

# AN OFFERING FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF RELIGION

Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa! Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh!

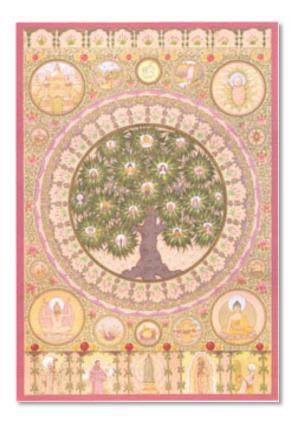
People often ask, "What is a Sikh Dharma Minister?" It is our hope that this booklet may be helpful in answering questions as well as inspiring you on this path of destiny.

We offer this wonderful compilation of words and thoughts from our global Ministry about what it means to be a Sikh Dharma Minister (*gleaned from our Minister's eNewsletter archives from 2001-2014*).

I hope you find these words helpful, interesting, and uplifting.

Humbly,

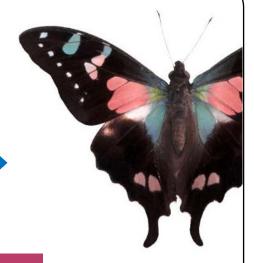
SS Dr. Sat-Kaur Khalsa Secretary of Religion





Working in Unity and Purity

To Serve Humanity



## SIKH DHARMA MINISTERS—A LIFE OF SERVICE



"You have to rise yourself from the ashes. Like that of a phoenix. You have to lead your own family; you have to become your religious **Minister** by your reality.

"There is no talk which can walk. There is no miracle anybody can do. You are the only miracle. You have to rise and elevate in your consciousness. Write your way, let your way become the guidelines."—
November 29, 1992 (Mexico)

## THE ROOTS OF THE MINISTRY



From the Secretary of Religion SS Dr. Sat Kaur Khalsa

When the Siri Singh Sahib first appointed me Secretary of Religion, one of my charges was to administrate the Ministry. At that time, the Ministry was a rich body of resources that was pretty much untapped.

In the early days of our Dharma, the Siri Singh Sahib would often make someone a Minister on the spot. Since

most of us came from a Judeo-Christian background, our concept of a Minister was influenced by that history. Traditionally, a Minister would serve a congregation from birth to death and the congregation would financially support

"You are the soul consciousness of God. Try to understand and realize your basic values.

These values will become virtues. These virtues will bring you many opportunities.

These opportunities will bring you peace, and the success will begin.

You will expand." —Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji the Minister. One of the first things the Siri Singh Sahib said was that he never wanted a Sikh Dharma Minister to live off the sangat. We were to serve our sangats and be leaders in our communities.

Initially many people were reluctant to fully embrace being Ministers, because they weren't quite sure of their role. Little by little I have tried to help people understand that the Siri Singh Sahib saw it was our destiny to be Sikh Dharma Ministers. Each person has unique gifts that are needed to serve our sangats and communities. The Ministry is like a beautiful patchwork quilt, each person being a unique part. When these parts are sewn together by the Guru's Word, the Ministry becomes a blanket that covers all the needs of the sangat. No single Minister has to do it all—it is a group effort.

Our roots are deep. From these roots, our Ministry can help our sangats reach the heavens. It is my hope and prayer that God ever bless you and keep you in His light and love.

## **VISIONING OUR MISSION**

At our Summer Solstice Minister gathering in 2006, we meditated and visioned on the role of a Sikh Dharma Minister, to further understand our role as Ministers to build the spirit of our communities and be able to minister to people in ways that help them stay connected with their souls.

Dr. Shanti Shanti Kaur led a meditation to answer the questions: "What is the vision for our Global Community of Ministers? What is the unique thing we have to offer the world that is different from any other Ministry?" We distilled our visioning to the following principles:

- A Sikh Dharma Minister is one who is willing to serve in crisis.
- A Sikh Dharma Minister welcomes everyone with consistent values, serving as a representative of Sikh Dharma.
- With a united practice of sadhana, prayer and connectedness as Ministers we can move into action.
- We call on the power of Shabad Guru, using our Sikh traditions and guidance from Siri Guru Granth Sahib and utilization of a Panj.

We then distilled this information to come up with an affirmation. Using the power of the collective, the group agreed to repeat the following affirmation out loud three times daily: "Sikh Dharma Ministers, working in unity and purity, to serve humanity." I invite every Sikh Dharma Minister to join in this endeavor. The power of our prayer and projection can help us manifest this truth. May God ever bless you and keep you in His Light and Love.

