



## Singapore's "Northern Sikhs" and their Gurdwaras: the historic journey of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun





**Singapore's "Northern  
Sikhs" and their Gurdwaras:  
the historic journey of  
Gurdwara Sahib Yishun**

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**Editorial Note**

While every effort has been made to give an accurate account of the events, donors, institutions and people, and provide other relevant information in documenting Gurdwara Sahib Yishun's history in this book, we sincerely apologise for any omissions or errors, or where certain events, people or institutions' or donors' contributions have been inadvertently omitted or inaccurately documented.

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## OUR PATRON



**Sardar Kartar Singh Thakral**

## OUR JATHA



## OUR TRUSTEES



Ajit Singh



Charanjit Singh Grewal



Jagdev Singh Grewal



## OUR SEWADARS



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Chhabra



Tara Singh Maliana



Manminder Singh



Harbhajan Singh  
Ghosal



Sukhdev Singh  
Bhaloor



Mejar Singh Gill



Iqbal Singh Sekhon



Gordev Singh  
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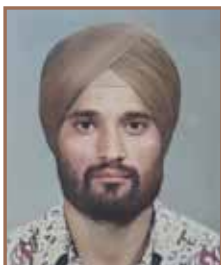
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Gurdip Singh Maliana

## FOREWORD FROM INDERJIT SINGH DHALIWAL

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

It gives me immense pleasure to pen a forward for this publication by Gurdwara Yishun Sahib commemorating the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Gurdwara. Let me start by congratulating the Yishun *sangat* for this important milestone and for keeping the *Nishan Sahib* flying high.

As we all know Gurdwara Sahib Yishun's history goes back much longer than the past 25 years, with its origins going as far back as the 1920s when the Naval Police Force Gurdwara took roots in the British Naval Base and functioned for half a century till the withdrawal of the British forces in 1971; and subsequently the two predecessor Gurdwaras, namely Sembawang Sikh Temple and Jalan Kayu Gurdwara, which merged to form Gurdwara Sahib Yishun in 1995. As a young boy, I spent a considerable amount of time at the Jalan Kayu Gurdwara, which was historically managed by the Seletar Air Base community. The family spirit of the *sangat* is something I fondly remember when I used to visit the Gurdwara. I got to know the Sembawang Sikh Temple a little later in life, after I got married. My wife was born and grew up in Naval Base, among the Sembawang based Sikh community. What struck me most about the Sembawang *sangat* was how everyone knew each other and were so close knit, again a family feeling. In fact, the Sembawang *sangat* was unlike any of the *sangats* I experienced in any other Gurdwara in Singapore, always making anyone of us feel very much at home.

As Singapore developed and the government acquired the lands of both Gurdwara sites, we were fortunate that we were allocated the land where the current Gurdwara stands. Given the shrinking community, it made sense to amalgamate the two historical *Gurwardas* to form Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. Thanks to the cooperative spirit of the *sangats* from both Gurdwaras, this process was smooth and received the support of not just the Sembawang and the Jalan Kayu Sikh communities but also the Sikh



communities all over Singapore and with the support, the building, and the final operations of the Gurdwara were successfully established.

Today, Gurdwara Sahib Yishun is an important part of the Nee Soon Constituency (and at time of the Ang Mo Kio GRC when I was a member of parliament). Thanks to all the committee members and the *sangat*, Gurdwara Sahib Yishun plays a useful role in the larger Nee Soon community, making their national contribution for the good of society.

Over the years, the composition of the Gurdwara Sahib Yishun *sangat* has evolved, with some of the founding and original members having moved out of Yishun and some out of Singapore. At the same time, many have moved in to the neighbourhood and worship at the Gurdwara. I am happy to see that this process of transformation has been smooth and the *sangat* has been able to evolve and adapt to meet the needs of the new community they serve. This is the hallmark of a progressive Sikh society.

Looking forward Gurdwara Sahib Yishun will have to focus on a few challenges. First, the lease renewal for the temple site is coming up soon. This will require the support of the entire Sikh community and also Singaporeans in general. Second, reenergising the youth to play an active role as they used to do in the past but are currently facing challenges. Third, as all religious institutions, Gurdwara Sahib Yishun too needs to identify the future needs of the *sangat* and identify relevant programmes that keep the Gurdwara a focal point of the community around Nee Soon and the nearby areas.

I want to congratulate the Gurdwara Sahib Yishun *sangat* for their excellent contributions to the Sikh community and to Singapore over the years and I wish them many more years of successful service and *Sewa* (spirit of service to others) in spreading the message of Guru Nanak of One Humanity and the three principles of *Kirt Karni* (work hard for a living), *Vand Shakna* (share with others through *Sewa* and sharing your earnings) and *Naam Japna* (focusing on God's Name).

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

**Inderjit Singh Dhaliwal**

Chairman of Coordinating Council of Sikh Institutions (CCSI),  
Member of Parliament, Singapore (1996 to 2015)

## MESSAGE FROM SUKHJINDER SINGH GREWAL

*"If you don't know history, then you don't know anything. You are a leaf that doesn't know it is part of a tree"*

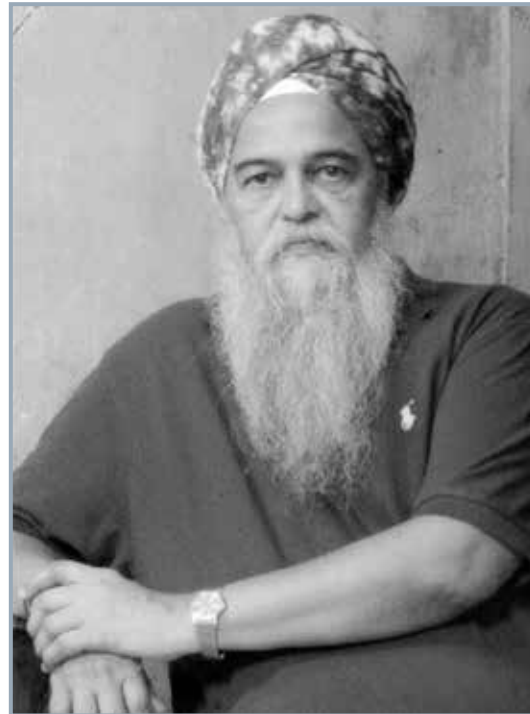
~~ Michael Crichton

The above quote rings true today as it did when it was first said. Having knowledge of our history allows us to understand where we came from, which in turn allows us to understand our present. It not only reveals the past, but it also helps us create a better future. I have no doubt that it is this desire that led Sardar Mejar Singh Gill to launch a project to record the history of the Gurdwaras of the Naval Base and Sembawang in the form of this present volume.

I know first hand the dedication, commitment and passion with which Mr Gill began this project and being the untiring soldier that he has always been, he soldiered on tirelessly to the end to see its successful completion. When Mr Gill first approached me to inform me about his plan to launch this volume, he told me that it would "obviously be incomplete" if the contributions of my late father Tara Singh Hitaishi and my grandfather Sardar Santa Singh were "not given due acknowledgement" in it.

That the Sikhs from the Naval Base and Sembawang carved out a distinct identity for themselves, one that is certainly worth recording, and one that we were all proud of, is something that is felt not just by us but is also recognized by those living outside of Sembawang in other parts of Singapore - who often looked upon the fraternity and cohesiveness that existed within the Sembawang Sikhs with envy if not outright jealousy. The division, if one can call it that, which existed between the Sembawang Sikhs and the non-Sembawang Sikhs, was so unequivocal that whenever we, the Sembawang Sikhs left Sembawang to go to any other part of Singapore, we would say that we were going to 'Singapore', as if we were travelling to another country.

There were of course good historical, social, economic and geographical reasons that gave rise to this division, some of which are being examined in this volume. The uniform economic position of most families; being



members of a *sangat* where the segregations based on *Majha*, *Malwa* and *Doaba* were non-existent; involvement by the youth in sports activities especially hockey; engaging jointly in *sewa* at the gurdwara; living together for decades at close proximity in the same geographical area created as unique camaraderie that was unparalleled.

During the course of the preparation of this volume, I learnt for the very first time about certain aspects of the history of both the Naval Base Gurdwara and Guru Khalsa Sabha. For example, I never knew that my late father Tara Singh Hitaishi and my late grandfather Santa Singh were the original pioneers who established Guru Khalsa Sabha. I never knew that the decision to establish a Gurdwara in Sembawang outside the then Naval Base was taken in 1936 at a gathering in the business premises of Akali Trading Agency in Sembawang, a grocery business owned by my grandfather. And I certainly did not know that my father was the first secretary of the gurdwara for several years and that my grandfather the president. I had even forgotten that I was the Vice President of the Gurdwara almost half a century later in 1982.

The period from 1961 to 1972 was in many ways a glowing period in the history of the Sembawang Gurdwara. It was during this period that several prominent personalities from India including Bhai Gopal Singh ragi, Bhai Dharam Singh Zakhmi, Harbans Singh Jagadri and Sant Fateh Singh visited Guru Khalsa Sabha as did many prominent preachers including Sant Singh Maskeen, *Giani* Phuman Singh and Sant Sohan Singh from Malacca, most of which my father was instrumental in facilitating. This was also the period during which the Sembawang *Naujawan Sabha*, which was the very first Sikh youth group in Singapore, came into existence. The first youth *samelan* was also held at the Guru Khalsa Sabha in December of 1967 as were many competitions to encourage youngsters to recite *Gurbani* and sing *kirtan*.

The period of the seventies and eighties had kept my father busy researching and recording the histories of various Sikh institutions including those in Malacca, Negri Sembilan and *Khalsa Dharmak Sabha* in Singapore. He was commissioned by their respective management committees to record and publish their histories. Before embarking on these projects, he had entrusted to the Sembawang Gurdwara for safekeeping all the articles, manuscripts, records and articles that had painstakingly collected and preserved over the decades from the 1940s. Sadly, all of these were burnt without any notice to him. I have no doubt that all or some of that would have proved invaluable towards recording and publishing a detailed history of Guru Khalsa Sabha. That's a tragedy of immeasurable proportions that he had to endure right till his dying day.

History, as I have stated above, allows us to understand where we came from and helps us create a better future. A better future can only be created if one treasures the past. It is therefore particularly heartwarming for me to see a record of the history of the Gurdwaras the Naval Base and Sembawang in the form of this volume. As a descendant of the pioneers who established Guru Khalsa Sabha, I feel particularly privileged and honored to be called upon to contribute this message in this commemorative volume.

I wish the present Management Committee of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun and Mr Mejar Singh Gill in particular all the very best and congratulate them on embarking on this project.

**Sukhjinder Singh Grewal**  
Vancouver, British Columbia

## MESSAGE FROM DR MUKHTIAR SINGH

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

Having left my roots in Sembawang for over 45 years, I feel humbled and honored to be asked to share about my associations with the Sikh Gurdwara (Guru Khalsa Sabha) in Sembawang in my younger days. During the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century, after annexing India the British realized that the Sikhs were great fighters and loyal soldiers, and recruited and started sending them to all parts of the empire. They also found that their loyalty and unity was dependent on their Guru being with them wherever they went. With this in mind every Sikh regiment and police contingent had a fully paid *Granthi* (priest), as well as accommodation for a Gurdwara. The only condition was that everyone kept their Sikh *Bana* (attire), with pleated turban and a neatly tied full beard. I am personally convinced that this initially helped to spread Sikhism all over the British Empire. Similarly, when the British Naval Base police force was established the same facilities were provided, besides many other perks. The police barracks were isolated in the North near Woodlands, away from the general accommodation for civilians. Inside the perimeter of the Naval Base, no other religious building, other than the Churches and the special Police Gurdwara, was allowed.

The civilian Sikhs initially worshipped at the Police Gurdwara, but the security and other related considerations made it a bit difficult for them to do over the years and hence the need for a separate Gurdwara. Thus, in the mid-thirties the small community of civilian Sikhs rented a room in a house in the Sembawang and installed *Guru Granth Sahib Ji* there, and not long later the whole house was taken over. As I understand it, the pioneers were Sardars Hira Singh, Kishan Singh, Santa Singh and Tara Singh Hiteshi. The Gurdwara was officially named Guru Khalsa Sabha.

With the opening of the Naval Base in 1938, some more Sikhs, mainly single men, moved there. My father Hakam Singh came there from Kuala Lumpur. My mother and I joined my father in 1941, about 3 months



before the Jap invasion. It remained operational throughout, and despite the bombings nearby was not damaged in any way whatsoever. Being on a slope, it had no council water or toilet, or electricity. Down about 10-15 steps was a well and bucket toilet. After World War 2, the *sangat* increased in size with more married couples settling in the Naval Base area. In 1947, the only police family not staying in the barracks became our neighbors. He was sub-inspector Naranjan Sing Bansi and his son Kewal.

During the first decade of the Gurdwara, there was no priest or proper *Kirtan Jatha*. Mr Bansi, among others, did *kirtan*, *katha*, and someone played the *Dholky*. In 1948, the *sangat* decided to employ Sardar Ganda Singh Ji as a fulltime *granthi* from 1948. For years Kewal and I and a few other youngsters went to the Gurdwara every Sunday, and our duties were to carry water up from the well to the kitchen for making tea etc. Initially, there was only Parshad and occasionally boiled chick peas. *Langgar* was only during *Gurpurabs*. Hardly anyone could speak English in the early days. However, the unity and commitment of the *sangat* could not be questioned.

In the early 50s, white ants invaded the wood and attap gurdwara. It had to be rebuilt. The *sangat* rose to the occasion and levied one week's pay from all. Every one paid! Gradually the *sangat* increased and the Sabha progressed. Two sheds for langar were added. Another row of rooms was built at the back for the disadvantaged families. In my days there were no elections. The *sangat* chose 3 to 5 persons to run the Sabha, who were forced to accept!

I remember vividly when I was granted a Colombo Plan Scholarship to go to UK for specialist studies in 1967, the *sangat* honored me with a *sirropau*, and a *gutka* to wish me well. I was asked to say a few words. I was so overwhelmed by the occasion, that tears came to my eyes, and I could not say a word, and was asked to sit down. My loyalty and attachment to the Sabha remained unquestioned. My three children were baptized there between 1965 to 1971. Whenever I visited Singapore, I always made it a point to visit my childhood Gurdwara.

I congratulate the committee which has put in a lot of effort in getting this book published. Three of the Gurdwaras do not exist anymore, and the pioneers have either passed on or are now overseas. Old photos, few which existed, are lost. This ambitious project must have, undoubtedly, consumed a lot of time and energy to bring it to fruition. The present generation will hopefully get a glimpse of the hardships our parents went through to keep *Sikhi* alive. I hope future editions, if any, will contain updated and lost data from surviving members.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

**Dr Mukhtiar Singh Sidhu**  
Brisbane, Australia

## MESSAGE FROM AJAIB SINGH

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

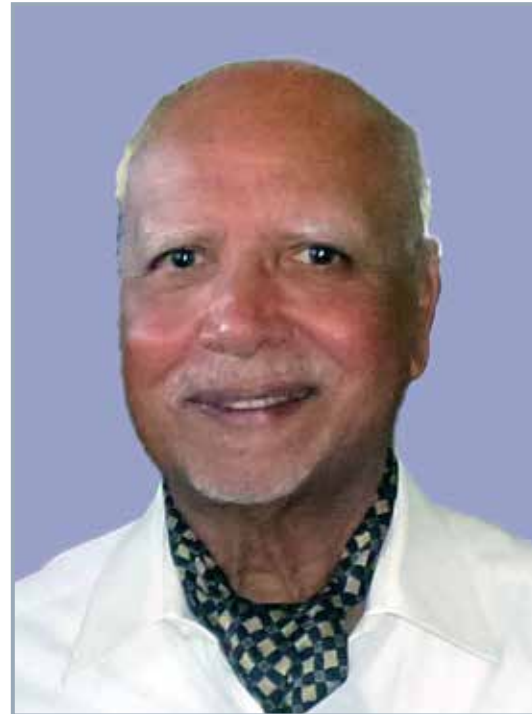
As we celebrate 25 years of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, I would like to congratulate the *Sangat* for their excellent work in establishing this beautiful complex where everyone is able learn the teachings of our gurus and apply it in their daily lives. This Gurdwara has had very humble beginnings, and I am honoured to be requested to share my memories.

My memory of the earlier Gurdwara is when it was located in Torpedo, also known as Khalsa Crescent. It had moved there sometime in the late 1940s or early 1950s. Three of the 8 accommodation blocks there housed the unmarried policemen. The ground floor of these blocks was mainly open space, and the accommodation for the unmarried policemen was on the first floor. The empty space on the ground floor at Block 7 used to house the Gurdwara. When Rimau Complex was constructed later, many families moved there and soon after, the Gurdwara too was relocated there.

The *ragis* for *kirtan* were mainly policemen who were musically inclined and well versed in the Guru Granth. There were about four to five policemen who used to do the *kirtan*; and two names I clearly remember are Bhai Gurnam Singh (PC 197) and Bhai Santokh Singh (PC 201). Another thing that I remember is the *chaur* used at this Gurdwara, which was made of peacock feathers, something you don't see nowadays.

In those days, we all lived like a large extended family. We children were quite often used by the grownups as errand boys. We had a good group of boys - Harpal, Sarban, Ranjit, Sarjit and myself. There were others too, but they were much younger than us, such as Mejar, Atma and Ajmer.

All the policemen were given monthly rations of flour, ghee and tea leaves. These provisions and the rations for *langgar* were kept in a store, dispensed freely whenever it was required. The Gurdwara used to have programs every Sunday and all families were usually there. On every





*gurpurab*, there used to be an *akhand path*; and the *paathis* used to be from amongst the policemen. For the night *paathis*, it used to be the duty of us youngsters to wake the *paathis* on time for their duties, sometimes even having to cycle all the way to Rimau, when some families were staying there. To fill in our idle time, we used to help ourselves to *badam* and *mishri* (almonds and rock sugar) meant for the consumption of the *paathis*; and if this was not enough, we used to help ourselves with papayas and sugarcane from the gardens of the policemen.

The elders kept us connected with Gurdwara, and as we grew up and became professionals in our own fields, we never lost the connection with our community and religion. It is this connection that has inspired the *sangat* of today to establish the beautiful Gurdwara Sahib Yishun complex. All of us can be proud of this achievement. I am so happy to see that it is the youngsters of yesterday who have taken on the leadership responsibilities at Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. Others from the Naval Base Police families, who have migrated to different parts of the globe, mainly to United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, have also continued to keep this legacy of association with the Gurdwara alive in their countries. By the grace of *Waheguru*, I have also been blessed to have been part of the group that was involved in the building of the new Glenwood Gurdwara in Sydney, which some members of Gurdwara Yishun have visited.

As I look back, I feel the blessings of our elders who laid the basic foundations during the humble beginnings in the 1930s to where the Gurdwara is today. My heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to all at Yishun Gurdwara on this auspicious anniversary. May *Waheguru* continue to shower peace and blessings to all and the *Nishan Sahib* fly high at Gurdwara Sahib Yishun forever.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

**Ajaib Singh**  
Sydney, Australia

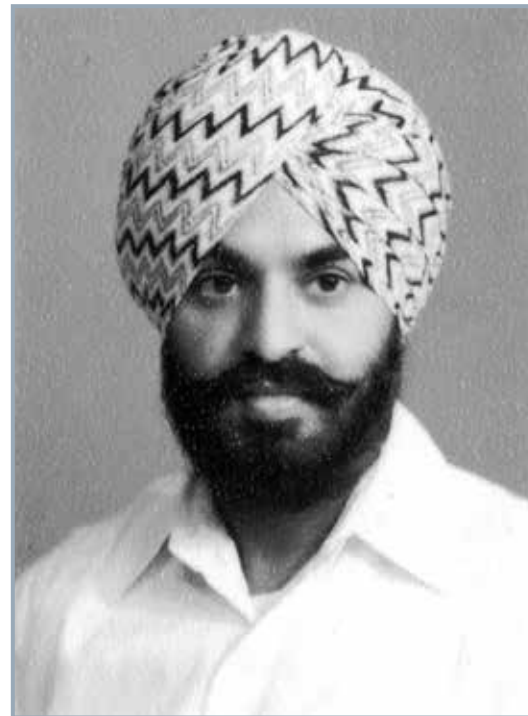
## MESSAGE FROM DHARAM SINGH

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

I am truly honoured to be given the opportunity to communicate with the *Sangat* of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun on the happy occasion of celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. I am so happy to note that the Gurdwara has continued to carry forward the proud legacy of our earlier Naval Police Force and Sembawang Gurdwaras.

As I look back, I can still remember the old British colonial days when I arrived with my father and mother to Singapore in 1931 when I was barely 5 years old. My father joined the British Naval Police Force, then known as Additional Police, and despite it being a strange environment compared to Punjab, we lived as one small community with all our activities closely associated with the Gurdwara. I have fond memories of the Gurdwara in the early days functioning in wooden buildings with attap huts, first on the hill near the Dockyard being built and soon after in a bigger building at the 14<sup>th</sup> Miles Sembawang Road area, and then moving to concrete buildings in Canberra Lines, the Royal Navy Ammunition Depot area, Khalsa Crescent and finally at Rimau.

From the late 1940s onwards, when I was living in Sembawang, I became closely associated with the Sembawang Sikh Temple. It had been established in a small house around the 13th Milestone Sembawang Road, just outside the rubber estate. Sardar Santa Singh and his son Tara Singh Hitaishi together with Hira Singh and Kishan Singh had got together to set up this Gurdwara for the convenience of those who had difficulty in praying at the Police Gurdwara due to the security movement restrictions placed by the British authorities as the Naval Base got fenced up from the rest of Sembawang. Though there were two Gurdwaras, we all worked in close collaboration with each other, with *Gurpurabs* organised in consultation with each other and for the benefit of both *Sangats*.



Representatives from the Police Gurdwara were also co-opted into the Sembawang Gurdwara Management Committee to ensure full cooperation.

The *Sangats* of both Gurdwaras were extremely cooperative and worked as one. The youth of Sembawang, including those from the Naval Base, were also a unique lot. Together with the two brothers, Sardar Satwant Singh Ajit and Tara Singh Hitaishi, I used to be actively involved in assisting them in their *Naujawan Sabha* activities. It was a wonderful experience working with them and I still have fond memories of the various excursions organised by them, as well as execution of variety shows and stage plays, which drew very enthusiastic support and encouragement from the general *Sangat*.

Despite having migrated to Canada, I have always kept in touch with our Sembawang friends in Singapore. I am extremely happy to see that they are so blessed to have kept the proud legacy of the old Sembawang community alive and strong. I am so heartened that the *Sangat* has decided to come up with a commemorative book on the Gurdwara tracing the legacy of the past. It has been an extremely wonderful experience reliving old stories with Sardars Sukhjinder Singh and Mejar Singh Gill when we recently got together through “zoom” sessions to share our experiences of the good old days of the past for the purpose of the book. It brought back great and memorable memories of the years gone by.

I wish to congratulate the committee for taking on this important task of getting this book prepared and published. Though the predecessor Gurdwaras are no longer there, the spiritual experiences and memories live on. Through the book, I hope that the younger generation will be acquainted with our past, and get to know who we were and where we are now. We have always been a special community, very closely attached and bound together by our rich history. I pray to *Waheguru Ji* to keep our *Nishan Sahib* flying high.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

**Dharam Singh**

Vancouver, Canada

## MESSAGE FROM MOKAND SINGH (PC 125)

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

I joined the Naval Police Force sometime towards the end of 1947 and served the Force until my retirement in {1972}. I returned to Punjab in 2009 and I have been living in my village Samadh Bhai since then, though two of my sons live in Singapore and are members of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. I am very honoured to be asked to share about my days in the Naval Police and the Gurdwara that we all belonged to then.

I was about 19 years old when I was recruited together with several others, such as Hakam Singh (PC 218) from Village Kaleke Dist Moga, Joginder Singh (PC 96) from Chand Bhan Dist Faridkot, Bhajan Singh (PC 82) from Sukhanand, Dist Moga, Bhajan Singh Puri (PC 205) Dist Moga, and Harbans Singh (CPL 255) from Jallandar in Punjab into the Naval Base Police. I remember very well us at Madras waiting for SS Rajulah to take us to Singapore in mid-August just when India attained its Independence. My earliest memories are of Royal Naval Ammunition Depot (RNAD) where we were all accommodated. Most of us were single and housed separately from the married personnel, who were much less than us in numbers those days. We only brought over our families later when we had settled in the jobs.

The Gurdwara was located in one of the buildings in the accommodation blocks which were mainly of wood and attap roofs, and gradually improved into proper concrete accommodation blocks. I used to hear from my senior colleagues then that our predecessors had started the Gurdwara over 20 years earlier in 1925 when the Police Force was first organized and the Gurdwara had to be moved in line with the deployment and accommodation of the policemen. As the size of the police force increased, most of us were moved to Royal Naval Torpedo Depot (RNTD) quarters next to the Royal Malayan Navy Complex around 1950. The Gurdwara at RNAD was the size of two rooms but the RNTD Gurdwara was much bigger occupying the whole ground floor of Block 7. Subsequently,



the Gurdwara was relocated to Rimau, where most of the married policemen were housed. It functioned there till the British decided to close the Naval Base in 1971.

Our daily routine then was performing guard duties at the RNAD or RNTD. The Gurdwara played a key part in our lives. Almost every policeman, irrespective of rank, was involved in the Gurdwara activities. There was no distinction of *Majha*, *Malwa* or *Doaba* and we all lived as one community. Though we were all entrusted with other specific duties and chores within the accommodation complex, no one had to be assigned any temple duties. Everyone, who was off-duty, was always there to perform *sewa*, be it langar preparation or general upkeep and maintenance. Though we had a full time *Giani* during my time, there were several colleagues of ours who also performed *Kirtan* regularly. Being one special community, even the children were a unique lot. I remember the youngsters of those days all actively involved in performing *sewa* at temple. It was very nice to see all families as one community.

The Naval Base Community was a special one indeed and closely associated with the wider Sembawang Community, namely those civilian workers living in the Naval Base as well as those residing outside the Naval Base. Though our civilian Sikh brothers congregated at Sembawang Sikh Temple, both the *Sangats* worked hand in hand with one another. It was only because of the security-related restrictions in the Naval Base and based on convenience considerations that we had two Gurdwaras but there was no distinction as to which Gurdwara one belonged to and we all referred to ourselves as the Naval Base-Sembawang Sikh Community. Special *Gurpurabs* were organized collectively at the chosen Gurdwara and the *Gianis* and *Kirtan Jathas* performed wherever required. When the British withdrew in 1971, resulting in the closure of the Naval Police Gurdwara, all the assets were moved to Sembawang Sikh Temple and everyone thenceforth functioned as one collective *Sangat*.

I am very happy to hear that the Sembawang *Sangat* has just celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at the newly built Gurdwara Sahib Yishun and that a book is being prepared to trace the origins of the Gurdwara from its early police days. I wish to congratulate the *Sangat* for keeping the legacy of the Sembawang Sikhs alive and wish the *Sangat* the very best.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

**Sardar Mokand Singh**

Vill: Samadh Bhai

Punjab

## ਮੁਕੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ (ਪੀਸੀ ੧੨੫) ਦਾ ਸੁਨੇਹਾ

ਮੈਂ ੧੯੪੭ ਦੇ ਅੰਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੇਵਲ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਰਤੀ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ੧੯੭੨ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੇਵਾਮੁਕਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਮੈਂ ੨੦੦੯ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਾਪਸ ਆ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਉਦੋਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਸਮਾਧ ਭਾਈ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਰਹਿ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਾਂ, ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ ਮੇਰੇ ਦੋ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਯੀਸ਼ੁਨ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਹਨ। ਨੇਵਲ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਿਤਾਏ ਆਪਣੇ ਦਿਨ ਸੰਗਤ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੈਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਮਾਣ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹਾਂ।

ਮੈਂ ਲਗਭਗ ੧੯ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਕਈ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਨੇਵਲ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਰਤੀ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਹਾਕਮ ਸਿੰਘ (ਪੀ.ਸੀ. ੨੧੮) ਪਿੰਡ ਕਾਲੇਕੇ ਜ਼ਿਲਾ ਮੋਗਾ, ਜੋਗਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ (ਪੀ.ਸੀ. ੯੬) ਪਿੰਡ ਚੰਦ ਭਾਨ ਜ਼ਿਲਾ ਫਰੀਦਕੋਟ, ਭਜਨ ਸਿੰਘ (ਪੀ.ਸੀ. ੮੨) ਪਿੰਡ ਸੁਖਾਨੰਦ, ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਮੋਗਾ, ਭਜਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਪੁਰੀਆ (ਪੀ.ਸੀ. ੨੦੫) ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਮੋਗਾ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਜਲੰਧਰ ਤੋਂ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ (ਨੈਕ ੨੫੫)। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਯਾਦ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਮਦਰਾਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਐਸ.ਐਸ. ਰਾਜੂਲਾਹ ਦੀ ਉਡੀਕ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਅਗਸਤ ਦੇ ਅੱਧ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਲੈ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ ਉਸੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਭਾਰਤ ਵੀ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਅਜਾਦ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਮੇਰੀਆਂ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪੁਰਾਣੀਆਂ ਯਾਦਾਂ ਰਾਇਲ ਨੇਵਲ ਅਮਿਊਨਿਸ਼ਨ ਡਿਪੋ (ਆਰ.ਐਨ.ਏ.ਡੀ.) ਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਸਾਡੇ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਕੁਆਰੇ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਆਹੇ ਹੋਏ ਕਰਮਚਾਰੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਖਰੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ, ਜੋ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਘੱਟ ਸਨ। ਨੌਕਰੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਹੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਸੱਦ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ੀ ਬਲਾਕਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਇਮਾਰਤਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਇੱਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਥਿਤ ਸੀ ਜੋ ਮੁੱਖ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਲੱਕੜ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਰੀਅਲ ਦੇ ਸੁੱਕੇ ਪੱਤਿਆਂ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਛੱਤਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਬਣਾਈਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਸਨ, ਅਤੇ ਹੌਲੀ-ਹੌਲੀ ਕੰਕਰੀਟ ਦੇ ਪੱਕੇ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ੀ ਬਲਾਕ ਬਣਾਏ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਮੈਂ ਉਦੋਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੀਨੀਅਰ ਸਾਥੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਸੁਣਦਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਵਡੇਰਿਆਂ ਨੇ ੨੦ ਸਾਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ੧੯੨੫ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਵਾਰ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਇਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਤਾਇਨਾਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਜਿਵੇਂ-ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਗਿਆ, ਸਾਡੇ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਬਹੁਤਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ੧੯੫੦ ਦੇ ਆਸ-ਪਾਸ ਰਾਇਲ ਮਲ-ਾਇਨ ਨੇਵੀ ਕੰਪਲੈਕਸ ਦੇ ਕੋਲ ਰਾਇਲ ਨੇਵਲ ਟਾਰਪੀਡੋ ਡਿਪੂ ਵਿਖੇ ਬਣੀ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਬਦੀਲ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਆਰ ਐਨ ਏ ਡੀ ਵਿਖੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਦੇ ਕਮਰਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਆਰ ਐਨ ਟੀ ਡੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਲਾਕ ੭ ਦੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਜ਼ਮੀਨੀ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲ 'ਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ, ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਰਿਮਾਉ ਵਿਖੇ ਤਬਦੀਲ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ, ਜਿੱਥੇ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾਤਰ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਾਲੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਸਮੇਤ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇੱਥੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ੧੯੭੧ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਨੇਵਲ ਬੇਸ ਬੰਦ ਕਰਨ ਤੱਕ ਜਾਰੀ ਰਿਹਾ।

ਅਸੀਂ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਆਰ ਐਨ ਏ ਡੀ ਜਾਂ ਆਰ ਐਨ ਟੀ ਡੀ ਵਿਖੇ ਗਾਰਡ ਦੀਆਂ ਡਿਊਟੀਆਂ ਨਿਭਾਉਂਦੇ ਸੀ, ਜਿੱਥੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਅਹਿਮ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਈ। ਲਗਭਗ ਹਰ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਾਲਾ, ਚਾਹੇ ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਦਰਜੇ ਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ, ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਗਤੀਵਿਧੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਸੀ। ਮਾਝੇ, ਮਾਲਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਦੁਆਬੇ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਫਰਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਇੱਕੋ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸੀ। ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ੀ ਕੰਪਲੈਕਸ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਕੰਮ ਸੌਂਪੇ ਗਏ ਸਨ, ਪਰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਡਿਊਟੀ ਦੇਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਈ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਜੇ ਵੀ ਕੰਮ ਤੋਂ ਛੁੱਟੀ ਤੇ ਹੁੰਦਾ, ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ, ਚਾਹੇ ਉਹ ਲੰਗਰ ਦੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਕਰਨੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਆਮ ਦੇਖ-ਭਾਲ ਅਤੇ ਰੱਖ-ਰਖਾਅ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੋਲ ਪੱਕਾ ਗ੍ਰੰਥੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਵੀ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਸਾਡੇ ਕਈ ਸਾਥੀ ਵੀ ਹਰ ਰੋਜ਼ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇੱਕ

ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਭਾਈਚਾਰਾ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ, ਬੱਚੇ ਵੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਸਨ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਨੌਜਵਾਨ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਯਾਦ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਰਗਰਮੀ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਸਾਰੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕੋ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਦੇਖ ਕੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਚੰਗਾ ਲੱਗਦਾ ਸੀ।

ਨੇਵਲ ਬੇਸ ਭਾਈਚਾਰਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਵੱਡੇ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਬਹੁਤ ਨੇੜਿਓਂ ਜੁੜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ, ਖਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਨੇਵਲ ਬੇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਨੇਵਲ ਬੇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਆਮ ਕਾਮੇ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਆਮ ਸਿੱਖ ਭਰਾ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿਖੇ ਇਕੱਠੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ, ਪਰ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਥਾਵਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਇੱਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਜੁਲ ਕੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਨੇਵਲ ਬੇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ-ਸਬੰਧਤ ਪਾਬੰਦੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੋਲ ਦੋ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੋਈ ਫ਼ਰਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਕਿਹੜਾ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਕਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਤ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਨੇਵਲ ਬੇਸ-ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਭਾਈਚਾਰਾ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਸੀ। ਦੋਹਾਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਖਾਸ ਗੁਰੂ ਪੁਰਬ ਸਮੂਹ ਸੰਗਤ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਇਕੱਠੇ ਮਨਾਏ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਵੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੁੰਦੀ, ਗਿਆਨੀ ਅਤੇ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਜੱਥੇ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਹਾਲ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਜਦੋਂ ੧੯੭੧ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਵਾਪਸ ਚਲੇ ਗਏ, ਨੇਵਲ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਬੰਦ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ, ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਜਾਇਦਾਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਇੱਕ ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਸੰਗਤ ਵਜੋਂ ਵਿਚਰਨ ਲੱਗੇ।

ਮੈਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਦੀ ਸੰਗਤ ਨੇ ਹੁਣੇ-ਹੁਣੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਬਣੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਯੀਸ਼ੂਨ ਵਿਖੇ ਆਪਣੀ ੨੫ਵੀਂ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ-ਗੰਢ ਮਨਾਈ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਪਿਛੋਕੜ ਜਾਣਨ ਲਈ, ਜੋ ਕਿ ਮੁੱਢਲੇ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਇੱਕ ਕਿਤਾਬ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਸੰਗਤ ਨੂੰ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਰਾਸਤ ਨੂੰ ਜਿਉਂਦਾ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਵਧਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ੁਭਕਾਮਨਾਵਾਂ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ।

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ॥ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਿਹ॥

ਸਰਦਾਰ ਮੁਕੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ  
ਪਿੰਡ ਸਮਾਧ ਭਾਈ  
ਪੰਜਾਬ



Mokand Singh (PC 125) standing at centre

5



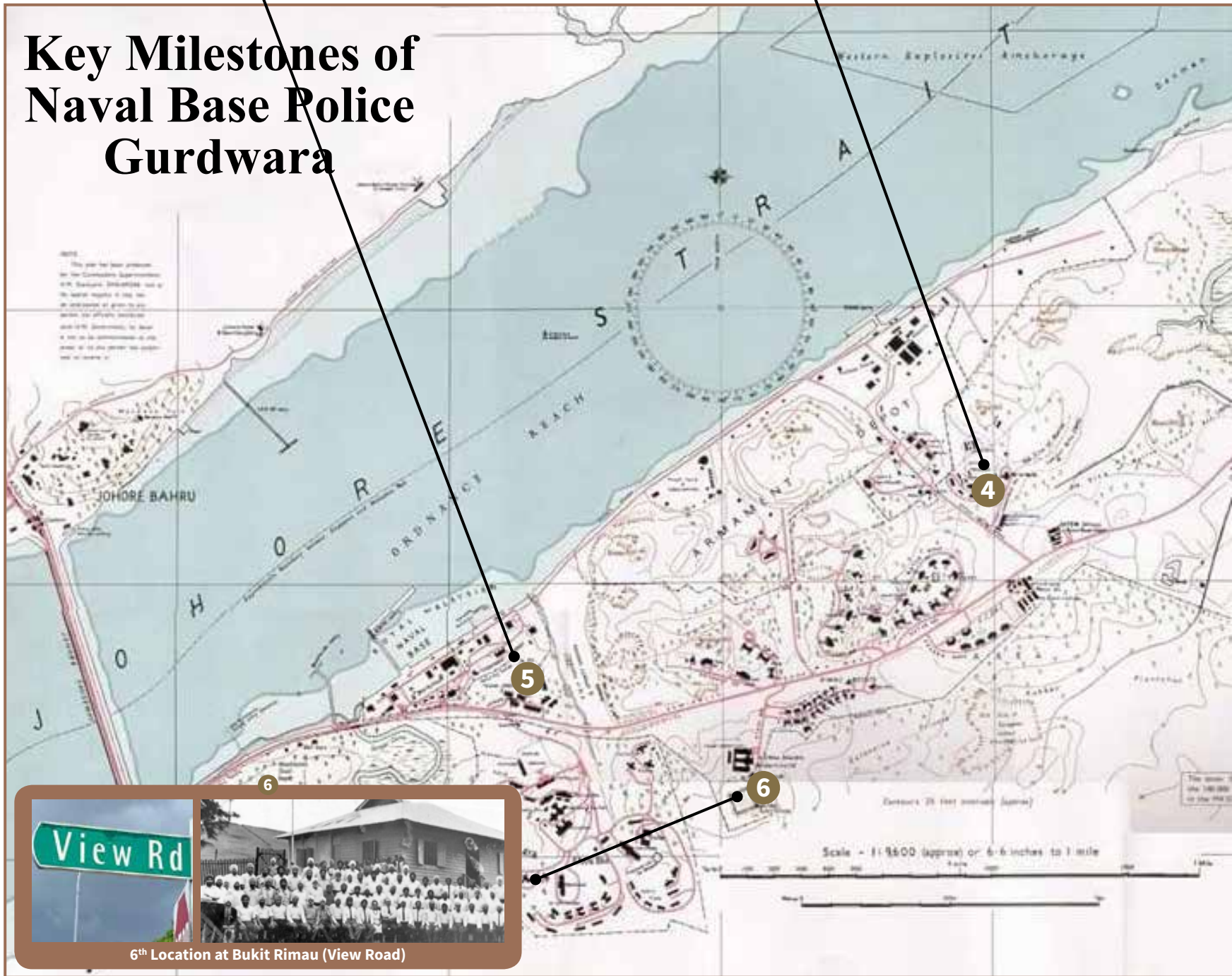
5<sup>th</sup> Location at Royal Naval Torpedo Depot (RNTD) - Khalsa Crescent

4



4<sup>th</sup> Location at Attap Valley Road

# Key Milestones of Naval Base Police Gurdwara



6



6<sup>th</sup> Location at Bukit Rimau (View Road)

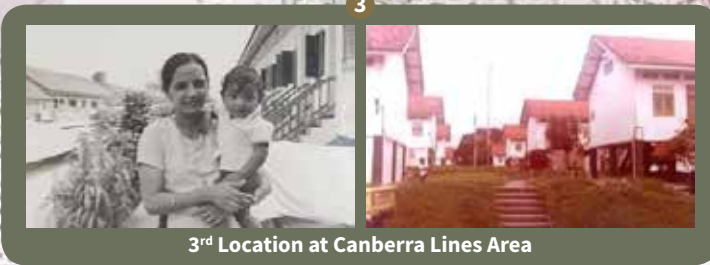
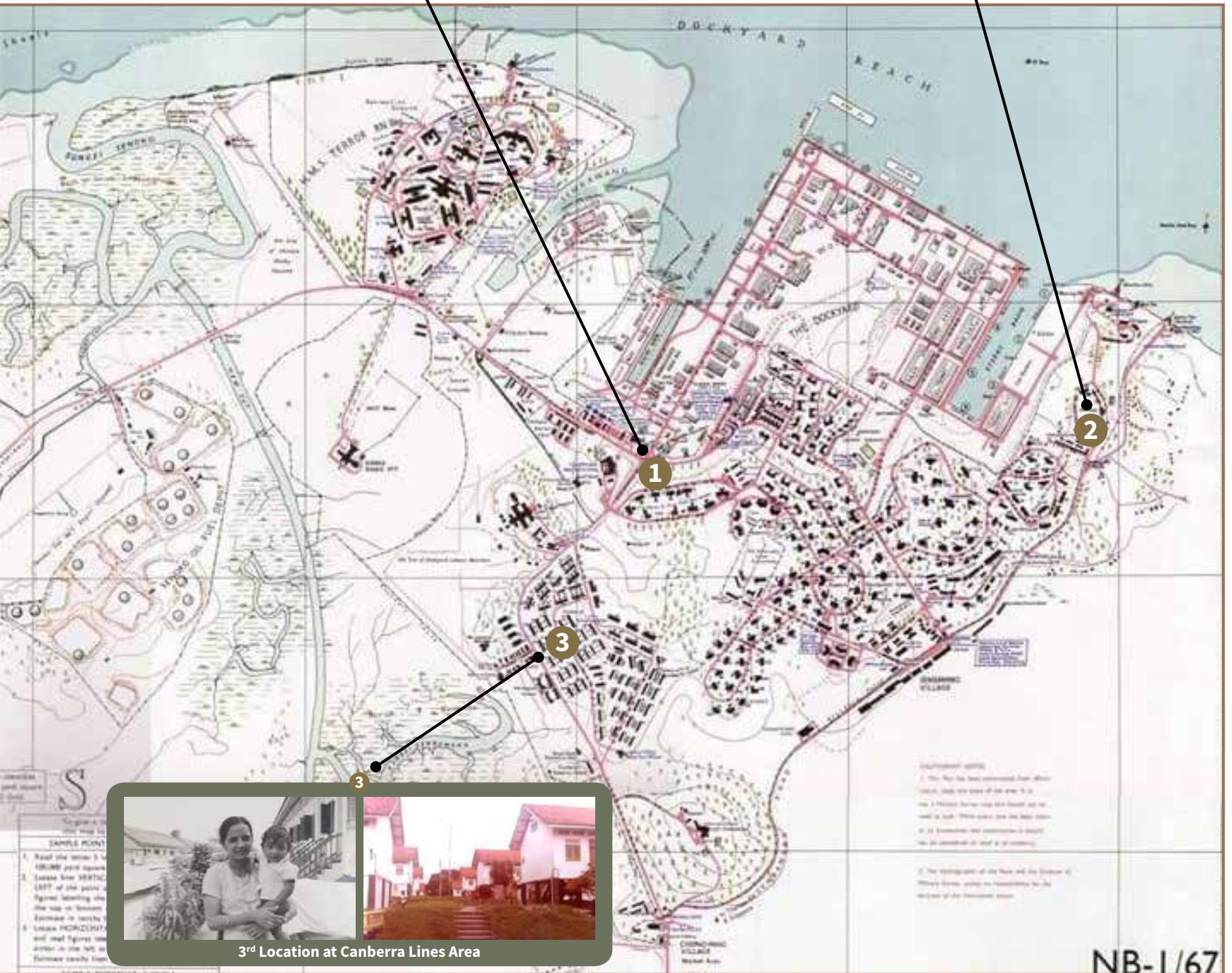




1<sup>st</sup> Location at Bermuda/Ottawa Road Area



2<sup>nd</sup> Location at 14<sup>th</sup> Miles Matta Gate Area



3<sup>rd</sup> Location at Canberra Lines Area

## KEY MILESTONES OF NAVAL BASE POLICE GURDWARA

### **1<sup>st</sup> Location at Bermuda/Ottawa Road Area**

- a. 1923 – Commencement of Construction of Naval Base
- b. 1925 – Gurdwara established by Sikh Security Guards at Bermuda/Ottawa Road area.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Location at 14<sup>th</sup> Miles Matta Gate Area**

- a. 1932 – Gurdwara shifted to 14<sup>th</sup> Milestone area near Matta Gate
- b. 1934 – Sikh Security Guards redesignated s Additional Police Constables (APCs)
- c. 1939 – APCs gazetted as Naval Police Force (NPF) by Oder-in-Council by Governor, Straits Settlements

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Location at Canberra Lines Area**

- a. 1940 – Gurdwara shifted to newly constructed block at the workers accommodation at Canberra Lines area
- b. Jan 1942 to Aug 1945 – Gurdwara closed during Japanese Occupation
- c. Sep 1945 – Gurdwara re-opened at Canberra Lines

### **4<sup>th</sup> Location at Attap Valley Road**

- a. 1948 – Gurdwara shifted to Royal Naval Ammunition Depot (RNAD) at Attap Valley Road

### **5<sup>th</sup> Location at Royal Naval Torpedo Depot (RNTD) - Khalsa Crescent**

- a. 1950 – Gurdwara shifted to Block 7 at Khalsa Crescent (RNTD)

### **6<sup>th</sup> Location at Bukit Rimau (View Road)**

- a. 1959 – Gurdwara shifted to the new accommodation complex at View Road (Same year Gurdwara officially registered as Gurdwara Sahib Naval Police (Naval Police Sikh Temple)
- b. 1971 – Gurdwara closed down and all assets transferred to Sembawang Sikh Temple.

