

Singh Sabha Southall Education Centre



Newsletter October 2015

Issue No. 6



P2 & 3 – Welcome & Important Notices

P4 & 5 – A New Beginning

P6 & 7 – Special Mentions

P8 – February Prize-giving & Vaisakhi Programme

P9 – Hemkunt Symposium and Keertan Darbar

P10 & 11 – Searching for the True Guru

P12 – Kids' Page

SSSEC Newsletter written and edited by Gurleen Kaur,
Harpreet Kaur, and Prabhleen Kaur

*Classes every Sunday held at Villiers High
School Boyd Avenue, Middlesex, UB1 3BT
For more information please contact us:
07941696607
sssec@hotmail.co.uk
www.sssec.org
www.twitter.com/sssec*

**Welcome back to all our old pupils, and to new pupils,
welcome to SSSEC!**



We hope this academic year will be bigger, better and more successful than ever before! The SSSEC Team has been very busy, spending a lot of effort over the summer to make sure everything runs smoothly.

We have many exciting things planned for the year ahead...

All our volunteers, pupils and parents have been **incredibly supportive** in helping us move to our **new venue at Villiers High School**; the two **admission days** in July proved to be **very successful** and many more registered in September.

There are a few changes this year, most importantly to the timings. **All pupils must now attend both morning and afternoon classes.** Timings are as follows:

10:00 – 10:30: whole-school assembly

10:30 – 12:15: morning classes (Punjabi AND Gurmat)

12:15 – 12:45: lunchtime

12:45 – 14:00: afternoon classes

(Kirtan OR Tabla OR Santhiya OR Drama OR GCSE Sikhism)

IMPORTANT NOTICES

As SSSEC is a charitable, not-for-profit organisation, **we rely solely on donations** to keep SSSEC running. You are **welcome to contribute** any amount you want, or to **donate a specific resource** that the centre needs. (There will be a **to-buy list** available from the office.)

We currently **do not have storage space** at the school, so pupils will have to **take all their books and stationery home** at the end of the day. Please make sure you **keep them safe**, as you will have to **pay to replace lost items** as well as losing valuable work!

This also means that kirtan students must have their **own harmonium** (vaja) or at least a small keyboard, and tabla students **must buy a tabla**. This isn't simply to ensure that everyone has an instrument in lessons – it is vital for everyone to **practise their lessons** at home and not just on Sundays!



Punctuality and attendance are very important. Pupils must arrive by 09:55 –assembly starts **promptly at 10am** and **lateness will be penalised**. Those who want to tie a dastaar must arrive by 9:45. As we hire the school for a fixed number of hours, **parents must collect their children by 2pm**.

Any **absent pupils must contact us** (preferably via email) otherwise their absence will be listed as unauthorised. **Three unauthorised absences will result in the pupil having to re-register.**

A NEW BEGINNING

For various reasons, SSSEC has had to move from the previous location of Khalsa Primary School to the current location at Villiers High School. It will take some time for everyone to fully settle in, but despite this the two admission days held in July and the university students' workshop & discussion event held in August proved to be very successful. We have been absolutely blown away by the level of support from all members of the SSSEC team, students, and parents. With the continued help and support of the parents and our team, the new academic year has been off to a wonderful start!



Our new location for Sunday classes has good public transport links; it is a short walk from Southall Station and bus stops for the 207, 427, 607, 105, E5, 120, 195, 482, H32, 95 and 482 buses. For those travelling by car, there is plenty of parking available on the premises. (Southall Park and Park Avenue Gurdwara are also nearby!)

As there is no darbar hall with Guru Granth Sahib ji being present, morning assembly will take place in the school hall, sitting class-wise on chairs. Parents are requested to stay for assembly and sit on the chairs towards the back.



The most exciting change this year is that we are offering more choice to SSSEC students about what they can learn in the afternoon. Kirtan and tabla classes continue as normal, and students can now also choose to attend santhiya, drama or GCSE Sikhism classes. Those aged five and under can choose between kirtan and santhiya. Decide wisely...



We will have a feedback box at the entrance every week, and we would love to hear what you think we are doing well in addition to what we can improve further! Please fill out the feedback forms provided near the box so we can make SSSEC even better than before.



