

Who are the Sikhs?

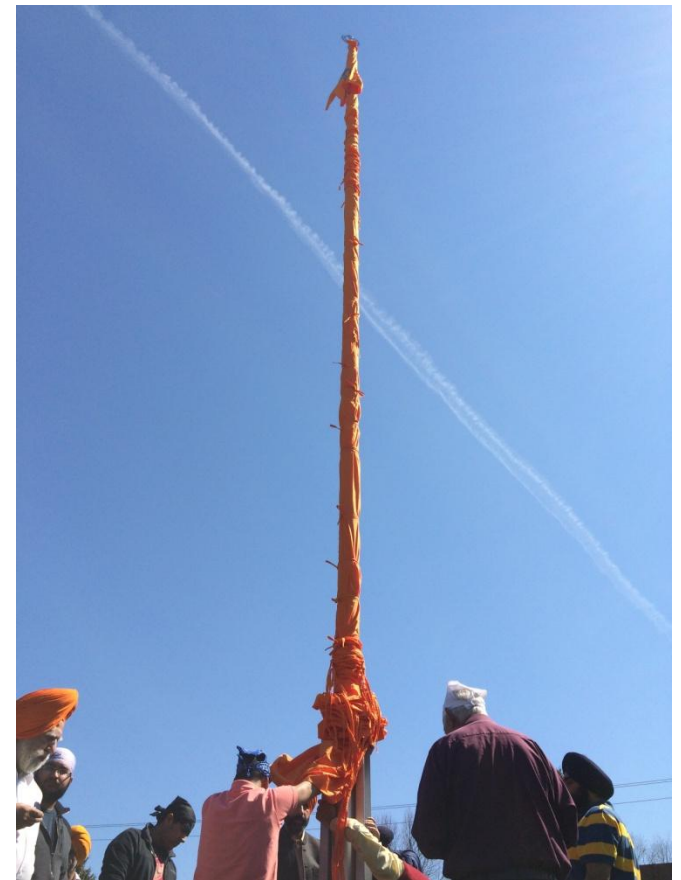


The Punjabi word '*Sikh*' means 'learner'.

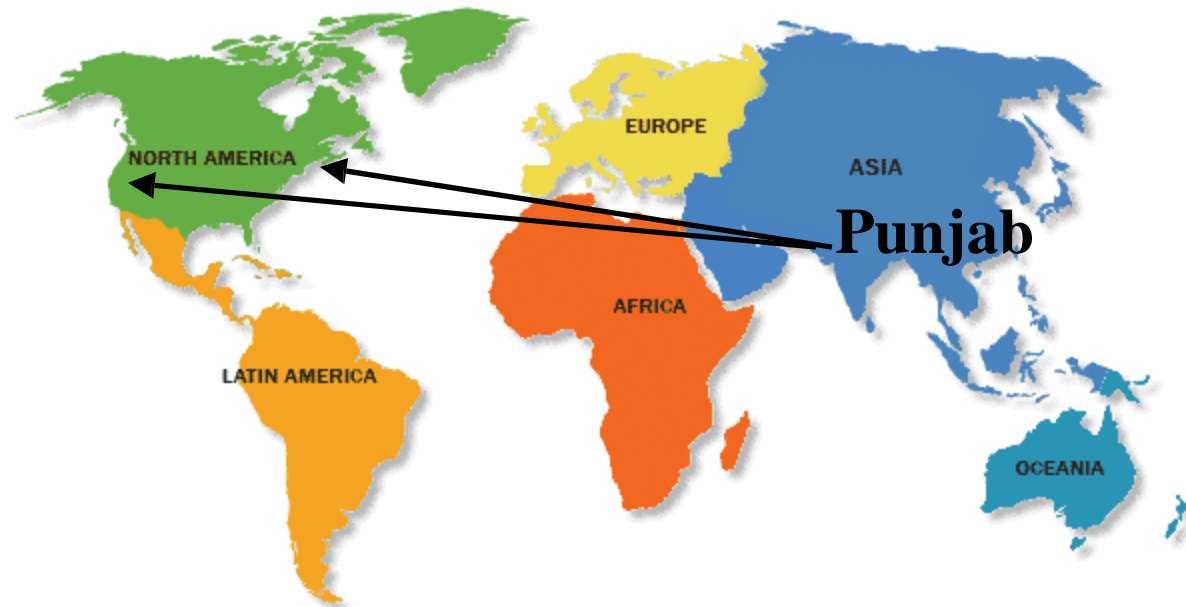
We are knowledge seekers, learning from our Gurus about God. We are learning from one another and from life.