## KEY MILESTONES OF GURDWARA SAHIB YISHUN

### Sembawang Sikh Temple (1936 – 1995)

1. Established in 1936 in a house at 13th Milestone Sembawang Road
2. Initially referred to as “13th Mile Naval Base Seletar Gurdwara” and subsequently formalised as “Gurdwara Guru Khalsa Sabha”
3. In 1971 took over all assets of members of sister-Gurdwara Naval Police Gurdwara
4. In 1973, officially registered as “Gurdwara Guru Khalsa Sabha”
5. In 1984, renamed as Sembawang Sikh Temple
6. In April 1986, Government issued notice for renewal of temple due to redevelopment of the area
7. In Feb 1990, Government offered resettlement site at Yishun Ring Road
8. In Jun 1990, Building Committee formed
9. On 27 Aug 1995, Sembawang Sikh Temple merged with Jalan Kayu Temple to form Gurdwara Sahib Yishun.
10. On 11 May 1997, Sembawang Sikh Temple officially dissolved

### Jalan Kayu Temple (1927 – 1995)

1. 1928 – Gurdwara established by RAF Seletar Auxillary Police Force Sikhs within RAF Seletar Base
2. Jan 1942 to Aug 1945 Gurdwara closed during Japanese Occupation
3. Sep 1945 Auxillary Police Force disbanded and Gurdwara closed down.
4. Jan 1946 – Sikh Temple Jalan Kayu (Gurdwara Sahib Jalan Kayu) established.
5. 27 Aug 1995 – Merged with Sembawang Sikh Temple to form Gurdwara Sahib Yishun.
6. 11 May 1997 – Sikh Temple Jalan Kayu officially dissolved.

### Gurdwara Sahib Yishun

1. February 1990 – Government offered joint resettlement Site for both Gurdwaras at Yishun Ring Road
2. 17 October 1993 – Ground Breaking Ceremony
3. 21 August 1995 – Gurdwara Sahib Yishun officially registered with Registrar of Societies
4. 27 Aug 1995 – Official Opening Ceremony of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun
5. 11 May 1997 – Sembawang Sikh Temple and Jalan Kayu Temple officially dissolved and 1<sup>st</sup> AGM of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun held on same day



# **INTRODUCTION**

Gurdwara Sahib Yishun celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in August 2021. To most people, this gurdwara is relatively new amongst the six other gurdwaras in Singapore today. This is understandable as the name has existed for just 25 years. But Gurdwara Sahib Yishun has a rich legacy, going back as far as the oldest gurdwaras in Singapore.

When celebrating the silver anniversary milestone of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, the gurdwara *sewadars* felt that what was critically missing was the recognition of contributions of the pioneering Sikhs and our forefathers who had laid the foundations of our gurdwara. This coffee table book serves to document the illustrated history of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, going back to over 90 years, when the predecessor gurdwaras were set up in northern Singapore.

It may not be common knowledge among Singaporeans and even among Singapore Sikhs today, that in the past, there were a number of gurdwaras in the north of Singapore, mainly associated with the presence of British security forces in the police and military. These gurdwaras developed in the vicinity of what came to be known as the 'Seletar-Sembawang area'. The centre-piece gurdwara was the Naval Police Gurdwara located within the British Naval Base, to serve the sizeable number of Sikh policemen at the base, and two other gurdwaras operating outside of the Base, namely the Sembawang Sikh Temple and the Seletar Air Base Police Gurdwara (which was later replaced by Jalan Kayu Gurdwara). The Naval Base Police Gurdwara, however, was relocated several times, whenever the locations of the police barracks changed. From its first two locations, just outside of the Dockyard area and from 14<sup>th</sup> Miles Sembawang, it moved to Canberra Lines. After the Japanese occupation, it was relocated to Royal Naval Ammunition Depot (RNAD) at Attap Valley Road and then to Royal Naval Torpedo Depot (RNTD) at Khalsa Crescent, and finally to Bukit Rimau at View Road until its closure after the British withdrawal in 1971.

In this regard, when a community's institution comes to be associated with the community's origins and journey in a foreign land, then that institution takes on a particular importance for both the community and the distant land where the institution has taken root. This is exactly the importance of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun in Singapore where the origins of the gurdwara is directly related to the early history of the Sikhs in Singapore and where the Sikhs as policemen came to be associated as security providers in what was to become the British Naval Base in Singapore, then seen as the most important British and Western naval base in the southern hemisphere, or at least in the British colonial territories. Similarly, Sikh policemen serving at the Seletar Air Base also established their gurdwara within Seletar Air Base. The Sikhs as policemen and the development of gurdwaras was also evident in other parts in Singapore as seen following the establishment of the Sikh Police Contingent in 1881 and later, the establishment of the Dock Police Force by the Tanjong Pagar Dock Company.

Equally significant, while the major Sikh gurdwaras were located in the city part of Singapore, be it the 'Police Gurdwaras' associated with the Pearls' Hill Police Station or the Sepoy Lines and where the various civilian gurdwaras were established according to 'regional affiliations', the Sikhs in 'Northern Singapore' also established their gurdwaras in line with the development of the British Naval Base in Sembawang and the Air Base at Seletar. However, the 'northern gurdwaras' were established along non-regional lines, something that has continued to colour the present-day Gurdwara Sahib Yishun.

Against this backdrop, this book examines the origins and evolution of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun to the present day. This book contains eight main sections. First, in the Prologue, Gurdwara Sahib Yishun is located with the framework of 'police gurdwaras' in British colonial territories, especially in what was then known as Malaya that was made up of the Federated Malay States, Un-

federated Malay States and the Straits Settlements. Second, chapters one to six documents and analyses the origins of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun from its humble beginning as Gurdwara Sahib Naval Police, then examines the temples that existed outside the naval base, namely, Sembawang Sikh Temple and Sikh Temple Jalan Kayu, and how the temples in the north of Singapore came to be amalgamated, and the role of various religious leaders, pioneers and *sewadars* as well as the plethora of activities the temple has been involved in, inter alia, Punjabi education, the temple's women and youth wings, its social, cultural and sporting activities, and its role in charity. Finally, the book ends by telescoping about the gurdwara's future in the context of Singapore and the needs of the Sikh community at large.

We have strived over the last six months to collect as much information as possible from existing gurdwara records even though gaps exist as records of several years are missing. We also made appeals to the *Sangat* as well as our past members who have migrated overseas to come forward with any record, photo or other information related to the history of the gurdwara from the Police days until now. We are extremely grateful to many members, including from overseas who generously came forward to supply materials in their possession or shared whatever information they had. They have helped, in many ways, to piece up our narration into a story of a special group of people so filled with pride for a Gurdwara with a great legacy. We would like to place on record our special thanks and appreciation to each and every one of them, as duly acknowledged at end of this publication, and sincerely apologise to anyone who may have been inadvertently left out.

While every effort has been made to document the history in a very impartial manner, we may have omitted documenting contributions of some individuals purely from lack of information or lack of awareness on our part and we sincerely apologise for such omissions and errors in interpretation.

We are very grateful to our elders, namely Sardars Dr Mukhtiar Singh, Ajaib Singh, Dharam Singh, Mokand Singh and Sukhjinder Singh for sharing their messages in this publication. These are individuals who have been closely associated with our predecessor gurdwaras and have shared invaluable information regarding the functioning of the gurdwaras and the *sewadars* of the earlier days. Our special thanks to Sardar Inderjit Singh for his forward in this publication. Last but not least, our sincere thanks to Dr Bilveer Singh for his suggestions and comments, and for contributing the Prologue in the book.

Gurdwara Yishun Sahib has come far from its humble days to where we are today. Unknown to also many, it is the only gurdwara in Singapore on a short 30-year lease, and hence, confronted with extra financial challenges of not only ensuring its proper maintenance and care but also having the additional responsibility of meeting the lease payments. It is a community gurdwara, where all of us have a collective responsibility of ensuring that it will continue to serve effectively in the spirit of *Chardi Kala* and *Sarbat da Bhalla*.

We look forward to one and all in keeping the *Nishan Sahib* flying high forever. May *Waheguru Ji* shower His Blessings on our gurdwara and the *Sangat*.

### **Sewadars**

Gurdwara Sahib Yishun

April 2022





# **PROLOGUE**

## GURDWARA YISHUN SAHIB WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF POLICE GURDWARAS IN COLONIAL SINGAPORE

Two of Singapore's historic gurdwaras today, namely, Gurdwara Yishun Sahib and Silat Road Gurdwara, are directly linked to the evolution of British colonialism in Singapore and the security role Sikhs played in the then colony of Singapore in the past.<sup>1</sup> An important framework to understand what is Gurdwara Yishun Sahib today is to make sense of what its predecessors were, especially the Naval Base Police Force Gurdwara (and its associated Sembawang Sikh Temple) in the Sembawang area, and the smaller gurdwara of Seletar Air Base Auxilliary Police Force (APF), later replaced by Jalan Kayu Gurdwara, servicing the Seletar Air Base; and how they evolved over the years. The concept and operationalisation of 'police gurdwaras' was a unique British colonial practice in Malaya, especially in the Federated Malay States and the Straits Settlements, where sizeable Sikhs were brought in from Punjab to serve in the British colonial police force.



As the British consolidated their hold in the Straits Settlements, made up of Singapore, Penang and Malacca, and later in the Malay States, both the Federated and Un-Federated Malay States, the British deployed Sikh police personnel in increasing numbers after the mid-nineteenth century. This saw a growing number of Sikh males being deployed in Singapore, as in the other British colonial territories in Malaya, and together with this, the 'police gurdwaras' became an important architecture and feature of British deployment of Sikh police personnel in Malaya. Not surprisingly, in 2022 there are still five 'police gurdwaras' in Malaysia, three in Kuala Lumpur (Gurdwara Sahib Police, Kuala Lumpur, Gurdwara Sahib Police Depot (PULAPOL), Kuala Lumpur and Gurdwara Sahib Police, Jalan Parliament, Kuala Lumpur), one each in Perak (Gurdwara Sahib Police, Ipoh, Perak) and Penang (Gurdwara Sahib Sikh Police, Penang). It is within this framework that one should today understand and appreciate the importance and relevance of Gurdwara Yishun Sahib in the context of historical 'police gurdwaras' in British colonial Malaya that included Singapore.

Why then did the British facilitated the growth and development of 'police gurdwaras' in its colonial territories in Malaya that included Singapore? First, it was simply a kind gesture to provide a place of worship for its police personnel who happened to be Sikhs and for whom the gurdwara was where they worshipped. However, apart from this general aspect, there were very clear specific reasons why the British colonial authorities invested in 'police gurdwaras' for its Sikh police servicemen.

The Sikh police servicemen were no ordinary employees of the British Raj, especially as the British came to understand the Sikhs since the 1840s, and in particular, following the two Anglo-Sikh Wars, the first from 1845 to 1846 and the second from 1848 to 1849. As this was among the last territories to be conquered in what became British India, the British came to appreciate the Sikh fighters as one with fierce fighting prowess, bravery and loyalty to the cause. The British realised that the centre of gravity for the Sikhs, in fact, all Sikhs, was their religion that conditioned their daily lives and worldview, especially against the backdrop of past atrocities and repression by the Muslim Mughals.

The British also came to know that Sikhs were brave warriors with an unrelenting fighting spirit and believed in the martial spirit as was inspired in them by their Gurus, especially when confronted with a superior enemy and the untold sufferings and sacrifices they had to endure in the past. If properly nurtured and motivated, the Sikhs could be transformed into a mammoth fighting force for the British colonial authorities and for this to happen, the Sikhs' religion and way of life had to be safeguarded. And whoever provided this 'service', especially in satisfying the Sikhs' hunger for spirituality and respect for their religion, would in turn be served with distinction, something the Sikhs, especially the police servicemen lived up to expectations since the 1870s right through to the post-Second World War period.

The British realised and understood that if they respected and provided for the Sikhs to practice their religion, then the Sikhs under the British would not just perform their duties but be prepared to give their lives for them. In this endeavour, the British built at their own cost, 'police gurdwaras', often within the police stations and provided for the maintenance of the gurdwaras, with the most senior Sikh police officer acting as the 'president' and the 'Subedar' or senior sergeant serving as the *Giani* or Priest of the gurdwara.

For the British colonial authorities, the 'police gurdwaras' were also important avenues to imbue not just a sense of loyalty to the British but also to the key tenets of Sikhism as was espoused by the Sikh Gurus, in particular, the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh Ji. The British ensured that only 5K Sikhs, namely, Sikhs who adopted the five physical symbols of Sikhism (uncut hair, a steel bracelet, a wooden comb, a cotton underwear and a steel sword), the Sikhs who were first initiated into the Khalsa, were employed as police personnel. The religious services in the 'police gurdwaras' were used to strengthen the police personnel's devotion to Sikhism, to the Punjabi Language (*Gurmukhi*) and ultimately, to the British colonial authorities. As the British provided the Sikh police servicemen their spiritual and job security as well as the respect



that followed from being an important part of the security system, in return, the Sikhs, especially the police servicemen, served the British with distinction throughout the period of British colonialism in Malaya, including in Singapore. Hence, the need to understand the concept of 'police gurdwaras' in British Malaya, including Singapore. As the Sikh police servicemen came from different parts of Punjab, the 'police gurdwaras' also served as a unifying force among the servicemen regardless of whether they were *Malwa, Majha* or *Doaba* Sikhs.

As the police precincts were within security sensitive areas, non-police personnel Sikh civilians were not allowed into the 'police gurdwaras' except on rare celebrations of the Sikh faith. Neither were non-police personnel permitted to administer these 'police gurdwaras', a practice that is still continued in the five police gurdwaras in Malaysia today, where serving or former police personnel or their children are the primary 'administrators' of these gurdwaras. Partly due to this factor, as the Sikh population increased in Malaya including Singapore, new 'civilian' gurdwaras were built outside the police precincts, leading to the growth of non-police gurdwaras in Malaya, including Singapore.

Most importantly, the safeguarding and promotion of the Sikh religion within the 'police gurdwaras', played a crucial role in developing a code of service and loyalty among the Sikh police servicemen. Through the ideology of Sikhism, their pride in their religion and history of sacrifice and persecution, and the sense of uniformity, unity and pride in service through the 5Ks that were continuously reinforced daily at the 'police gurdwaras', the British succeeded in creating a powerful force known for its dedication, bravery and loyalty in line with its martial tradition. These traits and achievements were appreciated throughout Malaya in the past and both Malaysia and Singapore today, and Gurdwara Yishun Sahib is an important part of this historic tradition that should be transmitted to future generations.

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1. Like Gurdwara Yishun Sahib today, Silat Road Gurdwara also has a past linking to 'police gurdwaras', namely, the Pearls Hill Gurdwara associated with the Sikh Contingent and Tanjong Pagar Dock Police Force in the 1880s. These gurdwaras were later amalgamated with the Gurdwara Sahib Silat Road that was constructed in 1924.

# CHAPTER 1

## TRACING OUR HUMBLE BEGINNINGS IN 1925: 'GURDWARA SAHIB NAVAL POLICE' (NAVAL POLICE SIKH TEMPLE)

Gurdwara Sahib Yishun was built in Yishun New Town in 1995. Unlike the other gurdwaras in Singapore, it sits on state land with a short 30-year lease commencing from 1992, which requires to be extended, subject to Government's approval, for no more than 30 years at a time as per prevailing government policy. While to many it may appear to be the youngest and newest compared to the six other gurdwaras in Singapore today, its history, however, goes back to the colonial interwar years, where three gurdwaras existed in Northern Singapore from the 1920s till the 1970s, namely Naval Police Sikh Temple, Sembawang Sikh Temple and Jalan Kayu Temple. The Naval Police Gurdwara closed down in 1971 and its members as well as its assets were transferred to Sembawang Sikh Temple. Given the changes in demographics as well as Government's land use policies, the remaining two gurdwaras subsequently were amalgamated into one with a new identity, referred to as Gurdwara Sahib Yishun or Yishun Sikh Temple.



Naval Base Security Guards- 1920s

The origins of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun can be traced to British policy after the First World War, when Britain became rather concerned over the safety of its numerous territories in Asia, especially in India, Burma, Malaya and Hong Kong, and also Australia and New Zealand, all of which Britain wanted to protect from any Japanese threat in the Pacific. In 1909, being strategically located in the Strait of Malacca between the Pacific and Indian Oceans, Singapore was chosen as the site of a major British naval base with an air base nearby, both of which were located in the northern part of Singapore, then referred to as the 'Seletar-Sembawang' area. The construction of the Naval Base in Sembawang began in 1923 and that of the Seletar Air Base in Jalan Kayu area shortly later around 1925. This was to be the start of Sikhs settling in northern part of Singapore rather than just around the town area in the south. Prior to that, the only sizeable local Sikh community in Singapore was that of the 160 odd Sikhs brought to Singapore to form the Straits Settlement Police Force in Singapore in 1881 to be followed later by small numbers of others, who served mainly as security guards and watchmen. There were also a few, who given their farming background, became dairy farmers and bullock drivers, and ventured slightly out to the outskirts of the town to create their own farms. But there were none in the northern part of Singapore in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century until the British undertook the construction of the Naval Base and Air Base in the "Seletar-Sembawang" area.

But why the preference for Sikhs for the Naval Base by the British? Based on their experiences in India, the Sikhs together with a selected number of ethnic Indian groups were classified as 'Martial Classes' and Punjab had always been the main source of manpower for police and security work in British colonies in the Far East, such as the deployment of the Sikhs in the Second Opium War in China in the 1850s, the creation of the Sikh contingent in Perak in the 1870s, and the establishment of the Sikh Police Contingent in Singapore in the 1880s, as mentioned earlier, to name a few. The Sikhs also served and proved their worth during service in the British Army during the two World Wars in various parts of Europe and the Middle East. For obvious reasons, they were the first that the British looked to for the security requirements of their Naval Base in the Far East.



1926 Photo of workers involved in tree clearing. Note the Sikh Security Guard at extreme left and other Sikh workers among the group.  
(Courtesy of Public Record Office, London)

The construction of the Naval Base was entrusted to British Contractor M/s Topham Jones and Railton (a company that exists today). The project of constructing a naval base large enough to accommodate the largest warships afloat then entailed employment of a substantially large manpower force as well as elaborate security arrangements for the strategically chosen area. While the majority of the labour force for the project came from South India, the security of the construction areas was entrusted to Sikhs brought in from Punjab. The construction of the Naval Base started slowly but was accelerated in the 1930s when Japan began moving into Manchuria and northern China. The phased build-up of the Naval Base also saw the progressive increase in the number of Sikhs being brought over. All in all there were about 60 odd Sikhs in the 1920s, with a handful employed in civilian jobs and the rest constituting the Naval Base Security Force. All of them were accommodated in long wooden housing blocks with attap roofs. Understandably, all the Sikhs were accommodated around the same area to facilitate common *langgar* preparation

and other related arrangements. The Sikh civilian workers though were accommodated separately - but close to the blocks accommodating the Sikh security guards. Many of the Sikhs were devout Sikhs, reciting their *banis* daily. It was only natural that the first thing that the Sikhs would do was to build their gurdwaras in these places to meet their spiritual needs, where they could gather to hear the spiritual discourse and sing religious hymns in the praise of *Waheguru*.

The origins of Naval Police Force Gurdwara can be traced to circa 1925 when the Sikh security guards (later renamed as Additional Police Constables in 1934) as well as the civilian Sikh workers employed by the British contractor M/s Topham Jones and Railton, decided to establish a small gurdwara within its precincts. Sardar Dharam Singh (born in 1927), has some vivid memories of the early days. His father joined the Naval Base Security Force in 1931 and he is familiar with developments during the period, having seen what was taking place as well as hearing from others what had taken place earlier. According to Sardar Dharam Singh, the first gurdwara was inaugurated in one of the Sikh blocks on a hill quite close to the Dockyard's main entrance where the offices of the Contractor were located then. This, in all likelihood, based on the description of the area, appears to be what later came to be known as Bermuda/Ottawa Road area where more concrete buildings were built in subsequent years for the expanding Naval Base work force, for both civilians and the uniform services. Half of the wooden block was converted to serve as the Gurdwara while the other half served as the *langgar* area. Around it were the accommodation quarters of the security guards as well as the civilian workers. According to Sardar Dharam Singh, among the prominent personalities who managed the gurdwara in the 1920s, were Sardars Gurnam Singh Moga and Teja Singh.



Late 1920s photo of Sikh Security Guards before being designated as APCs in 1934.



When the build-up of the Naval Base gathered pace from 1928/29 onwards, it was already being billed as the largest naval base east of Suez. More workmen were employed and security for the area beefed up. The number of Sikh security guards also more than doubled. New buildings for the accommodation of naval and civilian staff were put up in various areas outside the dockyard area, but within the Naval Base, including around the Mata Gate area, 14<sup>th</sup> milestone, Sembawang Road. With the increase in the number of Sikh security guards, more accommodation blocks were built for them. The Sikh security guards decided to build a bigger gurdwara there, sometime around 1932, this time occupying the whole block with the *langgar* area in a separate block. Soon after, the other smaller gurdwara was closed and all Sikhs, civilians as well as the security guards, worshipped together at the bigger 14<sup>th</sup> Mile Gurdwara. By this time, a handful of Sikhs had also moved from the town area to the Sembawang area and started their own businesses there, including taxi service, running household and provision shops and cattle rearing. The 1931 Census of Singapore (as compiled by C. A. Vlieland titled *British Malaya: A Report on the 1931 Census* – London, 1932) indicated that, of the 2,988 Sikhs living in Singapore, 2,666 were living within the municipal area, and 322 living outside the town areas, mainly in Sembawang and Jalan Kayu areas.



Old Photo of Naval Base Dockyard under construction in mid 1930s

What was the mode of transport of the migrants coming to Singapore? It was first a long road journey, lasting 3 days, starting from village to the port, either at Madras or Calcutta and then onwards by ship. Many still remember the name SS RAJULA, one



SS Rajulah

such ship that most people sailed on from the 1920s until around 1972. After about a week of sea journey, this was followed by a week of quarantine at St John's Island before stepping foot on mainland Singapore. And there are numerous stories that many have shared about the sea journey those days but that's best kept for another publication.

The construction of the Naval Base accelerated significantly in line with regional developments, especially after Japan invaded Manchuria in September 1931. When the dockyard was more than three-quarters completed in 1934, the security guards were supplied with police uniforms and designated as Additional Police Constables (APCs), with the uniform similar to that worn by Straits Settlements policemen. Recruitment of these APCs was mainly carried out through the Sikh Contingent of the Straits Settlements Police Force, located at the Sepoy Lines at Pearls Hill as well as other migrant arrivals. The manpower strength of the APCs was also increased to 250 men. The 1934 formalisation of the Additional Police Constables Force is a significant event not just because of the re-designation of the Sikh security guards to a formal police force but also the attention paid by the British to meeting the religious needs of the policemen. While earlier on it was the initiative of the Sikh security guards in organising the space for their religious activities and needs, from then onwards the British authorities undertook the responsibility of providing for the gurdwara and related needs. From the mid-1930s onwards until the Japanese invasion, several individuals were actively involved in the Police Gurdwara, including managing the religious duties, namely *Hawaldars* Harnam Singh (SGT No 1), Uttam Singh (SGT 3), Maghar Singh (SGT 23), and Gurdial Singh (SGT 14), to name a few.



Sikh Additional Police Constables (APCs) in the Late 1930s



An early photo of APCs in their new uniforms in 1934. Sardar Atma Singh (seated 2<sup>nd</sup> in front row) with his son Chanan Singh in Boys Scout Uniform, who later joined the force.

The gurdwara infrastructure was all paid for by the British on similar lines as provided for the Sikh Straits Settlement Police Contingent in Pearls Hill. Why? This is a legacy of the British policy in treating their Sikh security forces wherever they were employed. The British, having witnessed the Sikhs up close during their days in the Indian Army and well aware of the Sikh inclination for prayer, made special arrangements for the daily morning Nitnem and evening Rehras services as well as the full Sunday *Jodh Mela* and other key *Gurpurab* celebrations. For these purposes a gurdwara was established wherever Police Cantonments were set up in Malaya and Singapore. The establishment of the gurdwara also facilitated the enforcement of rigorous religious disciplinary standards for the Sikh policemen, which in a way served the British interests well too. Sardar Dharam Singh remembers as a child joining the newly recruited Sikh policemen undergoing the *Amrit Sanchar* ceremony. The policemen were also required to follow a strict code of conduct, which forbids the removal of hair. This was something that was strictly enforced with the policemen facing inspections during various parades. Any Sikh policeman caught trimming his hair was severely dealt with, including being sacked from the force.

According to Sardar Dharam Singh most of the APCs were unmarried. After saving some money, they returned to Punjab to get married and then brought their families over. There were only a handful of families and his was one of them. He was the only child in his family, as were a few other children that constituted the Sikh children population then. The most senior policeman then was *Hawaldar* Harnam Singh. The policemen were housed in several simple wooden blocks around the 14<sup>th</sup> mile area, within the Naval Base precincts, which was then demarcated by a simple fence with concertina wires (strengthened subsequently into a proper fence around 1938). While the unmarried were housed in one block, the married servicemen were housed in the others. The Gurdwara, then referred to as the Police Gurdwara, was the main place where all the servicemen congregated regularly. *Langgar* was shared by all and *Granthi* and *Kirtan* duties were performed from among the servicemen.

A major component of the Base was completed in March 1938, when the King George VI Graving Dock was opened; more than 300 metres in length, it was the largest dry dock in the world at that time. In line with this significant event in 1938, a proper Naval Police Force was created by the British government and all the APCs were absorbed into this new force, which was formed to take over all police duties in the entire Naval Base area. In 1939, the Naval Base Police Force was gazetted by Order-in-Council by the Governor of the Straits Settlements and given the same powers as the Straits Settlements Police, but within the confines of the Naval Base area and its other related installations outside. This was a unique development, in that while the Straits Settlement Police Forces existed in Singapore, Penang and Malacca, another similarly organised force was



APCs in 1940 training in front of their Wooden-Attap Shed barracks

being specifically created just for the Naval Base area in Singapore. During this period there were over 250 Sikhs in the Naval Police Force out of a total of 400 policemen in total.



Mid 1940s Photo Of Sikh Policemen in long pants, which were provided for a short period after WW2 reorganisation of Police, and then changed to short pants in late 1940s

More Sikhs were also joining the Naval Base in various tradesmen vocations, including store men, clerks, crane drivers as well as electricians and the like. The Naval Base, completed in 1939, was a large complex, containing a floating dock, dry docks, giant cranes, machine shops; and underground storages for water, fuel and ammunition. In terms of accommodation, it was a self-contained town within the base itself, with separate areas of accommodation for the British officials and their families, the police and fire brigade forces, and the thousands of Asian workers. In addition, there were the schools (separate ones for the British and Asian children), cinemas, hospitals and other sports and recreational facilities. In terms of religious places, there were many churches, mainly for the Europeans but only one unique Sikh Temple specially serving the religious needs of the Sikh Policemen and all paid for by the British.

With the expansion of the Police Force and construction of accommodation, the Naval Police



NPF Parade at Canberra Lines circa 1948

Gurdwara understandably had to be relocated in line with where the majority of Sikh policemen were mainly concentrated. With the expansion of the Police Force and the recruitment of more civilian Sikhs to work at the Naval Base, concrete blocks of living quarters were built around the Kowloon/Canberra Road area, closer to where the main Canberra Gate had been constructed, at around the 13th mile Sembawang area. The whole accommodation complex, which also housed civilian workers came to be known as Canberra Lines. When the concrete blocks of living quarters became ready in the later part of 1939, the Police Gurdwara shifted to one of the blocks in Canberra Road in 1940. All the Sikh Policemen congregated there. As for the civilian Sikh workers, they initially congregated together at the Police Gurdwara at 14<sup>th</sup> miles area but later decided to build their own gurdwara, outside of the Naval Base, known as Sembawang Sikh Temple, which started functioning in 1936, as will be discussed in the next chapter.



ASP Jangeer Singh with NPF Sikhs in Canberra Lines

The chief of the Naval Base Police Force was a British Officer initially with the rank Assistant Superintendent of Police, but subsequently upgraded to the rank of Commissioner as the force increased in size. The Force was enlarged and divided into three Divisions, namely the Sikh Division, the Punjabi-Muslim Division and the Marine Police Division comprising mainly of Malays. The Sikh Division was the largest comprising about 500 men, compared to about 100 in the Punjabi-Muslim Division and about 60 in the Marine Police Division. Inspector Jangeer Singh (later promoted to ASP rank), who joined the Naval Base Police in 1939, was appointed as the first officer-in-charge of the Sikh Division. His father Sardar Bhagg Singh had earlier served in the Straits Settlement Police.

The Sikh Division had more personnel because there were many highly restricted areas in the Naval Base where smoking was banned and Sikhs were preferred as they were non-smokers. These restricted areas included the Ammunition Depot, known as

RNAD, at Attap Valley Road (where about 200 Sikh Policemen were deployed) and the Senoko Oil Installation (where about 30 policemen were deployed) within the Naval Base. There were also other installations outside of the Naval Base that the Naval Police Force was responsible for, namely the Communications installations at Kranji (where about 50 Sikh Policemen were deployed); the Normanton oil installations (where about 30 Sikh Policemen were deployed); and the Mount Faber oil installations (where 15 Sikh Policemen were deployed).



1940s Photo - Insp Angad Singh at second row fifth from left and Atma Singh (CPL 45) sitting in front row third from left

In early 1940, the manpower strength of the Naval Base Police Force was further increased to about 550 Sikhs, 180 Punjabi-Muslims and 70 Malays. There was by then a sizeable Sikh population in the north and three Sikh temples in operation. The other two temples being Sembawang Sikh Temple, which had a membership of about 80 members comprising of the newly arrived Sikhs serving in the Naval Base in various trades, namely as drivers, clerks, storekeepers, mechanics and electricians; and another temple in Selatar Air Base comprising of a much smaller number of policemen serving there, as they manned the one and only main gate there, in addition to patrolling the Base area.



Insp Angad Singh with NPF Sikhs and British Naval Officer circa 1947



Passing Out Parade of Sikh Policemen in late 1940s

But dark clouds were looming in the region. The Naval Base was built and supplied to sustain a siege long enough to enable Britain's fleet to reach the area. But with the British fleet and forces committed in Europe and the Middle East, they could not be spared to deal with a potential threat in Asia. Almost throughout 1941, there was relative calm with everyone under the illusion of Singapore's impregnability but soon the reality of war befell on everyone and many who lived during the period have many stories to tell. When the Japanese started their war in the Far East in December 1941 and until the evacuation of the Naval Base on 31 January 1942, more than a dozen Sikh policemen and about a dozen Sikh civilians, mainly Sikh drivers lost their lives. With the Naval Base evacuated, the gurdwara at Canberra Road (which had functioned for barely 2 years) also had to be closed. The Sembawang Sikh Temple, however, continued to function during the Japanese Occupation from February 1942 to August 1945. Though over two dozen Sikhs from the Naval Police were recruited by the Japanese to work with their police in the Naval Base, it was a tough time for most of the other Sikhs, who had to endure the hardships during the Japanese occupation period. Some returned to Punjab.

The post-war period saw a major reorganisation of the Naval Base Police Force. It was ironical that while on the one hand, the British were planning the disbandment of the Sikh Contingent of the Straits Settlements Police in 1946, a force that had made their presence readily felt in the heart of Chinatown, the hub of criminal activities then; on the other hand, the Sikh component of the Naval Police Force in the North was being increased in strength as the Sikh strength of the Force then was deemed insufficient to police all the restricted areas. More importantly, the Canberra Lines Police Gurdwara which was closed when the Base was evacuated on 31 January 1942 was also reopened



Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to the Naval Base in March 1946. Inspector Jangeer Singh escorting him with Lord Mountbatten behind. As a leading member of the Congress, Nehru was invited to Singapore in mid-March to meet Indian troops and study the conditions of the large Indian community in Singapore. Nehru became India's first Prime Minister in 1947. Lord Mountbatten, then Supreme Allied Commander of South East Asia, later became the last British Viceroy of India



1949 Photo - Atma Singh (CPL 45) in civies with his grandson Malkit Singh

in September 1945. Inspector Jangeer Singh with three men went to then Malaya in October 1947 to recruit Sikhs for the Naval Base Police Force. He managed to recruit about 50 personnel. This was apparently not enough to meet the requirements; and the following year, Inspector Jangeer Singh was sent to Punjab to recruit about 200 Sikhs to further strengthen the Sikh Naval Police Force to its required manpower establishment. He came back with about 150 personnel. In 1949, the total strength of the Sikh Division totalled 450 men.



Early 1950s Police Group Photo

Just three years after being reopened, the gurdwara at Canberra Lines was again relocated to a block near the Armament Depot at Attap Valley Road in 1948, close to the accommodation quarters of most of the Sikh staff there. The huge Armament Depot had just been completed and many Sikh policemen were employed there. While the policemen continued to serve in large numbers there, the gurdwara was there only on short temporary basis as proper concrete accommodation quarters were being constructed next to the Royal Malayan Navy (RMN) Barracks further north. When ready around 1950, the accommodation complex, built specifically for Sikhs, comprised of 8 double storey buildings with the whole ground floor of Block 7 specifically reserved to serve as a gurdwara. This new complex was aptly named as Khalsa Crescent. The gurdwara functioned in Khalsa Crescent for about slightly over 9 years.



Group Photo of 1950s at Khalsa Crescent





Group Photo with Visiting Indian Dignitaries



Sikh Policemen Interacting With Visiting Indian Dignitary 1950s



Group Photo with visiting Indian Dignitaries



Group Photo with visiting Indian Dignitaries



Entrance Leading To Gurdwara  
at Khalsa Crescent



Indian Independence Day parade - 1955



Rifle Drill during Indian Independence Day Parade - 1955



Indian and UK Flags At Khalsa Crescent during Indian Independence Day Parade - 1955



Langar at Khalsa Crescent Police Barracks



Youth Of Khalsa Crescent During Gurgurab Celebration



Informal Photo after washing hair at Khalsa Crescent

But the gurdwara had to move again given the need for more accommodation for the increase in police personnel as well as changes in British defence plans for the region. Around the period 1940, the British had built the so-called “Rimau offices” on Bukit Rimau with plans to set up a Maritime Ops (Operations) Command Centre. After the war, however, the plans fell through and in the latter part of the 1940s, and given the expansion of the Police Force, a decision was taken to turn it into a much needed Naval Police Force residential complex. Sardar Ranjit Singh S/O Sardar Bhoop Singh (PC 141), remembers his family of three being allotted accommodation at Rimau together with a few other families, namely those of Sardar Kundan Singh (PC 69) and Sardar Natha Singh (PC 147), who arrived from Punjab at the same time in November 1950. Initially, there were only a handful of families living at the Rimau Complex, with most of the Policemen residing at Khalsa Crescent. According to him “it was an eerie, desolate kind of forbidding building, lacking proper bathrooms, lighting and with no transport facilities”. Going to school was another challenge where he had to wade through the wet dew and tall grass along a small *path* to reach Khalsa Crescent so as to join other children his age, namely Sardars Sarban Singh and Harpal Singh, and then proceed to school in Johore. Gradually more and more families were transferred from Khalsa Crescent to Rimau.



Rimau Complex Post 1971

Given the large number of Sikh policemen being moved there, it was decided to move the Gurdwara there. The Gurdwara had to be specially built next to the newly converted Rimau residential complex. Sardar Bhag Singh Dhudi (who had served in the Naval Police Force from January 1936 till the mid-1940s) and a few other civilian construction workers were engaged to construct the gurdwara. Sardar Sukhdev Singh Ji of Dhaleke remembers Sardar Bhag Singh, with his tool kit slung across his body, working on the roof of the temple that was being constructed. He also recollects sugar cubes boxes being placed at the staircase before it was cemented, though he does not know what significance this had!

In 1959, parallel with the majority of the Sikh police accommodation shifting from Khalsa Crescent to the new building in View Road, the gurdwara started operating from Bukit Rimau, which was renamed View Road, where it was officially registered as “Gurdwara Sahib Naval Police” or “Naval Police Sikh Temple” with the Singapore Government. It was to remain in this location until its closure in 1972 (as several families were permitted to remain there) after the Naval Police Force was disbanded following the British pull-out from Singapore in 1971. The gurdwara’s effects were then handed over to Sembawang Sikh Temple, which also became the place of worship for the remnants of the Naval Base Police staff and their families. After the withdrawal of the British, only two gurdwaras remained operational in northern Singapore.



Rimau Gurdwara Opening Ceremony Photo of 6 Dec 1959 with Chief Police Officer as Guest Of Honour



Saroops of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji being brought to Rimau Gurdwara's Official Opening Ceremony



Installation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Saroops during official opening Ceremony of Rimau Gurdwara



Ladies Sangat at Rimau Gurdwara during Opening Ceremony

Many may not be aware that there used to be a Naval Base Fire Brigade and that Sikhs played a major role in that formation too. The Naval Base Fire Brigade was manned entirely by Sikhs from 1936 to 1940, with 32 Sikhs manning the fire engines in eight-hour shifts under charge of two Sikh Sergeants. After the conclusion of the war in 1945, Fire Officer Jagtar Singh re-organized the Fire Brigade, which was expanded with the recruitment of Malays into the service. In 1950, Jagtar Singh was promoted to the rank of Senior Assistant Chief Fire Officer and he retired in 1971. The Sikhs from the fire service did not have their own gurdwara and hence became de facto members of the Police Gurdwara too.

During the early years, prior to the Japanese occupation, the Sikh Community in the 'Seletar-Sembawang' area, was predominantly male, as discussed earlier. Its female population was very small and comprised mainly wives of some Sikhs in the Naval Police Force. In fact, this was the same pattern throughout Singapore, due mainly to the kind of work available and the

living conditions then, as well as the uncertainty of life in an alien environment which restricted the migration of females in any significant numbers. A few years after the war, from around the early 1950s, one could see an increase in the number of females and children. This is evident from more married quarters being added to the Kowloon/Canberra area, the construction of the Khalsa Crescent Complex as well as the Rimau police quarters from then onwards. Activities at the Police Gurdwara also became more diverse with family-organised Jhod Melas, Punjabi classes for children and youth activities. The children of the 1950s and 1960s have fond memories of the Torpedo and Rimau Gurdwaras, where the larger Sikh community existed together, with the Gurdwara being the pivot of almost all activities, religious and cultural.



Chief Police Officer joining Police Sangat at Rimau Gurdwara during Waisakhi 1967



Chief Police Officer joining Sangat for langgar during Waisakhi Celebrations



Chief Police Officer interacting with Sikh Policemen



Chief Police Officer interacting with Sikh Policemen



Chief Police Officer with Inspector Angad Singh and Giani Pritam Singh in group photo of 1965

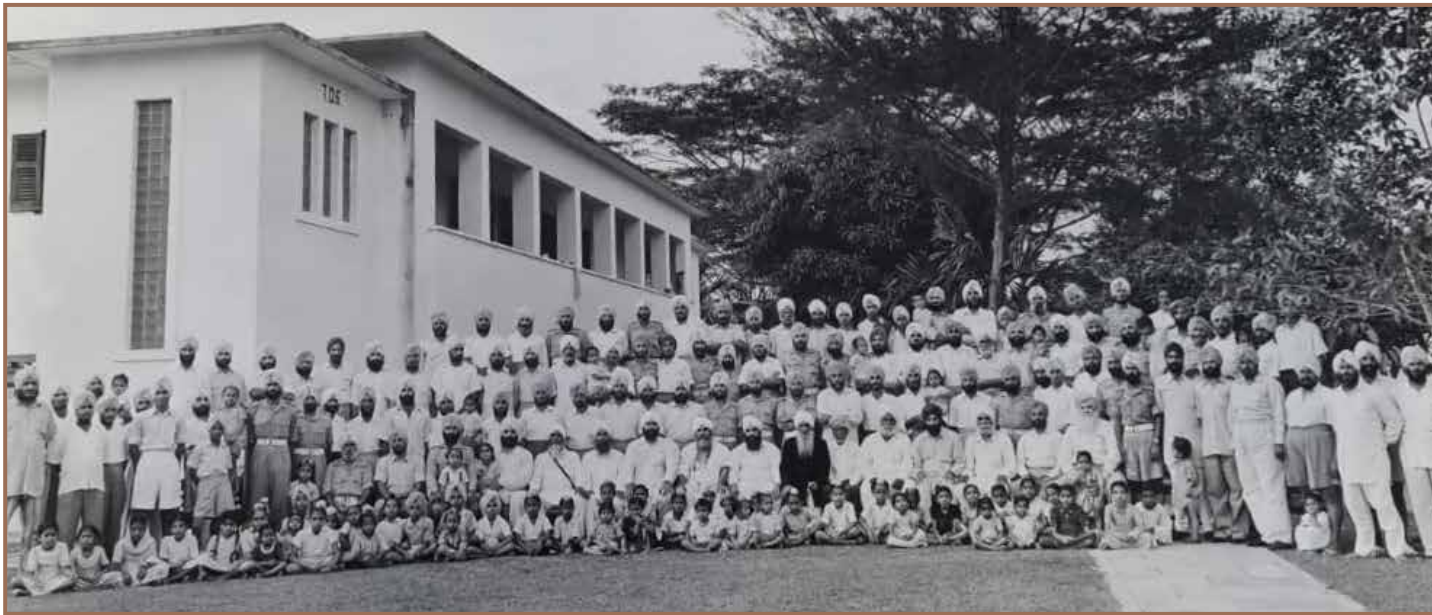


Chief Police Officer joining Police Sangat at Rimau Gurdwara during Waisakhi 1967

In terms of conduct of religious services, during the early years a few select policemen, usually Punjabi educated and ranked personnel such as the *Hawaldar*, performed the *Granthi/Giani* duties while others performed the *Kirtan*. They were exempted from their police duties on the days that they were tasked to perform the religious services at the gurdwara. One particular individual who deserves special mention is Bhai Channan Singh Dala who conducted most of the religious functions from the time of the establishment of the gurdwara till the early 1940s. He was very religious and well versed with the *Rehat Maryada*. After the Japanese occupation, the *Granthi* duties were performed by Sardar Gurnam Singh, who also taught Punjabi to the children.

It was only around the late 1940s, in line with the reorganisation of the force after the war, and the increase in families, that a full-time *Giani* was employed. He was provided with accommodation for his family as well as paid by the Police Force, with all the other entitlements as per the policemen, such as paid relief passages to India. The first priest to be appointed as *Giani* of the Police Temple was *Giani* Kehar Singh Ji, who served from around 1948 till 1955. He was a retired British Indian Army *Giani*, who was not only very well versed with Sikh Scriptures, but also excellent in Shabad *Kirtan* and *Katha*. According to Sardar Ranjit Singh, the youth of those days, including Sarban, Harpal, Sarjit and himself, to name a few, not only mastered the five

Sikh prayers and learnt to read the *Gurbani* from *Giani* Kehar Singh, but they all did well in their Senior Cambridge Punjabi examination too. *Giani* Kehar Singh was succeeded by *Giani* Pritam Singh, who served from 1956 till 1967, during the period of the temple functioning at Khalsa Crescent (Torpedo Barracks) and later at Rimau (View Road). When *Giani* Pritam Singh retired, he was succeeded by *Giani* Tara Singh, who served till the closure of the Naval Police Temple in 1972, following the disbandment of the Naval Police Force in 1971.



Group Photo taken during Sant Sohan Singh Ji's visit to Khalsa Crescent Gurdwara in 1955. Giana Ganda Singh (Sembawang Sikh Temple), *Giani* Gurdit Singh Ghali (Johor Sikh Temple) and *Giani* Kehar Singh (in black coat) of Khalsa Crescent Gurdwara also seated in front row

The President of the Naval Police Sikh Temple used to be the most senior Sikh Police Officer. Inspector Jangeer Singh Pemay (promoted to Assistant Superintendent in 1952 and the only Sikh to attain this rank in the Naval Police Force), served as President of the Police Gurdwara until his retirement in 1961, succeeded later by his brother Inspector Angad Singh Pemay. The last serving President of the Police Gurdwara was Inspector Bhagat Singh Chola Sahib.

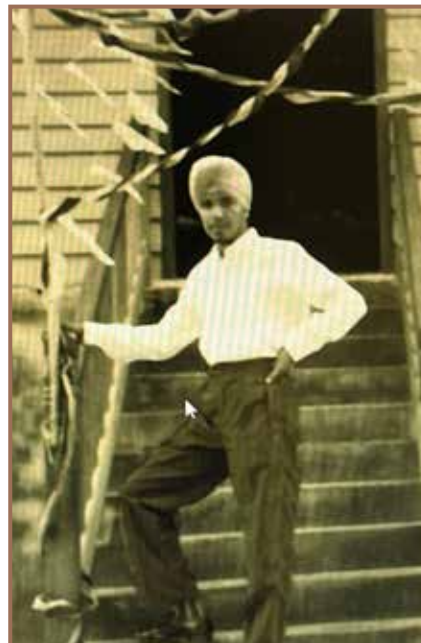
The Sikhs continued to serve in the Naval Base Police Force until its disbandment in 1971 when the British troops pulled out of Singapore. From its peak of over 500 Sikh Police personnel, about 150 Sikh families migrated to the United Kingdom, 100 families returned to India, and the rest found work in Singapore. Some joined the Installation Auxiliary Police Force (IAPF) which guarded the installations taken over by the Australian and New Zealand South East Asia Force, which lasted till around 1978 while some joined the Security Force of Sembawang Shipyard which took over the Dockyard and converted it into a commercial shipyard.





