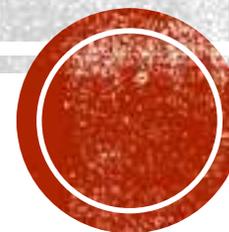
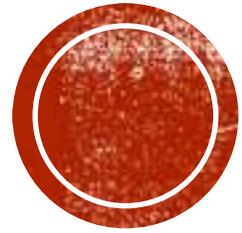


# DEATH AND FUNERALS IN SIKHI

Simrat Kaur





# A LITTLE BACKGROUND ON SIKHS...

Who are Sikhs and what are they about?



# Guru Granth Sahib

# The Guru Eternal



## WHAT IS SIKHI

- Founded in Punjab by **Guru Nanak Dev Jee** in 1469
- Guru Nanak Dev Jee had 9 living successors up to the 10th Guru – Guru Gobind Singh Jee
- 10th Guru declared the Sikh holy scriptures – **Guru Granth Sahib Jee**, as his successor instead of a human being.
- Now Guru Granth Sahib Jee is the Sikhs' guide forever and given the same status and respect as previous 10 human Gurus.
- Sikhs worship the **ONE** almighty God and only God – no statues/images



# SIKH IDENTITY



## Kes (unshorn hair):

Teaching one to be humble and submit to God at all times, to efface ego, complimented with a turban



## Kanga (wooden comb):

Teaching one to remain detached from the world and break the bonds of worldly attachment, the hair that falls during the combing process symbolises the breaking of attachment



## Kirpan (sword of mercy – usually a small dagger):

As part of the Sikh martial tradition, the Kirpan is used to bless food and, when all peaceful means have been exhausted, it can be used to uphold righteousness; it acts as a reminder to control one's anger and to only draw arms in self-defence or to protect the weak and needy



## Kara (iron bangle worn on the wrist):

Reminding one of their moral obligation when using their hands and to efface greed; it is the handcuff from the Guru reminding a Sikh of their love and respect for their Guru



## Kashera (long breeches – underwear):

Reminding one of their moral obligations and to control their lust

- Baptised Sikhs wear the 5k's at all times as commanded by the tenth Sikh Guru, **Guru Gobind Singh**
- A Sikh who has taken Amrit (baptised) is known as an **Amritdhari**, while a Sikh who has not taken Amrit but follows Sikhi beliefs is called a **Sahajdhari** ("slow adopter")
- Sikh males suffix **Singh** (lion) to their first name
- Sikh females suffix **Kaur** (princess) to their first name



# SIKH CODE OF CONDUCT

## Do's

- Respect the equal rights of all regardless of rank, gender, caste, class, color, or creed
- Share with others, especially those in need
- Perform selfless service for humanity
- Earn income by honest employment
- Come to the aid of the defenseless
- Keep all hair intact and unaltered
- Meditate and read or recite daily prayers
- Worship and recognize one divine light manifest in all
- Regard any other than one's spouse as brothers or sisters
- Become initiated as Khalsa and wear the five articles of faith
- Follow ideals of Guru Granth Sahib and the ten Gurus

## Don'ts

- Cut or otherwise alter the hair of the head, face, or body
- Engage in premarital or extramarital intimacies
- Eat meat
- Smoke or use intoxicants
- Worship idols
- Deify any human being
- Pray to demigods or deities
- Observe caste or gender inequality
- Give credence to auspicious dates, horoscopes, or astrology
- Be involved with illegal activities or dishonorable associates
- Practice superstitious rituals



# DEATH... THE FINAL MILESTONE

- In Sikhi a funeral ceremony is called "**Antam Sanskaar,**" or celebration of the completion of life
- Everything that happens is Hukam – the will of God
- Death is not the end
- Sikhs believe in reincarnation
- Person's soul may be reborn many times as a human or an animal
- Guru Granth Sahib says that the body is just clothing for the soul and is discarded at death
- Divine spark of God/soul in each person rejoins God when a person is finally released from the cycle of rebirth
- Sikhs believe that there are 8,400,000 forms of life and that many souls have to travel through a number of these before they can reach Waheguru





ਨਹ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਨਹ ਜੋਬਨੈ ਨਹ ਬਿਰਧੀ  
ਕਛੁ ਬੰਧੁ ॥

*there is nothing to stand in Death's way -  
neither in childhood, nor in youth, nor in old age.*

ਓਹ ਬੇਰਾ ਨਹ ਬੂਝੀਐ ਜਉ ਆਇ ਪਰੈ  
ਜਮ ਫੰਧੁ ॥

*That time is not known, when the noose of  
Death shall come and fall on you.*



When the body is filled with ego and selfishness, the cycle of birth and death does not end. Guru Granth Sahib Ji, 126



## KARAM...

Sikhs believe in karam – one's actions and the consequences of these actions decide whether a soul can be set loose from the cycle.