Lastly, look out for an exciting new Punjabi-speaking scheme in the coming term! Please also encourage your children to speak Punjabi more often by practicing at home, and borrow dual-language books from your local library to help your child practise.



SPECIAL MENTIONS

We are lucky to have such dedicated teachers, volunteers, parents and students as part of SSSEC! Here are just some of the people we want to thank in particular for their hard work and support throughout last year (we apologise in advance for anyone we may have missed out!):



Our teachers put in extra hours beyond those required on Sundays to prepare lessons and improve the quality of SSSEC education. Special mentions go to Sandeep Kaur for spending hours typing up end of year exams and doing many tasks behind the scenes, Parampreet Singh for helping us with his IT expertise, Baldev Kaur for preparing a very informative yet concise Thought of the Week for every assembly, and Sukhraj Kiran Kaur and Baldev Kaur for spending time helping Punjabi GCSE and A level students at home during the week and accompanying them to exams.



Narinder Kaur (mother of Japsimar and Mansehaj Singh) has been organising the lunch seva every week extremely efficiently without fail, and has also taken up the role of centre coordinator for SSSEC for the Hemkunt Symposium.

We have a dedicated team of parent volunteers who prepare lunch every week during Punjabi lessons. The food is also donated by parents, as are the plastic boxes, trays, cups and cutlery.



Ravinder Singh and Sonia Kaur (parents of Ajuni and Habhi Kaur) only joined us last year, but have made themselves well known and well-loved for their dastaar-tying scheme, in which those children who tie a dastaar to Sunday classes are given rewards to encourage them to keep it up! They have also helped with many other tasks to improve the classes.



Kulbir Singh and Gurjit Kaur are the father and sister of SSSEC students Naina Kaur and Maninder Singh. They have worked tirelessly through the year by donating fruit and carrying out many vital admin tasks including monitoring attendance.



Varinderpal Singh has been a very important member of our team behind the scenes throughout previous years, and has joined us on the front line on Sundays this academic year.



The parents who help in the Naveen Paniri class ensure the smooth running of lessons by helping students with their work and keeping their endless energy under control (especially at lunchtime)!



Last but not least, we would like to thank all our pupils and their parents for their enthusiasm in turning up on Sundays, and their support to keep these classes running. Some of you travel very long distances to learn Punjabi, Gurmat and Kirtan, while others put their personal problems aside to give their dasvand of time and effort to the education of our community. We hope SSSEC continues to flourish and bring the joy of learning and the philosophy of Sikhi to as many people as possible.

February Prize-giving

On 8th February we held a programme at Park Avenue Gurdwara in which those students who had sat the Pracheen Kala Kendra exams last summer did kirtan and were given their certificates. GCSE and A level Punjabi students were also given their exam certificates, and both Punjabi and music exam students were awarded trophies for their efforts. Well done to all exam students for the amazing results!



Vaisakhi Programme

The annual Vaisakhi Programme on 29th March was a great success. Assembly happened as normal after a slightly late start, and this was followed by class presentations.

The Kirtan Beginners' Class sang Shant Pae in Raag Bilaaval, followed by senior students singing Sur Nar Mun Jan in Raag Ramkali. Class 3 gave their presentation on the Panj Kakaar, Youth Beginners performed a short play about true Amrit, and the A level class told us about the Panj Pyare and equality.

Then it was time for our mystery guest! Thank you to Narvir Singh for his talk about poetry in Sikhi, and his poetry-writing workshop which proved popular and very memorable. We hope to invite him back for more workshops in the future.



Hemkunt Symposium

In March and April we saw over 70 of our students
(and some teachers!) compete in the Hemkunt Symposium 2015.

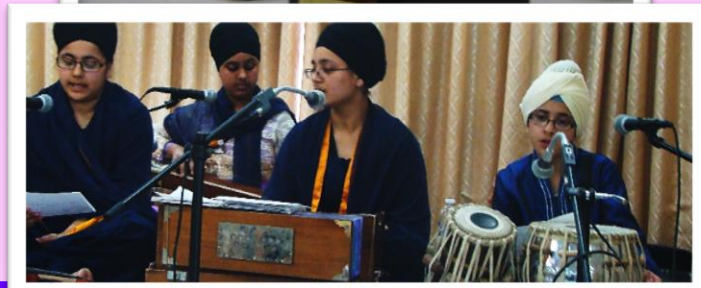
Everyone worked very hard to prepare and deliver their speech, with some SSSEC members making it to the international! Well done in particular to Diya Nanaki Kaur (group 1), Brahmjot Singh & Avneet Kaur (group 2) and Harpreet Kaur & Gurleen Kaur (group 5).