Rimau Gurdawar Farewell Gathering 31 Oct 1971

Those remaining members of the Naval Base Police who chose to remain behind in Singapore, automatically became members of Sembawang Sikh Temple. With the Police Force disbanded and the temple closed, all the equipment of the Naval Police Sikh Temple, including the large heavy metal “*pitleh*” (cooking utensils) were transferred to Sembawang Sikh Temple in early 1972. One particular item, the *Kunda Ghotna* remains in Gurdwara Sahib Yishun even today, an appropriate symbol of *langgar* preparation in the old days as opposed to modern grinders in use and hence a reminder of our origins in the 1920s.



Ajaib Singh standing on Steps of Rimau Gurdwara - 1960s



This huge Pitleh was transferred from Rimau Gurdwara to Sembawang Gurdwara in 1971

## ਭਾਗ- ੧ -੧੯੨੫ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੀ ਨਿਮਰ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤ ਨਾਲ ਜਾਣ ਪਹਿਚਾਣ 'ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇਵਲ ਬੇਸ ਪੁਲਿਸ'

ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਯੀਸ਼ੁਨ ੧੯੯੫ ਵਿੱਚ ਯੀਸ਼ੁਨ ਨਵੇਂ ਕਸਬੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ੧੯੯੨ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਈ ਇੱਕ ਛੋਟੀ ਜਿਹੀ ੩੦ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਲੀਜ਼ ਨਾਲ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ 'ਤੇ ਸਥਿਤ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਹਰ ੩੦ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਧਾਇਆ ਜਾਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਮਨਜ਼ੂਰੀ ਦੇ ਅਧੀਨ ਹੈ। ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਸ ਲੀਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਹਰ ਵਾਰੀ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ੩੦ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤੱਕ ਵਧਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਇਸ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਕੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਖ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਅੱਜ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਦੇ ਛੇ ਹੋਰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਛੋਟਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਨਵਾਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਜਾਪਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਇਸਦਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਬਸਤੀਵਾਦੀ ਅੰਤਰ-ਯੁੱਧ ਦੇ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤੱਕ ਵਾਪਸ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿੱਥੇ ੧੯੨੦ ਤੋਂ ੧੯੨੦ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਤੱਕ ਉੱਤਰੀ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਿੰਨ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਸਨ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਨੇਵਲ ਬੇਸ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ, ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ। ਨੇਵਲ ਬੇਸ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ੧੯੨੧ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੰਦ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਸਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਪਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਜਦੋਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਜ਼ਮੀਨਾਂ ਵਰਤਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਨੀਤੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਕੀਤੀ, ਬਾਕੀ ਬਚੇ ਦੋ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਇੱਕ ਨਵੇਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ, ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਯੀਸ਼ੁਨ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਯੀਸ਼ੁਨ ਦਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ੧੯੨੩ ਦੇ ਸੇਲੇਟਰ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਖੇਤਰ ਤੋਂ ਲੱਭਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾ ਨੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਯੁੱਧ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਦੇ ਉੱਤਰੀ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਹਵਾਈ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਇੱਕ ਬਹੁਤ ਵੱਡਾ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡਾ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਹ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਅੱਡੇ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਦੇ ਉੱਤਰੀ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਥਿਤ ਸਨ। ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ੧੯੨੩ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਕੁਝ ਸਮੇਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਲਗਭਗ ੧੯੨੫ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੇਲੇਟਰ ਹਵਾਈ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਇਆ। ਇਹ ਉਹ ਸਮਾਂ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਸੋਂ ਦੱਖਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਕਸਬੇ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਦੇ ਉੱਤਰੀ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਹੋਣ ਲੱਗ ਪਈ ਸੀ।

ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਦੇ ਅੱਡੇ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਲਈ ਵੱਡੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਾਮਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ, ਜਿੱਥੇ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾਤਰ ਕਾਮੇ ਦੱਖਣੀ ਭਾਰਤ ਤੋਂ ਲਿਆਂਦੇ ਗਏ, ਉੱਥੇ ਹੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਲਈ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੋਂ ਲਿਆਂਦਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਗਿਆ ਉਸਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਵੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੋਂ ਲਿਆਂਦੇ ਗਏ। ੧੯੨੦ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਲਗਭਗ ੬੦ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਨ, ਜੋ ਆਮ ਨੌਕਰੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਦੇ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਦਸਤੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਸਭ ਦੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਲੱਕੜ ਦੇ ਬਣੇ ਘਰਾਂ, ਜਿੰਨਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਛੱਤਾਂ ਨਾਰੀਅਲ ਦੇ ਸੁੱਕੇ ਪੱਤਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਣੀਆਂ ਸਨ, ਵਿੱਚ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਗਾਰਡਾਂ (੧੯੩੪ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਧੀਕ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਸਿਪਾਹੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਦਰਜਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ) ਅਤੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਠੇਕੇਦਾਰ ਮੈਸਰਜ਼ ਟੋਪਮ ਜੋਨਸ ਅਤੇ ਰੇਲਟਨ ਲਈ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਆਮ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਾਮਿਆਂ ਨੇ ੧੯੨੫ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਛੋਟਾ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ, ਜਿਸਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਨੇਵਲ ਬੇਸ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ। ੧੯੨੮/੨੯ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਕਾਮਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਾਧਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਗਾਰਡਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵੀ ਦੁੱਗਣੀ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਸਿੱਖ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਗਾਰਡਾਂ ਨੇ ੧੯੩੨ ਦੇ ਲੱਗਭਗ ਇੱਕ ਵੱਡਾ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਇੱਕ ਕਮਰੇ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ ਪੂਰੇ ਬਲਾਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ।

੧੯੩੪ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੰਦਰਗਾਹ ਦੀ ਤਿੰਨ ਚੌਥਾਈ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਵਧੀਕ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਸਿਪਾਹੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵੀ ੨੫੦ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਵੱਡਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਮਾਰਚ ੧੯੩੮ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੂਰਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਕਿੰਗ ਜਾਰਜ VI ਗ੍ਰੇਵਿੰਗ ਡੌਕ ਵੀ ਖੋਲ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਉਹ ਸਮਾਂ ਸੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਦਾ ਗਠਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਵਧੀਕ ਸਿਪਾਹੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਵੇਂ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਰਤੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਕੁੱਲ ੪੦੦ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ੨੫੦ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਵੱਧ ਸੀ। ਹੋਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਵੀ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਨੌਕਰੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਟੋਰ ਮੈਨ, ਕਲਰਕ, ਕਰੇਨ ਡਰਾਈਵਰ ਅਤੇ ਇਲੈਕਟ੍ਰੀਸ਼ੀਅਨ ਆਦਿ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹਨ। ਯੂਰੋਪੀਅਨ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਇੱਥੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਚਰਚ ਸਨ, ਪਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਲਈ ਸਿਰਫ ਇੱਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸੀ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਲੂ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਚੱਲ ਅਚੱਲ ਖਰਚੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਅਦਾ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਨ।

ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਾਧੇ ਅਤੇ ੧੯੩੯ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ ਲਈ ਪੱਕੀ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ, ੧੯੪੦ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਕੈਨਬਰਾ ਰੋਡ 'ਤੇ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਅਸਾਨੀ ਨਾਲ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਆ ਸਕਣ। ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਨਿਯਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਚਲਦੇ ਆਮ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਔਖਿਆਈ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ੧੯੩੬ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਿਸਨੂੰ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ।

ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਦੀਆਂ ਤਿੰਨ ਟੁਕੜੀਆਂ ਸਨ, ਸਿੱਖ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ-ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਅਤੇ ਮਰੀਨ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਟੁਕੜੀ ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿਰਫ ਮਲਾਈ ਸਨ। ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਟੁਕੜੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੱਗਭਗ ੫੦੦ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਨ। ਇੰਸਪੈਕਟਰ ਜੰਗੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ (ਤਰੱਕੀ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਏ ਐਸ ਪੀ ਵੀ ਬਣੇ) ਜੋ ੧੯੩੯ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਲਈ ਬਣਾਏ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਰਤੀ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ, ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਟੁਕੜੀ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ ਵਜੋਂ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਭਾਗ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸਟਰੇਟਸ ਸੈਟਲਮੈਂਟ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੇਵਾ ਨਿਭਾ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਸਨ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਟੁਕੜੀ ਦੀ ਨਫ਼ਰੀ ਜਿਆਦਾ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਉੱਚ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਵਾਲੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਸਨ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਸਿਗਰਟਨੋਸ਼ੀ 'ਤੇ ਪਾਬੰਦੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਪਹਿਲ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਤਾਇਨਾਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉਹ ਤੰਬਾਕੂਨੋਸ਼ੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ੧੯੪੦ ਦੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਵਿੱਚ, ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਵਿੱਚ ੫੩੦ ਸਿੱਖ, ੧੮੦ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ-ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਅਤੇ ੨੦ ਮਲਾਈ ਭਰਤੀ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਸਨ। ਉਦੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਉੱਤਰੀ ਸਿੰਘਪੁਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਬਾਦੀ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਵਧ ਗਈ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਸਨ। ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ੮੦ ਦੇ ਕਰੀਬ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਸਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਵੇਂ ਆਏ ਸਿੱਖ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਸਨ, ਜੋ ਕਿ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਕਿੱਤਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ। ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸੇਲੇਟਰ ਏਅਰ ਬੇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਲੂਆਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਘੱਟ ਸੀ। ਉਥੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਮੁਲਾਜ਼ਮ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਗਸ਼ਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਉੱਥੇ ਦੇ ਇੱਕੋ ਇੱਕ ਮੁੱਖ ਗੇਟ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਸੰਭਾਲਦੇ ਸਨ।

ਜੰਗ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਦੀ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਲਈ ਬਣੇ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਵੱਡਾ ਪੁਨਰਗਠਨ ਹੋਇਆ, ਇਹ ਹੈਰਾਨੀ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਇੱਕ ਪਾਸੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ੧੯੪੬ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਟਰੇਟਸ ਸੈਟਲਮੈਂਟਸ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਟੁਕੜੀ ਨੂੰ ਭੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਬਣਾ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ, ਉੱਥੇ ਹੀ ਉੱਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਟੁਕੜੀ ਦੀ ਤਾਕਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਾਧਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉੱਚ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਵਾਲੇ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਲਈ ਲੋੜੀਂਦਾ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੈਨਬਰਾ ਰੋਡ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਜੋ ਕਿ ੩੧ ਜਨਵਰੀ ੧੯੪੨ ਨੂੰ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡਾ ਖਾਲੀ ਕਰਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਬੰਦ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ, ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਸਤੰਬਰ ੧੯੪੫ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਖੋਲ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਮੁੜ ਖੋਲ੍ਹੇ ਜਾਣ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਰਫ ਤਿੰਨ ਸਾਲ ਬਾਅਦ,

ਕੈਨਬਰਾ ਰੋਡ ਸਥਿਤ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ ੧੯੪੮ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਅਟਪ ਵੈਲੀ ਰੋਡ ਵਿਖੇ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਸਥਾਨ ਆਰਮਾਮੈਂਟ ਡਿਪੂ ਅਤੇ ਉੱਥੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਦੀ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਸੀ। ਪੁਲਿਸ ਮੁਲਾਜ਼ਿਮ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਉੱਥੇ ਵੱਡੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਪਰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਥੋੜ੍ਹੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਲਈ ਉੱਥੇ ਸੀ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਆਰ.ਐੱਮ.ਐੱਨ. ਬੈਰਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਅੱਗੇ ਪੱਕੇ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ੀ ਘਰ ਉੱਤਰ ਵੱਲ ਬਣਾਏ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ। ਅੱਠ ਦੋ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲਾ ਇਮਾਰਤਾਂ ੧੯੫੦ ਦੇ ਆਸਪਾਸ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਲਈ ਬਣਾਈਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਸਨ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਬਲਾਕ ੭ ਦੀ ਹੇਠਲੀ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਲਈ ਰਾਖਵੀਂ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਨਵੀਂ ਜਗਾ ਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕਰੈਸੇਂਟ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ। ਇਹ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਲਗਭਗ ੯ ਸਾਲ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕਰੈਸੇਂਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੁਸ਼ੋਭਿਤ ਸੀ।

ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਇਸ ਖੇਤਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਯੋਜਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਮੁਲਾਜ਼ਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੋਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਬਦਲਣਾ ਪਿਆ। ੧੯੪੦ ਦੇ ਆਸ-ਪਾਸ, ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਨੇ ਬੁਕਿਤ ਰਿਮਾਉ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ 'ਰਿਮਾਉ ਦਫ਼ਤਰਾਂ' ਦਾ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਮੈਰੀਟਾਇਮ ਐਂਪਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਕਮਾਂਡ ਸੈਂਟਰ ਖੋਲਣ ਲਈ ਕੀਤਾ ਪਰ ਯੁੱਧ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ, ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਯੋਜਨਾਵਾਂ ਖਤਮ ਹੋ ਗਈਆਂ ਅਤੇ ੧੯੫੦ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਦੇ ਅਖੀਰਲੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਵਿੱਚ, ਇਸਨੂੰ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਦੀ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਦਲਣ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਸਿੱਖ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਵੱਡੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਹੋਏ, ਇਸ ਨਵੀਂ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਇੱਕ ਨਵਾਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ।

੧੯੫੯ ਵਿੱਚ, ਸਿੱਖ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਦੀ ਬਹੁਗਿਣਤੀ ਦੀ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕਰੈਸੇਂਟ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਊ ਰੋਡ ਤੇ ਨਵੀਂ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਲੇ ਜਾਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ, ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਬੁਕਿਤ ਰਿਮਾਉ ਤੇ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ, ਜਿਸਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਬਦਲ ਕੇ ਵਿਊ ਰੋਡ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ, ਜਿੱਥੇ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਕੋਲ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਤ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇਵਲ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਜੋਂ ਰਜਿਸਟਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ੧੯੭੧ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਛੱਡਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਨੂੰ ਭੰਗ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ੧੯੭੨ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੰਦ ਹੋਣ ਤੱਕ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਇਸ ਸਥਾਨ 'ਤੇ ਹੀ ਰਿਹਾ (ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਕਈ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉੱਥੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਦੀ ਇਜਾਜ਼ਤ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਸੀ) ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦਾ ਸੰਚਾਲਨ ਫਿਰ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਸੌਂਪ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਜਾਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ, ਉੱਤਰੀ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਦੋ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਹੀ ਕਾਰਜਸ਼ੀਲ ਰਹਿ ਗਏ ਸਨ।

# **CHAPTER 2**

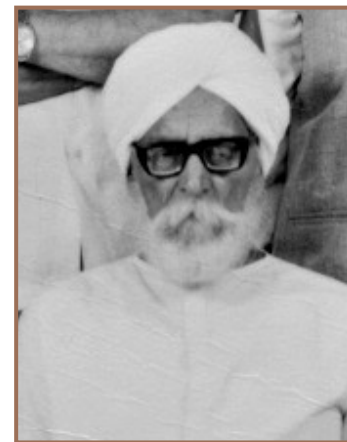
## TEMPLES OPERATING OUTSIDE THE NAVAL BASE: SEMBAWANG SIKH TEMPLE AND SIKH TEMPLE, JALAN KAYU

### SEMBAWANG SIKH TEMPLE

As discussed in Chapter 1, the size of the Sikh component of the Naval Police Force expanded in unison with the construction of the British Naval Base in the Sembawang area, northern Singapore. In addition to the uniformed Sikh policemen, there were also many Sikh civilians employed in both the bases, that is, the Naval Base in Sembawang and the Seletar Air Base in Jalan Kayu area. Their strength increased correspondingly in line with the expansion of the two bases. The Sikh civilians in the two bases were to soon build their own gurdwaras.

This chapter deals briefly with the history of the two gurdwaras, starting first with Sembawang Sikh Temple. When the construction of the Naval Base accelerated significantly in line with regional developments, especially after Japan invaded Manchuria in September 1931, there arose the need for more civilian workers. More Sikhs started joining the Naval Base, supplementing the ever-increasing number of South Indians. Initially, the civilian Sikhs were involved in excavation of the swampy area as well as construction-related activities but as more joined in, they became drivers, storemen, clerks, mechanics, electricians as well as crane operators. There were jobs in abundance in the various departments being set up in the Naval Base, namely Electrical, Construction, Supply, Civil Engineering, Service and Maintenance Departments, to name a few.

Gradually, there was also an increase in size of both the Sikh civilian population within the Naval Base as well as those living outside. Some, such as Dr Mukthiar Singh's family lived inside the Naval Base, in Block 88 and other family blocks. Several other families lived outside the Naval Base, namely that of Sardar Tara Singh and Sardar Jaswant Singh at the 15<sup>th</sup> miles, Sardars Bakshish Singh and Sardar Kishan Singh at the 14<sup>th</sup> miles area, and Sardar Hira Singh, Sardar Mohan Singh, Sardar Bhag Singh, and Sardar Darshan Singh at 13<sup>th</sup> miles area, to name a few. They all made their livelihood through various other occupations, such as watchmen and caretakers, itinerant clothes peddlers, petty entrepreneurs and small shopkeepers. A few even started running their own taxis. One particular individual, Sardar Ajit Singh Ghuat, had his own cattle farm and was supplying milk to the area. While initially they joined the Sikh police congregations at the Police Gurdwara set up at 14<sup>th</sup> miles within the Naval Base, it became difficult over time, especially given the tight security situation and access difficulties for the civilian Sikhs, and hence the need for another gurdwara.



Sardar Santa Singh



Sardar Hira Singh



Sardar Tara Singh



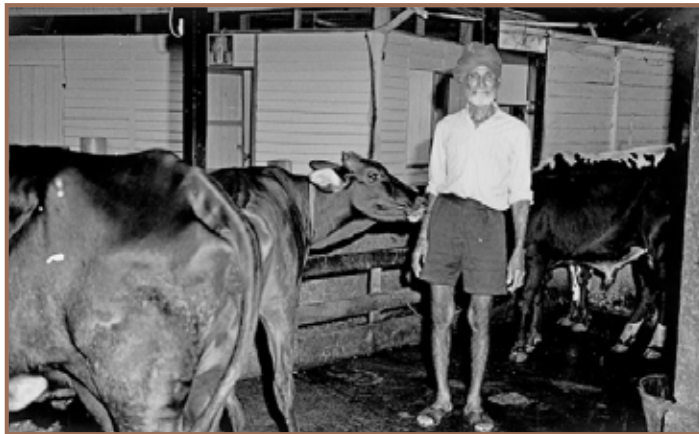
Sardar Kishan Singh



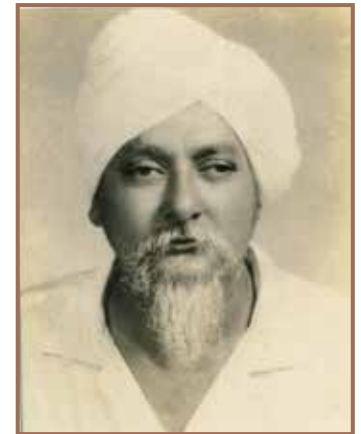
Sardar Bakshish Singh



Sardar Jaswant Singh



Sardar Ajit Singh Ghuat



Sardar Mohan Singh

A few civilians Sikhs, living within as well as outside the Naval Base, led by pioneers, such as Sardars Hira Singh Sangrur, Kishan Singh, Kajan Singh, Santa Singh and Tara Singh, decided to establish their own gurdwara outside the Naval Base in Sembawang Road in 1936. Hira Singh was an ex-serviceman and was then working as a watchman at Canberra School while Kishan Singh ran his taxi service from outside the Naval Base. Sardar Santa Singh ran his own 'Akali Trading Agency' supplying groceries and other provisions together with his son Tara Singh Hitaishi. According to Sardar Tara Singh's account in *History of Khalsa Dharmak Sabha, Singapore 1924 - 1983* which he authored, and where there is a short chapter on Sembawang Sikh Temple, this group met on a few occasions at 'Akali Trading Agency' and decided to build the gurdwara outside the Naval Base. The first President of the gurdwara was Sardar Hira Singh Sangrur, with Sardar Tara Singh Hitaishi as Secretary and Sardar Bachittar Singh Maskeen as the Treasurer. To further cement its close relationship with the Naval Police Gurdwara, they co-opted two members from the Police Gurdwara into the Committee, a practise that carried on till the closure of the Naval Police Gurdwara in 1971.

Sardar Dharam Singh and Dr Mukhtiar Singh remember quite well the developments during the period. Sardar Dharam Singh, whose father, Sardar Maghar Singh (SGT 23), served in the Naval Police Force from 1931 until 1960, was already having his own business in Sembawang area in the 1940s while Dr Mukhtiar Singh arrived with his mother to join his father in Singapore just before the outbreak of war in 1941. Sardar Dharam Singh witnessed the setting up of the temple while Dr Mukhtiar was acquainted with the developments through his father Sardar Hakam Singh, who was also quite active in the temple. According to them, the pioneering Sikhs first rented a room at a house in 1936, which had been leased from the Sembawang Rubber Estate by a Tamil gentleman. This wooden house with an attap roof was located at the fringe of the Sembawang Rubber Estate, just outside of the Naval Base around the 13th milestone area, which later came to be known as Sum Wah Chee Drive. It was a rather humble beginning with *Guru Granth Sahib Ji* being installed at the small room in the wooden house. But the following month, the owner decided to hand over the whole house to the Sikhs for a 'few hundred dollars'. Apparently, he had another property nearby and felt that the Sikhs needed it more than him for their religious needs.

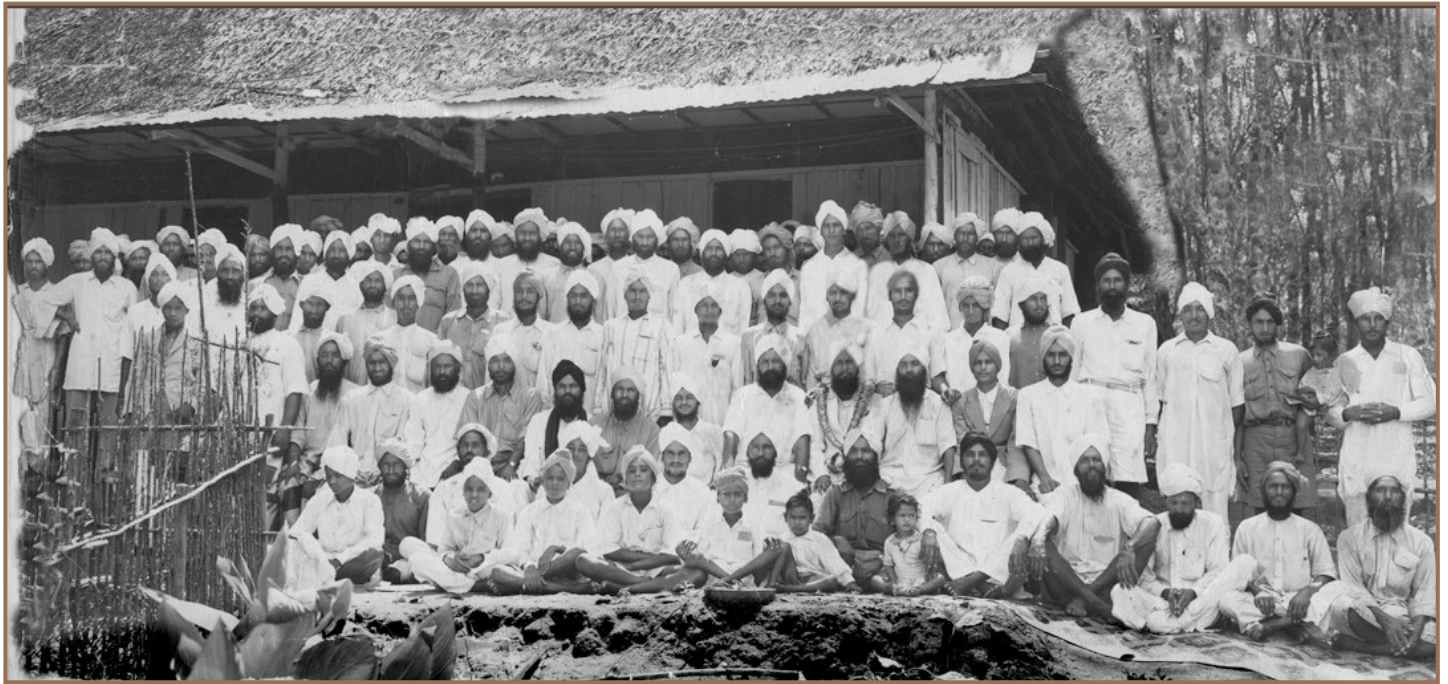


Sardar Hakam Singh

The gurdwara used to be referred to initially as the "13th Mile Naval Base Seletar Gurdwara" but was soon to be formally referred to as "Guru Khalsa Sabha". There was no electricity or water in the rubber estate area those days. A well was dug for water supply while electricity and piped water took much later to arrive. According to Dr Mukhtiar Singh, the well was dug on slightly lower ground from the gurdwara which was over two metres further up on higher ground. There was a bathroom and toilet next to the well. He has fond memories of himself and other kids being entrusted with duties of carrying the water in pails to the temple on higher ground on Sundays. In later years, someone donated the cost of installing pipes for the water but electricity was to come much later.

Children of Tara Singh "Hitaishi" and Jaswant Singh when they were living at the 14<sup>th</sup> miles area





Group Photo Of Sembawang Sangat Late 1930s

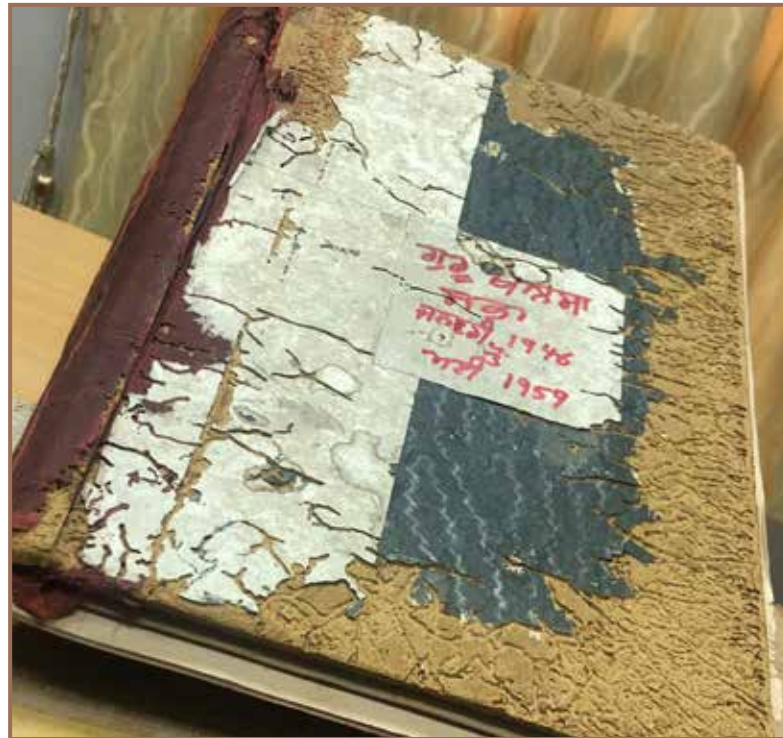


Group Photo Of Sembawang Sangat 1948

Sardar Dharam Singh also shared some interesting anecdotes of how the Gurdwara Sahib increased in land size in the initial few years. According to him, the youth of the gurdwara used to cut away some of the nearby young rubber trees on the excuse of keeping the gurdwara surroundings clean, tidy and malaria free. Many a time the Estate Manager confronted the temple President, who used to plead with the Estate Manager, giving all sorts of excuses as well as invoking the Guruji's blessings on him and his family. More often than not, the estate manager relented after the usual reprimands. After all, it was only a few small trees at the fringe of the large rubber estate, and the goodwill with the Sikh Community was more important to him than the trees. For the gurdwara, it was an increase from the few rooms under one roof to additional rooms being constructed in the rear over the years! This was until more residents settled in the area after the Japanese occupation, and the boundaries were more clearly defined by the authorities.

The membership of the temple was to increase gradually over the years in line with the ongoing developments in the Naval Base. When the major component of the Base was completed in 1938, with floating dock, dry docks, giant cranes and machine shops in place, and the Sikh police numbers increasing, there were also corresponding increases in the civilian Sikh population working in the Naval Base. By the early 1940s, there were about 50 Sikh motor-transport (MT) drivers and motor mechanics, in addition to about 40 electricians, and over dozen timekeepers and clerks, and some crane drivers and storekeepers.

As in the case of the Sikhs in the Police Force, the civilian Sikh community in Seletar-Sembawang during the early years was predominantly male. Its female population was very small due to the living conditions then, as well as the uncertainty of life in an alien environment and hence the limited migration of females. This is reflected in the membership of Sembawang Sikh Temple in the early years. According to the late 1940s Management Committee's minutes, the gurdwara comprised of 91 members, most of whom worked at the Naval Dockyard as drivers, storemen, electricians and clerks, with less than a dozen having their own business. By 1950, the membership had grown to 150 members. It is interesting to note that most of them lived in Blocks 29 and 64, which were accommodation blocks for single male workers those days. In short, the majority, as in the case of the Police, were male migrants having left their families in India.



Old Management Committee Record Book 1940s & 1950s



The founder members of the gurdwara held leadership roles during the first 10 years, including during the Japanese Occupation. Sardar Hira Singh served as its President until 1940 followed by Sardar Kishan Singh until 1943 and Sardar Santa Singh until 1946. Unlike the Police Gurdwara, which had to close during the Japanese Occupation, this gurdwara continued to be in operation throughout, albeit constraints imposed by the Japanese, with both Sardar Kishan Singh and Sardar Santa Singh playing critical roles during the Japanese occupation. They assisted the Sikh widows and family members of those killed by way of provisions and necessities as well as gave refuge to many others in need. They also worked closely with Sikh members of the Naval Police, whose gurdwara was closed but more than happy to perform *sewa* at the Sembawang Temple during the Japanese occupation period. Some of the police members were already involved in assisting the Sembawang Gurdwara throughout the war period as reflected in the 1946 MC's minutes, that during the Japanese occupation years "*Hawaldar* Sardar Harnam Singh (SGT 1) had nominated 5 members from the Police to perform *sewa* at Sembawang Gurdwara, namely *Hawaldars* Sardar Gurdial Singh s/o Naghaya Singh (SGT 14) and Sardar Sardara Singh s/o Ishar Singh (SGT 8) and Sardar Dayal Singh s/o Narain Singh (SGT 12) and Sardar Karnail Singh s/o Kehar Singh (SGT 11), and Naik Sardar Gurdial Singh s/o Wariam Singh (CPL 30)". It was in all respects a collective effort of both gurdwaras working together to serve the *Sangat* during such difficult times.

Sardar Dr Mukhtiar Singh and Educationist Sarban Singh have vivid memories of the Japanese period. According to them, while air-raid preparations were in place in the Naval Base area where air raid shelters had been constructed in several places, other places were not safe. They remember the Japanese bombings that took place in December 1941 where many were left dead in the city area. In the north, the Seletar Air Base area was heavily bombed because there were British planes there but the Naval Base area was not touched much other than the RN W/T Station Suara telecommunication installation. Dr Mukhtiar recollects an occasion when the air raid was sounded on a Sunday when the *Sangat* was at the Sembawang Sikh Temple and how the elders pushed him and three other children under the *Guru Granth Sahib* Palki. Fortunately, the gurdwara was spared as the bombing was at the nearby Seletar Air Base. During the first few weeks of the Japanese invasion, it was a rather dangerous period and a few Sikh families living in the Naval Base, including Dr Mukhtiar's as well as other families living at 15<sup>th</sup> miles, namely that of Tara Singh and Jaswant Singh, took refuge at a rubber estate in Jalan Kayu, where the 'Sikh Brothers' from city opened up their houses to them. Several other families, including Sardar Sarban Singh's family took refuge with relatives in Paya Lebar. According to Dr Mukhtiar, there was a British Sikh military unit deployed nearby in the Jalan Kayu area but they evacuated soon after, leaving behind rations of flour, sugar and ghee, which came handy to the families hiding there.



Gurdial Singh (SGT 14)

Times were tough for all races during the Japanese occupation period even though the Chinese got the worst treatment. Food, medicine and clothing were scarce and black marketing was rampant. Many had to grow their own food to survive. Some Sikhs got back their old jobs while others took new jobs that were created. Dr Mukhtiar's father, Sardar Hakam Singh went back to

operating the largest 30-ton crane in the dockyard, a job that he held before the fall of Singapore and later went back to doing after the return of the British. Sardar Hakam Singh's work was given due recognition, with numerous letters of commendation from Captains of British Warships that he worked with, and the biggest recognition of all in 1953, when he was awarded the QEII Coronation Medal. He retired in 1968.

Dr Mukhtiar Singh also remembers how the Gurdwara Management Committee (MC), despite its limitations in manpower, kept the gurdwara going. As mentioned earlier, Santa Singh, assisted by his elder son, Sardar Tara Singh (while younger son Sardar Satwant Singh Ajit joined the Indian National Army to fight in Rangoon), as well as taxi owner Sardar Kishan Singh, played key roles in keeping the *Sangat* together during the difficult period, assisting those in need as well as ensuring that *degh* and *langgar* continued to be served on Sundays. After the war ended, with almost everyone concentrating on rebuilding their lives, the gurdwara was not forgotten. With Sardars Santa Singh and Kishan Singh assisting some families, (especially the widows and children) in their repatriation to India, several members of the *Sangat* (albeit a *Sangat* already limited in numbers), namely Sardars Makhan Singh, Mukhand Singh, Pritam Singh, Bhag Singh, Baksish Singh Sarmukh Singh, Nahar Singh, Hari Singh, Narain Singh, Puran Singh and Dr Mukhtiar's father Hakam Singh were all roped in to help in the gurdwara.

With the living conditions improving after the war, the *Sangat* again concentrated their efforts on the Gurdwara. Among others appointed to the Management Committee, Sardar Hakam Singh was appointed as the Treasurer. According to Dr Mukhtiar, his father had no idea of keeping accounts, and that he had to assist in keeping the accounts, though it was simple accounting with the annual *chanda* being a dollar per member and the usual small *golak* donations. But every cent received had to be accounted for, especially given the difficult operating circumstances then. Being a wooden building, it was inevitable that the building had to be upgraded. For a start, several minor refurbishments were undertaken after the war, namely in 1947 and 1951. But a major retrofit was undertaken in 1953, when it was rebuilt with plank walls sitting on a three feet concrete wall with a zinc roof, and able to accommodate a *Sangat* of 200 persons. It was further extended in 1957 when more rooms were constructed at the rear and side as well as the whole compound fenced up. According to the Management Committee minutes, "a Building Committee was formed in 1957, comprising of Sardars Bhag Singh, Hira Singh, Baksish Singh, Kishan Singh, Hakam Singh, Resham Singh and Satwant Singh; and all members were required to donate a week's pay or more, if possible, for the works". The response was very good. These rooms were very useful, serving as accommodation to those in need as well as a library and classrooms for Punjabi classes. Special mention needs to be made



Sembawang Sikh Temple

of Sardar Bhag Singh, who given his construction expertise, was personally involved in renovating the temple with a few other workers. Immediately after completing the major renovation and alteration works at the Sembawang Sikh Temple in 1958, Sardar Bhag Singh was entrusted with building the brand new Police Rimau Temple, which was completed in 1959.

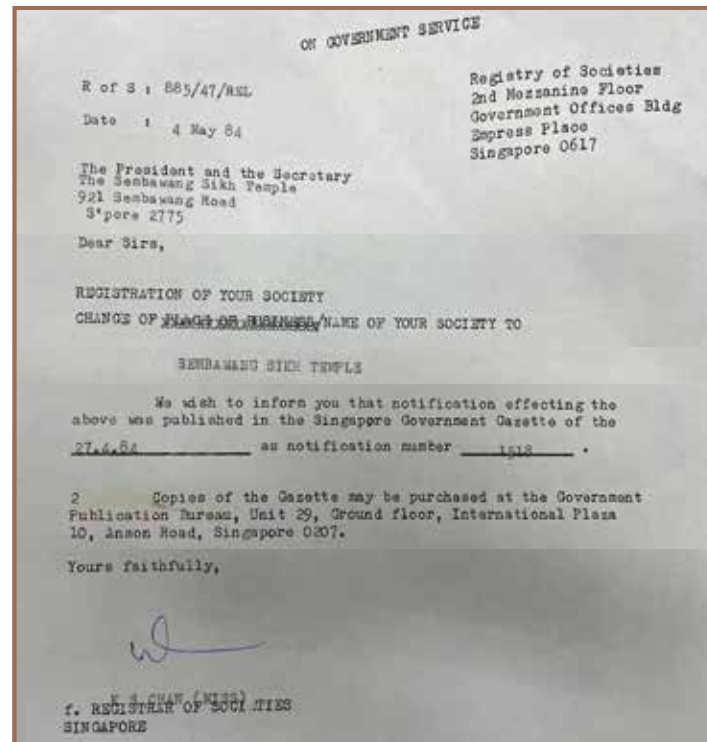


Sembawang Gurdwara Entrance



Sembawang Gurdwara Darbar Sahib

From the time of its establishment in 1936 and the closure of the Naval Police Gurdwara in 1971, the two gurdwaras functioned in solidarity with each other, and celebrated all the auspicious Sikh functions together. In the words of Sardar Dharam Singh, they were no different from two close siblings and considered each other as one and the same. Following approval from the Registrar of Societies, the gurdwara was officially registered as Gurdwara Guru Khalsa Sahib in 1973 and later in April 1984, renamed as Sembawang Sikh Temple, as per Government Gazette Notification No 1518 dated 27 April 1984. Being the only gurdwara in the north, it not only served the Sikhs in Sembawang, but also the Sikhs who moved into the newly built towns of Ang Mo Kio, Marsiling and Yishun.



April 1984 - Change of Name of Gurdwara from Guru Khalsa Sabha to Sembawang Sikh Temple



Group photo of Farewell of Founder Member and President of Gurdwara Guru Khalsa Sabha Sardar Hira Singh in early 1960s. His son Mehervan Singh also with garland.



Sembawang Group Photo 1964

Sembawang Sikh Temple worked closely with other Sikh Institutions over the years. In 1963, the Singapore Sikh community was among the forefront of minority communities in Singapore in expressing support for the proposed merger between Singapore and Malaya. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew was invited to a function at the Central Sikh Temple (CST) in 1963 where a donation (including the gurdwara's contribution) was made to the National Patriotic Fund. A special float was prepared for the National Day Procession that year where Sembawang's Sikhs were actively involved. Subsequently, when the Singapore Sikh Community donated an ambulance to Singapore General Hospital in 1964, and another to Thomson Road General Hospital in 1967, Sembawang Sikh Temple also contributed towards the cost. Again in 1984, when a new hearse was required by the Sikh Community, Sembawang Sikh Temple contributed towards the purchase. *Sarbat Da Bhalla* has always been the basic operating principle of the Sembawang *Sangat*.



1963 Malaysia Day Celebration Float Of Singapore Sikh Community



1963 Malaysia Day Celebration Float- Sardar Dharam Singh Won Best Dressed Award



Isteri Sat Sangh of Sembawang Sikh Temple in 1960s



Sembawang Gurdwara Group Photo - 1970s



The *Granthis* (or *Gianis* as they were also referred to) of Sembawang Sikh Temple undoubtedly deserve special mention. The first full time *Granthi* of the gurdwara was Baba Ganda Singh, who came from Taiping Malaysia. He was a very learned *Giani* who spiritually influenced the lives of many. He served from around the late 1930s till around 1959. His children Sardars Chattar Singh, Bhagat Singh, Hari Singh and Amar Singh all played active roles in Sembawang Sikh Temple Management Committees. Sardar Chattar Singh not only served actively in the MCs but also undertook *path* duties during *Akhand Paths* as well as performed *Kirtan* services at gurdwara. Sardar Bhagat Singh served in the Naval Police Force and was the last President of Naval Police Gurdwara at the time of the withdrawal of the British forces in 1971. Baba Ganda Singh was such a spiritual soul that he passed on while performing prayers at Patna Sahib in Bihar in 1967. Baba Ganda Singh was succeeded by another prominent *Giani* Gurdial Singh Ji, and subsequently many others, as covered separately in Chapter 4.

Among the early Presidents of the gurdwara were Sardar Hira Singh, the founder-President who served from 1936 till 1940, Sardar Kishan Singh till 1943, and Sardar Santa Singh till 1946. Among the later Presidents were Satwant Singh, Darshan Singh, CPT (Retired) Jageer Singh, Sukhdew Singh Bhaloor and LTC (Retd) Mejar Singh Gill, who was the last serving President of Sembawang Sikh Temple. Sembawang Sikh Temple continued to function until the early 1990s when the land was acquired by the Government and it then amalgamated with Jalan Kayu Temple to form Gurdwara Sahib Yishun.



Group Photo Sembawang Members in 1970s with a visiting guest



Group Photo Sembawang Members in 1980s



Sembawang Ladies at Entrance Of Darbar Hall



Group Photo Sembawang Members in 1980s



Sangat In Darbar Hall



Sangat In Darbar Hall



Young Ladies Serving Langgar



Langgar Area of Sembawang Sikh Temple



Langgar Area of Sembawang Sikh Temple



Gurdwara Cleaning In Progress

## SIKH TEMPLE, JALAN KAYU (GURDWARA SAHIB JALAN KAYU)

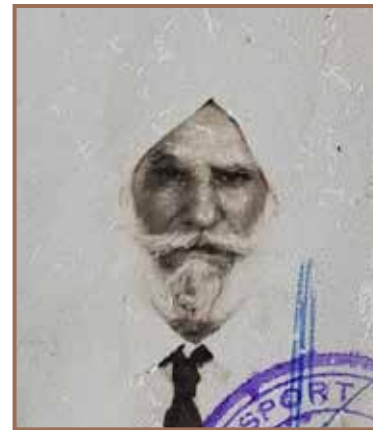
The Seletar Air Base was constructed just around the time as the Naval Base, beginning in the late 1920s. The Jalan Kayu Sikh Temple traces its origins to the Sikh community which came to the area to serve in the Royal Air Force (RAF) Seletar Auxiliary Police Force as well as in other civilian occupations there, albeit in much smaller numbers than in the Naval Base. Just as in the case of the Naval Police Sikhs, it was the Seletar Police Sikhs who set up a RAF Police Gurdwara in their barracks within the Air Base circa 1928. The Sikh civilians, who worked in the Air Base, also worshipped here. The most senior among them was *Hawaladar* Sardar Gurdip Singh Ji. Among the other pioneers there were Sardars Hari Singh, Puran Singh and 'Major' Mehar Singh. Sardar Mehar Singh had served in the British Army before joining the Seletar Police. He used to be referred to as 'Major' Mehar Singh, and by virtue of his age and seniority also assisted in performing the *Granthi* duties. According to some accounts, the gurdwara was located not too far from the main Guardroom where the police barracks were located then.



