

Q: I am a young woman. All of my friends shave their legs. I do the same, but feel guilty. How can Sikh women participate in society if they don't carry out practices that are expected of them from that society?

Women around the world and in all cultures have had to participate in all sorts of fashion practices to be "beautiful and desirable." Men were not subjected to these practices...practices which were sometimes degrading and always frivolous...because men set the rules. In China women's feet were bound...to the extent that grown women could barely walk due to their small and deformed feet. In many Islamic societies women are covered in cloth from head to toe, which puts them in a vulnerable position in public. In Western societies women are expected to pluck out their eyebrows, shave their legs, and if they wish to be on the beach in swimsuits, they undergo painful waxing procedures to strip out "unwanted hair"...a painful process. Most men would not dream of doing the same. Sikh women have an opportunity to make a statement here...provide personal examples of healthy living without these silly and irritating practices. Of course, it is much easier to conform!

Gallipoli & Proud Sikh Heritage

The Sikhs fought alongside the Allied troops in both WW I & WW II, including Aussies at Gallipoli. The Sikhs were sent to help the 2nd Royal Fusiliers in Gallipoli. Soon after the third battle of Krithia



(Gallipoli) on 4 June 1915, Gen. Sir Ian Hamilton wrote to the Commander in Chief: "In spite of these tremendous losses there was not a sign of wavering all day. Not an inch of ground gained was given up and not a single straggler came back. The ends of the enemy's trenches into leading into the ravine were found to be blocked with the bodies of Sikhs and of the enemy who died fighting at close quarters; and the glacial slope is thickly dotted with the bodies of these

fine soldiers all lying on their faces as they fell in their steady advance on the enemy. The history of the Sikhs affords many instances of their value as soldiers, but it may be safely asserted that nothing finer than the grim valour and steady discipline displayed by them on the 4th June has ever been done by soldiers of the Khalsa."

GURPURABS & PROGRAMME April - May 2015

<i>Baisakhi (birth of Khalsa) Evening Prog.</i>	14.04.2015
Baisakhi (Birth of Khalsa) Akhand Path Aramb 0500 am	17.04.2015
Baisakhi (Birth of Khalsa) Akhand Path Bhog 0900 am	19.04.2015
Gurgaddi Guru Amar Das Sahib Ji (<u>Sunday Prog. 19 April</u>)	16.04.2015
Joti Jot Guru Angad Dev Sahib Ji (<u>Sunday Prog. 19 April</u>)	16.04.2015
Gurgaddi Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib Ji (<u>Sunday Prog. 19 April</u>)	16.04.2015
Joti Jot Guru Har Krishan Sahib Ji (<u>Sunday Prog. 19 April</u>)	16.04.2015
Parkash Guru Angad Dev Sahib Ji (<u>Sunday Prog. 19 April</u>)	18.04.2015
Parkash Guru Teg Bahadur Ji (<u>Sunday Prog. 19 April</u>)	18.04.2015
Parkash Guru Arjan Dev Ji (<u>Sunday Prog 3 May</u>)	02.05.2015
Parkash Guru Amar Das Ji (<u>Sunday Prog 24 May</u>)	23.05.2015

On first Friday of every month **Youth Program** held at Gurdwara Sahib from 6-8pm

ANZAC Day March thru' City of Perth (0845 - 1130)

25.04.2015

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Nit Chardi Kala

NEWSLETTER OF SIKH GURUDWARA PERTH

ISSUE 170

(Chet-Vaisakh-Jeth 547 Nanakshahi)

April-May 2015



Guru Amardas with the infant Guru Arjan - 'Bani da Bohetha'

Guru Amardas Ji was the eldest son of Sri Tej Bhan Ji a farmer and trader and Mata Lachmi Ji. His parkash (birth) took place at a village Basarke near Amritsar (23 May). Guru Amar Das was very impressed with the Sewa performed by Bhai Jetha and so he married his daughter Bibi Bhani to him (Guru Ramdas). After marriage, the couple remained in Goindval serving the Guru and Sangat. Guru Arjan Dev Ji was born in the house of Guru Ram Das Ji (2 May). One day while Bibi Bhani was serving her father, baby Guru Arjan Dev Ji tried to climb on to his Grandfather's cot. Guru Amardas Ji declared, "Duhetta Bani Da Boehtha" - This grandson would one day be like a ship of Gurbani to ferry all across this tormented world.

