

An Open Letter to all Members of Colorado Singh Sabha (CSS)

Open Letter No 2015-01 dated June 16, 2015

Writers of the open letter: Kiranjit Singh Sikand (A life Member of CSS) and Karmjit Singh Salh (A Life Member of CSS)

Subject: Let us all keep our Gurudwara Sahib a real peaceful place of Worship, and always remember and never forget that the principle at Colorado Singh Sabha is: "SANGAT IS SUPREME"

Sadh Sangat Ji,

GOAL: The goal is to maintain the sanctity of Sangat's Gurudwara Sahib (Guru Ghar) and keep it a peaceful place of worship.

Unfortunately, it has been brought to our attention by many Sangat Members that Teja Singh Rai who is the current member of the Committee of Sewadaars (COS) and holds the position of Treasurer of Colorado Singh Sabha, insulted and humiliated Bhai Satinder Singh Ji (*Head Garanthi and Wazir of our Guru Ghar*) in front of many Sangat Members in the Langar Hall on Sunday May 24th 2015. Both the writers were not present during this ugly episode but you can get the details as to the tone of the insult and the language used, from Harbans Singh Virk and some other Sangat Members, who were present in very close proximity and fully witnessed this ugly episode.

This kind of repetitive behavior by the Rai's is totally unacceptable, and a disgrace to the Colorado Sikh Community, especially from any member of the Committee of Sewadaars. From Teja Singh's past and present actions, it appears that Teja Singh Rai is abusing his leadership position and over reaching his authority to settle some personal vendetta against Bhai jis. If not corrected, this type of action will give bad name to the new 2015-2017 COS, as Sangat will not tolerate it.

Over the several years, there are many good things have happened and a few not so good at our Guru Ghar.

We are proud of the following actions, activities and good deeds:

We are very fortunate that the overall Sangat Members of CSS are excellent and so many Sangat Members have done so much SEWA and are continuing to do SEWA year in year out and have performed the SEWA for decades without any controversies. Below are just a few examples of good deeds of Sangat Members and of being proud:

- Over 240 Sangat Members have become Life Members over the years, which provided the funds of more than 1.2 million dollars and helped towards building our new Guru Ghar
- Construction of the new Guru Ghar in Commerce City: 2007-2008 COS, 2008-2009 COS, 2009-2011 COS and a very large list of Sangat Members
- Addition of the concrete road: 2011-2013 COS and Sangat Members
- Addition to the Langar Hall at the back and two Entry Pillars at 120th Ave: 2013 – 2015 COS and Sangat Members
- All the Fund Raisers who worked very hard to raise the funds to buy the two parcels of land and build our new Guru Ghar: Surinder Ghumman, Makhan Singh, Rashpal Bajwa, Jassi Singh and a very large list of Sangat Members
- Our Bhai Jis who fully participated with all the Sangat Members to raise funds for our Guru Ghar by going to Sangat Member's houses over the years
- Building design and construction: Ved Varma, Tejwant Mangat, Baljit Nanda and many other Sangat Members

