Public Statement

I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity to go to India to learn from such amazing people and the inspiring institution that Harmandir Sahib (The Golden Temple) is. I am indebted to the Temple for all of the knowledge that I acquired while there. I did not know that working with hundreds of other people to cook a meal for thousands of people could be so cohesive and easygoing. Stress and chaos is nonexistent in the Temple even though they are accomplishing near-impossible tasks daily. This taught me that there really never is reason to stress out because it only inhibits one from performing at his or her best level.

The Golden Temple is the best example of sustainability that I have ever seen and I am enthusiastic to implement what I learned from being there. They have nearly zero food waste because what is served there is considered to be “God’s food” so it is shameful to throw any of it away. Viewing all food as holy would be a great way to help curb waste here in the United States. Additionally, the only utensil that is used at the Temple is a spoon. Here in the U.S. we usually provide forks, knives, spoons, and napkins without making the effort to think about if they are necessary or not. I am definitely going to incorporate this thinking when I make decisions about planning events with food.

Something that really surprised me is that Hindus consider the Harmandir Sahib their second home. Many poor Hindus slept at the Temple for up to a few months and it is not common in American culture to feel so welcomed in a religious place that is not of your own faith. One thing that I really wish I could explain to my family and friends is that all religious facilities here should be as open and welcoming to those of other faiths are in India. The poor would be much better off if free community meals were not contingent upon being a part of the religion or hearing a sermon. Recognizing everyone as a child of God and treating them accordingly is an aspect of most world religions, yet practice of this idea in Western religious spaces is shaky.