



World Sikh Council – America Region (WSC-AR)

A representative body of Sikh institutions of America founded under the patronage of Siri Akal Takhat Sahib

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 16, 2006

Member Gurdwaras:

1. Gurdwara Sahib Fremont, Fremont, CA
2. Guru Nanak Sikh Mission, Livingston, CA
3. Sikh Gurdwara of LA, North Hollywood, CA
4. Sikh Gurdwara Riverside, Riverside, CA
5. Colorado Singh Sabha, Denver, CO
6. Guru Singh Sabha of Augusta, Augusta, GA
7. Sikh Study Circle of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA
8. Sikh Religious Society of Chicago, Palatine, IL
9. Sikh Society of South, New Orleans, LA
10. Sikh Gurdwara of Michigan, Rochester Hills, MI
11. Sikh Society of Michigan, Madison Heights, MI
12. Guru Nanak Foundation of Jackson, MS
13. Sikh Gurdwara of North Carolina, Durham, NC
14. Garden State Sikh Association, Bridgewater, NJ
15. Guru Nanak Sikh Society of Delaware Valley, Sewell, NJ
16. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Glenrock, NJ
17. Sikh Sabha of New Jersey, Lawrenceville, NJ
18. Gurdwara Baba Deep Singh, Las Vegas, NV
19. Sikh Cultural Society Inc., Richmond Hills, NY
20. Sikh Cultural & Edu. Society of Western NY, Buffalo, NY
21. Sikh Religious Society of Dayton, Dayton, OH
22. Guru Nanak Found. of Greater Cleveland, Richfield, OH
23. Guru Gobind Singh Sikh Society, Bedford, OH
24. Guru Nanak Religious Soc. of Central Ohio, Columbus, OH
25. Sikh Sadh Sangat, Easton, PA
26. Philadelphia Sikh Society, Millbourne, PA
27. Tristate Sikh Cultural Society, Monroeville, PA
28. Mid South Sikh Sabha, Memphis, TN
29. Sikh Center of Gulf Coast, Houston, TX
30. Siri Guru Singh Sabha, Richardson, TX
31. Sikh Gurdwara of North Texas, Garland, TX
32. Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Fairfax, VA
33. Sikh Association of Central Virginia, VA
34. Sikh Religious Society of Wisconsin, Brookfield, WI

Other Sikh Institution Members:

1. Siri Guru Granth Sahib Found., Anaheim, CA
2. Sikhs Serving America, Topeka, KS
3. Sikh Youth Federation of North America, White Plains, NY
4. Sikh Heritage Institute, Long Island, NY
5. Sikh Educational & Religious Foundation, Dublin, OH
6. Sikh Youth Federation of USA, Toledo, OH
7. Academy of Guru Granth Studies, Arlington, TX

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WSC-AR Commemorates 400th Anniversary of Martyrdom of Fifth Sikh Guru Sahib with International Conference and Other Events

The World Sikh Council - America Region (WSC-AR) is pleased to announce that the historic 400th anniversary of the martyrdom of Siri Guru Arjan Sahib will be commemorated by an International Conference "**Siri Guru Arjan Sahib Ji's Life, Martyrdom, and Gifts to Humanity**" to be held July 29-30, 2006 at San Jose State University in California. Other notable events planned are a Gurmat Sangeet Program on July 28, and a Youth Seminar on the Life and Teachings of Siri Guru Arjan Sahib on August 5 - 6.

These events are intended to provide an insight and informative focus to all communities on the significant contributions of Siri Guru Arjan Sahib Ji, the Fifth Guru Sahib, to humanity. Local Sikh Gurdwaras and communities are planning their regional events the weekend of June 17-18 all over the United States and the world.

The WSC-AR Anniversary Planning Committee under guidance of its Chairperson, Dr. Manohar Singh of Vermont, has identified three main activities and has a specific team that has planned each undertaking. These sub-committees have done the planning and will carry out the implementation of the events with volunteers from various communities.

An International Conference titled "Siri Guru Arjan Sahib Ji's Life, Martyrdom, and Gifts to Humanity" will be held on July 29-30 at San Jose State University, California, by the Department of Foreign Languages. This will be held under the guidance of Prof. Atamjit Singh, Prof. Mahinder Singh and Prof. Ranbir Singh. This distinguished committee has selected topics from well known authors. This International Conference will feature prominent academics who will present papers on topics related to Siri Guru Arjan Sahib Ji's contributions to humanity. Presentations will be in English, and Punjabi versions will be provided, as available, and included in the final proceeding publications.