Thank you to everyone who helped with preparing, judging, announcing, answering queries and doing all the other hard work which went into making the symposium a success, and of course to the parents and participants who wrote and delivered the speeches. We look forward to seeing even more SSSEC students take part next year!



Hemkunt Keertan Darbar

A total of seven jathas in three age categories took part in the 2015 Hemkunt Keertan Darbar which took place at Park Avenue Gurdwara. Each age group was given a specific raag from the Guru Granth Sahib, and they started by giving a brief explanation of both the raag and the shabad they would sing. The judges were impressed with the participants' knowledge of music, and by how beautifully they performed. After a very long and tiring yet enjoyable evening, the winners were announced, and it was with great joy that all three jathas from SSSEC went up to collect their first-place trophies. Well done to the participants and their teachers for the effort they put into preparing for the competition, and we hope they have inspired more students to learn kirtan.



Let's travel back in time four hundred years to a place called Amritsar. It is the year 1604...

In the heat of an Indian summer, a crowd of devotees sits in an expectant silence in the newly-built Harmandir Sahib.

The cool air from the sarovar around the simple building washes over the sangat as they watch the first granthi, Baba Budha Ji, open up the Adi Granth.

This is the day of the 'Pehla Parkash', the opening ceremony of the first copy of the Adi Granth, compiled and dictated by Guru Arjan Dev Ji and hand-written by Bhai Gurdas Ji, at Harmandir Sahib.

The Sikhs have seen Guru Arjan Dev Ji bow before this book which contains the collective writings of the first five human Gurus and many Hindu and Muslim saints.

Some people are confused – Sikhs do not believe in rituals, and bow to no-one but their Guru, so why has their Guru just bowed in front of a book and sat down at a lower level than it?

Meanwhile, Baba Budha Ji has started reading from the Adi Granth, and the Sikhs sit in careful silence, listening to the words.

As the reading of the shabad 'Santaaⁿ ke kaaraj aap khaloya' comes to an end, the Sikhs now understand why Guru Arjan Dev Ji has bowed to the Granth and asked the sangat to do the same.

The true Guru is *not the physical body of a person* such as Guru Arjan Dev Ji, but the message delivered by that person.

The *shabad*, or bani, is our only true Guru, and this can be found in the Adi Granth – now, in its final form given to us by Guru Gobind Singh Ji, known as the Guru Granth Sahib.

A Sikh has full faith in the Guru Granth Sahib, and does not bow to anyone else.

ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਾਰੇ ॥

Bani guru guru hai bani vich bani amrit saare

But fast-forward four centuries and many Sikhs are still confused about who they should follow!

Many Sikhs bow down to artistic representations of the human Gurus. They will have pictures hanging in their houses, perhaps even with a garland of flowers and an incense (dhoof) to 'show respect'.

Others will turn to sants or babas in search for answers to their problems, taking the advice to recite bani like a mantra, or perhaps carry out various rituals which our Gurus worked so hard to break us away from.

And in almost every Gurdwara around the world, the Guru Granth Sahib has been reduced to a mere holy book, covered in richly decorated rumalas, with shastars and flowers carefully arranged on the cloth in front, and a heavy chaur sahib being flourished over it.

But no one will take the time to lift the rumala and read the words underneath.

The Granthis may take the daily hukamnama, akhand pathis may read the whole Granth at high speeds in 3 days, young members of the sangat may take pride in being able to quickly call up any shabad (with meanings!) on their mobile phone, but very few will truly read, understand and apply the message of the Guru to their lives.

Do how can we ensure that we are loyal to our one true Guru? How can we make sure we are not caught up in meaningless rituals and practices?

All ten human Gurus emphasised the importance of critical thinking – thinking for yourself and not following others blindly. They questioned the world around them and encouraged others to do the same.