RAF Seletar Sikh Policeman on Duty



Jalan Kayu Sikhs in 1930s



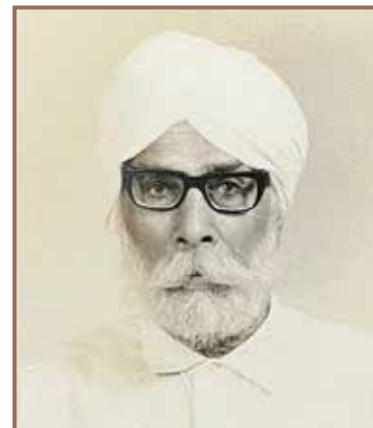
Sardar Hari Singh (founder member)



Sardar Puran Singh (founder member)



Sardar "Major" Mehar Singh (founder member)



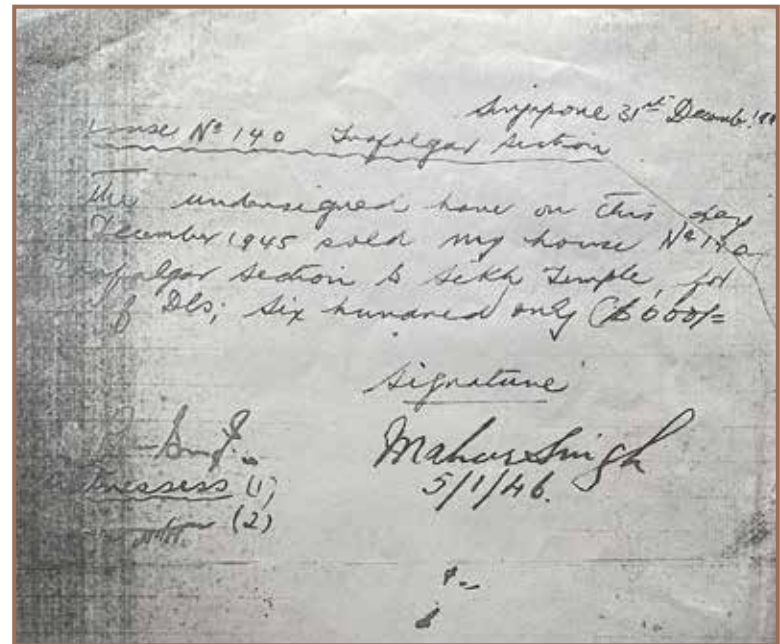
Sardar Bood Singh (founder member)

During Second World War, the gurdwara closed down after the British abandoned the Base when the Japanese took over Johore and brought their artillery in range of the airfield. After the war, in January 1946, the Auxiliary Police Force was disbanded. The first thing that the Sikhs in Seletar/Jalan Kayu area did was to set up a new gurdwara in the area. The founder members of Sikh Temple, Jalan Kayu, as became its official name, were Sardars Hari Singh, Puran Singh, Bood Singh, 'Major' Mehar Singh and Kehar Singh. According to Sardar Gurcharan Singh Ji (owner of Jaggi's North Indian Cuisine Restaurant Restaurant), son of Sardar Puran Singh Ji, it was Sardar Kehar Singh (brother of Mehar Singh), who offered one of his houses to serve as a gurdwara. The founder members decided to pay him a 'token sum of \$600' to take over the property and make it into a community gurdwara. Under the leadership of Sardars Hari Singh, Puran Singh and 'Major' Mehar Singh Ji, the house was subsequently renovated, with

donations collected from amongst the Sikhs and Hindus living there, including one Pandit Amar Chand, who was also active in performing *sewa* at the gurdwara. The Sikh Temple, Jalan Kayu, was located at 140 Trafalgar Section, as the area was referred to in the 1940s/50s, which was later renamed as 140, Jalan Kayu in the 1960s and finally as 39, Lorong Ranting, Jalan Kayu in the 1970s as per some of the available records, though the physical location remained the same throughout.

Sardar Hari Singh is the father of Sardars Joginder Singh and Gurcharan Singh, who are both active members of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun today. 'Major' Mehar Singh's family legacy also remains connected to Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, as one of his daughters, Bibi Pritam Kaur was married to a Naval Base Police Force member, Sardar Chand Singh (PC 206) and their children, namely Bibi Gulwant Kaur and Sardar Daljit Singh, continue to be actively involved in Gurdwara Sahib Yishun even today. They have fond memories of their childhood days spent at the gurdwara. According to Gulwant Kaur, the gurdwara was located within vicinity of several other houses in the kampong and "there were lots of places for us children to run around the area". In terms of membership, the Jalan Kayu Gurdwara had a very small membership base, never more than about 30 members. It is remarkable that it was kept running with such a small *Sangat*. For funding, it was able to meet its needs through rental of 6 rooms that were added on over the years to the original house belonging to Sardar Kehar Singh Ji.

Sardar Hari Singh led the gurdwara for the first few years, after which Sardar Puran served as President until the late 1970s. Other than the founder members, there were a few other prominent personalities who were involved in subsequent years. One was Sardar Veer Singh Chugha Kalan, who came to Singapore as a soldier in the British Army in 1939 at the age of 18. He survived the war and joined the Telecommunications Installation in Yio Chu Kang, and was to play an active role in the gurdwara, including serving as Treasurer and later as the President in the 1980s. Among the younger generation, Sardars Joginder Singh and Sardar



Sale Agreement Jalan Kayu Gurdwara



Sardar Veer Singh Malhi  
Chugha Kalan



Sardar Ajmer Singh  
son of Jai Singh

Didar Singh also served in the Management Committee for several years, including as Secretaries. There was also Sardar Ajmer Singh s/o Jai Singh who came to Singapore at the age of 19 just before the outbreak of war in 1942. After the war, he joined RAF Seletar as a civilian in the Base Logistics Department, where he served until their withdrawal in 1971. He was an active member of Gurdwara Sahib Jalan Kayu. His daughter, Bibi Jagdev Kaur married Sardar Jasbeer Singh from Sembawang and they have remained active members of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, including serving in the Management Committees. There were also several others, including Sardar Mah Singh, Inspector Hardial Singh, ASP Ranjit Singh, DSP Harbans Singh and LTC Albel Singh, to name a few, who moved to the new estate

nearby at Yio Chu Kang, and also played an active part in the temple affairs. Sardars Hardial Singh and Ranjit Singh served as Presidents of the gurdwara in the 1980s and early 1990s, with the last serving President being Sardar Mah Singh. As in the case of Sembawang Sikh Temple, Gurdwara Sahib Jalan Kayu continued to function until the early 1990s when the land was acquired by the Government and it was amalgamated with Sembawang Sikh Temple to form Gurdwara Sahib Yishun.



Entrance To Jalan Kayu Gurdwara



Darbar Sahib Jalan Kayu Gurdwara



Giani Hari Singh With Gurcharan Singh on Tabla



Jalan Kayu Gurdwara Sangat



Giani Hari Singh



Giani Hari Singh With Gurcharan Singh on Tabla

## ਭਾਗ ੨ – ਨੇਵਲ ਬੇਸ ਦੇ ਬਾਹਰ ਸਥਿਤ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ: ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ

### ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ

ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਭਾਗ ੧ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਰਚਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ, ਉੱਤਰੀ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਦੇ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਬਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੋਇਆ। ਵਰਦੀਧਾਰੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ, ਦੋਵਾਂ ਥਾਵਾਂ, ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੇਲੇਟਰ ਹਵਾਈ ਅੱਡੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਆਮ ਸਿੱਖ ਵੀ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਦੋਹਾਂ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਧਦੀ ਗਈ। ਦੋਵਾਂ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਛੇਤੀ ਹੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਬਣਾਉਣੇ ਵੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਸਨ।

੧੯੩੬ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਹੀਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੰਗਰੂਰ, ਕਿਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ, ਕਾਜਨ ਸਿੰਘ, ਸੰਤਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਰਗੇ ਮੋਢੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਹਰ ਰਹਿ ਰਹੇ ਕੁਝ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਇੱਕ ਹੋਰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਰੋਡ ਤੇ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਆ ਕਾਰਨਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਨੇਵਲ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਔਖਿਆਈ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਹੀਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਇੱਕ ਸਾਬਕਾ ਫੌਜੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਕੈਨਬਰਾ ਸਕੂਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਚੌਕੀਦਾਰ ਵਜੋਂ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਕਿਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇਵਲ ਬੇਸ ਦੇ ਬਾਹਰੋਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਟੈਕਸੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਚਲਾਉਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਸਰਦਾਰ ਸੰਤਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਪਣੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਹਿਤੈਸ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਕਰਿਆਨੇ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਸਮਾਨ ਦੀ ਸਪਲਾਈ ਆਪਣੀ 'ਅਕਾਲੀ ਟਰੇਡਿੰਗ ਏਜੰਸੀ' ਤੋਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਸਰਦਾਰ ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ੧੯੨੪-੧੯੮੩ ਤੱਕ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਧਾਰਮਕ ਸਭਾ, ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਈ ਵਾਰੀ 'ਅਕਾਲੀ ਟਰੇਡਿੰਗ ਏਜੰਸੀ' ਵਿਖੇ ਮਿਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਦੇ ਬਾਹਰ ਵੀ ਇੱਕ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਹੀਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੰਗਰੂਰ ਸਨ, ਸਰਦਾਰ ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਹਿਤੈਸ਼ੀ ਸਕੱਤਰ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਬਚਿੱਤਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਸਕੀਨ ਖਜ਼ਾਨਚੀ ਸਨ। ਨੇਵਲ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਜ਼ਦੀਕੀ ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਦੋ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕੀਤਾ, ਜੋ ਕਿ ੧੯੭੧ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੇਵਲ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਬੰਦ ਹੋਣ ਤੱਕ ਜਾਰੀ ਰਿਹਾ।

ਇਹਨਾਂ ਮੋਢੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ੧੯੩੬ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਘਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਕਮਰਾ ਕਿਰਾਏ 'ਤੇ ਲਿਆ, ਜੋ ਕਿ ਇੱਕ ਤਾਮਿਲ ਸੱਜਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਰਬੜ ਅਸਟੇਟ ਤੋਂ ਕਿਰਾਏ 'ਤੇ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਨਾਰੀਅਲ ਦੇ ਸੁੱਕੇ ਪੱਤਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਛੱਤ ਵਾਲਾ ਇਹ ਲੱਕੜ ਦਾ ਘਰ ੧੩ਵੇਂ ਮੀਲ ਪੱਥਰ ਖੇਤਰ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਦੇ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਬਾਹਰ, ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਰਬੜ ਅਸਟੇਟ ਦੇ ਇੱਕ ਪਾਸੇ ਸਥਿਤ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸਨੂੰ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੁਮ ਵਾਹ ਚੀ ਡਰਾਈਵ ਵਜੋਂ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਜਾਣ ਲੱਗਾ। ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਵਿੱਚ "੧੩ਵੇਂ ਮੀਲ ਨੇਵਲ ਬੇਸ ਸੇਲੇਟਰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ" ਵਜੋਂ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਜਲਦੀ ਹੀ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਰਸਮੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ "ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਭਾ" ਵਜੋਂ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਜਾਣ ਲੱਗਾ।

ਨੇਵਲ ਬੇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਚੱਲ ਰਹੇ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਦੇ ਵਧਣ ਨਾਲ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵੀ ਵਧਣ ਲੱਗੀ। ਜਦੋਂ ਅੱਡੇ ਦਾ ਵੱਡਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ੧੯੩੮ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੂਰਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ, ਤਾਂ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਧਦੀ ਗਈ, ਉੱਥੇ ਹੀ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਨੌਕਰੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਆਮ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੋਇਆ। ੧੯੪੦ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਦੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਤੱਕ, ਲਗਭਗ ੪੦ ਇਲੈਕਟ੍ਰੀਸ਼ੀਅਨ, ਇੱਕ ਦਰਜਨ ਟਾਈਮਕੀਪਰ ਅਤੇ ਕਲਰਕ, ਅਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਸਟੋਰਕੀਪਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ, ਲਗਭਗ ੫੦ ਸਿੱਖ ਮੋਟਰ-ਟਰਾਂਸਪੋਰਟ (ਠ) ਡਰਾਈਵਰ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਟਰ ਮਕੈਨਿਕ ਸਨ। ੧੯੪੦ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਦੇ ਅੰਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੇ ਮਿੰਟਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ, ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ੯੧ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਸਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਨੇਵਲ ਡੋਕਯਾਰਡ ਵਿੱਚ ਡਰਾਈਵਰ, ਸਟੋਰਮੈਨ,



ਇਲੈਕਟ੍ਰੀਸ਼ੀਅਨ ਅਤੇ ਕਲਰਕ ਵਜੋਂ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਰਜਨ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਘੱਟ ਲੋਕ ਆਪਣਾ ਕਾਰੋਬਾਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ੧੯੫੦ ਤੱਕ, ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਧ ਕੇ ੧੫੦ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਜਾਣਨਾ ਦਿਲਚਸਪ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾਤਰ ਬਲਾਕ ੨੯ ਅਤੇ ੬੪ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ, ਜੋ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕਲੇ ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਕਾਮਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ ਸੀ। ਉਦਾਹਰਨ ਲਈ, ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਹੁਗਿਣਤੀ ਪੁਰਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਸੀ ਸਨ ਜੋ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਇੱਥੇ ਆਏ ਸਨ।

ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਸੰਸਥਾਪਕ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ੧੦ ਸਾਲ, ਜਾਪਾਨੀ ਕਬਜ਼ੇ ਦੇ ਵਕਤ, ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਸੰਭਾਲਿਆ। ਜਾਪਾਨੀ ਕਬਜ਼ੇ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਸਭ ਨੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਔਖਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਵੇਖਿਆ, ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਚੀਨੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਮਾੜਾ ਸਲੂਕ ਹੋਇਆ। ਭੋਜਨ, ਦਵਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਕੱਪੜੇ ਦੀ ਘਾਟ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਲਾਬਾਜ਼ਾਰੀ ਜ਼ੋਰਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਸੀ। ਕਈਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਿਉਂਦੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਲਈ ਆਪਣਾ ਭੋਜਨ ਆਪ ਉਗਾਉਣਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਕੁਝ ਸਿੱਖ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਪੁਰਾਣੀਆਂ ਨੌਕਰੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਪਰਤ ਗਏ ਸਨ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਕਈਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਵੀਆਂ ਨੌਕਰੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ।

ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੀ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਲੱਕੜ ਦੀ ਹੋਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਉਸਦਾ ਨਵੀਨੀਕਰਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਸੀ। ਯੁੱਧ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ, ੧੯੪੭ ਅਤੇ ੧੯੫੧ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਈ ਛੋਟੇ-ਮੋਟੇ ਮੁਰੰਮਤ ਦੇ ਕੰਮ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਵੱਡੀ ਮੁਰੰਮਤ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ੧੯੫੩ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ, ਜਦੋਂ ਤਿੰਨ ਫੁੱਟ ਕੰਕਰੀਟ ਦੀਆਂ ਨੀਹਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਲੱਕੜ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੰਧਾਂ ਉਸਾਰ ਕੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਕ ਦੀ ਛੱਤ ਪਾਈ ਗਈ ਅਤੇ ਜਿੱਥੇ ੨੦੦ ਦੇ ਕਰੀਬ ਸੰਗਤ ਬੈਠ ਸਕਦੀ ਸੀ। ਫਿਰ ੧੯੫੭ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਕਮਰੇ ਉਸਾਰੇ ਗਏ ਅਤੇ ਚਾਰਦਵਾਰੀ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਸੀ।

੧੯੩੬ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਅਤੇ ੧੯੭੧ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੇਵਲ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਬੰਦ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਤੱਕ, ਦੋਵੇਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਮੇਟੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਗਤ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਸ਼ੁੱਭ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਮਨਾਉਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਸਰਦਾਰ ਧਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ, ਦੋਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਖ ਕਰਕੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਇੱਕ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਸੀ। ਰਜਿਸਟਰਾਰ ਆਫ਼ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀਜ਼ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨਗੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ, ੧੯੭੩ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ 'ਗੁਰੂ ਖ਼ਾਲਸਾ ਸਭਾ' ਵਜੋਂ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਤ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਦਰਜ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਅਪ੍ਰੈਲ ੧੯੮੪ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸਦਾ ਨਾਮ ਬਦਲ ਕੇ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ, ਜਿਸਦਾ ਵੇਰਵਾ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਗਜ਼ਟ ਨੋਟੀਫਿਕੇਸ਼ਨ ਨੰਬਰ ੧੫੧੮ ਮਿਤੀ ੨੭ ਅਪ੍ਰੈਲ ੧੯੮੪ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਰਜ ਹੈ। ਉੱਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਇੱਕ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਸਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਨਵੇਂ ਬਣੇ ਕਸਬਿਆਂ ਅੰਗ ਮੇ ਕੀਓ, ਮਾਰਸਲਿੰਗ ਅਤੇ ਯੀਸੂਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਆ ਕੇ ਵਸਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਵੀ ਇੱਥੇ ਆਉਣ ਲੱਗ ਪਏ ਸਨ।

ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਹੀਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ, ਬਾਨੀ-ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਸਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ੧੯੩੬ ਤੋਂ ੧੯੪੦ ਤੱਕ ਸੇਵਾ ਕੀਤੀ, ਸਰਦਾਰ ਕਿਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ੧੯੪੩ ਤੱਕ, ਅਤੇ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਸੰਤਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ੧੯੪੬ ਤੱਕ ਸੇਵਾ ਕੀਤੀ। ਬਾਅਦ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਤਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ, ਕੈਪਟਨ(ਸੇਵਾਮੁਕਤ) ਜਗੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ, ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਲੂਰ ਅਤੇ ਲੈਫਟੀਨੈਂਟ ਕਰਨਲ(ਸੇਵਾਮੁਕਤ) ਮੇਜਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਗਿੱਲ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਹਨ, ਜੋ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਆਖਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਸਨ। ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ੧੯੯੦ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਦੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਤੱਕ ਜਾਰੀ ਰਿਹਾ। ਜਦੋਂ ਇਸਦੀ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਵਾਪਸ ਲੈ ਲਈ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਾ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਯੀਸੂਨ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ।

## ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ

ਸੇਲੇਟਰ ਹਵਾਈ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਲਗਭਗ ਉਸੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਜਦੋਂ ੧੯੨੦ ਦੇ ਅਖੀਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਤ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਰਾਇਲ ਹਵਾਈ ਸੈਨਾ ਬਲ (ਅਢ) ਸੇਲੇਟਰ ਐਕਜ਼ੀਲਰੀ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਫੋਰਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ

ਉੱਥੇ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਆਮ ਕਿੱਤਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਏ ਸਨ, ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਜਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਘੱਟ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵੀ ੧੯੨੮ ਵਿੱਚ ਹਵਾਈ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਬੈਰਕਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਆਰਏਐਫ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕੀਤਾ। ਹਵਾਈ ਸੈਨਾ ਅੱਡੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਆਮ ਸਿੱਖ ਵੀ ਇੱਥੇ ਨਤਮਸਤਕ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਮੋਡੀ ਹੌਲਦਾਰ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਗੁਰਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਨ। ਹੋਰ ਮੋਢੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਮੇਜਰ ਮੇਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਨ। ਸਰਦਾਰ ਮੇਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਸੇਲਟਰ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਭਰਤੀ ਹੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਫੌਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਨੌਕਰੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ 'ਮੇਜਰ' ਮੇਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ, ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਗੁੰਥੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਫਰਜ਼ ਵੀ ਨਿਭਾਉਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਕੁਝ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਹ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਗਾਰਡਰੂਮ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਸਥਿਤ ਸੀ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬੈਰਕਾਂ ਸਨ। ਦੂਜੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਯੁੱਧ ਦੇ ਦੌਰਾਨ, ਜਦੋਂ ਜਾਪਾਨੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਜੌਹਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਕਬਜ਼ਾ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਇਲਾਕਾ ਜਪਾਨੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਤੋਪਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਾਰ ਹੇਠ ਆਉਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਅੱਡਾ ਛੱਡਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਬੰਦ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ।

ਯੁੱਧ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ, ਜਨਵਰੀ ੧੯੪੬ ਵਿਚ, ਸਹਾਇਕ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਬਲ ਨੂੰ ਭੰਗ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸੇਲੇਤਾਰ/ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ ਦੇ ਸੰਸਥਾਪਕਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ, ਬੂਦ ਸਿੰਘ, ਮੇਜਰ ਮੇਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਕੇਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਨ। ਸਰਦਾਰ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਗੁਰਚਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ (ਜੱਗੀ ਰੈਸਟੋਰੈਂਟ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਕ) ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ, ਇਹ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਕੇਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ (ਮੇਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਭਰਾ) ਸਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਇੱਕ ਘਰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਦੇਣ ਦੀ ਪੇਸ਼ਕਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ। ਸੰਸਥਾਪਕ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਜਾਇਦਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਕੌਮੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਸਿਰਫ ੬੦੦ ਡਾਲਰ ਦੀ ਨਾ ਮਾਤਰ ਰਕਮ ਅਦਾ ਕੀਤੀ। ਸਰਦਾਰ ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ 'ਮੇਜਰ' ਮੇਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਹੇਠ, ਇਸ ਘਰ ਦੀ ਮੁਰੰਮਤ ਉਸ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਕਰਵਾਈ ਗਈ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਅਮਰ ਚੰਦ ਵੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਸਰਗਰਮ ਰਹੇ। ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ, ੧੯੪੦ ਤੋਂ ੫੦ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਵਿੱਚ ੧੪੦ ਟ੍ਰੈਫਲਗਰ ਸੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਥਿਤ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਬਦਲ ਕੇ ੧੯੬੦ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਵਿੱਚ ੧੪੦ ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ ਅਤੇ ਅਖੀਰ ੧੯੭੦ ਵਿੱਚ ੩੯ ਲੋਰੇਂਗ ਰੈਟਿੰਗ, ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ, ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ ਮੁੱਖ ਸਥਾਨ ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਇੱਕੋ ਹੀ ਸੀ।

ਸਰਦਾਰ ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਕੁਝ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਲਈ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਕੀਤੀ, ਜਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਪੂਰਨ ਨੇ ੧੯੭੦ ਦੇ ਅਖੀਰ ਤੱਕ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਵਜੋਂ ਸੇਵਾ ਕੀਤੀ। ਸੰਸਥਾਪਕ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ, ਕੁਝ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਸ਼ਖਸੀਅਤਾਂ ਵੀ ਸਨ ਜਿੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਬਾਅਦ ਦੇ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੇਵਾ ਨਿਭਾਈ। ਸਰਦਾਰ ਹਰਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ੧੯੮੦ ਅਤੇ ੧੯੯੦ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਦੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਰਹੇ, ਜਿੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਖਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਮਹਾਂ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਨ। ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ, ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ ਵੀ ੧੯੯੦ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਦੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਤੱਕ ਜਾਰੀ ਰਿਹਾ ਜਦੋਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਵਾਪਸ ਲੈ ਲਈ ਗਈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਾ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਯੀਸ਼ੁਨ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ।

# CHAPTER 3

## AMALGAMATION AND NEW IDENTITY - GURDWARA SAHIB YISHUN

Sembawang Sikh Temple and Jalan Kayu Temples continued to operate for several years but winds of change were not far from the horizon from the 1970s onwards, especially given the British announcement of their planned withdrawal from the region and the developments taking place all over Singapore. In line with the redevelopment of Singapore, with new Housing and Development Board (HDB) towns being created in Ang Mo Kio, Yishun and Woodlands in the north, the HDB already had plans to develop the area where the temples were located. But this, for some reason or other, did not appear to be a matter of concern to the Management Committees of both temples until the 1980s as is evident from the subsequent developments.

At the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of 1 June 1975, “Mr Jageer Singh in his capacity as the newly elected President of the Temple suggested that a Building Sub-Committee be formed to keep in view the possibility that the Temple may have to shift in the future. But the consensus was that the Management Committee should be able to cope with such an exigency rising in the future”. Barely two years later in October 1977, HDB notified the gurdwara that the land that the gurdwara was sitting on had been vested in State ownership since 1 November 1974. Thereafter, the HDB granted a Temporary Occupation Licence (TOL) in respect of the said land at \$10.00 per month, subsequently increased to \$50.00 per month in the 1980s. Unfortunately, even then the Gurdwara Management Committees appeared to be found wanting as no pro-active measures appeared to have been taken to deal with the matter. In 1978, the Management Committee formed a “Rehabilitation Committee” comprising four members, where the terms of reference required it to check and confirm with appropriate Government Departments regarding future of the temple premises as well as to explore the possibility of alternate sites, and develop plans for a new building. Unfortunately, there is no record of anything concrete taking place for a few years.

At the AGM of 15 May 1983, Sardar Tara Singh Hitaishi, in addition to seeking information about the “new members of the Sikh community living in the Ang Mo Kio, Sembawang, Nee Soon and Woodlands and their religious needs, also enquired as to what was happening about the building”. According to the minutes, “the President replied “so far nothing” and that the Committee had not met but that efforts are being made to see our Member of Parliament to get things going”. According to the Management Committee’s annual report dated 13 April 1986, the Management Committee then “received notice for the removal of our Temple because of the redevelopment of this area” and that “the Temple Building Committee was due to meet the Resettlement Officer in late January 1986”.

The Building Committee met the HDB authorities and sometime in September 1986, the HDB Resettlement Department offered a plot of land at Defu Lane 7 as a proposed site for the Gurdwara. A special meeting was held on 28 September 1986 where the Management Committee members and other concerned members met to discuss the future of the gurdwara. The alternate site offered at Defu Lane was rejected for obvious reasons, being too far away and at an obscure location. However, in the process of discussing various measures to pursue in putting up justifications to the Government authorities, the Management Committee realised that the temple had yet to be registered as a charitable organisation with the Commissioner of Charities, which would

also facilitate the collection of donations for the new temple. While the registration with the Commissioner of Charities was formalised on 3 April 1987, nothing concrete took place in terms of raising funds and/or looking for alternate sites. Some follow-up discussions did take place with Jalan Kayu Temple authorities as they too had been served with similar “Quit Notice” but nothing concrete materialised for another three years.

Finally in February 1990, the Government offered a resettlement offer of a site at Yishun Ring Road for Sembawang Sikh Temple and Jalan Kayu Gurdwara to jointly build a new Gurdwara there. This was readily accepted by the Sembawang Sikh Temple Management Committee. This also warranted a revamp of the Building Committee. At the AGM held on 3 June 1990, the details of the new offer were discussed and where “after the letting out of the Jaikaara the following persons were selected to be part of the Building Committee, namely, Darshan Singh, Jageer Singh, Prem Singh, Major Mejar Singh Gill, Major Charanjit Singh, Sobaran Singh, Jagdev Singh and Chattar Singh”. The Building Committee, initially comprising of only Sembawang Sikh Temple members, was headed by Charanjit Singh with lawyer Sobaran Singh volunteering his services as Secretary and Prem Singh maintaining the Building Fund Accounts, albeit being accounted for under Sembawang Sikh Temple accounts. The Jalan Kayu Temple Management Committee took some time to come on board, initially preferring to go on their own given their limited membership base and hence, preferring a smaller temple as well as being concerned of the difficulties in raising funds for a bigger joint temple at a time when other Sikh religious organisations were undertaking similar building projects. With the HDB authorities standing firm on the joint relocation offer, Jalan Kayu Temple’s Management Committee eventually took up the offer and joined the Building Committee in 1992. Sardars Mah Singh, Albel Singh, Ranjit Singh and Joginder Singh from Jalan Kayu Temple Management Committee were then included into the Building Committee. In addition to this, more volunteers served in the Building Fund Committee, namely Sardars Sukhdev Singh, Sarjit Singh Dhandal, Ajmer Singh, Sarban Singh, Pratap Singh, Manmohan Singh, Manminder Singh, and Jasbeer Singh as well as Madam Harender Kaur. The wheels were finally beginning to move but many challenges lay ahead, especially so in terms of finances, something that had not been given serious attention over the years.

The Government set the land premium around \$400,000 for a 30-year lease. In the temples’ coffers, the Sembawang Sikh Temple had about \$290,000 and another \$68,357 as ex-gratia resettlement compensation and Jalan Kayu Temple had over \$100,000, including ex-gratia resettlement compensation. In short, all that the two temples then had was enough money for the lease payment but almost none for the construction of a new temple. Fund raising took top priority and various sub-groups were formed to undertake the fund raising, including visiting as many Sikh homes as possible throughout Singapore as well as organising various other fund raising projects and activities. These are elaborated in the subsequent paragraphs.

The site offered in February 1990 was a 1,317 square feet plot of land near the Khatib MRT Station in Yishun Ring Road on a 30 year lease. Given the financial constraints, it took some time for fund raising strategies to be worked and for construction plans to be put into effect. As for the construction itself, instead of engaging a private architect, the Building Committee decided to engage HDB architects to undertake the project. The HDB readily agreed as their portfolio of projects comprised mainly HDB buildings and shop-houses as well as mosques but they had not been involved in building any gurdwara. In this respect, Gopal Singh of HDB was extremely helpful in assisting the Building Committee in discussing the matter with the HDB authorities in the later months of 1990.

In January 1991, HDB was appointed as the agent for the design of the gurdwara, tender document preparation, tender evaluation, contract finalisation and supervision of construction. The construction of the dome had to be given special emphasis, given its unique shape features vis-à-vis the mosques' domes. While initially, there were plans for a three storey building, the Building Committee finally settled on a two storey building based on optimisation of space and financial considerations. It was agreed to keep it a modest yet economical and functional building, with a column-free *Darbar Sahib*, a library- cum-meeting room, an office area and a Bridal Room on the upper floor and the accommodation facilities for the *Granthis*, and the *langgar* hall and kitchen on the ground floor. However, the most important issue was whether to have a dome or not? Notwithstanding the extra cost, this was unanimously agreed upon by the *Sangat*. The main dome together with the smaller 4 domes on all sides are the striking features of the gurdwara, especially when lighted up at night, notwithstanding its constrained space within the HDB neighbourhood.

The HDB initiated the Tender Exercise on 15 October 1993. At the closing date, a month later, five tender bids were received, ranging from \$1.826 million to \$2.698 million. These were considered rather high and HDB requested to negotiate with the lowest bidder, which resulted in a reduction of \$40,000. The Building Committee, on its own, also reached out to other contractors and M/S Pre-Eminent Construction Pte Ltd, who was known to one of the Building Committee's members agreed to take on the project at a cost of \$1,709 million, which was \$118,100 below the lowest tender price. The HDB then evaluated M/S Pre-Eminent's price offer independently and agreed to its offer.

Concurrently with the tender exercise going on, the ground breaking of the new gurdwara was held on 17 October 1993. Mr Ho Peng Kee, the Parliamentary Secretary (Ministry of Law and Home Affairs) and Member of Parliament (MP) for Sembawang GRC, officiated at the ceremony. Though it was a very simple ceremony, it was very effective in kicking off the fund raising efforts. All Sikh leaders of the Singapore Sikh community were invited to the event where they were briefed on the building construction plans as well as kept apprised of the financial situation of the gurdwara. It was a good kick-off event, as substantial donations in cash as well as donation pledges were secured on the day itself. Piling works started soon after in November 1993.



Guest of Honour Mr Ho Peng Kee



Speech By Member of Parliament



Attentive Sangat



Briefing by Architect



Ardaas at Ground Breaking Ceremony



Ardaas



Ground Breaking by MP Ho Peng Kee



Unveiling of The Plaque



Golak Donations







Langgar



Langgar



Justice Choor Singh and other guests



Bhangra group photo



Bhangra performance during Ground-Breaking Ceremony





Gidda Performance



Ground Breaking Commemorative Stone

All in all, the gurdwara was to cost \$2.5 million, including the land premium, HDB's agency fees and other miscellaneous expenses. The Building Committee had collectively got together to kick off the project but the raising of the funds was another thing altogether, which made the Building Committee members rather apprehensive whenever funds were due for the progressive payments throughout the construction period. With *Waheguruji's* blessings, however, funds did not stop flowing and the *Sangat's* prayers got answered notwithstanding the difficulties encountered. *Waheguru Ji* would not allow the project to stall mid-way as long as the *Sangat* remained determined to push the project through.



But it was challenging times indeed in the 1990s. Two other gurdwaras were being rebuilt around the same time as Gurdwara Yishun Sahib and there were plans afoot to build a Sikh Centre next to Silat Road Gurdwara. The Silat Road Gurdwara was extensively renovated and rebuilt in the mid-1990s at a cost of over \$4 million and officially declared open two months after Gurdwara Sahib Yishun on 23 October 1995. In 1990, around the same time as the new site was allocated to Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, the *Sangat of Khalsa Dharmak Sabha* had decided to demolish the old two storey building and replace it with a modern 3 Storey structure with a basement. The construction started in 1994 and was completed in 1996 at a cost of over \$5 million. Just as *Khalsa Dharmak Sabha* was being completed, work on the 7-storey Sikh Centre Building was also starting. The Sikh Centre was completed in 1998 at a cost of over \$ 5 million.



Building Construction in progress



Building Construction in progress



Building Construction in progress

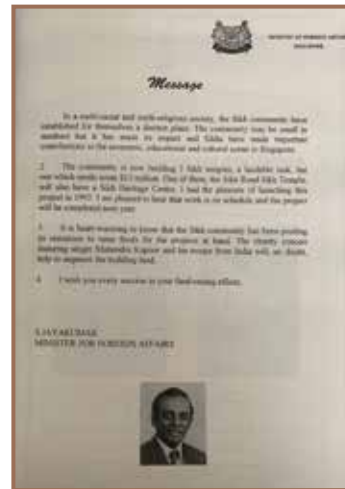
The Sikh Community was therefore confronted with a situation of three gurdwaras being built concurrently and it was quite understandable with some asking why Gurdwara Sahib Yishun could not be delayed slightly, especially given the limitation in funds. The unfortunate thing is that there was no choice given the “Quit Notices” and ultimatums issued by the Government. It was not a case of a new gurdwara being built but rather a case of saving at least one gurdwara from the two being evicted. In fact, not long after Sembawang Sikh Temple took up the offer of land at Yishun, and just prior to commencement of construction of the new temple, Government bureaucracy was already in action serving the Sembawang Sikh Temple with a “Notice to Quit” in August 1993, demanding that the land occupied by the Temple be cleared, followed later in October 1993 with a “Summons to Unlawful Occupant” to appear in Court in November 1993 under the matter of the State Lands Encroachments Act. The President of Sembawang Sikh Temple, Mejar Singh Gill, appeared in Court to explain as to why they needed to remain at same location while the new temple was being constructed.

Recognising that there were going to be problems in fund raising, the Sembawang Sikh Temple had also explored other options, including approaching Central Gurdwara Board to take the gurdwara’s management under its ambit and be responsible for building the new gurdwara. But given the situation where the Central Gurdwara Board had its own commitments and priorities, it was understandable that the Central Gurdwara Board’s attention and focus then was on rebuilding Silat Road Gurdwara.

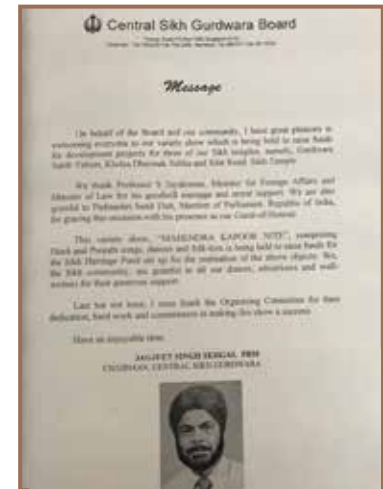
Notwithstanding all the challenges and difficulties, there were some individuals who stood by the Building Committee and urged it to push on. One particular individual was the late Sardar Jagjeet Singh Seghal, who specifically assisted the Building Committee in reaching out to Sikh businessmen for donations and personally got involved in several other projects, including assisting in organising a musical show with performers from India, which was held at the Singapore Indoor Stadium in September 1994. The musical show, “Mahendra Kapoor Nite”, organised by Sardars Jagjeet Singh Seghal, Mejar Singh Gill and Businessman Ravinderpal, with the late Sunil Dutt as Chief Guest and supported by several Punjabi singers and actors, attracted a large appreciative crowd. An amount of about \$200,000 was collected and shared equally between Gurdwara Sahib Yishun and *Khalsa Dharmak Sabha*.



Mahinder Kapoor Night

Message of S. Jayakumar -  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

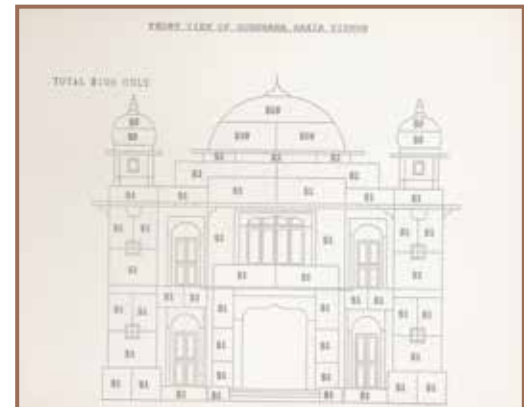
Message of Sunil Dutt



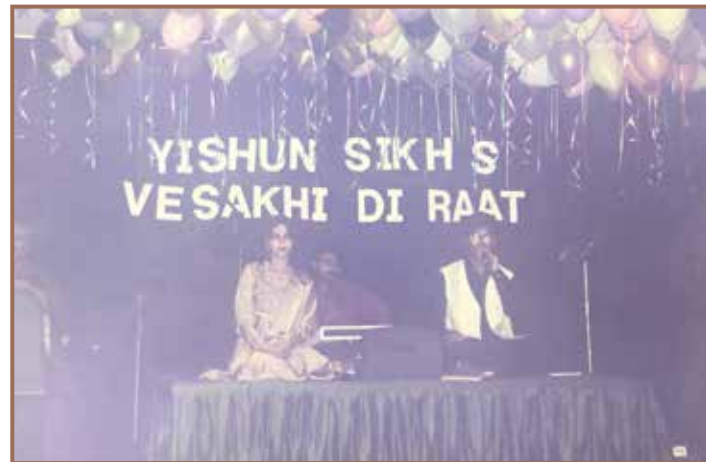
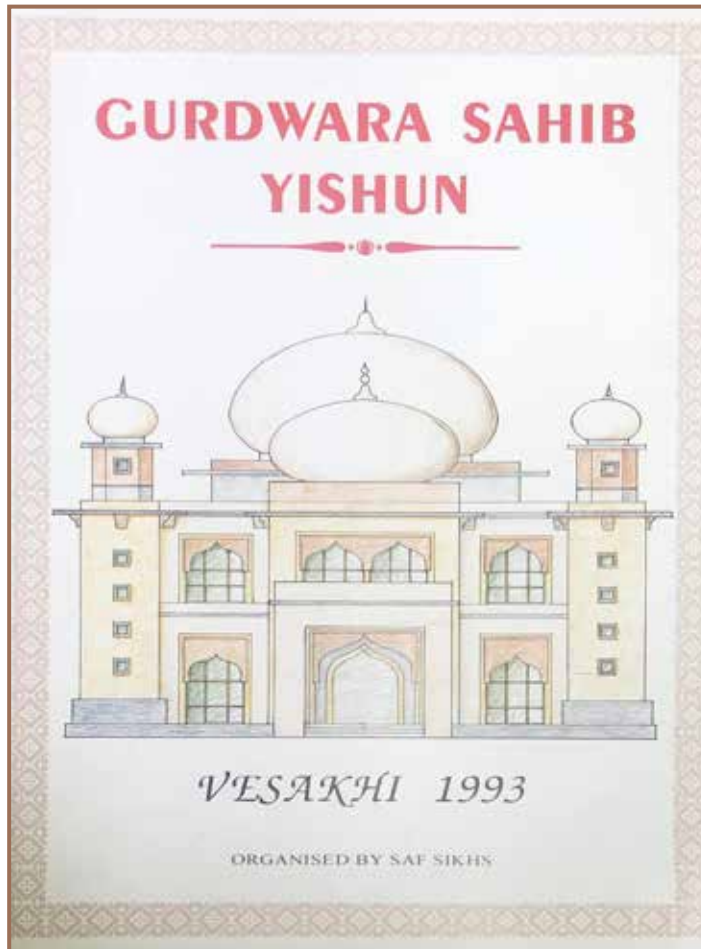
Message of Jagjit Singh Sehgal

The Building Committee also organised itself into small groups of three to four members making visits to Sikh homes throughout Singapore during the weekend and was able to secure pledges of donations of varying amounts. The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF)'s officers within the Building Committee reached out separately to other fellow Sikh military and police officers, and many came on board with donations of various amounts. All of them are duly acknowledged on the Gurdwara Donation Board. The Isteri Sat Sang also played a vital role in the Fund Raising Drive, and through their collective efforts, they raised another amount of \$35,000, in addition to making their personal donations.

In addition to the Variety Show, numerous other fund raising activities were organised. A "Buy a Brick" donation drive was also launched. All in all, a substantial amount of over \$50,000 was collected through this fund raising effort through gurdwara members and another amount of \$23,000 collected through students of Singapore Sikh Education Foundation under Sardar Bhajan Singh Ji. Some members got together and held "Dinner and Dance" Shows, including Vaisakhi Day Show and "auctions", which also helped to raise substantial amounts.




"Buy a Brick" Fundraising





Last but not of least was the role played by former members of the Naval Base Police Temple who had migrated to the UK. They conducted a fund raising amongst themselves and were able to contribute about \$20,000.

Despite the various fund raising activities highlighted, it remained a rather tense situation throughout the construction period as availability of funds was a matter of serious concern. Notwithstanding HDB being provided with a "Letter of Assurance" that sufficient funds would be available to meet the construction costs at all times, there were several occasions when invoices were received but funds were insufficient to make the progressive payments required, especially as the building was nearing completion. As the appeal letter of January 1995, about eight months before the opening ceremony shows (at next page), the financial situation was far from ideal. While the Building Account balance showed a requirement of about \$1.141 million, all that was available was about \$49,000 in bank as at 6 January 1995. Appeal letters were sent to all members to try and fulfil their pledged donations while the Building Committee resorted to raise funds through other means. The *Sangat* responded positively and donations of about \$600,000 were received by July 1995, just a month before the official opening ceremony, with a requirement for about \$500,00 for outstanding payments, but with only \$31,769 in cash balance in bank.



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## ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸੰਬਾਵੰਗ

### SEMBAWANG SIKH TEMPLE

(R.O.S. No. 88647, Registered with Charities Board)  
321 SEMBAWANG ROAD, SINGAPORE 2775.  
TEL: 7534607

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa  
Waheguru Ji Ki Fatch

As you may already be aware, the Gurdwara Sahib Yishun is heading completion. The status report as at Jan 95 is enclosed for your information. The progress so far could not have been possible without your support. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the support given so far and look forward to your continued support in the future.

Our records show that you have pledged \$ \_\_\_\_\_ of which \$ \_\_\_\_\_ has been paid-up so far. If there is any discrepancy in this respect, please inform us immediately so that we can update the records accordingly.

As progressive payments have to be made in line with the construction progress of the building, we are somewhat concerned with our financial situation. Whilst every effort is also being made to raise funds through other means, we would like to appeal to all donors to try and fulfil their pledged donations, as well as to increase the amounts, if possible.

Unless there is a collective effort by the whole Sikh Community, we may have difficulty in realising the project. Please continue to donate generously to this noble cause. We are almost there and with your generosity, we can complete the building, of which the whole community can be proud of.

Should you have any other constructive suggestions or proposals in raising funds, we would be most glad to implement your suggestions. As the temple belongs to all of us, we must all join hands together to build this temple, not just for ourselves but more so for our future generations.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa  
Waheguru Ji Ki Fatch.


Yours in service  
LTC Mejar Singh Gill  
President Sembawang Sikh Temple

Mr. Mah Singh  
President Jalan Kayu Sikh Temple

LTC Charanjit Singh  
Chairman, Building Fund Committee

### GURDWARA SAHIB YISHUN

C/o Sembawang Sikh Temple  
321 Sembawang Road, Singapore 2775.  
Tel: 7534607



26th January, 1995

## AN APPEAL TO ALL DONORS/WELL-WISHERS

By the grace of the Almighty, the construction of the new Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, which began in Oct 93, has proceeded smoothly so far and should be completed according to schedule in June/July 95. HDD is handling the project. The photographs of the various stages of construction are reproduced for your information.

As every Sikh is already aware, this temple will replace two historic temples - the Sembawang Sikh Temple and Jalan Kayu Sikh Temple, which have to make way for the government's redevelopment plans in the area. Whilst appreciating the fact that the Sikh community is already quite heavily burdened with supporting the reconstruction of the historic Sri Lal Road Sikh Temple, the Sikh Education Fund as well as several other on-going works in other temples, this is one project that seriously warrants the collective effort of all Sikhs. Unlike the strong efforts of other communities in building more religious institutions for their members, we are merely trying to save one temple in place of the two temples making way for modernisation.

Though the support from local Sikhs as well as those overseas has been encouraging so far, much more needs to be done for the simple two-storey temple to finally become operational. Whilst the construction is proceeding well, the financial situation is far from satisfactory. We are in dire need of cash to meet the contractor's bills.

The financial situation is as follows:

S/N	Item	Estimated Proprietion	Amount Paid	Amount Balance
1.	Concrete (MS - Pre-Enclosed Per Lot)	\$ 1,307,900.00	\$ 711,900.00	\$ 596,000.00
2.	GST (On Contract Sum)	\$ 51,237.00	\$ 28,295.75	\$ 22,941.25
3.	PIB and TAB Contributions	\$ 34,000.00	\$ -	\$ 34,000.00
4.	Architect Fee, Clerk of works salary, material Plans submission Fee and GST	\$ 228,752.50	\$ 148,545.35	\$ 80,207.15
5.	HDD (For piling works)	\$ 56,971.75	\$ 56,971.75	\$ -
6.	Commissioner of Lands and Survey Duty (For 30 years Land Lease)	\$ 406,674.00	\$ 406,674.00	\$ -
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 2,485,098.45</b>	<b>\$ 1,342,237.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,142,861.45</b>
		Cash in Bank - \$48,885.44 (As at 6 Jan 95)		

We humbly appeal to all those who had made pledges to promptly pay up so that the Building can be completed on schedule.

