really is.

No evildoer can withstand these weapons.

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj Limb 628 Raag Sorath)

Kirtan Classes

Most Gurudwaras provide for kirtan classes. These are usually harmonium classes. It is important to encourage the teaching of classical instruments like the rabab, sarangi and tabla and to get more children learning kirtan in the raags the Guru Granth Sahib Ji speaks in. It is important that children are taught kirtan with love. Just as you would wash a dish thoroughly with care it is more thoroughly cleaned. If you make a hash of it without effort, chances are it still remains dirty. It is a personal opinion that when someone recites the Guru's bani with piyar and heart, the listener feels more bliss than someone who does not have his or heart in it. The key as always is that all bani should be read correctly.

The Messenger of Death cannot even touch that humble being who sings the Kirtan of the Lord's Praises.

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj Limb 866 Raag Gond)

Training for Tomorrow's Leaders

As mentioned above, there is a real lack of young Sikh leaders today. We are in need of creating people with an arsenal of the guru's word behind them in order to lead Sikhi into the future. There exists an organisation called the Fellowship of Activists To Embrace Humanity, FATEH. FATEH runs a Change Across Borders (CAB) programme, where the individual travels to Chandigarh in Punjab and undertakes a 9 month course in the different skills of human development inspired by the teachings of the Sikh gurus. Classical kirtan tuition, Gurbani Santhiya, gurmat, field trips to places of historical and cultural interests, gatka, Sikh History, talks by eminent Sikh scholars are amongst many other priceless activities under the curriculum.

After 6 months of study, the participants spend a further 3 months on a field project. This project could be in the villages or at the FATEH office. The CAB programme is aimed at creating 'ambassadors and catalysts' who will return to their home-country to inspire other youths. At an individual level, CAB aims at helping the participant to become useful citizens. For more information on CABs and other avenues for volunteering with FATEH please visit their website at <http://www.fatehworld.org/>. (See Appendix 2 for more information on FATEH and the CAB programme).

There are other courses available. Sikh Missionary College provides a 2-year Missionary Correspondence course. Thus the youth can study from their own home. Damdami Taksal in Mehta in Punjab also accepts students to learn Gurbani and take lessons in discipline of the Gursikh. Degree graduates or youth with genuine piyar for Sikhi should be encouraged to go on these programmes.

These courses are invaluable products that should be sold to the public. The Gurudwara committee is responsible for encouraging and motivating parents and youth alike to consider these courses.

Feeding the homeless

Students of Demontfort University and Leicester University have recently been involved in taking langar and distributing it to the homeless or rough sleeping people in the town centre. I have had personal pleasure in being able to feed the needy in this way. It is a highly satisfying and pleasurable experience. It increases the image of the Sikh in society and also allows an individual to partake in seva thereby doing the seva of Vaheguru himself. These altruistic leanings will also lead people towards the guru and improve

the standing of the Sikh youth in general both spiritually and in the material world.

In peace and poise, they give to the poor.
(Raag Gauri 5 Limb 236 Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj)

The Gurudwara should encourage such shows of humanity. Only when an individual has consideration for others will that person have consideration for his own identity.

University Students

University students leave university at present times with debt averaging £8000. Many Sikh students live away from home. The Guru's home is mankind's abode. Gurudwara committees should consider setting up awards for students. For example, if a student is enduring financial problems, the Gurudwara may be running a discretionary award of a few hundred pounds and make it a condition that the student involved, must be able to perform some seva whilst at university in their spare time. This seva could be administrative tasks, seva for older people etc.

On the one hand this may pull a person to be closer to Maharaj ji, and also provide assistance to the student too. Many people will disagree with this, as no one should do seva for money however, I feel that if someone is in debt they generally feel that no one is there for them. And if they can come to Maharaj's door and say I need help, I am sure that person will always remember Vaheguru helped them in their hour of need. This is just an idea. It is for Gurudwaras to implement if they wish.

Plan of action

It is with these suggestions in tow, that I would like to clarify, that to fall into these activities without prior and sensible planning would not be sensible. It means the suggestions will not work to their full effect. The need exists for a plan of action and each Gurudwara needs to sit down and adopt their own strategies with the youth involved in their set-up. This is because every Gurudwara is on various stages of development when it comes down to youth involvement. Some places will have Gurbani Santhiya some wont. Some will have Projectors and screens and others will fall short of these requirements.