If we read the Guru Granth Sahib, we will see that we are not spoon-fed instructions. Rather, our Guru describes the experience of realising God, and gives tips on how to live the best life possible by connecting with God. However, the only way we can know what our Guru is saying is if we read and listen to their message from the Guru Granth Sahib.

But even reciting the Nitnem banis can become a mere ritual if we don't take the time to understand, discuss, and apply to our lives what the Guru is saying.

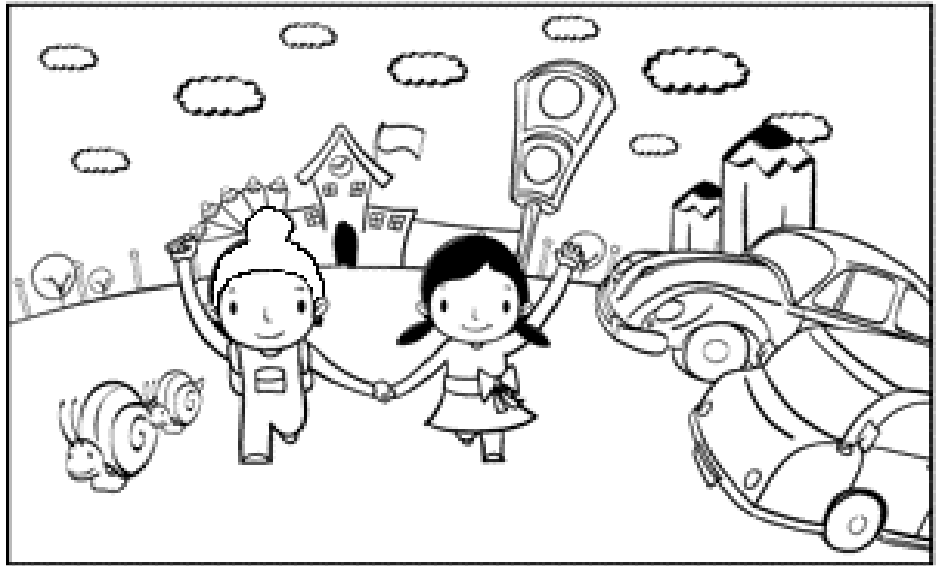
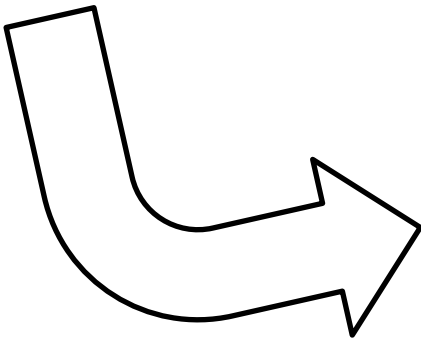
ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਅੰਧਾ ਸਭੁ ਅੰਧੁ ਕਮਾਵੈ ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਮਗੁ ਨ ਪਾਏ ॥

Eh jag andha sabh andh kamaavai bin gur mug na paae.

KIDS' PAGE

Spot the difference!

Look out for the answers in the next newsletter...



Here is a short poem by Giani Amritpal Singh Ji. Can you read it and draw a picture about what the message of the poem is? The best artworks will be included in the next newsletter!

ਨਾ ਮੈਂ ਮਿਸ਼ਨਰੀ, ਨਾ ਅਕਾਲੀ
ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਕਾਤ-ਗੋਤ ਵੀ ਬਿਖਾ

ਅਖੰਡ ਕੀਰਤਨੀ ਨਾਹੀ ਟਕਸਾਲੀ
ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਮਾਧਾਂ ਵਾਲੀ ਚਿੰਘਾ

ਚਮਤਾਰ ਗੁਫਤਾਰ ਮਫਤਾਰ ਨਿਰਾਲੀ
ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਵੀ ਮਨ ਫਿੱਕ ਤਿਖਾ

‘ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ’ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਿਨ ਕੋਈ ਨਾ ਵਾਲੀ
ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਵਾ ਮਿੱਥਾ

If you want to submit an article, poem, picture, activity or anything else for the SSSEC newsletter, please email us at sssec@hotmail.co.uk