



# Divya Drishti



2020 Edition

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॥ सत्यनाम ॥

## MANGALAACHAARAN

*Kasturi Kundal Base, Mrig Dhundhe Van Maahin  
Aise Ghat Ghat Raam Hai, Duniya Dekhe Naahin*

The musk is in the deer's navel, yet it keeps searching for the scent in the forest;  
Similarly, God is present in everyone's heart, but people cannot realise Him.

*Antar Jyot Ek Deep Jalat Hai, Hriday Kamal Men Jhaank Re...*

A flame is glowing within you, look in your heart you will see

*Baahir Dhoondhe Baahir Phirataa, Kabhi Idhar To Kabhi Udhar  
Naahin Milaa Hai Naahin Milegaa, Soch Samajh Le Baanvare  
Karle Band Baahar Ki Aankhen, Hriday Kamal Men Jhaank Re...*

Everyone keeps searching outside, here, there, everywhere  
Oh crazy one! Think well, no one has ever nor will ever find Him outside  
Close your physical eyes and use your inner eye to look in your heart

*Kaun Dikhaave Kaun Samajhaave, Bin Sataguru Ke Kaun Milaave  
Kripaa Hui Jab Bhaag Khuli Aur, Paave Asali Raah Ujaagar  
Ras Barase Jas Adbhut Motee, Hriday Kamal Men Jhaank Re...*

Who can show you or teach you? Without a Satguru you cannot realise Him  
When I was graced by Satguru I became fortunate and found the right path to  
enlightenment  
Pearl-like miraculous nectar is flowing in your heart, look within you will see

*Nahin Samajhe To Kabhi Nahin Soojhe, Is Jeevan Kaa Mol Ghanere  
Satyanaam Kaa Dhyaan Dharo, Us Chetan Se Jaa Milo  
Saanyee Viraaje Tere Andar, Hriday Kamal Men Jhaank Re...*

If you still have not understood, you will never grasp the broader purpose of life  
Meditate on the Holy Name and unite with the Supreme Consciousness  
God is well settled within you, look in your heart you will see

*Written & Composed by Mahant Jay Jaggessur*

# New Normals

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the publication of *Divya Drishti*. I still remember when I first committed pen to paper to launch this newsletter in 2010 in an effort to record our achievements and convey our plans to devotees and the public. I am proud to say that every year we have been able to impart valuable information to all those who have been connected with our Association.

Although the year 2020 has been very different in many ways, we have still been able to pursue our mission and fulfill our responsibility as a Spiritual Organisation to maintain a healthy interaction and exchange with our members. Many activities were done differently this year, yet, they all met the needs of one and all. Making optimum use of technology and virtual platforms, we have been able to reach out to more people and touch more lives. As I write this editorial, I am glad to say that although the global pandemic has been very devastating in many ways, the Kabir Association has been able to establish itself as a respectable organisation to which devotees have an affinity. I am particularly grateful to Ravi Dass who has come forward to offer his services in accommodating us with the Zoom virtual platform which has been so crucial for us to stay connected and exchange information. Almost every sector in the economy has had to resort to virtual platforms, and the Kabir Association of Toronto was no exception.

It is the tradition for us to reflect on our achievements and look forward to a new year with new projects and better plans. This year has not given us much to project as uncertainty still looms even after vaccines have been approved. Nevertheless, I am still hopeful that despite challenges which may screw up our plans, we must continue to be creative to make our way towards spiritual progress. Spiritual practices are not dependent on the world's predicaments. We learn to be resilient and persevere on our path. Regardless of what surrounds us. Because all we need to continue on our path is already within us. If we wait for the world to be better or for the world to be COVID-free for us to engage in our spiritual practices, we will never be able to do so. There will always be something or other happening in the world. Our actions should not be dependent on occurrences plaguing the world. The world is Maya, and he who is able to conquer Maya is well set to fulfill his life. Satguru Kabir Saheb said :

“Maayaa To Thaganeeh Bhayee, Thagat Phire Sab Des;  
Jaa Thagane Thaganeeh Thagee, Ta Thagaa Ko Aades.”

Maya is a great cheater, and keeps roaming everywhere, in every country. He who is able to defeat this cheater is indeed worthy of being praised.

As we end twelve months and prepare to start a fresh set of twelve months, I would like all of us to reflect on only the positive side of things. Let us tap into that infinite reservoir of divine grace that is always glowing within us and be focussed on fulfilling the purpose of our human birth.

I take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very Happy New Year with renewed energy to achieve more spiritual progress in your lives.

Happy Holidays!

Mahant Jay Jaggessur (President, Kabir Association of Toronto)

## Message from the Vice-President

Saheb Bandagi,

Wishing you and your family good health, happiness, and prosperity for the holidays in the coming year!

With the blessings of Sadguru Kabir Saheb and the support of our Executive Board, Mahants, Devotees and Volunteers, I am honoured to be serving as Vice President of the Kabir Association of Toronto. I thank one and all for this great opportunity to serve our esteemed Temple. I promise to continue to deliver my services with sincere dedication and commitment keeping community and temple needs as first priority.

Temples are institutions of learning, carriers of culture, preservation of history, a tool to uplift the society, providing eternal bliss and showing the spiritual path to everyone. With all these founding principles, our temple has been serving the people of GTA, Ontario and Canada, since we opened on Sept. 8, 2019, for service to the community. I feel that we are blessed to have the support and guidance of founding our members who have been serving the temple for last year or so.

