



Grassroots Global Ministry

The Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji established the Sikh Dharma Ministry in 1971 to serve the organizational, leadership and spiritual needs of our Dharma.

We have a diverse, rich resource of people that make up our Sikh Dharma Ministry. It's time that we learn more about each other, about what other Ministers are doing, and about how they are doing it. In this first issue of our Global Ministry in Action, we received inspiring stories of service from our brothers and sisters in South America, Central America and Mexico.

Future issues will explore our service in other parts of the world...please enjoy these stories and may they inspire your service to humanity. We would love to hear from Ministers around the globe about your service projects as well!

Humbly,

The Sikh Dharma Ministers' Newsletter Team
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Serving the Global Sangats in South America, Central America and Mexico



SERVICE IS HAPPINESS –

Seva in Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Paraguay and Argentina

By SS Sham Kaur Khalsa

In life we all search for happiness. We might not even comprehend what a state of happiness really is. We taste it at times for short moments and this makes us keep looking for it and live our lives pursuing that thing we call happiness. In this search we often find that helping, serving, and caring for others leaves us in a really good state.

We may ask ourselves why this is, why serving others makes us feel complete. It feels like our lives have a purpose, a connection with something bigger than ourselves. Maybe it is because serving others gives us a reflection of what we have inside. When you have given your time and resources to hold a situation you learn humility. You can see the divinity in action through you. Serving others teaches us that everything is perfect as it is. In service it becomes easier to lose the control we think we have and surrender to what is.

For over ten years I have worked with children living on the street—especially young girls in very dangerous and hopeless situations. After all this time we have become a family. Many have died in the process; many have gone away. The challenges continue for them but we have gone through it together. We learn from each other every step of the way and so it has been a blessing for me.

One value we share as Sikhs and yogis is service, as a key element of spiritual growth to reach happiness. Our Kundalini Yoga students participate in the effort to embrace this value. In every Kundalini/Sikh Dharma community in South America seva is taken very seriously. You can feel it everywhere.

In Chile, for example, there is an institutionalized structure to provide food for poor people and to provide aid in situations of extreme events. The program is Langar Chile. Communities in Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay and Argentina serve food to poor areas once a week or once a month, depending on the community's abilities. There are also free yoga classes in jails for women and men. There is a whole movement led by the Women of Light Foundation from Chile to China to reach the souls of women to be healed and be elevated.

The spirit that embodied our Sikh Gurus long ago is still alive in the heart of our global community, and continues to inspire young people to become real human beings through service. We consider service to be a duty and a blessing. It is a key element of our lifestyle which, among many other things, makes us very happy. There is so much to do, so many people to serve and so much happiness to feel. Let's keep up and we will be kept up by God and Guru!

Reaching Happiness

“One value we share as Sikhs and yogis is service, as a key element of spiritual growth to reach happiness.”

—SS Sham Kaur Khalsa
(La Paz, Bolivia)

Promoting Interfaith Understanding in Chile

Sikh Dharma Chile is also in touch with the Oficina Nacional de Asuntos Religiosos (National Office for Religious Affairs) that promotes understanding of religions/spiritual practices in Public Policy matters.



Healing with the Guru Gaitri Mantra Meditation at UN International Peace Day Celebration

A Mission of Service

By Sat Sansar Singh
Santiago, Chile

Guru Harkrishan's life is an example and a touchstone for inspiration in our life and work. When out of compassion he decided to sacrifice his own physical body to heal a whole town, he put himself aside to serve others. The remembrance of giving a priority to serve others is a driving force in our daily activities. Guru Harkrishan's sacrifice is a constant reminder to live with compassion and empathy for other people's challenges, and to reach out to serve those needs.

Here in Santiago, Chile the mission of serving the needs of our communities is sustained through a monthly Gurdwara service, together with several other Dharmic activities including Akhand Paths and Gurbani Kirtan. Our Gurdwara service is held on Sunday morning, served by 10 sevadars and attended by 20-30 people. There is also Ishnaan Seva, usually served by 3-5 sevadars.