We therefore appeal to all Sikhs to join us in saving the one and only historic temple in Northern Singapore. We urge all donors who have made pledges to kindly remit their donations as well as to encourage others to join hands in this worthy cause. Please forward your donations by cheque/money order/postal order/Draft (A/C Payee Only) payable to Sembawang Sikh Temple Building Fund or Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. All donations of \$2,100/- and above will be acknowledged on the proposed marble "Donors Board" to be permanently displayed at the entrance of the Temple.


The Sangat and Management and Building Committees of Sembawang Sikh Temple and Jalan Kayu Sikh Temple would like to take this opportunity to wish one and all a happy and prosperous New Year 1995.

Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa, Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fatch.


Yours in service:  
President and Management Committee: Sembawang Sikh Temple  
President and Management Committee: Jalan Kayu Sikh Temple  
Chairman and Members: Sembawang Sikh Temple Building Committee

### ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਯੀਸ਼ੁਨ


## GURDWARA SAHIB YISHUN




The Temple Building construction




The full-blown temple in 1995



The foundation stone being laid



After 1 month, work had on the site



With the grace of Waheguru Sahib, work has been done



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### GURDWARA SAHIB YISHUN

NGARI YISHU'S ROAD, SINGAPORE 2776, TEL: 7534607

#### GURDWARA SAHIB YISHUN - INVITATION TO WITNESS MOVING-IN CEREMONY

The Sangat and well-wishers will be pleased to know that the construction of the new Gurdwara Sahib Yishun has been completed. The temporary structure opened in 1993 is required to be replaced by the new one.

All well-wishers are invited to witness the historic religious ceremony and their presence in this holy place will add to the auspiciousness of the occasion. Please be here on the auspicious date, time and place as mentioned in the invitation below. Please be here on the auspicious date, time and place as mentioned in the invitation below.

1. 1995-01-15 (Monday) 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (at the new temple site)

2. 1995-01-15 (Monday) 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (at the new temple site)

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## SPRING CLEANING BEFORE MOVING-IN



By the grace and blessings of the Almighty *Waheguru Ji*, by the time the temple officially opened in August 1995, there were sufficient funds to fulfil all the payments. Special mention must be made of Sardar Kartar Singh Thakralji, who not only donated \$151,000 at the onset of the donation drive, but also visited the construction site in between, together with Justice Choor Singh as well as kept in touch with the Building Committee to be apprised of the developments taking place. More importantly, on the day of the opening ceremony, he personally encouraged several other Sikh businessmen present to contribute substantially so that the temple finances were in the “black” on the opening day itself! By December 1996, when all outstanding pledged donations were settled, the Financial Year (FY) Accounts showed a balance of \$380,000 in the accounts of the new temple. As has been proven so many times, *Waheguru Ji* will not allow a Gurdwara to be left unfinished as long as the *Sangat* remains united and committed in its cause.

The opening ceremony was held in planned military style timing and precision, with the Saroops of *Guru Granth Sahib Ji* of both Gurdwaras being brought in mobile processions until about 600 metres and then on foot from both sides of the road leading to the Gurdwara. Sardar Kartar Singh Thakral officiated at the opening ceremony of the Gurdwara Sahib on 27 August 1995. He and

his brother, Sardar Mohinder Singh Thakral, 'symbolically' opened the gates at the main entrance to the Gurdwara Complex, to welcome the Saroops of the *Guru Granth Sahibs* from the two gurdwaras, carried on the heads of the respective gurdwara *Gianis*, into the newly built gurdwara. Sardar Kartar Singh Thakral then led the *Sangat* behind the *Guru Granth Sahibs* into the *Darbar Sahib* where the *Guru Granth Sahib* of Sembawang Sikh Temple was installed at the main Palki and the *Guru Granth Sahib* of Jalan Kayu Temple placed at the Sach Khand Room next to the Palki. This signaled the merging of the two gurdwaras into the new single entity of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. As part of the celebrations, the new *Nishan Sahib* was also raised on the same day. The opening ceremony was a historic occasion indeed, with most of the Singaporean Sikh Community and its leaders in attendance. The following day, the remaining Saroops of *Guru Granth Sahib Jis* of both temples were brought over and placed at the Sach Khand room at Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. This signaled the complete merger of the two gurdwaras into one.

### CEREMONIAL JOURNEY OF SAROOP (BIR) OF SEMBAWANG GURDWARA TO GURDWARA SAHIB YISHUN







### CEREMONIAL JOURNEY OF SAROOP (BIR) OF JALAN KAYU GURDWARA TO GURDWARA SAHIB YISHUN



## INSTALLATION OF GURU GRANTH SAHIB AT GURDWARA SAHIB YISHUN















### FIRST NISHAN SAHIB CEREMONY AT GURDWARA SAHIB YISHUN





## LANGGAR



## REMAINING SAROOPs (BIRs) OF BOTH GURDWARAS BEING BROUGHT TO GURDWARA SAHIB YISHUN



Today, only one gurdwara stands tall in northern Singapore, whose legacy goes back to the 1920s. Though there are numerous treasurable and historic photographs that remind us of our past, one special item that was used in the early years remains with us even today. This is the traditional Langri *Kunda Danda*, made of pure granite stone that was used for grinding onions, chillies, garlic cloves and other dry spices at Naval Base

Old Kunda Ghotna From Police Gurdwara - Reminder Of Our Past

Police Gurdwara. It was handed over from the Police Gurdwara to Sembawang Sikh Temple and subsequently brought over to the newly constructed Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. Those days, one to two men worked to grind the spices using a long log (dauri danda) on the Kunda. While modern grinders and mixers have made our *langgar* preparation much easier today, this simple but historic artefact serves to remind us of our past and the selfless service of Sikhs involved in providing for the *Sangat* at the gurdwaras.

Straits Times

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HOME

28-08-95

## Two Sikh temples merge into one in Yishun



**The two Sikh Holy Books, the Guru Granth Sahib, being carried into the new Yishun Sikh Temple.**

TWO Sikh temples merged into the new Gurdwara Sahib Yishun (Yishun Sikh Temple) yesterday morning in a colourful ceremony that lasted about two hours.

Two separate processions

proaching the new building from opposite sides. The texts came from the Sembawang and Jalan Kayu temples.

Led by businessman and philanthropist Kartar Singh Thakral, the congregation

Then the Holy Books were placed in a palanquin in the prayer hall. More than 2,000 Sikhs thronged the new temple in Yishun Ring Road yesterday.

Lieutenant-Colonel Char-

programmes for youth, including tuition and hymn singing classes, to bring them into the mainstream of Sikh culture and religion.

The Sembawang and Jalan Kayu temples it replaces be-

Lieutenant-Colonel Mejar Singh of the Sembawang temple and Mr Mah Singh of the Jalan Kayu temple praised the Sikh community for raising the \$2.5 million for the project. It was short of \$366,000. But \$350,000 was do-

## ਭਾਗ ੩ - ਵਿਲੀਨਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਨਵੀਂ ਪਛਾਣ - ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਯੀਸ਼ੁਨ

ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ ਕਈ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤੱਕ ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਪਰ ਪੂਰੇ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਦੇ ਮੱਦੇਨਜ਼ਰ ੧੯੭੦ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੱਡੀ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਦੀ ਹਵਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਈ। ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਦੇ ਉੱਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੰਗ ਮੋ ਕੀਓ, ਯੀਸ਼ੁਨ ਅਤੇ ਵੁੱਡਲੈਂਡ ਵਿੱਚ ਹਾਊਸਿੰਗ ਅਤੇ ਡਿਵੈਲਪਮੈਂਟ ਬੋਰਡ (ਐਚਡੀਬੀ) ਵੱਲੋਂ ਨਵੇਂ ਕਸਬੇ ਬਨਾਉਣੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤੇ ਅਤੇ ਐਚਡੀਬੀ ਨੇ ਉਹ ਖੇਤਰ ਵੀ ਵਿਕਸਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਬਣਾਈ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਸਥਿਤ ਸਨ।

ਅਕਤੂਬਰ ੧੯੭੭ ਵਿੱਚ ਐਚਡੀਬੀ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਸੂਚਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਿ ਜਿਸ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ 'ਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਥਿਤ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ੧ ਨਵੰਬਰ ੧੯੭੪ ਤੋਂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਮਲਕੀਅਤ ਘੋਸ਼ਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ, ਐਚਡੀਬੀ ਨੇ ਉਕਤ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਦੇ ਸਬੰਧ ਵਿੱਚ ੧੦ ਡਾਲਰ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਮਹੀਨਾ ਦੀ ਦਰ ਨਾਲ ਇੱਕ ਅਸਥਾਈ ਕਬਜ਼ਾ ਪੱਤਰ (ਠੌਲ) ਦਿੱਤਾ, ਜੋ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿੱਚ ੧੯੮੦ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਧਾ ਕੇ ੫੦ ਡਾਲਰ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਮਹੀਨਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਸਤੰਬਰ ੧੯੮੬ ਵਿੱਚ, ਐਚਡੀਬੀ ਪੁਨਰਵਾਸ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਸਤਾਵਿਤ ਜਗ੍ਹਾ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਡੇਫੂ ਲੇਨ ੭ ਵਿਖੇ ਇੱਕ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਦੀ ਪੇਸ਼ਕਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ। ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਦੂਰ ਅਤੇ ਵਾਜ਼ਬ ਸਥਾਨ 'ਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਰੱਦ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਅੰਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਫਰਵਰੀ ੧੯੯੦ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਲਈ ਯੀਸ਼ੁਨ ਰਿੰਗ ਰੋਡ ਵਿਖੇ ਇੱਕ ਜਗ੍ਹਾ ਦੀ ਪੇਸ਼ਕਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਉੱਥੇ ਇੱਕ ਨਵਾਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ। ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਨੇ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਪਰ ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਣ ਲਈ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਸਮਾਂ ਇੰਤਜ਼ਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ। ਉਹ ਆਪਣੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਸੀਮਤ ਮੈਂਬਰਸ਼ਿਪ ਦੇ ਮੱਦੇਨਜ਼ਰ ਅੱਡ ਇੱਕ ਛੋਟਾ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਬਨਾਉਣਾ ਚਾਉਂਦੇ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਇੱਕ ਵੱਡੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਉੱਤੇ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਖਰਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਵੀ ਚਿੰਤਤ ਸਨ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਹੋਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਾਰਮਕ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਵੀ ਉਸ ਵਕਤ ਕਈ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਕਰ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਨੇ ਆਖਰਕਾਰ ਐਚਡੀਬੀ ਦੀ ਪੇਸ਼ਕਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਅਤੇ ੧੯੯੨ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਿਲਡਿੰਗ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋ ਗਈ।

ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ੩੦ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਲੀਜ਼ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਦੀ ਕੀਮਤ ੪੦੦੦੦੦ ਡਾਲਰ ਦੇ ਲਗਭਗ ਤੈਅ ਕੀਤੀ। ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਖਾਤੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੁਨਰਵਾਸ ਮੁਆਵਜ਼ੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਮਿਲੀ ਰਾਸ਼ੀ ਲਗਭਗ ੨੯੦੦੦੦ ਡਾਲਰ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ੬੮੩੫੭ ਡਾਲਰ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਲਨ ਕਾਯੂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਕੋਲ ਪੁਨਰਵਾਸ ਮੁਆਵਜ਼ੇ ਵਾਲੀ ਰਾਸ਼ੀ ਸਮੇਤ ੧੦੦੦੦੦ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਡਾਲਰ ਸਨ। ਸੰਖੇਪ ਵਿੱਚ, ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਕੋਲ ਲੀਜ਼ ਦੀ ਅਦਾਇਗੀ ਲਈ ਤਾਂ ਬਣਦੀ ਰਕਮ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਨਵੀਂ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਲਗਭਗ ਕੋਈ ਪੈਸਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਚੰਦਾ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਕਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਤਰਜੀਹ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਅਤੇ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਉਪ-ਗਰੁੱਪ ਬਣਾਏ ਗਏ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਪੂਰੇ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੱਧ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਸਿੱਖ ਘਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਦੌਰਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਚੰਦਾ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਹੋਰ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਗਤੀਵਿਧੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਆਯੋਜਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਨਵੀਂ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਦਾ ਅਕਾਰ ੧੩੧੭ ਵਰਗ ਫੁੱਟ ਸੀ ਜੋ ਯੀਸ਼ੁਨ ਰਿੰਗ ਰੋਡ ਉੱਤੇ ਖਾਤਿਬ ਐਮਆਰਟੀ ਅੱਡੇ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਸੀ। ਵਿੱਤੀ ਰੁਕਾਵਟਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੱਦੇਨਜ਼ਰ, ਚੰਦਾ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਣਨੀਤੀਆਂ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਯੋਜਨਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਲੀ ਰੂਪ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਕੁਝ ਸਮਾਂ ਲੱਗਿਆ। ਜਨਵਰੀ ੧੯੯੧ ਵਿੱਚ ਐਚਡੀਬੀ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਨਕਸ਼ਾ ਬਨਾਉਣ, ਟੈਂਡਰ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਨ, ਟੈਂਡਰ ਮੁਲਾਂਕਣ, ਠੇਕੇ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਰੂਪ ਦੇਣ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਨਿਗਰਾਨੀ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਤ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਿੰਨ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲਾ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਬਨਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਅੰਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੀਮਤ ਰਾਸ਼ੀ ਅਤੇ ਜਗਾ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਦੋ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲਾ ਇਮਾਰਤ 'ਤੇ ਸਹਿਮਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ (ਥੰਮਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾ), ਇੱਕ

ਲਾਇਬ੍ਰੇਰੀ-ਨਾਲ-ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਕਮਰਾ, ਇੱਕ ਦਫਤਰ, ਇੱਕ ਵਾਧੂ ਕਮਰਾ ਉੱਪਰਲੀ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲ 'ਤੇ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ। ਗ੍ਰੰਥੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼, ਲੰਗਰ ਹਾਲ ਅਤੇ ਰਸੋਈ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਹੇਠਲੀ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲ 'ਤੇ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਮੁੱਖ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਦਾ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਧਿਆਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਖਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਮਸੀਤ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਵੱਖਰੀ ਦਿੱਖ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ। ਮੁੱਖ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਚਾਰੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਛੋਟੇ ੪ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਦਾ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਖਾਸ ਦਿੱਖ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਆਸਪਾਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਇਮਾਰਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਸ਼ੀਲ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਰਾਤ ਨੂੰ ਰੌਸ਼ਨੀ ਹੋਣ 'ਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੀ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਮਨਮੋਹਣੀ ਲਗਦੀ ਹੈ।

੧੫ ਅਕਤੂਬਰ ੧੯੯੩ ਨੂੰ ਟੈਂਡਰ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤੇ। ਇੱਕ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਬਾਅਦ, ੧.੨੦੯ ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਡਾਲਰ (ਜੋ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਘੱਟ ਬੋਲੀ ਸੀ) 'ਤੇ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਮੰਨਜ਼ੂਰੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ। ਨਵੇਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦਾ ਨੀਂਹ ਪੱਥਰ ੧੨ ਅਕਤੂਬਰ ੧੯੯੩ ਨੂੰ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ। ਸ੍ਰੀ ਮਾਨ ਹੋ ਪੇਂਗ ਕੀ, ਸੰਸਦੀ ਸਕੱਤਰ (ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਅਤੇ ਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਮਾਮਲਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਮੰਤਰਾਲਾ) ਅਤੇ ਸੋਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਖੇਤਰ ਲਈ ਸੰਸਦ ਮੈਂਬਰ (ਐਮਪੀ), ਨੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦਾ ਨੀਂਹ ਪੱਥਰ ਰੱਖਿਆ, ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ ਇਹ ਇੱਕ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਸਾਦਾ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਚੰਦਾ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹ ਬਹੁਤ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਸਿੱਧ ਹੋਇਆ। ਇਸ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਸਮੂਹ ਆਗੂਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਦਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਵਿੱਤੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਜਾਣੂ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ। ਇਹ ਕਾਮਯਾਬ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਸੀ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਸ ਦਿਨ ਨਕਦੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਚੰਦਾ ਜਮਾਂ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਵਾਅਦੇ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਨੀਂਹ ਭਰਨ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਨਵੰਬਰ ੧੯੯੩ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਇਆ।

ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੀ ਕੁੱਲ ਲਾਗਤ ੨.੫ ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਡਾਲਰ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਦਾ ਕਿਰਾਇਆ, ਐਸਡੀਬੀ ਦੀ ਏਜੰਸੀ ਫੀਸ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਫੁਟਕਲ ਖਰਚੇ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਸਨ। ਪਰ ੧੯੯੦ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਹ ਚੁਣੌਤੀਪੂਰਨ ਸਮਾਂ ਸੀ, ਜਿੱਥੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਯੀਸ਼ੂਨ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਦੋ ਹੋਰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਮੁੜ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਲੋਟ ਰੋਡ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਯੋਜਨਾਵਾਂ ਵੀ ਬਣਾਈਆਂ ਜਾ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਸਿਲੋਟ ਰੋਡ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦਾ ੧੯੯੦ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਦੇ ਅੱਧ ਵਿੱਚ ੪ ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਡਾਲਰ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਦੀ ਲਾਗਤ ਨਾਲ ਮੁਰੰਮਤ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੜ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ੨੩ ਅਕਤੂਬਰ ੧੯੯੫ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਯੀਸ਼ੂਨ ਤੋਂ ਦੋ ਮਹੀਨਿਆਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਉਦਘਾਟਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਜਿਸ ਸਮੇਂ ੧੯੯੦ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਯੀਸ਼ੂਨ ਨੂੰ ਨਵੀਂ ਜਗ੍ਹਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਸੀ, ਉਸੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਧਾਰਮਕ ਸਭਾ ਦੀ ਸੰਗਤ ਨੇ ਪੁਰਾਣੀ ਦੋ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲਾ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਢਾਹ ਕੇ ਉਸਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਇੱਕ ਬੇਸਮੈਂਟ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਤਿੰਨ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲਾ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ੧੯੯੪ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ੧੯੯੬ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੂਰਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਖਾਲਸਾ ਧਾਰਮਕ ਸਭਾ ਦੀ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਮੁਕੰਮਲ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੈਂਟਰ ਦੀ ਸੱਤ ਮੰਜ਼ਿਲਾ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਵੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਇਆ, ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ੧੯੯੮ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੂਰਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ 'ਤੇ ੫ ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਡਾਲਰ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਦੀ ਲਾਗਤ ਆਈ।

ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਚੁਣੌਤੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ, ਕੁਝ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸਨ ਜੋ ਬਿਲਡਿੰਗ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੇ ਮੋਢੇ ਨਾਲ ਮੋਢਾ ਜੋੜ ਖੜ੍ਹੇ ਹੋਏ ਅਤੇ ਅੱਗੇ ਵਧਣ ਦਾ ਹੌਂਸਲਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇੱਕ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਮਰਹੂਮ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਜਗਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਹਿਗਲ ਸਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਾਰੋਬਾਰੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਦਾਨ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਬਿਲਡਿੰਗ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਿੱਜੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਕਈ ਹੋਰ ਗਤੀਵਿਧੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਏ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਕਲਾਕਾਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਇੱਕ ਸਫਲ ਸ਼ੋਅ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੈ। ਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਥੀਏਟਰ ਵਿਖੇ ਕਰਵਾਏ ਗਏ ਸ਼ੋਅ ਵਿੱਚ ੧੫੦੦੦੦ ਡਾਲਰ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਦੀ ਰਾਸ਼ੀ ਇਕੱਠੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਸੀ ਜੋ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਯੀਸ਼ੂਨ ਅਤੇ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਧਾਰਮਕ ਸਭਾ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਵੰਡੀ ਗਈ ਸੀ।

ਬਿਲਡਿੰਗ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਤਿੰਨ ਤੋਂ ਚਾਰ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਛੋਟੇ-ਛੋਟੇ ਸਮੂਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੰਗਠਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਪੂਰੇ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਘਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਦੌਰਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਵੱਡੀ ਮਾਤਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਚੰਦਾ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਬਿਲਡਿੰਗ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੇਵਾ ਨਿਭਾ ਰਹੇ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਦੀ ਫੌਜ (ਸ਼ਾਅਫ) ਦੇ ਅਫਸਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਨਿੱਜੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਸਾਥੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਫੌਜੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਅਫਸਰਾਂ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕੀਤੀ, ਅਤੇ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਰਕਮਾਂ ਇਕੱਠੀਆਂ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ,

ਜਿਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਵੇਰਵਾ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਦਾਨ ਬੋਰਡ 'ਤੇ ਸੂਚੀਬੱਧ ਹਨ। ਇਸਤਰੀ ਸਤਿ ਸੰਗ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਚੰਦਾ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਣ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਈ, ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਯਤਨਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ, ਨਿੱਜੀ ਦਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ, ੩੫੦੦੦ ਡਾਲਰ ਦੀ ਰਕਮ ਇਕੱਠੀ ਕੀਤੀ।

ਵਰਾਇਟੀ ਸ਼ੋਅ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਕਈ ਹੋਰ ਗਤੀਵਿਧੀਆਂ ਵੀ ਕਰਵਾਈਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ। ਇੱਕ "ਇੱਟ ਖਰੀਦੋ" ਦਾਨ ਮੁਹਿੰਮ ਵੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਕੁੱਲ ਮਿਲਾ ਕੇ, ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਯਤਨਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ੫੦੦੦੦ ਡਾਲਰ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਭਜਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਹੇਠ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਐਜੂਕੇਸ਼ਨ ਫਾਊਂਡੇਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ੨੩੦੦੦ ਡਾਲਰ ਦੀ ਰਕਮ ਇਕੱਠੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਕੁਝ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਕੱਠੇ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਸ਼ੋਅ ਆਯੋਜਿਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਰਕਮ ਇਕੱਠੀ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਦਦ ਕੀਤੀ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ “ਵਿਸਾਖੀ ਡੇਅ ਸ਼ੋਅ” ਅਤੇ “ਨੀਲਾਮੀ” ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹਨ। ਨੇਵਲ ਬੇਸ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਸਾਬਕਾ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਨਿਭਾਈ ਗਈ ਵੱਡੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਖੋਂ ਪਰੋਖੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਜੋ ਬਰਤਾਨੀਆ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਰਵਾਸ ਕਰ ਗਏ ਸਨ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਚੰਦਾ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਕਰਕੇ ੨੦੦੦੦ ਡਾਲਰ ਦਾ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਪਾਇਆ।

ਸਰਬਸ਼ਕਤੀਮਾਨ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਅਪਾਰ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਅਤੇ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਨਾਲ, ਅਗਸਤ ੧੯੯੫ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਦੋਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਤ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹਿਆ, ਉਦੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਅਦਾਇਗੀਆਂ ਪੂਰੀਆਂ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੀ ਰਕਮ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕਿਆ ਸੀ। ਸਰਦਾਰ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਠਕਰਾਲ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕਰਨਾ ਬਣਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਦਾਨ ਮੁਹਿੰਮ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤ ਵੇਲੇ ਨਾ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ੧੫੧੦੦੦ ਡਾਲਰ ਦਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ, ਸਗੋਂ ਜਸਟਿਸ ਚੂੜ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਵਾਲੀ ਥਾਂ ਦਾ ਚੌਰਾ ਵੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਬਿਲਡਿੰਗ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਵੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਦਘਾਟਨੀ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਵਾਲੇ ਦਿਨ, ਸਰਦਾਰ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਠਕਰਾਲ ਨੇ ਨਿੱਜੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਕਈ ਹੋਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਾਰੋਬਾਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਬਣਦਾ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਪਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਉਦਘਾਟਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਹੀ ਖਾਤੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੀ ਰਕਮ ਜਮਾਂ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਚਾਰੂ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਲਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ। ਦਸੰਬਰ ੧੯੯੬ ਤੱਕ ਜਦੋਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਵਚਨਬੱਧ ਦਾਨ ਜਮ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਸਨ, ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਖਾਤੇ ਵਿੱਚ ੩੮੦੦੦੦ ਡਾਲਰ ਜਮਾਂ ਸਨ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਸਿੱਧ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਹੈ, ਸੱਚੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਕੰਮ ਨੂੰ ਅਧੂਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿਣ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਜਿਸ ਕੰਮ ਦੇ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸੰਗਤ ਇੱਕਮੁੱਠ ਅਤੇ ਵਚਨਬੱਧ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਅੱਜ, ਉੱਤਰੀ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਇੱਕ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸਦੀ ਵਿਰਾਸਤ ੧੯੨੦ ਦੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਤੱਕ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਕੀਮਤੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਤਸਵੀਰਾਂ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਾਡੇ ਅਤੀਤ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਦਿਵਾਉਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਇੱਕ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਚੀਜ਼ ਜੋ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤੀ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਰਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੋਲ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਗਤ “ਕੁੰਡਾ ਘੋਟਨਾ” ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਕਿ ਸ਼ੁੱਧ ਗ੍ਰੇਨਾਈਟ ਪੱਥਰ ਦਾ ਬਣਿਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਨੇਵਲ ਬੇਸ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿਖੇ ਪਿਆਜ਼, ਮਿਰਚਾਂ, ਲਸਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਲੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਸੁੱਕੇ ਮਸਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੀਸਣ ਲਈ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਸੇਮਬਾਵੰਗ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਵੇਂ ਬਣੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਯੀਸ਼ੂਨ ਵਿਖੇ ਲਿਆਂਦਾ ਗਿਆ। ਉਨ੍ਹੀਂ ਦਿਨੀਂ ਲੰਗਰ ਦੀ ਰਸੋਈ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਤੋਂ ਦੋ ਆਦਮੀ “ਕੁੰਡਾ ਘੋਟਣਾ” ਵਰਤ ਕੇ ਮਸਾਲਾ ਪੀਸਣ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਮਸ਼ੀਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਅੱਜ ਸਾਡੀ ਲੰਗਰ ਦੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਸੌਖਾ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ, ਇਹ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਪਰ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਚੀਜ਼ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਾਡੇ ਅਤੀਤ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਦਿਵਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਪੁਰਾਣੇ ਸਮਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਸੰਗਤ ਦੀ ਨਿਸਵਾਰਥ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ।



# CHAPTER 4

## OUR GURDWARA'S RELIGIOUS LEADERS

All three temples in the north, in particular, Naval Police Sikh Temple and Sembawang Sikh Temple, and to a lesser extent, Jalan Kayu Sikh Temple, were visited by prominent Sikh religious leaders as well as *Kirtan Jatha* groups from India throughout their existence. Some of the visits are highlighted in the subsequent paragraphs below.

### VISITS BY OUR REVERED SIKH RELIGIOUS PERSONALITIES

#### Sant Baba Sohan Singh Ji

Sant Baba Sohan Singh Ji of Malacca is the most venerated and revered Sikh religious personality in Malaysia, Singapore and other parts of Asia, including India. His tall stature, glowing chubby countenance, flowing long beard, soft spoken speech, benign fatherly counsel, simple, humble ecclesiastical living and saintly poise endeared him to the vast following of the Sikh community, including the northern Singapore Sikhs. Even after his demise, the multitudes of devotees who gather from far and near, in Malacca every May for commemorative prayers in his memory is testimony of the great devotion and veneration that Sikhs have for him.

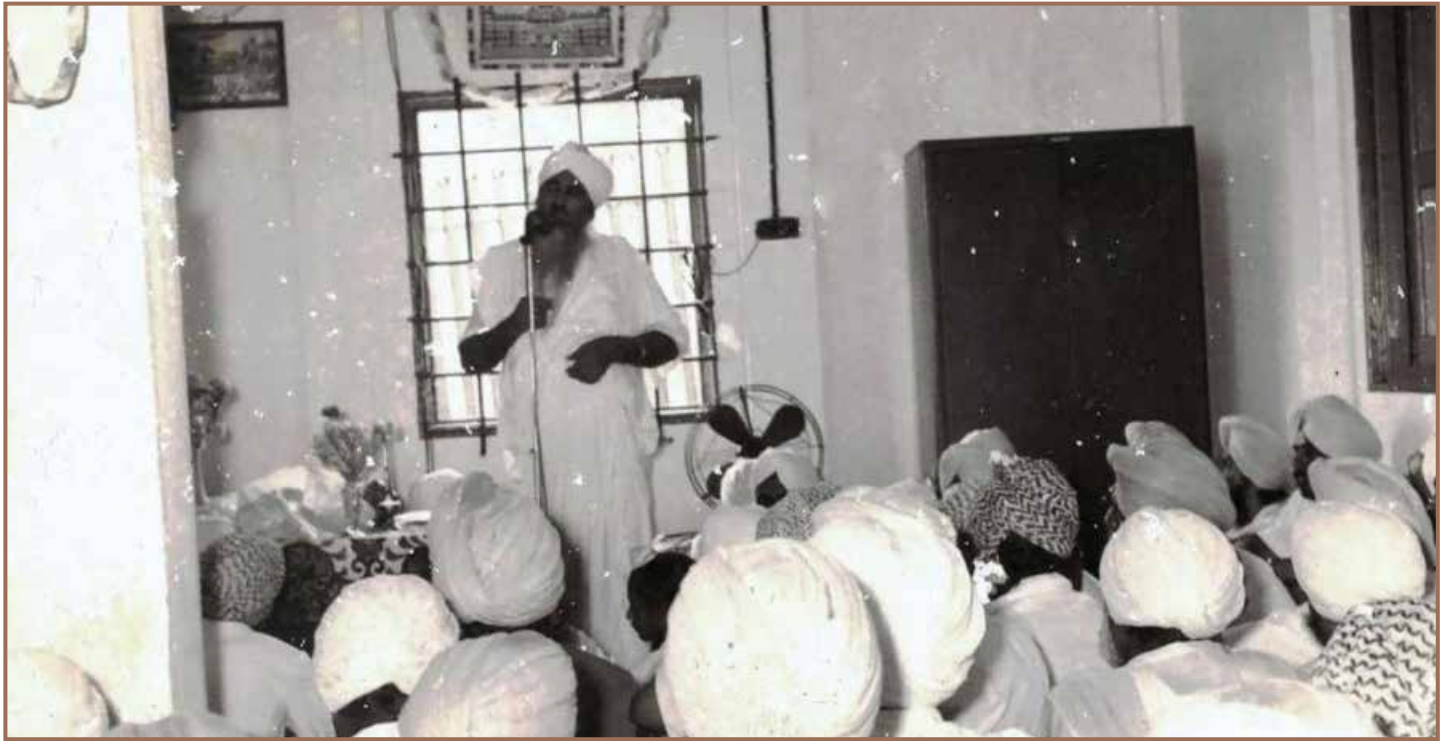


Sant Baba Sohan Singh Ji at Sembawang Gurdwara

The *Sangats* of the Naval Police and Sembawang Gurdwaras were particularly blessed by his presence at the gurdwaras on several occasions, where he left an indelible mark on the lives of many with his *Kathas* from the *Gurbani*. Sant Baba Sohan Singh first visited the RNTD Naval Base Police Temple at Khalsa Crescent in 1955. Subsequently, he visited the Naval Police Gurdwara again in 1960, when the temple had relocated to View Road, and he also visited the Sembawang Sikh Temple then. He was to make another visit to both the temples in 1965, where he gave *Kathas* at both gurdwaras. Sant Baba Sohan Singh Ji made his last visit in September 1966 when he accompanied Sant Baba Fateh Singh to Sembawang Sikh Temple. He passed on in 1972. Since then, Sembawang Sikh Temple, and now Gurdwara Sahib Yishun has always made special transport arrangements for its *Sangat* to travel to Malacca for the commemorative prayers (*Malacca Barsi*) every year, except during the recent COVID-19 period.



Sant Baba Sohan Singh Ji's Visit to Khalsa Crescent in 1955



### Sant Baba Fateh Singh Ji

Sant Baba Fateh Singh Ji, the Sikh religious leader who became the foremost campaigner for Sikh rights (*Punjabi Suba Morcha*) in post-independence India, visited Singapore in September 1966. His entourage included Jathedar Sardar Mohan Singh Ji Toor, Vice President of Shrimoni Akali Dal and Sardar Arjan Singh ji Badiraja, Secretary of Shrimoni Akali Dal. Sant Baba Fateh Singh Ji visited Sembawang Sikh Temple accompanied by Sant Sohan Singh Ji. Special arrangements were made for this visit given that two revered leaders of the Sikh faith were visiting the gurdwaras at the same time. The *Sangats* of both the Naval Police Temple and Sembawang Sikh Temple were there to welcome Sant Ji at Sembawang Sikh Temple. Sant Fateh Singh Ji not only performed *Katha* and *Kirtan* at the gurdwara but also hoisted the *Nishan Sahib* during the visit. Sant Baba Fateh Singh Ji, Sant Baba Sohan Singh Ji and the other two dignitaries also inscribed their names on a special yellow satin scroll pendent to commemorate the visit. Subsequently, Sant Baba Fateh Singh also visited Jalan Kayu Temple.

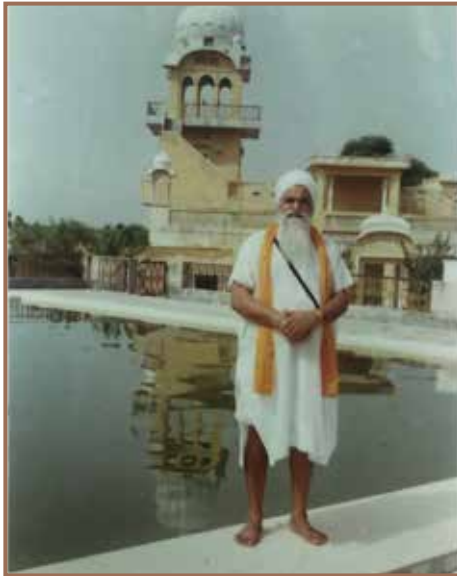


Sant Baba Fateh Singh Ji with Sant Baba Sohan Singh Ji at Sembawang Gurdwara in 1966



### Sant Baba Harnek Singh

Sant Baba Harnek Singh is one individual who has been closely associated with the northern Singapore Sikh Community. He influenced the lives of many members of the *Sangat*, guiding them in the *Sikhi* way of life and service to community. He was particularly active in guiding the Sembawang youth, getting them involved in and partaking in *sewa*. Despite his busy schedule in Punjab, he made several visits to the gurdwara, in the 1970s and then again in 1980 and 1983. Sardar Ranjit Singh remembers Sant Baba Harnek Singh's *Jatha* conducting *Kirtan* on a daily basis, either at Sembawang Gurdwara or at members' homes. Many devotees from all over Singapore came to listen to his *Kirtan* and *Katha* discourses. He was very attached to the *Sangat* and used to send his *ashirwad* (blessings) to the *Sangat*. A copy of his *ashirwad* after his visit in 1973 is attached at next page. When he heard about the potential resettlement issues confronting the gurdwara, he personally made a contribution for the cause and strongly motivated the Sembawang Sikh Community to take on the challenge of building a new temple. His contribution of \$3,100 (\$1000 being his personal contribution and another \$2,100 topped up by the *Istri Sat Sang*) has been appropriately acknowledged as the "Founding Donation" on the Donor Board displayed at the gurdwara.



Sant Baba Harnek Singh Ji

### Sant Nahar Singh Sunheran Wale

Sant Nahar Singh Ji, a frequent visitor to Singapore and Malaysia, also visited Sembawang Sikh Temple twice in the 1980s, where he performed *Katha* and shared messages of Sikhism from the *Gurbani*. Sant Nahar Singh Ji has been instrumental in building numerous schools, colleges, hospitals and Gurdwaras, including one in Machap, which is located between Ayer Hitam and Simpang Renggam along the old highway in the State of Johore.



Sant Nahar Singh Ji



Sant Nahar Singh Ji

### Sant Amar Singh

Sant Amar Singh of Nanaksar also visited Sembawang Sikh Temple twice, once in the 1960s and again in the 1980s. During his visits, in addition to *Kirtan* and *Katha*, he also conducted an *Amrit Sanchar* (Khande di Pahul) Ceremony, where many, young and old, participated.



Sant Amar Singh Ji

### Gurcharan Singh Tohra

Gurcharan Singh Tohra, another prominent Sikh leader in India, visited Gurdwara Sahib Yishun in mid-1980. He was the longest serving President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), a body he headed for 27 years. He was an orator, steeped in the Sikh lore and *Gurbani*. He was personally known to Sardar Tara Singh Hitashi, who hosted the visit for the benefit of the Sembawang *Sangat*. His visit drew a very large congregation from throughout Singapore.



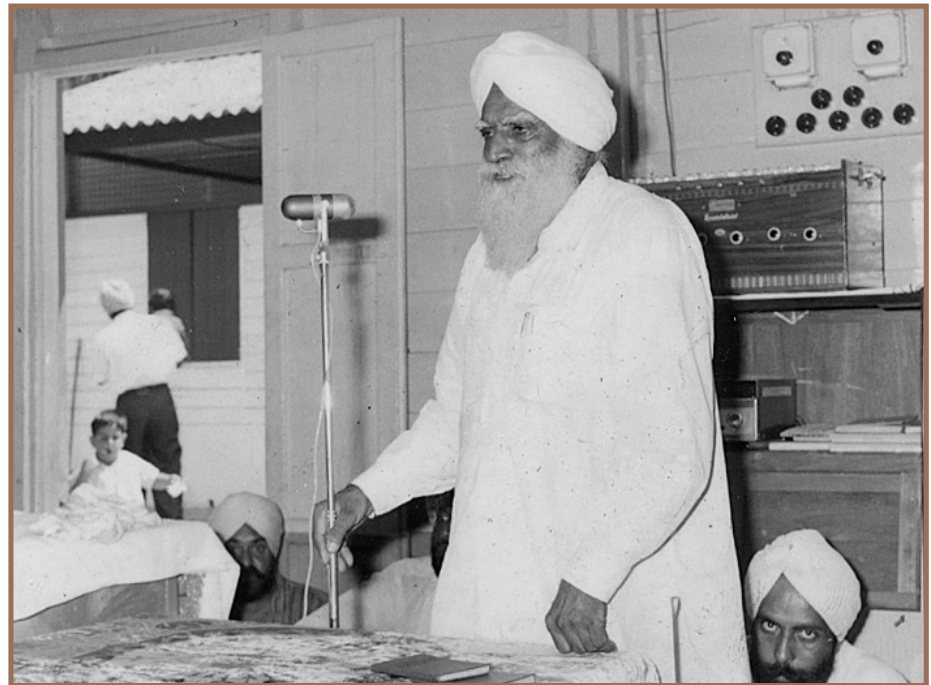
Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra, President SGPC (1980)



Letter of Appreciation from Gurcharan Singh Tohra - Aug 1980

### Giani Phuman Singh

*Giani* Phuman Singh, a long term active founder member of the Sikh Missionary Society, is well known for his *Parchars* and lectures on Sikhism in Singapore and Malaysia. Being closely associated with Sardar Tara Singh Hitashi, he was invited to deliver *Sikhi* lectures on several occasions at Sembawang Sikh Temple in the 1960s and 1970s.



Giani Phuman Singh

### Sant Singh Maskeen

*Giani* Sant Singh Maskeen was a renowned and venerated Sikh Scholar and theologian, known for his in-depth expertise of Gurmat and *Gurbani*. He authored more than a dozen books, and was given the title of *Panth Ratan*, the highest honour awarded by the *Akal Takht* to an individual for exceptional services to the Sikh cause and Mankind through the message of *Gurbani*. The *Sangat* of Sembawang Sikh Temple had the privilege of listening to him in person at the gurdwara in the 1960s.



Bhai Sant Singh Maskeen

### Giani Mahinder Singh Khalsa

*Giani* Mahinder Singh Khalsa, more affectionately known as Khalsa Ji, who shared a close relationship with the revered Sant Baba Sohan Singh Ji of Malacca, was a prominent personality in the corridors of Sikh Missionary work in Malaysia and Singapore. He visited the gurdwara a few times in the 1970s and 1980s, the last being in 1982, where he performed *Kirtan* and shared messages of Sikhism from the *Gurbani*. He was a very well respected and admired religious leader.



Giani Mahinder Singh Khalsa





## Others

According to Gurdwara records, there were several other prominent *Kirtankar* personalities who visited the Sembawang Sikh Temple. Some of the prominent *Katha* and *Kirtan* groups were those of *Giani* Harbans Singh Jagadri, Ragi Angad Singh Delhi Wale, Bhai Dharam Singh Ji Zakhmi, Bhai Ranjit Singh Bombay Wale, and prominent *Hazuri Ragis* from *Darbar Sahib*, such as Bhai Jaswant Singh Ji and Bhai Gopal Singh, to name a few. Bhai Gopal Singh Ji, who visited the Gurdwara twice in 1964 and 1967, is best remembered for his sweet and melodious *Kirtan* and *Katha* and discourses.



Ragi Harbans Singh  
Jagadari Wale



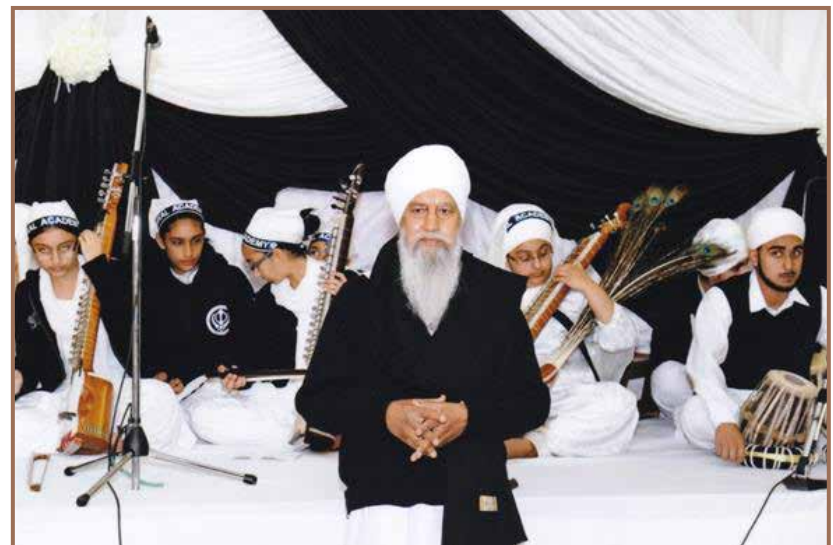
Bhai Gopal Singh Ji (Hazuri Ragi)



Ranjit Singh of Bombay performing with Gurcharan Singh of  
Katong on tabla and Satwant Singh "Ajit"

## Dr Khem Singh Gill Khaleke - Akal Academy Children's' Kirtan

Dr Khem Singh Gill (*Padma Bushan*), a prominent Indian academic and Vice Chancellor of Punjab Agricultural University, who was also Chairman of over 100 Akal Academies under his *Kalgidhar Trust*, made several visits to both Sembawang Sikh Temple and Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, where the Akal Academy's children performed *Kirtan*. Such visits, in addition to drawing large *Sangats*, also inspired many parents to enrol their children for *Kirtan* classes at the gurdwara.



Dr Khem Singh Gill Khaleke Akal Academy group

### Dya Singh (Australia)

Sardar Dya Singh, who hails from Malaysia, and now lives in Australia, is a renowned Sikh “gursangeet” exponent who has taken *gurbani* sangeet into the mainstream world music stage. He sings about spirituality in Punjabi with occasional English explanations, as well as blends traditional music with modern and traditional trends. He performed at Sembawang Sikh Temple on a few occasions in the 1990s.



### K. Deep (Kuldeep Singh) and Jagmohan Kaur

Many will remember the K. Deep and Jagmohan Kaur’s Punjabi Variety Show performance at Victoria Theatre in Singapore in the 1960s. Though they were no religious leaders as such but professional singers, the couple were invited to the gurdwara to recite a few *Dharmik Geets*. Some members today still have fond memories of them singing their popular religious recitations of ‘*Channa Cho Chann Gujri da Chann*’ at the gurdwara.



K Deep and Jagmohan Kaur

## WAZIRS OF OUR GURDWARAS

While our *Sangats* were blessed by visits of various Sikh religious personalities as discussed earlier, the *Sangat* was also well served by its own *Gianis* (priests) over the years. There is no doubt that the key personality in any gurdwara is always the *Giani* (term being used interchangeably with *Granthi* though there are slight differences between the two) and the associated *Kirtan Jatha*. The *Giani* is the religious leader or “*Wazir*” of the *Sangat*, organising the daily services, leading the prayers, such as *Ardas* or in singing (*Kirtan*) as well as reciting the holy scriptures from the *Guru Granth Sahib*, including conducting *Anand Karajs*, *Marg de Bhogs*, engagement ceremonies, *Gurpurabs* and *Akhand Paths*, etc. While in the earlier days, all that the gurdwara had was the *Giani*, who in addition to *Katha* also did the *Kirtan*, it is quite normal nowadays to have a separate *Kirtan Jatha* or the *Giani* himself, together with one or more individuals, constituting the *Kirtan Jatha*.

The *Gianis*, predominantly from Punjab, have come and gone after a few years, some staying for longer periods, based on the approved employment permits. Unfortunately, they are not accompanied by their families due to the prevailing immigration and employment laws. Hence, given their short stays and their upbringing, culture, belief sets, and their language, they are sometimes perceived as somewhat different from the local *Sangat*. But they all settle down fast and adapt well to the new surroundings, though their emotional connection with the *Sangat* does take time and effort.

