

GURU NANAK SOCIAL MOBILITY SCHOLARSHIPS

Announcement

1. Mukhtiar Singh and the Sikh Education Council are delighted to announce the result of the fourth Guru Nanak Social Mobility Bar Scholarships.

2. The winners are:

First place: Md Mominul Hamid.

Second place: Kareena Talwar.

Third place: Zoya Gokhool.

3. Although unsuccessful, we were also impressed with the applications of:

Michael Abiodun Olatokun

Shaniqua Butt-McKenzie

Kirit Potiwal

4. The aims of the scholarships are:

a. To improve social mobility in professions perceived to be out of reach for those from poorer backgrounds. This will be achieved through financial awards, mentoring and work placements.

b. To encourage a wider understanding of Sikh jurisprudence by considering whether society may learn from Sikhism for the benefit of us all. To achieve this, applicants were asked to write an essay on, *"The welcome to Ukrainian refugees is uniquely compassionate. Discuss"*.

5. Whilst no feedback is provided, the best answers engaged with the second aim of the scholarships and demonstrated the requisite skills for becoming barristers (researching; persuasive writing; structured and logical arguments; and analytical ability). In considering the quality of the essay, we considered the stage of the applicant's studies as well as the obstacles they face. It did not matter if we disagreed with the points made, but it was important that the essay was persuasive and sourced.
6. A common theme was recognising that a compassionate approach to Ukraine refugees was consistent with the Sikh vision. A further common theme was recognising the difference in approach to non-white refugees and how such inequality was contrary to Sikh jurisprudence.
7. The standard was extremely high and we are grateful to all those that made genuine applications: Mukhtiar Singh and previous winners will provide advice on their pupil applications if requested.
8. The winner is **Md Mominul Hamid**, who is a third-year law student at Northumbria University. He impressed with his strong commitment to the Bar despite facing a number of substantial obstacles. Mr Hamid was a victim of human trafficking and is an asylum seeker, who advocates for the greater education rights for refugees and asylum seekers. Mukhtiar Singh will provide him with £4,000 to alleviate the financial burden of pursuing a career at the Bar and also mentoring for one year.
9. The second winner is **Kareena Talwar**, a Bar Course student. Ms Talwar impressed with her academic achievements to date despite coming from a working-class, single income household; and facing

many significant obstacles. She has demonstrated a tremendous work ethic and commitment to pro bono work. Mukhtiar Singh will be awarding her with £300.

10. Due to the quality of her application, a further scholarship will be awarded to **Zoya Gokhool**, who has completed the Bar Course and is seeking pupillage. Despite significant obstacles, she obtained a First Class Honours and impressed with her achievements to date. She will be offered a work placement.
11. All three are congratulated for their impressive applications and essays. All have come from disadvantaged backgrounds and have shown not only do they have the necessary strong commitment to become barristers, but they also have the ability. Each have their own stories of overcoming significant obstacles, which many are privileged not to face. All three are expected to be successful barristers in the future.
12. All of this year's applicants stood out in terms of the diversity of applicants from working class backgrounds and the ability to overcome extremely difficult obstacles, including significant trauma.
13. Those that were not successful and continue to meet the criteria, are encouraged to apply again next year.
14. The essays will be published on the Sikh Education Council website and on Mukhtiar Singh's website.
15. Chambers and firms willing to provide work placements should please contact Mukhtiar Singh at m.singh@doughtystreet.co.uk. Please state whether you are able to pay for reasonable travel expenses.

Next year

16. There will another Bar Scholarship next year offering financial prizes, mentoring and work placements.
17. It is hoped that the Guru Nanak Social Mobility Scholarships will be available in other professions in the future, for professions deemed out of reach for the working class.
18. Any firm or individual wishing to sponsor a Scholarship in 2023 should please contact Mukhtiar Singh at m.singh@doughtystreet.co.uk
19. Details about next year's scheme will be published at around early April 2023 on the website (singhbarrister.co.uk) and via LinkedIn.
20. In the spirit of the legal profession, and in the spirit of Sikhism, award winners and runner ups who subsequently secure pupillage through the scheme ("the Scholars") will be expected to (and we are delighted that they do) participate in the scheme in the future including providing mentoring.
21. It is hoped that as the scheme develops, Scholars will lead engagement in state schools with the Sikh Education Council to encourage a career in the Bar, whatever their background.
22. Questions about the Bar Scholarship or the scholarships generally should be directed to Mukhtiar Singh: m.singh@doughtystreet.co.uk

23. Mukhtiar Singh is an Employment and Commercial Barrister at Doughty Street Chambers. He has a particular interest in discrimination; whistleblowing; and commercial and business ethics. He is one of the Bar Council's Social Mobility Advocates as part of the #IamtheBar scheme. <https://www.barcouncil.org.uk/careers/i-am-the-bar-social-mobility/>

24. The Sikh Education Council provides guidance; engages in research; and teaches about the Sikh way of life. [The Sikh Way | The online home of the Sikh Education Council](#)