

Twenty Years of Guru Ram Das Chanting Celebrated in Phoenix

By SS Meher Kaur Khalsa

The first Friday night of 31 minutes of chanting to Guru Ram Das began on June 30, 1995. My husband, Soul Singh, and I had been at Solstice and had been very inspired on hearing that the Herndon community was holding



chanting every night. We decided that we would start having chanting at our house every Friday night.

Over the years, we have been blessed to have hosted many wonderful evenings featuring some of our best musicians—Snatam Kaur, Guru Ganesha Singh, Vikram Singh, Dev Saroop Kaur, Siri Gopal Singh, Sangeet Kaur, Bibi Bhani Kaur, Sat Kartar Kaur, Guru Gian Singh, Shant Kaur, Joti Kaur, Satnam Singh, Jai Jot Singh, Livtar Singh, Liv Singh, and many others.



When we realized that 2015 was the 20th anniversary of our weekly chanting program we felt that it should be marked by a special party. Sat Kartar Kaur drove in from Los Angeles to be our musician. When she arrived, she asked me what melody she should use. The one that came to me was one of the earliest melodies from the early 1970s.

We sent out a flyer and mentioned it to everyone we knew from yoga students, to community members and anyone else we happened to be speaking with.



The night was as special as anticipated. A sangat member gave us quantities of wooden heart-shaped boxes and little jeweled trees. At Solstice, Amrit Kaur from SDI Dasvandh gave me the beautiful bookmarks and little cards with



a picture of the Siri Singh Sahib to distribute, so we had lots of party favors.

I put together a taco bar and spent part of the day chasing down ripe avocados for guacamole. There was cake and vegan ice-creams and a great punch made with a wonderful herb tea that I had bought in New York.



The chanting was beautiful and it was very special to me that almost everyone there had never heard that melody before.

Once that chanting was over and we blessed the food, it seemed the energy in the room multiplied and overflowed so we were awash in a sea of joy.



The Alchemy of Community

by SS Soul Singh Khalsa

Sometimes we can see a change of consciousness in the smallest of things. That's what happened to me with a cruddy, old light fixture we had in our bathroom.

The year was 1995 and Meher Kaur and I had gotten very inspired by the example of the Herndon community hosting nightly chanting to Guru Ram Das to bring more light to their community.

So on June 30, 1995, we started Friday chanting to Guru Ram Das at our house. That was when the light fixture started to bug me. It was a cheap fixture we had over our bathroom mirror that had gotten rusty. It had never bothered me before but now it did. Sangat was coming each Friday and that changed everything. So, we had it replaced. More than a thousand Fridays later, it is the same thing – Sangat is coming and the devotion of the devotees needs to be matched by a welcoming environment.

Chanting to Guru Ram Das is a very unique practice. Sadhana is hard - getting there is the true beauty of it. Yoga classes are meant to be challenging to test one's grit. Gurdwara is easier. But the easiest of them all is chanting to Guru Ram Das.

Each Friday, we would sit and chant together. After we finished, many times Meher Kaur and I would talk about the alchemy we had just witnessed. Guru Ram Das is the master healer and we have seen through that mantra, so much healing.

We encourage people to start a night of chanting. It will bring Guru's alchemy to your community, to yourselves, and to your homes. It has certainly done that for us.