Thus it is necessary to apply a plan of action and slowly introduce these policies. This is logical thought because where for example Gurbani classes have been advertised, people will attend and at least one individual from these classes with Maharaj's blessings, will also intend coming to the other activities and perhaps help organise them, (Appendix 3 is an example of a plan of action for my local Gurudwara in Leicester.)

CONCLUSION

Endless are His Praises, endless are those who speak them.
Endless are His Actions, endless are His Gifts.
Endless is His Vision, endless is His Hearing.
His limits cannot be perceived. What is the Mystery of His Mind?
The limits of the created universe cannot be perceived.
Its limits here and beyond cannot be perceived.
Many struggle to know His limits,
but His limits cannot be found.
No one can know these limits.
The more you say about them, the more there still remains to be said.
Great is the Master, High is His Heavenly Home
Highest of the High, above all is His Name.
Only one as Great and as High as God
can know His Lofty and Exalted State
Only He Himself is that Great. He Himself knows Himself.
O Nanak, by His Glance of Grace, He bestows His Blessings. ||24||
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj Limb 5 Pauri 24)

The recommendations made are of short concise and down to earth nature. This approach in writing was employed because of the need to understand the solutions, implement them and pray to Vaheguru that he gives us all assistance in what we are aiming to do. As a humble servant of the Sangat I will have made many mistakes in writing the thoughts onto paper as they entered my head.

I know there will be people who will criticise these recommendations and there may be people who agree with them. I am under no illusion that my task is complete. If I have made these recommendations I can only see it fit that it is my duty to contribute to them in some shape or form. I will try to do this to the best of my ability and of course in line with the blessings and permission of Vaheguru.

The task of encouraging, promoting and instigating Sikhi in the youth is the responsibility of every gursikh who has taken the nectar of immortality. It is the task of every Gurudwara to promote this in the western world. This is because the Gurudwara is our home. We should also be aware that as parents, we must strive to be good working role models for our children. Teach them the ideals of Sikhi and show them how to not just practise Sikhi...but to live it.

The recommendations themselves are by the Sangat for the Sangat. Please view this report with that in your minds. However where there is optimism, I must also employ realism. The Dark Age (Kalyug) we are currently in, means we have a massive force activating against our youth in the shape of the five passions and the pull of worldly desires (Maya). Thus I cannot predict that the recommendations discussed above will work. However I do believe, that

if someone enters the house of the Guru, and if they listen, digest and contemplate on what they hear in the house of the guru; a small light in them will be ignited and another soul will be saved in these troubled times. I will take that to be my target: To have just one person realise that we are living in an illusion and are guests on borrowed time in this court of the almighty.

I would also like to state that I am not seeking the lure of chairmanship or leading financed projects. Nor am I the mouthpiece of any political group. I am simply a gursikh with the wish to share what I have learnt with the Sangat. If the future brings any test of my own ability, I will try to do my best to pass it; however I believe I will only surpass such assessments of my Sikhi with the Sangat and guru maharaj's hand on my head. The Sangat and Vaheguru will assist in this huge task of harnessing the Sikh youth.

Please forgive me, O God, O Searcher of hearts. ||4||76||145||
(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj Limb 195 Raag Gauree)

Siree Raag, Fifth Mehl:

Arising each day, you cherish your body, but you are idiotic, ignorant and without understanding.

You are not conscious of God, and your body shall be cast into the wilderness. Focus your consciousness on the True Guru; you shall enjoy bliss forever and ever. ||1||

O mortal, you came here to earn a profit. What useless activities are you attached to? Your life-night is coming to its end. ||1||Pause||

The animals and the birds frolic and play-they do not see death. Those who always remember the Naam, the Name of the Lord, are considered to be liberated. ||2||

Mankind is also with them, trapped in the net of Maya. That dwelling, which you will have to abandon, and vacate-you are attached to it in your mind. And that place where you must go to dwell-you have no regard for it at all. Those who fall at the Feet of the Guru are released from this bondage. ||3||

**No one else can save you-don't look for anyone else.
I have searched in all four directions; I have come to find His Sanctuary.
O Nanak, the True King has pulled me out and saved me from drowning! ||4||3||73||**

Sri guru Granth Sahib Ji Limb 43 writer: Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Translation of Bani on Screen

I contacted S. Jujhar Singh from Wolverhampton, who is an expert in this technological field. He currently is doing seva for the British Organisation of Sikh Students and is at the forefront when it comes to working with computers and projections. He assists in setting up the screens for any youth kirtan durbars organised by BOSS. There are other individuals who also contribute selflessly to initiatives set by BOSS, however I do not remember their names off the top of my head. Vaheguru and the Sangat know who these people are.

