

Documentary on Hari Mandir Sahib A Sahajdhari couple's Devotion

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As Sikhs we are the blessed people. An awe-inspiring Sikh religious place, the Hari Mandir or the House of the God, popularly known as Golden Temple, was built by our Gurus at the Town of Amritsar in Punjab and left for us to revere. Besides being the most sacred place for the Sikhs, the architectural beauty of this spiritual place has no parallel any where on the earth. Certainly several books, scenic pictures and other pieces of literature are available for the seekers who desire to know about this extra ordinary piece of jewel. But as we all know, the Indian Diaspora and its new generation often lack time to go through the lengthy pieces of information outlined in those books or literature. Moreover the information is provided in a format that certainly tests the patience of even those who consider themselves to be the most committed. As such there always was a need to bring forth and high light the detailed history, beauty and its significance in the format that could have been conducive to the children growing away from the land of our heritage as well as those who do not know much about our faith. One would think that we the inheritors of this jewel would have felt imperative to look ahead, seek and disseminate the information about this precious jewel in a form that was felt to be user-friendly especially to the style of these groups.

But alas! It is with pain and regret that one ends up saying that Sikhs in general and Sikh religious leaders in particular had failed miserably in their duty not only towards their children but to the world community at large in disseminating the information about this treasure. Finally it was only for a devoted family out of their sheer love and reverence for this beautiful place to rise to the occasion and present to the Sikh community the best and top class documentary film ever produced with the state of art and modern technology, regardless of their personal expenses and tireless efforts. It is with great humility that they are asking the Sikh community not only to enjoy this piece of art themselves, rather showpiece it for their children and others around them in such a way so that entire humanity could have a glimpse of this most sacred jewel of the Sikhs.

Ramesh and Asha Seth, a couple full of hope and optimism (as her first name "Asha" implies) translate into couple truly rich in all facets of life, both born and raised in Amritsar, i.e. *Guru da ghar*, had always wanted to fulfill their dream of doing this project of unusual *seva* to the Sikh community. Her destiny landed her to Bombay where she joined the film industry and ultimately became a director and then owner of a company in the production of commercials for T.V. industries. Asha will wake up in the middle of night to dream about this project and, finally, when opportunity came along both husband and wife decided to see this project through. Unfortunately they did not realize the uphill battle that lied ahead to convince the hierarchy of S.G.P.C. to let them make this film within the premises of the Golden Temple as the early morning *Seva* of cleaning the floors of Harmandir Sahib is only restricted to Amritdhari males! Yet her perseverance finally paid off and she was able to prepare camera men and others who could fulfill the required obligations and project was finally completed and it is now available in the form of a documentary. It took the family Rs. 25 lacs of their own money, and three years of continuous work with several trips between Amritsar and Mumbai, along with their team, to make this happen. Finally the documentary is now become available in English as well as Punjabi.

Asha Seth and her husband have been going from Gurdwara to Gurdwara im USA showing this documentary themselves. Surprisingly in a span of one hour and few minutes Asha has

been able to highlight the important components of Sikh history related to Hari-Mandir in a very beautiful and sophisticated way. The photography and the factual data complement one another throughout the documentary. The Shabads chosen for background music have been rendered by experienced Ragis in a professional and evocative style. But the most important aspect is the visualization of the scenes of internal “*Sukki and Gilli*” seva done in the very early morning hours that not many had seen for themselves. Additionally the scenes of Dipawali or “*Bandhi chhor Divas*” are depicted in a way that makes one feel as if heaven itself has landed on earth for this night. The *Jalao* or the rare *Darshan* of the jewels and other precious ornaments presented to Golden Temple by Maharaja Ranjit Singh are also shown in the documentary.

The only purpose to pen this piece is to inform the readers that this is one documentary that not only each and every believer of Sikh family should own personally, rather an attempt must be made to show it at various schools, colleges as well as to non-Sikh friends. This will make our children proud of their heritage and would dispel unfounded beliefs about our faith. This happens to be a dire need of times we live in. There is no better way to make the world aware about Sikh faith and our precious heritage.

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