- Langar services during all Gur Purabs by Indian Restaurant owners: Mohinder Singh, Jujhar Singh, Jagdish Singh, Balwinder Singh, Guggi, Amrik Singh, Simran, Harman, Jagdish Singh, Gurinder Gill, Meena, Cheena, Binny and many other Sangat Members
- Langar SEWA by our sisters and daughters and brothers: Very large list of Sangat Members
- Families volunteering for Langar Sewa through out the year: Very large list of Sangat Members
- Group of families who fill in for Langar Sewa for all open Langars.
- Preparation of pakoras, sweets during all Gur Purabs and other occasions: Lakhwant Singh, Mohinder Singh, Surinder Singh, Joginder Singh and many other Sangat Members
- Maintenance and cleaning: Thiara Families, Jaswinder Dhillon(Patwari Ji) and many other Sangat Members
- Group of young members who do Langar serving SEWA and clean up the Langar Hall afterwards: Happy Singh and many other Sangat Members
- Running the Panjabi School for children in Guru Ghar: Pavitar Kaur Juneja, Gurinder Singh Juneja's family, Amarjit Sandhu and many Sangat Members
- Educating local Community about Sikhism: Dilpreet Jammu, Inder Chopra, KP Singh and many Sangat Members
- Pathiis for the Akhand Paaths: Very large list of Sangat Members
- Pathiis for the Khula Paaths: Very large list of Sangat Members
- Getting Potable Water connection from South Adams County Water District: Tejwant Mangat, Rajbir Dhillon, Rashpal Bajwa and many other Sangat Members by participating in election and their presence at meetings
- Distribution of drinking water at Memorial Day Parade in Commerce City: Very large list of Sangat Members
- Our Sangat Members at large, having respect for each other and for all the *Granthis* of Guru Ghar
- Landscaping improvements in the Guru Ghar's yard: Teja Singh Rai and many other Sangat Members
- Our Bhai Jis who have helped in keeping the Sangat together, welcoming the Sangat at all times of the day
- Contributing funds and *Kar SEWA* towards the Guru Ghar: Very large list of Sangat Members
- Collecting and contributing funds for good causes like 9-11, Floods, Earth quake in Nepal and local causes: Rajbir Dhillon and very large list of Sangat Members
- The lists of all good deeds and the list of names is too long to mention in this Open Letter, so we apologize for not listing all names, and our Guru Ji knows all the names of those Sangat Members
- The list of all good deeds is too long to mention in this open letter and our Guru Ji knows it all

Some Background for the benefit of the Sangat members who came to Colorado after year 2000: The Colorado Singh Sabha, registered in the State of Colorado as a Non-profit organization is required to follow all the state regulations to maintain its non-profit status. The CSS has been in existence for over 35 years, and little over 15 years ago, there were major changes made to the CSS as the previous leadership / management were simply rotating each other year after year between four individuals and their immediate family members making a mockery of the overall process in a Non-profit Institution. The power of then leadership got in their head upon which they adopted the philosophy of **HAKUMAT** over the **Sangat** rather than **SEWA**. A large portion of Sangat got united and major changes were adopted, because we firmly do believe that **"SANGAT IS SUPREME"**. Sangat spent in excess of \$150 K in legal costs to get the settlement. Most of us are totally committed to the principle of **"SANGAT IS SUPREME"** and shall continue to keep it that way. The Sangat even got a long (over 8 feet long) banner made with the words **"SANGAT IS SUPREME"** and placed it at the entrance of the Guru Ghar in Golden Colorado. Now in 2015, Sangat does not deserve to have the leadership which does not believe in the concept of **"SANGAT IS SUPREME"**.

The Colorado Singh Sabha's Sangat is very decent but not weak. (*Shariif but not Kumjore*)

This Gurudwara Sahib belongs to the whole Sangat and it is not any one person's inherited property, because Sangat has jointly built it.

Eh Guru Ghar sub daa sanjah ghar hai te eh kise dee vee jaddi jaidaat nai hai, kiun ke eh saari Sangat ne mil ke banai hai.

The members of the Committee of SEWAdaars is chosen to their leadership positions to be responsible, and do SEWA and not HAKUMAT over the Sangat. Sangat members do not come to the Guru Ghar to be subjugated by the volunteers in any leadership positions. The Sangat expects all the volunteers in any and all responsible and leadership positions to be kind, respectful, have the capacity to listen to the Sangat, be humble, keep their tempers in control and truly practice decency (*Nimerata*)

There should be ZERO TOLERANCE towards disrespect in person or through the speeches, physical or verbal violence. The offenders should not be supported for any positions of Leadership by the Sangat.

We are requesting and expecting Teja Singh Rai to stop any harassment of any one. Soon after becoming the Treasurer for the third time, Teja Singh Rai expressed the desire to get the Sangat United, we were happy to hear and fully support that goal, but in order to unite the Sangat, it is very essential that all the volunteers in leadership positions respect each and every member of the Sangat including all the Bhai Jis (*Garanthis of our Guru Ghar*)

It is the duty of the leadership to unite the Sangat and not split it apart. (*Sangat noo Joro na ke Toro*)

Keeping the Sangat united is very essential and would be very helpful in getting our Phase 3 construction for our main Darbaar hall with in a short period.