### ABOUT OUR TEMPLE

With all your continued support, we have come a long way since the Association was founded. To our beautiful temple, in the last few months of the Year 2020, we have added a lower ceiling which also created space for additional storage. It has also been boosted by pot lights and draped at the back with a beautiful background and aesthetics. Apart from this, we have also built a stage with a transparent finish, bringing out the wood grains exhibiting a natural beauty. We still have plenty of challenges and we hope to overcome them as time goes by in the coming New Year. As Vice-President, I would like to focus on providing the utmost comfortable and spiritual experience to all our devotees, promoting our ancient culture, and reinforcing the founding principles of Satguru Kabir Saheb. The years of experience I gained in serving the community in various capacities, temple guidelines and changing needs of devotees will guide me to serve the community in the most desired way.

## SATSANGS

We are very fortunate to have the most learned and well trained Mahants performing with high dedication, keeping the community needs and service in their mind. Their commitment, dedication, energy and service bring a lot of positive vibrations to the temple. While we have been affected with the COVID-19 pandemic, all satsangs at the Centre have had to be suspended until further notice thus prompting us to turn to Virtual Satsangs (held through Zoom in the comfort of our homes) through which many people from other parts of the globe, apart from our regular devotees, have been able to tap in and join to benefit from the teachings of our beloved Mahant-in-charge, Jay Jagdessur, Dr. Jagessar Das, a world renowned advocate of Sadguru Kabir Saheb's teachings, Dr. Sudha Pandit and other Mahants from Trinidad and Pakistan as well as other devotees. Although personally, I miss the Centre, I must confess that I have been thrilled with Virtual Satsangs so far, and I too have been able to provide a valuable contribution as well.

## BEREAVEMENT

It is with great sadness that, as I sat to write this part of the Kabir Association of Toronto newsletter, I am having to include the passing of our dear beloved Mahant Pattiram Saheb, originally from Trinidad & Tobago. So when in March I got the news from his son, Baldath Ramroop, that his dad was in the hospital and it was not looking good I became very worried. No one was able to visit him at the hospital due to the COVID-19 pandemic that has been ongoing. According to Baldath bhai, when his dad left home in an ambulance, it was thought that he would have been back soon; however, it turned out otherwise. After a few days he passed away. Mahant Pattiram had spent more than twenty-five years with us, some of which were way before The Kabir Association of Toronto was established, and he has left us with an abundance of Sadguru Kabir Saheb's messages. He was a father-figure to many, if not all of us, due to the fact that we had a very close and long relationship with him as he provided invaluable spiritual guidance. I can never forget that soul who has taught us so much and being there for all of us. May his soul rest in Satlok.

## A WORD OF THANKS

I must say that we don't have a Facility Manager to run this organisation, but because of my background and experience, I am glad that I have been carrying the mantle as such. I am indebted to the many volunteers who have and continue to provide selfless service. I conclude my message with the following saakhi from Satguru Kabir Saheb:

“Jag Men Bairee Koyi Naheen, Jo Man Sheetal Hoy;  
Yaa Aapaa Ko Daari De, Dayaa Kare Sab Koy.”

If one's mind is quiet and cool, he cannot have an enemy in this world. Because it is only in the disturbed state of mind that one involves himself in altercation with others. If you lay aside your ego and become humble, everyone will love and be kind to you.

Haimraj Das (Vice-President, Kabir Association of Toronto)

# 2020 In Review

The year 2020 has been a year of new normals. We all have had to adapt to new ways of dealing with our day-to-day life, work and family responsibilities, social interactions and travel habits. Much of these have been largely influenced by technology and the internet. The Kabir Association of Toronto was no exception. I will highlight this year's activities and events as we adapted to creative ways of continuing to operate.

## QUARTER ONE

Every year we have been starting off the New Year with an opening satsang. January 1st 2020 was very special as we did our New Year satsang at the Kabir Centre (38-1365 Mid-Way Blvd Mississauga) for the first time. This satsang was attended by lots of devotees, and everyone was very happy to meet and greet at our newly acquired Centre. Our next major event was Holi Chowtaal singing on February 29th, 2020 at the Annual Holi Sammelan organised by the Ontario Hindu Cultural Association. This year's event was held at the Devi Mandir in Pickering. As with previous years, our performance was very well received and acclaimed by all attendees. The month of March ended on a very sombre note with the passing of Mahant Pattiram Ramroop on the 23rd. This was a very big loss to our Association and the Kabir Panth community in Toronto. This loss was made harder to endure because of the prevailing COVID-19 confinement and restrictions. Many people could not attend the funeral, but were however able to view the ceremony virtually on Zoom. Mahant Pattiram Ramroop has left a big void with his demise and will always be remembered dearly. It is worth noting that lockdown and social distancing measures came into effect in the beginning of March as COVID-19 cases were increasing. The ensuing prayers in memory of Mahant Pattiram Saheb were held on Zoom as well, and the final Chalaawaa was held at his son's residence with a limited number of devotees on April 18th. The first quarter was indeed a rough start, not only for our Association, but also for the whole world as everyone was bracing to be safe in an unprecedented global pandemic.