On Calhoun, look for our Nishaan Sahib (flag) covered in saffron cloth. We have a flag raising ceremony every year.



Sikh men and women came to America more than 100 years ago



- West Coast and later in New York
- Farming & Lumber Industry
- Pioneers
 - Immigration Policy
 - Citizenship Reform
 - Representation in Federal Government

Sikhism in Brief

Sikhism is the fifth largest world religion.

1. Christianity – 2.2 billion
2. Islam – 1.4 billion
3. Hinduism – 900 million
4. Buddhism – 396 million
5. Sikhism – 26-30 million
6. Judaism – 15 million

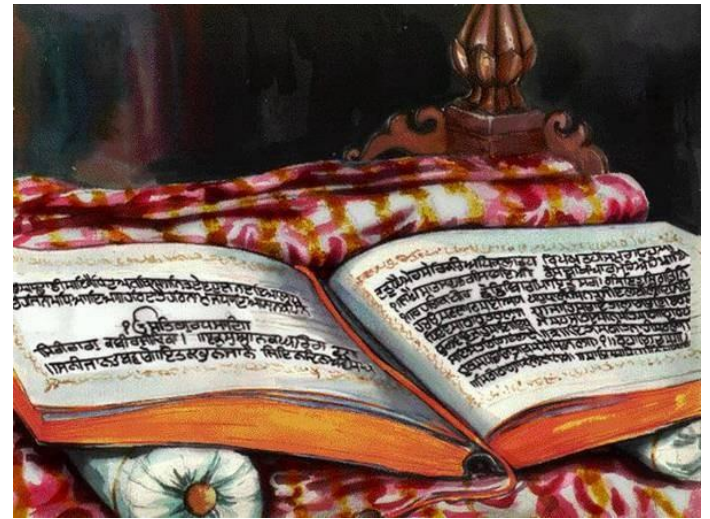
99% of people (men/women) wearing a turban in the US are Sikhs.



Guru – “Spiritual Guide”

The *Guru Granth Sahib* (holy scripture) and the Guru Panth (community of initiated Sikhs) are the present Guru.

- 1430 pages of Punjabi poetry by 7 of the 10 gurus, and 35 Hindu and Muslim poets.
- our living Guru, personified, treated as a person
- Reminds us to be kind, tell the truth, love and respect everyone
- We gather to chant from the scripture. The chant is magical, powerful, soothing, uplifting, helpful, connecting, cleansing...



The Mool Mantar

The first verses our parents taught us were the ***Mool Mantar*** (root verse), which begins the ***Guru Granth Sahib***.

The Japji is said to be the first composition uttered by Guru Nanak upon enlightenment.

The Japji

*There is one reality
ever existent
It is Naam (consciousness)
the unmanifest manifested
the Creator pervading all
without fear, without hate
timeless, unborn
complete within Itself
Through meditation
It may be realized
It was when there was nothing
It was before all ages began
It exists now, O Nanak,
And shall exist for evermore.**

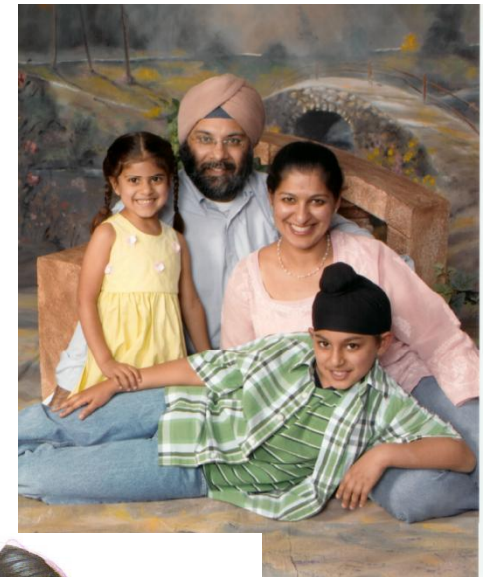
Guru Nanak (1469-1539)

*Trans by Kirpal Singh.



