



Estd. 1980

# Sri Hemkunt Foundation Inc.

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## S. Shamsher Singh (1924 – 2011)

ਕਬੀਰ ਸੰਤ ਮੁਏ ਕਿਆ ਰੋਈਐ ਜੋ ਅਪੁਨੇ ਗ੍ਰਿਹਿ ਜਾਇ ॥

kabeer sa(n)th mooeae kias roeeai jo apunae grihi jaae ॥

Kabeer, why cry at the death of a Saint? He is just going back to his home



S. Shamsher Singh ji, founder of Sri Hemkunt Foundation Inc., passed away on June 13, 2011 while he was resting in his home at Kanpur, India, where he cherished his youth from 1946 – 1979.

Popularly known as “Uncle ji”, he - dedicated his entire life to educate children/ youth about Sikhi. He was born on September 17, 1924 in village Bakharbar, District Sargodha. He graduated from Punjab University. He started his first enterprise in Moghalpura, Lahore under the name of S. P. Engineering Corp. This unit started producing vegetable oil extraction machinery. In 1948, after partition, he restarted the factory in Kanpur. In a period of 15 years, he became one of the leading exporters of industrial machinery from India to Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Cambodia, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria etc.

For 16 years he worked as member, secretary and general secretary in Patna (Bihar) - the sacred birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh on the Prabandhak Committee Takhat Sri Patna Sahib. The new buildings of Janam Asthan, Takhat Sahib, Darbar Hall, offices and various residential blocks were designed and built during that period.

Since 1960, he worked as a Founder Trustee and general secretary of Gurdwara Sri Hemkunt Sahib Management Trust. The buildings designed and erected at Sri Hemkunt Sahib, Gobind Dham, Gobind ghat, Joshimath, Srinagar (Garhewal), Rishikesh and Hardwar during this period are really amazing. The facilities created in difficult terrain has resulted in the number of pilgrims rising from 115 in 1960 to over a million a year.

In 1980, he established Sri Hemkunt Foundation Inc. in New York, USA for the sole purpose to convey the Guru’s message to the children/ youth Diaspora. He imported books on Sikh history, Sikh philosophy and Sikh principles from India and distributed to children/ youth (6 – 25 years age). He organized Symposium on these books and awarded gold medals to winners. In the last 30 years, the participation has grown from 19 to over 2,000. The program has reached various parts of USA, Canada, Kenya and London, (U. K.). Presently, 69 Gurdwaras in the western hemisphere participate in the program.

In the year 2007 (at the age of 82 years), he started a Keertan Darbar program. Under this program, youth (10 – 25 years age) recite Shabads in the same Raags that were written and recited by Guru jees themselves. Every year three different Raags are prescribed, one to each of the three age groups. Primary objective of the program is to revive the use of string instruments – Rabab and Saranda – which were used by Guru jees while reciting the Shabads. Participants are decorated with golden medals.

Uncle ji’s sudden death has shocked tens of thousands of Sikhs whose lives have been touched by him. He will be dearly missed. The Sikh community has lost a rare gem in the passing of S. Shamsher Singh ji. His wife – Jagjit Kaur (*his companion since 1949*) – had passed away in 2003. He is survived by five daughters, one son, 11 grand children and 4 great-grand children.