## QUARTER TWO

The second quarter of 2020 started to get more unpredictable as Government and Health authorities were coming up with new measures and announcements almost every week. This made it very difficult to plan our Pragatya Divas celebrations in June this year. However, we were able to conduct a virtual crossborder satsang on June 4th with the participation of devotees and Mahants from Vancouver, New York, and Trinidad. This satsang was focussed on commemorating Satguru Kabir Saheb's 622nd appearance. Discourses and bhajans were presented and all participants were advised to do their prayers at their respective homes as our Centre remained closed due to the pandemic. It is in the second quarter that we started our weekly Sunday satsangs through Zoom. May 3rd was the kick-off with "Acceptance" as the theme as to underline our resilience in going

through new ways to do things. We are very thankful to Ravi Dass for graciously hosting all our Zoom events.

## QUARTER THREE

Many restrictions surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic were lifted in July and August 2020. We were therefore able to hold our Guru Poornima Chowkaa Aarti on July 4th at the Kabir Centre with a limited number of devotees. This was the first Chowkaa Aarti performed at the Centre since its launch. We were also able to hold our Annual Summer Fun Day on August 23rd at the Meadowvale Conservation Park. It was indeed very comforting to come together as a big family in the park after long periods of confinement. Elders and kids had a good time playing and having fun outdoors. The day ended with rain showers, which were also welcomed as part of the fun. Due to the reinstatement of restrictions, we were not able to celebrate our Centre's first anniversary at the Kabir Centre. However, we held a virtual satsang on September 12th with participants from Vancouver, New York, and Trinidad to both celebrate our anniversary and also the launch of Dr Das' Memoir published in August 2020. Dr Das's Memoir highlights his move from Guyana to Canada, his spiritual journey, his professional itinerary, and his achievements on a global level insofar as spreading Satguru Kabir Saheb's teachings are concerned. Due to technical issues, the kabir.ca website was also revamped in September, which led to the amalgamation of kabir .ca and kabirassociationoftoronto.org. It is now much easier as all resources can be found in just one website.

## QUARTER FOUR

As the pandemic continued to create havoc in the world, and especially as cases in India kept increasing, the Indian Pharma Educational Society invited me to give a lecture on the philosophy of Satguru Kabir Saheb to uplift the morale of its members and other interested parties in India. On October 10th, I gave a lecture for one hour on "Rewind and Recharge: Tapping into the philosophy of Kabir". This lecture was broadcast live on Facebook and was attended by almost 2,000 people. Lots of positive feedback were received after the event, and the organisers plan to hold more lectures like this. The Kabir Centre also got a new-look with the revamping of its stage. Thanks to our Vice-President, Haimraj Das, who has spearheaded this project, came up with a totally new design, with a more spacious stage and storage space. Rajendra Dass also helped out with electrical works, prominently spotlighting the stage. Many volunteers also showed up to help in this facelift operation. We are also proud to have participated in the World Bhakta Samaj Bhajan Sammelan, which was a virtual bhajan programme spanning over six weeks from November 21st to December 26th. This event was organised by the Shree Ramkabir Mandir in Carson, USA, with over 75 participants from different countries. Participants were from India, USA, Canada, Holland, UK, Trinidad, Mauritius, Zambia, Botswana, South Africa. The Kabir Association of Toronto performed on December 13th, with a variety of bhajans, all very well received by viewers. The programme was broadcast on Zoom and on Facebook.

Unfortunately, this year we could not hold our Annual End-of-year Fun Day due to COVID-19 restrictions on social gathering.

Despite the global pandemic and restrictive measures enacted to safeguard public health, the Kabir Association still continued to be active in pursuing its mission and staying connected with its members, devotees, and collaborators both in Canada and abroad. We were also privileged to have Hazur Ardh Naam saheb address devotees in a few of our virtual satsangs. We have also continued to hold our Yoga classes (three times per week) through Skype. Members and non-members who regularly join to practise Yoga are very thankful to our two volunteer Yoga teachers, Amal Badal and Jalpa Shah for continuing to promote this discipline despite all the challenges we are facing amid COVID-19. Other ongoing activities include my daily spiritual messages (Kabir Darshan) which started on April 1st, and weekly lectures on Satguru Kabir Saheb's teachings. We have been able to maintain weekly bhajan practice sessions whenever it was possible, and I am sure that this has helped our devotees maintain their interest in devotional service.

I would like to convey special thanks to my Board for supporting me in continuing to pursue our mission and helping me build the Association stronger. I am confident that as things get back to normal, we will be able to foster a better community, a better society, and a better world with our actions.

Mahant Jay Jaggessur (President, Kabir Association of Toronto)

## The Road to Immunization

Although every year is different and unique in its own way, 2020 has been particularly different for bringing the whole world to a standstill as the biggest pandemic ever paralysed every single country. Never has the frailty of life been felt more than in these last 9 months. Growing concern as to when things can get back to normal still persist even if vaccines have been developed and are being promoted as safe and dependable. This year, more than ever, State heads, religious leaders, business executives, and many other influential humanitarians are giving messages of hope. Hope and confidence that 2021 will be better. How has the spiritual world been impacted?

With close to 2 million deaths and over 80 million cases of COVID-19 in a year, there are definitely lots to be concerned about. Especially when prudent and health-conscious people are inadvertently impacted. As it has been, anyone could be a victim of this deadly virus. However, when we think about the why, the how, and the what of the origins and cause of such easily transmissible disease, two things come to mind : 1) how people can debase human dignity, and 2) how all human beings are woven in one and the same fabric. Lots of efforts and resources have been put into researching and developing a vaccine to save the world. Why did we not already have the immunity? Satguru Kabir Saheb teaches us to be immune to the world. This can happen when we realise our real Self, who we should associate ourselves with and who we should dissociate ourselves from. As spiritual



beings, our fundamental task is to function in harmony with all other beings, with all other spirits. If we contaminate the purity of our true being by harming and hurting others, it is obvious that we will endure the consequences of such unethical behaviour.

