

THE KHALSA ROYAL OAK TREE LODGE 1244

The object and the problem facing the existing Brethren was to make The Royal Oak Tree Lodge grow from the present difficult period of declining membership numbers to a solid Lodge which could continue to eternity.

Several proposals had been discussed but none had any effect of gaining membership. There had been a number of recent new Advancees from within the Indian community, with others brought in by a recent joining member.

One fine day, the PGM, RWBro. Terry Sheern whispered into my ear, saying “Ranjit, you can make the Lodge grow, call it an Indian Lodge if you wish, I’ll support you.” This idea, initially, was thought of as being a gentle joke, as we often had had with the PGM, but he planted a seed and made me feel that this task had to be accomplished.

After several months, despite all our efforts, the Lodge was still in a relatively weak position. I thought that we should not let the Warrant be returned without giving it a final push.

The Brethren of the Lodge were initially not sure of my proposal to the change of name, but on the day of the meeting we had a very poor turn out, and I think we had all resigned to the idea of surrendering the warrant.

At the meeting, I had not prepared any proposal as I was unaware that the discussion whether to keep or surrender the warrant was to take place. The next fear was whether the name change, which had been turning over in my mind for months, would be acceptable. Fortunately, it turned out that the suggestion was received positively. There was concern as to how the change of the name could revive the Lodge. I had no answer other than a gut feeling, I had an idea and believed the word “Khalsa” was a tool that could be used to create strength.

The origin of the word comes from the turbulent times when the Khalsa were created. It has its origin in the Sikh religion, of which I am a proud member. It was during a period of persecution across India with the Khalsa standing up against oppression and fighting for equality across society.

After nearly 260 years the Sikh religion had been fully established through the teachings of the 10 Gurus; the last being Guru Gobind Singhji who concluded that the Sikh Holy Scripture was then complete.

At the ceremony he inaugurated 5 members from the congregation to Sikhism, with the 5K’s, Kesh (uncut hair); Kangha (comb); Kacha (under clothing); Kirpan (dagger) and Kara (steel bangle).

These five were taught to practice the morals of a human being.

Faith

Discipline

Sincerity and Honesty

Consciously work and earn honourably

Charity.

If one looks at communities around the world, Sikhs shine out as a community you could turn to for charity at a time of need.

Free food is available to any person at the temples at any reasonable time, including accommodation for the distressed.

The word Khalsa has taken many interpretations over time. It currently signifies a person of Strength, Honesty, Honourability, Hard work and Charity. It is one you could turn to for support in all aspects of life.

Charity being a top priority currently seen around the world in times of need, Khalsa Aid will travel wherever needed and provide through volunteers.

In the UK many homeless are regularly fed and clothed by the organisation. Hot meals are provided during the cold months by mobile kitchens, totally run by volunteers.

There are a large number of Sikh members in Masonry around the world.

There is a Khalsa Craft Lodge which was inaugurated a few years ago in Berkshire.

That is the Khalsa spirit!

I now wish to take the strength of a Khalsa to make our Royal Oak Tree Lodge to be built firm for ever.

WBro. Ranjit Bhogal,

The Khalsa Royal Oak Tree Lodge of MMMs, No. 1244.