Gurbani Kirtan is usually performed by one of three sevadars who have been trained by Ustad Narinder Singh in Amritsar, and also a tabla player trained by Murli Manohar. Gurbani Kirtan classes are also offered. People connect with the energy of the Siri Guru Granth Sahib, which is open for people to read all day long. Oftentimes, morning Sadhana includes a short Gurdwara service.

Akhand Paths are held about three times a year (Siri Singh Sahib's birthday, Guru Ram Das' birthday and Kundalini Yoga Festival) in the Santiago area. Akhand Paths have also occurred in other cities in Chile, including La Serena, Viña del Mar and Valdivia. At the yearly 3HO Chile International Kundalini Yoga Festival, a full Gurdwara is held every morning at the end of Aquarian Sadhana chants. There are often Sikh and/or Amrit vows ceremonies and Anand Karaj. Nitnem and Gatka classes are also held during the festival.



Sikh Vows at 3HO Chile International Kundalini Yoga Festival Gurdwara

Inspired by the teachings of Guru Amar Das and the Siri Singh Sahib Yogi Bhajan, since 2003 every Thursday a group of volunteers from Langar Chile serves a hot vegetarian meal to homeless people outside of Vega Central and San José, San Juan and Posta Central Hospitals in Santiago. Since 2011, a group of volunteers provides the same service in Viña del Mar, and since 2012 in Osorno.

Sikh Dharma Chile also participates in Foro Espiritual Santiago por la Paz, an Interfaith group composed of most traditional religions and indigenous religion/spiritual practices, that meets monthly to discuss different perspectives on current issues. Foro Espiritual also organizes a yearly celebration of UN International Peace Day (September 21), in which Sikh Dharma does a prayer together with the whole group. That event attracts over 300 people from various spiritual backgrounds.



ONAR Directive with representatives of Catholic, Christian, Bahai and Sikh Organizations

Bringing the Light to Ecuador

Since July 2014 we have offered classes at Mujeres de Frente, a school created for the rehabilitation of women who were in prison. A Kundalini Yoga teacher specializing in children teaches the children of these women. The main objective is to create a stable environment where the children are supported and accompanied through the process of developing their abilities and their resiliency.



We recently started weekly Kundalini Yoga classes for refugee women in the Kolping Foundation of Quito. All the classes offered through the social programs are free of charge. The teachers specialize in Kundalini Yoga for women, and teach all the classes for seva. We have a multidisciplinary team (psychologists, anthropologists and sociologists) who evaluate the programs so that we can prove through scientific criteria the impact of the practice of Kundalini Yoga in the lives of these women and their environments. This team also offers their services as seva.

In 2014 over 500 women took at least one class free of charge in Ecuador. More than 160 women attend our classes on a weekly basis.



Women of Light in Ecuador

By Gurujot Kaur, Executive Director, Mujer de Luz-Ecuador

Women of Light is a nonprofit organization that pioneers social intervention programs in support of women who are in vulnerable and dangerous situations. The programs are based on Kundalini Yoga classes, which are free of charge. In February 2014 we brought Women of Light to Ecuador, where over twenty Ecuadoran teachers perform this seva.

Our Social Programs

We started teaching in a rehabilitation facility in Quito in March 2014 and in the new facility of Latacunga in October 2014. There are over 200 women registered for the four classes that are offered every Friday. The program is focused on creating emotional and physical wellbeing, decreasing the levels of depression, stress and anxiety, and supporting the women's critical process of changing to a new penitentiary system. The teachers have previous experience teaching Kundalini Yoga at the penitentiary facility for men in Quito for the past four years.



Women of Light Ecuador with SS Nam Nidhan Kaur and Gurujot Kaur, Executive Director

Domestic Violence

In October 2014 we began a program for women who are victims of domestic violence. We teach classes every week at the Centers for Equity and Justice in Quito, Calderon and Eloy Alfaro. This program supports the therapeutic treatment that the women receive. The goal is to help them find their place in the new scenario they are living in, overcome the old patterns of identification, and learn self-healing techniques that can be useful in their everyday lives. This year we will have new classes in two Centers for Equity and Justice and in a shelter house for sex workers.