All three gurdwaras, in particular the Naval Police Gurdwara and Sembawang Sikh Temple, which had a bigger membership base, were blessed to have very learned and prominent *Gianis* serving the *Sangat*, as highlighted in the subsequent paragraphs.

## GIANIS OF NAVAL BASE POLICE GURDWARA

From the early days of its establishment till the early 1950s, the Police Gurdwara was managed by the policemen themselves. *Langgar* was shared by all and *Granthi* and *Kirtan* duties were performed from among the servicemen. A few select policemen, usually Punjabi-educated and ranked personnel such as the *Hawaladar*, performed the *Granthi/Giani* duties while others performed the *Kirtan*, etc. They were exempted from their police duties on the days that they were tasked to perform the religious services at the gurdwara. One particular individual who deserves special mention is Bhai Channan Singh Dala who conducted most of the religious functions from the time of the establishment of the gurdwara till the early 1940s. According to Sardar Dharam Singh Ji, he was very spiritual and well-versed with the *Rehat Maryada*. The youth of the 1940s and 1950s, namely Dr Mukhtiar, Sarban, and Ajaib also fondly remember one Sardar Gurnam Singh, who not only performed *Granthi* duties then but also taught them Punjabi.

It was only around the mid-1950s, in line with the increase in families, that a full-time *Giani* was employed. He was provided with accommodation for his family as well as paid by the Police Force, with all the other entitlements as per the policemen, such as paid relief passages to India, etc. The first full-time priest to be appointed as *Giani* of the Police Temple was *Giani* Kehar Singh Ji, who served from around 1949 until 1955. He was an Army Veteran Priest, who took much interest in the youth. Sardar Ranjit Singh has fond memories of *Giani* Kehar Singh teaching him and others, namely Sardars Sarban, Harpal and Sarjit, *Gurmukhi* as well as the *Gurbani*.

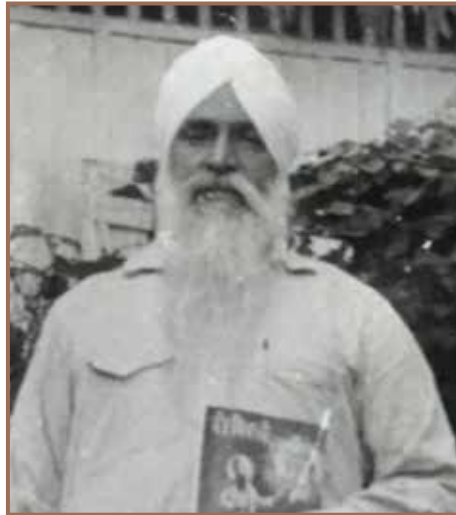


Giani Kehar Singh

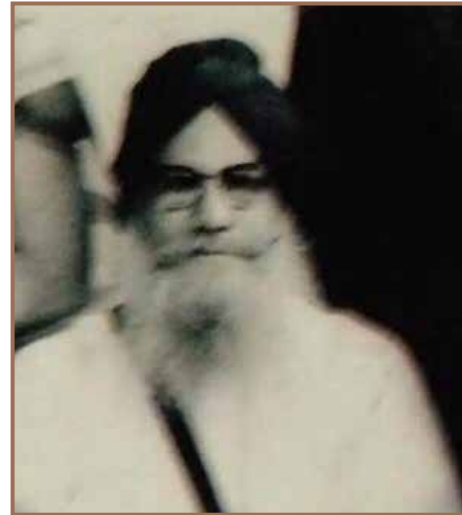
*Giani* Kehar Singh was succeeded by *Giani* Pritam Singh Ji, who served from 1956 until 1967, during the period of the temple functioning at Khalsa Crescent (Torpedo Barracks) and later at Rimau (View Road). When *Giani* Pritam Singh retired in 1967, he was replaced by *Giani* Tara Singh Ji, who served until the closure of the Naval Police Temple in 1972 following the disbandment of the Naval Police Force in 1971.



Giani Pritam Singh



Giani Pritam Singh Ji



Giani Tara Singh

*Giani* Pritam Singh not only conducted the religious services but could also do *Kirtan* with *tabla* and harmonium accompaniment by musically inclined policemen. He was also actively involved in teaching *Gurmukhi* to the children of the policemen. There were many among the children of those days who not only mastered Punjabi but became proficient in reciting the *Guru Granth Sahib*, including Sardar Atma Singh s/o Sardar Nand Singh (PC 63) and Bibis Nasib Kaur and Jarnail Kaur, daughters of Hakam Singh (PC 218), to name a few. Bibi Jarnail Kaur continues to partake in *path sewa* during *Akhand Paths* at Gurdwara Sahib Yishun even today. *Giani* Pritam Singh decided to retire in 1967 to join his son who had migrated from India to UK.

*Giani* Pritam Singh's successor, *Giani* Tara Singh, not only carried on with the teaching of *Gurmukhi* to the children but also started musical training for those interested in performing *Kirtan*. Both *Giani* Pritam Singh and *Giani* Tara Singh were learned *Gianis*, who lived the life they preached. They were held in high esteem by the Police Sikh community.

*Giani* Pritam Singh's daughter, Bibi Minder Kaur and *Giani* Tara Singh's daughter, Bibi Rashpal Kaur live in Singapore with their extended families and continue to be active members of the *Sangat* even today.

## KIRTAN SEWA BY SANGAT MEMBERS AT NAVAL POLICE GURDWARA

Special mention also needs to be made of those policemen entrusted to perform *Kirtan Sewa* together with the *Gianis*, especially from the 1950s until the closure of the temple in 1971. They were there every morning and evening on rotational duty to perform the *Japuji Sahib* and *Raehras Sahib* as well as perform at the Sunday *Jodh Melas* and *Gurpurabs*. They were all musically-talented individuals, namely Sardar Gurbachan Singh (PC 108) who used to sing and play the harmonium and he used to be accompanied by his son, Sardar Sant Singh Ji on the *tabla*. There was also Sardar Gurnam Singh (PC 297) who played the harmonium accompanied by his son on the *tabla*, and there was the special *Kirtan* duo, comprising of Sardar Piara Singh (PC 90), who was an expert in playing both the *dolki* and *tabla*, and his accompanying partner Sardar Ram Singh Ji (PC 166), who played the harmonium. One cannot also forget Sardar Santokh Singh (PC 201), another active *Kirtan* performer. Many still remember his melodious recitations of the Shabad “*Toon Mera Mata Toon Mera Pita*”. They were all so versatile that they could easily join with one another to partake in any religious singing activity. In short, they performed the *Kirtan* no different from any professional *Kirtan Jatha* and not only did they perform the *Kirtan* but were extremely suitable replacements of the *Giani* whenever he went on home leave to Punjab. There were occasions when Sardar Satwant Singh Ji and others from Sembawang Sikh Temple also performed *Kirtan* at the Police Gurdwara and vice versa.



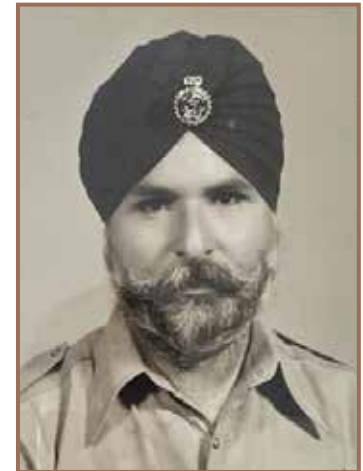
Sardar Gurbachan Singh (PC 108)



Sardar Gurnam Singh (PC 297)



Sardar Piara Singh (PC 90)



Sardar Santokh Singh (PC 201)

## GIANIS OF SEMBAWANG SIKH TEMPLE

As mentioned earlier, the Police Gurdwara had no problems in the conduct of religious activities, given the availability of several Sikh policemen who were well-versed to undertake the responsibilities until a full-time *Giani* was employed. The Sembawang Sikh Temple, however, given its limited membership, had to rely on professional priests to conduct the services, including *Path*, *Katha* and *Kirtan*. There were some members of the *Sangat* who assisted whenever necessary but it was the full-time priest who performed most of the services.

### **Giani Ganda Singh (1946 until 1958)**

The first full-time priest of Sembawang Sikh Temple was *Giani* Ganda Singh, who was from Taiping (Perak), where he had served as a *Giani* at a local gurdwara. He came over to Sembawang together with his family just after the Japanese Occupation. A relative of his, Sardar Atma Singh (CPL 45), who had been serving in the Naval Base Additional Police, had invited him over at the request of Sembawang Sikh Temple Management Committee, who were looking for a full-time priest. Given his maturity and spiritually-oriented life, he turned out to be the best pioneering priest that the gurdwara could hope for.

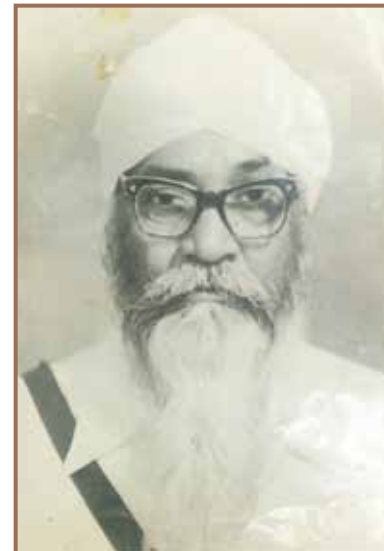
*Giani* Ganda Singh served from 1946 until the late 1950s. He was a very learned priest and lived the life that he preached. He was very well-respected by the Sembawang *Sangat*. He took a special interest in the youth, and his own children were actively involved in the gurdwara's activities. His sons, in particular, Sardars Piara Singh, Chattar Singh, Bhagat Singh, Amar Singh, Hari Singh and Dharam Singh, were all very active in Sembawang Sikh temple activities throughout their lives.

Given his seniority and popularity, *Giani* Ganda Singh was specially requested to assist at the Johor Sikh Temple around the mid-1950s when the temple was rebuilt. He travelled often to serve at the Johore Bahru Temple in addition to his fulfilling his responsibilities at Sembawang Sikh Temple. *Giani* Ganda Singh was a spiritual soul, passing away in 1967 while performing prayers at Patna Sahib in Bihar, India.

### **Giani Gurdial Singh (1959 to 1980)**

*Giani* Gurdial Singh, who took over from *Giani* Ganda Singh Ji in 1959, was another strong spiritually-oriented personality. He was the longest serving priest in Sembawang Sikh Temple, serving for 20 years from 1959 until 1980. He too lived the life that he preached. He was extremely steeped in *Gurbani* and took his duties very seriously. Retired Inspector Sarjit Singh remembers him as a *Giani* who went to great lengths to explain in simple terms the hymns and poems in the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

*Giani* Gurdial Singh paid great emphasis on the youth, always having words of encouragement for the *Naujawan Sabha* and being there for all the activities organised by them at the gurdwara. *Giani* Gurdial Singh Ji also taught many children how to play the musical instruments and several accompanied him on stage on numerous occasions, in particular, Sardar Amarjit Singh s/o Maghar Singh (SGT 23).



Giani Ganda Singh



Giani Gurdial Singh

### Giani Atma Singh Amol (1980 to 1981)

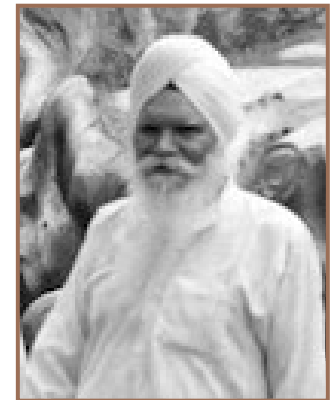
*Giani* Gurdial Singh's replacement was *Giani* Atma Singh Amol s/o Sarwan Singh. He arrived from Sarawak where he has served as priest of Gurdwara Kuching for over two years. However, he did a short stint of over a year as he had made prior arrangements to join another gurdwara in Malaysia.



Giani Atma Singh Amol

### Giani Inder Singh (1982 to 1986)

The gurdwara was left without a *Giani* for about a year until *Giani* Inder Singh s/o Partap Singh joined in late 1982. He served for over 4 years. Inder Singh was a very well-respected preacher. He had earlier served as a priest in Africa. The Gurdwara Management Committee reluctantly let him go in December 1986 when he was offered a *Giani* post in UK where his wife was permitted to accompany him, unlike the restrictive immigration rules in Singapore. In the words of Sardar Sarjit Singh, he was a great family-oriented person and a 'peoples' *Giani*'. According to Sardar Sarjit Singh, he not only used to make it a point to give *Saggan* from his own pocket to new-born babies as well as newly wedded couples, he also always offered milk to children whenever they sought his blessings.



Giani Inder Singh



Giani Inder Singh Joining Birthday Celebrations



Giani Inder Singh With Gurdwara Residents

### **Giani Avtar Singh Ji (1987 to 1990)**

*Giani Avtar Singh* joined the temple in early 1987 and served for over three years until early 1990. He was a very matured and learned priest, having served at Nanaksar, Punjab. Unfortunately, the gurdwara had to reluctantly let him go after three years as he had obtained approval for his family to migrate to Houston, Texas in the United States.

After *Giani Avtar Singh Ji* left, the gurdwara used to have two *Gianis* overlapping each other so as to avoid a situation of being left without a *Giani*, as happened after the departure of Atma Singh Amol in 1981. This arrangement carried on until the move to Gurdwara Sahib Yishun in 1995.



Giani Avtar Singh Nanaksar

### **Giani Baldev Singh Ji (October 1990 to 1994)**

*Giani Baldev Singh Ji* was a close associate of Sant Baba Harnek Singh Ji, who had been closely associated with the gurdwara in the 1970s and early 1980s. *Giani Baldev Singh Ji*, who had accompanied Sant Baba Harnek Singh Ji on his earlier trips, followed in his footsteps by being closely associated with the Gurdwara. He served for four years from 1990 to 1994 at Sembawang Sikh Temple.



Giani Baldev Singh

### **Giani Mokham Singh Ji (1990 to 1993)**

*Giani Mokham Singh* took over from January 1990 and served until 1993. He served together with *Giani Baldev Singh Ji*. The two were a good combination in performing *Kirtan* and also taught *tabla* and harmonium to the younger children.



Giani Mokham Singh



## KIRTAN SEWA BY SANGAT MEMBERS AT SEMBAWANG SIKH TEMPLE

The *Gianis*, as discussed earlier, played a key role in most religious activities as there were no professional *Kirtan Jathas* as are common in our gurdwaras today. There were, however, a handful of members of the Sembawang *Sangat*, who performed *Kirtan* on their own or were active in assisting the *Gianis*, especially so in providing support in playing the harmonium and *dolki* or *tabla* during *Kirtan*.

In the early days, there were occasions when Sardar Jaswant Singh used to perform the uniquely 'Classical *Kirtan Style*' of *Kirtan*, as described by Sardars Sukhjinder Singh and Sarjit Singh. Sardar Jaswant Singh Ji, who lived in close proximity to the temple, was an avid reader and a gifted singer. Sardar Jaswant Singh's son, Sardar Parampal Singh Ji has continued on his father's legacy and performs regularly at various gurdwara's Jhod Melas even today, including at Gurdwara Sahib Yishun.

Another popular *Kirtan Jatha* group, led by Sardar Ranjit Singh's father-in-law Sardar Sohan Singh (father of Bibi Daljeet Kaur) performed quite often at Sembawang Sikh Temple. Sardar Sohan Singh Josh was the son of Bhai Pall Singh of Khalsa Dewan Malaya, Pusing. Bhai Pall Singh and Bhai Badan Singh were renowned leading members of the *Dhadi Jatha* (accompanied with sarangi) who performed all over Malaya in the 1920s. The elder son Sardar Sohan Singh Ji played the *tabla*, while his younger brother, Sardar Jaswant Singh Ji, and Sardar Teja Singh played the harmonium. Given their daughter's linkage with the Sembawang community, they were often invited to perform at Sembawang Sikh Temple.

There were also other active participants such as Sardar Nirmal Singh, who used to play the harmonium and Sardar Amarjit Singh who used to play the *tabla*. They used to be very regular in providing accompaniment to *Giani* Gurdial Singh Ji. Sardar Amarjit Singh is the younger brother of Sardars Dharam Singh and Surjit Singh, who have migrated to Canada. Sardar Satwant Singh Ajit, another gifted musician and poet, also often took the *Kirtan* stage with his son Sardar Gurmit Singh Ji as well as his daughter Bibi Manjit Kaur Ji during *Gurpurabs*.



Sardar Jaswant Singh



Sardar Sohan Singh Josh



Giani Gurdial Singh With Nirmal Singh & Amarjit Singh

## GIANIS OF GURDWARA SAHIB YISHUN

With the two gurdwaras merging into one in 1995, the serving *Gianis* of both gurdwaras became the first two official *Gianis* of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. Over the years, with the *Sangat* increasing in size, the need for more *Gianis* became apparent, not just for the normal *Kirtan* and *Katha* at gurdwara but also to undertake prayers at individual member homes and other related requirements. There was no formal *Kirtan Jatha* until 2012 (which lasted for two years) and the *Gianis*, who joined and left at different time frames before that period and after, given their proficiency and versatility in playing the various musical instruments, were nevertheless able to undertake *Kirtan* duties effectively. In 2021, a full proper *Kirtan Jatha* was brought in for the purpose.

### **Giani Kora Singh Ji (1993 to 1998) and Giani Baljit Singh Ji (1995 to December 1996)**

*Giani* Kora Singh joined Sembawang Sikh Temple in 1993, replacing *Giani* Mokham Singh Ji and then served together with *Giani* Baldev Singh Ji who left in 1994. At time of amalgamation of the two gurdwaras into Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, he together with *Giani* Baljit Singh of Jalan Kayu became the first two *Gianis* of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. *Giani* Baljit Singh left in November 1996 while Kora Singh served until 1998.



Giani Kora Singh



Giani Baljit Singh

### **Giani Jasbeer Singh Ji (1994 to 1999)**

*Giani* Jasbeer Singh Ji deserves special mention. He joined the Sembawang Sikh Temple in early 1994 at a crucial time when donations were being sought for the new Gurdwara Sahib Yishun that was being constructed and when the *Sangat* was actively involved in various fund-raising activities. Given the financial constraints faced by temple, he agreed to join at a salary of just \$100 and managed to survive by *bheta* or contributions from the public. He served as the Manager of the gurdwara, playing a key role in supporting the Temple Management Committee and Building Fund Committee in raising funds for the temple. For his dedicated and loyal services rendered to Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, our Navalites in Sydney agreed to sponsor him there where he continues to serve as Manager of Parklea Gurdwara in Sydney, Australia.



Giani Jasbeer Singh

**Giani Karam Singh Ji (1996 to 1998)**

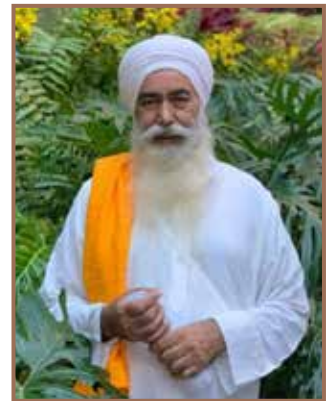
*Giani* Karam Singh Ji served from May 1996 onwards. He replaced *Giani* Baljit Singh who left in November 1996. He was good in performing both *Kirtan* as well as delivering the *Katha*.

**Giani Gurmail Singh (April 1997 to September 1998)**

*Giani* Gurmail Singh Ji did a short stint of over a year at the gurdwara. As he managed to get another offer at a UK gurdwara in the later part of 1998, the Management Committee reluctantly let him go.

**Giani Baldev Singh Ji (1998 to 2001)**

*Giani* Baldev Singh Ji, another acquaintance of Sant Harnek Singh Ji, served at Gurdwara Sahib Yishun for three years. He was very well-acquainted with the *Sangat*, having visited Sembawang Gurdwara previously with Sant Harnek Singh Ji and was of great assistance in guiding the younger priests.



Giani Baldev Singh

**Giani Gursewak Singh Ji (1998 to 2005)**

*Giani* Gursewak Singh served from September 1998 to June 2005. He took over from *Giani* Kora Singh Ji. He served together with *Giani* Baldev Singh and is one of the longest-serving *Gianis* of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, serving the *Sangat* for almost seven years. After leaving the gurdwara, he migrated to Canada.



Giani Gursewak Singh

### **Giani Sukhwinder Singh Ji (Sangatpura) (1999 to 2007 and 2010 to 2012)**

*Giani* Sukhwinder is the longest serving *Giani*, who did two tours of duty at Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, totalling a period of over nine years. Prior to joining Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, he had served as Hazoori Ragi at Takht Sri Dhamdama Sahib, Talwandi Sabo, Bathinda, Punjab. An extremely learned and humble *Giani*, he was very well-respected by the *Sangat*. After serving over seven years during his first stint, he had to return to Punjab to handle some family matters and he re-joined the gurdwara three years later to serve for another two years as Head Priest. The *Sangat* reluctantly bid farewell to him in later part of 2012 when he was offered a *Giani* post at Austral Gurdwara in Australia.



Giani Sukhwinder Singh  
Sangatpura

### **Giani Himmat Singh Ji (2005 to 2013)**

Another long serving *Giani* of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, who served for about eight years is *Giani* Himmat Singh. *Giani* Himmat Singh was a close associate of *Giani* Sukhwinder Singh Ji, and they both worked-well in serving the *Sangat*. He also worked extremely well with the new *Gianis* who joined the gurdwara during the period. He was very versatile, not only being proficient in *Kirtan* and *Katha* but also able to assist in the *Langgar Sewa*. He covered the *Langgari* duties whenever needed, especially when Sardar Gopal Singh went to Punjab on home leave. He was very well-respected by the *Sangat*. He was very gifted and a rare breed indeed. After leaving the gurdwara, he migrated to Australia where he has continued to perform similar services at a gurdwara there.



Giani Himmat Singh

### **Gianis Phaldeep Singh Ji, Harneik Singh and Lakhwinder Singh Ji (From 2005 to 2009)**

*Giani* Phaldeep Singh served as Head *Giani* for five years from March 2005 until March 2010. He took over from *Giani* Gursewak Singh Ji, who migrated to Canada. He served together with *Giani* Himmat Singh Ji and was joined later by two other *Gianis*, namely, Harnaik Singh Ji and Lakhwinder Singh Ji in 2006. This duo joined *Giani* Phaldeep Singh Ji to form the *Kirtan Jatha*. *Giani* Harnaikh served for two years from November 2006 until December 2008, while *Giani* Lakhwinder Singh Ji continued to serve until April 2009. *Giani* Phaldeep Singh left the gurdwara in 2010 and went on to serve in Malaysia, at the Kuala Lumpur and Kota Baru temples for six years before migrating to the UK.



Giani Phaldeep Singh



Giani Harneik Singh



Giani Lakhwinder Singh

### **Giani Balwinder Singh Ji**

*Giani* Balwinder Singh served Gurdwara Sahib Yishun for two years from Jun 2010 until May 2012. He took over from *Giani* Sukhwinder Singh Ji (Sangatpura) who migrated to Australia.

### **Giani Sukhwinder Singh Ji (Jalandar) and Kirtan Jatha**

*Giani* Sukhwinder Singh Ji is another prominent *Giani* Ji who gave eight years of service to Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, serving from February 2012 until February 2020 as Head Priest. He replaced *Giani* Balwinder Singh Ji. A very humble and unassuming personality, he was very well-respected by the *Sangat*. Not only was he very good in performing *Kirtan*, he is also best remembered for his melodious rendition of the daily *Hukam Nama*, a task that used to be entrusted to him especially during the annual *Naam Ras Kirtan Darbar* in Singapore.

*Giani* Sukhwinder Singh came together with *Giani* Sukhdev Singh Ji and *Giani* Gurinderpal Singh Ji as part of a proper *Kirtan Jatha*.

The trio performed well as a *Kirtan Jatha* and serving *Giani* Himmat Singh also complemented well whenever required until he left in 2013. Subsequently, in 2016, when *Giani* Sukhdev Singh Ji and *Giani* Gurinderpal Singh Ji decided to migrate to Canada, and they were replaced by *Giani* Aashpal Singh Ji (who joined in 2016 and left in 2018) and *Giani* Harpreet Singh Ji Chawla (who joined in 2018 and left in 2019). *Giani* Sukhwinder Singh Ji continued to serve throughout until February 2020 when he decided to migrate to the USA. He is currently performing *sewa* as Head Priest at Gurdwara Sikh *Sangat*, Texas, USA.



Giani Sukhwinder Singh Jalandhar



Giani Sukhdev Singh



Giani Gurinderpal Singh



Giani Ashpal Singh



Giani Harpreet Singh Chawla

### **Giani Sandeep Singh Ji**

He joined in November 2018 and served only for a year as he had to leave due to some family commitments back home. He left in December 2019. Despite his short stay, he connected very well with the *sangat*.



Giani Sandeep Singh

### **OUR SERVING HEAD GIANI - GIANI SATNAM SINGH JI**

Our serving Head *Giani* today is *Giani* Satnam Singh Ji. He is a learned priest, having obtained a Master in Religious Studies from Punjab University, Patiala in 2009. He served as Head *Granthi* and *Parcharak* at Sri Guru Harkrishan Sahib Gurdwara, Khana (Ludhiana) from 2009 until 2014, after which he joined Gurdwara Sahib Yishun and has been serving ever since. He is assisted by *Giani* Makhan Singh Ji, who joined in Jun 2019. *Giani* Makhan Singh has a diploma in *Gurmat Sangeet* from Sikh Missionary College Ludhiana and has diplomas in musical instruments, including *Tanti Saaj Dil Ruba*.



Giani Satnam Singh



Giani Makhan Singh

## OUR SERVING KIRTAN JATHA (SINCE MARCH 2021)

*Giani* Baljinder Singh, the Head Raghi, has a Masters in Gurmat Sangeet from Patiala University as well as several diplomas in various musical instruments, including harmonium and *tabla*. He served as a Music Teacher at Akal Academy Sherpur and Baroo Sahib from 2011 to 2015 and served as Head Raghi at Sri Guru Singh Sabha Patiala from 2015 till 2019. His *Kirtan Jatha* joined Gurdwara Sahib Yishun in Mar 2021. He is accompanied by *Giani* Gurpreet Singh, who possesses a Diploma in Sangeet from *Guru Granth Sahib* Vidhya Centre, Chandigarh. He served in Gurdwara Sahib Preet Nagar Patiala. He is proficient in harmonium. The third member of the *Kirtan Jatha* is Sukhbir Singh, who has a Diploma in Sangeet, specialising in *Tabla*. He served at Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha Patiala.



Hazoori Ragi Jatha

## OUR LANGGAR SEWARDARS

Though preparation of *langgar* in the earlier days used to be undertaken by members of the *Sangat* in all temples, it has become necessary over the years to employ full-time *Sewardars* for the purpose. While members of the *Sangat* continue to assist in *langgar* preparation, it is understandable that a full-time person be entrusted with the overall responsibility, given the increasing number of programmes at temples and the need to take stock of rations and supplies. Gurdwara Sahib Yishun has been engaging full-time *Sewardars* for the purpose since 1996. The first full-time *sewardar* was Sardar Jagtar Singh who served from January 1996 until July 2001. He was succeeded by Bhai Gopal Singh who served from July 2001 until July 2007, when he had to return to India to attend to family matters. He was succeeded by Bhai Didar Singh who served for three years from July 2007 until August 2010. Bhai Gopal Singh came back to Gurdwara Sahib Yishun again in August 2010 and has been serving since then. Special mention needs to be made of *Giani* Himmat Singh, who served from 2005 until 2013 and who stepped in for the *langgari sewadars* whenever they went on home leave to Punjab during his period of service.



Sardar Jagtar Singh



Sardar Didar Singh



Sardar Smagh Gopal Singh



# CHAPTER 5

## TRIBUTE TO OUR COMMUNITY'S PIONEERS AND SEWADARS

In earlier chapters, we recollected the brief history of the predecessor gurdwaras of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. As is evident, numerous individuals were involved in their establishment and management over the years. Without them laying the strong foundations, there would have been no Gurdwara Sahib Yishun today. What better way then but to pay tribute to the pioneers of these gurdwaras whose legacies continue to guide the *Sangat* today. Among the pioneers were a few families as well as specific individuals who played key roles in the early days of our gurdwaras, as highlighted in the subsequent paragraphs but not in any order of precedence and/or importance.

### Sardar Bagga Singh Ji's Family – Involvement in all Three Temples

One particular prominent family is that of Bagga Singh Sidhu, who came from Bhatinda region of Punjab to Malacca around 1916, where he served in the Straits Settlements Police. He was transferred to the Straits Settlements Police in Singapore in 1919 where he served until around 1930, when he returned to Malacca with the rank of *Subedar*. He passed on in 1933. Though he had no direct role in the Naval Base area, all his four sons, who spent their childhood days at the Sepoy Lines in Pearls Hill, were to be actively involved in the two gurdwaras at the Naval Base area, namely Sardar Jangeer Singh Ji and Sardar Angad Singh Ji in the Naval Base Police Gurdwara and Sardar Darshan Singh Ji and Sardar Jora Singh Ji in Sembawang Sikh Temple.



Sardar Bagga Singh

### ASP Jangeer Singh Ji

Sardar Jangeer Singh Ji was a legendary figure in the Naval Base. He was born in India and accompanied his father to Penang at the age of five in 1916. Sardar Jangeer Singh did his schooling in Singapore at Outram School and Raffles Institution, and at the age of 17 joined the Federated Malay States Railways in 1928 as a Clerical Officer and then switched to Singapore Vehicles Department (predecessor of Registry of Vehicles). In 1930, a few months before his father was posted to Malacca, he joined the Straits Settlements Police, where he served until 1938 with the rank of *Subedar*. Just prior to the Naval Base Police Force being gazetted by Order-in-Council by the Governor of the Straits Settlements and given the same powers as the Straits Settlements Police in 1939, Sardar Jangeer Singh was chosen to head the Sikh Contingent in the Naval Base Police. As elaborated in Chapter 1, he was to make several trips to then Malaya and India to recruit Sikh policemen for the Naval Police Force. Being the most senior Sikh Police Officer, Sardar Jangeer Singh served as the President of the Police Sikh Temple throughout his years of service in the Naval Police Force until his retirement at the end of 1961. In 1960, Sardar Jangeer



ASP Jangeer Singh

Singh was specially chosen by the Commander-in-Chief Far East to assist in the reorganisation of the Sri Lankan Police Force at HMS Highflyer Base in Welisars Ceylon, for which he was highly commended. After his retirement, Sardar Jangeer Singh served for another four years as Manager of the Royal Singapore Yatch Club until mid-1965, when he migrated to the UK. Sardar Jangeer Singh was a very well-respected individual who went out of the way to protect the interests of all the Sikh Policemen, especially those without formal education. He paid special attention to the youth, encouraging and motivating them to explore other fields rather than serving in the Police Force where advancement opportunities were then rather limited. He was often present at *Jhod Melas* where all policemen were expected to come together with their families.

### **Inspector Angad Singh Ji**

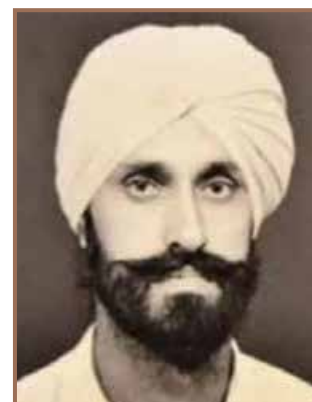
Sardar Angad Singh Ji, following the footsteps of the elder brother, Sardar Jangeer Singh Ji, also joined the Naval Base Police when the Police Force was reorganised after the Second World War. He was recruited directly as an Inspector. When ASP Jangeer Singh retired in 1961, Inspector Angad Singh replaced him as President of Police Gurdwara. He was five years younger than ASP Jangeer Singh, and very much associated with the youth, namely Dr Mukhtiar Singh Ji, Dr Kewal Singh Ji, educationists Sarban Singh and Ranjit Singh, and Sardars Naginder Singh and Mohinder Singh, to name but a few, who have fond memories of spending time with him. Inspector Angad Singh Ji, unfortunately, passed on in 1966 at a relatively young age of 46. His children have remained active in Sembawang Sikh Temple and Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, especially his son, Sardar Manmohan Singh, who has served in several Management Committees.



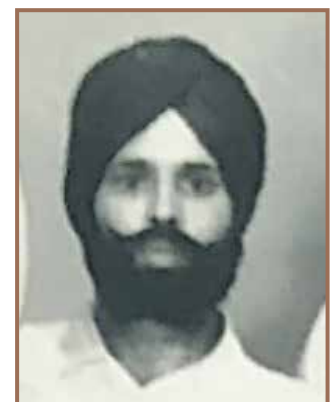
Inspector Angad Singh

### **Sardars Darshan Singh Ji and Jora Singh Ji**

Sardars Darshan Singh Ji and Jora Singh Ji, unlike their two brothers, Sardar Jangeer Singh and Sardar Angad Singh, who both joined the Naval Police Force, took a civilian career route. Sardar Darshan Singh Ji first joined the Singapore Postal Services, and after several years of service, switched to being a Clerical Officer at the H.M. Dockyard. He was very active in Sembawang Sikh Temple from the 1960s, serving in the Management Committee in the 1970s and 1980s, including holding post of President of Sembawang Sikh Temple from 1980 to 1988. Sardar Jora Singh Ji, who also worked at the British Dockyard, was active in Sembawang Sikh Temple, including serving in the Management Committee. Sardar Darshan Singh Ji's children have remained active in keeping his legacy of *sewa* alive at Gurdwara Sahib Yishun today.



Sardar Darshan Singh



Sardar Jora Singh

### Sardar Hira Singh Ji - Founder-President of Sembawang Sikh Temple

Sardar Hira Singh was the founding President of Sembawang Sikh Temple. It was he, together with Sardars Kishan Singh, Kajan Singh, and the father and son duo, Sardars Santa Singh and Tara Singh, who were actively involved in setting up the Sembawang Sikh Temple in 1936. According to some accounts, he had served in the British Army before settling in Singapore. He was employed as a watchman at Canberra School in Sembawang after doing a short stint in the Naval Base that was then being set up. He was actively involved in increasing the membership of the gurdwara in its early days and arranging for the musical instruments for *Kirtan*. According to Sardar Dharam Singh, immediately upon renting the room for the gurdwara, he arranged for the installation of the *Guru Granth Sahib Ji* and provision of basic *Kirtan* items such as the *dolki* and *shenna* while the *chimta* and harmonium came two weeks later. During the Japanese Occupation, he together with Kishan Singh and Santa Singh, played a key role in keeping the gurdwara fully operational, including providing assistance to various people in need, especially the widows and their children. He was a very well-respected individual, one who went out of the way to ensure that community interests took priority. Sardar Sukhjinder Singh also has fond memories of the community spirit of Sardar Hira Singh. According to him, when his elder sister got married in 1959, it was Hira Singh who arranged for the *Janj* (bridegroom group) to be accommodated in Canberra School, where Hira Singh personally arranged for charpoy beds to be collected from various homes for the purpose. Sardar Hira Singh returned to India with his family in the early 1960s.



Sardar Hira Singh

### Sardar Santa Singh Ji's Family (Involvement in Sembawang Sikh Temple and Gurdwara Sahib Yishun)

Sardar Santa Singh arrived in Singapore sometime in 1929, accompanied by his elder son, Sardar Tara Singh Hitaishi, who was about 15 years old. He set up a grocery and provision shop called 'Akali Trading Agency' outside the new Naval Base that was being then built. He supplied provisions to the policemen inside the Naval Base as well as those residing outside of the Naval Base. He was a respected member of the small Sikh community. He and all the civilian Sikhs became members of the first small gurdwara built by the Additional Police Constables but when new security constraints were imposed over the years, they decided to open another gurdwara outside the Naval Base. He chaired a few meetings held at his shop and provided guidance on the establishment of the gurdwara. Given his busy schedule in running his new business, he encouraged Hira Singh to take the lead with his son, Tara Singh serving as the Secretary. During the Japanese Occupation period, he worked closely with Hira Singh and Kishan Singh to provide the necessary assistance to those in need. During the latter part of the Japanese Occupation, he took over the leadership of the gurdwara from 1943 to 1945. He continued to assist the subsequent Management Committees until he decided to return to India in 1950 where he remained until the 1960s. He came back to Singapore in 1972 and passed on in 1984.

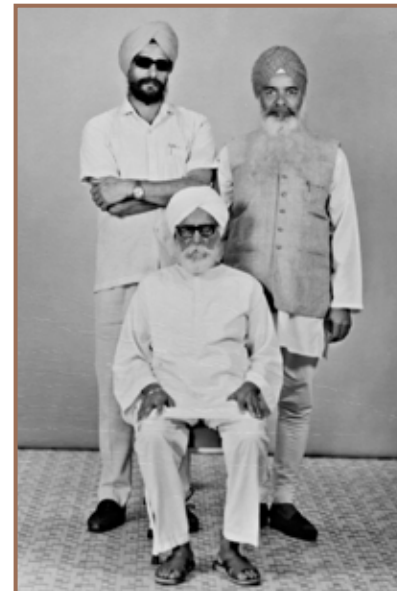


Photo of Sardar Founder Member Santa Singh with his two sons, Sardars Tara Singh Hitaishi and Sardar Satwant Singh Ajit

### Sardar Tara Singh Ji Hitaishi

Sardar Tara Singh Hitaishi was a prominent member of not just the Sembawang Sikh Community but one who played an active role in the Singaporean Sikh community at large and to some extent, even the Malaysian Sikh community. “Tara” is a word originating from Sanskrit, meaning “star”, and it symbolises the light of the soul; and Tara Singh lived an exceptionally remarkable life of spirituality. While in his early 20s, he was already actively involved in setting up the Sembawang Sikh Temple, where he held the post of Secretary for seven years; and at the age of 26, he was the founder-member of the Sikh Missionary Tract Society, Malaya in 1941. In the 1950s, he participated in several conferences on Sikhism in Malaya, including the first ever *Granthi* training course held in Tatt Khalsa Diwan Selangor in 1955.

In the 1960s, he again became actively involved in Sembawang Sikh Temple, holding post of Secretary for several years, during which period he arranged for the visits of several prominent Sikh preachers and leaders through his connections with the Akalis in Punjab, including Sant Amar Singh Ji, Sant Singh Maskeen, and *Ragis* Bhai Gopal Singh Ji and Bhai Angad Singh Ji, to name a few. Tara Singh was a prolific writer and a historian. He contributed regularly on Sikh matters to *Navjwan Press* as well as gave lectures on on-going developments in India, especially during the period of *Punjabi Subha*. He also authored several books in Punjabi, including one on the life of Sant Sohan Singh Ji Malacca (titled *Safal Jeewan*), *History of Khalsa Dharmak Sabha (1924-1983)*, *History of Negeri Sembilan Sikhs* commissioned by Datuk Mahima Singh, *Pardes Bania Des* and *Hitashi Bal Bodh*, to name but a few. According to Sardar Dharam Singh, he also prepared a simple Punjabi-Malay Dictionary for new Sikh immigrants to understand basic communication in the Malay Language.

Towards the later period of his life, he devoted his time to teaching *Kirtan* to children as well as recitation of the Holy Scriptures to the elderly. After spending his whole adult life in Singapore, he returned to Punjab in 1992 where he passed on that same year at the age of 77. His children, Sukdarshan and Sukhjinder Singh, also played active roles in the Temple Management Committee, including overseeing the *Naujawan Sabha*.



Sardar Tara Singh Hitaishi



Sukdarshan and Harinder with Satwant Singh

### Sardar Satwant Singh 'Ajit' Ji

He is the younger son of Santa Singh. He arrived in Singapore in 1937 to join his father, Santa Singh and brother, Tara Singh Hitaishi, to help in the running of a provision shop. In addition to helping his father at the shop, he also assisted at the Sembawang Sikh Temple, where his father and brother had been actively involved in setting up the gurdwara in 1936. When the Second World War broke out, he joined the Indian National Army (INA) set up by Subash Chandra Bose, and served alongside other INA soldiers in Rangoon. After the war, Ajit Singh returned to India and brought his wife and family to Singapore. They settled in Sembawang, where they raised their six children.

He served in the Sembawang Sikh Temple Management Committees for many years, including holding the position of Secretary for several years. Satwant Singh was a prolific writer, following the footsteps of his elder brother, Tara Singh Hitaishi. He also regularly contributed articles to the Punjabi newspaper *Navjivan Press*. He was also an accomplished orator and poet, having written numerous poems in his lifetime. He often participated in poetry writing and reciting competitions (*Kavi Darbar*) in Singapore and Malaysia and achieved accolades for his amazing work. Many still remember his *Sikhyas* and *Sheras* (elaborated further in next chapter) recited at marriages in those days. Sardar Amarjit Singh shared a handwritten copy of a *Sehra* by Sardar Satwant Singh Ajit written especially for Sukhdarshan Singh's (Satwant Singh's nephew) wedding in 1970, which was read by Amarjit on the auspicious day. There is also another *Sehra*, titled *Mahabir Sehra* which was written by Satwant Singh Ajit for Dr Manmohan Singh Grewal's son, Mahabir's wedding in Johore Bahru Temple on 20 December 1964.

He was actively involved, together with Sardar Dharam Singh, in getting the youth to set up the Nauwjawan Sabha in the early 1950s and subsequently organising religious as well as cultural activities for them. These included *Samelans*, social outings, dramas and *Kirtan* classes. The *Kirtan* groups that he set up were given opportunities to perform at various religious celebrations across Singapore and Malaysia. He used to organise *Kavi Darbars* for the youth, in addition to various other activities during *Gurpurabs*.

Sardar Ajit Singh remained active until poor health prevented him from contributing further. He passed on in April 2007 at the age of 89. Sardar Ajit Singh's children continued to play active roles in the Gurdwara Management Committees. His elder son, Sardar Jagdev Singh, held the post of President of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun for eight years while his younger son served as Auditor for several years in Sembawang Sikh Temple. Today his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren remain active in keeping his legacy alive.



Sardar Satwant Singh "Ajit"



Gurnam Singh and Satwant Singh performing Kirtan

### **Giani Baba Ganda Singh Ji's family (Involvement in Three Temples)**

Another prominent family is that of *Giani* Ganda Singh, who came over to Singapore after the Second World War. Baba Ganda Singh was the first priest of Sembawang Sikh Temple, as elaborated separately under chapter 4 on religious leaders. The members of his family, just like the other pioneering families, became actively involved in the Sembawang Sikh Temple as well as the Naval Police Temple. While two of his sons, namely Bhagat Singh and Hari Singh, served in the Naval Police Force and were active at the gurdwara there, his two other sons, namely Chattar Singh and Amar Singh, were active in Sembawang Sikh Temple.



Giani Ganda Singh

### **Sardar Bhagat Singh Ji and Sardar Hari Singh Ji**

Sardar Bhagat Singh Ji joined the Naval Base Police in the early 1950s and soon attained the rank of Inspector. He took over as President of Naval Police Temple after the demise of Sardar Angad Singh Ji in 1966 and served until the Police Force was disbanded in 1971. Subsequently, he started his own security services business but continued to remain active at both Sembawang Sikh Temple and Gurdwara Sahib Yishun.

Sardar Hari Singh Ji followed the footsteps of Sardar Bhagat Singh Ji. He joined the Naval Police Force in the mid-1950s, where he held the rank of Sergeant. He remained active at Sembawang Sikh Temple after the disbandment of the Naval Police Force in 1971.



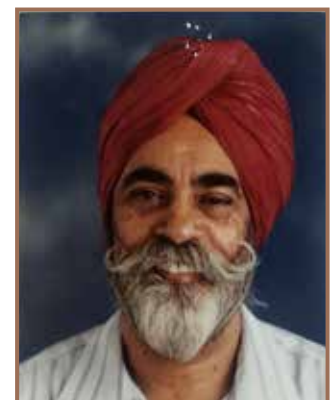
Inspector Bhagat Singh

### **Sardar Chattar Singh Ji and Sardar Amar Singh Ji**

Sardar Chattar Singh Ji was the eldest son of Baba Ganda Singh and played a very active role in both Sembawang Sikh Temple as well as in Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, holding various positions in Management Committees of both gurdwaras as well as playing an active role in the Building Committee. He was a very simple and humble religious man, who also performed *Kirtan* at gurdwara quite regularly as well as performed *Path sewa* during *Akhand Paths*.



Sardar Chattar Singh  
Chohla Sahib



Sardar Amar Singh Chohla Sahib

According to his nephew, Sardar Mukhtiar Singh, his Mamaji, Chattar Singh was the one who looked after him and his brother Avtar Singh, not only paying for their education but also looking after their other needs. Sardar Chattar Singh was a very enterprising man. After work in the Naval Base, where he initially worked as an electrician, he would go to Nachiappa Brothers Shop in Jalan Kedai, where he would further sharpen his skills in repairing various electrical items. Having acquired the skills, he opened his own electrical shop called 'Singh Radio and Electrical Service' just across the road facing Sembawang Post Office. His brothers, Sardar Amar Singh Ji and Sardar Dharam Singh Ji, also gave a helping hand after work.

Sardar Amar Singh followed the footsteps of his elder brother, Sardar Chattar Singh Ji, where he also served in several Management Committees of Sembawang Sikh Temple over the years. Today, Sardar Chattar Singh's sons remain active at Gurdwara Sahib Yishun.

