



UNITED  
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*Recognize the Human Race as One*

An  
Introduction to  
SIKHISM

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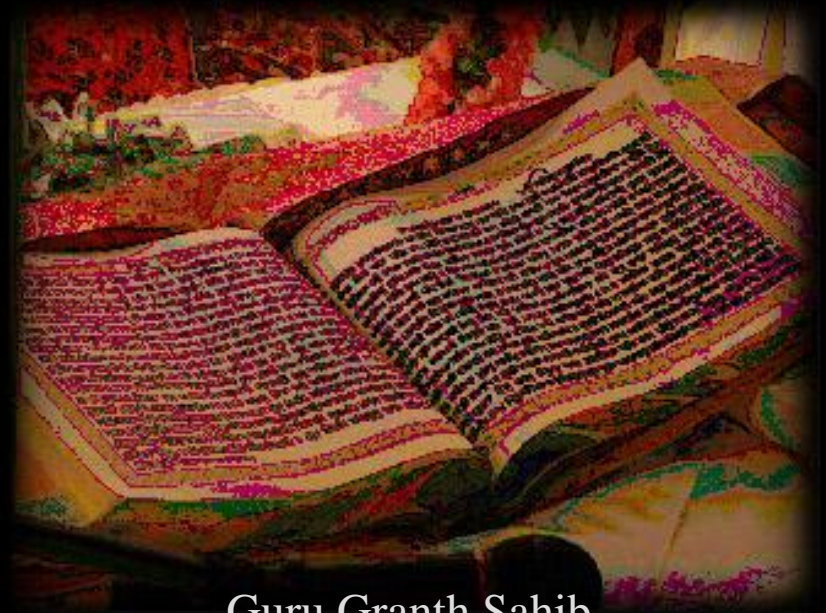


# *Agenda*

- ◆ What is Sikhism?
- ◆ Who are the Sikhs?
- ◆ Where do Sikhs Live?
- ◆ Basic Beliefs
- ◆ Articles of Faith
- ◆ About UNITED SIKHS
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# *What is Sikhism?*

- ◆ Religion founded in India (1469) by Guru Nanak and built upon by the nine prophet teachers (Gurus) who succeeded him.
- ◆ The word “Sikh” means disciple or student.
- ◆ World’s youngest monotheistic religion.
- ◆ Sikhism is distinct from Hinduism or Islam - with its own unique, divine scripture embodied in the Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh Holy Book).



Guru Granth Sahib



# *What is Sikhism?*

- ◆ Fifth largest religion.
- ◆ Universal religion which is open to all - recognizes & respects all human beings as equals.
  - ◆ Does not recognize race, class, caste, or other earthly distinctions between people.
  - ◆ Recognizes men & women as equal in all aspects of life.
  - ◆ Sikh place of worship is called ‘Gurudwaara’



# *Basic Beliefs*

- ◆ There is Only One God.
- ◆ Equality of mankind.
- ◆ Freedom and Liberty for all.
- ◆ Speaking out against injustice and standing up for the defenseless is considered a Sikh's duty.
- ◆ Condemnation of superstitions and blind rituals.
- ◆ Intoxications such as alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs are strictly forbidden.



# *Who are Sikhs?*

- ◆ 22 million Sikhs worldwide trace the origin of their religion to Panjab, meaning the ‘Land of the 5 rivers’, located in Northern India.
- ◆ Over 5 million Sikhs live outside of India in the UK, Canada and United States.

# *Who are Sikhs?*

- ◆ All Sikh men are identifiable by their distinctive turbans. 99% of people worldwide that wear turbans are Sikhs.
- ◆ Many Sikh women wear ‘smaller’ turbans to keep their head covered as well.





# *Prime Minister of the world's largest democracy, India - is a SIKH*

- Dr. Manmohan Singh – 14<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister of India.
- He is widely know as the ‘Father’ of Indian Economic Reforms, because of his policies during his tenure as the Finance Minister of India from 1991-1996.



# *Who are Sikhs?*

## Famous Sikhs

- ◆ Sikhs have fought in both World Wars with the Allied troops.
- ◆ The Sikh regiments were instrumental in valiantly defeating the Nazis.
- ◆ Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany: ‘Father’ / Creator of Fiber Optics.





# *Where do Sikhs Live?*

- ◆ India
- ◆ United States of America
- ◆ Canada
- ◆ England
- ◆ Australia
- ◆ Africa
- ◆ Brazil
- ◆ All over the World...



# *Basic Beliefs*

- ♦ ‘Naam Japna’ - Remembrance and meditation on God.
- ♦ ‘Vand Kae Chhakna’ – meaning to share with others before partaking yourself. Encompasses the principles of living as an inspiration to others and supporting the community (i.e. giving to charity).
- ♦ ‘Kirat Karni’ – Earning a honest living through hard work.



# *Mandatory Articles of the Sikh Faith*

Mandated by religion, all initiated Sikhs must carry the five articles of faith, which include the Kirpan.

