

For Immediate Release

**Mic Check 1, 2, 1, 2 – Welcome to the Movement –
Lahir 2009**

Newark, NJ, Nov. 24, 2009 -- There was one final mic check before doors opened to the anxiously awaiting crowd of children, college students, parents and grandparents from the tri-state area, California, Texas and Virginia. Over 500 people quickly grabbed appetizers from Begum Palace and took their seats in the NJIT Ballroom on Saturday, November 21st for *Lahir: Move the Movement*.

Organized by several Sikh youth in the New York area and fueled by the sangat of Gurdwaras in NY, NJ, and CT, the evening was dedicated to commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Sikh Holocaust of 1984 and the human rights violations that followed. Its mission was two fold: first to inspire, educate, and awaken the masses by joining in the movement to rebuild our panth, and second to encourage Sikh artists to express themselves in creative ways.



Nimeeta Kaur and Simardev Singh welcomed the vibrant and diverse Sangat, introducing the purpose of this event and the importance of supporting upcoming generations to embrace their talent, and integrate their passion with their profession. Dr. Harbhajan Singh Nayar agreed, "It was my great fortune to see our evolution. Thirty years ago when I was a counselor at various camps in the area, I would ask Sikh kids what they wanted to be and I almost always heard either doctor or engineer. Today, we have finally grasped the concept that in order for us to be successful, we must have leaders in all fields and professions."

About 20 talented young individuals lit up the stage in unconventional ways on Saturday night. Some read poetry, some sang, while others played a musical instrument or rapped. They dedicated their act to the shaheeds of 84, encouraged us to break the silence, spoke out about human rights, about the injustices that took place in 1984 and about injustices that continue to take place today. Female infanticide, domestic violence, saving Punjab, and Bollywood's portrayal of Sikhs were among some of the non-84 topics that the artists also touched upon.

The evening kicked off with a poem by Savraj Singh from New Jersey, and was followed by Ashishpal Singh (spoken word), Harmeet & Harpriya Kaur (rap), Aneeta Rai (song), Gurpreet Manko (song), Bandana Malik (spoken word), The Chana Brothers (classical music), Harleen Kaur (spoken word), and Vikram & Amarpreet Singh (dhamic geets). Lahir was also honored with the participation of Gursimar 'MC G' Singh of Dallas, an up-and-coming young hip hop artist, Jagmeet 'Hoodini' Singh from LA with his breathtaking rap performance, Meetu Chilana, a talented singer, writer, and actress, as well as Toronto-based artist Humble the Poet. The evening closed with a powerful performance of dhamic vaara, hip hop, and short speeches about the importance of freedom and remembrance by G.N.E., SaintSoulja and Mastana, of DC.

Navjot Singh, a New Jersey High School student commented, "The performances expressed authentic emotion through spoken word, rap, singing, etc., which united and motivated the Sangat to take a stance against injustice, regardless of who the target is." Humble the Poet brought home this message as he and Hoodini got the audience singing, "I dance for 84, I dance for Darfur".

Various vendors and artists had their work on display. Hina Suri, a young artist from New Jersey, worked on a piece throughout the night. At the end of the event she enthusiastically commented, "Tonight was

a great confidence booster. It definitely gives me more reason to incorporate my passion for art in my future plans.” Vishvajit Singh, creator of sikhtoons.com, also had some of his work on display and handed out fliers for his first exhibition about 1984 in New York City.

Gurpreet Singh Kandola, a study abroad student from London, said, “That was wicked! We don’t see things like this back in England and I really hope that these performers will be able to travel around the world to inform and inspire others.” After two successful Lahir’s in the DC area and now one revolutionary Lahir in the tri-state, the Sikh Renaissance will be spreading to various cities across the country, so make sure to look out for the movement in your hometown! Contact the organizers at movethemovement@gmail.com if you want to support the cause or bring Lahir to your city.