SIKH GURUDWARA PERTH, 10 Cheltenham Street Bennett Springs WA

MAKING AN IMPRESSION: A TRUE STORY

"First, I would like to say Hello to everyone here and wish you all the Peace of God in your lives. I am a Christian who came here to learn about Sikhism, and I have never posted before, but I would like to do so now, as I have recently read some posts from the young people here about the difficulty of keeping hair, beard and turban in a western country. "I am not young, I am 44 years old. The reason I wanted to learn about Sikhism is that during World War II, in Italy, my favorite, and very loving uncle was an American soldier. At the battle of Cassino, he was wounded, could not walk, and was buried so deep in the mud that when the American troops went by, they thought he was dead. When my uncle regained consciousness, he thought he was finished, and began what he thought were his final prayers. After some time, he saw the legs of soldiers, and he cried out in a weak voice "water". A Sikh soldier came to help him. He carried him over two miles on his own back under heavy gunfire to a medical aid station. If it was not for a Sikh, I would not ever have had the opportunity to know my Uncle Danny, who was very special to me. Uncle Danny did not know what a Sikh was, but he was very thankful for being saved. Before the Sikh soldier left him at the medical station, he asked him what his name was, all the soldier said was 'Singh.' "Uncle Danny wrote from the hospital to his sister, my grandmother, about this soldier over 60 years ago, in a letter. He also wrote to his commanding officer to tell him that this man should get a medal, but all he knew was that his name was 'Singh,' and he could never locate him. "Way back in 1965 when I was 5 years old, Uncle Danny took me to the Thanksgiving Day Parade in Philadelphia because everyone else in the family was tired, and I was the 'baby' of the family, and his children were already grown at that time; he volunteered to keep me quiet:-) Well, when we were downtown at the parade, a man with a turban, beard and the biggest moustache I had ever seen walked by, and I asked my uncle to pick me up because I was frightened of him. Uncle Danny picked me up and said, 'Elena, don't be afraid of him. He is a 'Singh', and 'Singhs' are the bravest and kindest people I have ever known. They come from a far away country called India, where I know there are a lot of brave people, but they are the best.' "Uncle Danny died of cancer in 1977, when I was in my first year in college. Before his death he was the father of two daughters, and grandfather of four children, not to mention loving uncle to my mother and all of us. If it were not for a Sikh, he would not have come home to us. "Although I have known Sikhs in the past, and was friendly with several especially during my college years, I became interested in understanding their beliefs because of two incidents; the first being the hate crimes committed against Sikhs after 9-11, and the second was inheriting the family photos and papers when my grandmother died in December 2003, three weeks away from her 92nd birthday. When I went through the box of papers and photos, I found the letters Uncle Danny had written to her during the War about the 'Singh' who saved his life. At the time I found the letters, I also recalled that Thanksgiving Day when I first saw a Sikh. The Sikhs I had known in the past were also very upstanding and decent people who would help anyone, of any faith, or race, and I became interested in what their religious teachings were, as I thought it may have something to do with the way they behave towards others. I also wanted to learn about Sikh beliefs because I live in an area where there has been a lot of prejudice after 9-11, and if there is anyway that I can help by teaching people, or even just saying something positive about my Sikh neighbors when I hear ignorance, I wanted to be able to tell them more than just, 'they are not Muslims.' So please, to all the Sikh youth out there that are considering giving up your hair, beards and turbans, I would ask you to reconsider, and keep your identity. Practice your faith, as it is very beautiful. "Although I am a Christian, I am of Middle Eastern back ground, so I know what prejudice can do; I also belong to a Christian group that believes in head coverings, and after 9-11 it was frightening for a while. I really wanted to take off my headscarf, and look like everyone else. After much prayer and soul searching I came to the conclusion that God and my belief in my path to Him was the most important thing, not the opinions of others. "All you need to do is to be a faithful Sikh, and let people get to know you,

and the wonderful person you are, because you are faithful.