We spoke at length about proposed costs and agree that expense will vary according to the size of the diwan hall. The estimated costs are spelt out below. The ingredients for this recipe are as follows:

- 1 x Projector
- 1 x Computer /Laptop
- 1 x Screen
- 1 x Software (Guru Granth Sahib Ji)

Projectors

Projectors are sold on the basis of the quality of their output in terms of light (called lumen). A benchmark is between 1000 and 1500 lumens. Some projectors have the capacity to produce in the excess of 2000 lumens. If we are looking for a portable machine, it would be recommended that the machine projects 800 lumens and more. Machines with greater lumen projection adapt better to a range of different environments.

The other factor, which determines a projectors price, is the screen resolution. This relates to the number of pixels, which make up the image from the personal computer or laptop. Most standard personal computers run on either SVGA (800 x 600) or XGA (1024 x 768). The majority of laptops operate at XGA. To gain optimum visual quality, it is essential that the projector corresponds with the computer output.

I feel we need to go for the projector with the best visual quality (XGA) and with approximately 1500 lumen. The price range I found for those models on <http://www.projectors-online.co.uk/> was approximately £2400 to £2700. Jujhar Singh recommended that choosing a projector was dependent on the diwan hall. Some may require more powerful projectors. He also suggested a

projector priced around £3700 would be sufficient for any Gurudwara. These projectors have a lumen of around 3500- 3600. We agreed that if the need arises he can be contacted to assess which projector would be best suited to the Gurudwara.

Computers/ Laptops

These vary in price depending on speed and performance. A good personal computer with decent speed and storage will cost around £200 to £300. It is generally good idea to shop around in computer fairs for bargains.

Screens

These are fairly cheap, and the range varies according to the size and type required. It will be better to use manual wall screens. We are looking at approximately £100 for the screen. However to save costs, it may be an idea to use a white sheet in most cases!

Software

Guru Granth Sahib Ji Maharaj can be obtained from the author of the website Sikhi to the max.com. Jujhar Singh assures me the software is amazing. I am sure many of us will agree.

General Cost breakdown

Lowest possible:	£2400 Projector	Decent System:	£3700 projector
	£200 Computer		£300 Computer
	£0 White Sheet		£100 Screen
	£Seva Software		£ Seva Software
Total Approx:	£2600	Total Approx	£4100

It is entirely up to the Gurudwara committees to decide how they want to pick and mix the components.



FATEH
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Fellowship of Activists To Embrace Humanity

—A Human Development Organization—

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A Season for Development and Service

“Man is not emancipated as surrounded by all the knowledge that his sciences or religions can give him, but he is free when he embraces God as man and gathers the miserable to his bosom and makes them happy with the joy of being. In sweet humanity are the windows ajar for him to fly out to the infinite rapture of freedom

—”

- Prof. Puran Singh

Are you a young professional or a college student/graduate? Are you interested in learning more about the culture of Panjab and/or volunteering time for human development projects? Are you motivated, looking for growth, interested in making contributions to the community at large and have the desire to make a difference?

The Change Across Borders (CABs) program has room* for just such individuals.

WE are Fellowship of Activists To Embrace Humanity (FATEH). Our Mission is: To inspire a proactive spirit within the community by fostering avenues for selfless service and human resource development to combat social ills including illiteracy, poverty, hunger, poor health and hygiene, inequality, and oppression. FATEH is a volunteer-based, non-profit, non-governmental, human development organization focused on educational, social, and psychological empowerment.. Presently we are operating in North America, Asia and the European Union. We have contributed in Kosovo and Bosnia. FATEH’s projects are:

Change Across Borders (CABs) – now in its third year, CABs is a program, which runs from 9-12 months and includes two integrative semesters of coursework. The curriculum includes Journey of a Nation (pre Guru Nanak to present day history), Guru Granth Sahib (structure, compositions, concepts, interpreters, and secondary sources), Kirtan Mariada (musical theory, rags, and tals; vocal and instrumental), Gataka (the Martial Arts), Gurmukhi (language, grammar, and lexicon), and Santhia (proper pronunciation, in rhythm and with appropriate pauses, of Gurbani). Guest lecturers have included Harinder Singh Mehboob (author and poet), Gurtej Singh

(National Professor of Sikhism and author), Dr. Gurcharan Singh (life fellow of Panjabi University), Dr. Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon (author, historian, and professor), Jagdish Singh (orator and professor) and Dr. Balwant Singh Dhillon (author and professor). To supplement instructions and discussions, several field trips are undertaken to sites of historical and cultural significance. At the end of six months (two semesters of coursework), each participant undertakes three months of full-time engagement in a project. Past projects have included working in village schools (education), media, orphanages (hygiene and health), with Vanjaras and Siklighars, etc. These projects are geared at utilizing the participant's existing skills. At the end of nine months, the participants may opt to continue with FATEH or one of our projects for an additional three months.