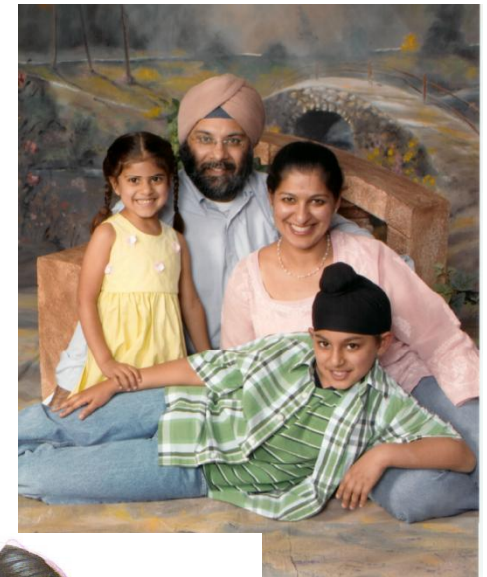
Core Sikh Beliefs

- One God
 - Loves and sustains all humanity
- All are equal in the eyes of God
 - Respect for all genders, religions, races, etc.



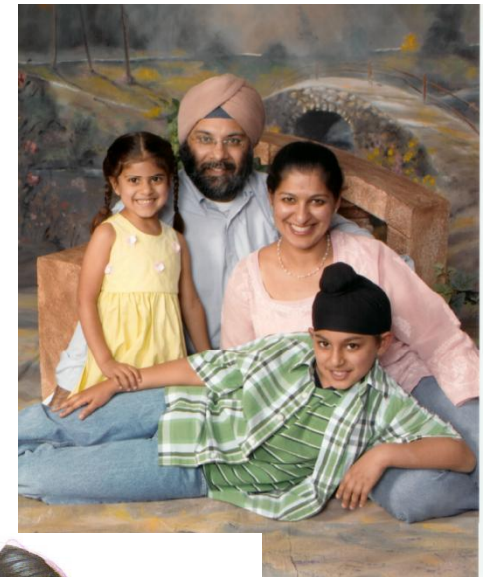
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 - Sikhs are supposed to work and live honestly



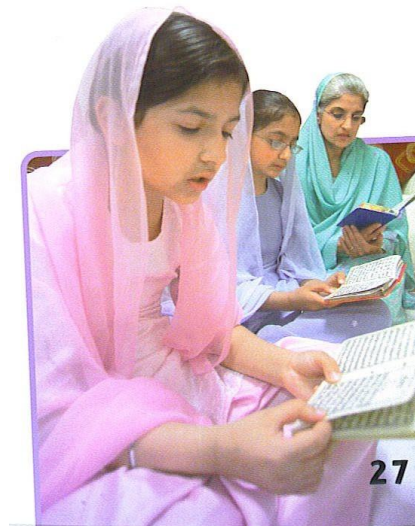
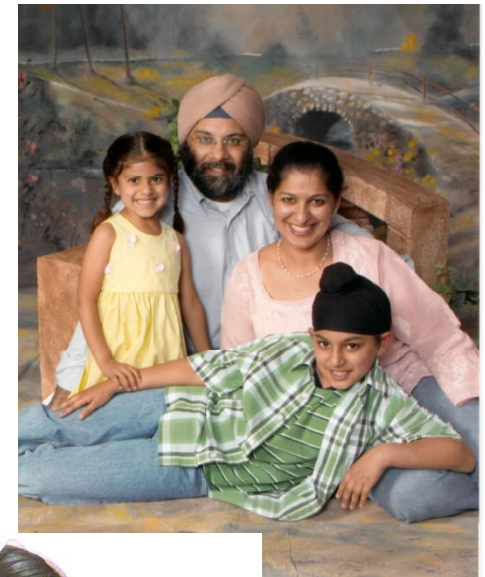
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- Earning an Honest Living
 - Sikhs are supposed to work and live honestly
- Share with Others
 - Share your time, money, etc. with others



Core Sikh Beliefs

- One God
 - Loves and sustains all humanity
- We are equal in the eyes of God
 - This includes all genders, religions, and races.
- Earning an Honest Living
 - Sikh men and women try to work and live honestly. You don't have to give away your possessions and become an ascetic to follow Sikhism. You don't need to give up technology.
- Share with Others
 - Share your time, money, etc. with others
- Remember God
 - We say the name of God, Vaheguru, often throughout the day



Core Sikh Beliefs



After Death:

- merge into the universal nature, as a drop of rain merges back into the ocean. Individuality is lost.
- Many Sikhs believe in reincarnation, with a clean slate thanks to the meher (grace) of Vaheguru, the supreme teacher.
- No heaven or hell after death. Heaven is to be in tune with the creative spirit while still alive. Conversely, suffering and pain caused by ego is hell on earth.
- Spiritual pursuits are positive experiences in and of themselves. Not sacrifices made to collect a reward.
- No punishment after death. All right here, right now.

