

**WITNESS STATEMENT OF PROBhat HAZRA**

A Petition To Protect The Sacred Space At The Corner Of Woodlawn Rd And Woolwich St,  
Guelph, Ontario, Canada.

My name is Probhat Hazra, a resident of Waterloo, Ont. My residential address is 460 Ashby Court N2T 1H1. Phone 519 578 6326.

I was born a Hindu. However, I am a member of The Self-Realization Fellowship (SRF) since 1973. Paramahansa Yogananda founded SRF in 1920. The international headquarters is located in Los Angeles, California.

A few of the aims and ideals of SRF are:

To disseminate among the nations knowledge of definite scientific techniques for attaining direct personal experience of God.

To teach that the purpose of life is the evolution, through self-effort, of man's limited mortal consciousness into God consciousness; and to this end establish SRF temples for God communion throughout the world and to encourage establishment of individual temples of God in the homes and in the hearts of men.

To reveal the complete harmony and basic oneness of original Christianity as taught by Jesus Christ and original Yoga as taught by Bhagavan Krishna; and to show that these principles of truth are the common foundation of true religions.

To point out the one divine highway to which all paths of true religious beliefs eventually lead: the highway of daily scientific, devotional meditation on God.

To liberate man from his threefold suffering: physical disease, mental inharmonies, and spiritual ignorance

To advocate cultural and spiritual understanding between East and West, and the exchange of their finest distinctive features.

My wife and I emigrated from Singapore to Ontario in 1994 and made our home in Waterloo. Since then we found our new friends and joined the SRF Meditation Group in Guelph. About two years later The Jesuit Centre most graciously welcomed our meditation group to this holy building. As required by our faith we have silent devotional meditation on every Sunday.

Prior to meditation proper we do a set of 36 "Energization Exercises" which involves sending spiritual energy to every part of the body. A spiritual breathing technique known as Pranayama or Life Force control is essential for the energization practice. The sacred grounds

of this centre is, I find, is an ideal location for this spiritual practice. The old trees, the orchard, the beautiful space made holy by devotees seeking God within these premises for almost 100 years. Many a time when I walk on these premises to enjoy the environment and soak in the “vibration” of the place I can feel, in the depth of my soul, an ineffable peace. This evolves into joy humanly inconceivable. Another place where I had very similar experience is in the new Chapel in Lourdes, France.

We also meditate inside the centre for two hours every Sunday and for eight hours on Sunday before every Christmas.

Meditation is the science of God-realization. The ultimate object of meditation is to attain conscious awareness of God, and the soul’s eternal oneness with Him. Meditation utilizes concentration in the highest form. Meditation requires that special type of concentration in which mind is freed from all forms of restlessness or distractions and solely focused on God.

I practice an ancient yoga breathing technique to help my mind to be liberated from restlessness. The quiet atmosphere and the sacred vibration of the centre is very helpful. After meditation when I walk this ground in contemplative silence a realization frequently dawns on me that He has manifested Himself in the creative beauty of the natural landscapes of this sacred space. Any large scale commercial activity which increases human or vehicular traffic will adversely affect the serenity and sacredness of this area. And this will fundamentally affect my weekly worship and spiritual practice. I am deeply concerned.

I would like point out that early saints of the Christian tradition like Anthony and Augustine required the solitude of the desert to contemplate and seek God. Alas! In present time we can not leave our homes and families and retire to desert or to some jungle to contemplate and meditate. It may also be noted that organizations like the Carmelite order build their churches away from major commercial hubs. There are profound spiritual reasons for this tradition. Intense commercial activity permanently affects the spiritual aura of the surrounding area.