One of the pillars of the Kabir Panth faith is non-violence, which is primarily practised by adopting a vegetarian diet and lifestyle. The human body has not been designed to consume meat, fish or other non-vegetarian products. Even if one does not believe in God or in the principles of spirituality, he should understand that eating that which is not meant for the human body is harmful to his well-being. Science has also proved that meat-based foods have so many adverse effects on our health. Obesity, diabetes, depression, and cancer are just a few of the health concerns that result from non-vegetarian lifestyles. This pandemic has triggered people to re-think their eating habits and lifestyles. Yet, many people are still very adamant in satisfying their carnal appetites to the detriment of the whole of humanity. One unethical behaviour trickles down to a multitude of cascading health hazards threatening people in various parts of the world. Even if we ignore the fact that animals have consciousness and feelings, we cannot discount the fact that they carry viruses and diseases which can be harmful when consumed. At a time when efforts are being multiplied to eliminate a virus which is deadly, not enough reflections are being made to prevent recurrence of such epidemics and pandemics. Satguru Kabir Saheb openly condemns those who disrespect the sacredness of life.

“Kahataa Hoon Kahi Jaat Hoon, Kahaa Ju Maan Hamaar;  
Jaakaa Galaa Tum Kaatiho, So Phir Kaati Tumhaar.”

Kabir says that He keeps advising over and over again, yet people do not pay heed. If you cut another being's throat, you will have yours cut too eventually.

The process of natural immunization involves our behaviours and lifestyles. Spiritual teachings point towards living well and let others live well too. For this to happen, we are taught to build our immunity by controlling our senses. Real immunity is developed when one is 'dead' while living. Immune to the traps of the world. Because Satguru Kabir Saheb says that we will all face physical death some day, but that death is not what will free us from this world. We need to attach ourselves to the Eternal Being while alive.

“Baid Muwaa Rogi Muwaa, Muwaa Sakal Sansaar;  
Ek Kabeera Na Muwaa, Jaake Naam Adhaar.”

Both doctors and patients die; actually, the whole population of the world will die. But he who realised the Eternal Name never dies.

When we are able to discriminate between right and wrong, good and bad, truth and untruth, reality and illusion, then we become totally immune to all the traps that the world lures us with. Those are traps that attract us by exploiting the vulnerability of our senses and can only corrupt our rationality. Immunity, in the spiritual sense, is not to be built by introducing a foreign body in our system, but it is built by developing our inner strength and

fortitude to perform the right actions. Even if the whole world gets inoculated with the anti-COVID vaccines, immunity building will not be complete as long as every single individual does not realise their true purpose in life.

After going through one of the toughest years in human history, the message of hope is not enough to look forward to a new year with renewed spirits. It is the time for action - more than ever. Let the spirit in us guide us to fulfill the purpose of our life, and may God bless us all with strength and resilience to continue our journey.

Happy New Year 2021!

Mahant Jay Jaggessur (President, Kabir Association of Toronto)

## The Logic and Humaneness of Vegetarianism

In every activity of life, we like to have positive results for others and ourselves. Vegetarianism is a lifestyle that is positive and benefits all people, animals, natural resources and the atmosphere. Unless we examine this subject, we will not see the merits of vegetarianism, and will not modify our lifestyle to reap positive benefits.

Let us consider the benefits of a vegetarian life:

No.1. Health: a vegetarian lifestyle promotes better general health and longevity. It has been estimated that vegetarians live approximately seven years longer than non-vegetarians and are generally healthier. This lifestyle also helps to maintain proper weight and decreases the epidemic of obesity and diabetes. For health, there is ample protein in a balanced vegetarian diet.

No. 2. Conservation: Vegetarians can be supported by half an acre of land, but non-vegetarians require three and a half acres of land. This is because of the need for pasture and land for growing grain and hay to feed cattle. Enormous quantities of water are required for producing and slaughtering animals. It requires 15 lbs. of grain to produce 1 lb. of beef. This is the law of diminishing returns, and no sensible person will like to make such investments.

No. 3. Food supply: There will be much more food for a hungry world if all the land used for producing meat, were used to produce grains, fruit and vegetables. Many more people can live on 15 lbs. of grain than on 1 lb. of beef. Currently most of the grain and soybeans are used to feed cattle instead of people.

No. 4. Pollution: Cattle farming produces a great deal of pollution to land and water and produces a great deal of methane gas that increases the greenhouse effect. This pollution often results in diseases and deaths as occurred in Walkerton, Ontario.

No. 5. Diseases: Several serious diseases come from animals. Think of Mad Cow disease, SARS, Avian flu, and E. Coli infections, and now Covid-19. Animals also suffer diseases that may not be detected, and are processed with the meat for human consumption

No. 6. Ethics and Compassion: Animals are helpless and innocent about their fate. Is it ethical to feed and raise animals that have no clue of what will happen to them? Is it ethical or compassionate to kill these innocent animals? Is it ethical to use a cow's milk, and when she cannot produce milk to eat her? Human beings need to have reverence for life, since they cannot create life.