### **Sardar Gurdial Singh Ji's Family (SGT 14) - Involvement in Three Temples**

Sardar Gurdial Singh (SGT 14) was a very respected and humble senior member of the Naval Base/Sembawang Sikh Community. Then there were no Management Committees in the Police Gurdwara, with the President entrusting responsible persons to undertake specific duties, such as finances, *langgar* and general maintenances, etc. Sardar Gurdial Singh was deemed so trustworthy that he was appointed the Khazanچی or Treasurer of the gurdwara for many years, in the pre-war as well as post-war times, so much so that he was always fondly referred to as Khazanچی Sahib with some forgetting his real name. Khazanچی Sahib held this responsibility for as long as people can remember and he did such a great job that it was never passed on to anyone else until the closure of the gurdwara. He was a familiar sight at every *Gurpurab* and a role model to others, always helping many of the uneducated policemen in whatever assistance required. After the Police Force was disbanded, he continued to actively serve at Sembawang Sikh Temple until he passed on in 1976.

His sons, Sardars Sarban Singh and Ajmer Singh, continued the legacy of Sardar Gurdial Singh by their *sewa* at both the Sembawang Sikh Temple and later, at Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, where they were actively involved in the Building Fund Committee



Gurdial Singh SGT 14



Master Sarban Singh



Ajmer Singh



as they served in several Management Committees. Sarban Singh also played an important role in the Singapore Khalsa Association where he headed the Education Committee and continues to be active at Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. The younger brother, Ajmer Singh is best remembered by *Sangat* for making transport and accommodation arrangements for the annual Sant Sohan Singh *Barsis* in Malacca. He last held the post of Vice President of the gurdwara in 2008/2009 when he migrated to Canada, where he passed on in 2017.

### Sardar Maghar Singh Ji's Family (Involvement in Two Temples)

Sardar Maghar Singh Ji was one of the pioneers of the Naval Police Force. He joined in 1931 and retired almost 30 years later in 1960. He was assigned the Police Number 23 and he held the rank of Sergeant. Upon retirement, his family stayed at the Sembawang Gurdwara accommodation at the rear until 1962, when they purchased an old house just adjacent to the gurdwara. The family tore down the old house and rebuild a bigger one with many more rooms to accommodate the extended family. This house was to become the meeting place of most people who, after the gurdwara services, went there to pay homage to the elders, Sardar Maghar Singh Ji and Bebeji Jas Kaur, both of whom were very well- respected among the *Sangats* of Naval Police Gurdwara as well as Sembawang Sikh Temple.

Sardar Maghar Singh's eldest son, Sardar Dharam Singh Ji, who arrived with his father, was to experience the early days of the Police Gurdwara, the first that was built by the security guards and then the second that was upgraded to a bigger one at the new location at Matta Gate, 14<sup>th</sup> miles, Sembawang. He and his younger brother, Sardar Sarjit Singh were active in performing *sewa* at Royal Naval Ammunition Depot (RNAD) Gurdwara at Attap Valley Road and later at the Royal Naval Torpedo Depot (RNTD) Gurdwara at Khalsa Crescent locations until moving out of the Naval Base in 1960.

Subsequently, all three brothers, namely Sardars Dharam Singh Ji, Sarjit Singh Ji and Amarjit Singh Ji, were actively involved in Sembawang Sikh Temple, including serving in various positions in the Management Committees of the Gurdwara. Sardar Dharam Singh was actively involved, together with Sardar Satwant Singh Ajit, in overseeing the *Naujawan Sabha* in the early 1950s and organising religious, social and cultural activities for them, including *Samelans*, social outings, dramas and *Kirtan* classes. Sardar Sarjit Singh Ji, who served in the Singapore Police Force, was much sought after for photography work during weddings and other major activities. Sardar Amarjit Singh played an active role in the *Naujawan Sabha* as well as being involved in Sunday *Kirtan* performance with the *Giani Ji* during *Jodh Melas* and *Gurpurabs*. The extended Maghar Singh family remained active in Sembawang Gurdwara until their migration to Canada in the 1980s.



Sardar Maghar Singh (SGT 23)



Sardar Dharam Singh



Inspector Sarjit Singh



Sardar Amarjit Singh

### **Sardar Bakshish Singh**

Sardar Bakshish was a businessman operating from 14<sup>th</sup> miles, Sembawang Road. He was one of the pioneer members of Sembawang Sikh Temple and served in the Management Committee, including as Secretary for several years. He remained a very dedicated and committed member of the *Sangat* until he left Singapore to settle in India in the early 1970s.



Sardar Bakshish Singh Ji

### **Inspector Dalip Singh Manuke Family (Involvement in Three Temples)**

Another prominent member of Naval Police Sikh Temple was Inspector Dalip Singh. He joined the NPF before the Japanese Occupation and rose from the rank of Sergeant (No 22) to Inspector. He was very active at both the Khalsa Crescent and Rimau Police Temples, and upon disbandment of the Police Force, later served actively at the Sembawang Sikh Temple, including serving as President of Sembawang Sikh Temple for three years in the late 1970s. His legacy was carried on by his sons Sardars Charanjit Singh, Gurmit Singh and Piara Singh, who served actively in



Inspector Dalip Singh  
Manuke



Sardar Gurmit Singh  
Manuke



Sardar Charanjit Singh  
Manuke

Management Committees of Sembawang Sikh Temple and Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. In particular, Sardar Charanjit Singh headed the Building Fund Committee as well as the Pro-Tem Management Committee of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun until Sembawang Sikh Temple was officially dissolved on 11 May 1997 and formal elections of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun held. Sardar Gurmit Singh served as Treasurer on Gurdwara Sahib Yishun for six years, alternating between Manminder Singh and Tara Singh.

### **Inspector Sardar Naranjan Singh Family (Involvement in Three Temples)**

Inspector Naranjan Singh was another prominent member of the Naval Police Sikh Temple. He joined the force in the mid-1930s and rose from the rank of Sergeant (No 5) to Inspector. He was very active at both Khalsa Crescent and Rimau Police Temples but passed on in 1967. His two sons, Sardar Jasbeer Singh and Sardar Manminder Singh, played very active roles at both Sembawang Sikh Temple and Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. Sardar Jasbeer Singh, given his technical expertise, was actively involved in the Building Committee in overseeing the temple's construction. In addition to making his own substantial donation to the Building Fund, he

was also actively involved in raising funds through various other activities organised for the purpose. Sardar Manminder Singh deserves special mention for his myriad of contributions. Not only has he been actively involved in overseeing the finances of the gurdwara (as discussed separately under Khazanchis), he has been very active in leading the youth in various sporting events under the gurdwara banner.



Inspector Naranjan Singh



Sardar Jasbir Singh



Sardar Manminder Singh

### Inspector Sardara Singh Parmar Ji

He was a prominent member of the Naval Police Force, where he rose to the rank of Inspector. He was active at the Police Gurdwara, and after its disbandment he continued to be active in Sembawang Sikh Temple, where he served as Vice President for three years. His two sons, Sardars Bhopinder Singh and Sukhdev Singh, have subsequently carried on with his legacy of *sewa* at Gurdwara Yishun Sahib.



Inspector Sardara Singh



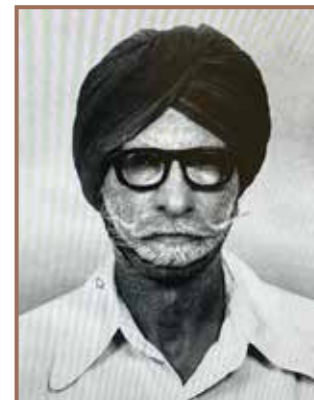
Sardar Sukhdev Singh



Sardar Bhopinder Singh

### Sardar Gurdip Singh Bhaloor Family

Gurdip Singh came to Singapore at the age of 17 and immediately joined the Naval Base Police as a Constable in the early 1930s, bearing number PC 89. He returned to India to get married in 1951. Upon coming back to Singapore, he decided to leave the Naval Police and joined the Auxiliary Police Force at Kallang Airport, where he worked for about a decade and then went on to undertake other jobs in subsequent years. He was very active in Sembawang Sikh Temple where his uncle *Giani* Gurdial Singh served as *Giani* from 1959 to 1980. He built a house for his family at Jalan Lengkok Sembawang and remained active at the gurdwara until he passed on in 1994. His wife, Sardani Jangir Kaur, was actively involved in the *Istri Sat Sang* at Sembawang Sikh Temple and continues to be an active member of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun today.



Saradar Gurdip Singh

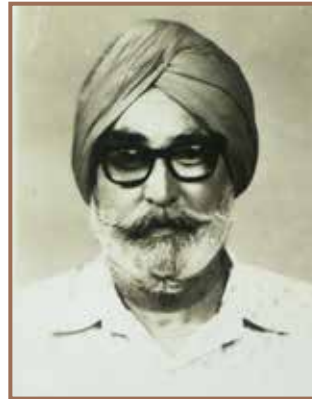


Bibi Jangir Kaur

Sardar Gurdip Singh's sons, Sardar Sukhdew Singh and Sardar Sukhminder Singh, and daughter Bibi Harinder Kaur, also played active roles in Sembawang Sikh Temple and Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, with Sardar Sukhdew Singh serving as President of Sembawang Sikh Temple for two years and Gurdwara Sahib Yishun during its first year of operations.

### Sardar Gurnam Singh family

Sardar Gurnam Singh (PC 298) was a very active member of the Naval Police Temple. He was an accomplished harmonium player who performed *Kirtan* very well. He was actively involved at both Torpedo and Rimau temples. His wife Bibi Amarjit Kaur, remained very active with the Istri Sat Sangh at both Sembawang Sikh Temple and Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. His son Rashpal Singh also served in the Management Committee of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun.



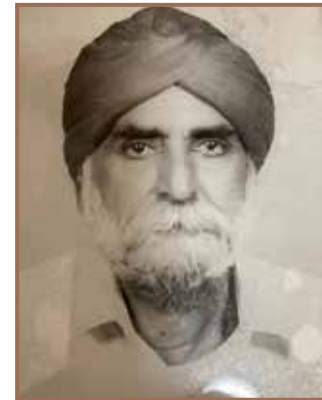
Sardar Gurnaam Singh Gurusar



Bibi Amarjit Kaur

### Sardar Mewa Singh Ghosal Family

Sardar Mewa Singh Ghosal was another individual who contributed many years of *sewa* at Sembawang Sikh Temple. He joined the Dockyard after the war as Checker, handling import and export of shipments. He, together with Sardar Jagraj Singh Bhallow, were very active in *langgar* preparation at Sembawang Sikh Temple for several years. Sardar Mewa Singh's sons, Sardars Harbhajan Singh and Avtar Singh, have continued with his legacy of *sewa*, with both being actively involved at Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, including serving in the Management Committees.



Sardar Mewa Singh Ghosal

### Sardar Mehar Singh Family (Involvement in Three Temples)

Mehar Singh is the founder-member of Jalan Kayu Temple, who served actively at Jalan Kayu Temple. Through the marriage of his daughter, Pritam Kaur to Sardar Chand Singh (PC 206), his legacy of *sewa* continued at Naval Police Temple, where Bibi Pritam Kaur was rather active in the *Istri Sat Sang* there. Subsequently, their children, namely Bibi Gulwant Kaur and Sardar Daljit Singh, have been actively involved in Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, where Gulwant Kaur has been very active in organising activities for the ladies and Daljit Singh serving in the Management Committee.



Sardar "Major" Mehar Singh

### Sardar Ajit Singh Ghuat

Ajit Singh Ghuat was another great personality in Sembawang. He was the only Sikh to own a small cattle farm, which he started in the 1930s. Not only known for his simplicity, humility, friendliness and hardworking nature, he was also recognised for his great generosity. According to Sardar Dharam Singh, he was a very generous person, even providing free milk to those in need. Those involved in the Building Committee of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun will remember the episode where Sardar Mejar Singh Gill made a plea from the Sembawang Sikh Temple rostrum for donations when there was insufficient cash at hand to pay for a progressive invoice from the Contractor, and Sardar Ajit Ghuat rushed home to return with \$2000 in cash and assured the Building Committee not to worry but to push on with the project with assurances of more money if necessary. He was a gem of a man who inspired the Building Committee to work harder to achieve its goal. He remained active at the Gurdwara until his death.



Sardar Ajit Singh Ghuat

### Sardar Bhag Singh Ji Dhudi

Sardar Bhag Singh Ji s/o Kapur Singh joined the Additional Police Constables Force in 1936 where he served as CPL 33 for over 10 years. He was quite skilled in carpentry work and decided to put it into use rather than serve in the Police.

Being quite enterprising, he is one of the early few who decided to invest in property, buying a house in Bah Tan Road and refurbishing it into several rooms which he rented out to others. He served actively in the Management Committee of Sembawang Sikh Temple, including as President in the late 1940s. He is best remembered for his personal involvement in the refurbishment of the Sembawang Sikh Temple as well as the construction of the Naval Police Rimau Temple in the 1950s. Sardar Bhag Singh was a very spiritual person. According to Sardar Sukhinder Singh, he always had his *Kirtan* tape on, even when he was working. Many also remember him as a 'healer of back problems', a service he undertook without any payment. Sardar Bhag Singh's children, Sardars Charan Singh, Karnail Singh and Kartar Singh, were also very active in *sewa* at the gurdwara.



Sardar Bhag Singh

### Captain (Retired) Jageer Singh

Sardar Jageer Singh was a school teacher until the 1960s, and subsequently mobilised into the Singapore Navy until the 1990s. One of the senior-most members of the gurdwara today, he has been actively involved in both Sembawang Sikh Temple and Gurdwara Sahib Yishun's Management Committees from the mid-1960s until 2000, including serving as President of Sembawang Sikh Temple for several years. He was actively involved in conducting Punjabi classes for children at Sembawang Sikh Temple in the 1960s and 1970s. Given his old age, he is no longer active but is often present during *Gurpurabs*.



Captain (Retired) Jageer Singh

### **Master Harpal Singh Ji**

Sardar Harpal Singh is one individual from the first generation of youth in Sembawang who performed *sewa* at Police Gurdwara, Sembawang Sikh Temple and Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. He was active in most of the Management Committee's of the gurdwaras, and was a familiar sight at the gurdwaras at all events until he migrated to Australia where he passed on. He took part in *Path* services during *Akhand Path* programmes. His greatest contribution was to organize the gurdwara's library, where he catalogued all the books for easy reference.



Master Harpal Singh

### **Sardar Jaspreet Singh Chhabra Ji**

Jaspreet Singh Chhabra is another individual who deserves special recognition and mention. He arrived in Singapore sometime in the 1997 and became very actively involved in Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, where he served as Secretary for eight years. He was active in overseeing the various renovation works undertaken, including waterproofing of the gurdwara roof, the installation of air-conditioners and the lift. Despite being actively involved in the Central Gurdwara Board, where he also served as Chairman of Silat Road Gurdwara, Sardar Jaspreet Singh Chhabra always found time to assist at Gurdwara Yishun whenever required. Being a grassroots leader, he has been the gurdwara's main link with the local Member of Parliament (MP), who provided much assistance whenever required. He was recently featured in 'Stories of Integration', a book of 30 naturalized Singaporeans, whose skills and talents brought much benefit to the country. Sardar Jaspreet Singh Ji, currently serving as Vice President of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, was awarded the Public Service Medal in 2018.



Sardar Jaspreet Singh Chhabra

### **Sardar Dalwinder Singh Ji**

Sardar Dalwinder Singh has also played an active role in the Management Committees of Sembawang Sikh Temple, where he served as Secretary for three years, and later at Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, where he served as Secretary for four years and as President for ten years.



Sardar Dalwinder Singh

### **Sardar Harpal Singh Ji**

Sardar Harpal Singh Ji, owner of Hitech Engineering, is another individual who has been actively involved in Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. He has been offering free services of his company in installation of new electrical wirings and related fittings for various projects, including the new Sound System as well as the projection system, where the intention is have live streaming to reach out to *Sangat* at their homes, especially our members who are overseas.



Sardar Harpal Singh

## **OUR LONG-SERVING KHAZANCHIS**

Similar to Sardar Gurdial Singh, the long serving Khazanchi of Naval Police Force Gurdwara, both Sembawang Sikh Temple and Gurdwara Sahib Yishun have also been blessed by a special breed of Sewadars with a similar selfless spirit. While many have served at one time or another in such posts, a position which comes with enormous responsibility requiring much time and effort, three such individuals deserve special mention, namely, Sardar Prem Singh, Sardar Manminder Singh and Sardar Tara Singh.

### **Sardar Prem Singh**

Sardar Prem Singh, a rather soft-spoken and humble person, is one individual who gave many years of service to all three gurdwaras that he was involved in, that is, at Naval Police Gurdwara and then at Sembawang Sikh Temple, culminating in the building of the new Gurdwara Sahib Yishun.

After the closing of Rimau Temple in 1972, Prem Singh became actively involved in Sembawang Sikh Temple, where he served continuously in the Gurdwara Management Committee for 15 years from 1976 until 1990, where he held the post of Treasurer for 13 years. When the Building Fund Committee was initiated in 1991, it was none other than Sardar Prem Singh, who had to be persuaded by the *Sangat* to take on the special responsibility. He managed the Building Committee accounts for another seven years until the dissolution of the Building Committee in 1997. No accolades are sufficient in paying tribute to this great individual who has done so much for the Gurdwara. Sardar Prem Singh passed on in 2019.



Sardar Prem Singh

### **Sardar Manminder Singh Ji**

Following in the footsteps of Prem Singh is another humble and soft-spoken personality, Sardar Manminder Singh. He has been actively involved in the temple's finances ever since Gurdwara Sahib Yishun was constructed. He assisted Prem Singh in managing the Building Fund Accounts for seven years, and subsequently held the post of Treasurer at different times for a total of seven years. Notwithstanding Registrar of Societies' rules relating to Treasurers not being allowed to serve consecutively for more than two years, the Management Committees have continued to rely upon Sardar Manminder Singh to assist in the financial accounts, given his dedication and meticulousness in handling accounts. Directly or indirectly, Manminder Singh has been actively involved in managing the gurdwara accounts ever since Gurdwara Sahib Yishun commenced operations to date.



Sardar Manminder Singh

But *Khazanchi sewa* is not all that Manminder needs to be commended for. He has been very active with the Sembawang youth, organizing various cultural gatherings as well as sports competitions for them. In addition, he has led the Gurdwara teams at SKA organized competitions, the Asia Pacific Sikh Games, as well as the Inter-Gurdwara games, such as the Bhai Maharaj Cup, where the teams did extremely well, including winning the Championship Cup.

### **Sardar Tara Singh Ji**

Sardar Tara Singh, a retired SAF Warrant Officer, has also contributed much in overseeing the temple accounts. He has served formally as a Treasurer of Gurdwara Sahib for 10 years, alternating with Manminder Singh and Gurmit Singh, the other long-serving Treasurer of the gurdwara. In addition to the Treasurer role, Tara Singh has also contributed in lighting up the gurdwara, especially during *Gurpurabs*.



Sardar Tara Singh

## **OUR LANGGAR SEWADARS**

Just like the lady *sewadars*, who are often seen performing *sewa* at the *Langgar* kitchen (as discussed in next chapter), the men have always been there too, and in full force at every *Jodh Mela*. Though many have been actively involved, only a few are highlighted here due to space constraints. At the Naval Base Gurdwara, there was the legendry Sardar Kartar Singh (PC 88) who was a familiar sight at the gurdwara throughout the 1950s until the closure of the temple in 1971. He was one who appeared to be living in the temple itself, being present there every time during any activity that was taking place. He was extremely active



in performing *sewa* at the temple, serving the *langgar* and washing the utensils after that. Another unique *sewa* of his was going round the barracks and distributing *langgar* to those who could not make it to the *Jodh Mela*, a *sewadar* par excellence. He was a unique personality with a big turban and long beard. He was blessed with such long hair that they flowed down to his feet when loosened.

There was also Sardar Sardara Singh Ji (PC 183) who performed *sewa* as a *langgari*, specializing in preparation of Dhal and Yogurt (Dhal). In later years, a youthful Sardar Joginder Singh (also nicknamed as Tiger) used to help until he secured a job in the Dockyard and then went on to perform similar *sewa* at Sembawang Sikh Temple until he migrated to the US.

The same was the case in Sembawang Sikh Temple where numerous individuals performed *sewa*. In particular, Sardars Jagraj Singh and Mewa Singh were particularly active in the *Langgar* kitchen. But there was one particular *Sewadar*, Sardar Jagjit Singh Gujarwal (also known as Nahar Singh) who rendered great service to the Temple Kitchen from the 1950s until the 1970s. He passed away in June 1981. According to the Annual General Meeting minutes of 1982, the *Sangat* observed a minute of silence in remembrance of his *sewa* contributions.

By the early 1990s, due to the increase in the *Sangat* with more Sikhs moving into the new housing estates of Ang Mo Kio, Yishun and Woodlands, and resultant increase in temple programs, it was inevitable and necessary that full-time staff be engaged to look after the Temple Kitchen at Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. Details of the full time *Sewadars* are covered in separate Chapter 4 under *Sewadars*.



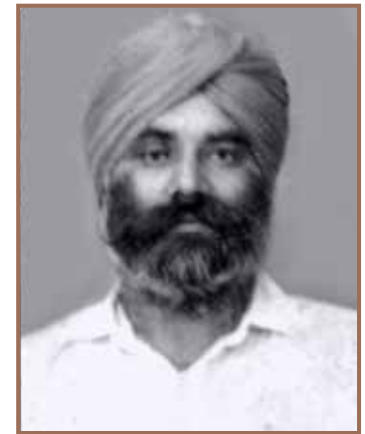
Sardar Kartar Singh (PC 88)



Sardar Sardara Singh (PC 183)



Sardar Jagraj Singh



Sardar Nahar Singh



# CHAPTER 6

## OUR OTHER ACTIVITIES: PUNJABI EDUCATION, ISTRI SAT SANG, NAUJAWAN SABHA, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND SPORTS, AND CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

### Our Unique Community

Looking at the history of our gurdwaras in Singapore, most were set up in the 1920s, mainly in the city area in the south, based on the arrivals of the early Sikh migrants, including the Sikh Police. They all settled around the then city confines and the adjoining areas. Understandably, the early gurdwaras were built to cater for migrant members from specific regions of Punjab, mainly *Majha*, *Malwa* or *Doaba*. The 'northern Singaporean' Sikh Community, however, was a particularly unique community, away from the city, with Sikhs from all regions of Punjab working together in the same British establishments, and hence, having a closely-knit relationship.

The bigger Naval Base Police Gurdwara and the Sembawang Sikh Temple, and even Jalan Kayu Gurdwara, albeit its small membership base, were not regionally based and served as common community temples for all the migrants from Punjab. Irrespective of their Punjab regional backgrounds, whoever joined the uniformed police forces or as civilian workers in the two bases, they were all bound together in whichever gurdwara that they formed the congregation. This unique characteristic was further reinforced for those living in the Naval Base by the fact that they all worked within the Naval Base as well as shared the same infrastructure and services, namely same schools, medical, sports, social and cultural facilities. Being insulated from what was happening outside, they considered themselves different from the rest of Singapore. Whenever anyone from the Naval Base went to the city, they would say "I'm going to Singapore" as if Naval Base was not part of Singapore!, which, perception-wise, was quite true.

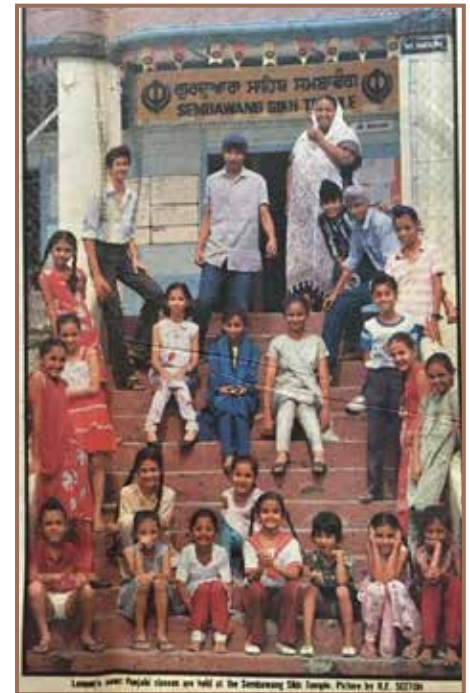
The legacy of this unique Sikh community in the north, where the gurdwaras not only served as places of worship and close fraternity but also functioned as community centres where educational, social, cultural and sports activities were also carried out, carries on even today at Gurdwara Sahib Yishun.

### Punjabi Language and Religious Classes

Both the Naval Police Temple as well as Sembawang Sikh Temples played an active role and gave full support to the promotion of the Punjabi language among the Sikhs in the north, especially from around the 1950s when migrant families with children increased in numbers. In the Naval Police Gurdwara, especially when located at Khalsa Crescent and later, at View Road, special classrooms were provided for the purpose. It is understandable that some of the conservative families of the earlier days did not send their daughters to English schools, as they had no intentions of permanently staying in Singapore and looked forward to returning to India after completion of their duty, and hence, were quite content with the daughters mastering *Gurmukhi* and being proficient in the Sikh holy scriptures. *Giani* Pritam Singh, assisted by some select members of the police, conducted the *Gurmukhi*

classes. Sikh religious studies was also given special attention and several youth members were able to recite up to the *Guru Granth Sahib* level and some were also involved in the reading of the *Guru Granth Sahib* during the *Akhand Path Gurburab* programmes.

In Sembawang Sikh Temple, particularly from 1957 onwards when the building was renovated and more rooms added for Punjabi classes and the library, the teaching of Punjabi was given special emphasis. The attendance varied from 20 to 30 students over the years with classes held on Saturdays. When Punjabi classes were being conducted at the Singapore Khalsa Association in the 1970s and 1980s, one specific class of over 30 students was conducted at Sembawang Sikh Temple in coordination with SKA Punjabi School. At its peak, there were 41 students attending Punjabi classes in 1989, where cupboards and other items had to be moved out of the classrooms to make space for the students. The temple made arrangements for free copies of *Punjabi Parveska* (Beginner Books) to be given to all children as well as supplied soft drinks and cakes so as to encourage as many children to attend as possible. When the Sikh Education Board took over the running of the Punjabi classes, the Gurdwara closed its Punjabi classes and all the gurdwara's students were transferred to Si Ling School under the Singapore Sikh Education Foundation (SSEF).



Religious classes were also conducted at Sembawang Sikh Temple from around the 1950s to 1980s. In view of decision of the Ministry of Education in 1983 with regards to the teaching of religion in all schools and making it an examinable subject, the gurdwara worked in unison with the Education Committee of SKA to encourage parents to send their children there and also provided free transport for children to attend the classes.

### **Tribute to Punjabi Teachers**

There were several persons involved in the teaching of Punjabi from the 1960s onwards. Special mention needs to be made of the following who contributed immensely in this respect. Among the pioneer teachers were Sardar Tara Singh Ji, Sardar Dharam Singh Ji and Sardar Jageer Singh, to name but a few. Sardar Mahinder Singh Ji (who worked at GPO) also rendered his services as a teacher for several years. They were active in the 1960s and 1970s. Sardar Piara Singh Ji, who came to Singapore to join his father in the late 1970s and later got married to his wife Bibi Manjit Kaur d/o Bhajan Singh (PC 205) from Sembawang, also taught the children from 1982 until about 1985. He is very proficient in the language having attained a Bachelor of Arts from Punjab University of Patiala.

Among the female teachers, there are several who deserve special mention. In the earlier days, the family members of Masterji Charanjit Singh Ji from Bukit Timah were actively involved, in particular his sister, Bibi Sarjit Kaur, and his wife, Bibi Ranjit Kaur. They were later joined by Bibi Tirlochan Kaur and Jasmail Kaur. There was also the younger Gulwant Kaur d/o Sardar Chand Singh (PC 206), and currently active member of the *Istri Sat Sangh*, who also did a short stint as a Punjabi Teacher.



Sarjit Kaur



Ranjit Kaur



Tarlochan Kaur



Gulwant Kaur



Piara Singh



Jageer Singh

It was not just a matter of tutoring the children in Punjabi. Some of them needed to be assisted in their normal English curriculum too. The elderly too were not forgotten. In this Bibi Manjit Kaur d/o Sardar Satwant Singh Ajit and Bibi Manjit Kaur Daroli deserve special mention. Bibi Manjit Kaur d/o of Satwant Singh Ajit, being a teacher herself, gave tuition to primary school children over the weekends while Manjit Kaur Daroli took the initiative of teaching Punjabi to elderly ladies. Their contributions were much appreciated by the recipients, with the children producing good results in their examinations while the elderly ladies became proficient in reading and writing Punjabi.

### **RECOGNISING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE OF CHILDREN**

Attention has been paid not just to the Punjabi Language and religion but also academic education in general. Management Committees of the gurdwara have on several occasions organised Jhod Melas to honour our children where prominent Sikh leaders, including former Members of Parliament, Sadars Devinder Singh and Inderjit Singh, were invited to present them awards for academic excellence.



## CHILDREN ACTIVITIES

Much effort has been put in over the years to organise special Children programmes during *Gurpurabs* as well as on other special days. This included *Pagan Banaian* (turban tying) for boys, and *Gutan Karniah* (hair tying and braiding) competitions, activities for kindergarten children, art competitions, Children *Kirtan* programmes, story-telling and team building activities as well as musical training, to name a few, all of which are captured in the photographs that follow. Such activities have received very good responses with parents and children attending in large numbers. During the COVID period too, these activities continued, albeit in controlled numbers and with proper safety management systems in place as per the regulations in place.

### GIRLS' HAIR TYING COMPETITION





## CHILDREN KINDERGARTEN ACTIVITIES





## CHILDREN ART COMPETITIONS





## CHILDREN KIRTAN PROGRAMMES





### CHILDREN STORY TELLING AND TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES



## MUSICAL TRAINING FOR CHILDREN



## ISTRI SAT SANG

Sikh ladies are an important and invaluable component of any Sikh *Sangat* throughout the Sikh temples. Ever since the early days of both the Naval Police Gurdwara and the Sembawang Sikh Temple, the ladies have always played an active role in the *langar* preparation *sewa* in Kitchen. They were always there very early in the morning, well before the commencement of religious activities. It is no different in Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, where the rich traditions of the *Istri Sat Sangs* of the predecessor gurdwaras have continued to flourish. While there have been no formal registration of the *Istri Sat Sang*, they have been actively involved in organisation of *Gurpurabs*, preparation of *lanngar*, fund raising and various other social and cultural activities of the gurdwara.



Farewell Photo of Besant Kaur w/o ASP Jangeer Singh

At the Naval Police Temple, Mataji Besant Kaur w/o ASP Jangeer Singh led by example. As the police force was a uniformed organisation, it was quite natural that the wife of the most senior officer rallied all the other wives in undertaking the various *sewa* activities. Also, with the gurdwara located close to the police accommodation blocks, the ladies were readily available to be called upon as and when needed for any form of *sewa*. The same went for the youth who were always there to support as necessary. At Sembawang Sikh Temple, despite most members living some distance away from the gurdwara, the ladies were also always there in numbers for the *Sewa*.



The Sembawang Sikh Temple also had a unique arrangement in place where not only were some ladies elected to be part of the Gurdwara Management Committee, they were also co-opted if and when necessary. According to records available, some of the other prominent *Istri Sat Sang* members that served in the MCs included Bibi Kartar Kaur, Bibi Tirlochan Kaur, Bibi Surinder Kaur, Bibi Amar Kaur and Bibi Chatin Kaur, to name a few.

Two prominent lady *sewadars*, namely Bebe Harnam Kaur and Bibi Tirlochan Kaur stand tall, having given years of service to the temple. Though the *Istri Sat Sang* was not formally registered, these two tall stalwarts were entrusted with opening a private joint account in their names to manage the funds of the *Istri Sat Sang*. In recent years, we have had the involvement of other relatively younger ladies, namely Gulwant Kaur, Ajmer Kaur, Karnail Kaur, Jasmail Kaur, Amrit Kaur and Harcharan Kaur, to name a few.

Special mention needs to be made of the active role that the *Istri Sat Sang* played in fund raising for the construction of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. Not only were they there to assist in organising the various fund raising activities being undertaken by the Building Committee, but on their own they also collected funds for the purpose. All in all, they raised a sum of \$35,000 by the time the new gurdwara was ready. Since then, the *Istri Sat Sang* has raised funds on various occasions for specific *Gurpurab* celebrations over the years as well as organised Family Day Outings, Mothers' Day Celebrations and Lohri, to name a few. When funds were recently being collected for the 'Lease Extension/Refurbishment Donation Fund' of the Gurdwara in 2021, the *Istri Sat Sang* raised another sum of over \$10,000 for the purpose.

## OUR LONG SERVING ELDER ISTRI SAT SANG MEMBERS

### Bebe Ji Harnam Kaur

A centenarian, Bebeji Harnam Kaur is the longest serving *Istri Sat Sang* member of the gurdwara. She was active as far back as the 1950s when the Police Gurdwara functioned at RNTD and subsequently at Rimau until its closure in 1971. She remained active at Sembawang Sikh Temple from the 1970s until the move to Yishun Gurdwara in 1995 and later years. Many still remember her active involvement in the forefront of all *Istri Sat Sangh sewa* activities but what needs special mention is her acts of humility; humbly cleaning the footwear of worshippers and arranging them neatly at both the gurdwaras. She was also actively involved in fund raising efforts. Such was the trust that the lady members had in her that they opened a Bank Account under her name jointly with Bebeji Tirlochan Kaur and all the monies collected were entrusted to both of them. Old age has prevented her from being active in the last few years but her family continues to bring her to gurdwara to join the *Sangat* even today.



Harnam Kaur



### Bebe Ji Tirlochan Kaur

Bebeji Tirlochan Kaur's involvement in the gurdwara goes back to the 1960s. She was not only active in the teaching of Punjabi Language at Sembawang Gurdwara but also actively involved in the *Istri Sat Sang's* *sewa* activities. In the 1980s, she was also inducted into the Gurdwara Management Committees, where she served as Assistant Secretary. She remains actively involved in *sewa* today, including performing *Path sewa* during *Akhand Paths*.



Tarlochan Kaur

### Sisters Ajmer Kaur and Kartar Kaur

These two sisters were actively involved in the *Istri Sat Sangs* of all three gurdwaras for many years. Bebeji Ajmer Kaur w/o Inspector Angad Singh was actively involved in the Naval Police Force Gurdwara until the disbandment of the force, after which she remained active at both Sembawang Sikh Temple and Gurdwara Sahib Yishun until she passed on in 2007. Her sister, Bebeji Kartar Kaur w/o Darshan Singh was active in Sembawang Sikh Temple and Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, including serving as a Committee Member in the management Committee in the 1980s.



Ajmer Kaur



Kartar Kaur

### Amer Kaur

Bibi Amer Kaur started doing *sewa* at a relatively young age in the 1970s, being active in the *Naujawan Sabha* and later, in the *Istri Sat Sang* at Sembawang Sikh Temple. She also subsequently served in Temple Management Committees in the 1980s, including holding the key post of Treasurer. She remains active in the *Istri Sat Sang* at Gurdwara Sahib Yishun today.



Amer Kaur

### Chatin Kaur

Bebaji Chatin Kaur was a very active member of the *Istri Sat Sang* from the 1970s, including serving in the Management Committees in the 1980s in Sembawang Sikh Temple. She remained active at Gurdwara Sahib Yishun until her recent migration to Canada.



Chatin Kaur

### OUR CURRENT ISTRI SAT SANG CO-ORDINATORS

The rich *sewa* legacy of the *Istri Sat Sang* continues even today. Notable among the current group, who continue to play active roles are Gulwant Kaur d/o Chand Singh (PC 106), Karnail Kaur d/o Hakam Singh (PC 218), Ajmer Kaur d/o Late Inspector Bhagat Singh, MAJ (Retd) Amrit Kaur and Jagdev Kaur d/o Ajmer Singh, to name a few. They continue the tradition of organising various activities for the young and old.



Amrit Kaur and Ajmer Kaur

### ISTRI SAT SANG ACTIVITIES

#### Mothers' Day Activities









## Medical Camp



## Activities By Sunehrey Pal





### Photo Frame Making





## Lohri Celebrations







## OUR KITCHEN ISTRI SEWADARS

Though *langgar* preparation is a collective effort of many hands, special mention needs to be made of a few special *Istri Sat Sang* ladies who were actively involved in cooking at the kitchen when there were no full-time *Langgar Sewadars*, namely Mataji Jangir Kaur Bhaloor, Mataji Jagir Kaur Johal, and Bibi Jamail Kaur. They undertook various responsibilities, including assisting the new *Langgar Sewadars* to settle in and be familiarised with the local vegetarian dishes. They are numerous others who continue to be actively engaged in *sewa* at every *jodh melha* and *gurpurab* even today, but there are far too many of them to name.





## OUR AKHAND PATH PATHIS

Though *Akhand Path* Sahib is undertaken by *Gianis*, numerous others, especially the ladies and men, have always assisted in the *Akhand Path* Sahib programmes of the gurdwara whenever so organised. Among the men, several who have always been there most of the times are Sardar Darshan Singh, Sardar Chattar Singh, Sardar Harpal Singh, Sardar Hari Singh (Tpt), Sardar Satwant Singh Ajit, Sardar Sarban Singh, Sardar Nirmal Singh, Sardar Sukhdarshan Singh and Sardar Ajmer Singh, to name a few. As for the ladies, there are many of them, but photos of only a few are included here.



Inderjit Kaur



Tej Kaur



Tirlochan Kaur



Balbir Kaur



Simran Kaur



Mandeep Kaur



Jarnail Kaur



Sukhvir Kaur



Pritam Kaur

## SIKH NAWJAWAN SABHA

There was no formally registered Nawjawan Sabhas per se in the old days at both the Naval Police Gurdwara or the Sembawang Gurdwara, but the youth were actively involved in performing *sewa* and undertaking various youth-related activities at the temples.

At the Police Gurdwara in the early days of the 1940s and 1950s, the earlier generation of youth, namely Sardars Sarban Singh s/o Gurdial Singh (SGT 14), Ranjit Singh s/o Bhoop Singh (PC 141), Ajaib Singh s/o Santokh Singh (PC 219), Sarjit Singh s/o Maggar Singh (SGT 23), all have fond memories of Khalsa Crescent days, where they partook in various activities at the temple, including decorating the gurdwara for *Gurpurabs*, *Kawta* Competitions, and *langgar sewa*. The next generation, comprising the youth of Rimau Temple days were actively involved until the closure of the gurdwara and its amalgamation into Sembawang Sikh Temple.





Sembawang Sikh Temple's youth were no different. Dr Mukhtiar and his small cohort also performed dedicated *sewa* there, including during the Japanese Occupation and after. With the increase in youth numbers, over the years, the gurdwara MCs paid special attention to bringing more youth on-board the various activities of the temple, including religious, social, cultural and sports. From 1950 onwards, the youth formed their own Sikh Nawjawan Sabha Sembawang committees and worked closely with the MC. A system was formalised where the President and Secretary of the Nawjawan Sabha were co-opted to attend the MC meetings.





Sardars Dharam Singh and Satwant Singh Ajit were not only themselves actively involved in various religious and other related activities, such as teaching Punjabi, *Kirtan*, Drama, to name a few, but they went out of the way to encourage the youth of Sembawang to be involved too. Sardar Sarjit Singh (Police Inspector) remembers Sardars Tara Singh Hitaishi, Satwant Singh Ajit and Dharam Singh holding 'dialogue sessions' with the youth and guiding them in the conduct of the various activities. Some of the elders accompanied the youth on their group organised excursions and social outings.





In the late 1960s/1970, the *Naujawan Sabha* was very active in its many and varied programs and activities, including *Samelans* (Youth camps). Many still remember and have fond memories of the especially arranged drama shows that were put up in the Sembawang area at Canberra Community Centre as well as in the city at the National Theatre. These almost professional-like shows were choreographed and supervised by Sardar Dharam Singh and Sardar Satwant Singh Ajit. One particular drama, which was very well-attended, revolved around the *Perkhendi Sadhu* vs the *Gurmat Path*. (See picture at next page of audience at Canberra Community Centre where not only were the people piled up inside the Community Centre but also outside looking through the doors and windows).







According to file records, there were several who were very active and/or served in key positions in the Nawjawan Sahbha during the 1970s to the 1980s, namely, Sukhdarshan Singh, Ajit Singh, Ajmer Singh, Jasminder Singh, Satpal Singh, Rashpal Singh, Bhagwant Singh, Gursharanjit Singh, Amer Kaur, Premjit Kaur, Sukhminder Singh and Amarpal Singh, to name but a few. While there were some activities organised by the Sikh Nawjawan Sabha, albeit in declining numbers in the 1990s, it became inactive from 2000 onwards. The reasons are understandable as the newly formed Sikh Sewaks, Young Sikh Association and Singapore Khalsa Association were already actively involved then in organising youth activities at the Sikh community level, and our youth got drawn there for obvious reasons.

## Weddings – Accommodation arrangements for Bridegroom's Party (Janj)

Sikh weddings were rare in the early years, at least until the late 1950s/early 1960s since most of the earlier arrivals were single policemen or single civilian workers in the Naval Base. For obvious reasons, the singles returned to Punjab to get married but as more families settled in, it was only natural that the gurdwaras would be involved in the conduct of solemnizations of Sikh weddings. And there were occasions where the Bridegroom's party came from afar in Malaysia, and hence, the requirement for accommodation for the *Janj*. Unlike nowadays, where hotel accommodation is readily available and is the norm, it was a pure community spirit those days where all got together to ensure that the *Janj* was appropriately accommodated and looked after.

In the Naval Base Police area, the Punjabi school classrooms at Rimau Complex were used for the purpose with the bedding items such as charpoi (*manjeh and chardars*) provided by various households. Two such weddings were that of Bibi Gurmit Kaur d/o Sardar Bhajan Singh (PC 205) to Sardar Sukhdev Singh from Seramban in 1963, and Bibi Pritam Kaur d/o Sardar Sardara Singh (PC 183) to Sardar Harbhajan Singh Ji of Seramban in 1964.

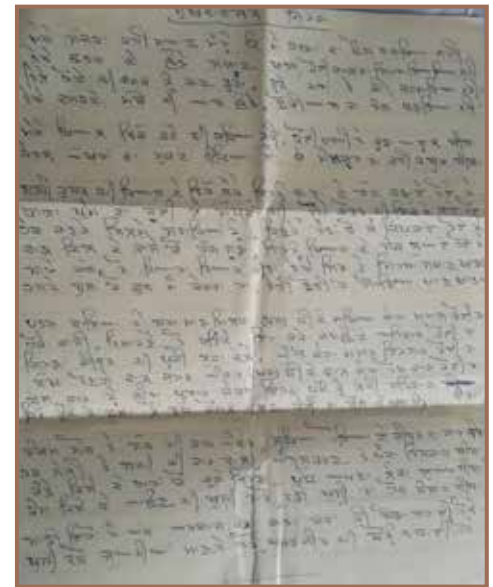
It was no different at the Sembawang Sikh Temple, where the earliest wedding was that of Sardar Tara Singh's daughter, who marriage took place in 1959. Sardar Hira Singh Ji, the founder-member of Sembawang Sikh Temple took personal responsibility for accommodating the *Janj* in Canberra School, where the bedding items were provided by various households for the purpose.

## Sikhyas and Sheras

The younger generation of today may not be aware of the tradition and significance of *Sikhyas* and *Sheras*, which were essentially words of advice, often delivered in poetry form at wedding ceremonies. These used to be part and parcel of the Sikh wedding tradition and norms in the earlier days, being taken over by DJ, *Dhols* and *Bhangra* of current times.

The *Sikhya* used to be read by a sister, sister-in-law, close relative or friend of the bride, offering words of advice on how she should respect and fit in with her new family of in-laws and relatives from the bridegroom's family while the *Shera* was read to the bridegroom on how to welcome and accept the bride as a new member of his family and to be forgiving for any shortcomings she may have.

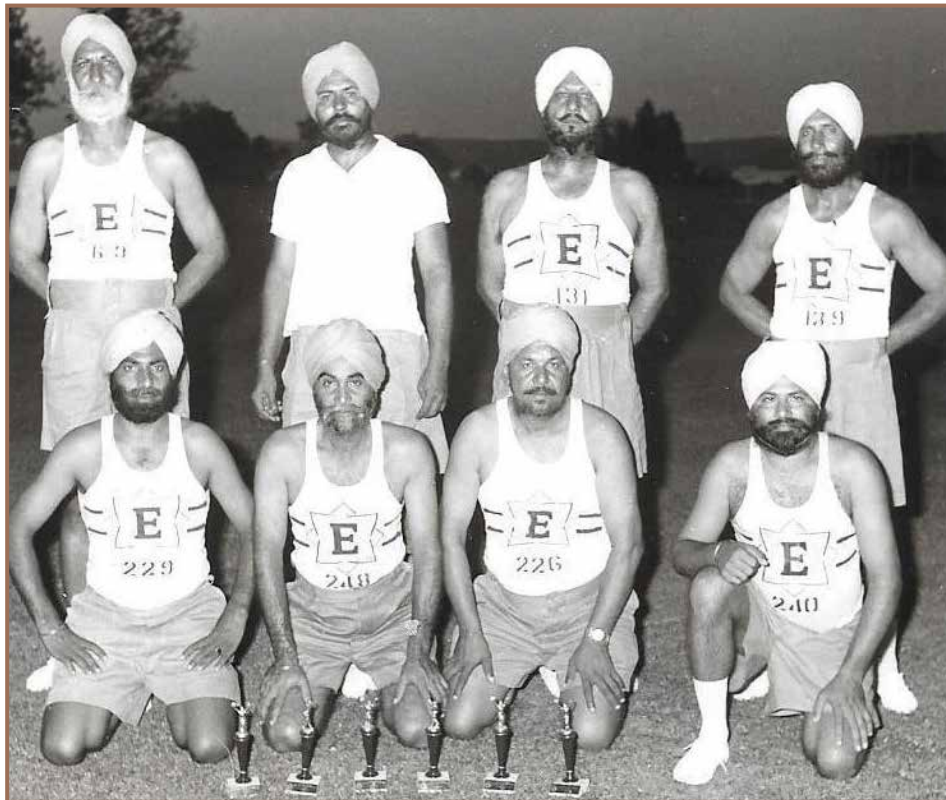
This used to be quite a common feature in most wedding ceremonies. Sardars Dharam Singh and Satwant Singh Ajit, being accomplished poets, were often sought after by families for assistance in composing such wedding poetry for their relatives to recite at the wedding ceremonies. See photos of "*Sheras*" in next page, including one of wedding of Master Ranjit Singh and Daljeet Kaur with "Tumbi" accompaniment by *Giani* Ram Singh, another of wedding of Jarnail Kaur d/o Hakam Singh (PC 218) also with "Tumbi" accompaniment, and one of Sardar Amarjit Singh reading it at Sardar Ajit Singh's wedding at Sembawang Gurdwara.