Other projects include:

Manifesto 2000 in conjunction with UNESCO: campaign for the "International Year for the Culture of Peace and Non-violence".

Camp FATEH includes ongoing children's camps and workshops in North America and Asia.

Outreach entails donating toys, books, stationary and clothes to other organizations working with children.

KartáKare employs psychological and educational support; counseling, and therapy; addresses issues of health and nutrition; initiated mentoring programs (Saath) and creative education (Sajan).

CSP (Chithi Singhpura) After the massacre of Sikhs in Kashmir, FATEH raised funds for construction of classrooms, hired unemployed but educated youth to conduct tuition classes for students. FATEH also bears the tuition costs for those children whose families cannot.

Prasár entails indexing, translation, transcription and publication of reference tools and texts of Panjabi cultural significance. These include Rattan Singh Bhangu's "Siri Guru Panth Parkash", Giani Gian Singh's "Panth Parkash", and Bhai Nand Lal's "Qulliyat-e-Goya".

We all talk much of Sikhi, Sevá, and Sarbat da Bhalá. When will we transform talk into action? The time is NOW and talk is cheap. We owe it to ourselves to earnestly acquire knowledge of our faith in an honest and integrative manner. It is then our responsibility to express this learned perspective through action in our everyday life. A Sikh is one who ceaselessly yearns to grow and toils to serve His creation. Will you?

For further information and details about joining CABs, please contact fateh-asia@fatehworld.org. If you would like to volunteer in one of FATEH's projects and want more details, please visit our website at www.fatehworld.org or contact fateh-na@fatehworld.org or fateh-eu@fatehworld.org.

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APPENDIX 3: Guru Tegh Bahadur Gurudwara, East Park Road Leicester

Plan of action

The Gurudwara is quite a vibrant home for the Guru and the Sangat. It already has in place the following foundations:

Khalsa Education Centre (Teaching Punjabi in GCSE and Alevel)
Kirtan Classes in the Sikh Community Centre
Gurbani Santhiya on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.
Mata Gujri Ji Library

I have taken a year as a transitional period. Some priorities will be dealt with in the first couple of months, solely because of the established activities already taking place in the Gurudwara.

Month 1:

- Arrange meeting with Gurudwara Committee
- Agree on Action plan
- Establishment of youth committee of like-minded, Sikh youths.
- Advise Sangat of changes
- Arrange installation of screen

Month 2

- Advertise the Gurbani Santhiya classes to all but especially the youth
- Start once a week youth durbars (possibly Sundays)
- Develop links with organisations such as FATEH and those mentioned.

Month 3

- Start youth discussion group one day a week.
- Begin initiatives for children and youth relating to Akhand jaaps.
- Develop links with youth speakers from around the country to come and talk to youth. These events must also be advertised.

Month 4

- Begin monthly youth kirtan durbars, advertised nationally and through British Organisation of Sikh Students.
- Work towards organising gatka and classical music classes.
- Arrange trips to other Gurudwaras around the country and meet with other youths.

Month 5

- Begin planning Sikhi Camp for end of the 6 month, or if there is a clash, to begin advertising the BOSS camp.
- Begin reading sessions in Library

Month 6

- To organise the Sikhi Camp.
- To debrief the Sangat achievements in last 6 months and also to award individuals who have found the way to Sikhi with Sirapaos.

This plan it must be noted is one, which is individually tailored and subject to change. There will be gurpurbs (Guru's birthdays) and other tiohaars (special events) thus the programme will always be of a flexible nature. However once the aims are declared they must be seen through to completion. A youth committee consisting of Sikh youth who are willing to do seva must be organised. Thus it can be seen that the youth are actively encouraging other youth. Also once the events are organised they are then to be run every week. The exceptions are the monthly kirtan durbars and the Sikhi camp, which is every 6 months. The youth committee can make any other recommendations and events can be changed or amended as wished. This is as stated before a template action plan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- The Saadh Sangat for being the proof listener
- The translator of the Rehit Maryada from Taksal
- My family for being so patient with me

And most importantly

The most benevolent, the most forgiving, the most giving, the most beautiful all seeing all doing eye...

VAHEGURU.