No. 7. Violence: Killing is a violent act. Killing a human is punishable by life imprisonment or, in many cases, by death. Similarly, killing animals is a violent act and will produce certain negative effects in people who kill or condone the killing of animals. This is the law of karma.

No. 8. Adaptation: The animals raised for food are vegetarians. They have teeth for grinding vegetable matter. Neither these animals nor humans have long canine teeth for tearing flesh, as do the carnivorous animals. These animals and humans do not have claws for grabbing and tearing flesh. There are many more similarities between human beings and vegetarian animals.

No. 9. Stamina: Note that all strong and hard-working animals are vegetarians. They are active all day, whereas carnivorous animals are slothful, and become active when they are hungry, and need to hunt. Human beings are similar to the vegetarian animals in this respect. Also note that the biggest and strongest animals are vegetarians.

No. 10. Comparison of animal and vegetable life: People often argue that vegetarians kill plants. The degree of manifestation of the life force, or the degree of consciousness, is considerably less in plants than in animals. Killing animals creates a great deal more of negative karmas. Spiritually, this is wrong. Nearly all plants will grow more shoots when cut. You can replant a piece of potato, carrot or cuttings of plants, and have a greater supply. You cannot do this with animals.

Considering the above, do people still have to eat meat? Would not a vegetarian lifestyle be more humane, healthy and environmentally sound? Fortunately, vegetarianism is slowly gaining in popularity with younger and better-informed people. When I was in medical school in the 60's essential amino acids were said to be derived only from meat. Now that is not the case. I am an example of a lifelong vegetarian, a doctor, and a vegan for 10 years. I am well enough in my late 80's to write this article, and to expound Kabir Saheb's compassion and vegetarianism to everyone.

Dr. Jagessar Das M.D.

# My Foster Mother

*A poem by Dr. Jagessar Das M.D.*

My birth mother brought me forth,  
And with love and caring nurtured me.  
In infancy, she suckled me,  
And cuddled me to show her love.  
Without words, I felt a closeness,  
That gave strength to my self-esteem.  
Lo! I grew and mother's milk abated,  
So substitute milk she fed me,  
Milk miraculously produced by the cow.  
She who gives me nourishing milk,  
If not birth mother, then is foster mother.  
The loving unselfish cow is now  
My foster mother, feeding me  
With nutritious milk all through life,  
Helping healthy growth of bone and flesh.  
I can never forget my foster mother,  
Whose nurture even in age,  
Sustains me in sickness and health.  
I must treat my foster mother with love,  
Meeting her needs – food, water and comfort.  
Can I ever repay her generosity?  
She asks nothing, as she has no words,  
But she has deep feelings in her heart,  
Responding to love and fearful of hurt.  
She is helpless without matching intellect,  
And silently entreats us for kind treatment.  
She will then gladly supply milk  
Unstintingly, for our life's welfare.  
Let us then think with a compassionate heart:  
Should we slay and eat our foster mother?  
So with soft and compassionate heart,  
Let us love and protect our foster mother.

# Reviews, Reviews, Reviews

Bandagi Saheb to all my dear brothers and sisters.

This year, with the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting all regular activities, the emergence of the Sunday Morning Virtual Satsangs led by Mahant Jay Saheb of the Kabir Association of Toronto brought comfort to many devotees. Being a regular attendee and presenter at this satsang, I consider it a great boon and blessing as it has left me feeling more spiritually enriched and much more motivated to continue researching and sharing the sublime and profound messages of Satguru Kabir Saheb and the Saints.

My sincere best wishes to the Kabir Association of Toronto on the tenth anniversary of the publication of this beautiful Divya Drishti magazine.

Saheb Bandagi.

Mahant Parsuram Kumar Dookie. Trinidad, W.I.

Bandagi Saheb!

My association with the Sunday satsangs came about as they went online due to the pandemic. It is not the happiest of reasons, but shows that negative events can also have a positive side. Perhaps there are others like me who got this opportunity for the same reason. Being in Vancouver, I have to limit my hours of sleep on Sundays. Not the most regular attendee, I nevertheless feel blessed each time I am present in the session. The prayers are sung beautifully; and the deep reflections on values that are philosophical and yet linked to everyday life are excellent. It is wonderful how several people's small contributions together make a meaningful whole. I now feel closer to Kabir Saheb's teachings.

The time management is very good, the atmosphere is welcoming and sometimes I forget the event is virtual.

I am very grateful to the Kabir Association of Toronto for letting me be part of the satsang.

Charu Mittal, Vancouver, Canada.

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THANK YOU, Kabir Association of Toronto, for adapting by using a virtual platform to continue with weekly satsangs and other programs. To protect our physical health, we needed to be isolated for most of this year which made satsangs an essential service for mental health. Satsangs reinforces our faith which gives us guidance, strength, hope and community. I look forward to attending every week! I also like the fact that there is a theme for each week.

Virtual satsangs were attended by devotees from around the world including his Holiness Shri Hazur Ardh Naam Saheb. After attending the weekly satsangs, I would like for them to still be broadcast even after in-person activities are allowed at the Kabir Centre. Being in Vancouver, I would really benefit from the online broadcasts.

KAOT is dedicated and continuously seeks opportunities to promote and propagate the teachings of Satguru Kabir Saheb. May Satguru Kabir Saheb shower blessings on you all as you continue in this noble endeavour.

Saheb Bandagi

Sorogini Ramparshad, Vancouver, Canada.