“Have, on your person, all the time, the five K’s:

- the *Keshas* (unshorn hair).
- the *Kirpan* (sheathed article of faith)
- the *Kachhehra* -- drawers like garment may be made from any cloth, but its legs should not reach down to below the shins;
- the *Kanga* (comb).
- the *Karha* (steel bracelet)."

-- *The Sikh Rehit Maryada (Code of Conduct)*

# *Articles of Faith: The 5 Ks*

- ♦ Kara – Steel bracelet usually worn on the right hand. A symbolic reminder of the commitment of a Sikh to God.
- ♦ Kanga – Small comb worn in a Sikh's hair. Represents the importance of discipline and is used to keep the hair clean and untangled.
- ♦ Kirpan – Article Of Faith, Represents dignity and the Sikh struggle against injustice.



# *Articles of Faith: The 5 Ks*

- ♦ Kesh - Long unshorn hair. The keeping of hair in its natural state is regarded as living in harmony with the will of God.
- ♦ Kachhehra – Long boxer-like underwear. Represents the commitment of a Sikh to monogamy and sexual restraint.



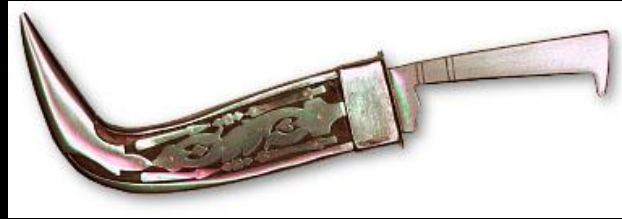


# *Sikh Prayer Service - Keertan*



- Note the facial hair and the sling over the right shoulder of the men – this sling carries the Kirpan.
- Men usually style their beards with gel – or just leave them open like, in the adjoining picture.
- Also notice that the styles of the turban has changed – nonetheless it is simply a personal choice. Sikhs women also wear a smaller turban or a chunni, which is more like a scarf or babushka.
- Drums and a harmonium are used during the service.

# THE KIRPAN



- 'KIRPA' + 'AAN'. '*Kirpa*' means an act of kindness, a favor; and '*aan*' means honor, respect, self-respect.
- By Wearing a Kirpan a Sikh makes a commitment to stand up for the Truth and against oppression
- The Kirpan is not a dagger or knife as it is not an article of violence or harm



# *Kirpan*

- US, Canadian and British courts have always upheld Sikhs' right to wear the Kirpan as an article of faith
- Sikhs have won all known Kirpan cases that have gone to court in the United States and Canada; some cases have been dismissed by the courts that have recognized it as an article of faith.
- According to the Sikh code of conduct, the *kirpan* is to be worn using a *Gatra* (a strap that enables a kirpan to be suspended near one's waist or tucked inside one's belt). The implication of this explicit requirement is that the Kirpan cannot be worn as a miniaturized symbol. To neglect to wear one or more of the Five Ks represents a serious lapse in the Sikh religion.

# Sikh Dress Code

**Kesh | Keskey** - uncut hair and beard, as given by God, to sustain him or her in higher consciousness; and a turban the crown of spirituality.

**Turban** - The crown of spirituality.

**Kangha** - a wooden comb to properly groom the hair as a symbol of cleanliness.

**Kara** - a steel circle, worn on the wrist, signifying bondage to Truth and freedom from every other entanglement.

**Gatra** - A strap to hold the Kirpan (Small sword).

**Kirpan** - the sword, with which the Khalsa is committed to righteously defend the fine line of the Truth.

**Katchera** - specially made cotton underwear as a reminder of the commitment to purity.

[SikhPride.com](http://SikhPride.com) | [SikhSangat.com](http://SikhSangat.com)

Vick [www.UNITEDSIKHS.org](http://www.UNITEDSIKHS.org)

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# *Hate Crimes post 9/11*

- Balbir Singh Sodhi fatally shot in Mesa, AZ.
- 75 year old man brutally beaten with a baseball bat in Queens, NY.
- A database of more than 500 cases involving hate crimes targeting the Sikh Community



# *UNITED SIKHS*

- ♦ International Sikh Advocacy Group with Chapters in North America, Europe, & Asia.
- ♦ Mission: To transform underprivileged and minority communities and individuals into informed and vibrant members of society through civic, educational and personal development programs, by fostering active participation in social and economic activity.



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# *References*

- ◆ For more information about Sikhs, please also visit the following sites:

[www.UNITEDSIKHS.org](http://www.UNITEDSIKHS.org)

[www.sikhs.org](http://www.sikhs.org)

[www.allaboutsikhs.com](http://www.allaboutsikhs.com)

[www.sikhnet.com](http://www.sikhnet.com)

[www.allaboutsikhs.com](http://www.allaboutsikhs.com)



**?? QUESTIONS ??**

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*Thank You !!*

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