

Keeping Kartarpur Sahib In Its Original Condition

A Note From The American Sikh Council On The First Gurdwara Established In 1521

Kartarpur Sahib, the place where the founder of the Sikh Faith Guru Baba Nanak Sahibji, spent 18.5 years of his life as a farmer, a householder, a husband and a father while spreading the word of love, humanism, universal sisterhood and brotherhood and making sure that his followers learnt how to raise their voices against any kind of tyranny, be it state repression or social discrimination.

The 'Enlightener' who brought the 'revealed word' of the ONE, with the message of love and truth through ethical conduct, so that the teeming masses could rise above the myriad issues of divisiveness and start becoming more humane and human and get on the path to become a 'Sikh'.

The soil, the water, the trees the, the farms, the entire environment reminds every Sikh of not only the founder their faith but an 'Enlightener' who was concerned with the practical reality of all humans, rather than trying to save our souls.

Guru Baba Nanak Sahibji brought about a revolutionary change in the thinking of the multitudes through true servant leadership by inculcating those values in the mostly downtrodden to create a community of dynamic, empathy driven, upstanding individuals who would have a spine to stand up for the meek and the weak; anywhere and everywhere.

No other place can be more in-



spiring for a Sikh than Kartarpur Sahib!

Kartarpur Sahib can be called the first Gurdwara which was established in 1521. Bhai Dhuni Chand donated 100 acres to Guru Baba Nanak Sahibji where he started to till the land and use it for farming.

It is indeed a sad state of affairs that in Indian Punjab there is no Gurdwara left which is still standing and maintained in its original form. Instead, all the historic Gurdwaras are being torn down and gaudy marble-laced buildings are replacing and completely destroying precious living history.

The original physical structures, the trees, the immediate landscape are all being purposely destroyed by the 'powers to be' with the help of their insidious proxies, who are primarily 'kar-

sewa gangs' prevalent in Punjab. Even the SGPC and DGPC is hand in glove in destroying any vestiges of old history relating to the Sikh Gurus and other important historical figures.

Guru Sahibji started a community of Sikhs who lived within the close vicinity of the current complex. It would be heartening to see the department of archeology and various other associated entities if they could revive all the old structures in exactly the same way as it was during that period.

The American Sikh Council (ASC) is sincerely appealing and requesting the Pakistan government to make sure that the entire Kartarpur Gurdwara complex is maintained in its present state, without adding anything new and/or changing the original architecture in any shape or form.

Any changes and/or additions

to accommodate visitors from lodgings to restrooms and more must be done at a distance, away from the main complex so that the Kartarpur Sahib complex, the farms, natural areas in the 100 acres of land that belonged to Guru Sahibji and the forest areas around the river Ravi can retain as much of its originality as possible, to be preserved for posterity.

The powers to be on the Indian side through ordinary Sikhs and/or the kar-sewa volunteers will do their best to upgrade and modernize the Gurdwara complex and that also needs to be kept at bay.

It has come to our attention that some among a long list of important Sikh historic and religious sites in Pakistan are already under attack by the kar-sewa modernizing brigade.

These and future attempts on destroying our living heritage must immediately be stopped in their tracks.

It is critical that the Waqf Board and the Pakistan Gurdwara Parbandak Committee understand the legitimate concern of the Sikhs diaspora.

The religious heritage of a living faith must be preserved at any cost as the Sikhs have already lost more than 90% of it to the vagaries of politicians, divisions of land and time.

ASC reiterates its plea to keep the Kartarpur Sahib complex in its current simplicity as that is

what Guru Baba Nanak Sahibji insisted on his entire life. Sikhs everywhere yearn to visit the Kartarpur Sahib and see the fields that our wondrous 'Guru' tilled with his own hands, the place where he lived, the trees he sat under and feel and touch their forehead on the same dusty soil that our 'Guru' walked on!

The American Sikh Council (ASC) thanks the Pakistan government for opening the Kartarpur corridor and taking this proactive step towards peace and amity of two people who have so much in common, from language to food, from poetry to clothes and so much more.

The American Sikh Council (ASC) strongly supports every effort to maintain the original integrity of all important Gurdwaras, including the Kartarpur Sahib complex across Pakistan.

A group of concerned citizens have started a Facebook page to monitor and report on the developments of the Kartarpur Corridor and to make concerned voices heard in regards to the development. Stay in touch at: <https://www.facebook.com/kartarpursahibcorridor/>

The American Sikh Council is the umbrella organization of Sikhs in the United States. It is an elected body of Sikh Gurdwaras and institutions. Currently 74 Gurdwaras and other Sikh institutions across the nation are members of ASC.

Corridor To Open In Six Months

GURDASPUR: The Kartarpur corridor is expected to be completed within six months. The decision to build the corridor by Indian and Pakistan came ahead of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak this year.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday (Jan. 3) that millions of Sikh pilgrims will be able to go to the final resting place of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak in Pakistan's Kartarpur from Dera Baba Nanak in Punjab's Gurdaspur district without any hassle because of his government's efforts. "For 70 years, devotees have been forced to watch the land of their guru through binoculars," the Prime Minister said while addressing a rally in Punjab's Gurdaspur. "Adhering to the demand of the crores of Sikh people, the NDA government took the historic decision of building the Kartarpur corridor."

Vice-president M Venkaiah Naidu laid the foundation stone for construction of a road corridor linking Dera Baba Nanak with Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan's Kartarpur on November 26 last year. And,

Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan broke the ground for the Kartarpur corridor on November 28 on his side.

A corridor linking India's border district of Gurdaspur with the historic gurdwara in Pakistan had been a long-pending demand of the Sikh community. Thousands of Sikh devotees from India visit Pakistan every year to celebrate the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak.

India had proposed the corridor to Pakistan around 20 years ago. PM Modi, while participating in the Gurdwaras celebrations on November 23, had said that Kartarpur corridor could be a reason to connect people, adding that the incidents of 1947 should be left behind.

"Seventy years ago during Partition, we were separated from the holy land, it was only a matter of few kilometres," PM Modi said. "Next year, on the anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, festivities will be held in every state and across the world... We are making efforts to ensure that there is no obstacle in reaching the pilgrimage centre," he said.

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