"It is my prayer that each day may be bright and beautiful.

As it comes, may it uplift your soul and consciousness towards God.

And let the light of the Guru's words enlighten you forever. Sat Nam."

From The Power of Prayer, The inspired Words of Yogi Bhajan, KRI 1985, p. 20.



Sikh Dharma Ministers Working in Unity and Purity to Serve Humanity

## THE RISE OF THE MINISTRY IN THE WEST



#### SS Shanti Kaur Khalsa

When the Siri Singh Sahib starting spreading the Guru's Word in America, it became clear that an organized system of leadership needed to be established to serve the ashrams and Gurdwaras that were springing up everywhere. He based the Ministry of Sikh Dharma on the concept of the Manji system. In the West, we have adopted the word *ministry* from the Judeo-Christian culture,

because it implies a life of service and devotion, but it is important to understand that we don't share many characteristics with Ministers of most faiths. Learning from history, we have to understand the sharp differences that define us as Sikh Ministers:

- We are the servants of the Panth;
- o The relationship between a Sikh and his Guru is direct, no one stands in between, least of all us;
- We do not financially benefit in anyway from Dasvand or the Guru's donations;
- o All people are equal before God, and the title of a Sikh Dharma Minister gives us no special position in God's eyes;
- o To be a Minister means we are the first to step forward, the first to offer whatever is needed, the last to eat, and the last to sleep.

If we maintain our purity of spirit, then the Guru's love will always be there to give us strength and endurance.

## MEANING AND RELEVANCE OF IDENTITY AS A SIKH DHARMA MINISTER

## SS Dr. Shanti Shanti Kaur Khalsa



What is it about being a Sikh Dharma Minister that makes us distinct from others who serve the Dharma? After all, we do much the same things as everyone else, don't we? What difference does it make in actual practice whether we have an SS or MSS in front of our name or whether other people in our community know we are Ministers or not? Shouldn't we act the same, either way? Why should we stand out? What makes it important to

identify myself as a Minister?

"Another destiny group within the [Guru's] Court are all the Ministers of the community. They ensure the continuity and grace of the Gurdwara and its programs by their presence, devotion, and their own continuity in relation to the Siri Guru Granth Sahib and the service to the Sadh Sangat."



Bhai Sahiba Dr. Inderjit Kaur Khalsa (Bibiji)

"Each of us has an earnest, deep longing and devotion to be a Minister; that is what the Siri Singh Sahib saw in us when he made us Ministers. Let us each find the courage to identify this within our self. I encourage each of us to drop whatever it is that separates us from this identity."

Over the years these are questions I have heard from Sikh Dharma Ministers wondering about their identity as a Minister. For many, this has become an urgent question as the personal self desires to align with the soul. In conversations with Sikh Dharma Ministers, I have discovered that answering these questions has brought a deeper meaning to the commitment of being a Minister.

So, what does it mean to be a Sikh Dharma Minister?

Simply, we are Sikh Dharma Ministers because it is in our destiny to be so. Acknowledging this destiny to one's self is an important step. It says, "I recognize myself, I identify myself as a Minister." This self-identification clarifies our purpose and intention and grounds our actions. This clarity ignites the power to direct our own specific talents and energies to serve as a Minister. From this deep inner base, each of us can be a Minister as we are, without trying to match some ideal that we may hold.

Sardarni Sahiba Dr. Sat Kaur, Secretary of Religion, said, "Once I recognize myself as a Minister, I am willing to be recognized as a Minister by others. A Sikh Dharma Minister

takes responsibility, which comes from an inner urging to serve others. A Minister is one who is willing to initiate, to extend, to expand in the service of the mind, body, and spirit of others, and to the global human community. This starts with self identification and allowing oneself to be identified by others as a Minister. It is identity and identification."

Sardarni Sahiba Hari Charn Kaur from Espanola, New Mexico, describes it this way, "Each of us has an earnest, deep longing and devotion to be a Minister; that is what the Siri Singh Sahib saw in us when he made us Ministers. Let us each find the courage to identify this within our self. I encourage each of us to drop whatever it is that separates us from this identity. Sometimes what separates us from ourselves can be a fear of 'too-bigness' or it can be a sense of 'too littleness.' Either way, let's cut through it and be who we are, humbly and with clear confidence."