As part of this historic occasion, a Gurmat Sangeet Program featuring the Shabads (Hymns) and Raags of Siri Guru Arjan Sahib Ji performed by youth groups, as well as renowned professionals, will be held on July 28. Mr. Sarbpreet Singh of Boston is coordinating this observance. The focus on the traditional raags and the original rendition of Shabads (Hymns) will be supplemented by the distribution of selected audio-visual material representative of the period.

The Literature sub-committee has made available the following brochures on the WSC-AR web site: Ardaas - The Sikh Prayer, Sikh View of Other Faiths - A Message Of Tolerance and Understanding, The Sikh Concept of God, The Sikhs and Their Religion, Vaisaakhi, Interfaith Understanding and Cooperation - A Matter of Faith for Sikhs, Sikhs in America: Stress and Survival. One brochure of special note is a trifold on Siri Guru Arjan Sahib Ji. It provides information on Guru Ji's teachings and contributions and is especially suitable for distribution among the interfaith community. A copy of this and other brochures can be obtained from www.worldsikhcouncil.org. The WSC-AR would like to acknowledge the contribution of Dr. Ranbir Singh in providing full access to this information.

The Youth Sub-Committee has arranged a Special Seminar on the Life and Teachings of Siri Guru Arjan Sahib Ji, with Mr. Kuldeep Singh of Toledo as the Coordinator. The event is planned for August 5-6 at Sri Guru Singh Sabha of Washington, Seattle. This special seminar will be hosted alongside the annual International 2006 Sikh Youth Symposium which will take place at the same venue. Sikh youth from all over the nation are invited to attend.

Siri Guru Arjan Sahib was the fifth in line starting with Siri Guru Nanak Sahib, the founder of the Sikh Faith. Each of the Gurus took the name "Nanak" in his compositions. Their compositions are distinguished by use of the word "Mahla" or the "Body". Thus, Siri Guru Arjan Sahib's compositions are designated as "by the Fifth Body". This emphasizes that even though the ten Gurus had different bodies, they embodied the same divine light as Siri Guru Nanak Sahib, the founder of the faith.

Siri Guru Arjan Sahib came to this world in 1563 C.E. as the youngest of three sons of the fourth Guru, Siri Guru Ram Dass. In 1581 C.E., before his light merged with the Divine Light, Siri Guru Ram Dass designated Siri Guru Arjan Sahib as his successor Guru. During his stewardship of the faith, Siri Guru Arjan Sahib continued his predecessors' work of spreading Siri Guru Nanak's message of faith, hope, prayer, and love and the unity of all faiths. He continued the tradition of service to all people regardless of their socio-economic status or religious belief. During his reign, the city of Amritsar grew significantly, and Harmandar Sahib was completed. He also founded the cities of Hargobindpur, Kartarpur, and Taran Taaran in Punjab (South Asia). Thriving communities developed at each of these places.

Perhaps the most significant gift Siri Guru Arjan Sahib gave humankind was his compilation of the Divine Word brought by him and the preceding Gurus, along with selections from the works of several Hindu and Muslim "Bhagats" (including Kabir and Sheikh Farid) and bards into a single volume. This was the Aad Granth. Later, the Word brought by the ninth Guru was added. The completed volume was invested with the status of Eternal Guru by the tenth Guru Siri Guru Gobind Singh Sahib in 1708 C.E. It is referred to as Siri Guru Granth Sahib.

Siri Guru Arjan Sahib Ji, the Fifth Sikh Guru, was tortured to death on June 16, 1606 at Lahore (Punjab in South Asia) and his body was thrown in the river Ravi. The only parallels to the unwarranted torture-death of Siri Guru Arjan Sahib on frivolous charges are the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the death by poison administered to Socrates. A messenger of love of God and among all people was executed because of his growing popularity. Sikhs often refer to Siri Guru Arjan Sahib as "Shanti de Punj, Shaheedan de Sartaj" meaning "The embodiment of peace, the supreme martyr." The martyrdom took place during the hottest part of the year and the torture is said to have included seating Guru Sahib on a hot griddle and pouring hot sand over his body. Sikhs observe the anniversary of Guru Sahib's martyrdom with congregational prayer, taking out processions singing prayers, and serving cold refreshing drinks to all. The drink traditionally consists of diluted milk sweetened with sugar and often flavored. Cool-aid and lime-aid are often used as well. At times, other soft drinks and, of course, cold water are offered.

The World Sikh Council - America Region (WSC-AR) is a representative and elected body of Sikh Gurdwaras and institutions in the United States. Its members include 41 Gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship) and other Sikh institutions across the nation. WSC-AR works to promote Sikh interests at the national and international level focusing on issues of advocacy, education, and the well-being of all humankind. For more information, please visit www.worldsikhcouncil.org.