Bandagee Saheb,

I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation for the invitation extended to participate every Sunday morning in the Association's Virtual Satsang conducted by you. You do a great service and are quite competent, most learned, and are a dedicated, hardworking servant of Satguru Kabir Saheb.

The chance to be in Satsang each Sunday since April, 2020, is truly a blessing. It helps me in my spiritual growth and development and is a very enjoyable and awakening experience. To be in the company of devotees of Kabir Saheb is like a beautiful tree that provides good shade, and people rest there to escape from the heat of the sun. There is no better place to spend one's time, in addition to taking God's name [which is one's duty], attend and participate in Satsang! I wish to mention that I welcome the themes given each week as it provides a purpose for reading all our books, literatures, saakhis, and bhajans.

Though Covid-19 has created havoc throughout the world and has caused places of worship to close their doors, we can count it a blessing during this time for the opportunity to join in Satsang with devotees from across the globe through the medium of Zoom. Special thanks extended to those responsible for providing Zoom. Salutations and thanks again to you, the members of KAOT and Satguru Kabir Saheb, the ocean of mercy and bliss, may we all be blessed in achieving our goal

Best regards & Bandagee Saheb,

Pulmattee Ramkissoon, New York, U.S.A.

# A Message from Trinidad

Saheb Bandagee Saheb,

It is my honour, on behalf of the executive and members of the Satya Kabir Nidhi, to offer a few words on the 10th Anniversary of the publication of Divya Drishti by Mahant Shri Jay Jaggessur Saheb and the Kabir Association of Toronto (KAOT).

I must confess that I had not seen the Publication until recently, and it is quite a fascinating one which I will now look forward to seeing every year. The articles, bhajans, saakhees and catalogue of main activities each year are truly informative and inspiring. It reminds me that we all need reminders, lest we forget, not only of our purpose and progress, but also of where we started, what we have achieved and what more we think we need to do. It is a wonderful publication and record and I congratulate Jay Saheb and the executive and members of KAOT for it. The availability of Divya Drishti on your remarkable website also makes it accessible to all and sundry, and so I feel moved to recognize the work of your 'website crew' for another remarkable aspect of KAOT. Congratulations all round, you are all doing ground-breaking seva in the name of Satguru Kabir Saheb under the astute leadership of Jay Saheb. You have our awe and admiration. We appreciate your achievements and encourage you to continue.

We have had the added privilege of joining the weekly satsangs via Zoom. Although the COVID 19 pandemic has kept us all apart, it has facilitated this method of us keeping together in Satsang. It has been really enlightening to listen to the messages from the Mahants and devotees as well as the bhajans, saakhees and messages of Satguru Kabir Saheb. I think it is a great idea and look forward to satsang with all participants in the coming months.

I also want to take the opportunity to mention our deep sense of gratitude and admiration for the pioneering efforts of Dr. Jagessar Das Ji, his family and the Kabir Association of Canada. The work of 'Dr. Saheb' and his teams has been record-breaking, inspiring and continues to be that for all of us. Both organisations have done so well and will remain in our hearts forever. Congratulations.

May I take this opportunity to recall a message of Satguru Kabir saheb. Saheb says in one of his songs:

*Jeevat hee karoo aasaa santo, muye mukti guru kahe swaarthee...*

He says, 'Oh Saints, hope to achieve mukti while we are alive'. Satguru goes on to imply in the rest of the song that while we are alive is the only time we can think and act, we can become attached physically or spiritually etc., and whatever we gain spiritually while alive will be retained after death. All this through the mercy of Satguru.

It is a reminder to us all to start now on our spiritual journey. Too many times we think we will do our spiritual practices once a week, once a month or when we 'retire'. We do not have time for religion and spirituality with our family while we are studying, working, playing etc. We find time for many of the physical pursuits, but not for the spiritual. It is like the proverbial 'an apple a day keeps the doctor away', which we remember when we must go to the doctor for not having taken the 'apple a day'.

Satguru Kabir Saheb reminds us in his many verses that the method is simple [sahaj] and can be practiced while we are engaged in all our regular, necessary physical activities.

My message then is, let us renew our attempts to re-start our daily spiritual routines as prescribed by our Guru.

Congratulations on the tenth anniversary of Divya Drishti, keep up the excellent seva via Zoom and Best Wishes to each and everyone of you for a wonderful holiday season and bright New Year ahead, filled with Satguru's Grace.

Mahant Keith Praim Das (Satya Kabir Nidhi, Trinidad, W.I.)

## Benefits of yoga in daily life

1. All-round fitness. You are not just physically fit but also mentally and emotionally balanced.
2. Weight loss. With regular practice of yoga, we tend to become more sensitive to the kind of food our body asks for and when. This helps keep a check on weight.
3. Stress relief. A few minutes of yoga during the day can be a great way to get rid of stress that accumulates daily - in both the body and mind. Yoga postures, pranayama and meditation are effective techniques to release stress.
4. Inner peace. We all love to visit peaceful, serene spots, rich in natural beauty. Little do we realize that peace can be found right within us and we can take a mini-vacation to experience this any time of the day! Benefit from a small holiday every day with yoga and meditation.
5. Improved immunity. Our system is a seamless blend of the body, mind and spirit. An irregularity in the body affects the mind and similarly unpleasantness or restlessness in the mind can manifest as an ailment in the body. Yoga poses massage organs and strengthen muscles; breathing techniques and meditation release stress and improve immunity.
6. Living with greater awareness. The mind is constantly involved in activity – swinging from the past to the future – but never staying in the present. By simply being aware of this tendency of the mind, we can actually save ourselves from getting stressed and relax the



mind. Yoga and pranayama help create that awareness and bring the mind back to the present moment, where it can stay happy and focused.