Being a Sikh Dharma Minister is not about being above someone else or being better than someone else. We each have a call to connect with other people and uplift them. In our own way, each Minister has the capacity to awaken another to the power of their own soul. We have the ability to touch, to elevate, to speak to



the heart of the other person, even if we have kept this ability hidden or have chosen not to use it.

The Sikh Dharma Ministry is a collective hope. It is a guardianship established so that the community, the sangat, feels secure. Siri Sikdar Sahiba Sardarni Guru Amrit Kaur, describes the Sikh Dharma Ministry as a "collective network of presence in the world."

So, how do we step into our identity as Ministers in a way that the community feels comfortable with: that each of us feels comfortable with?

It is helpful to awaken to one's own humility, to become more clear about "who I am; what I am here for, and what, and who I am serving." Sardarni Sahiba Sat Kirpal Kaur, former CEO of Sikh Dharma and Chief Whip of the International Khalsa Council, suggests simply living by example. She says, for her, "A Minister is one who holds the values, lives the values, and has the ability to communicate the values to others." As we become comfortable with simply being who we are, the sangat can become comfortable with us.

At this time, perhaps more urgently than any other, I invite you to sit with yourself, and perhaps a few other Ministers, to identify and describe for yourself what it means to you personally to be a Sikh Dharma Minister.

Sardarni Sahiba Gurutej Kaur of Los Angeles says succinctly, "I am a Sikh Dharma Minister because that is what I am called to do. It is not a title, it is not a piece of paper, or a status symbol. It is a privilege and sometimes a burden. I am here to serve."

#### **MEETING OUR DESTINY AS MINISTERS**



## SS Viriam Singh Khalsa

There are many facets to being a Minister in Sikh Dharma. The Siri Singh Sahib's vision for us as individuals meeting our destiny as a Minister—and as a larger group fulfilling the Guru's mission in these times—is breathtaking in its scope and majesty. Here are my thoughts on some roles that Ministers can play in creating community or Sangat.



I firmly believe—and my 30 years of experience have thus far confirmed—that Sadhana is the soul of community. If you want a quick litmus test of the health of any given Sangat, large or small, look at their Sadhana. By coming together in the morning to worship, pray, and vibrate the cosmos together, so many things are opened by the Guru and so many things are worked out. As a Minister, take responsibility for group

Sadhana. Support this effort like a living thing, for it does require nurturance. As our Sangats grow, it is important that our concept of Sadhana grow with them. Sahaj Paths and Akhand Paths are strong nutrients that help communities grow, both inwardly and outwardly. Involve everyone in the Akhand Path, including yoga students, visiting parents, and other faiths. The Guru is for everyone.

Bring people together with special events. This can include getting together once a week to sing a particular shabad, read a Bani or do a particular meditation. These can be ongoing events or they can be organized around a special holiday or Gurupurbs. It is nice to hold these gatherings at different Sangat member's houses, both to spread the blessing energy around and to bring people together. Efforts in this area really pay off for creating community.

Ministers can organize regular potlucks at Sangat member's houses. Eating together creates Pangat, a strong social bond and sacred community. These meals are great ways to involve "outsiders" who may feel awkward at more formal "religious" events like a Gurdwara.

Many years ago we asked the Siri Singh Sahib how we could bring the Eugene Sikh community closer together, and he advised us to have weekly weekend breakfasts together. We started these and they became quite popular. New relationships were forged that continue to this day.

We all have different strengths as Ministers. Sikh Dharma has many technologies that can help us in our efforts if we but use them.

## MINISTERING IS SERVING

## MSS Shakti Parwha Kaur Khalsa

Basically, Ministering is serving. When Bhai Kanhaiya brought water to the wounded enemy soldiers on the battlefield, he was Ministering unto them. He saw the God in all, as the Siri Singh Sahib did. This is not always easy for most of us, especially when the behavior or words of another person are unkind, rude, or obnoxious.

In most religions, the Minister, Priest or Rabbi conducts a weekly, or daily prayer service, officiates at weddings and funerals and baptisms, and is the person to whom members of the congregation trust for guidance, comfort and inspiration. When the Siri Singh Sahib established the Sikh Dharma Ministry in 1972, he knew that we would be called upon to fulfill all those needs and more as we enter into the Aquarian Age.