We would also encourage Teja Singh Rai to watch the TV program broadcasted from Bangla Sahib Gurudwara where Bhai Ranjit Singh Ji sitting in the *Tabya* of Holy Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, regularly makes many similar announcements **therefore the announcements made by Bhai Satinder Singh Ji regarding the Langar is very relevant to the operations of Colorado Singh Sabha, therefore should be acceptable as part of the protocol and should be continued.**

Another fact: The Sangat members motivated the writers and not the Bhai Jis and the writers did not get Bhai ji's permission to write this open letter.

To convey our thinking process, we will use our own names so that we do not offend any one:

1. If Sikand does something good for the Guru Ghar, that good deed does not give him any right to do something bad or detrimental to the Guru Ghar.
2. If Sikand takes some bad actions for the Guru Ghar, then any of Sikand's friends including Salh should not support Sikand for his bad actions.

We are NOT proud of the following actions and incidents:

Unfortunately the following incidents took place after 2011, after we moved to our new Guru Ghar:

- Physical fight among two members in June, 2012 where a turban got removed due to physical fight and other person's leg was damaged, police came to our Guru Ghar and the incident ended up in the Adams County Court.
- Two anonymous letters regarding Tiaan festival celebration and Panjabi Singer Performance insulting the organizers of the two events in 2012.
- Insult of visiting Giani Avtar Singh ji, father of Bhai Sandeep Singh Ji in May 2012 by one individual.

- One anonymous letter in October 2012 about Sandeep's family which was a crime in legal definition due to its pornographic contents. Many of the Sangat members are totally committed to find the low life perpetrator or perpetrators (*Badmashes*) for the crime committed against Sandeep's family. This issue (*Badmaashi*) will be over ONLY after the low life perpetrator or perpetrators (*Badmashes*) are caught and exposed.
- Slapping of a young person in April, 2014
- Insult of a life member with use of foul language in front of over 250 members during a General Body Meeting on August 24, 2014 and the absence or lack of justice (*Insaaf*) to the victim by 2013-2015 COS
- Having double standards by the 2013-2015 COS in dealing with complaint from Teja Singh Rai
- The Tribunal not even understanding their job responsibilities and failing to provide justice (*Insaaf*)
- Action taken by 2013-2015 COS for removing the musical instruments (*Saaj*) by ignoring the principle of "SANGAT IS SUPREME" against the wishes of the Sangat at large
- Excessive rotation of same individuals in the position of leadership in COS year after year as we have large number of Sangat Members who are even more capable and qualified than the individuals who keep on rotating
- Insult of CSS members through the speeches and in person in the name of *Maryada*: A trend by one individual
- Two anonymous letters against several Sangat Members and their families with very foul languages in April, 15
- Insult of *Head Garanthi of our Guru Ghar* on May 24th, 2015

The individuals should not try to settle their personal vendettas within the boundaries of the Guru Ghar as it upsets the peace and sanctity of our Guru Ghar. Please resolve your differences away from Guru Ghar. Sangat does not come to the Guru Ghar to witness or get insulted or humiliated or get slapped by others in the Guru Ghar. Also Sangat does not come to the Guru Ghar to be shouted at by a person who cannot control his or her temper. Sangat comes to Guru Ghar to get peace of mind with the expectation that our Gur Ghar is a peaceful place.

We are requesting the individuals who participated in all these negative incidences in the past, to not to repeat these negative actions ever again in the Guru Ghar.

We should discourage the same volunteers repeating their leadership roll year after year in the Committee of Sewadaars, and encourage to bring fresh talent like the three new members of the 2015-2017 COS who are doing SEWA for the first time (Darbara Singh Sandhu, Manjit Singh Thiara and Kuldip Singh Gill)

If there is any doubt about support regarding the issues raised in this open letter, the writers are willing to start a Signature Drive to determine the degree of support for the contents of this open letter.

There may be additional open letters depending upon the situation at Colorado Singh Sabha, and the possible topics may be as follows:

- SEWA verses HAKUMAT by the Volunteers in the Leadership positions
- Steps Colorado Singh Sabha may consider to take to keep peace and harmony

The writers would welcome any rebuttal in writing to this Open Letter. If there is any rebuttal to this open letter please do provide your name in the rebuttal.

Request: Looking for an individual who would accurately translate and type this Open Letter in Panjabi language, so that the Sangat Members who are not versatile in English can read this Open Letter in Panjabi.


Kiranjit Singh Sikand


Karmjit Singh Salh