

Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh

January 14, 1996

Dear Sadh Sangat ji,

As you know the Indian Sikh* community has been growing very rapidly in the recent years. Approximately one and a half year ago, need was felt by the Indian Sikh community for more participation in the management process of the organizational structure of current Gurdwara. A request was made which was denied and announced in one of the Sunday Gurdwara soon thereafter. There being no alternative, the Indian Sadh Sangat continued to attend present Gurdwara.

Now the Indian Sikh community has grown to the extent that the present Gurdwara facilities are unable to handle. Even on an ordinary Sunday Gurdwara, Sangat is sitting on the stairs or even outside on many occasions. On any Gur Purab, this is always the case. Looking for a solution, some Indian Sikhs held a large meeting on November 18, 1995. There was a lengthy discussion about building a new Gurdwara or expanding the present facilities with equal participation in current organizational structure. Even though majority of the present members felt that the message previously was very clear and Indian Sikhs will not be allowed to serve in the organization at the management level, decision was made to have another discussion with American Sikh* community representatives. This was done in a good faith so both communities can continue to work and worship together. A five-member committee was selected for this discussion and to bring back the decision so further action can be taken.

At the first combined meeting on December 3rd, 1995 an Ad-Hoc Committee was created by selecting six members from each community. A meeting was held after every Sunday Gurdwara for the next five weeks. A plan was developed to select a local organizational body with equal representation from both communities. The Sikh Religious Society and Sikh Dharma of Phoenix were to donate their respective properties to the new organizational body which then would be placed into a "perpetual trust". This was again declined by the Sikh Dharma management and a statement was issued to that effect and announced on Guru Gobind Singh Ji's Birthday, January 7th, 1996. "*Excerpts from the Siri Singh Sahib's response*" stated "We do not accept that there is an Indian Sikh or American Sikh. Community is a whole, not divided. Sikhs are Sikhs...". Why then an Indian Sikh can not be selected into the present administrative structure ?

The Indian Sikh Community made a sincere effort towards working together and keeping the community together. Time and again, however, the message to the Indian Sikh community has been that there would not be any changes in the legal organizational structure of Sikh Dharma of Phoenix. The Indian Sikhs, therefore, will never have their own representation in the legal organizational structure of the present system. They will never have legal and economic ownership of the present Gurdwara. Many Indian Sikhs have now decided to build another Gurdwara. Another place of worship where everybody would be welcome. Another place where Guru's teaching would be passed on. Another place where Guru would provide peace and harmony. Let us therefore join forces and ask for Guru's blessings to build His Dwara where His message could be passed on to the coming generations.

A second meeting has been organized by the Indian Sikh community on January 20th, 1996 at 2:00 PM at India Palace, 7th street and Bell. The previously selected five-member committee will present detailed statement about recently held combined meetings between both Indian and American Sikh communities. Further course of action will be discussed. Those who are interested to further this cause are welcome to join.

* The Indian Sikh or American Sikh terms are used for identification purposes only.