He set up levels, or tiers, of Ministerial responsibility. Not a hierarchy—on the contrary he told us to visualize an inverted pyramid. On the very bottom, the lowest position, supporting the entire structure was the Siri Singh Sahib, and he did. He carried us all. And he still does! His example, his teachings, his subtle body continue to permeate Sikh Dharma.

He created the Ministerial titles of *Mukhia Singh Sahib* and *Mukhia Sardarni Sahiba* to carry the next level of responsibility. Above them are the *Singh Sahibs* and *Sardarni Sahibas* whose responsibility is to serve the Sadh Sangat directly. He used to say that the top level, the most important people in this pyramid are the ones who have no titles, and those who may not even be Sikhs. He taught us that we are here to serve all of humanity.

#### REFLECTIONS FROM THE MINISTERS

One goal in any spiritual practice is to better serve ultimate Truth in thought, word and deed. The meditation, prayer, actions and devotion of people of Divine Love combine in a force field around the Earth, in our deepest hearts, and in a universal Unconscious. Together we are truly moving towards universal peace, love and meaningful prosperity.—SS Manjit Kaur Khalsa, NM





...for me, Ministering is mostly about Being. My sadhana, banis, and devotion create an energy that naturally teaches and heals. Because of our energy and appearance, people do ask questions and tend to talk more about spiritual subjects. But, for me, the Ministering seems to be more the result of staying present in the moment, and allowing Spirit to unfold.

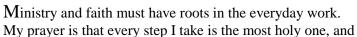
— SS Dr. Sham Rang Singh Khalsa, MA



I try to remember that Guru Gobind Singh is my role model and teacher. As a Minister if I can remember to do sadhana, wear bana, do banis, keep up, then I'll be living my role as a Minister of Sikh Dharma. I won't have to look for opportunities to serve; they will come to me.—SS Harpal Singh Khalsa, NM



My ministry is not separate from all that I am and all that I do. It means that in order to serve, my sadhana must be strong and that I make myself available to people.—MSS Nirvair Singh Khalsa, NM



that my work exemplifies God. To the extent that we as Ministers remember and practice the habit to make each interaction uplifting and address the spirit within the moment we are in, to that extent we live successfully as Ministers.—55

Dharm Singh Khalsa, NM





As Ministers we need to create spaces where we can share our journeys and nurture the power of our Dharma, so that we can act as One, even when we are dispersed all over the world.—65 Gurujodha Singh Khalsa, Mexico



As Sikh Dharma Ministers, we can function as one subtle energetic body. Like the heart-centered energy that flows through the entire physical body, distributing vital energy throughout, so can the Ministry's energetic vibration pervade the entire body of Sikh Dharma, bringing cohesion, integration and connection. — SS Har Nal Kaur Khalsa, NM



There is one simple guiding principle as a Minister of Sikh Dharma: Mission without Commission. To honestly serve this mission we have to put aside our own personal agendas and serve the needs of the time and space before us. It is such a tremendous privilege to serve in the capacity of a Minister that there are no limitations in service. As the Guru is the hub and touchstone of the community so too is the Minister a guiding physical presence.— SS Gurubachan Singh Khalsa, NM

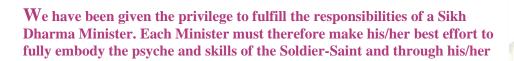
The Siri Singh Sahib, my beloved teacher, inspired my Ministry. From his example, I long to serve God as he served Him.—MSS Krishna Kaur Khalsa, CA

By the Grace of the Guru, somehow this incarnation has been made sacred. Through the miracle of Love, we have been made servants of the Word, servants of the times, servants of the souls of the Aquarian Age. We have been made to serve as Ministers of Sikh Dharma. We answered the call of the times, the call coming from the Subtle Body of the Guru, and the dramatic call coming from our beloved Siri Singh Sahib



ji—leading the way, with a great sweep of his metaphoric hand saying: "Come on! Let's go!"—MSS Guru Raj Kaur Khalsa, Canada

The words Sikh Dharma Ministry to me mean, "Our collective consciousness as a sangat to hold the teachings of our Gurus as our first love and living our lives as an example of a Sikh of the Guru."—SS Jugat Guru Singh Khalsa, India







projection, word, thought and deed be able to neutralize violence, safeguard the Guru, protect the Sangat and protect and safeguard those who would look to us for protection, all with grace, dignity and divinity.—SS Gurujodha Singh Khalsa, CA