Thank you for allowing me to share with you, and I wish you all of God's blessings in your life."

SELF-ACCEPTANCE (kesh, tattoos, body piercings...)

Questions and Answers about Sikhism by Jasprit Singh

Self-acceptance is an integral part of the Sikh faith. Guru Gobind Singh, when confronted with spineless men and women of Indian society...people who blindly followed and bowed before manmade laws, no matter how degrading...introduced the Kesh-Kanga privilege: Kesh (or unshorn hair) as a symbol of acceptance of the Creator's given form, and Kanga (or comb) to take care of the Kesh...to keep it healthy and clean. In most cultures body modifications such as haircuts (many jobs are off-limits for men with Kesh), tattoos, etc., are demanded to ensure conformity and order. So much so that in the 1960s when the Hippie Movement started in America, men grew their hair long and kept their beards as a symbol of rebellion. However, the Sikh concepts of kesh-kangha is not a sign of rebellion...it is a sign of acceptance of the Creator's gift and a nurturing of that gift.

Q: Why does Sikhism reject haircuts and other similar rituals that a large fraction of the world's population practices? Do Sikhs consider these people sinners or bad people?

A large part of the world's population does participate in rituals such as shaving of hair, body piercing, etc. In this sense, Sikhs are in the minority. However, for a Sikh, acceptance of Nature's beautiful body is an important component of the Sikh value system. Acceptance of one's God-given physique without "improving" it by razors and scissors is a first step in accepting other laws, the foremost of which is becoming a universal being. Sikhs view others who engage in such rituals as people who carry unnecessary burdens in their lives; not as sinners or bad people.

Q: What does the Guru Granth Sahib say about body modifications such as haircuts, tattoos, body piercings, etc.?

It is common for religion texts to provide very detailed outlines of do's and don'ts. The Bibles (old and new) and the Koran provide very detailed guidelines to their flock on daily living. The Guru Granth Sahib does guide us about living in consonance with Akal Purakh's Will. The Guru provides us basic Universal principles (One God, Truth brings bliss, oneness of the human race, etc.) and the path to reach Truth (by minimizing ego and seeing oneself in everyone). In the Sikh "rahitnama" or code of conduct, Kesh is to be accepted as the Creator's gift and taken care of with a kanga (comb). Acceptance of the Creator's given body is a natural outcome of a lifestyle that is in conformity with the Guru's teaching. Of course, this does not preclude the use of surgery or other medical interventions when the body has become ill.

Q: Why are there so few Sikhs and how do Sikhs feel about being such a small minority?

It is true that Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism can claim over a billion followers each, while there are only twenty million or so Sikhs. However, this is not a source of pessimism for a Sikh. A Sikh's goal is to be in Chardi Kala (unbounded optimism) because Sikhism is a Religion of Truth. The Guru's guidance makes sense, because it brings bliss in this life

Q: Don't you think that Sikh faith would have a lot more followers if Sikhs were allowed to shave and have haircuts?

The Sikh faith is not a club or a party whose goal is to increase the number of people who profess to be Sikh. Kesh is definitely the easiest part of being a Sikh. The other requirements: Always living in Truth; love for all (including non-Sikhs); standing against injustices (even at personal risk); giving up the arrogance of racial or lineage superiority...are immensely more difficult. Kesh & Kanga are a privilege we are given by the Creator...a privilege Guru Gobind Singh asked us to enjoy. Sikhi is a faith of the individual and his/her relation with the Creator. It requires courage and confidence even if one has to walk a lonely path.