Freedom from the cycle of rebirth is called **mukti**.

These things can stop a soul reaching mukti:

**kam** - lust or desire

**karodh** - anger

**lobh** – greed

**moh** – being too attached to the world

**hankar** – pride

**manmukh** - being self-centred instead of God-centred which is Gurmukh

**maya** - illusion - looking at the world and its' material trappings, forgetting God



ਸੁਖ ਮੈ ਬਹੁ ਸੰਗੀ ਭਏ ਦੁਖ ਮੈ ਸੰਗਿ  
ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

*In good times, there are many  
companions around, but in bad times,  
there is no one at all.*

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਭਜੁ ਮਨਾ ਅੰਤਿ  
ਸਹਾਈ ਹੋਇ ॥੩੨॥

*Says Nanak, vibrate, and meditate on  
the Lord; He shall be your only Help  
and Support in the end. ||32||*

## THE FINAL MOMENTS OF LIFE IN SIKHI

- Sikh family encourages their ailing loved one to focus on God by reciting His name, or prayers from Guru Granth Sahib
- Rather than lamenting the passing of an individual, Sikhi teaches acceptance to the will of the creator, emphasizing that death is a natural process, and an opportunity for reunion of the soul with its maker.
- Wailing or crying out loud is discouraged – acceptance of God's will





## PREPARATION OF THE DECEASED

The body of the deceased Sikh is bathed and attired in clean clothing (day before cremation)

The hair is covered with a turban or traditional head scarf as usually worn by the individual who has passed away.

The 5ks, or five articles of faith worn by a baptised Sikh in life, remain with the body in death.

Body is transferred to a coffin.





## DAY OF FUNERAL

Body is taken to the Gurdwara or home.

**Shabads** (hymns) from the Guru Granth Sahib, are recited by the congregation, for consolation and courage.

**Keertan** is performed by Ragis while the relatives of the deceased recite God's name near the coffin.

At the conclusion of the service, an **Ardaas** is said before the coffin is taken to the cremation site.



"God has determined the time for my nuptials; come pour the oil of joy at my door. Bless me, my friends, that I find that sweet union, dwelling as one with my Master and Lord. All must receive their last call from the Master; daily he summons those souls who must go. Hold in remembrance the Lord who will summon you; soon you will hear his command."

- Kirtan Sohila 7-8

At the point of cremation, a few Shabads are sung by the congregation

Final speeches are made about the deceased person.

**Keertan Sohilaa** (night time prayer) is recited.

Final Ardas called the "**Antim Ardas**" ("Final Prayer") is offered.

A close relative generally starts the cremation process – light the fire or press the button for the burning to begin.

Service usually lasts about 30 to 60 minutes.





# CREMATION

In Sikhi, cremation is the usual method for disposal of remains regardless of the age of the deceased.

In many parts of the world a Sikh funeral involves an open air funeral pyre.

In the West, cremation takes place in a crematorium.

When cremation is not a practical option the deceased body may be submerged at sea.

Memorial to the dead or gravestone, etc. is discouraged – body is empty shell without soul





## DISPOSAL OF ASHES

The ashes are later collected and disposed by immersing them in the nearest river. Sikhs do not erect monuments over the remains of the dead.

After the cremation ceremony, there is another service at the Gurdwara, the Sikh place of worship, called the **Sahaj Paath** Bhog Ceremony.





# SAHAJ PAATH

After the death of a Sikh, the family of the deceased may undertake a non-continuous reading of the entire Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Sahaj Paath) – at home or the Gurdwara.

Sahaj Paath usually timed to conclude within ten days of the death of the person.

Conclusion of the Sahaj Paath marks the end of the mourning period.

Friends and family gather together for the Bhog ceremony on the completion of the reading of Guru Granth Sahib.



"Meditate in remembrance on the Lord and Master, O my siblings of destiny; everyone has to pass this way.

These false entanglements last for only a few days; then, one must surely move on to the world hereafter"

Alaahaniaa – Guru Nanak Dev Jee

Musicians sing appropriate **Shabads** (hymns).

Prayers of Guru Tegh Bahadur (9th Guru) are read, and Ramkali Sad, the Call of God, and Alaahaniaa are recited.

After the final prayer, a random reading or Hukam is taken, and **Karah Parshad** is distributed to the congregation.

Food from the Guru's kitchen, **Langar**, is also served.