Ministry has so many faces. It is knowing your neighbors, participating in your communities, and teaching the methods and words of the Guru Granth. In all these varied roles, neutrality is essential by approaching every environment with the standard of compassion for all. This requires listening, especially to people other than those who confirm your reality. From this space, Ministry emerges. — SS Dr. Hari Simran Singh Khalsa, CA

Sikh Dharma Ministry is the service to our brothers and sisters of the world to heal, uplift and deliver them to their destiny. Everyone has a chance in life to turn towards spirituality.—SS Guru Sangat Kaur Khalsa, VA





Many candidates tell me that taking Minister vows is not unlike taking Amrit. There is a subtle shift in their consciousness and a deepening of their commitment and responsibility to serve. Perhaps this is a good reminder for those of us who have been around a long time, to maintain our consciousness and continue to deliver our destinies as Ministers.—SS Dr. Sat Kaur Khalsa, NM/CA



Compassion is a jewel of our spiritual birthright that, when engaged, raises us up and enables us to experience the closeness of the Divine. It allows us to expand in the experience of the higher aspects of our being.—SS Chioneso Kulwant Kaur Khalsa, United Kingdom

Sikh Dharma Ministry: to serve, to serve, to serve. To serve God and Guru, to serve the Siri Singh Sahib and his family, to serve the Sadh Sangat and the Khalsa nation. To serve all, at all times, in all places.—SS Deva Kaur Khalsa, South Africa





Holding the space of a Minister requires a high connection with the Divine, profound wisdom and extreme humility. I aspire toward these attributes. Day by day it's a journey of discovery.—55

Mahan Rishi Singh Khalsa, NJ

It is very clear to me, through the teachings of our great Gurus, that there is no hierarchy in Sikh Dharma - meaning that no one is a "better" Sikh than anyone else. It is our actions that dictate how far or close we are to the Guru. So, to be Minister in Sikh Dharma means that we have qualified and ordained ourselves to serve the sangat and the mission of Guru Nanak on this earth.—SS Shanti Kaur Khalsa, NM





The Siri Singh Sahib taught us that the greatest power of a Sikh is the presence, and I believe that service begins with that. When our presence is strong and penetrating, we have an impact, and I believe that affects people in a positive way. Serve the mission of the Guru, then the way that manifests in other forms of service will come clear. Signature Singh Khalsa, Singapore

I experience Sikh Dharma Ministry as being in the moment within the vibration of the Holy Nam, being a resource to others finding their way on the dharmic path. I love in our practice that there is no higher or lower. Siri Singh Sahibji said once - "In Sikhism we are colleagues - some are a little further ahead, some a little further back; we are all together on the path."—SS SatSundri Kaur Khalsa, Espanola, NM





As a Minister, it is my experience that I serve God and Guru only: God is the Doer and I just exist by the Will and Grace of God alone. In other words, I am a creature of the Creator, not the Creator. As Guru Nanak says in the Siri Guru Granth Sahib: "Says serf Nanak, I am the slave of Thine slaves, O my Lord. As Thou makest me speak, so do speak I."—Siri Sikdar Sahiba Sardarni Guru Amrit Kaur Khalsa

Being a Minister in our Dharma to me is an honor. It is an opportunity to walk further along this path laid out to us by the Siri Singh Sahib.— SS Siri Pritam Kaur Khalsa, Yuba City, CA



Sikh Dharma Ministry manifests in many different levels and ways for me....as a Gurusikh, it is an experience of giving my head to Guru and living in love and trust that I belong to the Guru and the Guru is part of me.—66 Harbhajan Singh Khalsa, NC



Sikh Dharma Ministry means being able to hold the sacred space for those taking the sacred vows of marriage. It means holding the space of the Gurus while I am teaching Kundalini Yoga. It means "seeing the God in all" whether I am doing hospital chaplaincy, shopping for groceries, cooking for and serving homeless populations, interacting with

my neighbors, or gardening.—SS HarDarshan Kaur Khalsa, NC



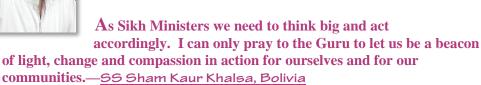
I don't relate to BEING a Minister, as a noun, a title, or a position. But as a verb, in action and activity, I totally do that. I Minister.—SS Guru Meher Singh Khalsa, CA



To live as Ministers of this Dharma, our Dharma...we are to value ourselves, and make our growth a priority, and hold ourselves with compassion and without judgment.—SS Gurvinderpal Singh Khalsa, Espanola, NM



Sikh Dharma Ministry is to serve the seekers of the realness of existence on their pathway toward their own destiny.— SS Sunder Singh, VA





We live in faith. We experience faith and our Guru redeems our faith with the blessing of Infinity. In that consciousness we live. In that consciousness we teach. In that consciousness we pray.