Yoga in Your Community

This program, which started in October 2014, is organized in cooperation with women from the Organized Network for the Economy and Solidarity (Red de Organizaciones de Economía Popular y Solidaria).

A team of Kundalini Yoga teachers offers classes every week in the Carapungo Auditorio, which is part of Quito's county. The aim of this program is to support the empowerment of women in the different organizations through the tools of Kundalini Yoga for emotional, physical and mental wellbeing as well as self-worth and self-appreciation. At the same time we look forward to strengthening the capacity of working in teams and the development of women's leadership.



Sacrifice: Unto Infinity

SS Gurujodha Singh Khalsa (Mexico)

It is interesting that the numerology of this year brings together the number 8 and the number 5. Beyond the fact that Guru Harkrishan, for being the 8th Guru, embodies the virtues of the Pranic Body, he became Guru at the age of 5 and he died at the age of 8. This implies a connection between these two numbers and this can help us shed light on what this year will ask of us, through Guru Harkrishan's life and death example. Number 5 is the physical body and represents the virtue of sacrifice, as it is through the body that we can turn our human experience into a temple, resounding with God's name. When we transform the lead in us into gold (we sacrifice the gross for the subtle), the celestial melody of the Divine starts ringing within us. This is exactly what Guru Arjan means in the following lines:

*Even the mean, mean man, who sins again and again,
If he will chant the Name of the Lord,
four corners of the world will bow down to him.*—Asa Fifth Guru

It does not matter who we are or were and what our actions have caused in the past. Once we tune our physical body to the sacred vibration of the Naam, a process of purification occurs by which we re-establish and re-identify our Self.

This purification relates to the domain of the Pranic Body. Once the prana flows freely and abundantly through the *nadis* it washes away all sickness and impurity, both physical and energetic. Chanting Gurbani Kirtan is the ultimate experience of this: through the Naam you transform darkness into light and that stimulates a healing flow of prana that gives you an experience of infinity. Ultimately, when that experience is perfected the "twist" in the 8 untwists and that turns the 8 into an O—which translates into an experience of pure Oneness or Yoga.

Guru Harkrishan was an example of this relationship between the Physical and Pranic Body: he made the ultimate sacrifice of his physical body in order for the ultimate purification (healing) to happen in his community that was afflicted by a disease. This teaches us that when our sacrifice is unto infinity, it brings healing, not only for ourselves but for those who surround us too.

Personally, Guru Harkrishan's example led me to begin this year contemplating this: "What am I a sacrifice to in this lifetime?" This is a profound meditation for me and I invite others to reflect upon it too.

Sangat-wise, I believe Guru Harkrishan can inspire us to go beyond what we think we can do for others. Our community in Mexico is very large and there are wonderful activities already taking place: social langars, teaching yoga in prisons and the service our IKYTA team does to our communities are just a few examples of how, when we are touched by the grace and compassion of someone's service to us, this awakens within us the power to sacrifice and serve for the healing of others.

One major new project we are working on in Mexico is the creation of a Mexican 3HO Kundalini Yoga Festival! This is the next step our sangat needs to take to address its own needs and to serve all those new souls that are looking for a happy, healthy, holy lifestyle. Just in Mexico City there are over 23 million residents—so we have a lot of opportunities to serve, teach, lead and spread the light.



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—SS Gurujodha Singh Khalsa
(Mexico City)



Serving the Under-Served The dedication of Sat Atma Singh Khalsa (Mexico City)

By SS Dr. Shanti Shanti Kaur Khalsa

Sat Atma Singh Khalsa of Mexico City devoted his life to service. He was inspired by the example of Guru Harkrishan and served the ill and underserved, teaching Kundalini Yoga to people with HIV/AIDS. He believed the end of AIDS is in sight and that the practice of Kundalini Yoga specific to the needs of people with HIV brings new momentum to living healthy with this condition. In November 2013 I had the privilege to join him at his classes in the heart of Mexico City and saw the vitality, clarity and inner stillness he awakened in his students.