7. Better relationships. Yoga can even help improve your relationship with your spouse, parents, friends or loved ones! A mind that is relaxed, happy and contented is better able to deal with sensitive relationship matters. Yoga and meditation work on keeping the mind happy and peaceful; benefit from the strengthened special bond you share with people close to you.

8. Increased energy. Do you feel completely drained out by the end of the day? Shuttling between multiple tasks through the day can sometimes be quite exhausting. A few minutes of yoga everyday provides the secret to feeling fresh and energetic even after a long day. A 10-minute meditation benefits you immensely, leaving you refreshed and recharged in the middle of a hectic day.

9. Better flexibility & posture. You only need to include yoga in your daily routine to benefit from a body that is strong, supple and flexible. Regular yoga practice stretches and tones the body muscles and also makes them strong. It also helps improve your body posture when you stand, sit, sleep or walk.

10. Better intuition. Yoga and meditation have the power to improve your intuitive ability so that you effortlessly realize what needs to be done, when and how, to yield positive results.

Amal Singh Badal (Yoga Instructor, Kabir Association of Toronto)

## How has the Pandemic Impacted my Life?

A pandemic is not a new phenomenon. Throughout recorded history we have read about different kinds of pandemics, and today we are experiencing another one. Each time a pandemic occurs, it brings with it lessons about life. It teaches us about ourselves and the world in which we live.

In all this chaos, I ask myself the question: How has this pandemic impacted my life? Simple things that I once took for granted have now become luxuries. Shopping for groceries, going for walks, interacting with families and friends have become less, or practically non-existent. Within the norms of a restricted society, I have to make changes and adapt to the existing situation. In the consumer-oriented society, I evaluate 'need' against 'wants'. Amidst the chaos there is flexibility, creativity and adaptation.

In adapting to the existing situation, the digital world has opened itself to new heights. Physical distancing has given rise to virtual distancing without geographical boundaries. This has brought connectivity throughout the globe. Through Zoom there are religious, social and intellectual interactions. This has certainly brought people together, despite distances.

The pandemic has caused me see the goodness in humanity. When a neighbor knocks at the door and asks if I need anything from the grocery store tells me that, generally, people still have that innate quality of goodness. The greatest impact is that life is precious and there is more gratitude for the small things in life.

Urmila Das (Vancouver, B.C., Canada)

## Loving Kindness – Meetha Bhavana

According to yoga, everything is interconnected. We are interrelated beings, and we cannot experience life without being in relationship with one another. This is why the practice of loving-kindness or meetha bhavana towards ourselves, towards our fellow humans, and towards nature is of the utmost importance and this is an incredibly timely topic, given the topsy-turvy, chaotic times we're currently living in.

### Practicing Loving Kindness (Meetha Bhavana) Towards Yourself

The best place to start is with your own self as to truly love others, we must first love ourselves fully. We must accept ourselves, beauty, flaws, and all, before we can fully accept those, we're in close (or far) relationship with. We must first focus our loving attention inwards, before we can radiate that love outwards. There is a traditional one line yogic mantra to be repeated over and over again and if you have a set of mala beads to support the repetition of the mantra, even better.

The mantra to practice is: *May I be happy and free from suffering.*

What a simple statement and yet, so powerful. I encourage you to take this profound act of loving-kindness towards yourself and meditate with it each morning. As you do so, the words will gradually sink into your conscious awareness. Before you even realise it, you really will feel a deep sense of love, kindness, friendliness, and acceptance towards yourself. After you've practiced with this mantra each day for 40 days, you can switch to the next practice, which has to do with directing loving-kindness outwards.

### Practicing Loving Kindness (Meetha Bhavana) Towards Those Close to You

In the first stage of directing our focus outwards, we start close to home, with someone we love and care about. Start with someone who you genuinely want to be happy. This might be your partner, your mother, your father, a sister or brother, your grandparent, your niece, or your own child. Just begin focusing your attention on one of these people in your life. The practice, just like the one towards yourself, should be done for 40 days. While this may seem like a lot of time, it will pass before long. And, it's a fun project to have. Mark the days in a meditation journal, then move on to the next phase.

The mantra for your loved one is: *May my loved one be happy and free from suffering.*

You may wish to insert your loved one's name into the meditation, to make it that much more personal and specific. Do this for 40 days, and you will see even they feel the benefits!

## Practicing Loving Kindness (Meetha Bhavana) Towards Others

The next phase has to do with directing your attention to people you feel neutral towards. It could be your yoga teacher or someone in your neighborhood to whom you wave a friendly hello from time to time. Again, I want you to practice with this person for 40 days.

Keep a note of it in your meditation journal as you practice this mantra each day: *May those around me be happy and free from suffering.*

## Practicing Loving Kindness (Meetha Bhavana) Towards Those Who Have Hurt You

Next, it gets a little more difficult. We move our meditation to include someone who has caused us harm. This person could be an ex-girlfriend or boyfriend who broke your heart. It could be someone with whom you're currently having issues with. Maybe you have a family member who is incorrigible. Direct this meditation towards them. It's not easy. And it's not supposed to be. You're cultivating loving-kindness towards all beings—not just those who make you happy or those for whom you feel neutrality. You're cultivating it towards someone with whom you have a sticky relationship.