MSS Hari Jiwan Singh Khalsa, Espanola, NM





To me Sikh Dharma Ministry means serving something beyond yourself. Reaching and extending yourself beyond your comfort zone to serve who or what comes to you. It means listening deeply and allowing your kindness, compassion and grace of neutrality to heal and uplift all circumstances. It means leaving a person uplifted. It means service without an agenda.—SS Panch Nishan Kaur Khalsa, Berlin, Germany

"Life is a challenge in itself. Life is a weakness in itself. And life is always up and down. When you do not walk on the path of God you are miserable....Only you won't be miserable if you only understand one thing and that is that you are walking towards God and you feel that Infinity, the attitude of service, seva. If you make life as a seva, pain will go away. That's what it is."

—The Siri Singh Sahib, August 1, 1982

#### SIKH DHARMA VOWS – A DAILY PRAYER

## Sikh Dharma Minister Vows as given by the Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Khalsa Yogiji

We shall not bow to any person for worship, but shall bow only to God and Siri Guru Granth Sahib as the Word of God.

We shall not worship any deity or angel, other than God and God shall be our guide and Guru.

We shall serve humanity without discrimination of caste, race, creed, religion or gender.

We shall be bound down by this oath that we shall serve without any pressure or prejudice.

Our house, dwelling, and property shall be at the availability within our means, of any human being who needs it righteously.

We shall open the doors of our hospitality without discrimination.

From today onward we will neither live with each other or at each other, but honestly, before God and Guru we will live for each other.

We will always be ready to serve and will understand, being of God, that we will give a universal truth and not a personal or experimental truth.

In case of difficulty we will consult the Siri Guru Granth Sahib with honesty and purity of soul.

We will meditate on God before the sun rises, because only a fool rises after the sun.

We will pay tribute to our Creator as consciously as we can.

We will earn righteously through the sweat of our brow gracefully.

We will not freeload or get money by any other underhanded means.

We will live as God made us, and will not shave hair from any part of our body, because that is the energy antenna which God gave us.

At night we will comb our hair back with a wooden comb to save our energy and aura.

The vows of a Sikh Minister are a daily commitment. I find that reading the Minister vow helps me to remember and re-commit to what it means to have the honor of being a Sikh and specifically a Sikh Minister. May we all feel the daily blessings of what an incredible gift has been given to us by Guru and the Siri Singh Sahib.—SS Varnjeet Kaur Khalsa, NM



We will respect our own sexuality. Male Ministers will consider all women other than their spouse as their daughter, mother or sister; female Ministers will consider all men other than their spouse as their son, father or brother.

We will always serve humanity righteously without any material gain or attention to material things.

We will serve the community and the weak and even stake our lives for that reason.

We promise to be vegetarians, and never take any intoxicant.

We can be broken fiber into fiber, but will never worship other than God and Guru.

We will never insult or show disrespect to any scripture or holy book.

We will always dress in full attire in public to represent Sikh Dharma.

We will read scriptures and perform duties correctly and daily.

We will perform human service, and be a source of inspiration to all.

We will die gracefully, never accepting any act of pressure to prove us cowards.

We will not have any fear of death when we lay down our lives for God.

## From Victory and Virtue

A MINISTER of Sikh Dharma is a shining light, a radiant son or daughter of Guru Gobind Singh who lives to be healthy, happy and holy, and who inspires others to live so.

A MINISTER lives with an open heart, open ear and open eye in order to feel, hear and see the needs of people around him or her.

A MINISTER serves the needs of individuals and the collective Sadh Sangat with an attitude of gratitude, because these beautiful beings are God's creatures and the disciples of the True Guru.

A MINISTER uplifts anyone wavering on the path of Dharma, helping to turn doubt into faith, loneliness into fulfillment and weakness into strength.

A MINISTER is the embodiment of Chardhi Kala, keeping up in high spirits through opposition, difficulties, pleasure and pain, and all tests of time and space.

A MINISTER is continuously and consistently striving toward perfection, consciously working on herself or himself.