We first met in 2010, when he came to Espanola, New Mexico to take a 4-day specialty training on teaching Kundalini Yoga to people living with HIV/AIDS. For the rest of his life Sat Atma Singh worked to bring the teachings of Yogi Bhajan and the Shabad Guru to people with serious health conditions. In 2013 he took on the mission of making sure more Kundalini Yoga teachers in Mexico were trained to teach Kundalini Yoga therapeutically, leading the way for training Kundalini Yoga teachers to reach people with diabetes, the number one cause of death in Mexico. To date, 26 teachers in Mexico City are trained in the specific Kundalini Yoga curriculum for people at all stages of Type 2 diabetes.

Sat Atma Singh worked tirelessly writing proposals to receive financial support from the government for the HIV/AIDS and diabetes classes. He wanted to make sure as many people as possible are served.

He understood and lived the teaching that acceptance of God's will is not a sacrifice. When he himself became seriously ill with malignant cerebral lymphoma, he went to San Francisco, where his mother lived, for medical care. Seva Simran Singh visited regularly during Sat Atma Singh's treatment and saw him the day before he passed. Seva Simran Singh told me, "It was very hard for Sat Atma Singh to breathe and to speak but he always was able to command a strong, 'Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh!' when I was leaving after a visit. His spirit was there in strength and devotion literally until his last days."

The work Sat Atma Singh began in Mexico City has not continued since his death on September 12, 2014; it is our prayer that a Kundalini Yoga teacher in Mexico City will pick up his service. If you are called to serve in the frequency of Guru Harkrishan, kindly contact me at healthnow@grdcenter.org. It would be my honor to train you to carry on the important and impactful service that Sat Atma Singh started.

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Sat Atma Singh and SS Nam Nidhan Kaur (Chile) at Summer Solstice Sadhana in New Mexico



Life at Belo Horizonte – Brasil

by SS Dr. Gurusangat Kaur Khalsa

Education in Action

The sangat in Belo Horizonte put together a donation plan, which during five years raised 1.3 million US dollars. With the funds, we tested for four years the curriculum and an educational program according to Sikh Dharma and Siri Singh Sahib's teachings. We also trained teachers and built the school infrastructure. Donations from abroad also helped to make that dream a reality, providing \$39,000 to help furnish the classrooms and playgrounds.



Miri Piri School Team of Teachers

The formative years are the most important to consolidate self-identity and create the basis for an Aquarian human being. Miri Piri School with its team is ready to bring to a full dharmic light issues that educators can no longer avoid. Children require their needs to be addressed with competence and compassion. We will make a difference!

Inclusion & Excellence

We welcome children from different social and cultural backgrounds, and believe that our dharmic training can contribute to create a culture of excellence, progress and freedom. We value the sovereignty of each soul and believe together we can inspire each other's growth.

Mission and Inspiration

When heart and head are united in service and the lips utter silently "Wahe Guru," the body does take the load. This should be the motivation that allows the Divine Plan to take shape. In its completion, all shall be made humble. The results bring peace and light to every soul. Only then one can say the Guru's mission is fulfilled.



Investing in Futures— Sangat Businesses in Brasil



ABAKY was created in 2004, right after Siri Singh Sahib's passing. Since then we have grown steadily and today we form a Sangat of more than 200 people.

We created businesses to support our growth and to serve the needs of the community in Brasil. Each business donates to our Seva Program Fund, and so we are consistently serving and sharing the Teachings.

ABAKY Seva

Our Seva Programs help bridge gaps in a diverse, unequal and multicultural society, where we serve at:

- Detention house for males
- Detention house for pregnant women
- 3 Day Care Homes
- Public schools and hospitals

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*Sikh Dharma Ministry: Working in
Unity and Purity to Serve Humanity*



***"You answered the call of duty—
that's the beauty of life."***

***Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan
Singh Khalsa Yogiji
(July 7 1977)***