Core Sikh Beliefs

Personal Responsibility

As she has planted, so does she harvest; such is the field of karma.

Guru Granth Sahib Page 134

He sows seeds of poison, and demands Ambrosial Nectar. Behold - what justice is this?

Guru Granth Sahib Page 474

Let your responsibilities arise from your compassion.

Japji Sahib.

The soul goes through cycles of births and deaths before it reaches the human form. The goal of our life is to lead an exemplary existence so that one may merge with God, and thence be complete.

Core Sikh Beliefs



- **Khalsa – the community of initiated Sikhs**
 - Pledge to wear all five K's,
 - Pledge to protect and defend the weak and fight for social justice.
- **Concept of a Saint-Soldier.**
 - 83,000 Sikh soldiers died in World Wars I and II.

Core Sikh Beliefs

Gender Equality

- First names interchangeable between men and women
- Singh (Lion) as last name for men or women
- Kaur (princess) as last name for women



Gender Equity

Like everyone else, we're working on it.

Dis-Beliefs

- **Sikhs do *not* believe in:**
 - Fasting, superstitions, ritualism, caste system
 - terrorism or hurting innocent people
 - hate or racial profiling
 - Wars/battles based on religion
 - proselytising
- **Sikhism prohibits:**
 - Smoking, drinking alcohol, taking intoxicants
 - Idolatry/Idol-worship
 - Worshipping the gurus as Vaheguru
 - Going against nature (cutting your hair, cosmetic hair-removal, piercings, tattoos, extremes of asceticism)
 - Disgust of other people's food, colour.



The 5 “Ks”



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Iron Bracelet (Kara)
GOOD DEEDS



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Sword (Kirpan)
PROTECTION



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Long Underpants
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SELF DISCIPLINE



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Long Underpants (Kachera)
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Uncut Hair (Kesh)
SPIRITUALITY

The 5 “Ks”



Iron Bracelet (Kara)
GOOD DEEDS



Sword (Kirpan)
PROTECTION

Long Underpants (Kachera)
SELF DISCIPLINE



Uncut Hair (Kesh)
SPIRITUALITY



Comb (Kanga)
CLEANLINESS

Our Turbans

- 99% of the people wearing a turban in the U.S. are Sikh men/women.
- It is a religious obligation for Sikh men and optional for women
- Worn so a Sikh man/woman can always be recognized. He/she is duty bound to offer help.
- Sikh men do not remove their turbans in public, (and should not be required to do so).



Turbans Illustrated

Sikh Turban



Sikh Turban



Sikh Turban



Sikh Turban



Sikh Turban

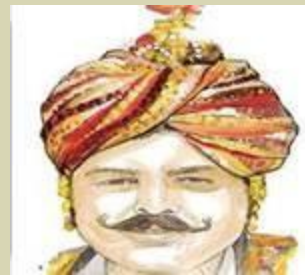
Non-Sikh Turban



Afghan Turban



Palestinian Turban



Indian Turban



Iranian Turban

Most Sikhs Speak Punjabi

- Over 80 million people speak Punjabi
- Punjabi is written from left to right
- The Punjabi alphabet contains 35 letters

ਹੈਲੋ

ੳ ਅ ਏ ਸ ਹ
ਕ ਖ ਗ ਘ ਙ
ਚ ਛ ਜ ਝ ਞ
ਟ ਠ ਡ ਢ ਠ
ਤ ਥ ਦ ਧ ਨ
ਪ ਫ ਬ ਭ ਮ
ਯ ਰ ਲ ਵ ਝ

Where we worship - Gurdwaras



Gurdwara in Amritsar,
India:
The Golden Temple



Gurdwara in Brookfield, USA:
Sikh Temple of Wisconsin

- Place of learning and worship.
- Weekends/Sunday worship in North America. 24/7 in India.
- A custodian of the *Guru Granth Sahib* is a granthi.
- Men and women read the *Guru Granth Sahib* in public, in the gurdwara, or in their homes.
- People of all religions are welcome.
- Every gurdwara has a free community kitchen (Langar), serving people of all faiths.
- Sikh Temples in Milwaukee, Oak Creek, Madison, Palatine...