## Sports and Games

The Sembawang area is famous for producing national sportsmen over the years. Everyone remembers the Quah brothers, Kumar, Suresh and Sundram, to name a few, who brought glory to Singapore in football and others who excelled in other sporting fields. But few may be aware that the Sikhs were also renowned for their sporting prowess not just in the Sembawang/Naval Base area but also at the national level. This is a legacy of the British days where sports was given special emphasis and the best football and hockey pitches in Singapore were found in the area.

The uniformed Naval Police Force had its own inter-Division games while the Dockyard workers had teams from the various Departments competing against each other. In addition, the local teams contested against teams of visiting warships as well as against other teams from Singapore. The Police hockey and volleyball team, in particular, stood out from the rest and did well in almost all competitions. In hockey, Sardar Bhajan Singh (PC205) and Sardar Mohinder Singh s/o Sardar Dharam Singh (SGT 20) stood out, bringing honours to the Naval Police Force hockey team as well as being called upon to represent Singapore Sikhs in the 1950s. Jarnail Singh s/o Kheta Singh (PC 165) was another prominent hockey player, who excelled as a goalkeeper. Understandably, the children were to follow in the footsteps of their parents and form their own teams, including gurdwara teams, and several Sikhs did well in various sports over the years.





Dr Mukhtiar Singh is a prominent name in this respect. He was the founding-member and Secretary in 1952 (and later President) of the Seletar Sports Club until he migrated to Australia. This club made a name for itself in football and hockey. The Seletar Young Indians Six-a-Side Hockey Tournament organised by the Club was one such great event in the 1960s and 1970s where the best of Singapore hockey teams participated and the youthful Naval Base teams were teams to be reckoned with.





It was in athletics that several Sikhs from Sembawang also made a name for themselves, and made the Sikh Community proud, the most prominent being Sardars Avtar Singh, Serjit Singh and Chamkaur Singh. All three of them ran and broke records, flying the Singapore flag high at international competitions. The most senior amongst them is Sardar Avtar Singh Ji, grandson of the first *Giani* of Sembawang Sikh Temple, Baba Ganda Singh, who created history in the 1960s. Avtar, who is in his late 70s, has an impressive medal haul for long distance running - one silver medal at the 1967 Southeast Asian Peninsular (SEAP) Games (1,500 metres) and another silver medal at the 1969 SEAP Games (5,000 metres). He also broke several national records during his time, most notably in the 800-metres, 1,500-metres and 5,000-metres events.



Avtar Singh



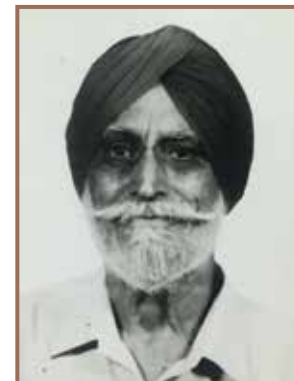
Serjit Singh

Following closely behind Avtar was Sardar Serjit Singh, who held the national records for 800 metres and 1,500 metres in the 1970s. His 1,500 metre stood for more than 20 years. Another Sembawang boy, Sardar Chamkaur Singh s/o Tara Singh Dhaliwal, got inspired by Serjit's achievements and went on to become a marathon runner in the 1990s. In 2002, at the age of 29, he stormed into the history books to break Serjit Singh's 23 year old national record for 1,500 metres. That same year, he also broke another national record for 5,000 metres which had been held by another fellow Sikh, Sardar Jagtar Singh for 19 years. In 2004, he brought pride to Singapore by bringing a bronze medal from the SEAP Games in Vietnam. He continues to run marathons even today.



Chamkaur Singh s/o Tara Singh

In soccer too, Sembawang has produced several good footballers, among whom Amarjit Singh s/o Surain Singh (PC 58) did particularly well. He represented SKA in several local competitions as well as in the Gurdwara Cup and also participated in the FAS S League. There were also two prominent referees, the senior among the two being Sardar Kartar Singh Ji, who was a certified referee during the British days. He officiated matches between visiting Naval Ships as well as between teams in the Sembawang League as well as matches organised by the Football Association of Singapore (FAS) those days. Subsequently, a much younger Sardar Sukhbir Singh s/o Sardar Sukhdew Singh, made his debut in 2002 at the young age of 19. He was a football referee for fifteen years and had the honour of being on the FIFA list of international referees from 2009 to 2018, a rare feat as there are no more than 15 FIFA-level referees in Singapore.



Kartar Singh





Amarjit Singh (Standing on the right)



Sukhbir Singh



### Community Level Sports Carnivals/Family Days

Sports carnivals was a common feature during Sembawang Sikh Temple days where all families got together in friendly rivalry participation in various ‘fun’ games for the young as well as the old. For the more competitive and sporting youth, several youth teams participated against each other in soccer and hockey, culminating in the popular ‘Married vs Singles’ Mata Jas Kaur Trophy as the main premier event. Given this rich tradition of sports and camaraderie, the youth of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun have kept this legacy alive over the years. Just a year after the opening of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, the Yishun Sikhs organised a 5-A-Side competition with two teams from each temple taking part. This tradition of “Inter-Gurdwara Games” was carried forward by the Central Sikh Gurdwara Board organising the annual “Bhai Maharaj Singh Cup” Inter-Gurdwara games where teams of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun have also done well. In recent years, the Yishun Sikhs have also organised golf competitions, which have attracted many Sikh golfers from not just Singapore but also Johore. Such activities were a regular affair until the COVID-19 related restrictions took effect from the end of 2019 onwards.









## OTHER COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Gurdwara Sahib Yishun has been an active and responsible member of the Singapore community, being actively involved in community outreach and other charitable activities, some of which are highlighted briefly in the subsequent paragraphs.

### **Sikh Welfare Council and Sikh Education Foundation**

Gurdawara Sahib Yishun, despite its limited membership base, resources and finances, has always been a responsible member of the Singapore Sikh Community. Soon after the new temple was opened in August 1995, the Sikh Welfare Council was launched on 14 October 1995. Despite the gurdwara not having sufficient balance cash in bank, it pledged an amount of \$51,000 towards the setting up of the Welfare Council, and settled the full payment by instalments later. It continues to contribute to other worthy causes, including SIWEC, SSEF and other nationally-organized Sikh activities until date.

### **Down Syndrome Support Group**

In 1996, on the occasion of the 1 July SAF Day Celebrations, the uniformed members of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun organized Puranmashi celebrations and collected over \$12,000 for donation to the Down Syndrome Support Group.

### **HEB-Ashram**

Sembawang Sikh Temple and subsequently Gurdwara Sahib Yishun has been actively involved with the Hindu Endowment Board (HEB)'s ASHRAM located in Sembawang since its set up in the 1980s. The Singapore Sikh Community contributed \$100,000 for its set-up through the SANA Sikh Aftercare Counselling Service, where Sardar Mejar Singh Gill was a founder member as well as Chairman for a few years. The ASHRAM remains closely associated with Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. Prior to the ASHRAM's establishment, the gurdwara's priests and volunteers used to visit Sikh drug inmates at the Khalsa Crescent and Sembawang Detention Centres until the task was taken over by Sikh Welfare Council in the late 1990s.

Not many are aware that that the video “A Dialogue with Death” launched by SANA Sikh Aftercare Counselling Service in 1990 at SKA by former Member of Parliament, Davinder Singh Ji was play-acted by Sembawang members, namely Sardar Manmohan Singh and his wife, Bibi Niranjan Kaur, as the parents, and Sardar Dalbir Singh s/o Gurbaks Singh Dhaleke as the drug addict. It was very well-received at gurdwaras, Punjabi schools and other gatherings, and served to spread the anti-drug message. Even today, given that there are Sikhs undergoing rehabilitation at this Halfway House, Gurdwara Sahib Yishun continues to provide meals on a weekly basis to all the inmates at HEB-Ashram.

### Swami Home

This is another Charitable Home in Sembawang that the gurdwara has been closely associated with for many years. In addition to making donations of cash, our *Sangat* has also made arrangements for meals for the residents at Swami Home on numerous occasions.

### PARTICIPATION IN SARBAT DA BHALLA AND RACIAL HARMONY RUNS

Gurdwara Sahib Yishun has been actively involved in these events ever since the Sarbat Da Bhalla (Well Being of all Humanity) runs were initiated in 1999. The overnight relays involving all gurdwaras, have not only attracted members taking part in the runs but also supporters, including families, who have turned up in large numbers to cheer the participants.



### 300<sup>TH</sup> GURGADDI OF SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI CELEBRATIONS IN 2008

In addition to organizing several religious activities to celebrate this historical event, Gurdwara Sahib Yishun also carried out a blood donation drive as our contribution to community of this auspicious occasion. It was great success with many coming forward to support this noble cause.

### GURU NANAK DEV JI'S 550<sup>TH</sup> BIRTH ANNIVERSARY IN NOV 2019

2019 was an important year for all Sikhs all round the world, marking the 550<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The *sangat* of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun was actively involved in the year-long series of community events, by organizing its own *Jodh Mela* as well participation in the *Naam Raas Kirtan Darbar*, the Sikh Harmony Walk – “Walking in Harmony”, as well as the Sikh Harmony Parade in the form of the float, with replica of Gurdwara *Janam Asthan, Nankana Sahib*, mounted on lorry. The *Gianis* of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun were actively involved in various collective activities organized by the Sikh Community, including the *Naam Raas Kirtan Darbar*. The Sri Nankan Sahib Float was welcomed reverently by the *Sangat* of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, where even the local Member of Parliament was present.







## OTHER CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

The *Sangat* has also contributed to several charitable causes. Recently our Head *Giani*, Satnam Singh, while on leave in Punjab also undertook a charitable mission. He distributed sewing machines to young girls so that they could contribute towards their family incomes as well as provided financial assistance to needy students from schools and colleges.



## INTER-RELIGIOUS HARMONY ACTIVITIES AT CONSTITUENCY LEVEL

Gurdwara Sahib Yishun has been actively involved in various Community Clubs/Residents' Committees/Inter-Racial Confidence Circles events, including participation in *Hijrah* Night Cycling, Hindu *Rath Yatra* as well as various other inter-racial activities.



## 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS AND APPRECIATION CEREMONY

Gurdwara Sahib Yishun celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its building at present site with an *Akhand Path* held from 27 August to 29 August 2021. On the final day, the *Nishan Sahib* was hoisted on a newly constructed flag pole, which is about two metres higher than the replaced one. The family of our long serving *Istri Sat Sang Sabha*, Bebe Harnam Kaur Ji sponsored the construction of the new stainless steel flag pole, which came in three segments, and now flies high for all to see from afar. On this auspicious day, all our long-serving *sewardars* were presented with mementos in recognition of their many years of service to the gurdwara.

















## OUR BELOVED MEMBERS, DONORS AND WELL-WISHERS (PAST AND PRESENT)

Last but not least, we would like to pay tribute to our *Sangat*, old and young, past and present, each and everyone of them, some of whom have passed on. These are the people and their families who all got together to make personal donations, according to their means, for the construction of old Gurdwaras and Gurdwara Sahib Yishun. Gurdwara Sahib Yishun could not have been built without the support of all such individuals. Many of them came forward again 25 years later to contribute towards the essential renovations/refurbishments being undertaken in conjunction with the extension of the lease. We have included photos of some of them, as available or provided by them, in this publication for record. However, as we have not been able to reach out to all for their photographs, they are all duly acknowledged on the Main Donor Board displayed at the entrance of the gurdwara. Another Donor Board is being prepared in respect of donations received for 2021 renovations/refurbishments. Names of all donors are nevertheless listed at pages 228 to 232 of this book for record.

We humbly apologise to any donor whose name we may have inadvertently missed out but be rest assured that we are indeed grateful to one and all from the bottom of our hearts.





















# CONCLUSION

## THE ROAD AHEAD

From its humble beginnings in a temporary attap roof structure at Naval Base Police Temple in the 1920s and its various other locations, and Sembawang Sikh Temple and Jalan Kayu Temple from the 1940s to mid-1990s, Gurdwara Sahib Yishun has come a long way. Today, the amalgamated Gurdwara Sahib Yishun is housed in a highly modern two-storey building in Yishun Town since 1995. But just like our homes, gurdwaras need to be refurbished and upgraded to serve the *Sangat's* needs and this cannot take place unless it is properly planned and arranged for. While financial constraints in the 1990s held the *Sangat* back from providing what would be deemed as basic facilities nowadays, such as the lift and air-conditioning, these were left to be provided for in later years. Given the increase in activities over the years as well as the increase in the *Sangat*, much more needs to be done.

All buildings age and hence, go through a process of wear and tear, and gurdwara buildings are no exception. The Gurdwara Management Committees have to face tough decisions about whether to rebuild, renovate, demolish and/or refurbish the building and/or any major infrastructure items. Just like human beings, they all have their life spans, and hence, there needs to be proper proactive planning to keep track of their life spans, and related repair and maintenance requirements as well as to ensure that funds are provided for. The infrastructure may be pushed beyond its acceptable life-span to some extent, but if left neglected, then the repercussions can be serious, especially if funds are not provisioned for.

In terms of financial planning, Gurdwara Sahib Yishun is in a rather unique and challenging situation as compared to other gurdwaras in Singapore. Unlike the other gurdwaras, it is the only gurdwara in Singapore on short 30-year lease. So while the other gurdwaras need to be concerned only about managing their infrastructure, Gurdwara Yishun has the added responsibility of ensuring that funds are also set aside for the renewal of the lease as well as to ensure that the infrastructure is well looked after over the years, including upgrades and/or replacement of big ticket items, such as waterproofing of roof, repainting, lift upgrade/renewal, carpet replacement, and kitchen and toilets upgrades, to name a few. Just to illustrate, the Silat Road Temple and *Khalsa Dharmak Sabha*, both of which were rebuilt in 1995, at the same time when Gurdwara Sahib Yishun was constructed, have spent substantial amounts since for refurbishments of their buildings while Gurdwara Sahib Yishun has been struggling to meet its lease extension requirements, let alone dealing with infrastructure upkeep and maintenance challenges.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Gurdwara Sahib Yishun was constructed under trying circumstances. At time of completion, and after all bills were settled, about \$380,000 was left in its coffers. Today, 25 years later, the gurdwara has been able to accumulate just about sufficient funds for lease renewal with little left for infrastructure improvements though life-spans of most items have exceeded way beyond the acceptable norms. For some reason or other, due attention was not paid to ensuring that sufficient funds were raised for the purpose.

Given such challenges facing Gurdwara Sahib Yishun, there is a need for the *Sangat* to ensure that persons and leaders chosen to lead or serve in Management Committees are responsible individuals who are able to undertake proper planning and effective management of the gurdwara. There may also be a need to formalise separate responsibilities between MC and Trustees to ensure that while Trustees are entrusted with Lease funds, the MC concentrates on effectively managing the temple, including

undertaking the normal maintenance upgrades as well as contributing annually specific amounts to the Lease fund held by Trustees. This is to ensure that not only are sufficient funds available for the next lease renewal but also to ensure that the infrastructure items are not left neglected.

One other major issue of concern is the role of youth. The Sembawang youth in general, and Sikh Nawjawan Sabha in particular, have been very active since the 1950s but have in recent years been seen less in action. The youth are the leaders of tomorrow and hence, need to step up and take the responsibility of leading our gurdwara into the future.

Last but not least, is the need to accept that the idea of 'Northern Sikhs', as it existed in the past, where we considered ourselves as distinct and separate from the rest of Singaporean Sikhs, has undoubtedly been diluted somewhat due to the 'internal migration' of Sikhs throughout Singapore. While this is understandable, we need to consider ways to keep the flame alive of the 'past greatness' of our pioneering members.

As the national Sikh community faces new and trying challenges in various areas, especially low incomes of some of our fellow Sikhs, drop in educational performances and standards of our children, and social issues such as rising divorces and related family issues, we need to look at more effective ways for the gurdwara to play a part of keeping a 'regional identity' of sort within the national context. This undoubtedly has to be done in close collaboration and integration with our national organisations, such as SKA, SIWEC, SSEF and Young Khalsa, etc.

With *Waheguru Ji* blessings, let's keep the *Nishan Sahib* flying high in Yishun for our future generations.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa,  
Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.





# **KEY OFFICE BEARERS**

## SEMBAWANG SIKH TEMPLE KEY OFFICE BEARERS (1936 TILL 1997)

YEAR	PRESIDENT	VICE PRESIDENT	SECRETARY	TREASURER
1936	Hira Singh	Kishan Singh	Tara Singh Hitaishi	Bachittar Singh Maskeen
1937	Hira Singh	Kishan Singh	Tara Singh Hitaishi	Bachittar Singh Maskeen
1938	Hira Singh	Kishan Singh	Tara Singh Hitaishi	Bachittar Singh Maskeen
1939	Hira Singh	Kishan Singh	Tara Singh Hitaishi	Bachittar Singh Maskeen
1940	Kishan Singh	Hira Singh	Tara Singh Hitaishi	Bachittar Singh Maskeen
1941	Kishan Singh	Hira Singh	Tara Singh Hitaishi	Bachittar Singh Maskeen
1942	Kishan Singh	Hira Singh	Tara Singh Hitaishi	Bachittar Singh Maskeen
1943	Santa Singh	Hira Singh	Kishan Singh	Tara Singh Hitaishi
1944	Santa Singh	Hira Singh	Kishan Singh	Tara Singh Hitaishi
1945	Santa Singh	Hira Singh	Kishan Singh	Tara Singh Hitaishi
1946	Makhan Singh	Mukhand Singh	Pritam Singh	Hakam Singh
1947	Bhag Singh	Baksish Singh	Sarmukh Singh	Hakam Singh
1948	Nahar Singh	Hari Singh	Narain Singh	Sarban Singh
1949	Hari Singh	Puran Singh	Gurdit Singh	Sarban Singh
1950	Hakam Singh	Zail Singh	Satwant Singh	Phuman Singh
1951	Narain Singh	Dhana Singh	Kuldip Singh	Kartar Singh
1952	Hira Singh	Jeet Singh	Jaswant Singh	Phuman Singh
1953	Bhagwant Singh	Bikram Singh	Narain Singh	Kartar Singh
1954	Bhagwant Singh	Bikram Singh	Kuldip Singh	Kartar Singh
1955	Hazara Singh	Kishan Singh	Satwant Singh	Baksish Singh
1956	Hazara Singh	Kishan Singh	Satwant Singh	Baksish Singh
1957	Hazara Singh	Kishan Singh	Satwant Singh	Baksish Singh
1958	Chanan Singh	Resham Singh	Teja Singh	Hakam Singh



1959	Chanan Singh	Resham Singh	Teja Singh	Hakam Singh
1960	Chanan Singh	Resham Singh	Teja Singh	Hakam Singh
1961 to 1972	There are no file records for the period 1961 to 1972. However, based on recollections of some members, Sardar Hakam Singh, Sardar Gurdial Singh, Sardar Dharam Singh, Sardar Tara Singh Hitaishi, Sardar Puran Singh Bagta, Sardar Amar Singh, Sardar Darshan Singh and Sardar Satwant Singh Ajit held the key posts of President, Secretary or Treasurer at different times during this period though exact dates and positions cannot be verified.			
1973	CPT Jageer Singh	Sardara Singh	Amar Singh	Dharam Singh
1974	CPT Jageer Singh	Sardara Singh	Amar Singh	Dharam Singh
1975	CPT Jageer Singh	Sardara Singh	Amar Singh	Dharam Singh
1976	Dalip Singh	Joginder Singh	Harpal Singh	Prem Singh
1977	Dalip Singh	CPT Jageer Singh	Satwant Singh	Prem Singh
1978	Gurdial Singh Malla	Major Singh s/o Rattan Singh	Darshan Singh	Prem Singh
1979	Dalip Singh	Darshan Singh	Major Singh s/o Rattan Singh	Prem Singh
1980	Darshan Singh	Uttam Singh	Dharam Singh	Prem Singh
1981	Darshan Singh	Naranjan Singh Bansi	Major Singh s/o Rattan Singh	Prem Singh
1982	Darshan Singh	Sukhjinder Singh	Dharam Singh	Prem Singh
1983	Darshan Singh	Prem Singh	Satwant Singh	Insp Sarjit Singh
1984	Darshan Singh	Prem Singh	Satwant Singh	Insp Sarjit Singh
1985	Darshan Singh	Hardial Singh	Satwant Singh	Mdam Amer Kaur
1986	Darshan Singh	Chattar Singh	Satwant Singh	Prem Singh
1987	Darshan Singh	Chattar Singh	Satwant Singh	Prem Singh
1988	Darshan Singh	Chattar Singh	Dalwinder Singh	Prem Singh
1989	CPT Jageer Singh	Darshan Singh	Dalwinder Singh	Prem Singh
1990	CPT Jageer Singh	Darshan Singh	Dalwinder Singh	Prem Singh
1991	Sukhdew Singh Bhaloor	Sukhminder Singh Bhaloor	CPT Jageer Singh	Sarjit Singh

1992	Sukhdew Singh Bhaloor	Sukhminder Singh Bhaloor	Sarjit Singh Dhandal	Sarjit Singh
1993	Mejar Singh Gill	Jagdev Singh	Sarjit Singh Dhandal	CPT Jageer Singh
1994	Mejar Singh Gill	Jagdev Singh	Sarjit Singh Dhandal	CPT Jageer Singh
1995	Mejar Singh Gill (Till Sembawang Sikh Temple officially dissolved on 11 May 97)	Jagdev Singh	Sarjit Singh Dhandal	CPT Jageer Singh

## GURDWARA SAHIB YISHUN KEY OFFICE BEARERS FROM 1997 ONWARDS

Gurdwara Sahib Yishun was registered under ROS on 21 Aug 1995. The Building Committee continued to serve as Pro-Tem Committee (headed by Sardar Charanjit Singh) to look after affairs of Gurdwara Sahib Yishun till Sembawang Sikh Temple (which managed the Building Fund) was officially dissolved on 11 May 1997 and elections held for Gurdwara Sahib Yishun that same day.

YEAR	PRESIDENT	VICE PRESIDENT	SECRETARY	TREASURER
1997	Sukhdew Singh Bhaloor	Jagdev Singh	CPT Gurdev Singh	Tara Singh Maliana
1998	Mejar Singh Gill	Jasbeer Singh	Manmohan Singh	Manminder Singh
1999	Mejar Singh Gill	Ranjit Singh Gill	Sarjit Singh Dhandal	Tara Singh Maliana
2000	Ranjit Singh Gill	Sukhdew Singh Bhaloor	Gurnam Singh	Tara Singh Maliana
2001	Ranjit Singh Gill	Sukhdew Singh Bhaloor	Gurnam Singh	Tara Singh Maliana
2002	Jagdev Singh	Charanjit Singh Manuke	Dalwinder Singh	Manminder Singh
2003	Jagdev Singh	Charanjit Singh Manuke	Dalwinder Singh	Manminder Singh
2004	Jagdev Singh	Charanjit Singh Manuke	Dalwinder Singh	Tara Singh Maliana
2005	Jagdev Singh	Charanjit Singh Manuke	Dalwinder Singh	Tara Singh Maliana
2006	Jagdev Singh	Charanjit Singh Manuke	Jaspreet Singh Chhabra	Gurmit Singh
2007	Jagdev Singh	Charanjit Singh Manuke	Jaspreet Singh Chhabra	Gurmit Singh

2008	Jagdev Singh	Ajmer Singh	Jaspreet Singh Chhabra	Tara Singh
2009	Jagdev Singh	Ajmer Singh	Jaspreet Singh Chhabra	Tara Singh
2010	Dalwinder Singh	Jasmindar Singh Gholia	Jaspreet Singh Chhabra	Gurmit Singh
2011	Dalwinder Singh	Jasmindar Singh Gholia	Jaspreet Singh Chhabra	Gurmit Singh
2012	Dalwinder Singh	Jasmindar Singh Gholia	Jaspreet Singh Chhabra	Manminder Singh
2013	Dalwinder Singh	Jasmindar Singh Gholia	Jaspreet Singh Chhabra	Manminder Singh
2014	Dalwinder Singh	Jasmindar Singh Gholia	Jagdev Singh	Gurmit Singh
2015	Dalwinder Singh	Jasmindar Singh Gholia	Jagdev Singh	Gurmit Singh
2016	Dalwinder Singh	Jasmindar Singh Gholia	Sukhdev Singh Parmar	Manminder Singh
2017	Dalwinder Singh	Jasmindar Singh Gholia	Sukhdev Singh Parmar	Manminder Singh
2018	Dalwinder Singh	Jasmindar Singh Gholia	Sukhdev Singh Parmar	Sukhdev Singh Chola Sahib
2019	Dalwinder Singh	Jasmindar Singh Gholia	Vacant	Sukhdev Singh Chola Sahib
2020	Mejar Singh Gill	Jaspreet Singh Chhabra	Harbhajan Singh Ghosal	Tara Singh
2021	Mejar Singh Gill	Jaspreet Singh Chhabra	Harbhajan Singh Ghosal	Tara Singh



# **LIST OF DONORS**

# ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਯੀਸ਼ੁਨ

## GURDWARA SAHIB YISHUN

(AMALGAMATION OF SEMBAWANG & JALAN KAYU SIKH TEMPLES)

### LIST OF DONORS

(FOUNDING DONATION BY SANT HARNEK SINGH - \$3100)

TRISHNA PARIKH	\$ 15,000	MONDRIAR SINGH DHOHAN	\$ 5,200	HIKMEENAR SINGH PARMAR	\$ 5,200	RAMJI SINGH SINGH	\$ 2,100	MAJ SAKHINDER SINGH	\$ 2,100
GENIAL SINGH DHOHWARA SINGH	\$ 10,000	PARAMAT SINGH s/o JAI SINGH	\$ 5,111	DALEEP SINGH ATHWAL	\$ 2,200	BURCHARAN SINGH	\$ 2,101	MAHIT KAUR MANJE	\$ 2,100
SARAJ SINGH RAHWAWA	\$ 5,000	AJMER SINGH s/o GURDIAL SINGH	\$ 5,101	SARDAR SINGH PARMAR	\$ 3,800	JAGIT SINGH s/o SUBBACHAN SINGH	\$ 2,101	MANIT SINGH GREWAL	\$ 2,100
MONDRIAR SINGH DHOHAN	\$ 5,000	JALAJR SINGH	\$ 5,101	TAN TAI LIANG	\$ 3,980	NARANWAN SINGH KORB	\$ 2,101	MUKHTIAR KAUR BINDER	\$ 2,100
KAT SARKH/SHARDA PARIKH	\$ 5,000	SURINDER SINGH	\$ 5,101	DR. SANTOKH SINGH	\$ 3,310	BANAM SINGH FATEENGARY	\$ 2,101	MUKHTIAR KAUR PLEER	\$ 2,100
S. HARNEK SINGH	\$ 5,000	GURBAGIAN SINGH BASANT	\$ 5,100	SOHAN SINGH s/o HARBANS SINGH	\$ 3,101	AMRIT SINGH DILL	\$ 2,100	NARANWAN SINGH DHOHAN	\$ 2,100
ISTERI SAT SANG, GURDWARA SELAT RD	\$ 35,000	GURDI SINGH s/o BOOR SINGH USMA	\$ 5,100	PARTO S KHALSA (DHARMAK DHWAN)	\$ 3,000	HARSHAN SINGH RAJGANA	\$ 2,100	NAVINDERJEET KAUR	\$ 2,100
JASVEER SINGH	\$ 3,250	KARAMAT SINGH KLER	\$ 5,100	HARPAL SINGH KALEKE	\$ 3,000	BALBR KAUR s/o BODESTAR SINGH	\$ 2,100	UJAGAR SINGH AKALI	\$ 2,100
BURCHARAN SINGH SANGH	\$ 3,000	KHALSA DHARMAK SABHA	\$ 5,100	MAJ AMANPAL SINGH	\$ 3,000	SHIKH	\$ 2,100	RAJ SINGH ROSE	\$ 2,100
UPHAM SINGH DHOHWARA SINGH	\$ 3,000	MEWA SINGH PARMAR	\$ 5,100	THA RAHAM SINGH KHARA	\$ 3,000	BASAKHA SINGH	\$ 2,100	PARAM JEET SINGH BAL	\$ 2,100
SINGAPORE KWALSA ASSOCIATION	\$ 25,000	MOHAN SINGH JAMARAI	\$ 5,100	GHAWALI SINGH	\$ 3,000	SHARAN SINGH	\$ 2,100	PAPAMALE SINGH RAJGANA	\$ 2,100
LTC MOJAR SINGH KALEKE	\$ 25,000	NAKHATAR SINGH SANDHU	\$ 5,100	EMMAN KOH HOOK HAI	\$ 3,000	SHARAN SINGH DHOHWARA SINGH	\$ 2,100	PIARA SINGH BHALLAR	\$ 2,100
LTC GURANJIT SINGH MAMAY	\$ 23,250	PAL SINGH BHAL	\$ 5,100	HARSHKASH SINGH SAWADY	\$ 3,000	BHARAJ SINGH SAKHANAM	\$ 2,100	PIARA SINGH MAHAKI	\$ 2,100
SOBARAN AND PRITAM NAWA	\$ 21,000	PAWTER CORPORATION	\$ 5,100	HARBANS SINGH s/o JEWAL SINGH	\$ 3,000	BKAR SINGH	\$ 2,100	PRITAM SINGH	\$ 2,100
GURDEV SINGH/HARBHADYAN KAUR	\$ 20,000	RANJIT SINGH DILL	\$ 5,100	NANDA TAN THAM TENG	\$ 3,000	BERAM SINGH DILL	\$ 2,100	PRITAM SINGH SOHI	\$ 2,100
SARAJ SINGH/HARENDAR KAUR	\$ 20,000	SADIA TRADING PTE LTD	\$ 5,100	GURDEV SINGH BHLOHMANDI	\$ 3,000	BUKTAR SINGH BHAI K. SAMAD	\$ 2,100	RANJIT KAUR BHALDOR	\$ 2,100
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MANI SINGH DALJEAR PARIKH	\$ 14,000	YS HARMANET SINGH PTE LTD	\$ 8,000	JASBR KAUR	\$ 2,600	OPT DEEVEY SINGH DARDI	\$ 2,100	RATTAN SINGH DAI	\$ 2,100
SUKHDEV SINGH PARMAR	\$ 13,000	ISTERI SAT SANG, GURDWARA SELAT RD	\$ 5,000	BHUPINDER SINGH SAIDOK	\$ 2,600	OPT KARAN SINGH	\$ 2,100	RATTAN SINGH RATTIAN	\$ 2,100
DARSHAN SINGH PARIKH	\$ 12,500	JASBR SINGH KHALSA	\$ 5,000	BURAN SINGH s/o CHANAK SINGH	\$ 2,600	DALEP SINGH MAIDHAI	\$ 2,100	SANTA SINGH DHANDAL	\$ 2,100
DATUK T. MURMA SINGH ISREMBAN	\$ 12,500	RAM JAGADAR SINGH KAPON	\$ 5,000	SURAN SINGH BHAGTA	\$ 2,600	DEBASH SINGH	\$ 2,100	SANT JAHAN SINGH MEMORIAL SOC. OF SINGAPORE	\$ 2,100
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ISTERI SAT SANG, CENTRAL SIKH TEMPLE	\$ 12,000	SUKHDEV SINGH s/o PARA SINGH	\$ 5,000	DARSHAN SINGH	\$ 2,550	DYAL DAS & RAM CHAND	\$ 2,100	SARAPAL SINGH BHARA	\$ 2,100
MANGIA SINGH MOGA PARIKH	\$ 12,000	A.S. RAM SINGH GOKIA	\$ 5,000	GURDAS SINGH DAVLEKE	\$ 2,500	GEWANI KAUR w/o P.S. SAINI	\$ 2,100	SARDANA SINGH LANGANA	\$ 2,100
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AMR SINGH AND RANJIT SINGH	\$ 10,000	LTC DALJEET SINGH	\$ 5,000	HARBAL SINGH s/o MEWA SINGH	\$ 2,500	HANI SINGH KURWALA	\$ 2,100	SUKH SINGH TIARD	\$ 2,100
ARCAD SINGH PARIKH	\$ 10,000	M. S. KOSHAR & SONS PTE LTD	\$ 5,000	JIBAL SINGH NANGAL	\$ 2,500	HARWRATH SINGH GURDAR	\$ 2,100	SUKHDEV SINGH	\$ 2,100
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JEWAL SINGH BHALDOR	\$ 10,000	MAJ AMANJIT SINGH PARM	\$ 5,000	JI SINGH	\$ 2,500	HARPAL SINGH SAWAZZI	\$ 2,100	SUKHDEV SINGH SIKHI BHAR	\$ 2,100
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JAGDEV SINGH FREWAL	\$ 7,500	PRITAM SINGH BRAR	\$ 5,000	W/O JANA SINGH MALJANA	\$ 2,500	JAGR SINGH BATH	\$ 2,100	SATWANT KAUR BEDI	\$ 2,100
2WO PARTAP SINGH	\$ 8,000	JITENDAR SINGH	\$ 4,800	UTTAM SINGH	\$ 2,400	JAGIT SINGH SIKHAWAND	\$ 2,100	KERTAR SINGH KAPURE	\$ 2,100
MMANDEER SINGH	\$ 7,500	RSAF SINGH PLOTS	\$ 4,800	JITMAL SINGH BRAR	\$ 2,400	JAGRA SINGH BHALDOR	\$ 2,100	MOHINDER SINGH DHOHWARA SINGH	\$ 2,100
RSAF SIKHS	\$ 7,137	SATWANT SINGH KAT	\$ 4,750	RANJIT SINGH KHARA	\$ 2,350	JAI SINGH DILL	\$ 2,100	MR. RETAR SINGH KAPURE	\$ 2,100
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SHER SINGH DEWANJE	\$ 6,400	HARBANS SINGH	\$ 4,000	JASWANT SINGH BHANDAL	\$ 2,200	JASWANT SINGH SAGGO BJA	\$ 2,100		
JAGR KAUR JEWAL PARIKH	\$ 6,300	HARBANS SINGH JASWAL	\$ 4,000	KULDEP SINGH KANG PARIKH	\$ 2,200	JEWAL SINGH BHANDER	\$ 2,100		
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PREM SINGH PREM	\$ 6,000	BASANT SINGH	\$ 3,500	JAGTAR SINGH JEDA	\$ 2,171	KAGMR KAUR	\$ 2,100		
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CHARANJIT SINGH GILLARWAL	\$ 5,200	KARAMJIT SINGH DHANDAL	\$ 3,300	AMARJIT KAUR GURDAR	\$ 2,102	MAJ PREM SINGH	\$ 2,100		

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106	LATE HAZOORA SINGH	\$1,300
107	BIBI BALWANT KAUR NATHPURA	\$1,250
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109	BALVIR KAUR	\$1,200
110	GURDIP SINGH	\$1,200
111	NARAINJI SINGH	\$1,200
112	RAJDEEP KHERA (ROGER KHERA)	\$1,178
113	RAMESHPAL SINGH THAGANA	\$1,111
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159	BEBE HARNAM KAUR	\$1,001
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162	GULWANT KAUR	\$1,001
163	GURMIT SINGH GREWAL PARIWAR	\$1,001
164	HARINDER SINGH (U S A)	\$1,001
165	HARJIT SINGH BHAIL	\$1,001
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184	MANMOHAN SINGH BASSI S/O RANJIT SINGH	\$1,000
185	NAAM KAUR DAKOHA	\$1,000
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**LIST OF  
ABBREVIATIONS  
&  
GLOSSARY**

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGM	Annual General Meeting
APCs	Additional Police Constables
APF	Auxiliary Police Force
ASP	Assistant Superintendent of Police
CC	Community Clubs
CST	Central Sikh Temple
FAS	Football Association of Singapore
FY	Financial Year
HDB	Housing and Development Board
HEB	Hindu Endowment Board
INA	Indian National Army
IRCC	Inter-Racial Confidence Circles
MC	Management Committee
MP	Member of Parliament
MT	Motor Transport
NPST	Naval Police Sikh Temple
PULAPOL	Pusat Latihan Polis Kuala Lumpur (Malaysian Police Training Centre, Kuala Lumpur)
RAF	Royal Air Force
RC	Residents' Committees
RNAD	Royal Navy Ammunition Depot
RNTD	Royal Navy Torpedo Depot
SAF	Singapore Armed Forces
SEAP	Southeast Asian Peninsular (Games)
SGT	Sergeant
SSEF	Singapore Sikh Education Foundation
SIWEC	Sikh Welfare Council
TOL	Temporary Occupation Licence
YMSA	Young Men Sikh Association

## GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

5 Ks	The five physical symbols of Sikhism (uncut hair, a steel bracelet, a wooden comb, a cotton underwear and a steel sword).
Akhand Path	The Akhand Path is the non-stop continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib from beginning to end.
Amrit	A sanctified solution of sugar and water used in the Amrit Ceremony, drunk at religious observances including baptism.
Amrit Sanchar (Khande di Pahul)	This is the 'nectar ceremony', also called Amrit sanskar, Amrit Parchar, or Khande di Pahul, a name given in the Sikh tradition to the baptism ceremony which is also known as the initiation ceremony into the Khalsa 'brotherhood'.
Anand Karaj	This is the Sikh marriage ceremony.
Ardas	This is a set of prayer in Sikhism, an integral part of daily rituals such as opening of the Guru Granth Sahib in the morning or its closing (Sukhasan) as well as part of prayers in naming of a child, marriage, cremation of a loved one and any other significant Sikh ceremonies.
Ashirwad	It means blessings.
Betha	This refers to donations.
Bhai	Literally it means brother.
Charpoy(i)	A portable bedstead commonly found in India, especially Punjab.
Chimpta	Literally meaning 'tongs', is a traditional musical instrument used in Punjabi folk songs, bhangra music and religious music.
Colonial Singapore	Period of British colonialism in Singapore since 1819.
Dahi	This refers to yogurt, an important staple for most Indians, especially Punjabis.
Darbar Sahib	This refers to the main hall within a gurdwara. Darbar, meaning 'court', also means the 'Guru's Court' and the central building at Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar, is also referred to as Darbar Sahib.
Dauri danda	Refers to the mortar and pestle as part of the kitchenware.
Degh	This refers to the bowl containing parshad, the blessed pudding served in a gurdwara.

Dharmik Geets	Refers to religious and devotional songs.
Dhal	Lentils, a key staple in the Punjab region.
Doaba Sikhs	The Doaba Sikhs are from the region between the two rivers, starting from Beas and going till Sutlej.
Dolki	A two-headed South Asian hand-drum.
Giani	The priest of a Sikh gurdwara.
Golak	A safe-like place where devotees drop their donations in a gurdwara.
Granthi	A priest who acts as custodian of the Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred scripture of the Sikhs.
Gurdwara	A Sikh temple.
Gurbani	This refers to the various compositions by the Sikh Gurus and other writers of the Guru Granth Sahibji.
Gurmat	A term use to connote the tenets of the Gurus, especially the religious principles, leading many to see it as been synonymous with Sikhism itself.
Gurmukhi	Literally meaning “from the mouth of the Guru’, is the alphabet that the sacred texts of the Sikhs is written in and used in secular writings in Punjabi.
Gurpurab	Also, referred to as Guru Nanak Jayanti, is the celebration of the birth of the first Sikh Guru.
Guru Gobind Singhji	The Sikhs’ tenth Guru.
Guru Granth Sahib Ji	This is the key religious scripture of Sikhism, regarded by Sikhs as the final, sovereign and eternal Guru following the lineage of the ten human gurus of the religion.
Harmonium	This is an instrument, a modified version of a reed organ, with keys like the piano and bellows to pump air into the instrument.
Hawaladar	A non-commissioned officer in the Indian army, equivalent in rank to sergeant.
Istri Sat Sang	This is the Ladies Wing of the gurdwara, assisting in the various programmes of the temple.
Jaikaara	It means to make an ovation, call out or shout in rejoice of a triumph, a victory, meant to raise the spirits of those around.
Janj	A wedding procession.
Jodh Mela	Prayers and celebrations commemorating benchmark events in Sikh history and propagating religious causes in Punjab over the last 250-300 years.

Katha	This refers to the verbal explanation of Gurbani and of Sikh history and traditions.
Kavi Darbar	This is the name given to an event or gathering where poets assemble to engage in recitation of their poetry.
Kirtan	The devotional singing usually based on Sikh scriptures.
Kunda Danda	This is a mortar and pestle used to grind or crush spices, etc. during cooking.
Langgar	This is the free vegetarian meal served in a Sikh gurdwara.
Langgari	This referred to the volunteers who were experts in cooking various dishes to be served in the Langgar, especially in preparing Dhal and Dahi.
Malacca Barsi	Barsi refers to a death anniversary and the 'Malacca Barsi' is about the death anniversary of Sant Sohan Singh from Malacca.
Malwa Sikhs	The Malwa Sikhs are from the region that lies beyond the Sutlej River.
Majha Sikhs	The Majha Sikhs are from the region from west to east of present-day Punjab, between the Ravi and Beas Rivers.
Mamaji	This refers to the maternal uncle or mother's brother.
Marg de Bhogs	A prayer ceremony associated with a death.
Naam Ras Kirtan Darbar	Loosely translated as 'Festival of Sikh Music', this event has been held in Singapore for many years.
Nishan Sahib	This refers to the triangular Sikh flag which marks all gurdwaras and other religious premises of the Sikhs.
Nitnem	The daily prayers a Sikh is commanded to say daily.
Padma Bushan	This is the third-highest civilian award in India.
Panth Ratan	The title Panth 'Rattan' literally means "Jewel" of the Panth, a group comprising all the world Sikhs and is a title of distinction for the excellent and meritorious service rendered by any individual to the Sikh Panth.
Parcharak	A person appointed to propagate a cause through personal contact, meetings, public lectures, etc.
Path	Paath or Path, means reading or recitation of the holy texts.
Pathis	Those who recite the Path.

Police Gurdwara	A Sikh place of worship within a police precincts meant for Sikhs serving in the British colonial police force.
Punjabi Parveska	Punjabi Language books for beginners.
Punjabi Suba Morcha	This was a long-drawn political agitation, launched by the Sikhs, demanding the creation of a Punjabi Suba, or Punjabi-speaking state.
Puranmashi	This is the day of the full moon.
Ragi	A Ragi is a Sikh musician who plays hymns (shabads) in different ragas as prescribed in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.
Rehras	The daily evening prayer of the Sikhs and is part of Nitnem.
Rehat Maryada	The Official Sikh Code of Conduct and Conventions.
Sach Khand	Sach Khand ("Realm of Truth") is the Sikh concept of Liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth.
Saggan	Donations and gifts.
Sangat	It means fellowship where men and women meet religiously, especially in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib.
Sant	A Sant or Saint is a person who is enlightened by God and has a full understanding of the way to salvation and liberation.
Sarbat Da Bhalla	It means blessings for everyone and may everyone prosper.
Saroops	This is a physical copy of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, sometimes called Bir.
Sewa	It means selfless service.
Sewardar	This refers to a volunteer who offers his/her services to a gurdwara or community free of charge.
Sheras	Sheras refer to words of advice being given to the bridegroom on how to relate best with his newly wedded wife and her family.
Sikhi	Sikhism or Sikhi is an Indian religion that originated in the Punjab region of the Indian subcontinent around the end of the 15 <sup>th</sup> century CE.
Sikhyas	Refers to narration of Sikh stories even though in the context of marriages, it referred to words of advice being given by a sister or sister-in-law to an incoming bride into the home and how to deal with her new family.



Subedar	Senior Sergeant.
Tabla	This refers to a pair of small hand drums used in Indian music, one of which is slightly larger than the other and is played using pressure from the heel of the hand to vary the pitch.
Takht	Literally it means a throne or seat of authority, and there are five Takhts in Sikhism.
Waheguru	In Sikhism, it refers to God as is described in the Guru Granth Sahib.
Wazir	Historically, it referred to a government minister or a person holding a political appointment; and as a mark of respect also refers to Sikh priests, they being Ministers of Religion.



# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Oral interview accounts of Sardars Dharam Singh Ji (Canada), Sarjit Singh Ji (Canada), Sardar Ajaib Singh Ji (Australia), and educationists Sardar Sarban Singh Ji and Ranjit Singh Ji of Singapore regarding early years Naval Police Gurdwara.
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**Sewadars**

Gurdwara Sahib Yishun

## SPECIAL APPEAL

Gurdwara Sahib Yishun is the only Gurdwara in Singapore on a short term lease of 30 years. Your financial contributions will help to ensure that this Gurdwara remains operational forever. Please donate generously.



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