For them, repeat this mantra for 40 days: *May my enemies be happy and free from suffering.* Again, insert the person(s) name if you wish.

## Practicing Meetha-Bhavana Towards All

The last phase regards all sentient beings. You want to expand your attention outward until it reaches the entire world. While this may seem a bit much, it's a great thing to practice. With time, you will truly—in your heart of hearts—feel compassion and loving-kindness towards everyone on Earth. And this feeling is an amazing thing.

Practice this mantra for 40 days, and see how it transforms your relationship to life, for the better: *May all beings be happy and free from suffering.*

Now you have a powerful practice that gives you 200 days of meditation practice. You don't need a computer, a smartphone, or any other apparatus. All you need is your kind attention and the practice. And a cool set of mala beads if you like!

Amal Singh Badal (Yoga Instructor, Kabir Association of Toronto)

## Selected Sakhis

The following *sakhis* are from the book “Kabir Sakhi – Spiritual Gems of Kabir” translated by Mahant Jagdish Das Shastri, edited by Dr. J. Das. For more, visit our website at [www.kabirassociationoftoronto.org/sakhis/](http://www.kabirassociationoftoronto.org/sakhis/)

*“pachha pachhi ke karane, sab jag raha bhulan;  
nirpachh hoi ke hari bhaje, soie sant sujan.”*

People are divided into various groups (religions) and thus the whole world is misguided. Being impartial to the worldly groups (religions), one who performs the devotion to Almighty God is the true saint.

*“bin rakhware bahira, chidiyon khaya khet;  
adha pradha ubare, cheti sake toh chet.”*

Without protection, the birds are eating up the grain of the farm.  
Still, a little bit is remaining. Protect it if you can.

*“ambar kunja kuraliya, garji bhare sab tal;  
jin te govind bichhure, tin ke kaun hawal.”*

The cry of the kunja bird, separated from its mate, makes the clouds thunder and cry showers to fill many ponds. If a mere bird suffers so much sorrow, how much more will not the devotee suffer who is separated from God?

*“jab lagi bhakti sakamata, tab lagi nirphal seo;  
kahai kabir ve kyon mile, nihkami nij deo.”*

As long as devotion is full of worldly desires, it is meaningless for realization. Kabir says: “How can one realize the Supreme Lord who is above desires?”

*“ram rasain prem ras, pivat adhik rasal;  
kabir pivan durlabh hai, mange sis kalal.”*

The very powerful drug of God is the nectar of love, which is very sweet. But it is difficult to obtain, because the seller asks for your head as its price.

॥ सत्यनाम ॥



(Top to bottom, left to right) Late Mahant Shri Pattiram Saheb; KAOT members at the Holi Chowtaal Sammelan 2020; Anandi Arati at the Kabir Center on Guru Purnima; KAOT members participating in renovation projects; KAOT members participating in Summer 'Funday'; Dr. J. Das's book cover; Poster for 'Rewind and Recharge' lecture given to IPES; KAOT Yoga class members; KAOT Yoga class instructors : Jalpa Shah & Amal Badal; KAOT members during Kabir Center hall renovation project; completed Kabir Center stage; KAOT bhajan mandali participating in Ramkabir Bhakta Samaj Akhand Bhajan Sammelan.

# Important Dates 2021

Service (*satsang*) is held weekly over Zoom (contact for link) every Sunday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. If the circumstances permit, *satsang* may also be held in person at the Kabir Centre, unit #38-1365 Mid-Way Blvd, Mississauga, ON L5T 2J5 (Canada). *Satsang* dates may be subject to change, for more information, please contact us or consult our website.

## Purnima Vrat Dates 2021

Jan 27 <sup>th</sup> – Paush Purnima Vrat	Jul 23 <sup>rd</sup> – Aashaadha Purnima Vrat**
Feb 26 <sup>th</sup> – Maagh Purnima Vrat	Aug 21 <sup>st</sup> – Shraavana Purnima Vrat
Mar 27 <sup>th</sup> – Phalguna Purnima Vrat	Sept 20 <sup>th</sup> – Bhadra Purnima Vrat
Apr 26 <sup>th</sup> – Chaitra Purnima Vrat	Oct 19 <sup>th</sup> – Ashwin Purnima Vrat
May 25 <sup>th</sup> – Vaisakha Purnima Vrat	Nov 18 <sup>th</sup> – Kartik Purnima Vrat
Jun 23 <sup>rd</sup> – Jyeshtha Purnima Vrat*	Dec 18 <sup>th</sup> – Agahan Purnima Vrat

\**Anandi chauka arati* will be held at the Kabir Center starting a 3:30 PM in honour of *Kabir Jayanti*

\*\**Guru Purnima*

## Holidays and Observances 2021

Jan 1 <sup>st</sup> – New Year's Day	May 24 <sup>th</sup> – Victoria Day	Oct 11 <sup>th</sup> – Thanksgiving Day
Feb 15 <sup>th</sup> – Family Day	Jul 1 <sup>st</sup> – Canada Day	Nov 11 <sup>th</sup> – Remembrance Day
Apr 2 <sup>nd</sup> – Good Friday	Aug 2 <sup>nd</sup> – Civic Holiday	Dec 25 <sup>th</sup> – Christmas
Apr 5 <sup>th</sup> – Easter Monday	Sept 6 <sup>th</sup> – Labour Day	Dec 26 <sup>th</sup> – Boxing Day

### Contact Information

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