Sikhs can be found in many different professions today!



Artists

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Artists



Actor

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Artists



Actor



Basketball Player

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Artists



Actor



Basketball Player



Military

Sikhs can be found in many different professions today!



Artists



Basketball Player



Military



Scientist



Actor

Sikhs can be found in many different professions today!



Politician

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Doctor



Politician

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Doctor



Politician



Lawyer

You'll find Sikhs in every profession!



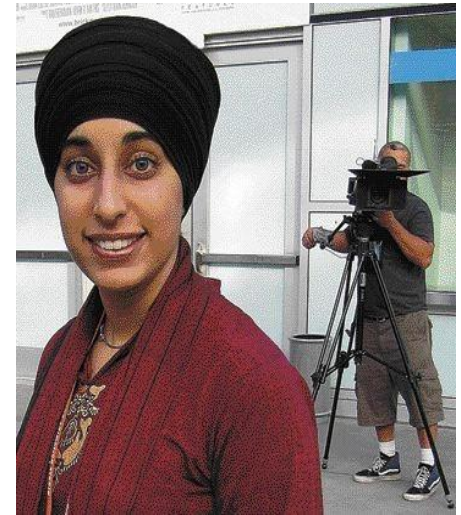
Doctor



Politician



Lawyer



Filmmaker

Sikh men and women in different professions



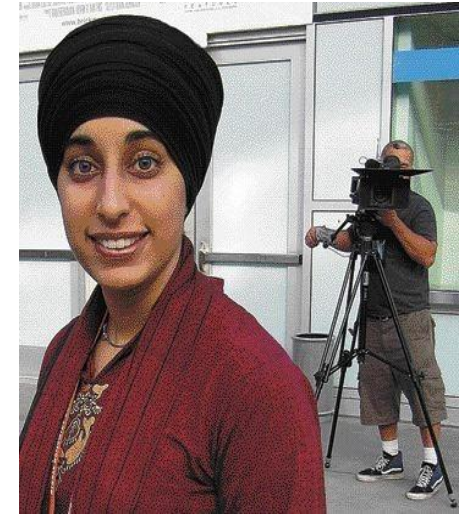
Doctor



Politician



Lawyer



Filmmaker



Farmer

Watch out! Here comes a Sikh! And he/she *will* feed you !!



We don't proselytize, we do sewa
(community service).

In MKE, since the neonazi
shooting in 2012, we have begun
to publicize our outreach efforts.

Talk to a Sikh man or woman,
We are in your midst today.

Come to our gurdwara on
Calhoun Rd in Brookfield, or in
Oak Creek.
All are welcome.

We wish you "Chardi Kala!"
(*May the creative spirit help you
soar!*)



Acknowledgements:

www.sikhcoalition.org

[Dr. Swarnjit Arora](#)

[Nimmi Arora](#)

[Dr Dalip Singh](#)

Further Study:

- *The Japji: The Message of Guru Nanak*: translated by Kirpal Singh. Sawan Kirpal Publications 1981. <http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org/pdf/JapJi.pdf>
- *Japji Sahib: song of the gods*: trans. by Prit Pal Singh Bhambah, IndiaResearchPress.com.
- Bilingual reading of the Sant Kirpal Singh's translation of the Japji at: <http://shaunasinghbaldwin.com/BuyAudio.html>
- *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* Tr. by Dr. Gopal Singh. World Book Centre, New Delhi, International Edition (1993).
- *The Sikhs, their religious beliefs and practises*. Owen Cole and Piara Singh Sambhi
- *A Very Short Introduction to Sikhism*: Eleanor Nesbitt (2005)

Compare a few translations -- each offers new insight.

The only translation I don't recommend is the translation by Edward Trump. For so long it defined Sikhism for the British. It also enabled the British to define a Sikh. I find it highly contemptuous, drawing spurious correlation between Sikhism and Christianity. But of course, it's really interesting if you're studying colonialism.

Unfortunately we do yet have any books in English (that I can find) that discuss the Sri Guru Granth Sahib as literature/poetry -- analyzing voice, structure, metaphor, imagery. We will.

Happy Reading!

Shauna Singh Baldwin

www.ShaunaSinghBaldwin.com

Web Resources:

www.sikhnet.com

www.sikhs.org

www.sikhiwiki.org

new.sgpc.net

Sikh Religious Society WI Library

Calhoun Rd,
Brookfield.



ASK A SIKH!
SRS Brookfield

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